

HELPS BY THE WAY:

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE,

DESIGNED FOR THE MINISTRY OF A FULL AND PRECIOUS
CHRIST TO THOSE FOR WHOM HE DIED.

VOLUME II.—1874.

“Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you, for Him hath God the Father sealed.”—JOHN vi. 27.

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HELPS BY THE WAY.

WHERE THE GOSPEL MEETS US.

In order to a true and lasting peace, it is of the first importance that we should understand *where*, and *as what*, the gospel meets us. "Salvation" is for the "lost," so Scripture teaches. "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost," (Luke xix. 10). We must be among the lost, then, in order to be saved. We must know what the place of "the lost" is, before we can know the true character of the gospel salvation.

If you will turn with me to the 15th chapter of Luke, you will find how far from a mere theological statement this is meant to be. It is not merely that *all* men are lost, and that Christ came to save them, however true that might be. It is the lost *among* men that His words contemplate. Thus, in the parable of the lost sheep, out of a hundred there, but *one* is lost, and that *one* becomes the sole object of the shepherd's care. "Does he not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?" This, remember, is the question put to Pharisees in view of their remark, "This man receiveth *sinners*, and eateth with them." And "*sinners*," for them, was not a title which included all men, but the title of a special class. If you had asked them, indeed, if *they* were not "*sinners*," they would have owned it, no doubt, as people easily do; but then *mere sinners* they were not. *Sinners among sinners* were these publicans, who had not even an apron of fig-leaves to cover the nakedness of their condition before God and man. And the Lord therefore pictures them as "lost," or prodigals who had

spent all in a far off country, and had no remnant of anything, whereby they might make peace with their father,—stripped of all, and perishing with hunger.

Not so these Pharisees. Sheep that had never so strayed were they. Just men that needed no repentance. Carefully, after their own fashion, does the Lord keep them separate from the lost, which they were not. Their picture is that quiet elder son who has never strayed, and who in the consciousness of uprightness can look his father in the face and say, "Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandments." Just like Paul's account of himself when a Pharisee, zealous enough to kill God's saints, and "touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." *He* was one of those ninety and nine just persons then.

But He, the shepherd of the sheep, "goeth after that which is *lost*," leaving the others; and with a love that never wearies or fails "until He finds it." With infinite wisdom, power, and love, upon the track, the result is sure; and the lost one is brought back upon the shoulders of the shepherd, "rejoicing" over it. "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." Beloved reader, in which class are you? Were you ever *lost*? On which side of these parables does your own conscience put you?

It is quite true that Scripture does put all men really down together under one head, and asserts there is "no difference" between them before God. But there is just what needs to be acknowledged, and so little is, and to own which brings one out of the ranks of the Pharisees into the ranks of publicans and sinners. And this is what makes the Gospel just the sweet and simple

suited utterance it is. To find real rest in a Christ who died for sinners, I must be conscious that I am only that, and cannot be ought else. "Righteousness without works" is clear and plain when once I see I have none, and can never have. The grace which answers to my need is explained by the knowledge of the need to which the grace answers.

Thus if the Pharisees in this 15th of Luke had accepted this truth, that there was no difference between themselves and the poor sinners Jesus was receiving, they would have rejoiced instead of murmuring at such rich and precious grace. And so with all who find the gospel "good news" hard to receive. Their real difficulty is the pride of heart which cannot consent to come down to the publicans' level. Once there, all is easy. If it be grace, and only grace for any, I must allow God to be as gracious as He please. If I once find I have nothing to pay my debt with, the only thing that will do for me is this: "When they had nothing to pay *He* frankly forgave them both." And if my brother have five hundred pence to be forgiven, I can scarcely stumble at the love which, forgiving me my fifty, will yet freely forgive him too.

But this will help us to make plain *what* exactly the common level is upon which we all stand before God. It is not that all have sinned exactly alike,—in the same way or with the same aggravation. There are differences, which the day of judgment will take account of, for then men will be judged according to their works, and we read of some being punished with few, some with many stripes. Even there, we must remember, God will be the Judge. It will not be men's thoughts of themselves that will be accepted, nor yet their thoughts of sin. We see our neighbours, alas, with keener eyes than we do ourselves, and *their* sins are apt to be of a

deeper dye than our own are. We who never were tempted with hunger can afford to look down upon the thief who steals to satisfy his own. To the proud, pride is almost a virtue, although it be "the condemnation of the devil." Covetousness is prudence. And all the while we argue for ourselves our neighbours see clearly through the poor and flimsy veil which only hides us from our own eyes. The moral of it all being that which it so little suits us to believe, at least as to ourselves, but which the wisdom of God has none the less surely uttered, "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, *who can know it?*"

And after all, suppose our opinion of ourselves were as true as it is likely to prove most miserably false, that would not alter at all the reality of there being "no difference," upon God's ground, between the best and the vilest. There are two points yet in which this remains true. "For," says the apostle, "there is no difference; *all have sinned.*" (Rom. iii. 23.) Have not you, dear friend? Think as favorably of yourself as you may, you can scarcely do otherwise than plead guilty to such a charge as that! "Who has not sinned?" you ask. Well then, you admit the first ground of judgment. There is no difference in this respect between you and the vilest. *All have sinned.* *You have sinned.*

But there is another thing. Again the apostle asks the question, "What then? are we better than they?" And he answers, "No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all *under sin.*" (Rom. iii. 9.) They are "under" sin:—all are. You ask, perhaps, what does that exactly mean. Why, this, that you are under the guilt and condemnation of it. If you have "sinned," your only place is as with your "mouth stopped" as "guilty before God" (Rom. iii. 19).

It is not the question *how much* you have sinned. That would come up in the adjudgment of the penalty,—of the amount of punishment. The judgment day will settle that. But it is not left to the judgment day to determine if you are under condemnation. That is determined. “He that believeth on Him”—on Christ—“is not condemned; but he that believeth not ~~is con-~~*demned already*” (John iii. 18). Under this condemnation the whole world lies. The law, the holy law of God which He gave at Sinai, that men might do and live, has declared positively as to all, that “there is none righteous, no, not one; . . . there is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Rom. iii. 10-12). “And we know,” adds the apostle, “that whatsoever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that *every* mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God” (19).

You are not under trial then, beloved reader, as to this: sentence is pronounced,—pronounced on all. “There is no difference: all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; and there it is the apostle goes on to speak of “being justified freely by His grace.” There is *no getting out of that place, except by* the grace of God freely justifying.

Reader, if the *first* part of our Lord’s words apply to you, take home the grace of the last.

“When they had nothing to pay: “that is your part in this matter;—

“*HE frankly* FORGAVE them both.”

SOME POINTS AS TO CONFESSION OF SINS.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John, i. 9.)

Various questions may be, and have been raised with regard to the verse before us. In the first place, to whom do the words apply? Do they apply to the sinner enlightened and convicted, but without the knowledge yet of forgiveness? or do they apply to the saint's confession of sins committed after having known the Lord? Or do they apply to both; and then how far do the two cases correspond to each other? and when may the believer have the assurance that he *is* forgiven? These are some questions, and important ones, to which I trust the examination of the verse itself and its connection may give us answer, through the grace of Him who alone effectually teaches any man.

The foundation truth of Christianity, as distinct from all that has preceded it, is this: that atonement has been actually made by the blood of Jesus, that that blood is before God as what satisfies Him with regard to sin, and enables Him to manifest Himself in grace and in truth. This manifestation of God is characteristic of Christianity. It is what the rent veil at the death of Jesus speaks of: the way into the holiest, made manifest” (Heb. ix. 8), and the *way out* for Infinite Love, shut up behind the barrier of sin and of law. God Himself is “in the light” (ver. 7).

Two effects follow: the presence of God (for “God is light,” and “that which doth make manifest is light”), discovers to itself the soul that is “*in the light*,” but the blood upon the mercy-seat, the blood which has let out the light, manifests its cleansing power far as the light extends. “If we walk *in the light*, as He is in the light . . . the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

It is not, "if we walk righteously, or holily:" that would be a totally different thing, and positive falsehood in this connection. It is not if we walk righteously, that the blood of Jesus cleanses us. The question is not of sin or holiness, but of *light* or of *darkness*; self-knowledge or self-ignorance, knowledge of God or ignorance of Him.

For God is in the light, no longer "in the thick darkness," as Solomon witnessed of Him even in Israel's brightest day. Christianity means acquaintanceship with God, who has declared Himself to us in His beloved Son. And *that* means also necessarily self-acquaintance.

We are, therefore, now in a position to understand the conditions the Apostle speaks of here, and to whom they apply. The very first of them, "if we *say* that we have fellowship with Him," most clearly points to profession, which He takes up and tests to see if it be true or false. The second, "if we walk in the light the blood of Jesus cleanses us," proves that the question is not whether people are (as saints) in communion as they ought to be, but whether they *are* saints, whether they have life at all. For all believers are cleansed thus. I am not writing now for those who question that. Therefore, to say, "If we walk in the light. . . the blood of Jesus cleanses us," is to say of those who do *not* walk in the light, that they are not believers.

Thus the Apostle is testing Christian professors as to the reality of their profession. It was already needful, even in his day, to do so. It is more abundantly needful now. The "we" includes "all who call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord." If this is true of the 6th and 7th verses, which we have shown it is, it is no less true of the three following ones. Not only is the form of language identical, "if we say," &c., but

the verses give us important illustration of the statement of the preceding ones. The man who says he has no sin is one in darkness; the man in the light has sins and confesses them. And because the efficacy of the blood reaches as far as the power of the light, the man who is made to know and own his sins as manifested by the light, finds the righteousness and faithfulness of God united in the forgiveness of his sins, and the cleansing from the condition which the sins had brought him into.

The verse before us thus in the clearest way applies to those to whom the entrance of God's Word has given light. They have received the testimony of God as to what they are and to what they have done. They find the answer to the need thus created in the discovery of what *God* is, and what *He* has done. They are in the light, and He is in the light. They are manifested; and so, to their joy, is He.

The most perfect correspondence *in principle* thus obtains between this passage from John's first epistle, and the Psalmist's record from the side of experience of how he came into "the blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works." He tells us of the struggle God had with him till he "confessed." His bones waxed old through his roaring all the day long; day and night His hand was heavy upon him; his moisture was turned into the drought of summer. That was "while I kept silence." But at last, says he, "I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and so Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." (Ps. xxxii.)

Here is the "confession" and the "forgiveness." They are linked together precisely as in 1 John i. Have we anything in the Psalm that answers to and may illustrate the "cleansing from all unrighteousness,"

that the apostle speaks of? We surely have it in measure at least in the 2nd verse. The man to whom, it tells us, "the Lord imputeth not iniquity," is also one "in whose spirit there is no *guile*." There is practical and most blessed cleansing of the soul, the fruit of that forgiving grace which had visited it. The heart brought back from its distance and alienation from the Lord, which sin had induced, could open itself freely and confidently to Him who had but just now forgiven "all that debt."

I do not go on further with the psalm. Difference there is between it and the epistle before us, that difference which necessarily ensues from Christianity being distinctively what in the beginning of this paper I have stated it to be. Light there was before Christianity, but not yet "*the light*." God was *not* "manifested," though men divinely instructed did know much about Him. And so even in this most blessed psalm. There could not be yet, "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." Nor could there be either, "He is *faithful and just* to forgive us our sins." The Cross had not yet declared His "righteousness" in this, nor given the sinner in the consciousness of nought but that, a work done for sinners, entitling all who would claim the value of it in that name, to rest upon His "faithfulness." It was His "forbearance" rather, that the Psalmist knew. Thus he merely states the fact of his having so received forgiveness, does not state it even as a general principle, as here the apostle does. These are differences which only he will consider minute or trivial, who has never had any deep exercise of soul, as to that which is the theme of these two passages.

But the correspondence between the two is sufficiently striking, nevertheless. And that in the psalm being taken up by the apostle in Rom iv., as applying to the

first grand meeting between the soul and God, when justification by faith is really learnt, the application of the corresponding passage in the epistle to the same time and event in the soul's history, can scarcely be denied. It is important to see it so, in the first place, before we look at other applications.

The verse here, taken in this *gospel* sense, is in perfect harmony with the gospel elsewhere. It is true that the internal side is necessarily put forward, rather than the external and objective. It is the work *in* the soul that is in question, rather than the work done *for* the soul. This results from what we have seen to be the apostle's object here, to test as to the reality of the Christian profession. And the question raised is, whether there has been in the soul in very truth that which is implied in repentance. Repentance is an absolute necessity for every one, a necessity which the gospel by no means sets aside, but confirms in the fullest way. "Repentance and remission of sins" were to be preached together in Christ's name, according to the Lord's own commission to His disciples (Luke xxiv. 47); and to be put (who can doubt?) in that order. We may be sure then, it is in nowise in conflict with the gospel, any more than the experience of want in my soul is in conflict with that which meets and supplies the want.

Such is the nature of true repentance. It is the knowledge of sin and helplessness; of what is summed up in those two characters of those for whom Christ died,—"ungodly," and "without strength;" or in that one word of perhaps unequalled intensity, "*lost*." Yet "the Son of man came to seek and to save that which is '*lost*.'" That surely is gospel. If repentance be the soul's realization of that condition, how suitable that "remission of sins" should be preached and assured to the repenting; and that the order should be as in our

Lord's own words, "Repent ye and believe the gospel."

Now this is just the style of the verse before us. "If we confess our sins," tells of these with whom the light has been dealing, manifesting the evil of heart and life until there was no word left for the burdened one to utter in the presence of God, but that one solemn and only one—"sin"! Yes, "sin," and nothing else. The absence of all else is an important element, if I may speak paradoxically, in the confession of one in the light with God. Not "sin," but no worse than my neighbour; not, "sin" and my right feeling about it; nor yet, "sin" and my good resolutions and intentions; no, but "sin," which infects so all I am and have, my very feelings about it as well as everything else, and so disables me from attempting promising anything about myself for the future, as just to leave me to mercy, mercy alone, hanging upon that and only that, mere and absolute mercy and love, and nothing else!

There is my "sin," then,—I confess it; it is all I can do. Mend it or myself, I cannot. My ignorance, carelessness, unbelief, hardness of heart, whatever else that may characterize a "sinner,"—I bring them, this great bundle of my sins, and just put them down before the Lord, not knowing the half of them, either. I find—what? mercy and love? aye, surely; but, most wondrous thing of all,—*righteousness*, GOD'S *RIGHTEOUSNESS*, *on the side* of the sinner,—on my side as that!

"Faithful and just to forgive us our sins!" Why, to be sure. Christ died for it, didn't He? Is not God "just," then, in forgiving sinners for whom Jesus died? Yes, and "faithful," too. Can He refuse that which He died that sinners might have? Can He deny, or can I doubt, either, that *I* am a sinner?

Very sweet and full then is this gospel. It needs to be such that that further blessed work may be done in

me, which the verse before us speaks of. The actual moral cleansing for the soul is in that display of God Himself which this reconciliation I have just received gives me. "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation." In my Father's arms I learn Himself; and that is what brings back the heart to Him; necessarily therefore, out of "all unrighteousness."

This is the primary interpretation and application of the passage we are considering. It is self-consistent, as well as in harmony with the general doctrine of the word of God. But this is not to affirm that there is no other application. On the contrary, from the very nature of the case, there is and must be. For being still and ever in the light, the sins of my after-life get their exposure and rebuke from it, as my former sins did; and confession is still the resource of a soul, conscious that sin has come in between itself and God. The thing confessed moreover is surely gone as a hindrance to communion.* All this is simple, and there is no difficulty in admitting it at once, and admitting it too as implied in the passage here.

But we need to look somewhat deeper at this, nevertheless. There are two apparently opposite extremes, more nearly connected though, than is commonly thought, into which men, aye, and even believers, are prone to run,—legality or lawlessness. It is so in the matter before us. On the one hand it is greatly to be feared, that there are some who are really taking this confessing of sin as a very easy way of getting rid of what has never greatly troubled them; and what it does

* The Christian is accepted before God in Christ: this never changes, because Christ cannot. He can never therefore need forgiveness again in any sense, which would interfere with that. But communion may be, and is interrupted by sin, and a *Father's* forgiveness needed for the restoration of this.

not much trouble them to *have* to confess very shortly again. They do not act like those cleansed from all unrighteousness ; or being so easily cleansed, they do not seem to dread very much the fresh contracting of defilement.

On the other hand, there are most certainly people of more sensitive consciences, who cannot make confession of sin so light a matter. Their difficulty is to know if they *have* properly confessed their sins, and therefore whether they have really title to believe themselves forgiven. They know enough of themselves to make them doubtful of anything that comes from them. They fall necessarily, however, into judging by their feelings whether they are or are not forgiven. They cannot, in that condition, find the feelings which they would make the evidence of their restoration to God. They lose power over sin therefore, not because careless as to it, but because moodily occupied with themselves and not with Christ, who alone "of God is made unto us sanctification."

Neither class (although believers), are really as to their practical condition, with God at all. With His presence apprehended aright, it would be impossible to be unexercised as to the sin so constantly recurring in the same form and character, while on the other hand in his presence legality would be equally impossible. Law, while it is the strength of sin, shuts out God, as we have seen.

There are many who are thus going on day by day, with sin, not open or gross, yet still conscious sin, accumulating on the conscience, disturbing peace, hindering the enjoyment of the place which God has given them with Himself, and really ignorant (although they know salvation truth), of the Divine remedy for all this, sure and simple and plainly written as it all is,

They have laid hold on this verse in 1 John, it may be, as the whole matter in their needed cleansing and restoration to God. They have failed to find it so, and no wonder; for the very simple reason that no *remedy* for the soul begins with "*If we.*" It is the natural thought that we must begin with ourselves, no doubt. We forget that old, old lesson which in other forms we have had to learn before, that in company with sin is helplessness. Christ alone is healer, restorer, giver of power as of life itself; and it is power we want at the very start.

We can never set ourselves right with God. In three ways we are apt to make the trial, but the only good effect can be to demonstrate our impotence in each case.

In the first case, it is a question of *righteousness*. When awakened to the sense of guilt and condemnation, the natural attempt is to "establish *our own* righteousness," and to try and do better "by God's help." And here we have to find that do our best, as we may, "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags," and that we have to meet God, not as having set ourselves right, but in the consciousness of being most wrong, to find that Christ died for the *ungodly*, and that God justifies the *ungodly*, and that "Christ is of God made unto us righteousness," when we have none of our own.

Again, as justified ones, we try the same thing in the matter of *holiness*. Having received righteousness by faith, we would yet make holiness a work; and very sincerely expect to make something of ourselves by God's help now in this way. The struggle is often a long and bitter one. The end is reached by the discovery once more of utter impotence, and that God having ended all of us in the Cross of His Son, has left us free to think of, to enjoy, and live for Him. Thus we are "sanctified by faith," and Christ is found to be

made of God unto us *sanctification* now, as righteousness before.

Now, in the matter of restoration the same mistake is constantly made, to the great injury of souls. Just as they thought once to make themselves righteous, and then to make themselves holy, so now they attempt to restore themselves to God, setting *themselves* right by confession and self-judgment. And the truth, that they ought to confess, and that "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins," quite blinds them to certain other things to the full as necessary to be known as this.

They are mistaken even as to this passage being direction for a penitent. It is a statement of certain principles rather; and that in order to test the profession of Christianity as to its being true or false. Its primary application also is not to the failures of the christian man, as such, but to the sins which the enlightened and convicted one brings (as we may rightly say), to the foot of the Cross. The other application, however true, is only secondary and inferential, and we need to take into consideration what Scripture elsewhere may furnish, in order fully to apprehend the very statement that it makes.

Now the same Apostle John furnishes us with what does directly and primarily apply to the case in point. First, in the beginning of the next chapter, and immediately following the verses we have been considering, he says, addressing himself by the familiar and endearing title of relationship, which only they could claim who could abide the testing of the first chapter (compare ch. ii. 12): "My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not. And if any one sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins." (ii. 1, 2).

Thus clearly and directly, and *as if for the first time*, he addresses himself to the supposed case of the incidental sins, the failure of a Christian. And in view of it to do what? To put Christ before the soul as propitiation and as advocate. In the first place to commend the erring one, not to his own resources or expedients, but to the Healer and Restorer, "the righteous" but most tender and gracious Shepherd of His sheep.

"An advocate with the *Father*." That sweet name of relationship is set prominently there to assure the one so fallen, of the heart of the Living God abiding faithful still, whatever he may have done, to all that Name implies. "*He cannot deny Himself.*" What a needed truth for the soul just in danger (with Peter in like case) of letting slip its hold of that Divine grace, which alone can *restore*, as it can alone *sustain*! "I have prayed for thee that thy *faith* fail not," were the words of the "Advocate" below. That had been His prayer as such. Is it not a specimen of such "advocacy" still, for those in like manner fallen? Is it not what He seeks for them, that gracious One above, that sin should not prevail to put distance (as it tends to do) between the soul and God? For he who desires to have us (no less than Peter), that he may sift us as wheat, knows full well that in that place of distance, no right judgment of sin, no true confession, no good thing at all, is possible. The "shield of faith" down, the arrows of the enemy, "fiery darts of the wicked one," take but too sure lodgment in the soul. Well might the Lord pray for Peter, and sweet to know that He prays for us, that *faith* fail not.

We turn elsewhere for the picture of how He who is the Advocate with the Father carries on His blessed work as *Restorer* of the soul. Still it is the Apostle John who furnishes us with it, and every one will re-

cognize in a moment that in the 13th chapter of his gospel it is that we have the cleansing of already washed ones. It is to such He says, as to Peter, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." One washing, and that a perfect one of the whole person, had already taken place in his case; and therefore when he would have had the Lord wash his hands and his head also, "Jesus saith to him, He that is washed,* needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit; and ye are clean." One "washing of water by the word," believers have thus all received. They have been born again by the gospel (1 Pet. i. 23, 25), and have been made "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. i. 4). The old nature is in them still, but as what, having received its judgment on the Cross, is no more reckoned to them. Hence they *are* "made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light,"—"clean every whit." This blessed "meetness" nothing can touch, and so this cleansing cannot be repeated.

But nevertheless there may be in our walk and ways that which is quite unsuited to Him who has chosen us for fellowship with Himself, and will render impossible our enjoyment of it. Hence the words, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." Defilement of this sort is easily contracted, alas, in a world like this, and being contracted must be cleansed off, he that is washed yet needeth to wash his feet.

We come then directly to the question, what is he to do who is conscious that he has sinned, and gathered defilement? What does the Lord say to such, according to the 13th chapter of John? There is an "if" here, as there is an "if" in the epistle, but it is an

* The Greek words express a difference which the English do not. The first "washed" is rather "*bathed*," as of the whole person. The word elsewhere in the chapter is quite another one implying only local washing.

"if *we*" there, and it is "if *I*" here. "*If I* wash thee not," not "*if we* confess," but "*If I* wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me."

And what does this mean but that we must needs, in order to being cleansed, first of all come back to Him even as we are, and put our feet with all their defilement into His hands, who thereupon undertakes the whole matter for us? He cleanses, and not we. This patient ministry of love is His, of whom it is written here, "having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." If they change, He changes not. If they defile themselves, it does but set Him afresh to serve them in more lowly guise than ever. What hand less than inspired could have penned that picture of One who, "knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God," in that full knowledge of what He was, set Himself to wash the feet of His disciples. Strange that it should be so hard to give Him credit for His love, and to us who believe in His Cross, and know Him as the Advocate with the Father now in the heavenlies! that we should need the reminding that He is still ready to take our feet into His blessed hands unwashed, Himself to wash them! But it is even so, and though we may resist, as Peter did, and think it humility on our part, and proper estimation of His dignity to resist, His words remain ever true: not merely "if you are not washed," but "*if I* wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."

Come back then, poor wanderer, whoever thou art, that hast been trying to right thyself with God by confession and self-judgment. Come back, and receive His grace, and drink in His love as full for thee as ever. Put thyself into the hands of the Advocate with the Father. He undertakes thy cause and thy care. Thou

hast no need to fear that the character and righteousness of God will be forgotten by One who went to the Cross to make it good,—“Jesus Christ the righteous, and the propitiation for our sins.” The distance that you deem there is between Him and you, is all of your putting, not of His. You are welcome at this moment to the enjoyment of His presence, not as careless yourself of sin, or supposing He is, but as knowing that He alone it is that cleanses from it. You must meet Him therefore just as you are, not as set right, but as needing it. In your Father’s presence, in communion with the Father and the Son, alone can you judge of sin rightly; alone can you find out how far you have wandered, and what your sin has been. You must judge it *with Him*, or you will have no power at all to judge it.

And now to come back to the epistle. How does the principle “if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,” apply then here? I am sure it does apply. The trouble is that we are so apt to turn what is a most gracious assurance into a legal condition, which always injures the soul and makes impossible the holiness we aim at by it. It is clear when we put our feet into the hands of Jesus to be cleansed, that that implies the confession of sin, for it is sin that has defiled them. But it does not imply that I suppose myself even to know the measure or quantity of my sin, or to come to the Lord in anywise as having gone through a prescribed process of self-judgment, or done a certain amount of (really) legal work, and that in order to get back into my lost blessedness of fellowship with God. It is this that I believe very many are so far astray about, to the ruin of their own peace and the loss of all power for holy walk. The question is, take me as I am, without attempt or pretension to be anything but what I am, but my heart coveting, nevertheless, that

"part with Him" which the Lord speaks of, am I not welcome, most welcome to Him, and to leave the task of cleansing to Himself who has undertaken it?

And may I not know that my sins are forgiven, not because I have plumbed the depth of my sins, and confessed it all according to the prescribed conditions, but because I have come to Him about it all, and have put myself into the blessed hands of the One who knows all my state and undertakes my cleansing? It is just here that there is mischief to the soul in putting the first chapter of the first epistle of John into the place of the thirteenth chapter of his gospel. Confession in this matter practically takes the place of Christ. And with self before one, the question is so often, have I confessed enough or aright? a question to which my deceitful heart is to supply the answer! Can I, or ought I to trust the answer that it gives?

But what then? am I not to confess? I answer, surely confess. Unburden the heart as fully as possible. I believe that which is the unfailing accompaniment of a healthful condition of soul is the instinct of confession. And as come to Him, and in His hands, as He shews me what I have done and what I am, it is simple and blessed work to add my "Truth, Lord," to every fresh discovery. But it is one thing upon His bosom to look back and see what I have been in, and what led me into it, and own it all out there, as He shows it to me, and judge it all with Him. It is quite another thing to *try and get myself back to Him* by an impracticable path of confessing all that has come in to put me at a distance from Him. If I am practically at a distance now, I am to know that it is all of my putting and of my keeping, never of His. My first right step is to return to the blessed place I have left. No door has been shut after me to keep me out, no cleansing is possible

while I am away. I have to come back owning surely that I have sinned, but not as cleansed from my defilement, but putting myself into His hands to cleanse me. A little while with Him will tell me a great deal more about myself and give me a great deal clearer judgment of my ways than months of self-occupation out of His presence.

And there is free forgiveness for me from my Father too. Not doled or measured out, but over-abundant over all my sin; after the self-same style as when at first He met me, bankrupt and in my sins, and with His clasped arms round me kissed me into peace.

I can bear to let Him tell me all. His love mine, His unchanging grace to meet every dark disclosure of what I am, and what I have done, my soul opens itself to Him, as the sun uncloses the garden-flowers to bask in its blessed beams. I want no hiding, I seek exposure to the brightness of a glory which is the "glory of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace *and truth*," which shines upon me at once to bless, to gladden and to purify. "Cleansing from all unrighteousness" can only be by that which fills and satisfies my heart with good and God.

HELPS WITH THE USE AND APPLICATION OF SOME SCRIPTURE TERMS.*

I. FORGIVENESS.

Forgiveness of sin is found in Scripture in various

* It is believed that many of the difficulties which we find in understanding the Word are the result of not having got hold in the first place, of the expressions used, when separately considered. The aim of the commencing series of papers is to give a sketch of the use and application of some of these as drawn from Scripture generally, so as to help in the discernment of the application in any particular case.

A brief statement only can be attempted, and the texts referred to which establish it. But it is earnestly hoped that no one will take for granted any statement made, but test all by the Word throughout.

connections which need to be carefully distinguished from each other. It may be useful to consider it as being a gracious release from consequences which would otherwise necessarily result from sin. Such consequences may be—

(1). Simply and strictly *penal*. From these the Christian is wholly and for ever delivered. He *has* in Christ “redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins” (Eph. i. 7), and a place where, being identified with and “accepted in the Beloved” (6), “no condemnation” can ever again attach to him (Rom. viii. 1). Thus there is no putting away of sins, again and again, as often as committed, but the worshipper *once* purged has “no more conscience of sins” (Heb. x. 2); the offering of Christ perfects for ever—“*perpetually*,” as the word means,—those that are (as all believers are) sanctified by it (10, 14).

One cannot possibly be too simple, then, that the efficacy of the precious blood of Christ is such for every one that believes in Him, that the cleansing which it gives never need nor possibly can be repeated. As sinners, children of Adam, we are passed away entirely, dead with Him in His death (Rom. vi.), and only exist before God as “in,” and one with, His beloved Son. We *have*, once for all, the forgiveness of sins.

(2). But then this is not the whole matter. And if we look at the moral government of God over the earth, it is easy to apprehend that He cannot let sin in His people pass without rebuke. It was His principle announced in Israel, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth, *therefore* I will punish you for your iniquities” (Amos iii. 2). This was the solemn declaration when Aaron’s sons, Nadab and Abihu, died before the Lord, “I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me, and before all the people will I be

glorified" (Lev. x. 3). Atonement could not alter this which was needful for the Lord's glory in the eyes of men, but grace comes in to make it at the same time that which shall "work together" with all else, "for good to them that love God." It becomes, while the vindication of His holiness before men in general, the tender, if solemn, chastening of a Father's hand, of which it is written: "He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness" (Heb. xii. 10).

This principle is distinctly declared in its application to Christians in 1 Cor. xi. 31, 32: "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged; but when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, *that we should not be condemned with the world.*"

That last need-be for the chastening is to be marked, as it conclusively proves how little God could pass over sin in His own. The apostle in no wise means to detract from the value of the atoning blood of Christ, surely; yet he says, if God did not judge sin in His people now, He would have to condemn them with the world bye and bye. So little can He suffer it to pass, as if He cared not.

This judgment was coming upon the Corinthian saints, for their disregard of what was due to the Lord at His own table. They eat and drank *judgment** to themselves, not discerning the Lord's body. On this account, many were weak and sickly among them, and many slept (vss. 29, 30). Disease and death were making inroads among them as the direct consequence of their sin. Now here, if under this discipline the soul got real humbling and restoration to God, that which otherwise would have ended in death, the Lord's mercy might deliver from. On the other hand, the sin might

* As in the margin; not "damnation," as in the text itself, as is evident even from v. 32.

be of such a nature that death might be inevitable. It might be a "sin unto death." These are the two cases supposed in 1 John v. 16, 17; the former of them only, in Jas. v. 14, 15. In the latter passage, it is expressly stated, "if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." Thus it is clear how a Christian man, forgiven in the first sense we looked at, might still need forgiveness in this second one. The consequence would be, God would be able in complete conformity with His own holiness to raise up the sick one. Verses 19, 20 give us the same thing from another side.

Forgiveness in order to restoration of communion is implied in all this. With sin indulged or allowed, communion is as impossible as judgment is certain. The application of 1 John i. 9, to this has been considered elsewhere.

(3). Christianity is that to which forgiveness of sins attaches. Baptism, therefore, which is the open putting on of Christ (Gal. iii.) is said to be "for the remission of sins" (Acts ii. 38). It washes them away (Acts xxii. 16), not surely in the sense in which the blood of Christ does, but as an external rite by which men are received out of the Jewish or Gentile world, into Christianity. Through this, which is the result of the mere rite as such, the *real* washing away of sins by the blood of Christ, which is the thing ever in God's mind, typically shines.

Baptism is burial with Christ (Rom. vi. 4, Col. ii. 12). This shews us how far the remission of sins which is in God's mind goes. The man whose sins are remitted is one who has died with Christ in His death, and exists no more for any fresh sins to be charged to (Rom. vi.) That is the Christian position, which only he who has living faith in Jesus is really in, and which baptism brings into as an external thing only.

(4). The forgiveness or remission of sins by the assembly (which two or three gathered to the name of Jesus may represent) is a thing easy enough to understand from Matt. xviii. 15-20, 2 Cor. ii., &c. It is connected with the *second*, or the governmental forgiveness above mentioned, in some sort as baptism is connected with the *first*. The holiness, and yet the grace of God in His government is to be maintained by His assembly upon earth.

ANSWERS TO SPECIAL QUESTIONS.

1. Do you understand from Acts ii. 6-8, that each speaker was understood by *one* of these different nationalities, or that every one of them understood him in his own tongue?

Ans.—Clearly the miracle was in the speaker's case, and not in the hearer's, as it would have been in the latter way. The disciples were enabled to speak in the different tongues in which the people of the different nations could understand them.

A FRAGMENT.

We may receive a benefit from a person, and be assured of a hearty welcome to it, and yet feel ourselves ill at ease in his presence. Nothing is more common than this. Gratitude is awakened in the heart very deeply, and yet reserve and uneasiness are felt. It calls for something beyond our assurance of his good will, and of our full welcome to his service, to make us at ease in the presence of a benefactor. And this something, I believe, is the discovery that we have an interest in *himself*, as well as in his *ability to serve us*.

This delineates, as I judge, the experience of the poor

woman' with the issue of blood (Mark v). She knew the Lord's ability to relieve her sorrow, and her hearty welcome to avail herself of it. She therefore comes and takes the virtue out of Him without reserve. But she comes *behind Him*. This expresses her state of mind. She knows her welcome to His service, but nothing more. But the Lord trains her heart for more. He lets her know that she is interested in *Himself*, as well as in His power to oblige her. He calls her "daughter." He owns kindred or relationship with her. This was the communication which alone was able to remove her fears and trembling. Her rich and mighty patron is her kinsman. This is what her heart needed to know. Without this in the spirit of her mind she would have been still "behind Him;" but this gives her ease. "Go in peace," may then be said, as well as "be whole of thy plague." She need not be reserved. Christ does not deal with her as a patron or benefactor (Luke xxii. 25). She has an interest in Himself, as well as in His power to bless her.

And so as to the Canticles. It is the love which warrants personal intimacy (after the manner of the nearest and dearest relationships) that breathes in this lovely little book. The age of the union has not yet arrived. But it is the time of betrothment, and we are His delight. Nay, it was so ere worlds were. As another has said, "in the glass of His eternal decrees, the Father showed the Church to Christ, and Christ was so ravished with the sight that He gave up all for her."

Do we believe this? Does it make us happy? We are naturally suspicious of any offers to make us happy in God. Because our moral sense, our natural conscience tells of our having lost all right, even to His ordinary blessings. The mere moral sense, therefore, will be quick to stand against it and question all overtures of peace from heaven, and be ready to challenge their

reality. But here comes the vigour of the spiritual mind, or the energy of faith. Faith gainsays these conclusions of nature. And in the revelation of God faith reads our abundant title to be near Him, and be happy with Him, though natural conscience and our sense of the fitness of things, would have it otherwise. Faith feeds where the moral sensibilities of the natural mind would count it presuming even to tread.

J. G. B.

“CHRISTIANOS AD LEONES.” *

’Tis bright, all bright before me, and the hours
Hasten me on to the eternal brightness,
The blest inheritance of the saints in light.
Sorrow is all behind me, and the beams
Of the fast coming day upon my soul
Kiss into glory all the clouds that hung
Once heavily o’er my path. How all is changed!
They linger now about me but to catch
And to throw back the dawn in radiance
Like to the rainbow glory round the throne.

O world, poor world, that didst not know thy Lord,
Nor value heaven’s treasures in His hand,
Nor know the love that brought Him down to thee
Abased and emptied of the form of God!
That didst miscem the lowliness of grace,
Which saving others, could not save itself!
The Cross of shame, the Cross thou gavest Him,
Thou knewest not must be transformed when He,
The Holy One, hung on it; knewest not
That death with all things else must own the One
Whom only man rejected,—that His death
Was but thy sentence, and His cross *thy* cross.

Poor world, that ne’er shall see such sight again,
The only glory and the only joy
Amid thy shadows is the lonely path
Of One who had not where to lay His head,

* “The Christians to the lions” was the cry of the heathen populace in the days of the Roman emperors, when being thrown to the wild beasts in the amphitheatre was a common punishment.

Of One who has ennobled poverty,
 Made joy of sorrow and endear'd rejection.
 Come to be with us, come not to be served,
 But in the blest necessity of love
 To serve even unto death, to serve for ever,
 And link us with Himself in blessedness,
 The fruit of His own solitary toil.

O Son of God, yet Son of man for ever !
 Thy tree of life is in these dark death-waters,
 And Marah is not Marah ! we can drink, —
 Yes, we, poor shrinking tremblers, we can drink,
 Of any cup Thy lips have pressed, and whence
 Thou hast drained all the bitterness. Death is gone,
 Behind me in thy Cross ; sin gone, wrath gone ;
 There is no wrath for me, and no forsaking,
 For that was Thine ; but mine the Father's arms,
 Those arms that shut out trouble evermore,
 And shut me in to rest and joy and peace,
 Where He, my Father-God, in his own love
 Rests and rejoices in His lost one found.

Can there be sorrow that Thy path is mine ?
 That the disciple should be as His Lord ?
 What shadow could be dark beside the darkness
 That hung its noon-day shroud about the Cross ?
 What have I lost, but loss ?
 And if I have seen all my treasures landed
 Though by rough hands, upon the sunlit shore
 Which beckons me e'en now, — *they* are not lost,
 But laid up where can be no bankruptcy,
 To give me welcome home ! and there's no check,
 No weight to hinder in the eager race
 I run not wearily, but still most glad
 That the end draweth near.

One only step, —

One step and then ! . . . Why, farewell, Cæsar's prison ;
 Welcome the city of the jasper walls ;
 Welcome the portals of my Father's house ;
 Welcome the "ever" of my Saviour's presence ;
 Farewell the passing ; welcome the enduring ;
 Dying alone to death ! — One little hour !
 The beasts shall have their prey, and I my joy.

THE GOSPEL IN THE GENEALOGY.

MATT. I. 1—6.

“And Judas begat Pharez and Zara of Thamar; * * * * and Salmon begat Boaz of Rahab; and Boaz begat Obed of Ruth; * * * and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias.”

THE introduction of four women's names, and of four only, into the genealogy of our Lord as given by Matthew, has furnished material for inquiry to many students of the inspired word. That there was a special purpose in it no one who had any right claim to be such could ever doubt. Moreover, a slight glance only at the names so chosen to a place in connection with the human descent of the Lord of Glory would show something of the significance of their being found there. They are precisely such names as a chronicler left to mere human wisdom in the matter, and especially a Jew, however right thinking, would have kept out of sight; and especially so as there was no apparent necessity for bringing them forward. They were not needed at all as establishing the connection of our Lord with David or with Abraham. No other names of women are thus introduced—neither Sarah, Rebekah, Leah, nor any other; while yet there was perhaps not another who might not seem to have better title to be remembered. These women were of all others, though in different ways, just the blots apparently upon the genealogy. And then, so far from any attempt at concealment of what was discreditable in connection with them, circumstances which needed not (one might have thought) to be referred to, are brought in, as if to draw our attention to what otherwise might have been less noticed. Thus Zara's twin-birth with

Pharez, though himself not in the line of the genealogy, is mentioned as if to recall the circumstances of that sin which brought them into being; while Bathsheba, instead of being mentioned by name, is associated as it were with all the horror of the crimes which her name alone one would think sufficient to bring to mind—"her that had been the wife of Urias."

But there is something very beautiful as well as characteristic in this fearlessness of one who, here as in other places—in a mere record of names, as it might seem, as well as in the most solemn passages of our Lord's life—spoke as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. If there be a blot upon the life of one of His people, the God of truth will never hesitate to bring it out, though it might seem to be the furnishing an occasion to those who seek occasion against the truth; and if there be a dark spot that presumptuous man would dare to lay a finger on, on but one of the links (each divinely constituted) of the chain of ancestry of the man, Christ Jesus, the Spirit of God puts *His* finger upon it first, to invite our attention to it as something worthy of being noted, and calculated only in the mind of faith to beget reverential thoughts and lowly admiration of a wisdom that never fails, and that is most itself when it confounds all other.

Now to a faith that (as is characteristic of it) "believes on Him that justifieth the ungodly," the introduction of the names of Tamar and of Bathsheba into the inspired record of the Lord's human ancestry, is pregnant with suggestions fitted to awaken the liveliest emotion. Each of these women of dishonoured names and shameful memories had title then in a peculiar way to appropriate those words which recorded Israel's most real boast: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." The human feeling—for there is that in it whatever there may be more—which has given an "immaculate concep-

tion" to the mother of our Lord, would have at least provided for the unblemished character of the line of His natural descent; and that feeling would have said, Let Him have connection with the purest and noblest only that can be found; and thus it is that human thought has been shown folly in the wisdom of One who, from the beginning, took the "seed of the *woman*"—first as she had been in the transgression—to bruise the serpent's head, and heal those that are oppressed of the devil. Fixed, in Divine wisdom, in that part of our Saviour's genealogy which no Jew could dispute—for none could dispute that the Christ was to come of David—these names (all perhaps Gentile, and some undoubtedly so) stood there to vindicate the Gentiles' part in the "child born." And just so in the face of pretension to human righteousness they stood to vindicate the claim of *sinners* to Him whose "body was prepared Him" that he might die for sinners.

Thus far, then, the meaning of these names in the connection in which we find them is plain enough, and their place in the genealogy not only needs no vindication, but is another note of harmony in that song of praise which His word, as well as all other of His works, is perpetually singing—seed to sow music in the hearts of the sorrowful, in the assurance of how the sighing of the prisoners has come up before the Lord.

But what if we are able to go further and to show that not only is this so, but that each of the four names here given furnishes its own peculiar feature to what, taken as a whole, is really a full and blessed declaration of the story of grace and of salvation—each in its order adding what the former had left out, till the whole is told? Would it not be worthy of God to speak so—to make not only types and parables, but the very names of a genealogy repeat a story He is never weary of telling, however slow man may be to hear?

Let us take up, then, the history of these four names, so far as it connects them with this inspired genealogy, and try to read the lesson which is given us by their connection with it.

The history of Tamar you will find in Genesis xxxviii. It is one of those dark chapters of human depravity which the Word lays open with its accustomed plainness and outspokenness. Infidels would speak of it as a blot upon the book that contains it, and few perhaps care to read it, least of all aloud. And yet it is a story that will one day again find utterance before the most magnificent assembly that the earth or the heavens ever saw or shall see. And how many such-like stories shall come out then—mine, reader, and yours, not perhaps, after all, so far removed from Tamar's—and the pure eternal day will not withdraw its beams, and the night not cover it up with its darkness.

What must be told then, may well bear to be told now. The light that shines upon evil deeds is all undefiled by them. If Tamar's history were a mere thing of the past and had no voice for succeeding generations, no doubt it had been vain to bring it up; but now let us rather thank Him for doing it, who has given us a page of human history so dark that we have to shudder, so filthy that we have to blush at it. Reader, I ask again, is there no page of *your* life, that, if it were written by the faithful hand of God, you would have to blush at in like manner?

Now, in all this history of Tamar's, the thing that strikes me in this connection is, that there is no redeeming feature about it. If I take the record attached to the other names which have place with hers in this genealogy, I may find perhaps in each case something that a little breaks the darkness. But I find nothing similar recorded about Tamar. She comes before me in this picture as a sinner and nothing else. The wife

successively of two men, each cut off for his wickedness by divine judgment, she dares yet in her own person, by crime equal to theirs, provoke divine judgment. But the wonder above all this is, that it is this very sin that brings her name into the Lord's genealogy—for this sin it was that made her the mother of Pharez, one of the direct line in Christ's ancestry.

Is there no voice in this? And is it the voice of the God of judgment, or is it the voice of the God of grace, the God and Father, indeed, of our Lord Jesus Christ? True, if I look alone at the Old Testament record, it may call up before me, as it has called up, the time of account and manifestation; but the moment I turn to the New Testament and find Tamar first of women's names in the genealogy of the Lord—Tamar, *brought in by her sin into that connection*—I find what fixes my mind upon a scene of judgment, indeed, and that of the most solemn sort, but where the Holy One of God stands for the unholy, where Barabbas' cross—place of the chief of sinners—bears the burden of One who alone bare all our burdens, and “with whose stripes we are healed.”

O blessed lesson, and worthy of God to give! Tamar's sin her connection with the Lord of life and glory! and O look, beloved! was not our sin our connection? Did not He die for sinners? Was it not when we confessed our sins, and with our mouths stopped took our places before God, ungodly and without strength, that we found out the wondrous fact that for the ungodly and without strength Christ had died; and that *because* we were sinners, and Christ had died for such, He was “faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness?”

Thus Tamar's name, first in this genealogy, is first too in the simple gospel truth that it reveals; and the fact that Tamar is a sinner, of whom I can readily think.

her sin, and whose sin gives her connection in a peculiar way with the Christ who came for sinners, is light and joy and gladness in my soul.

But we must turn to Rahab.

And here again we are not in very creditable company. Rahab is a Canaanite, one of a cursed race, and Rahab is a harlot, sinner among sinners. We seem destined to move in this track. The one thing recorded to her advantage is her faith. That it had fruit too, none can question. She is one whom the apostle James takes up, to ask us, "Was not Rahab, the harlot, justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and sent them out another way?" But even here, you will observe, the thing he appeals to is not what would, in men's eyes, make a saint of her. There was no brilliancy of devotedness, no wonderful self-sacrifice, no great goodness as one might say. Even in the very thing in which she shows her faith she tells a lie, as if to divorce faith and sincerity, and to give us expressly the picture of a faith that so "worketh *not*" as to leave the soul still without hope but as a sinner, unable to be justified save before a God who "justifieth the ungodly."

And who can doubt that it was Rahab's faith brought her into the genealogy, as sin had brought Tamar? Without faith, she had died with those shut up in Jericho, a cursed woman of a cursed race. Faith removed that curse from her; faith brought her in among the people of God, if it did not attract to her the heart of Salmon, so as in the most direct way to account for those words being in the genealogy, "Salmon begat Booz of Rachab."

Thus the second of these women's names teaches us a lesson as sweet and as needful as the former. "To him that worketh not but believeth" is what we instinctively think of when we think of Rahab. Faith that, while it has that which demonstrates its reality, leaves one still

to be justified as ungodly, nay, believes on One who only does so justify. Faith which looks not at itself, therefore, and pleads not its own performances, but brings the soul to accept the place of ungodliness only, because for the ungodly only there is justification.

This is very sweet and very wonderful. It is wonderful to find how in the mere introduction of a name into a catalogue, the God of grace can speak out the thoughts of His own heart. And it is very sweet to see how constantly before Him is the thought of our need and of His mercy, and how He would by the very wonder, as it were, surprise men's slow, cold hearts into the belief of it.

(To be continued.)

THE SON OF GOD.

Our Lord's own words, that "no man knoweth the Son, but the Father," may well make us take up with reverence the theme before us. There is none where it is more needful to remember, that it is the province of the Word to judge us, not ours to judge it. We have only "with meekness to receive," bowing the pride of our intellect, and checking the wanderings of our imagination, and restraining the unholy curiosity which would fain so often indulge itself even in the presence of the "deep things of God."

But while there is no subject as to which controversy is more to be deprecated, there is at the same time no point of faith upon which it is more important to have possession of the Scripture truth in its simplicity. The Person of the Son of God is one of faith's foundations. To touch it is to bring everything into question. "Who-soever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father."

but he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also." The Lord give us, beloved reader, unfeigned humility and subjection to the inspired Word, our only guidance here or elsewhere.

The declaration of the Son of God is given us even in the Old Testament. We know to whom it is said, "Thou art My Son: this day have I begotten Thee" (Ps. ii. 7). There has been, however, even here, to begin with, a most serious mistake made. The language of the psalm has been applied to the Lord as a Divine Being; and hence the way opened to low and dishonouring thoughts concerning Him; while the forced explanations of those who held the truth substantially did not commend the truth they held.

It should be plain that "this day have I begotten Thee" could only apply to the Lord's birth as man. And the not seeing that as man also He has the title of Son of God, has been the cause of much confusion and perplexity. Yet it is plainly stated in the angel's answer to Mary: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; *therefore*, also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke i. 35). Here there is no room to question that the manner of His conception is the justification of the claim of the "Man, Christ Jesus," to be the "Son of God."

And in Acts xiii., the very passage in the psalm is in this way applied to His begetting as man: "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus,* *as it is also written in the second psalm*, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." It is not resurrection that is spoken of here, as some have thought, for the apostle goes on to speak of that separ-

* "Again" is not in the original, and should be omitted.

ately directly after : "and as concerning that He raised Him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, He said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David."

But while not seeing this claim of the Lord as man to be the Son of God, has been the mistake of some, and while positive error has in this way come in,—others have made this the whole thing as to His Sonship. They have conceived it to be a lowering of His dignity, and inconsistent with His having equal honours with the Father, to speak of Him as eternally the Son. They call it even an "inferior name," unworthy of Him. They maintain that it is inconsistent with co-eternity as well as with co-equality. Hence they believe Him Son only as man, and deny Him to be Eternal Son, ever in the bosom of the Father.*

It is impossible to deny, on the other hand, that some maintainers of the Eternal Sonship have drawn from it conclusions of this very kind ; and in this very way the Arianism of the fourth century came in. Scripture, however, which clearly states the doctrine, is in no wise responsible for the conclusions of men, against which, moreover, it carefully and jealously guards us. We have only to cleave fast to it, and the simplest and most childlike among us will be certain to go least astray.

Let us turn, then, to the Scripture statements as to this. We are told that "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because God *sent His only-begotten Son* into the world, that we might live through Him" (1 John iv. 9). The language here is plain and expressive. It surely tells us God had a Son to send. And not, mark, after He was in the world, He sent Him to the Cross ; no, but He sent Him into the world. Surely then, before He was in the world, God

* The commentators Adam Clarke and Albert Barnes, among others, maintain this.

had a Son to send. Before "that holy thing" was begotten at all on earth, there was a Son, an *only-begotten* Son, in heaven.

✓ This is so clear that not another word ought to be needed; and it is only one out of many like passages. But I have been asked, could not the title of Son be given *by anticipation* here? Might He not have been the decreed, the fore-ordained Son, and so have been spoken of before He actually came into that place, or assumed that relationship?

I would answer by another question, Does not the apostle tell us that this was how God manifested His love to us, in that it was His Son He sent? And would it not in any wise cloud this manifestation, if it were *not* One then in that relationship He sent, but only One who was to become that after being sent?

But again. What glory was it that the Disciples saw in Him who when He was upon earth could say, "I and my Father are One," and "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father"? Was it anything short of *Divine* glory that they saw in the "Word made flesh"? Let them say then, who had seen it, what it was. What do they say of it? "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt* among us, and we beheld His glory"—the glory proper to the Divine Word made flesh: what was it?—"the glory *as of the Only-begotten of the Father*, full of grace and truth" (John i. 14).

Once more, I do not see how it could be plainer. If it was the Only begotten Son, whom God had sent, it was equally the glory of the Only begotten which shone out from Him while here. Is that, I would ask again, a glory properly Divine or not? Would it be enough if it were the glory only of a Divinely begotten *man*? for man it was, let us remember, true man, that was

* "Tabernacled" is the word, as if to assure us it was the full reality of His presence whose glory had filled the tabernacle of old.

born of a Virgin ; not blended Godhead and manhood. I am sure as to what the heart of every saint will say : it was true and Divine glory. Then I urge, the apostle can find no better way of describing it to us as such, than to say, that it was "glory *as* of the Only-begotten of the Father,"—glory such as that !

And when he goes on to add, contrasting that revelation of God then made with the darkness of former dispensations : "No man hath seen God at any time ; the Only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (18) ; surely it is not one begotten on earth that he has in mind, but one from all eternity in the nearest and dearest and most intimate relationship to the Father, who is come to speak of Him.

And once more. If there be a precise and formal statement anywhere, of the two natures in the One Christ Jesus, it will be admitted, perhaps, such a thing is to be found in Rom. i. 3, 4. What then is the apostle Paul's statement concerning the Lord Jesus there ? "Which was made of the seed of David *according to the flesh* ;" that is the one, the human side : what is the other ? "but declared to be the Son of God with power, *according to the spirit of holiness, by resurrection from the dead.*" Is this also "according to the flesh ?" Clearly not, for it is plainly and pointedly distinguished from it. What He was according to the flesh, His human nature, was, He was "of the seed of David." Outside and beyond all that, He was "SON OF GOD."

Need there be more said ? Surely the Word is not indistinct or uncertain in its utterances here. In none of these places could the thought of the title of the Son of God being anticipatively used of Him before He came in flesh and had the place, be possibly admitted. In the last case, He is definitely stated to be Son of God in *distinction* from what He was according to the flesh.

And as to men's conclusions, Scripture is not responsible for, but, as I have said, guards carefully against them. If they say, the doctrine supposes the Son not equal to the Father, even the Jews rebuke it, who sought to kill Him because He had said, "that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God" (John 7. 18).

If, on the other hand, men would draw, as they *have*, alas, drawn, such dishonouring conclusions from the Scripture truth, once more that Word enforces "that all men should honour the Son, even *as* they honour the Father" (ver. 23).

Can they not understand that the poor human relationship is after all but a faint and broken reflection of the Divine, and that to press a resemblance any further than the Word itself sanctions, is to pervert, not to receive, the Word?

"Unto the name of the Father, *Son* and Holy Ghost" are we baptized. That Name is the expression of all with which we are for ever identified. May this Triune God keep His saints true to all implied in it.

THE INTERVAL

BETWEEN THE TAKING UP OF THE SAINTS TO BE WITH CHRIST, AND HIS APPEARING IN GLORY WITH THEM.

My aim is to present, as briefly as possible in consistency with clearness, some of the Scripture proofs upon a point which many who have received the doctrine of the Lord's pre-millennial coming, find difficulty in. I shall state first of all the doctrine itself, and then bring forward the Scriptures which are to myself the abundant witness of the doctrine.

The doctrine itself is, that *after* the saints, living or dead, of the past or present, are taken up to be with the

Lord (according to 1 Thess. iv. 13-18), He does not immediately come with them to the earth, but that there is an interval filled up with a number of events which figure most largely in the page of prophecy. It is in this interval that the masses of unconverted Christendom become wholly apostate to the faith of Christ, and fall under the "strong delusion" of the last-day Antichrist. It is at this time also that the Jews, having returned to their own land in unbelief, receive one who comes in his own name, idolatry is set up, "the abomination of desolation" in their holy place, and wrath is poured out upon them. Yet it is also at this time that a remnant of this people, converted to God by His sovereign grace, become the first fruits of the great millennial ingathering, and from them the gospel of the kingdom goes out to the Gentile nations round. The Lord's appearing *with* His saints is when "Jacob's trouble" is at its height, and the nations are assembled around Jerusalem expecting its near and complete overthrow. The judgment of the world follows,—*not* that of the dead of all ages before the great white throne (Rev. xx. 11, 12), but that of the living, which prepares the earth for millennial blessing.

To this doctrine, however, many objections have been raised. I shall seek, therefore, with the more care to present the Scripture which satisfies my own mind of its truth.

It is perfectly plain, to begin with, that *when* the Lord *appears*, the saints of the present time "appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4). It is quite clear, therefore, that the taking up of the saints to Him, described in 1 Thess. iv., must be *before* the appearing. This, however, leaves it still uncertain that any sensible length of time elapses between the two.

What is connected with each it is important to notice. With the first, Christ's reception of His people to Himself and the joys of the Father's house (Jno. xiv. 2, 3).

With the second, the reward of works. With the first, thus, the fruit of Christ's work; with the second, the fruit of our own. The first is the hope of the "Morning Star," the distinct Christian hope, but leaving the world yet unblessed (Rev. ii. 28, xxii. 16). The second is the Old Testament hope, day-dawn for the world, the uprising of the "Sun of Righteousness" (Mal. iv).

The coming of the Son of Man, as in Matt. xxiv., is manifestly the appearing. He comes in the clouds of heaven with all the holy angels with Him, and it is a coming compared to the lightning coming out of the east and shining even to the west,—the plain figure of approaching judgment. Now what connects itself with this in this chapter? First, "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place"—the Jewish holy place clearly, for when they saw it, those that were in *Judea* were to flee to the mountains. Secondly, and given as the reason for their flight, "*Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to that time, no, nor ever shall be.*" This unequalled trouble was to be short in duration: for "except these days should be shortened, no flesh should be saved, but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Thirdly, *immediately after* this, "They shall see the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

Now here we find, in the last days, a Jewish remnant with some knowledge of Christ it must be supposed, for the exhortation addressed to them implies that they are listening to His words, and yet so little *Christian* as to be under the strict Jewish law of the Sabbath (ver. 20), and liable to be deceived by false reports of His being in the desert or the secret chambers (26). What has become of Christians and of Christianity at a time when

this is possible, and when once more the "holy place" is in Jerusalem, as of old? Yet this is before the appearing of the Lord, and some little while before, however His grace may limit the time of tribulation spoken of. Does not this look as if Christianity were gone from the earth at the time to which the Lord's prophecy has carried us forward, and therefore, for some little while before His appearing?

If we look further, this impression deepens into conviction. Our Lord has just referred us to Daniel. We find the expression, or its equivalent, for the first time ch. ix. 27: "For the overspreading of abomination He shall make it desolate." This is in the well-known prophecy of the seventy weeks. The prophet is told that these seventy weeks are determined upon his people (the Jews), and his holy city (Jerusalem), to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to anoint the most Holy (Place)." The expiration of this term (seventy weeks of *years*, as all agree) was to see this accomplished, mark, *for Judah and Jerusalem*. Their estrangement from God would then be over, His anger turned away, and, as the consequence of this, their holy place consecrated anew to Him. But then this shows us that we have not even yet seen the end of this prophetic period. Though it began confessedly, over two thousand years ago, this determined time on Judah and Jerusalem, of only 490 years, has not yet reached its close.

The only possible explanation of this is that there is a long break in the counting of these years, a time not reckoned in amid these 70 weeks, during which the promised blessing of Israel makes (so to speak) no progress. The time of the whole present dispensation is in fact such a break. God is occupied with other purposes. The heirs of heaven are being gathered. The Jews "as

touching the gospel, are enemies," and only that (Rom. xi. 28).

The rejection of Messiah by the people whom He comes to save, affects the whole structure of the prophecy before us, in a way that the mass of commentators have quite overlooked. A reference to the prophecy itself will show that the time specified in it does not end either with the birth or death of Christ. At the end of *sixty-nine* weeks Messiah comes and is cut off. Then comes a gap in which only the *desolation* of the city and the sanctuary, because of the people's sin, is marked.

"Know, therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah, the Prince, shall be **seven** weeks and three-score and two weeks. . . . and after the three-score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, and shall have nothing (*margin*), and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined."

There is the gap I spoke of. How long a time runs on after this is not stated; but the prophecy begins again the other side of it, with the actions of one, who, there is no reasonable doubt, grammatically or otherwise, is this "prince that shall come"—or *future* prince—just mentioned, whose *people* have already destroyed the city and sanctuary.* He is thus marked out as a *Roman* prince, and is plainly last head of the last Gentile empire in Daniel's vision of the seventh chapter.

*Titus is commonly taken to be "the prince that shall come," and "he shall confirm the covenant," in the next verse, is referred to Christ. But it is not *the*, but "a" covenant properly; and instead of "with many," it should be "*the many*"—the mass of the Jewish people. But plainly Christ confirmed no covenant with *them*.

Moreover it is carefully stated to be the *people* who destroy the city and sanctuary, not the prince himself; nor would the insertion of "the prince" in this case have any evident force. "The prince that shall come" is simply "the future prince," one to whom Old Testament prophecy so often refers.

"And he shall confirm a (not "the") covenant with *the* many for ONE WEEK, and in the midst of the week, he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate [or, there shall be a desolator] even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

Here we find the last seven years of Israel's history just before the time of blessing comes, a period, therefore, exactly answering to that in Matt. xxiv. But other details are given. The last head of the Gentile empire makes a covenant with the mass of the Jewish nation for this time. The nature of this covenant is not given, but we gather from what follows, that it allows the Jews, partially and in unbelief returned to their own land, their ordinances and worship. It accounts thus for the reference to the holy place in Matthew. But in the midst of the week—at the end of three and a half years,—this is all set aside; sacrifice and oblation cease, and the overspreading of abominations is the Old Testament language for the establishment of idolatry in place of the worship of Jehovah. Thereupon there is a desolator until the consummation, and the determined time runs out.

Thus far it is plain that the prophecies in Daniel and in Matthew throw light upon one another. Let us put by their side a third, which links the time of this Jewish distress with the last days of Christendom. I refer to 2 Thess. ii. for the full Scripture. The prophecy of the "man of sin" has been so long applied to the head of Romish Superstition, that Protestant Christians are very jealous of another application. Yet the apostle speaks of the imminent nearness of the day of the Lord,* while Popery has already been manifested over three

* The editors read, "the day of the Lord," instead of "the day of Christ" (ver. 2).

hundred years. Moreover, "the day of the Lord" leading us to Zechariah's prophecy of Jerusalem's last trouble (ch. xiv), and Zechariah leading us to Matthew and to Daniel, "the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place" is so simply explained of one who "as God, *sitteth in the temple of God*," that an unprejudiced mind can scarcely refuse the application of one to the other.

Moreover, every other circumstance corresponds. We find this "man of sin" the leader of the grand final apostacy of professing Christians from the faith (v. 3 9-12); God at last giving over to "strong delusion" those who "believed not the truth" when it was there, —an awful climax, to which all around is evidently tending now. Moreover, just as in Matthew, the Lord appears at the end of the time of trouble, so here the "wicked one" is consumed with the spirit [breath] of His mouth, and destroyed with the brightness of His coming.*

Thus professing Christendom is apostate, or apostatizing from the faith at the very time that the company of believing Jews, which Matt. xxiv implies, are suffering in the great tribulation. Jewish and Christian apostacy unite together at the close: the denial that Jesus is the Christ—the Jewish form of unbelief,—is united with the denial of the Father and the Son, which is the revelation peculiar to Christianity (see 1 John ii. 22). The precise time of the trouble that ensues to the faithful thus, is limited by Daniel's prophecy to the latter half of the last week of the seventy, that is, to three and a half years.

Now where, we may ask again, during all this time, are the saints of the present day? Where are the real

* A partial quotation from Isaiah xi. 4: "And He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked [one]." This is followed by a well known picture of millennial blessing.

Christians, when the masses of professors merely are apostate, and the saints of Jerusalem are plainly once more professors of Judaism? Is not this latter an indication of a change of dispensation having already taken place? And that the seventy weeks of special dealing with Judah and Jerusalem have again, after the long interruption, began to run their course, is it not again a sign that the purpose of God, for which that course had been interrupted, viz., the gathering of the heavenly saints, is now at last accomplished?

We are not left to this, however, merely. The whole book of Revelation is an expansion of this, and can only be understood in any proper way when interpreted in accordance with it. In the first part of it,—“the things that are,” (ch. i. 19)—we find the Lord occupied with the churches, the heavenly people; while after the 3rd chapter the church of God is no more seen on earth. In ch. iv. there is an entire change. A voice from heaven calls the apostle up there; and there he sees the throne of God set, with lightnings and thunderings and voices proceeding from it. Yet the bow of promise round the throne assures us that amid judgments coming on the earth, God has not forgotten His covenant with creation. Around the throne too are four and twenty thrones upon which four and twenty crowned elders sit, who, when the Lamb comes forward to take the book, fall down and ascribe to Him the glory of redemption. God’s kings and priests are all there in heaven; and thus, the gathering for heaven being accomplished,* the Lamb comes forward as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the “Root of David” (ch. v. 5). Israel, therefore, thereafter

*Those of Israel’s faithful ones, slain amid the tribulations of the last days, are seen to be joined to this company of the saints of the first resurrection previously taken to heaven, in ch. xx. 4-9. There are two distinct companies united there:—first, “I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them,” these are those in the 4th chapter. Then, “and I saw the souls of those beheaded, &c. . . . and they lived and reigned.” These are the martyrs of the last times.

comes upon the scene, and the seventh chapter sees 144,000 sealed of all the tribes, so as to escape the judgment to be poured out on the earth. And then also an innumerable company of Gentiles are seen with palms in their hands, as victors come out of "*the great tribulation.*"*

The conclusion is plain, that after ch. iv. and v. we are entering upon the last of Daniel's seventy weeks; and with this brief but solemn period the greater part of Revelation (ch. vi.-xix) is concerned. What very definitely marks this is the frequent specification of the very time before mentioned, the last half-week of Daniel. It is variously given as "time, times and a half," "forty and two months," "1,260 days," and variously connected with (1) the power of the Romish beast in its last form (ch. xiii. 5); (2) the flight of the Jewish remnant into the wilderness, and their protection there (ch. xii. 6, 14); and (3) the maintenance of a special testimony in Jerusalem (ch. xi. 3-8) during the same time.

I must be content briefly to point out this. To dwell upon it would far exceed my present limits. Nor can I at the present time touch upon other parts of Scripture, which confirm the views which have been here advanced. But I do not believe it requisite. The proofs already given, although requiring that care which is ever needed in the study of the Word of God, will be found conclusive, the more so the more they are weighed. In another paper I may return, however, to the subject, to look at the objections which have been made to the views before us,—the examination of which will give, perhaps, any needed confirmation.

* The Greek words give it in the most emphatic manner as, "*the tribulation, the great one.*"

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

We should on Divine authority, and in spiritual, scriptural intelligence, hold to it, that the Lord's Supper is the due characteristic expression of the Lord's day—that which should then be made principal.

If we read Luke xxii. 7-20, we shall learn that the passover of the Jews and the supper of the Lord being then exhibited successively—the one after the other—the latter, thenceforth, was to displace the former, and that for ever. The former, with other meanings attached to it, was the foreshadowing of the great Sacrifice which was, in due time, to put away sin. The latter is, now, the celebration of the great fact that that sacrifice has been offered, and that sin is put away.

After the Lord's Supper, therefore, is instituted, it is impossible to return to the passover. It would be apostasy; a giving up of God's Lamb and of the atonement.

But, if the Supper has thus displaced the passover, we may then enquire, is anything to displace *it*? We may read our answer in 1 Cor. xi. 26, and there learn that the Lord's Supper is set as a standing institution in the house of God till the Lord's return. The Holy Ghost, through the apostle, gives it an abiding place all through this age of the Lord's absence.

I conclude, accordingly, that we are not to allow anything to displace the Supper. It is of our faithfulness to our stewardship of the mysteries of God, to assert the right of that Supper to be principal in the assembly of the saints. It has displaced the passover by the authority of the Lord Himself; but, we, on the authority of the Holy Ghost, are not to allow anything to displace it. It is the proper service of the house of God. The Lord's Supper is the thing for the Lord's Day.

This comes out naturally in the progress of the story

of Christianity in the New Testament. We read in Acts xx. 7, "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread." And again in I Cor. xi. 33, "Wherefore my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another."

If we abandon the Supper for a sermon, or for a large congregation, or for any other religious scene or service, we have given up the house of God in its due characteristic and divinely appointed business and worship. So far we are guilty of apostasy. We have not, it is true, returned to the displaced or superseded passover; but we have allowed something or another to displace or supersede what the Holy Ghost has set as principal in the house of God. And, were we right-hearted, we would say what sermon would be more profitable to us? What singing of a full congregation more sweet in our ears than the voice of that ordinance which tells us, so clearly and with such rich harmony of all kinds of music, of the forgiveness of our sins, of the acceptance of our persons, and of our waiting for the Lord from heaven? and all this in blessed and wondrous fellowship with the brightest display of the name and glory of God.

Yea, the table at which we sit is a family table. In spirit we are in the Father's house. We are made by the table to know ourselves in relationship, and that lies just outside the realms of glory; for if children then heirs. If we be in the kingdom of God's dear Son, we are next door to the inheritance (Col. i.) And there the table is maintained until Christ comes again.

J. G. B.

ANSWERS TO SPECIAL QUESTIONS.

- (2.) An anxious soul is desirous of knowing, what is the enemy against the Holy Ghost? that is, what would

one do in these days to commit the unpardonable sin? Would the blood of Jesus wash away *that* sin, could one bring it to Him, so that he might be saved?

Ans.—"The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from *all* sin." There is nothing that you can name that if brought to Him would not be washed away by it. And the invitation to come and "take the water of life freely" is as wide as possible. Every one is welcome. *Whosoever* cometh to Him He will in no wise cast out. Thus there is *no* sin unpardonable in that sense. These blessed Scriptures give assurance of welcome and forgiveness for all who are desirous of it. Nothing can possibly contradict them. If I will come I may. If I believe on Jesus, "by Him *all* that believe are justified from *all* things."

Thus I may have perfect peace in my soul through the work and word of Christ, without any question as to what blasphemy against the Holy Ghost means. I may be sure that if it is unpardonable, as the Lord says, it must be because of such a nature as to exclude the thought of one who had committed it ever "coming" or "looking" to Christ at all for forgiveness. It must needs be a thing so hardening, or such a proof of hardness, that, as the apostle says of some, it would be impossible to renew them unto repentance," not "impossible for them to be saved, if they did repent," which would be quite a different thing.

For God "will have all men to be saved," and Christ "is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him." Thus neither will nor power is wanting upon God's part for the salvation of any. If men miss that, it must be through their own refusal or neglect. The "Lord, if thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean," can never find any other answer than "I will."

Now when we turn to the Scripture where "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost" is spoken of, we easily discover

that it has the very character which we anticipated. The passage in Matt. xii. shows us the Lord manifesting His power and grace among men by works which His adversaries could not possibly deny. It was not merely that He did miracles, but these so pregnant with love and grace as to bear witness by whose power they were wrought. The power of Satan was met and destroyed by one greater than he ; devils were cast out of those possessed with them. " But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils." Forced to own that more than human power was there, to avoid owning that it was divine, they slandered the Holy Ghost who was working there, by imputing it to the devil. They could not but know better, and the blasphemy revealed the terrible condition of heart that at all cost would not own God. It was this that made the sin so hopeless, the condition of heart being such a hopeless one. It was not that if any turned to God there was still no remedy, but because they *would* not turn.

For all the invitation thus remains, true and gracious as ever, " Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." None are shut out but by their own will. And he who *has* the will shows plainly thereby, that he has not committed the unpardonable sin. The Lord grant in mercy to any of my readers who may be possessed with fear of this sort, that there may be power in His word for their deliverance :—that they may both trust, and that without the smallest doubt or uncertainty, in Him whose blood cleanseth from *all* sin, assured that without one exception, " Blessed are ALL they that put their trust in Him " (Ps. ii. 12).

(3.) A correspondent, in reference to the article, " Who are the foolish virgins ? " in our last volume, writes :—

' With your view I am at a loss what meaning to attach to 1 Cor. iii. 15 and xv. 41, 42. What is the "loss" of the believer's burned works, or in the resurrection the different magnitude of the stars? Nor can I see any difference between the stubble-builders' loss as by fire, and that of the builder on the sand in Matt. vii. 26. One loses his work by fire, the other by water. The asserted cause of this loss is "hearing Christ's words"—receiving the Scriptures as such,—"but not doing them;" like the "carnal babes" of 1 Cor. iii., walking not in the Spirit, but "according to man," i.e., tradition, friendship of the world, sectarian division, as the great mass of Christendom is now doing. All this is to be judged by Christ's word, as in John xii. 48: rewarded like the builders of "gold," or meeting loss like those of "stubble," or the foolish virgins,—i.e., being left behind in the first resurrection, but the waiting subjects of the second, as in Rev. xx. 5, 6.'

Ans.—The paper in question distinctly asserts that "there *are* rewards" for the believer's works, and of course loss, therefore, for those whose works cannot stand the trial. In 1 Cor. xv., however, there is no question of this, nor does the passage "one star differeth from another star in glory" apply to it at all. The contrast is in this whole passage simply between the earthly condition of the first Adam and those connected with him, and the heavenly condition which the "last Adam" introduces into. It is in answer to the question, "How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?" not "how do the risen saints differ from one another?" but "how do they differ from their former selves?" All through the passage, there is not a question about any difference among the saints in glory; nor any about the reward of works.

As to the man "saved so as through the fire" (as the Greek is) in 1 Cor. iii., the difference between him and the

builder on the sand in Matt. vii. is very marked. The one is "saved," though suffering loss. The other is given as an illustration of the saying, ver. 21, "Not every one that sayeth unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." Thus, as the figure itself should point out to us, the ruin of the house upon the sand is the destruction of the dweller in it. "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity" (ver. 53).

But the real question is, not, are there rewards? or is there loss to saints who are themselves accepted? There is no doubt about that. The real question is, whether the "loss" in 1 Cor. iii. is, "being left behind in the first resurrection" and waiting for a second. Has our correspondent any proof of this? He points us to Rev. xx. 5, 6. If he means rather verse 4, I freely acknowledge that there is a second company of martyrs for Christ *added* to the first seen sitters upon the thrones. But these, as being simply "martyrs," do not certainly look like the "stubble-builders" of 1 Cor. iii. They are, I doubt not, those who, after the taking away of the Church to be with the Lord, are slain in the persecutions that follow, and who thus, being shut out of the earthly blessing just at hand, are made partakers of the heavenly blessing.

Still that is not called a "second" resurrection, but all, in character, the "*first*:" "This is the *first* resurrection." If then our correspondent refers really to verses 5, 6, does he mean that "the rest of the dead," who "lived not again until the thousand years were finished" are "carnal" but real Christians? If so he gives them a lower place than I ever heard of any doing. But the "rest of the dead" are, beyond doubt, those shut out of the first resurrection, because they are not like those that have part in it, "blessed and holy," and upon whom "the second death hath no power." They are those

"judged according to their works" (ver. 12) at the end of the millennium, and therefore lost, as every soul so judged must needs be.

That there is reward, or loss of it, for the believer at the appearing of Christ, is surely true. But that very simple but most blessed fact, that it is at His *appearing with*, and therefore *AFTER His coming for*, His saints, is conclusive proof that being shut out of His presence at the coming is not the "loss," in whole or in part, that any saint shall suffer.

AS THOU WILT.

Go not far from me, O my Strength,
 Whom all my times obey ;
 Take from me anything thou wilt,
 But go not *thou* away.
 And let the storm that does thy work,
 Deal with me as it may.

On thy compassion I repose,
 In weakness and distress ;
 I will not ask for greater ease,
 Lest I should love thee less ;
 Oh, 'tis a blessed thing for me
 To need thy tenderness.

Thy love has hidden many a path
 No outward eye can trace ;
 And, through the darkest night, my heart
 Leaps to behold thy face,
 And communes with thee 'mid the storm
 As in a quiet place.

O Comforter of God's redeemed,
 Whom the world does not see,
 I wish not to avoid the flood
 That casts my soul on thee !
 Who would not suffer pain like mine,
 To be consoled like me !

When I am feeble as a child,
And flesh and heart give way,
Then on thine everlasting strength
With passive trust I stay ;
And the rough wind becomes a song,
And darkness shines like day.

There is no death for me to fear,
For Christ my Lord hath died ;
There is no curse in all my pain,
For he was crucified ;
And it is fellowship with him
That keeps me near his side.

No suffering while it lasts is joy,
How blest soe'er it be ;
Yet may the suffering child be glad
The Father's face to see ;
And oh, it is not *hard* to bear
What must be borne in thee !

It is not hard to bear, in faith,
In thine own bosom laid,
The trial of a soul redeemed,
For thy rejoicing made ;
Well may the heart in patience rest
That none can make afraid.

Deep unto deep may call, but I,
With peaceful heart, will say,
Thy loving-kindness has a charge,
No waves can take away ;
So let the storm that speeds me home
Deal with me as it may.

A. L. WARING.

TOOMA'S DREAM.

Tooma is an Indian. He was born in the woods ; nurtured in a wigwam ; led a roving life with his father, in the Province of Nova Scotia, where he became an expert hunter and fisherman, and learned also to manufacture the various articles of mechanical skill made and sold by his tribe. He never learned to read, but he often heard the Bible read. He was brought up a Roman Catholic, and great pains had been taken to prevent him from receiving the simple truth as it is in Jesus. But the Lord is Omnipotent ; He can "take the prey from the mighty and deliver the lawful captive." He can "bind the strong man and spoil his house." Truth found its way to the heart of Tooma, and a deep conviction of sin. For many months, with no one to counsel or direct him, he was agitated night and day with the great question, "What must I do to be saved ?" If he spoke of his distress to any one, he was only stared at with wonder, and counted a fool or a madman, to be troubled about such things as these. He was advised to shake off this gloom and folly, and go to places of amusement. Finally, as everybody said so, he concluded he *was* crazy, and as he had lost his appetite and his strength, he feared he would die if he could not get out of that condition. Alas ! that there should have been no one to point him to the Great Healer of soul and body ! What could he learn from the mutterings and mummeries of the Mass, that had any tendency to heal a wounded spirit ? Tooma *did* succeed by the artifice of the devil, and the mistaken kindness of his friends, in shaking off his convictions for a season. But, blessed be God, he does not so readily abandon his good work begun. The enemy may succeed for a while, but ultimately Christ the Lord shall triumph. Tooma's con-

victions returned. Slow and unsteady was his progress into the light; nor can it be said that he is yet altogether free from the trammels of early training. But he has been led to see and appreciate the way of salvation as exhibited in the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. His trust is not in what the priest or what the church can do for him, or what he can do for himself; but in what the Lord Jesus Christ *has done* for him, in bearing his sins in His own body on the tree. He is enabled to rejoice in a present salvation, and to anticipate the glory that is to be revealed.

Among the means used by the Lord to lead Tooma to see and feel his utter helplessness and dependence, was the following remarkable dream, which was first related to the writer as we sat together translating into the language of his tribe a little tract entitled "The Explosion," in which the precious Gospel truth is illustrated and enforced by a scene in a coal mine after one of those fearful catastrophes so frequently occurring. He has since related the dream more particularly, and told me how deep and lasting the impression was that was made. As nearly as possible I will relate it in his own words.

"I dreamed that I had been out a-hunting, and was returning with a heavy load on my back. On my way I seemed to come to a wide river, which was frozen over, but as it was early in the season I feared that the ice was not sufficiently strong to bear my weight. I knew that other Indians had gone that way before me, and thought, could I but find their tracks, I might safely follow; but I could not find their tracks. Even my wife had gone over that very morning, but I could find no traces of the spot where she passed. Finally I attempted to cross, but when about half-way over I broke through. It proved that there had been a high freshet at the time the ice had formed. The river had fallen, and left the

ice as a roof far above my head. I went down to my armpits into the water and mud. I looked up and saw the hole through which I had fallen, far above my head. My perilous condition was at once comprehended, and I began to make most strenuous exertions to free myself. My first move was to disengage my heavy load from my shoulders. But instantly I perceived that this was not of the slightest advantage. I could no more extricate myself without the load than I could with it. Near the shore the ice was so thick and heavy that I could not break it. The only place of escape seemed to be the hole through which I had fallen, and which was far up out of my reach. All my strugglings only sank me deeper and deeper in the mud and made my situation more perilous. I called on my wife for help. But the absurdity of this instantly occurred to me. My wife, thought I, went by this morning; but where is she now? She is far away from this place, and were she here what could she do to help me? Alas! nothing. Then, in utter despair of help from any created source, I cried unto the Lord for help, and instantly, I knew not how, I was *saved*, and standing on firm and solid ground."

Poor Tooma's cries to the Lord for help had awakened his wife, and she in turn awakened him, furnished with an illustration of Gospel truth that quite prepared him to understand the lost and helpless condition of man, and God's blessed method of deliverance.

Dear reader, the above is but a *dream*, an *illiterate* Indian's dream; illiterate and unlearned in the usual import of these terms; for he can neither read nor write; but he is a very intelligent man, notwithstanding, and a man of no mean intellectual powers. I have not given the story in *broken English*, because he never uses broken English. I have not pretended to give his exact *words* at all, but simply to write the dream in my own language

exactly as he related it to me. And say, dear reader, do you see anything of your own history in this remarkable dream? Certainly a part of your history, and your state by nature, is exhibited by Tooma's dream. You have been in the "wilderness, hunting," and have carried about with you a burden of sins and sorrows, the result of your own hunting. And with this burden you have broken through and fallen into a deep dark pit of sin, and mud and water and mire. You cannot extricate yourself, and will perish in that condition unless delivered. Have you, like Tooma, in his dream, been brought to realize the fearful and hopeless condition into which you have been plunged? Have you ceased from your own vain strivings and from looking to a created arm for help? Can you say with the Psalmist, "In my distress I called upon the Lord and cried unto my God. He heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came in before Him even into His ears." Ps. xviii. 6. "He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God. Many shall see it and fear, and shall trust in the Lord."—Ps. xl. 2, 3. If this is true of you, dear reader, I may well add, "Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies."

For ever blessed be the name of the Lord. He did not come down from heaven, and become a man, and suffer and bleed and die, and rise again and ascend up far above all heavens, merely in order to help poor lost perishing souls to save themselves. He came to do the whole work—to *seek* and to *save* the LOST. No rope was let down to poor Tooma in his dream, for him to fasten around him and hold on to, in order to be drawn up through the skylight over his head, as many seem to im-

agine in their "waking dreams." The Lord did all, and the Lord *does* all, or no sinner would ever be saved. A friend of the writer once fell overboard in the harbour of Liverpool, Nova Scotia, in the winter season. Nobly he breasted the billows and kept himself afloat till the vessel "rounded to" and a rope was thrown him. But the moment he lifted his arms from the cold water there was no strength in them. He could neither *fix* nor *hold* the rope. They in the vessel, as he told me, *had to do all*. And, dear reader, whoever you may be, in the great matter of your salvation, Christ *must do all*, or you are irrecoverably lost, and that forever.

Poor Tooma had been brought up a Roman Catholic. He had been taught to tread in the tracks of the other Indians who had "passed on before." This he would blindly have done; but when real danger came, he could not find those tracks, and when he broke through, they were too far off to hear, and could have offered no help had they been near. Alas! for those who are trusting to the *extra* merits of the church. There is a sense certainly in which the "multitude" can be "followed," a dangerous and unwise expedient always: (See Ex. xxiii. 2), but there is a sense, and an important one, too, in which every man must "bear his own burden," and walk the dangerous, slippery path *alone*. I must be saved *personally*; I must "believe" for myself, and trust in Jesus and in Him *alone*, or I must perish, and perish *alone*. When the Great White Throne is set, (Rev. xx. 12-15) it is *each individual* that is judged. *Every one* whose name is not written in the Book is cast into the Lake of Fire. Not a single "comrade" will there be in that vast assembly. Each one will be too much absorbed in his own sad lot to be able to give any attention to that of another. Oh, my reader, beware lest that lot be thine! Delay not. Look up and cry to the Strong for

help. Look to the Cross of Jesus; to the dying, suffering, risen Jesus. Trust in His mighty name and live.

S. T. R.

THE GOSPEL IN THE GENEALOGY.

(Continued from Page 35).

And now we have got to Ruth: "Booz begat Obed of Ruth."

But what shall we say of Ruth? Here at first sight our text might seem to fail us, and we might seem to have parted company with sinners. Why, you might say, the Spirit of God Himself takes a whole book to tell us about Ruth. And true, indeed, though it be that she was a Gentile, as Rahab and as Tamar, you might repeat of her what the Lord Himself says of another Gentile: "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." With no sword of judgment hanging over her head as over Rahab's, with no tie to connect her with Israel but the memory of a dead husband who had himself abandoned it, with the memory of famine in that land which had forced her husband out, and with the company only of an aged woman, with whom bitter providences, as she deems them, have changed the name of Naomi into Mara—Ruth comes into the land and to the God of Israel, in whose fields she is content to be a gleaner. No, do not think, reader, that I would disparage the worth, or blot the fair fame of Ruth the Moabitess. That she was a Gentile only adds to it the more honour, in that among the godless grew her godliness, and that she was faithful where Israel's own children had set her the example of unfaithfulness.

But is there nothing in this very fact that, in company with the names of sinners among sinners, we find one who

shines as it were, saint among saints? What does it mean this putting down of Ruth in company with such names as Tamar, Rahab, Bathsheba? Is it not a truth of the same kind as when the Word tells us of one who "gave much alms" and "prayed to God alway," that he was to send to Joppa for a man who should tell him words whereby he should be saved? Or as when Zaccheus, standing forth and saying to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor," meets the significant and gentle word—you can scarcely call it reproof: "This day is **SALVATION** come to this house, for as much as he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man is come to seek and to *save* that which was **LOST**."

So that without the smallest word of detraction from Ruth's goodness, but rather allowing in its very fullest all that can be claimed for it, we may fairly draw a lesson from the company in which we find her name, which is itself full of instruction and of beauty; and Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, side by side in the genealogy, give us but the announcement of Isaiah's vision, which the Baptist's mission went to fulfil: "Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God." Yes, God's salvation, as much needed and in the same way, by one as another: as much of grace to one as to another, to Ruth the Moabitess, as to Rahab, or to Tamar.

But we have not yet got at that which gives fullest significance to this name in the genealogy. Against this Ruth, with all her loveliness and with all her goodness, there was lying a ban which did not lie in the same way against the others. She was a Moabitess, and against these there had been levelled an express statute of the law. "An Ammonite or a Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord, even unto their tenth generation they shall not enter into the congregation of the

Lord *for ever*" (Deut. xxiii. 3). Thus Ruth lay under the interdict of the law. It is striking that it was to this devoted, to this lovely woman that the law applied ; not to Rahab nor even to Tamar, God having thus proclaimed in an unmistakable way the law's character ; not bringing it in to condemn, where men's minds would have gone with it, the sinner and the harlot, but introducing it as that which would have excluded the piety of a Ruth. Emphatically was it thus taught that it was man as *man* that was shut out from God ; not in his sins merely but in his righteousness, and that if we stand on *that* ground all "*our righteousnesses* are as filthy rags."

But the law does not keep Ruth out. Moabitess as she is, she does enter into the congregation of the Lord. The law is set aside in her behalf, and instead of her descendants being excluded to the tenth generation, her child of the third generation sits upon Israel's throne, and hears the promise which confirms that throne to his heirs for succeeding generations.

Thus another principle comes out in bright relief. If God takes up the sinner and the harlot on the principle of faith, *law is set aside* by the very fact. "*The law is not of faith.*" "*The righteousness of God without the law is manifested,*" "*even the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe.*" This is what Ruth is witness to. The Moabitess comes into the congregation of the Lord, spite of the law expressly levelled against her to keep her out ; and in this we find but another utterance of this self-same story of grace which, in so many languages, our God so joys to tell.

One name alone remains ; one truth has yet to be uttered. God takes up sinners then by faith, and law is set aside. "*Faith is reckoned for righteousness.*" Not as if faith *were* righteousness, or its equivalent—that

would be quite another thing : but God, who had been looking (to speak humanly) for righteousness by law, had ceased to do so. The law had returned Him answer, "there is *none* righteous; no, not one." Thenceforth the principle was changed. "Faith" was "reckoned for righteousness:" faith that did not pretend to righteousness at all, for it was in One who "justified the *ungodly*."

But if God receives sinners, to what does He receive them? Is it a complete salvation they obtain, or are there conditions still to be met before the final goal is reached and there is complete security? On what, in short, does the *ultimate* salvation of the believer rest? This is a question which evidently needs answering before the soul can be completely satisfied and at peace. It is one thing to be now in the favour of God, and it is another thing to know that I can never lose it. And the more I look at myself, if it depend upon myself, the more I must be in dread of losing it.

Moreover, there are those who will allow of a free *present* salvation, who will not allow of one that gives security absolutely for the future. With them the *sinner* may be saved without works; but the *saint* may not. The legalism shut out at one entrance gains admittance at another, and the result in either case is the same. Self-sufficiency is built up; self-distrust taught to despair; the work of Christ is practically displaced from its office of satisfying the soul, and the grace of God effectually denied.

The Scripture speaks as decidedly on this point as on any other. On justification by the blood of Christ it builds the most confident assurance as to the future. It tells us that inasmuch as "when we were yet sinners Christ died for us, MUCH MORE then, *being now justified by His blood*, WE SHALL BE SAVED from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled

to God by the death of His Son, *much more* being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Rom. v. 8—10).

And when I turn to this last name of the four, and find "her that had been the wife of Urias" taking her place with Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth in the genealogy of the Lord, it seem as if the text just quoted were repeated in my ears. For, the moment I think of Bathsheba, a greater name than hers, linked strangely with hers in the crime which it recalls, comes in to efface her almost from my mind. David it is I think of—David, child of God, Israel's sweet psalmist! in whose breathings the souls of saints in every age have poured out their aspirations after "the living God;"—David fallen, and fallen so low that we cannot marvel if his name be side by side with Tamar's. David, man after God's heart! Oh, how many of the Lord's enemies hast thou made to blaspheme! how many of the Lord's people hast thou made to mourn for thee! Was that thy witness to what God's heart approved? Was that thy soul's panting after Him? What! murder a man in the midst of faithful service to thee zealously rendered, that thou mightest hide thine own adultery? Was that the man who, when flying from the face of his enemy, and when Providence had put that enemy within his power, cut off but his skirt, and his heart smote him for it? Ah, sadder than thy heart could be for Saul, we take up thine own lament over thee: "How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished."

And surely, O Lord our God, in Thy presence shall no flesh glory! If David could not, could we? Alas, if I know myself, what can I do but put my mouth in the dust, and be dumb for ever before the Lord! "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass." And "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." The voice that comes to me from David's sin

is infinitely more than David's condemnation. It is my own. Can I pretend to be better? Can I take my hand from his blood-stained one? Ah no! I accept with him my own condemnation; and not as a sinner merely, but as a saint. From first to last, from beginning to end, the voice of David's fall brings to me the assurance that the justification of the ungodly must be my justification still. It is like that voice of God, strange, men may call it, and contradictory in its utterance, which, having pronounced man's sentence before the flood, and destroyed every living thing because "every imagination of the thought of man's heart was only evil continually," after the flood declares: "I will not again curse the ground for man's sake; *for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth*; neither will I again smite any more everything living as I have done."

Blessed be His name, who will not trust His salvation to my hand. My "life" depends but upon the life of Him who has taken His place in heaven, after He had by Himself purged my sins; as much "*for me*" there in the glory as "*for me*" upon the cross. He is the accepted One; I but "*in Him*." Because He lives, I shall live also.

If David could have taken his salvation out of God's hand, he surely would have done it in the case before us. That he could not I read in this woman's name, partner in his sin, recorded in the genealogy. Once again, as in Tamar's case before, I find sin connecting with the Saviour of sinners. It was not that God did not mark, and in a special way, His abhorrence of the evil. It was only *grace*, really, to do that. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap," and no wonder, therefore, if adultery and murder sprung up again and again in David's path. No marvel that the sword never departs from his house, and that his wives are dishonoured in the

face of the sun. But in the midst of all this growth of thorn and thistle, sure fruit and consequence of sin, one floweret springs up from this cursed ground, type and witness of the grace that, where sin has abounded, over-abounds. From this David and this Bathsheba, whom sin has united together, a child springs whose name stands next in the line of the ancestry of the Lord; and who receives, as if to confirm this, a special name "Jedidiah," "beloved of the Lord."

And is it an imagination or is it more, that there is something in the name—the other name of this child born—which harmonizes with all this? I will not say; but if Solomon, "peaceful," be a strange name in so near connection with so sad a history, it is not an unsuited one to follow in this genealogical list—not an unsuited one to be in company with Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, or Bathsheba. And it is a blessed one to end with the history of four names, which when God utters them can be made to speak of what He must love well to utter, or He would scarcely take such strange occasion to remind us of it.

And if to any there seems after all in this, something that seems too much like a mere wonder to be God's utterance, I would beseech such an one to remember how once a burning bush was made just such a wonder to attract a passer-by, and how when he turned aside to see, a voice out of that bush proclaimed that God was really there. Even so may it not be strange that He should attract now by a kind of wonder, to listen to a story which He loves to tell; and for those who turn aside to see, may the same voice, now as then, be heard.

PURIFICATION FROM THE DEAD. 10

NUMBERS XIX.

One of the perfections of the Word of God is very manifest, in the way in which we find all the details of each book in exact harmony with the main purpose for which it was written. Nothing is introduced which is unnecessary. Nor does God mix up together things which are to be kept separate. Man's mind may, and often does, put together detached fragments of truth taken out of their proper place, and thus makes discord of that which should be all harmony. Those who study Scripture in subjection to the Spirit of God, seeking in dependence upon Him to guide them into all truth, and who do not bring their thoughts to it, but receive God's thoughts from it, learn its perfection at every turn. There is something in the beautiful harmony and order of each part of God's blessed Word, the discovery of which, as each new feature of it is seen, brings with it the deepened conviction of its Authorship, more powerful than all the laboured attempts of man to prove its inspiration, and which bows the heart in reverence before the God who gave it, as the revelation of Himself and of His thoughts.

Our blessing, then, is found, not in the amount of human wisdom or learning we can bring to the study of the Word, but in the measure in which we, emptied of our own thoughts, sit at His feet and hear His words.

In the chapter we have to do with just now, we see one of those instances in which the Spirit of God so distinctly sets aside all that is foreign to His purpose, and that when speaking of the subject God delights to enlarge upon—the death of Christ and its application to us.

The book, as a whole, views us in the wilderness. Not as Exodus, giving the picture of our bondage in

Egypt and the way out; nor as Leviticus, God speaking out of the sanctuary, "the tent He pitched among men," and so ordering all the details of sacrifice and service necessary for the approach to Himself of a people, sinful in themselves, but sanctified by a Holy God. But here we are in the wilderness—the place that is reached by passing through the Red Sea. For us, that surely is the place we occupy in the sight of God, set upon new ground, by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence the failure for which the Red Heifer is provided, is the surrender of our standing. A great many other things are the result of this, no doubt—but no amount of judgment of mere details of failure can set us really right, if we do not return into the consciousness of our place. It was just the Galatian evil so current in his day, and which the apostle meets, not by exhorting them to judge their crooked ways alone, but by showing them how really they had forgotten where the death of Christ had set them, beyond death in resurrection life, where the flesh was allowed no place, and where law could not touch them—was not needed, as well as could not apply.

We see, then, in this passage, v. 11-16, that what brings defilement is death. A people who were set beyond it, had nothing to do with it. To touch a dead body, a bone, or a grave, was to get defiled. So with the Nazarite in chap. vi. 6-8, he was forbidden to defile himself in this way for his father, or his mother, &c. We see, too, in the Pharisees in the Lord's time the same thing, with their *pretended* law-kept righteousness, which after all was but dead works, they were as graves that appeared not. With all their outward sanctity but inward corruption, they only brought defilement upon their deluded followers.

This chapter, then, shows us God's provision for our

sin in this respect. For this a red heifer is chosen "without spot or blemish" and "upon which never came yoke," in all which we have no difficulty in recognizing God's care to bring before us the spotless perfectness of the One who is made sin for us, but who Himself knew no sin, and who neither needed, nor had the restraint of a yoke upon Him, but whose "meat and drink" it was to do His Father's will. Unlike the sin-offerings in general, which were killed before the tabernacle, this is slain outside the camp. It is Jesus rejected by the world—giving "Himself for our sins according to the will of God the Father," in the outside place, despised and rejected of men, "that He might deliver us from this present evil world." That side of it is prominent here. Its blood is sprinkled before the tabernacle seven times, so as to connect together the two thoughts, and to show us that it was the same death that at once atoned for sin before God and became our death to, and deliverance from, the world. But all is omitted that can be, in order to give prominence to the thought *crucified to the world*, though God could not forget to mark the other side as well. The whole is burned outside the camp, "her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung," and into the burning are cast "cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet." The cedar and the hyssop setting before us all nature judged from the highest to the lowest, and the scarlet, all the glory of the world. Dear reader, is this your thought about the cross? Many another aspect of blessedness it has, we know. But has it, for you, been the staining of all the glory of the world? Its pride, its boasted plans, and prospects of future glory, are they for you all judged? Or do you take the cross to meet your guilt as before God and give your conscience peace, and then try to make the most of this world, and perhaps have

cherished plans for mending it? The religious world is busy with these thoughts now. Reforms are planned, the best way of evangelizing the world is sought after, and this scene is to be made a comfortable place for man to dwell in. Things, it may be, all right in their way, as being good done to man, and perhaps springing from a sense of benevolence that Christianity has inspired, but all falling short of what is in God's mind about this scene, who surely has *His* plans of blessing too, but in another way from what men think. All this, alas! is but forgetfulness of the lesson this portion of the Word would teach us, that the cross upon which our blessed Lord was crucified, was for us who believe in Him, death to, and deliverance from the scene which has rejected Him.

The ashes from this burning were kept in store, for use in such cases as have been named, "for a water of separation, a purification for sin." When any one was "defiled by the dead," the ashes were mingled with running water and sprinkled with a bunch of hyssop by a clean person on the defiled one.

The ashes are the remembrance of Christ's death, the water with which they are mingled is surely in type the Word—that Word which brings before us His blessed work—as ministered by the Holy Ghost. The hyssop reminds us of the lowliness we are brought into, and its being a clean person that sprinkles it, of the word in Galatians vi., "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are *spiritual*, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Perhaps here, too, the hyssop may better have its place, as showing us that it is the one humbled before God about himself—one who has no stone to throw at another—is the one who alone is fitted to restore his brother, and wash his feet—one who con-

sidering himself lest he also be tempted, can approach his brother in that spirit of self-judgment so necessary to invite and gain the confidence of the erring one.

Another point the Spirit makes, is of all importance here, and that is, the water being sprinkled twice, upon the third day and upon the seventh, and no amount of sprinkling on the seventh day could make the man clean if the water had not been sprinkled on him on the third day. Now it is noticeable the way in which this is put, so as to give prominence to the *third* day sprinkling. It is not said that if he is not sprinkled on the seventh day he is not clean. The danger lay in forgetting the sprinkling of the third day. Surely the Spirit thus marks our tendency to overlook the *way* of blessing, whilst really seeking the blessing. These two days are plainly significant of resurrection, the seventh less clearly than the third. But we must notice that it was not till the end of the seventh day, "at even," he was clean, thus beginning the eighth or first day clean. The third day, then, is clearly the resurrection of our Lord Jesus, who rose from the dead the *third* day after his crucifixion. But that third day brings us really to the early dawn of the eighth or first, and when Christian privileges of worship, &c., are spoken of, it is "*the first day of the week the disciples came together to break bread.*" Thus the third day, and the eighth or first of the new week are the same—the old things passed away and all things become new,—the place of blessing in "new creation" already entered on by faith, when not alone is all new, but all of God. How sweetly this speaks to us of deliverance from sin and guilt, from the place of death and condemnation, and the world, where the prince of darkness has his rule, and introduction into the place of light and privilege and eternal joy and blessing, as being raised from the dead and in

Christ now. And if we take Ephesians, already we are in the heavenly places and blessed with all spiritual blessings; but that is getting out of Numbers into Joshua.

To return, a moment, to this double sprinkling, we shall find it speaks to us with a kindly, warning voice, bidding us beware of what is a natural and common mistake.

As we have seen, the third day tells us of Christ's own resurrection from the dead, the seventh, leaving us clean upon the eighth to begin anew, as ours. How clear the teaching of this passage then, that to know my own place I must learn His first, and as I learn it, my own, as in and with Him sharing in His triumph over sin and death, the world and Satan, is known too.

Our hearts, ready enough to take up the thought of privilege and blessing, would try to enjoy the place we have, and if we have let it slip and got down to the wrong side of death again, we try to enter on our portion, but the way is barred to us. How God would teach us what we owe to His dear Son, and that as all blessing comes to us through Him, so must there be the giving Him the place He ought to hold in our affections and our thoughts.

As well might a sinner seek approach to God and the knowledge of forgiveness without an offering for his sin, as a saint attempt to appropriate the privileges and blessings of his place without having Christ before him as the One who has entered upon it all, and gained it not for Himself alone, but for His people. Our aim should be, then, to fix the heart on Him. If this is really done, it is not difficult to turn away from a world that crucified and cast Him out—that cross will be gloried in as that by which we are crucified to the world and the world to us, and minding earthly things

will be counted enmity to it. Nor will it be hard, or need an effort, to know and walk in my own place and privileges with God the Father, as I learn the delight and satisfaction that God and Father found in all the obedience unto death of His own Beloved Son. How worthy He who has glorified the Father upon the earth and finished the work He gave Him to do, to be glorified up there with the glory He had with the Father before the world was. And if He has said, "the glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given them," and "Father, I will that they also which Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory," shall we turn to look at our own natural uncomeliness, and refuse to enjoy and enter on by faith, our place, because we are not worthy? Or shall we not rather put with thankful hearts our Amen to all the Father has declared of the glory of His Son, and our place as earned for us by Him in all the anguish which He bore for us in the place of trial and of sin-bearing.

R. T. G.

HELPS WITH THE USE AND APPLICATION OF SOME SCRIPTURE TERMS.

II. SALVATION.

"Salvation" is simply "deliverance." A word like this will naturally have a great many different applications in Scripture. It is thus applied, very often in the Old Testament, and occasionally also in the New, to temporal and providential deliverances. The Psalms and Isaiah especially are full of the great national deliverance of Israel in the last days, yet to come: a thing it is of great importance often to remember,

although we need not do more than refer to it just now. In their case spiritual and temporal salvation will go together.

Even in the New Testament (to which we shall confine our attention here as giving the full doctrine of the Word upon this subject) it is important, in some cases, to notice this application. Thus "the prayer of faith shall *save* the sick," (Jas. v. 15) refers to bodily healing.

The immense mass of passages, however, in the New Testament refer undoubtedly to the salvation of the soul. But this, which is one great whole, no doubt, in the Divine mind, has its different stages and aspects, which need to be distinguished from one another with some care, or great confusion will result.

Thus we may, according to Scripture, speak of salvation as a *thing accomplished* and complete; as a thing *accomplishing* day by day throughout our Christian course; or again, as a thing only *to be* accomplished for us when the Lord shall come. Let us look at each of these views of it, and briefly refer to some of the texts which come under each head.

(1.) "By grace ye *are* saved;" "who *hath* saved us;" "according to His mercy He saved us" (Eph. ii. 5, 8; 2 Tim. i. 9; Tit. iii. 5), clearly express the first view. What is this accomplished salvation? Three other passages will help us here: "To give knowledge of salvation to his people by the remission of their sins;" "for it is (i.e., the Gospel is) the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith;" and again, "according to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Luke i. 77; Rom. i. 16; Tit. iii. 5, 6).

Here "the gospel" is named as that which delivers, remission of sins being proclaimed by it in the name of Jesus, and God's righteousness declared in the cross as justifying the sinner that believes in Him. This is the first part of our deliverance: being justified by faith we have peace with God, a present standing in His favour, and a sure and joyous hope of eternal glory (Rom. iii. 5).

Still this is only part of our salvation. The "washing of regeneration," whereby God saves us, implies much more than this. It is connected with baptism (for which many have taken it) just as the thing figured is with that which figures it. "Baptism," in figure, "doth also now *save* us" (1 Pet. iii. 21). The washing of regeneration does it, not in figure but in fact. Attention to the connection between these two things will make plain the meaning of this last phrase. For baptism is burial with Christ (Rom. vi, Col. ii). It signifies the complete and utter end of ourselves as sinners before God, in the death of His Son. Having thus passed away from before His sight, Christ alone, raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, is the One in whom we stand before Him. We are in Christ a new creation, old things passed away and *all* things become new, *all* things being of God (2 Cor. v. 17).

This baptism figures, and in figure it saves. This, too, the passage of Noah in the Ark through the judgment of the old world into a new, expresses as a "like figure" to baptism (1 Pet. iii). And the reader, instructed in the language of type, will find Israel's "baptism to Moses" at the Red Sea another figure of God's salvation (1 Cor. x. 2; Exod. xiv. 13, xv. 2).

This is the "washing of regeneration," and the "renewing of the Holy Ghost" is that by which God makes it good in the soul. It is a very real deliverance, making me give up the fruitless efforts to be *something*

in myself, owning God's judgment upon all of *me*, but giving me Christ instead ever to rejoice in, and this joy in Him as *strength over myself*.

This salvation then have we received : from guilt and condemnation and the power of sin. But—

(2.) There is a salvation daily accomplishing for us as believers : deliverance from the perils and temptations of the way, from all that would dishonour Christ, and hurt our own souls. Thus the Apostle could speak to the Philippians of things that seemed against him "turning to his *salvation*," and then he adds, as careful to let us know what he sought deliverance from : "According to my earnest expectation and my hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also, *Christ shall be magnified* in my body, whether by life or death." So also he writes to these saints at Philippi : "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of His good pleasure." It was the fact of God "working in" them which was to give them solemnity and fear in "working out" that salvation. It could be no reason for their fearing to be lost, plainly. It could be, and was, a reason for fearing to dishonour Him who was working in them.

The "salvation" which the repentance of the Corinthian saints led to (2 Cor. vii. 10) was of the same character. Such passages, if applied to the salvation of the *sinner*, as they often are, cause most serious and mischievous mistakes. We have only to see that they were addressed to those already "saved" in the *gospel* sense, to escape a very prevalent source of trouble and perplexity.

(3.) The final salvation of body and soul at the Lord's coming, to which all this is working on, needs little or no comment. It is necessary besides to remem-

ber that salvation is also used as a general term, which includes the whole of the various partial applications we have been looking at.

ANSWERS TO SPECIAL QUESTIONS.

(4.) The question has been raised as to whether "God is one" (Gal. iii. 20) means that He forms but one party in the covenant, and Israel another, and so they fail to get the blessing; or whether it is that He stands alone, and so blessing is secured? Will you give your view of this and the preceding verses?

Ans.—The preceding verses give us the contrast between law and the absolute promise of God to Abraham and to his seed, which He had taken care should be long before the law. God had not only taken up Abraham himself and justified him by faith, but had promised, "in him," the blessing of all nations, that he should be the father of many nations, that is, as the apostle shows, of believers (7-9). This blessing for the Gentiles in Abraham as their father, means simply this, that that faith which God counted to him for righteousness, was to be the principle according to which He would bring in blessing for men at large. Abraham was thus the beginning of a long line of those pronounced righteous by faith—in that sense their "father."

But not only "to Abraham" were the promises made, but also "to his seed;" here not the innumerable seed of Gen. xv., but the "*one*" seed, typically represented in Isaac, received back by his father (in a figure) from the dead (Heb. xi. 19). Thus it was promised, after that offering up of Isaac (Gen. xxii), not "in thee," but "*in thy seed* shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

Thus the "gospel preached before to Abraham" had

been a very full and blessed one indeed. Faith had been announced as the principle upon which the blessing of the nations was to be; Christ (typified in Isaac)—Christ dead and risen from the dead, the one through whom the blessing was to come; and this for the whole world, and before ever the law was—and therefore without one single legal condition to cloud the grace or alter the certainty of it.

Four hundred and thirty years after, the law did come. It is plain that could not affect the absolute promise of God made so many years before. "Law is not of faith" (12), and is another thing from "promise;" if the blessing of Abraham were to be inherited upon the terms of fulfilling the law, that would not be promise at all (18).

What purpose, then, did the law serve? "It was added," answers the apostle, "*for the sake of transgressions*" (19). Not simply, as in our common version, "because of." That might imply that it was added to *restrain* "transgressions," whereas the object was actually to *produce* them. "Where no law is there is no transgression" (Rom. iv. 15). It was given, therefore, to make the breaking out of the will of man positive transgression of the known will of God. To make men righteous it had no power. For this, *life* had to be given them, and the law could not give it, but only by its written verdict upon all men "conclude," or shut up together, "all under sin," that they might be "*shut up* to the faith which should afterwards be revealed" (23).

Thus it came in only for a time, although for a most deeply important purpose, and its lesson abiding for us who are "no longer under the schoolmaster" (25). "It was added for the sake of transgressions, *till* the seed should come to whom the promise was made." Then as to the manner in which it was given, which was signifi-

cant of its character: "it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator" (Moses).

But a mediator supposes two parties to mediate between—"is not a mediator of one;" "but God is," not two, but "One." The difficulty here is in deciding between two *applications* of an abstract statement, either of which seems to accord sufficiently with the truth and with the context. The "mediator" at Sinai made it plain there were two parties to the covenant there. Of these God was one, Israel the other. The failure of the latter caused the whole to fail as far as blessing was concerned. On the other hand in the promise, all depending upon the "One" God who gave it, the blessing was secure. Thus "God is one," might be, "He is *only* 'one' of the parties to the Sinai covenant;" or "in the covenant of promise He is the only 'one' on whom all depends." Both are legitimate conclusions. The latter seems more favored by the question which directly follows, "Is the law then against the promises of God?"

(5.) Does 1 Thess. iv. 14, refer to a bringing of the spirits of departed saints to rejoin their bodies, or to the fact that when the Lord appears, we who are alive and remain will not alone appear with Him, but that God will bring with Him the sleeping saints also, having previously raised them? Is there any Scripture that speaks of the spirits of departed saints rejoining their bodies?

Ans.—As to the last question, I know of no such Scripture. The passage in Thessalonians says nothing as to the spirits of the departed. It is plain that the saints at Thessalonica feared that their departed brethren would be cut off from sharing the blessedness of the saints living when the Lord should come to reign. He

assures them that, on the contrary, God would bring them *with* Jesus. Then follows a parenthesis (vss. 15-18), to explain how it was He would bring them, viz. by raising them from the dead and taking them up along with the changed living, to meet the Lord in the air. Thus they would be with Him to be brought back to earth with Him at His appearing.

(6.) Will you explain the text, "Quench not the Spirit?" Can believers do so?

Ans.—The passage is addressed *to* believers, and therefore it is certain they can. But the common idea of what it is to do so is all wrong. Taking verses 19-21 (1 Thess. v.) together will help in understanding them. To hinder the free action of the Spirit in the assembly was to quench it; they were therefore "not to despise prophesyings;" yet not to accept without question all that might assume to be of the Spirit, but to "prove all things—hold fast that which is good."

Many people have the thoroughly wrong idea that "a *measure* of the Spirit," as they misquote 1 Cor. xii. 7, "is given to every man," and that it depends upon every one's improvement, or otherwise, whether he is saved or lost. Nothing could be more untrue. The passage so wrongly read applies only to the members of the body of Christ, as the chapter proves; and no one of these can ever lose (as they take "quenching" to imply) that "holy Spirit of God, by which we are sealed *till the day of redemption*" (Eph. iv. 30).

"THE WORLD KNOWETH US NOT."

The reason is a wonderful one: "because it knew *Him* not." It knew not the Son of God. It knows

not the sons of God. This is always true of us. Our real life as Christians in its springs and motives, its joys and blessedness, its energy and power, is all unknown to those who are not possessors of it. Our near and dear relationship to God, is unknown also. That which is of the world in us, the world can recognize; that which is of God it has neither eyes nor heart for.

That which the apostle John asserts of every Christian, the Apostle Paul affirms of the "spiritual man." (1 Cor. ii. 15, 16.) "*The spiritual man judgeth (or discerneth, margin,) all things, yet he himself is judged (or discerned) of no man; for who hath known the mind of the Lord? . . . but we HAVE the mind of Christ.*" He has to add, alas: "But I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ."

Thus what is true of every child of God as such, is practically manifest in the spiritual man. He is a being unintelligible to those around, for he lives in another world to theirs, and he is animated by another spirit than theirs. How is it with you and me, beloved? and what would the Apostle say of us? nay, what do our neighbours actually say? They may speak well of us, no doubt, and yet that may be the opposite of real praise: "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you, for so did their fathers of the false prophets!"

"As long as thou doest well unto thyself, men will speak well of thee." Seek that which they seek—name, money, pleasure, place,—they understand that all well enough, and can applaud it. What can they make of one whose *life* says with the Apostle, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world?"

Is this true, and do men see it in us, think you, little as they may understand it?

"TAKE NO THOUGHT FOR THE MORROW."

"Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof."

Shed not to-morrow's tears :
Thou mayst not then have cause to weep,
Or God may give thee swift relief ;
Dismiss thy fears :
Who meets the trouble ere it looms,
A searcher after ill becomes,
And double burden bears.

To-morrow's storms why dread ?
The distant cloud thou fear'st to see
May break before it reacheth thee ;
Lift up thine head :
It may be ere that morrow dawn,
Where storms and tempest never come,
Thou shalt be led.

Tread not to-morrow's thorns ;
If brass and iron be thy shoes,
Sufficient grace for daily woes,
Thy burden's borne :
Wait on thy God, and strength renewed
To mount, or run, or walk the road,
Shall be bestown.

To-morrow's need why count ?
Though drop by drop be all that's given,
Treasured by rich supply in heaven,
Unfailing fount !
Suffice that manna daily fall,
That never fails the cruse of oil :
Thou'lt know no want.

Crave not to-morrow's grace :
If the last enemy assail,
And dying hour with all its wail
Around thee lays,
He who hath helped thee hitherto,
With love, and power, shall bear thee through
E'en Jordan's waves.

THREE DEATH-BED SCENES.

Upwards of twenty-nine years ago I stood beside the death-bed of one near and dear to me. She was in great agony and lay panting for breath, scarcely able to speak because of the violence of the pain. I knelt and prayed with her, and when I had finished, those in the room went out, and we were left alone. I continued kneeling with my face close to hers. There was silence, broken only by her thick breathing, when suddenly lifting up her hand, and passing it two or three times, with convulsive energy, through my hair, she panted out, "Ah my dear—this is not the time—as Mr. Gray emphatically said—when the temple—is being taken down—stone by stone—to prepare for eternity." Within a little time afterwards she fell asleep in Jesus.

That never to be forgotten scene, and those never to be forgotten words, were forcibly recalled to my mind by another death-bed, which I witnessed within a few hours from the time I now write. Some weeks ago I visited an old man, who for many years had been sadly given to intemperance. He was in much darkness, but seemed to listen attentively while I placed before him the gospel of the grace of God, and in particular appeared to lay hold of the blessed words, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." I promised to call again, but was prevented from doing so for several weeks. One evening, about an hour and a half before the time I was to preach at a village, three-quarters of a mile away, his son came with a message that he was very ill, and wished to see me. Short as the time was, I went, and on entering the house found the old man in a doze. They awakened him and endeavored to get him to sit up, but the attempt brought on an acute fit of suffering, and he filled the room with his cries. I attempted to

speaking, but for a time it was to no purpose. It was evident he wanted to listen; but, alas! it was equally evident that he could not, for "the temple was being taken down stone by stone," and the process filled him with agony. At last his suffering abated, and I had again the privilege of preaching Jesus to him. He seemed to drink in the words, saying emphatically, "I do believe, I do believe, I do believe;" and when I assured him that "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life," he said earnestly and repeatedly, "God grant it, God grant it." When I began the words, "He that cometh unto me," he took them up and finished them, saying, "I will in no wise cast out," and when I prayed he lay quiet. He died next day.

Was that old man saved? Not if salvation is a matter of works, for he never had performed any. He had lived for upwards of eighty-three years in sin, and only began to think of eternity when his time on earth had drawn to a close. Either, therefore, he was lost, or he was saved without works. That work required to be done before he could be saved, is indeed true, but it is clear that *he* could not be the workman. Then, if he is saved, the work must have been done by another, and blessed be God, the work of that One is perfect, and needs no addition on the part of the poor drunkard. The thief on the cross was saved by no power of his own, but by the work of that blessed One who hung alongside of Him whom he had just blasphemed, and who a little afterwards bowed his head and gave up the ghost, saying, "It is finished." How strange it is that with such words as "I have finished the work that Thou gavest me to do," uttered by the Son of God, men should deem salvation a matter of copartnership between themselves and Him, they doing so much, and Christ supplementing their deficiencies. If that is the way of

life, alas ! for the crucified thief or the dying drunkard ; alas for all ! for who can assure me that I, or any one, have done enough ? What ! says self-righteous man, is it not true that we ought to work ? Yes, it is, for you must work the works of God. And what are these ? This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.

But again I ask, was that old man saved ? and in order to enable me to answer that question I shall introduce another death-bed scene. A beautiful girl lay dying. She was a Christian. A young, unconverted person entered the room, and I spoke to her about her soul, and preached to her Jesus. Mary lay still and listened, and then lifting up her head from the pillow, she said to me, " Mr. M., would you tell her that if she believes on Jesus, and is not saved, that God would be telling a lie." " I do believe, I do believe, I do believe," said the poor dying drunkard. Did he believe ? God knoweth. But I know, that *if* he did he is saved, for God is He that cannot lie, and it is written in the Book, " Believe and live." Be assured that He who saved the dying thief, can save the dying drunkard.

This is not the time, when " the temple is being taken down, stone by stone," to prepare for eternity. How true are these words ! How awful is the mistake of putting off salvation to a death-bed ! Do you think, dear unbeliever, that you will be in a better position to turn to the Lord when you are sinking into the grave, and it may be your body is racked with pain, than you are now, when you are healthy and strong ? Satan may persuade you of that, but God teaches the contrary. Behold, He says, *now* is the accepted time, behold *now* is the day of salvation ; *now*, when you are healthy, *now*, when you are strong. Bodily suffering does not engender faith. The prospect of death does not always

soften the heart. Look unto *me*, says the Lord, all the ends of the earth, and be ye saved. Come unto *me*, says the Saviour, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and *I* will give you rest. H. M.

LOVE AND OBEDIENCE.

Love is the spring of obedience. Any obedience that does not spring from love, is legality, servility or selfishness. Christian obedience knows no other spring than love. The Christian obeys because he loves, and because he is loved. "If ye love me," says the Lord, "keep my commandments;" or, again, the Apostle writes, "the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again."

Our love to the Lord is but the response of our hearts to His love to us. "We love Him because He first loved us." Thus our love is the fruit of His—it is begotten by His and is the result of it. We do not love Him in order that He may love us. That were impossible. How could these wretched hearts force themselves to love one whom by sin, alas, they hate? Is not the carnal mind enmity against God? and how then could it love Him?

Never; were there not a display of love on His side first of all—were not His love free and spontaneous, acting independently altogether of us—there could be none on ours.

But, blessed be God, this is the very truth unfolded in the Gospel of His grace! It was when we "were dead in trespasses and sins" that God loved us. It was

when we were "yet sinners" that Christ died for us, and that God found occasion for this display of His own love. It was when we were hateful that the kindness and love of God appeared. And it was when we were lost that the Son of Man came to seek and to save us.

Such is the truth of the Gospel. The priority of the love of God to man before that of man to God is thus distinctly revealed. For instance, "God so loved the world," is the truth that takes the soul by glad surprise, for that uncalled-for and undeserved love shines forth in all its bright and precious radiance without the least encouragement from man, but the rather in spite of all that man could do to discourage and repel it! Yet that timeless, changeless love beams on, like a sun that no cloud can darken; like a fire that no frost can chill, because it flows from a heart, the very nature and essence of which are love itself. "God is love," is the grand and full explanation of the fact that "God so loved the world"—and the reason too of His suffering long with that world which is day by day and year by year augmenting its mountain load of sin and opposition to Him.

Oh! what a wondrous and soul-delivering truth is this! Oh! what a sight to behold the love of God in Christ Jesus bursting in upon this dark and dreary scene of sin and death and sorrow. Oh! how sweet to hear the story of that love, or to stand by Calvary's Cross and let the proud heart be melted by that triumph of loving kindness. Truly "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." And by such a story is the heart won, the enemy reconciled and the sinner saved. By such a truth is there kindled in the bosom a spark of love to Him. Thus "love begets love," and the enemy becomes a friend and a follower.

There is a striking moral connection between the question asked by the Lord of Peter in Jno. xxi. 17 and the command given to that Apostle in the 22nd verse of the same chapter. The question is "Lovest thou me?" and the command, "Follow thou me." The order is correct. Love is to precede obedience, and obedience is none the less to follow love. If the first can be established the second will be secured. If the Lord can gain the heart, He can count upon getting the feet. And, hence, with divine wisdom He tests the affections of the Apostle. "Lovest thou me?"—me, who loved thee and gave myself for thee, who forsook my all for thee—who spent long years of suffering and trial for thee; who cared for thee, and guarded and kept thee; yea, who died for thee and am risen again—but who have been forgotten by thee, abandoned in the moment of my deepest sorrow, and denied with oaths and cursings.—"*Lovest thou me,*" who have so loved thee? And what was the answer of poor heart-broken Peter? "Yea, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." Beautiful avowal and deeply grateful to the Lord! "Thou knowest all things," said Peter—as though he would again have shed the bitter tears of penitence, and acknowledged the threefold denial of his loved and loving Lord and Saviour. "Thou knowest all things,"—my weakness, my folly, my self-confidence and my sin—but my repentance, my anguish, my sorrow, too, "*Thou knowest that I love Thee.*" If none else should know it *Thou dost*. If all should brand me as a hypocrite, and call me a turncoat, *Thou knowest that I love Thee.*

Then "*follow me,*" said the Lord. If the Lord be really loved, He will likewise be really obeyed. Obedience will be proportionate to and commensurate with love. "He that loveth me not keepeth not my say-

ings.” As the love so the obedience. Different degrees of intelligence as to His will, there may and must be—but the spirit of obedience will characterize all who really love Him. An obedient heart is his delight. Such an one will be trained and nurtured by Him, and as He says, “if any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine.” Oh! that these three words, “*Follow thou me,*” may stand out in bold and clear relief before the grateful and loving gaze of our renewed affections—so that we may practically esteem Him worthy of all our obedience here, to whom we shall gladly bow the knee in the song of eternal adoration by and by, when ~~for~~ ever each blood-bought lip shall say, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing.” And if the crown that shall decorate each saintly brow is to be cast at His feet, shall not His name be honoured now by the grateful, complete and unreserved surrender of these poor hearts, and hands and feet, yea, of all that we have and are to the service of the same gracious Saviour and Lord. Oh! let Him thus be glorified. He claims us as the purchase of His blood—His heart’s blood!

May our inmost souls hear His question, “*Lovest thou me?*” and joyfully obey His command “*Follow thou me.*”

J. W. S.

“THE PATH OF PEACE.”

“He leadeth me beside the still waters.”—Ps. xxiii. 2.

Beside the still waters! What a place to lie in, beloved, in this world of trouble, of unrest, of aching, restless hearts! What fulness of meaning for the pilgrim’s heart. How many has the Shepherd so led through this valley and shadow of death—led through

this dry and thirsty land, by an unseen Hand, and supplied from an unseen source, whose hearts have known the meaning of Peter's words, who was bid by the Chief Shepherd to feed the lambs and sheep, "whom having not seen ye love, in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." Such the sweet portion of those who, if need was, were in heaviness, through manifold temptations, for the trial of their faith. From Adam's time has the world been filled with the fruits of man's misery and lust; but what rest to one who hears the words of the Shepherd seeking the lost, and whose sheep hear His voice, "He that cometh unto me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

Rest of heart, satisfaction, then, with no unsatisfied longing, belong to the believer! How sure a test then for us, as to whether we are following the Shepherd, that He leads beside the still waters; the very storms become calmed; or if we must abide in them, even still with Him there is quietness and joy amidst it all. Is it not infinite comfort, if we are in unrest of mind, to know certainly that He has not led us *there*? There is no doubt, or unrest, or distress of mind in His presence, in the path that He Himself trod. Will you say, beloved, that His path down here, which is set forth in the xxiii. Psalm, was one of doubts, rebellious thoughts and unhappiness? Do you not hear His voice in your daily life?—He says my sheep hear my voice. Are you following on then, step by step, as He calls, it may be over wastes and through clouds, but ever listening, and growing familiar with the sound of His words, and having such a companion—friend, all the way, in every trouble, little or great, and every quiet moment, as well as greater occasions? Oh,

what a path is the Christian's here below ! and, oh, that Satan should so easily delude our poor hearts that we should so much miss it and let him rob us of our secret delight, and give us complaints and vanity instead.

Are you in trouble ? Are your goods not increased enough ? Do your friends lightly esteem you ? Have you fears for to-morrow ? Are you in debt, or sick, or bereaved ? Is the thing come upon you which you feared ? Is the Lord's hand heavy upon you, so that though you might otherwise trust, yet now you must plan and scheme for yourself, hoping to trust when things are easier ? Oh ! beloved, for whom Christ died, for whom God gave His Son, by those very trials, sore as they may be, and the full measure of which God knows and has meted out to you, He is, in infinite love, opening a way for you of deepening joy, and Satan only would enlist your doubts and fears, to close it against you. To whom will you yield yourself, beloved of God ? which path will you walk in, that of faith or sight ? "While we look *not* at the things which are seen," says Paul. So could he say our light affliction, which is but for a moment. The language of faith is always brave language, because God is trusted, and things *seen* don't occupy the mind. What trouble is there that does not belong to things *seen* ? Can you name one ? What perplexity or distrust ? Here is just the struggle, and what a momentous one, that is going on in each of us ! Shall I look up or down, shall I give all attention to my troubles, or give heed to the Shepherd's voice ? Shall I trust God, who has saved me, or let Satan overwhelm me, and drive me into the path of an "*ordinary*" Christian, who knows he is saved, but has, alas ! lost communion, is without "*heart*" or energy ? There are trials in the path of faith ; but, beloved, the trial is the door to lessons of joy and peace in Christ. Don't

shrink back at the entrance ! He, Himself, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross. "Surely there is an end and their expectation shall not be cut off."

What were the things that men saw Paul passing through ?—They are recorded in 2 Cor. iv.—"Troubled on every side," etc. Would nature have chosen them, or gone through them ? Might he not have chosen an easier path ? How many have done so ? But what a choice ! Before Paul's eye opened up, not the fear of fresh trials in the future, oh no ! but the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, in the presence of Him who had chosen him. And is it not thus we make our calling and election sure—the heart gets familiar with the prospect of glory—and the aged warrior can say, "For the which cause I also suffer these things; nevertheless, I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

There is something in the words, "A religion that costs something." Have you committed all to Him against that day—made a whole-hearted venture for Christ, willing to wait that day for results, with no secret reserve of something for nature here in the meanwhile ? None can do it but those in whose heart radiates that hope of glory, who know the cost but are *sure* of the end through faith, which is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things *not seen*. What made the mariner venture fortune and life, and press on to discover a continent, but the full persuasion of its existence, and of the glory of its discovery.

The trials, then, beloved, are not to keep from, but to bring beside the still waters, in companionship with the Shepherd—they mark out the way to glory. If

trouble has taken away your happiness in the Lord, on what was your happiness based? What is it that you want, that the heart is not quiet? Ask yourself the question, can you set before the mind what it is? Well; would its attainment restore the soul? Ah, no! dear troubled soul, don't think it. It is Satan who would persuade you. Be sure the place of quiet and refreshment is not so found! but by a shorter, quicker path—yes, a shorter way—a broken heart—a broken heart just where you are, in the very circumstances! For *that* the Shepherd is waiting. His voice is calling. You need not arise nor go down the street, nor take counsel with a friend, nor with your own heart, which will not befriend you—but bow the heart down—the proud heart, before the word of God; that word, so full of perfect and sweet assurance for faith, against any day of evil, such an answer to every doubt, such a shield against the enemy's darts,—“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you.”

Then will the song be raised, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.” The lessons of trial, it may be bitter, have taught the soul this sweet confidence, and a personal relationship is recognised between it and the Lord. It is not “the Lord is *the* Shepherd,” as He is for all, but I have learned with delight that He is *my* Shepherd. It is no dry argument or reasoning, but a sweet assurance, made good in the depth of the heart. What a stay for the soul! The Lord—the Almighty—my care-taker. It is true that it is in weakness we have to learn this trust, for trusting is acknowledged weakness, and *that* we shrink from. The flesh can't do it, but the lesson learned, and the heart submissive and content to trust, oh! what a

source of strength has the child of God! What comparison between a human and divine power! How infinitely strong the weakest child of God, whose trust is God! Do we realize it? Inasmuch as we do, peace, ineffable peace, dwells within, which changing circumstances cannot destroy—cannot reach. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, *because he trusteth in thee.* In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

What comparison is there between trust in horses and chariots, and in the living God? Are your circumstances such as you cannot trust in, nor get comfort in? Then know that the Lord is hedging you in, that you may be forced to look up, since you cannot see over or through the difficulty. What if it hurts your pride and disappoints your expectations, and upsets your plans; the Lord has a better thing for you. Think, then, of the love that patiently deals with us! We distrust Him—and He does not rest until He has opened the eye to see His love. How wicked often is our unbelief, when we only deem ourselves tried sufferers.

It is a great thing to be persuaded of the Lord's love. What a portion for the heart. The Lord of heaven and earth loves me. This indeed fills the heart and gives quietness—every moment. "Who loved me and gave Himself for me." Because He loved me, He gave Himself for me. The springs are in Himself. I may forget myself then—it is no question of my deserts and faithfulness—and dwell upon his love alone. I don't say for the future: "I will be faithful, I am resolved to be steadfast," but the word is made sure to my heart, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want,"—the heart has gone out to *Him*, and freely utters its joy—sings gladly, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth beside the still waters. He re-

storeth my soul." But set yourself to accomplish your own will, or refuse God's dealing, and how is this blessedness far from you. Let us not seek then to walk by sight; let us not be wearied of faith—to faith all is bright, and the feet stand firm upon the solid everlasting basis of God's promise, and we take heed to the word, "Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." So long then as we are in this life, we remain so by "the will of God." Is there anything, then, we cannot submit to, seeing it is His will? His will, whose will Christ did when He came and died for us on the Cross—and only for a little while is the trouble—"For yet a little while and He that shall come, will come and will not tarry." "Now the just shall live by faith,"—a path which He Himself trod to the end, and in which he leads us by the hand; a sweet companionship. Beloved, He it is who leads, not we; and He it is who restores the soul. Not one bit of care belongs to you, but let the heart be free to enjoy His love, and speak His praise.

"My Shepherd is the Lamb,
The living Lord who died,
With all things good I ever am
By Him supplied.
He richly feeds my soul,
With blessings from above,
And leads me where the rivers roll,
Of endless love.

"My soul He doth restore,
Whene'er I go astray,
He makes my cup of joy run o'er,
From day to day.
His love so full, so free,
Anoints my head with oil,
Mercy and goodness follow me:
Fruit of His toil.

"When faith and hope shall cease,
 And love abide alone,
 Then shall I see Him face to face,
 And know as known.
 Still shall I lift my voice,
 His praise my song shall be,
 And I will in His love rejoice,
 Who died for me."

E. S. L.

"THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION."

IS IT PAPAL ROME?

Every point connected with the Lord's coming, becomes thereby, to those who have laid hold of that "blessed hope," invested with special interest. The question at the head of this paper is not one of least importance among these. Any one who is aware of what is going on at the present day, must know that the affirmative answer to this question lies at the very foundation of all the systems of prophetic interpretation, which assume to fix the time of the Lord's return. This is true, whether that time were reckoned to be (as it has been variously reckoned) 1843-4, 1866, or any year on to 1881 or later. And as long as Romanism is taken to be the fulfilment of this prophecy, the conclusion is inevitable: count the years, and the date of the Lord's coming will be found.

Hence this reckoning goes on, unhindered by the fact that year after year, devoutly believed in as the eventful and most blessed, long-expected time of the earth's great jubilee, and yet of the world's judgment, passes by and the reckoning has to be re-cast, and the date set still a little farther off. For over thirty years this has been going on, and the latest reconstruction of

the dates, that I have seen, very ingeniously makes these thirty years the "tarrying time" of the heavenly Bridegroom, applying thus the whole parable of the ten virgins to the so-called "Adventist" movement, which fixed His coming to be in 1843.

Few, it may be thought, could take "then shall the *kingdom of heaven* be likened"—with such a limitation. Still with many it has effect, and with many, too, very sincerely and earnestly looking and longing for their absent Lord. On the other hand, it need not be doubted how much sorrow and confusion is brought in among those who, cherishing these ardent hopes, and identifying them so with the truth of Scripture itself, have had in result to see them scattered to the winds, as time and again has been the case. How many, shaken in their faith, have gone back into the world they had turned their backs on,—how many have fallen into some of the many devices of the subtle enemy of human souls, the history of Adventism itself may show. Need is there then, even yet, to examine the fundamental point connected with all these calculations, with the disproof of which they necessarily fall to the ground.

It is a mistake that a recent writer has made, in speaking only of "*three* different views having been entertained by expositors" as to the "abomination of desolation," spoken of in Matthew and in Daniel. Of the three views mentioned, one refers its fulfilment to Antiochus Epiphanes, a century and a half before the Lord's birth. This makes it plain that, whatever *typical* significance the profanation of the holiest by Antiochus might have, it could not be the fulfilment of what the Lord predicts in Matthew as a still future thing.

The second view refers this fulfilment to what took place at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman army under Titus, A. D. 69. To this view, also, there

are many and grave objections, a few of which we may note.

(1). No abomination stood in the holy place at that time. The idolatrous ensigns of the Roman army, often referred to by commentators, certainly never did, but the temple was set on fire and burned to the ground.

(2). The abomination in the holy place was to be the sign for those in Judea to flee to the mountains, because *then* should be great tribulation. Surely a little too late as a sign, when Jerusalem was in the hands of the Romans, and the tribulation (a good while before begun) it was then impossible to escape from !

(3). The tribulation beginning with this abomination set up, was to be so severe that, except the days were shortened, no flesh would be saved ; and *immediately after* this there was to be the sign of the Son of man in heaven. This clearly makes the abomination an event of the last days, just before the Lord Jesus comes. Would it be believed, that in order to avoid this, some have made these "*shortened days*" of tribulation stretch over all the 1,800 years, from A.D. 69 till now? While on the other hand, the old view was that the coming of the Son of man Himself was the destruction of the city, and therefore, of course, a different thing from the same "coming," everywhere else in the same prophecy.

We may pass on to consider the third view, then, which the writer referred to thinks the only other worth notice, and the only and plainly right one. He (with many others) applies the prophecy of the "abomination of desolation" to Papal Rome.

But in giving this meaning to Matth. xxiv. everything is more strangely put out of place than by the second view, which he rejects.

(1). In the first place the "days," which in Daniel

are connected with the abomination of desolation, are taken as *years*, and the *shortened* days of tribulation are made to stretch from A.D. 538 to the Reformation. That is considered to be the end of the tribulation of the elect: strangely enough to one acquainted with history, for the majority of martyrdoms which Rome has given to the Church of God took place afterwards. Still, allowing that the Reformation has gradually wrought to bring about the toleration which in the present day prevails, there has certainly been no such sharply defined "end" to it as to render intelligible those words, "*Immediately after the tribulation of those days,*" as applying to any certain period.

(2). But there is another and more fatal objection still. For that it is not tribulation merely for the "elect" is plain, by the expression, "except those days should be shortened, there should *no flesh* be saved, but for the *elect's* sake those days shall be shortened." Here "no flesh" and the "elect" are distinguished from one another. But, surely, the Reformation did not save all flesh from perishing. Hence this interpretation will not do.

(3). Now, as to the real application of this passage, if my readers will turn to Dan. xii. 1, he will find *just at the "time of the end,"* and in connection with the deliverance of Daniel's people, Israel, "a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time,"—greater certainly, therefore, than any that preceded the Reformation.* By a very simple mark we know that the tribulation in Matth xxiv. cannot precede this, for of it the Lord assures us there would be none so great, *either before or after it.* Now, if this unpar-

* Comp. Jer. xxx. 7-9: "Alas, for that day is great, so that there is none like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it; . . . and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him; but they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king," &c.

alleled tribulation of Matthew preceded that in Daniel, it could not be true that the former would be "such as never should be after it." But the trouble in Daniel is at the "time of the end," and that in Matthew is also connected with "the end" (see xxiv. 14). They are both also trouble in which *Israel* is the chief sufferer; nor is there an atom of Scripture for spiritualizing "Israel" into the "Church of God." If it cannot be done in Dan. xii., nor in Jer. xxx., it cannot be done in Matth. xxiv., which coincides with these.

(4). This latter consideration is again a fatal objection to the "abomination of desolation" being Popery, or applying in any way to the professing Christian Church. What connection is there between the setting up of Popery, be it in 538 or any other time, with those in Judea fleeing to the mountains? so literal a flight and so plainly addressed to Jews, that it is added, "Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither *on the Sabbath day*." How plainly, too, do verses 23-26 refer to false Christs in Israel, rather than to a Pope at Rome, plainly anti-christian as the latter no doubt is. Those words, "Behold, he is in the desert," "Behold, he is in the secret chambers," how suited would they be to deceive a people expecting their Messiah to come in such a manner! how little suited to deceive those who know (even the least instructed of them) that Christ is to come from heaven visibly as He went up! These words could have no application, figurative or otherwise, to Papal Rome. Their reference is to a Jewish Anti-christ in Palestine in the last days, against whom the Lord Jesus warns anticipatively the Jewish converts of those days.*

If we turn to the book of Daniel, to which the Lord's

* After the Church of God has been removed to heaven; see some former papers: "Hope of the Morning Star," vol. i. p. 200; and "The Interval," p. 40 of present volume.

words direct us, this argument becomes still more clear. The 1260 days, the precise equivalent, and allowed to be so, of the "forty and two months," and "time, times and a half," elsewhere given, are very certainly half a week of years. This all allow; but on the principle of the "year-day" theory, they lengthen this period into as many years as there are days in it, or the three and a half years into 1260. The many ingenious arguments for this I do not propose to discuss. It will be simpler to give the one decisive argument against it. For these three and a half years of prophecy are just the last half of the last week of Daniel's "seventy" (ch. ix. 24-27). These are allowed by all to be weeks of years, and the whole seventy to be equal to 490 years. The last half week of *this* period would plainly be but three and a half literal years, and certainly could *not* be lengthened into 1260.

Now the last week of Daniel's 70, distinctly referring as it does to Israel and Jerusalem, and to the time immediately preceding their final blessing,—agreeing thus (as should be most evident) with Matth. xxiv.,—is expressly divided into two half-weeks. In the first of these the "coming prince" makes a covenant with the mass of the Jews. In the second, he makes the Jewish sacrifice and oblation to cease, and for the over-spreading of *abominations* there is a *desolator*. Let any one consider the time, place and circumstances, and say if this be not the equivalent of the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place with its accompanying short tribulation before the Lord comes.

But Daniel speaks elsewhere of an abomination of desolation. In ch. xi. 31, all are agreed that it refers to the before-mentioned profanation of the holiest by Antiochus, which was a foreshadowing of this in the last days. In ch. xii. 11, the reference is to what has

been before given, which certainly does not apply to the Pope, therefore, any more than the former. 1335 days from that, Daniel was to "stand in his lot," which, if it refer to his part in the first resurrection, can certainly not be reckoned from Antiochus.

I shall be told, of course, that there are other data whereby to interpret and apply these statements, and that the "little horn," springing up upon the fourth beast, or Roman empire, and into whose hands times and laws are given for "a time, and times, and the dividing of a time," is plainly the papacy.

I answer, if this interpretation clashes with the Lord's words in Matthew, as well as with the passages in Daniel, which speak of the "abomination that maketh desolate," then, however it be supported by great names, the interpretation cannot stand. And this is the real fact. On the other hand, once conceive of a prince to come, a Roman prince, fulfilling in the last days the prophecy of Dan. ix. 27, and the application of this prophecy of the "little horn," to such an one, is clear and every way consistent.

That the Romish church is described in Rev. xvii. as "the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth," is (by me, at least), undoubted. The writer I have referred to relies upon this as "straight Bible proof" that *she* is the "abomination." But that would no more prove the prophecy to be fulfilled in her than in any one of the abominations she was mother of. One of the daughters even might exceed the mother. And if the daughters are (as he says) "state-churches," *they* do not surely comprise *all* the "abominations of the earth." Hence it does not surely quite follow, that either the Roman church or any of her daughters must be that "abomination of desolation" which standing in the "holy place" was to be a sign for those in Judea

to "flee to the mountains." The rashest and wildest of "spiritualizing" can scarcely exceed such an application.

Let my Adventist brethren, or those who may read this, understand my object in these criticisms of what they may hold dear. God forbid that I should chill the expectation of the Lord's coming in one true heart that looks for Him. I would rather be a thousand times mistaken in the anticipation of my Lord, at such and such a date, than share in the indifference of others who look not for Him. Our true motto is given us by the Lord Himself: "Watch, therefore, *for ye know* not the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (Mat. xxv. 13). Yet we may, we *do* "see the day approaching" (Heb. x. 25). And while we do see many things which quicken our apprehension of its approach, we know nothing which of necessity must intervene before the Bridegroom come.

Let us cherish the hope, then, beloved; it is of God. May we indeed be "as men that wait for their Lord." But on the other hand, may He give us grace to reject all that is, alas, ministering to the incredulity and scepticism of those, who, when men's thoughts fail and come to nothing, are ready to believe that the sure Word of God itself is shaken.

A NOTE ON THE PARABLES OF THE TREASURE AND THE NET.

The initials at the close of the following communication will give it weight which nothing of mine can add to, for those who know the name they represent. While unable at present to see reason to recal the views already published (see vol. I. 293, 312), I believe it due to my readers, as well as to the writer himself, to give his remarks upon them. No doctrine is at all in question; and it can never be unprofitable to have to test what we hold by the Scriptures, which alone are infallible authority.—(Ed).

Will you allow me to call in question some details of your explanation of the parables of Matt. xiii? No

matter of faith is in question, or indeed of doctrine in any way, for I suppose on this we are quite agreed, but merely the interpretation of certain passages; but we lose by any mistake in this, and Scripture is too precious to allow of it, when in a form that acts on souls, for we are sanctified by the truth.

I suppose that the kingdom of heaven, in the six parables in which it is here spoken of, means the same thing. It is the subject of comparison. It may be, and is, viewed in various aspects, but the thing compared is the same. Your interpretation of the last makes of it an entirely new dispensation, when Christ has taken to Him His great power and is reigning and judging; or at least you mix these two together as one. I am not aware that, though "the heavens rule," the term "kingdom of heaven" is applied to the earthly dominion of the Son of Man. The Son of Man gathers out of His kingdom all things that offend and them that do iniquity, and the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

It has been long ago noticed that the first three of these parables present the outward apparent effects of the gospel in the world, the three last the thoughts of God in it; one, the result in man's responsibility; the other, the intention of God. We get the manifested effect on earth in the three first. The crop spoiled in the world, and to be left so till the harvest; the spread of a common doctrine in place of individual conversion; and that doctrine corrupt, a great power in the earth. Hence, in the *parable*, the tares are only gathered together in bundles on the earth, and the wheat gathered into the garner. The scene has ceased on earth, save that the tares are gathered in bundles for judgment. The wheat has disappeared there. Then God's actual judgment in power explains what now is known only spiritually.

Hence the explanation of symbolical prophecy and parables always goes further than the parable or prophecy, because these give the facts in their enigmatic form, which the spiritual mind alone can explain. In actual judgment all is manifest. In the *explanation*, the tares are cast into the fire, which they were not in the parable, and the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. The parable closes with the closing of the public state of things in the world,—the closing of the present state of things. The explanation, (not the parable), gives the judgment of God on the wicked, and the shining forth in glory of the saints. The Son of Man in judgment gathers out of His kingdom all things that offend.

In the last three parables we have the mind of the Lord in what took place; and first, it seems to me, in contrast with Judaism. Judaism, and Israel itself, was no hidden treasure, no mystery of the kingdom. The Lord gave up nothing to have it. They were His known people and inheritance in the world. He came to His own, though His own received Him not. When He comes again, He will take them to have the world, not the world to have them. In no case has the Lord, it seems to me, taken the world to have the Jews.

To come more directly to what drew my attention to these statements, or (to speak more exactly) to which my attention was drawn, the net cast into the sea. I cannot receive the thought, that it refers to the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, after the church is gone. As to the *facts* of that day, and that the preaching *will* take place, we are agreed. It is to the parable and its explanation that I refer. In the tares you have the position of the kingdom in the world. It is not the work of Christ and the Spirit for His own objects. Simply the facts and the result till the close of all here.

They are found as such in the world, and dealt with. In the parable of the net, the net is cast into the masses of population, the sea, and gathers out, the object being good fishes, though the net enclosed all ; but they are taken out of the sea, and brought to be handled by the fishermen who drew the net. In the parable of the tares there is no gathering a company into one net-full, with which the fishermen are occupied. The whole in the case of the net is their work. In the tares it is the Lord's, and Satan's, who spoils it in its effects on earth, though he cannot injure the wheat or hinder its being put into the garner. • It is the effect in the world till harvest, with the fact that the wheat is hid in the garner.

Further, in the gospel of the kingdom, when the church is gone, there is no gathering a net-full of good and bad. All is individual, and in the judgment all the world is brought together without exception ; not a net-full gathered and the separation made between those only who are in it, the mass of fishes being left in the sea. The kingdom of heaven, the subject of all these parables, never embraces all the world, but is a partial thing, save buying the field to have the treasure hidden in it, which makes the special object more distinct, but the operation of the Lord is partial. The field is the world, but the operation is sowing, and tares, and a treasure which is there ; but in the parable of the sheep and goats it is expressly all the Gentiles who are gathered, and no partial collective operation at all. Nor am I, indeed, aware that the throne of judgment set up on earth is ever called the kingdom. The parable of Matt. xxv. 31, seems to me to make a clear distinction.

Beside this, the comparison of the use made of the sea does not seem to me to seize the true use of these figures. In Isaiah, the wicked are like the troubled sea, casting up mire and dirt. This is a special action of the

surf, and the wicked are viewed in this character, and compared to it. That is another idea from the vast sea of nations, out of which a net-full of fishes is taken, good as well as bad. The sea and the fishes of the sea are distinct things, and it is a different thing to bring up all the nations—everybody—for judgment, and to gather of every kind, and leave the mass of the rest where they were. There is no bringing to shore in the judgment of the nations, before the judgment, but a gathering of all together. The fish are brought out of the sea into a net: that is the fishing work. I do not enter on the analogies of the days of creation as not necessary to my object; but I think in the remark, that this subject occupies 13 out of 22 chapters of Revelation, there is confusion between the beast and the Gentiles outside.

I have only one more remark to make, already alluded to as a principle. The *statement* of the parable is overlooked and confounded with the explanation. In the parable of the net, as in the tares and wheat, the explanation is, and is meant to be, different from the parable. In the parable, it is carefully stated that the persons who separate are the persons who have drawn the net: “which when *they* had drawn to shore, *they* sat down, and put the good into vessels.” They are occupied with the good, and simply reject the bad. In the explanation the angels, certainly not the fishermen, separate the wicked from among the just,—another kind of act,—and cast them into the fire. In the parable, we have the fishermen’s work carried out to the end of the fishermen’s part in it. The two previous parables give the thought and purpose of God in the kingdom of heaven; this, the part His servants take in it. In the tares, further, you have no action of men but of Christ, and Satan, and then judgment in this

world, providential and actual, the wheat being gone out of the way into the garner. The gathering into the net, and out of it into vessels, is a distinct part of the parabolic action, and done by the fishermen. In the parable of tares and wheat, the servants are forbidden to meddle with what is to be done, and the work of judgment, which is all, save the Lord's and Satan's, committed to others.

J. N. D.

EVERLASTING LOVE.

"Come and sit by my bed awhile, Jeanie ; there's just a little space
Betwixt light and dark, and the fire is low, and I cannot see your
face ;

But I like to feel I've hold of your hand, and to know I've got you
near,

For kind and good you've been, Jeanie, the time that I've been here.

"Kind and good you've been, Jeanie, when all was so dull and
strange ;

I was left to myself, and was not myself, and I seem'd too old to change,
And I couldn't get framed to the House's ways ; it was neither work
nor play ;

It wasn't at all like being at home, and wasn't like being away.

"And the days slipt on, and the years slipt on, and I felt in a kind
of a dream,

As I used to do in the noisy school sewing a long white seam ;
Sewing, sewing a long white seam the whole of the summer day,
When I'd like to have been in the open fields either at work or at
play.

"But now I feel as I used to feel in the summer evenings cool,
When we bairns would meet at the end of the street, or the edge of
the village pool ;

Or like when I've stood at the gate to wait for father home from the
town,

And held him tight by the hand, or held mother tight by the gown.

"And I feel to-night as I used to feel when I was a little lass,
When something seem'd alive in the leaves and something astir in
the grass ;

And all in the room seems warm and light, and I'm pleased to go or
to stay ;
But I've got a word in my heart, Jeanie, that's calling me away."

" Oh, what have you seen, Nannie, have you seen a blessed sight
Of angels coming to meet you ; have you heard them at dead of
night ?"

" Oh nothing, nothing like that, Jeanie, but what saith the Blessed
Word ?

' God speaketh once, yea, twice, unto man when never a voice is heard.'

" And He's given a word unto me, Jeanie—a word and a holy thought,
Of something I've never found upon earth, and something I've al-
ways sought ;

Of something I never thought that I'd find till I found it in heaven
above ;

It's Love He has given to me, Jeanie, His everlasting love !

" I'm old, Jeanie, poor and old, and I've had to work hard for my
bread ;

It's long since father and mother died, and ye know I was never wed ;
And the most of my life's been spent in Place, and in places where
I've been,

If I've heard a little talk about love, it's been work I've mostly
seen.

" And in summer the days were long and light, and in winter short
and cold,

Till at last I was good for work no more, for you see I'm getting old ;
And I knew there was nothing left for me but to come to the House,
and I cried,

But if I was not good for work, what was I good for beside ?

" And still when I went to chapel and church, I heard of love and
of love ;

It was something I hadn't met with on earth, and that hadn't come
down from above ;

It was something I'd heard of but never seen, that I'd wished for
and hadn't found,

But I liked to hear of love and of love, it had such a beautiful
sound.

" And I used to think, perhaps it was meant for richer people and
higher,

Like the little maid that sits at church beside her father the Squire,

For the angels that always live above, or for good folks after they die ;
But now it has come to me I know, it is nigh and is very nigh."

"Oh tell me, what have you seen, Nannie; have you seen a shining
light?

Have you heard the angels that harp and sing to their golden harps
at night?"

"Oh Jeanie, woman, I couldn't have thought of such things as these
if I'd tried ;

It was God Himself that spoke to me ; it was Him and none beside.

"It wasn't a voice that spoke in my ear, but a word that came to
my soul,

And it isn't a little love I've got in my heart when I've got the
whole ;

It is peace, it is joy, that has filled it up as a cup is filled to the brim ;
Just to know that Jesus died for me, and that I am one with Him.

"It's love, Jeanie, that's come to me as nigh as you're now, and
nigher ;

It's love that'll never change, Jeanie, it's love that'll never tire,
Though I'm old and I'm poor, and deaf, and dark, and the most of
folks that I see,

Be they ever so kind, I'd weary of them, or they'd soon grow weary
of me.

"And this isn't the House any more—it's Home ; and I'm pleased
to go or to stay,

I'm not a woman weary with work, or a little lass at play ;

I'm a child with its hand in its father's hand, its head on its mother's
breast ;

It's Christ, Jeanie, that's bid me come to Him, and that's given me
rest.

"And it isn't little God's given to me, though He kept it to the end,—
It's wealth that the richest cannot buy, that the poorest cannot
spend ;

And I needn't wait till I go to Heaven, for it's Heaven come down
from above ;

It's love, Jeanie, God's given to me, His everlasting love !"

"A COAL FROM THE ALTAR."

(Isa. vi.)

The lesson of this chapter, as we in our day may read it, is very full in its evangelic teaching. Its two broad features are these, that let man but take his true place before God, he shall surely find God's mercy for him and then, also, that this *mercy* is, and must be, also *righteousness*. As the apostle puts it concerning the gospel: "It is the power of God unto *salvation* to every one that believeth;" and then why? "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed." In God's good news to fallen man is His righteousness revealed!

The prophet, though he be that, God's man towards the people, in the presence of God must fall as low as any other. A Manasseh or a thief on the cross could do no more than utter that cry, "Woe is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips." And that is all the man of God can say. Like the Psalmist, "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord! for in Thy sight shall *no man living* be justified."

It is the first essential thing for blessing to be brought just to this point, to the utter giving up of all pretension to anything before God,—to the acceptance of His sentence of utter condemnation upon all the world;—all the world guilty before God. When we have reached that point we do not look round with self-complacency upon our neighbours, to reflect upon how much guiltier they are than we. That word "Lost," if we know what it means, swallows up all other distinctions. It refuses to know any distinction. "Undone!" "Lost!" The sinner of the city and Isaiah the prophet absolutely upon the same level as to that!

Have you come down to that dead level, reader? Death is, you know, the abolisher of all distinctions. Men are dead;—*all* dead;—dead in trespasses and sins

alike. Oh the hopelessness of that condition ! Can you educate or improve death ? Can human power do aught with death ? No, God alone can quicken. You must have "life." You must be born again. No works can come of you but "*dead* works," nothing that has not the odour of corruption in it, until you are born again, born of God, born of *His word*, which liveth and abideth for ever ; "and THIS is the word, which by the *gospel* is preached unto you." (1 Pet. i. 25).

Where and as you are then,—utterly powerless and helpless,—doing nothing, being nothing, promising nothing, you must receive the sweet and gladdening message of God's good news. You can be nothing, do nothing, till you have received it, for you are born again *by* it, and only so. You do not even begin to live to God until it does its work upon you.

And now, mark. No sooner is there the acknowledgment, "Woe is me, for I am undone ; because I am a man of unclean lips," than the mercy of God supplies the remedy. "Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar ; and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged."

How blessed, how worthy of God ! No long laborious process of cure is here ! No conditions are imposed, no work of self-help is enjoined. The provision of grace is simple, immediate, and immediately effectual then and there. On the sinner's part is solely the confession of ruin which sin has wrought. The declaration of iniquity taken away and of sin purged meets it at once on God's part. It is preached to the "undone" one. God's word gives him the assurance of what is done for him. He is not left to examine himself and to search out by his own feelings what is the mind of God towards him. He has to believe only and be at peace.

And so it ever is. Everywhere the gospel proclaim for all, because all are sinners, the good news of a salvation provided just for sinners. The call is to "repent and believe the gospel,"—that is, to take the place of sinners, and just drink in the mercy provided for sinners. To "repent" is to give up the pretence and effort at self-justification. To "believe the gospel," is just to believe in the justification which God has provided.

"Being justified *freely* by His grace." "Freely,"—what does that mean? "Whoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." What is taking it freely? Surely, just believing that it is mine, unconditionally mine, because I want it. That I am to assure myself that it is mine, if I "will," without any further question. This is the only "appropriation" Scripture knows of. The prophet confesses himself "undone." He is needy, anxious, convicted one. He is thereupon assured that *his* iniquity is taken away, *his* sin purged. That is what he is called on to appropriate. Not something that is not his own, but something that is freely his, just upon the ground of his being a poor, lost one, needing it.

Many, if I could ask, Do you need a salvation such as this? would have no difficulty at all in giving answer that they did. And further, if I asked them, *would* they have just such a salvation, if they could? would think it folly to ask such a question. With *them*, the question is of God's will, not of theirs. In Scripture the question is of man's will, not of God's. "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." "*I will*; be thou clean." "Who would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." Thus, if *we* will, there is no difficulty. For lost ones God has provided salvation, through the

work of Jesus. If *we* are that, and would have that salvation, it is ours. It is not for us to question, but to believe our blessedness.

But what a strange mode of purging unclean lips! "A live coal" from the altar. A coal red-hot with the fire which has just been consuming the victim. Yes, "*our God is a consuming fire.*" What a picture of that indignation and wrath against sin which is a necessity in the nature of a holy God! And though He pity, yea, love the sinner, *that* cannot change His holiness. Set me in presence then of this righteous and holy God, how can He show me favour? How can the *righteousness* of God clear or justify me? It seems as impossible as that a "live coal" should purge instead of blasting human lips.

But look again. It is a coal from off the altar: a *live* coal still, for God's wrath against sin never can die out, God's righteousness never can be aught but what it ever has been. But this live coal from the altar of sacrifice is nevertheless changed in its character so far: it does *not* blast, but purges. And looking not at the type but at the anti-type, the righteousness of God in the cross of Jesus Christ does *not* condemn but justifies the sinner. That cross surely is the altar of sacrifice where the live coal has done its work. It is where the righteousness of God has been declared, as nowhere else; but where it is declared, perfect as ever, living and active in its antagonism to sin, and yet not against the sinner but on his side. So that if I, confessing the sins which prove me one of those for whom He died, take my place thus before Himself, I find Him faithful and just to forgive me my sins, and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness.

God has title to tell out His love—title to show it *me*, —has earned this title at such cost to Himself, that I

cannot but believe He must love *much*, and love much to tell it out, and make souls happy in it. The gospel sent out everywhere, is His witness that it is so. I cannot honour Him more than by giving credit to it.

Will you, beloved reader, if yet you have not? Will *you* let in this tale of joy which is seeking admittance to your heart at this moment? Is it too good to be believed? Too good for a tale from God Himself? Does it give Him more glory than He deserves? Only take your place with the prophet in this chapter; God's testimony to the work of Christ is this: That it avails for *you*; for you, poor undone one, so glad to have this salvation if you only might, for *you* it avails: "Your iniquity is taken away and your sin purged." Believe it and rejoice.

"HOW IS IT THAT YE HAVE NO FAITH?"

A wonderful place is assigned to faith in Scripture. By it are we justified; by it sanctified; the heart purified, joy and peace fill it;—we live by faith, walk by faith, and all true and Christian work is that which is "the work of faith." Indeed, Christ being all to us as believers, and we "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ," faith is the hand that lays hold of and actually appropriates these blessings. How immensely important then for us that it should be in proper exercise and in vigour as it ought to be.

But, as our Lord's words to His disciples intimate, and as Scripture assures us from one end of it to the other, faith is that, nevertheless, in which the people of God are most constantly falling short, and this is indeed at the bottom of all other falling short. The whole generation of Israel, which had had God's mighty works in Egypt and the wilderness before their eyes, were shut

out of Canaan, save only two persons, because of their unbelief. And it was that with which, more than any other thing, the Lord upbraided those who had, still more than those brought out of Egypt, the visible glory of God manifested to them. "O ye of little faith." "O fools and slow of heart to believe." "How is it that ye have no faith?" And we have scarcely need to refer to Scripture in a matter which is of daily experience with us. Faith, which in view of all that God has done and manifested in our behalf, ought to be the simplest possible response of the heart to Him, is in fact what we are so grossly and sadly deficient in, as to be the open shame of Christians everywhere, and the conscious lamentation of every one who has any right thought Godward.

It is surely, then, a question that we may rightly take from our Lord's lips, and put seriously to ourselves, "How is it that ye have no faith?" There is reason for the question, and an answer to be found by those that care to look for it. Of one thing we may, to begin with, be quite sure, it is no arbitrary appointment of the Almighty, no will of Him whom we call "Father," that it should be so. That the Lord's question, above all implies, that the responsibility is ours, for the little we have of it. It is we that are in fault, and only we.

Some, indeed, so speak of faith being the gift of God as apparently to deny all responsibility of their own in the matter. But to those to whom I am now referring, God *has* given faith. The question is, has He affixed a limit to the faith which He has given? Has He given to us a "*measure* of faith" which we cannot exceed? It is quite true the words are from Scripture, but in the passages quoted, it is not that faith which is the common portion of believers which is in question, but the special gift of faith for that particular "office" which belongs to us individually as members of the body of Christ (see

the next verses, Rom. xii., 4, 5). In this respect it is quite true that we have our measure, and it is well to remember it too. I do not expect to have faith to preach at a street corner, if God have not given me the gift for the preaching itself. It is faith for my own line of things I want, not for somebody else's line. The thing is, ought I not to have that? ought I not to have that which will carry me on in the path wherein He leads me, invariably superior to all the circumstances, trials and difficulties of the way? Surely it is clear I ought; and if I ought, why have I not?

When the disciples felt that unbelief of theirs, and brought it to the Lord, saying, "Lord, increase our faith," His answer was a rebuke. Not surely that it is wrong to confess our failure to Him and seek His help against it. So far all is right. But the thing is, that there are *causes* of unbelief to be judged,—roots to be searched for, from which if undetected the same fruit will be ever found. And how many of us find it so? We lament about it but we go on with it. We confess it as sin, but it comes up at every turn.

The exhortation of the apostle is, "Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us." We are not called then to lament over it, but to lay it aside. You may say "There is the difficulty;" but the apostle's words imply most surely that it can be done.

The word of God always gives a moral reason for unbelief. The truth *ought* to have reception from every one. "If I speak the *truth*," says the Lord Jesus, "why do ye not believe me?" Not the sanction of the synagogue was needed, nor the consent of the Rabbies. Not (in our day) the voice of the Church, nor a catena of the fathers. The truth speaks to the *true*: "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." And men

did not believe, yea, could not believe,—why? "How can ye believe," asks the same authoritative speaker, "who receive honor one of another, but seek not the honor that cometh from God only?"

That was the secret of the rejection of the message in the day of Him who came unto His own and His own received Him not. This is the secret still, why in the hearts of those who have received Him, His word has even yet so little power. Want of truth of heart to Him, is the sad reality of what we have to confess, when we speak of our little faith. *We may lay it aside, if we will*, this unbelief of ours. You say in astonishment perhaps, Would we not gladly if we could? And I must answer again, We could readily if we would. The trouble is, we find it costs something. Which of us does *not* "receive honour from one another?" Which of us does seek, as the undivided purpose of his heart, "the honour that cometh from God only?" How can we believe unless it is so?

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." All true, indeed. And how little *real* occupation with the word there is, everywhere. How little the mouth speaks of it as that of which the heart is full. Christians themselves prize almost anything more. They have *prayer* meetings, and they do well. They do not ordinarily meet to read the Word together. They have made the interpretation of it a matter belonging to an official class, whose ministrations too they value more according to their powers of oratory than the ability to give to them the unadulterated bread of life. What else can there be but little faith, where that which begets faith is so little accounted of?

But there is a deeper meaning in all this than appears at first sight, for it is greatly disguised often by an apparent zeal for God and a multitude of good works.

Under all this, many, if they will honestly search their hearts, will find that there can be covered up a reserve of very much of that "gain to *me*" which the zealous apostle counted to be "loss." Nay, the bustle of much work may be indeed the very effort to pacify the conscience for the want of real "*self-surrender*" to the claim of Christ upon the soul.

Lot lived as a "righteous man" in Sodom. The manners of the place distressed him. "In seeing and hearing he vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their ungodly deeds." It was not open evil that seduced him; it was the verdure of "well-watered plains" for his cattle, God's natural blessings, innocent enough to use, had they not been his aim, but which called him from the simple path of faith to one of sight and sense and self-enjoyment. In result it was the shipwreck of all true joy, and the event shows, what is more solemn yet, how bankrupt he had become in faith itself. Inability to trust God marks him, whether pleading for Zoar, because it was a "little city," and God might perchance save a *little* city, and that not for the sake of souls in it, but for his own miserable sake who dare not flee to the mountains as God bade him, lest some evil take him and he die,—or fleeing again from Zoar, because even so he dare not trust the refuge of his own asking. All this reads us a lesson that it is in God's path—in the path of His will for us, that faith is found for the path.

And look once more at the Apostle's words: "Laying aside every *weight*, and the sin which doth so easily beset us." Is there not divine wisdom in that connection, and the *order* of that connection, between "*weight*" and "*sin*"? It is a racer stripping himself for the course that he is speaking of. It is only as one *is that*—the goal before him, and his whole soul bent

on reaching it—he can understand even what a “weight” is. For that, we must realize the apostle’s “this one thing I do ; forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” This intentness, this pursuit of “one thing” is what we want, and Christ Himself in glory the attractive object, the goal of the race. It is then that all that makes not toward that is worse than profitless : it is a drag, a *weight*. Not frittered away upon a hundred other things, the undivided energy of the soul is concentrated on the attainment of its object ; and it is easy to lay aside a “weight,” which is felt as such, and the only possible way of laying aside also the “sin which doth so easily beset us.”

Christian ! fellow-heir of that incorruptible inheritance,—have you even a thought to “get on in the world” to which the cross of Christ has crucified you ? Do you want its honours, pleasures, emoluments ? And do you yet complain that faith cannot lay hold of and enjoy her own ? To be sure it will be so. And many a one may detect by this simple test of the capacity he has to lay hold of and enjoy his proper portion, how far he is allowing the world to become an object to him. All sorts of worlds there are. The babe may be such to its mother, as well as his money to the miser. Christ alone *satisfies* ; and He has declared that whosoever cometh to Him shall *never* hunger. If we do hunger then, it is because we are “coming to” other things than just Himself.

“My people have committed two evils : they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water, and have hewn out for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, which can hold no water.”

The soul set right with God in this, His word be-

comes the necessary and blessed occupation of the heart and mind, and there is honest and unsparing judgment of whatsoever it condemns. Occupied with Christ, faith will have its proper sphere and exercise. It will not be "My leanness, my leanness" any longer, but "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

"TIMES AND SEASONS."

"It is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father has put in His own power." (Acts, i., 7.)

But there *are* times and dates in Scripture, and that in evident relation to the Lord's coming again. They are surely for us to know therefore, are they not? The dates in Daniel, for instance, mean something, and are precise enough. And if Daniel was to rest and stand in his lot at the end of 1,335 days from the setting up of the abomination of desolation, does not that imply that the resurrection will at least have taken place by then? and have we not a date by which to reckon it?

This seems to many convincing, and therefore I take it up to examine it a little.

And first, as to the reckoning attempted. The universal practice is to reckon the "days" spoken of as "years," as we are told prophetic style justifies. Now it is true that in Ezekiel, in a certain symbolical action of the prophet, a day is expressly given for a year (ch., iv., 6.) This may show certainly that in a symbolic vision a day might be given as a year. In point of fact it is not a symbolic prophecy, but a very literal one in which these days first occur. The eleventh chapter of Daniel, of which the 12th is a continuation, is admitted

on all hands to be that, as it is indeed apparent to the most unlettered reader. But beside this, the 1260 days, or three years and a half, wherever met with in prophecy are the simple equivalent of the last half week of the well-known prophecy of the 70 weeks, the great final crisis in Israel's history, ended by the coming of the Lord Himself. It will be worth while to shew this as fully as we have space for here.

The 70 weeks are 490 years, as no one will, I suppose, dispute. They form a determined time upon Judah and Jerusalem, at the end of which their full blessing comes in. Yet the time began with the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem. If then they are only 490 years, begun over 2,300 years ago and not yet ended, the conclusion is plain that they cannot be all counted *in succession*. A long gap of over 1800 years must occur somewhere in their course.

Accordingly we find a break. Sixty-nine weeks reach to Messiah the Prince; these have already then gone by. After this Messiah is cut off, the city destroyed, and the sanctuary; then "to the end of the war"—God's controversy with Israel—a time quite unreckoned.

The last week of the prophecy, when it arrives, is filled up with the doings of one, of whom prophecy is full, a future prince of the people who have already destroyed the city and the sanctuary,—a *Roman* prince. He makes a covenant with "the many" of the Jewish people, for "one week." In the midst of it he causes the sacrifice and oblation (in Jerusalem, of course) to cease, and because of abominations there is a desolator.

Thus we have an abomination of desolation in Jerusalem 1,260 days or three and a half years before the time of Israel's blessing comes. Matth. xxiv., and 2 Thess., ii., come in here, and give the scene distinctly, and abundant confirmation to this view of Daniel.

In Dan. vii., the times and laws (Israel's, I have no doubt, but do not insist upon it here) are given into the hands of the "little horn" of the fourth (or Roman) beast, "for a time, times, and the dividing of a time," the same period of three and a half years. It has been customary here, no doubt, and has got to be considered distinctively the Protestant interpretation, to explain this of the Pope. What analogy there may be I do not now enquire. Let it be noticed that the coming of the Son of man follows the conclusion of this period, just as in Dan. ix., explained by Matth. xxiv. The horn is the Roman prince on either view, as is plain from the prophecy itself. But the papacy did not (spite of the commentators) spring up as an eleventh horn among the horns already existing on the beast. In order to show this, people have to reckon in the hordes of barbarian nations which were over-running the empire and destroying it, as horns or powers of the empire. They were not its powers but its weakness. It was these nations that destroyed the empire, and brought about that state which (to use the expression in Revelation for it) "the beast was not." Accordingly the empire has actually disappeared, and its dismembered provinces form a large part of the present kingdoms of Europe. It is strange to make the Roman empire existent through these many years past, contrary to fact as well as to the precise testimony of Scripture: The beast is not. Rev., xvi distinctly gives us also its rise again: "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 shall be present." It is as so risen again, that the beast carries the woman Babylon the Great. And it is then that the t

* Which the editors read instead of, "and yet is."

horns are upon the beast. Little could it be said of Goths and Huns and Vandals, those ravagers of the empire, "*these have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.*" It is when the united empire rises up, as it shall yet, energized, alas, by Satan, that this will be. But not then will the horns give their power to the Pope. "They shall hate the whore, and make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire; for God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom to the beast." So both horns and beast (not either of them the Pope then surely) hate the harlot church and execute God's judgment on her. Yet, alas, they "make war with the Lamb," no less.

Thus then I must conclude, spite of similitude and analogy in some respects, that the Papacy is not the "little horn" of Dan. vii. Hence there is no need and no ground for turning the 1260 days into years to make them fit with this interpretation. With the one I have given, which refers it to "the prince that shall come" of Dan. ix., the literal days are in perfect and absolute harmony.

In Revelation the 1260 days are found, variously expressed, in several connections; but they all harmonize also very simply. In ch. xi., 2, the Gentiles tread under foot the holy city (Jerusalem) forty and two months. This is the *desolation* because of the *abomination*. But in the very same city, for the very same time, God maintains a witness to Himself. In ch. xii. the woman (the Jewish people*) flees into the wilderness 1260 days, and is nourished there "a time, times, and half a time." This is the time of tribulation of Matth.

* Many commentators make the woman here the Church, but the "man-child" born of her is plainly Christ, and Christ was born of the Jews clearly, not of the Church.

xxiv. Finally, the beast (ch. xiii.) is given power to practise * forty and two months. All this is manifestly the same period in whatever various aspects seen.

Thus there is no warrant, but the opposite, for making the 1260 days and the periods therewith connected into as many years. They apply really to a time when the Church is gone from the earth, and the present gospel testimony closed forever. As long as that goes on, the Jews are "enemies" as concerning it (Rom. xi. 28). And it is not till the last note of the gospel is sounded, the last member added to the Church, Christ's body, and they have been caught up to meet the Lord in the air, that this broken yet determined time of God's special dealing with Israel will be resumed. This is the period spoken of in Matth. xiii. and xxiv., as "the end of the *age*" (not "world"). It is a time of very special importance in the ways of God, and which prophecy presents at large. The Jews, not Christians, have to do with it. Hence it is the Lord says, in the words which stand at the head of this paper, when the disciples after his resurrection enquired, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?" "it is not for *you* to know the times and the seasons." Daniel's prophecy had long been given. The dates we have been looking at were then as now. He does not say, "the time is not come *yet* for you to know," but "it is not for you." The apostle Paul again, to men whom he commends because waiting for God's Son from heaven, says, "Concerning the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you." No New Testament writer touches the question of dates or times at all, save only John, and he, after "what the Spirit saith unto *the churches*" has come to an end, and after he has shown us the saints in heaven worshipping the Lamb before the throne of God.

* Not "continue" (verse 5).

From thenceforth there is no address to the Church, and no mention of the Church on earth, till the closing words.

On the other hand, in the Old Testament, the times of the Church of God on earth are but a blank in the field of prophecy. Dan. ix., has shown us how they are passed over there. In the seventh chapter it is this explains the omission of the Papacy and of the ages of non-existence of the Roman empire even, which in John appear. And still more remarkably (and a case often noticed) in the prophecy quoted by our Lord from Isaiah in the synagogue of Galilee, a comma only divides "the acceptable year of the Lord," which he was there to proclaim, from "the day of vengeance of our God," which will not be until He comes again. All the present time between His first coming and His second is a mere unnoticed gap.

There is Divine wisdom as well as Divine harmony in all this. We are to be looking *up*, not around. Poor work the study of a record of dates and figures, and to be occupying souls with things which I cannot resist the conviction that God has designedly permitted to get entangled and perplexed. Jesus is coming. Surely, none can be too brightly expectant of it. We know enough, too, to quicken expectation, but we "know not when the time is," and we "*watch*, because" we know not when.

"SUFFER ME TO COME TO THEE UPON THE WATERS."

(MATTHEW XIV. 22-36).

There is a perfect order in the development of truth in Matthew's Gospel, which needs to be laid hold of in order to the proper understanding of the separate details.

Thus it will be found that from the 3rd to the 12th chapters, it is the Lord's presentation to Israel according to prophecy and promise, that is before us. Being rejected so, the 13th chapter opens a new scene, the Son of man, disappointed of fruit in Israel, sowing the seed of His gospel in the open "field" of "the world." Here He does indeed get fruit, but amongst many opposing influences. His kingdom is set up in the midst of the kingdoms of men, and not only is there conflict as the result between it and the outside world,—but the prince of this world scatters *his own* seed inside the enclosure of the kingdom, and tares and wheat spring up together to the harvest.

The King too is absent, and the kingdom, entrusted to the care of men, falls into an anomalous condition. The outward history of this is given us in the second, third and fourth parables of the 13th chapter. In the last three, the mind and purpose of God, who after all will not be defeated in that for which He works. In the chapters that follow, from the 14th to the 20th, we have the moral or spiritual characteristics of this kingdom, not set up *in power*, as it will be when the Lord comes, but subsisting in *patience* during the meantime of His absence,—“the kingdom and patience of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rev. i. 9).

In this time of trial the heirs of glory are being trained and exercised in the school of suffering, for it is “if we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him.” The path of a rejected, sorrowing, crucified Master becomes the path of His disciples. Thus the Lord Himself enunciates the principles of discipleship: “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.” (Ch. xvi. 24, 25).

Looked at in this connection, it will not be strange to find in the incidents in our Lord's life recorded in this 14th chapter, a shadow of that path of disciples during their Lord's absence till His coming again. The closer and more attentively we look, the more we shall be convinced that it is even so.

He had just fed the multitude in Israel, whom yet, not recognizing His true glory nor their own need, He had to send away from Him. It was the picture of all the outward result among "His own" of that patient ministry of love toward them. His disciples, too, He constrains to get into a ship, and so separates them from the multitude, while they are parted from Him also for a while. "And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up into a mountain apart to pray." This is His present occupation, the gracious Intercessor and Advocate of His people on high.

They, meanwhile, are finding out what it is to be without Him in adverse circumstances: "And when the evening was come He was there alone, but the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves, for the wind was contrary."

And so it ever must be with us till He come. Night-time, because He is absent. Wind and waves,—the "course of this world," under the motive power of the "prince of the powers of the air,"—*against*, and only against, all that is of Christ.

Have you found it so, dear Christian reader? It is a good sign for you, if it be so. If persecuted for righteousness' sake—still more if for His name sake,—blessed are ye. On the other hand, woe unto those who can swim easily with the stream of even the so-called *religious* world,—the self-loving, pleasure-loving generation of these last-day, "perilous times," who, "having a form of godliness," yet "deny the power thereof," and as to whom the apostle exhorts, "from such turn away."

Or do you want to be yet convinced that these times are indeed upon us? Then you have nothing to do but to put forth Christ before you wherever you go, to make His glory your real aim, and His word your perfect and only guide and test of everything. You will soon find whether or not "the wind is contrary," and whether or not the stream is strong and adverse. You will soon find that it is not Christ's word that really *governs* the mass of even Christian men. You will find against you the current of tradition, of custom, of expediency. You will find the old axiom that "the end justifies the means," purged a little of its grossness, and with some limit set to it, no doubt,—much applauded still in practice, however abhorred in theory. You will find hypocrisy sanctified by office, and hoary-headed error revered for its age. You will find toleration for everything except the truth, and charity for all save those who follow it.

This may seem hard to believe,—useless to utter. The experiment alone can make it known. I urge it upon every soul that would be true to Christ, to examine and see why it is if he has no apprehension of it. The cross is as real a thing in the so-called Christian as in a heathen land; as real a thing to-day as in the apostle's days. "And whosoever," saith the Lord, "doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, *cannot* be My disciple."

But the strange thing in the picture before us is now to come. "And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And *when* the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were *troubled*, saying, It is a spirit, and they cried out for fear."

It was the One for whom they waited, whose absence was their felt loss, whose coming again yet so strangely troubled them. It has been so, alas, in the history of the Lord's people left upon the earth to wait and watch

for Him. The sweet and blessed hope of the Lord's coming has become an object of fear and of trouble to those to whom it should have been nothing but pure, unmingled joy. Christians have been expecting their judgment rather than their perfected salvation at His coming again. And without settled peace in their souls, basing their hope upon their own evidences of *saintship*, rather than simply upon a work wrought out for *sinners*, not knowing but they might deceive themselves, moreover, as to those very evidences, and expecting the day of judgment as that which was to infallibly determine who was really Christ's and who was not,—they have made Him a "spirit," a spectre, rather than a man, the true and blessed "*Man*, (Christ Jesus);"—a Judge rather than a most gracious Saviour. Thus His coming, seen by many of His own as nigh, has been matter to too many of distress and fear.

But has not His own voice too been heard? and heard as ever with its old, old message of peace and good will; calling back the hearts of His people to the recognition of Himself, as here in the narrative before us "straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer, it is I; be not afraid." Beautiful, that "straightway." Not a ruffle would He have on the soul of one little one that has believed in Him. Instantly upon the cry of alarm come His own tender words of assurance, whose tenderness is their rebuke. How should we not trust *Him* altogether? What reason for one single doubt, when it is Himself *alone* we have to trust? Can the blood shed for sinners fail? Is there one sinner not made welcome to it? Are not *all* blessed who put their trust in Him? Assuredly; and so we rest. "Come unto me, all that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you *rest*."

And those who are familiar with the spiritual history

of the last half century, can scarcely but be aware, that indeed along with that cry of His coming raised so much within that time, there has been going forth more simply and intelligibly than for many preceding years, the proclamation of a peace *made*, and not *to make*; to be believed only, and so received into the heart, and rejoiced in. Assurance of salvation, has been made known, not as the laborious attainment of years of pious struggling in darkness, but as that which is the proper and necessary result of faith in God's blessed Gospel. And with that the Lord Himself has been known and enjoyed and become the occupation of the soul, in place of the dreary self-occupation which is still by many considered to be actual duty.

The Lord's voice, may we not say, has been indeed making itself heard, and His words have been, as in the narrative before us, "Be of good cheer; it is I, be not afraid."

That voice utters itself in Peter's soul as a call to a new path. "Lord," he answers, "if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water." It is faith occupied with the coming Christ, that speaks in him; faith which prizes Himself beyond the company of disciples, and can afford to give up the mere human aids for keeping one above the waters; faith which can count upon Him alone, and walk even upon the water, "*to go to Jesus.*" Such, it is granted, is what the Church was called to at the beginning; actually it has been ever individual faith that has been needed for, and has done it. And from the very beginning almost, when the apostle could say of Christians, "*All seek their own,*" it has been characteristic of a remnant only,—a remnant at first *morally*, and, as Christian profession sank more to the level of the surrounding world, then more outwardly also, separated from the mass of disciples. But this separation was,

and is, let us remember, no mere negative thing. It is not merely *from* this or that. No, it is the coming of the heart to Jesus. It is not independency of the companionship of disciples, nor pride of opinion, nor love of singularity ; it is not that brethren are not loved and valued, but that Christ is more so. It is not even despising human aids, as if sufficient to oneself. No, it is only and very simply what Peter's words express : "Lord, if it be Thou, suffer me to *come to Thee* upon the water."

Blessed, most blessed, in whatever path of isolation and reproach, those with whom this is the language of the heart ! Isolation they will find ; reproach, they will have. Josephs, arrogant dreamers, condemners of their brethren, they will be accounted. Be it so : "at the end, the vision shall speak and shall not lie." They may be content to leave it to "the end."

But let us notice, how this sight of the coming Lord practically acts upon the soul to separate it from things around. When Lamech named his son "Noah," he said "This same shall *comfort us*"—for "Noah" means "comfort,"—"concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the earth which the Lord has cursed." It was true prophecy in all but one respect. The comfort was to come,—did come ; true, but all the generation to whom he spoke *were cut off by the flood which preceded the blessing.*

There are many Lamechs now : Christian men who make pious prophecies of blessing which is really yet to come, but no figure of a coming Lord is in their future in any practical way. They prophesy of winds ceasing, and clouds breaking, and waters calming at the coming break of day. They forget what is here, that it was when *Jesus* had come unto the ship, the wind ceased. How much connects itself with that coming of Jesus for

those to whom it has become a practical reality. For though it be for salvation to His own, for a guilty world it means *judgment*, and *judgment* equally for the "House of God" wherein He has so long been dwelling, yea, judgment which must "begin" there!

Is the Church fallen? is it to be judged and set aside, as the vessel of testimony upon earth? is the "last time" known by the many Antichrists? and the "last days" by a perilous form of godliness without the power? How keenly will you and I begin to look around us, if we gather conviction that it is even so! and if for us there abides still the joy that He who is yet amid all our unfaithfulness the true and faithful One, is coming to take us out of all the confusion and evil to Himself where He is, that surely is what gives force and power to the desire to be apart from all that, down to the least jot or tittle, of which His word, supreme judge and arbiter of all tradition, custom, expediency, may stamp as in His eyes evil.

"Suffer me to come to Thee,"—yes, to Thee, to Thee, Lord Jesus; into, nearer, dearer, closer intimacy with Thyself! What shall we count a sacrifice, whereby we may enjoy more of Thyself, who for eternity shall be all our joy? and though the path be upon the water, faith knows it is not the *circumstances* of a path that make it easy, but the presence and power of Him whom all circumstances obey.

Peter, alas, forgot this; when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, "Lord, save me." Strange that he who had proved Divine power in its ability to sustain him on the water, should doubt its being as equal to a rough sea as a smooth. In the path of faith it is Divine power or nothing; and if it be divine, with what difficulties will you measure it! Thus the path of faith is always the easiest path, yet never

when looked at in itself, but only when Christ is before the eye. "My grace is sufficient for thee ;—my strength is made perfect in weakness."

Certain it is, however, the path of faith tries us and proves our impotence as no other does. *They in the vessel sank not with Peter* ; but then they were not sustained like Peter either. If he could not boast much about his faith or walk, yet he attained his object. Peter's Lord was with Peter. His outstretched hand laid hold upon His fainting disciple. His voice rebuked not his *faith*, but his *doubt*. The others might have rebuked his *faith* rather. They might have said, why did you seek to walk in a path for which you were incompetent ? Many alas, are ready to take up such failure now, and to try and prove by it, that the path is not one possible to walk in. *They* had not so failed as he. But Peter might have said, Well, I have proved my incompetency,—all true ; but I have proved my Saviour too ; I am glad to have done the one for the joy of the other.

"And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased." Blessed ceasing of all trouble when the Lord rejoins His own ! "And they that were in the ship came and worshipped Him, saying, Of a truth Thou art the Son of God." Let us end there, where all shall indeed end. How we shall praise, when with Himself at last beyond the storms, Him whom in the meantime all storms and winds own and glorify ! He *is* coming ; and His reward is with Him to give every man according as His work shall be. Then when worship shall be our work for ever, we shall find that only to have been "work" here which *was* "worship"—done in the deep delight of what He is, and what He ever shall be, who abides to our eternal joy "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

THE WAY OF THE LOVE OF JESUS.

The more perfect *love* is, the more entirely and without distraction will it regard its object. And this will give it, at times, a very different bearing; because its way will be determined by the condition and need of its object. Its way, therefore, at times, may appear harsh and decisive—as when the Lord rebuked Peter (Matt. xvi.); as when He reproached the two disciples (Luke xxiv). But this is only because love is perfect, and, therefore, is undistractedly considering its object. Imperfect love will show itself otherwise; more attractively at times; but far, far intrinsically less true. Because imperfect love will not, in this way, unmixedly consider its object, but itself. It will be set upon *enjoying* its object, rather more than on *serving* it. And this will give it a more tender, and considerate bearing, at times, and get for itself more credit, while perfect love has all the while forgotten itself and its enjoyments, and ordered its course and its actings in more undistracted concern and desire to have another blest and profited.

Where do we see this perfect love, but in Jesus—in God? A mother has it not, but will, at times, enjoy her child. But Jesus had it. He considered His disciples, when he was with them, and ordered his way with them to their profit, and not to His own gratification.

He will gratify himself with them in that coming age—when He need no longer care for them as in a place of instruction and discipline. He will have no occasion then, in the exercise of perfect love, to consider only their profit, for their profit will have been brought to its accomplishment, in that place of their Lord's delight in them.

ANSWERS TO SPECIAL QUESTIONS.

(7.) Will you explain how it is the promises are spoken of in Heb. vi. 12, 15, as having been *received*, and in Heb. xi. 13, 39, as *not* having been received?

Ans.—In ch. vi. 12, the promises are not spoken of as received; they are our inheritance, into the possession of which we are not yet come; and faith and patience are needed to bring us in. In verse 15, the promise that Abraham obtained was the multiplication of his seed, which, after his patient endurance, he did see in its commencing fulfilment. In Heb. xi. the promises are of the “better resurrection” and the “heavenly country.” The latter the patriarchs had not received on earth; the former both they and we wait for.

(8.) What is meant by a “heart sprinkled from an evil conscience,” and a “body washed with pure water”? (Heb. x. 22.)

Ans.—The expressions refer to the consecration of the priests, Lev. viii. The former speaks of the effect upon the conscience of the knowledge of atonement by the blood of Jesus. It sets the question of sin at rest for ever, and the worshipper once purged has no more conscience of sins (Heb. x. 2). Conscience of sins is a bad or “evil conscience,” and thus Peter speaks of “a *good* conscience by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. iii. 21), because that resurrection shows the acceptance of the atonement made: “He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.”

The body washed with pure water refers to the cleansing power of the Word of God applied to the whole man: “the washing of water by the Word” (Eph. v. 26).

(9). What is meant by "through the veil, that is to say, His flesh"? how is His flesh the veil, and why is it called "a new and *living* way"? (Heb. x. 20).

Ans.—The veil of the holiest hid behind it the glory of God, as the flesh of Jesus veiled His deity. At the cross where the "Man, Christ Jesus" died, "the veil of the temple was rent in the midst;" a way was opened by which all might behold and enjoy the glory of God, otherwise inaccessible. Therefore it was a "*new* way;" and a "*living*" one, because it is Himself, a person risen from the dead, by whom we draw nigh to God. It is not a work done merely, which gives us access, but the living Person who has done the work.

(10). Can it be said we occupy the same place and relationship as the Son did when on earth? Is it true that through the Lord's intercession, founded on His having glorified God, (John xvii.), He obtains for His own which are in the world, the same place as Himself in the Father's love as sons, and also relatively to the world? Or does, "As He *is*, so are we in this world," show that we only get His place in resurrection?

Ans.—As in Christ before God, we are of course in Him as risen from the dead and gone into the presence of God. It is in this sense that "as He *is*, so are we in this world" is used. It is what gives boldness in the day of judgment. It does not mean that our relationship to the world is His, which would need a very different expression, but that even now while we are in the world, we are in God's sight as His beloved Son. It is our perfect and unchanging acceptance in the Beloved which is the point, for it is this which gives us boldness up to the day of judgment itself, and the "in the world" marks this as a present thing.

The "place in the Father's love" which Christ had

was no different, when He was here on earth, from what it is now in glory. "I have kept My Father's commandment, and *abide* in His love." He abode in it all through and still abides in it, that is all. It could not be more perfect love now than at the beginning.

The *place* He has got now as man before God is the fruit of His accomplished work, and it is this that is ours. It is different, of course, from what He had as man of sorrows upon earth, or of sin-bearer on the Cross. But this raises no question of change in the Father's love to Him, which was one all through.

Then, again, His place relatively to the world has undergone no change. He is gone out of it up to heaven, but when in it He was in character a heavenly man, the Lord from heaven; morally, He was in opposition to it, and it to Him,—a thing to which the Cross gave open testimony.

We must remember two things which the Word gives us, two things in no-wise in opposition, but which need to be equally kept in sight to preserve the even balance of the truth. On the one hand, we "ought to walk as He walked." Then His walk on earth is given as a pattern for us. On the other, "though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more; therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," &c. The only Christ we know or can know, or be in unison with, is One passed out of the flesh. This involves for us a difference from simply and literally copying all He did. He was "made under the law;" we are "dead to the law by the body of Christ, that we should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead." This is a difference, most surely; but apart from change of dispensation, all the rest of His walk is to be ours,—the moral blessedness and beauty which no change of dispensation could affect.

JESUS FORGIVING SINS.

MATT. IX. 6—MARK II. 9—LUKE V. 24.

God was showing His rich and various mercy in the old time; but this was done after a peculiar manner. He forgave sin—He healed disease—He fed his people. But all this was done in a peculiar manner. There was a certain distance and reserve—as it were, a remaining still in his own sanctuary, still in the heavens, though he was thus gracious. He met the need of a sinner, but he was in the temple, withdrawn to the holiest place, and the sinner had to come through a consecrated path to get the virtue of the mercy-seat. He met the need of his camp in the desert, but it was by remaining still in heaven, and sending from thence the angels' food, the Mighty's meat, and giving them water, after His mystic rod had opened the rock.

He met the disease of a poor leper, but it was after such leper had been separated to Him outside the camp, every eye and hand, all interference and inspection of man withdrawn and removed. Thus He was God, acting in his own due love and power, but there was a style in the action that bespoke distance from the objects of His care and goodness. Whether He *pardoned*, *fed* or *healed*, this manner was preserved.

The Lord Jesus, "God manifest in the flesh," is seen doing the same works of divine love and power. He *pardons*, *feeds*, and *heals*. And He does so in full assertion of His divine right or glory, thinking it no robbery to be equal with God. But there is altogether another style in those same actions when in His hand. The reserve, the distance is gone. It is God we see, not withdrawn into the holiest, but abroad in the prisons, the hospitals, and poor houses, of this ruined world. He *pardons*—but He stands beside the sinner

to do this, saying, "thy sins be forgiven thee," or "neither do I condemn thee." He *feeds*—but He is at the very table with the fed. He *heals*—but He puts forth His hand, in the crowd, on as many as were diseased, or stands at their sick beds. He thus comes to the needy ones. With pardon, food, and healing, He goes among them, letting them know and see that He is supplied with various virtue to be used by them without reserve. And there is in this a glory that excelleth, so that the former has no glory by reason of it.

How should we bless Him for this display of Himself. It is the same God of love and power in both—but He has increased in the brightness of His manifestations.

The religious rulers found this way of Jesus interfere with them. Their interest was to keep God and the people separate, for then they had hopes of being used themselves. Thus they were angry when the Lord said to the man, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." It was a great interference with them. It trespassed on their place. "Who can forgive sins but God only"—and God was *in heaven*. The Son of Man forgiving sins *on earth*, was a sad disturbance of that order by which they lived in credit and plenty in the world. But whether they received it or not, this was the way of the Son of God on the earth. He dealt with our necessities in such wise as encouraged the happy, near, and confident approach of all needy ones to Him. He did all to show that He was a cheerful giver; nay, more—that He gave Himself with his gifts; for with his own hand, as we have seen, He brought the blessing home to every man's door.

It was, therefore, only the happy confidence of faith that fully met and refreshed his spirit—that faith which

knew the title of a needy one to come right up to Him—the faith of a Bartimeus, which was not to be silenced by the mistaken scrupulousness of even disciples. And little children are to be in His arms, though the same mistake would forbid them.

This was His mind—He came into the world to be used by sick and needy sinners—and the faith that understood and used Him accordingly, was its due answer. Such answer we see recorded by the Evangelists here, in the action of the faithful little band, who, breaking up the roof, let down the bed whereon the sick of the palsy lay, *“into the midst before Jesus.”* There was no ceremoniousness in this—nothing of the ancient reserve of the temple—no waiting for introduction; this little company felt their necessity—knew the virtues of the Son of God, and believed that these suited each other; nay, that the Lord carried the one because necessitous sinners were bearing the other. It was a very strong expression of this, and I believe the strength of it was according to the mind of Jesus; so that on seeing their faith, as we read, without further to do, or more words, His heart, and the grace that it carried, uttered itself in an expression, as full and strong—*“Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.”*

Here was sympathy. Jesus was rending all veils between God and sinners, and so was the faith of this happy little company. His blood was soon to rend the vail of the temple, which kept God from poor sinners, from top to bottom, and now their faith was rending that which kept them from Jesus. This surely was meeting and entertaining the Son of God in character; and His Spirit deeply owns it—*“Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.”*

Happy faith that can thus break down all partition walls. O, this faith that takes knowledge of Jesus, the

Saviour of the world, as the mighty render of all vails !
which knows that nothing stands before Him.

Join thou, my soul, for thou can'st tell,
His sov'reign grace broke up thy cell,
And burst thy native chains—
And from that dear and blessed day,
How oft art thou constrained to say,
That grace triumphant reigns.

In the lively, happy impression of this truth through the Spirit, the soul tastes something of heaven. What blessedness to know that this is the way of God our Saviour. Grace and glory are both brought to us. We have not to ascend to heaven to seek them there. "Behold I come and my reward is with me," will Jesus say, when He brings the glory; as we have already seen Him with His grace standing at the door, or by the bedside, or in the crowd of needy sinners.

This is of God indeed. It is only divine love that can account for it. But the rulers did not like it. Their interest and credit in the world was to keep the forgiveness of sins still in the hands of Him who was in heaven; for then, as the consecrated path, they hoped and judged that they themselves would still be used.

And so it is to this day. Forgiveness is brought near and sure to the soul. The word of faith to the heart and to the mouth—this shortens the path, but it does not suit those who transact (as themselves and others judge) the interests of the soul.

Nothing appears more simple than all this on the principles of nature. The Pharisees in the Lord's time represented it. They were the religious rulers; and the more God was kept in the distance, the more reserve was preserved between him and the people, the more they were likely to be venerated, used, and enriched. Jesus, God in the *flesh*, the Son of Man forgiving sins

on the earth, was a sad trespasser on their place and plan of action. How, alas, is this principle still alive, still dominant; and the "people love to have it so," it suits the religiousness of man's nature too well to be lightly refused. The simplicity that is in Christ is sadly thus "corrupted," and our souls, beloved, should be grieved; deeply grieved because of it.

But we may also say that much occasion in our day has been given to this principle—to live and act as vigorously as it seems to be doing. For there has not been the meeting of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, this pardoning, feeding, healing love and power of Him who has come down to walk amid our ruins in the spirit which alone was due to it. There has been the assertion of grace, and the denial that God in this dispensation is to be sought for as at a distance, under the hiding of ceremonies, or within the cloisters of temples. There has been the producing of the blessed Saviour and giving Him to walk abroad among our necessities, according to the place He has Himself taken in the gospel. There has been the presenting of the marvellous condescending grace of the dispensation; but those who have asserted it, have not carried themselves towards it, and in the presence of it with that reverence, that holiness of confidence, which alone became them. And this has given man's religiousness (which would keep God still in heaven) occasion to revive, and be listened to and learnt again.

But is this righteousness the due corrective of abused grace? Is this the divine remedy? Is this God's way of rectifying evil? Or is it simple human reaction? Many are doing what they can to withdraw the Lord to that place which he has most advisedly, and for ever, abandoned. They are making him appear to build *again* the things which he had destroyed. They are putting

him back into the holiest place, there to be sought unto by the old aisles and vistas of the "worldly sanctuary"—to cover him with vails and cast up the long consecrated path by which of old the sinner came to Him. It were well to be righteously angry at Jesus and His grace being treated with so indelicate and untender a hand. While they would *protect the holiness* of Christ, they *obscure His grace*. They are seeking to do a service for Him that grieves Him most deeply. They are teaching man that He is an austere master; they withdraw Him to the place where it is felt to be a fearful thing to plant one's foot.

Indeed, this is a service He did not ask for. "Who has required this at your hands?" is, I am assured in my soul, the voice of the Son of God to those who thus withdraw Him from the nearest and most assured approach of the poor sinner. They have been doing what they could to change *HIS* place and attitude, instead of *MAN'S*. Correction was needed, surely. Man will be spoiling everything. There has been an intellectual arrogance, and carnal freedom with Christ and His truth which may well have grieved the righteous. But it was man that ought to be corrected, and not Christ. It was man that ought to have been challenged to change his place and bearing, and not the Lord. He has not repented of having come on earth to forgive sins, of having visited the poor Samaritan at the well, or Levi, or Zaccheus, in their houses, or Peter's wife's mother on her bed of sickness. He is still the same Lord, and purposes to be so. He has not retired within the vail again, nor bound up that which was rent from top to bottom. He has not built *again* that which He had destroyed. It is not a worldly sanctuary that He fills and furnishes, nor ceremonies and observances, and rites, and practices,

under which He is again concealing Himself. He has descended from heaven to earth; He is abroad among men in the ministry of His precious gospel, and by His Spirit beseeching sinners to be reconciled.

What, then, alas, is the character of that effort that would force Him back to "the thick darkness?" (2 Chron. vi. 12). It is an attempt made in the strength and with the subtlety of the devil, upon the Son of God, as of old. It is a taking Him, as it were, to the pinnacle of the temple, to some withdrawn and proved elevation, where the multitude may gaze at Him. But His purpose is, blessed be His name, to stand in the midst of them that they may use Him.

We should change our place, that is equally true. We should learn to pass and re-pass before this gracious, blessed Son of Man with the unshod foot. It is for us to change our attitude, and not to seek to make Him change His.

We have still to see Him in all the grace of this happy dispensation, we have to read "the gospel of the blessed God," (1 Tim. i.), as they read it of old who knew and felt that the Son of Man had power on earth to forgive sins,—but we have to read all this more in their spirit also. We are to wonder at the strange sight as they did—to tell Jesus, with the contention, that we are not worthy that He should come under our roof, while we still use His immediate presence and grace—to stand before Him like Zaccheus and call Him "Lord," though like him, receiving Him to our own house, and to follow Him in the way with adoring, thankful praise, though having refused, as Bartimeus, to be put at a distance by the vain religious scruples of even His own disciples.

Ah! this is what should have been done. This would have been the divine corrective of the mischief

that has come in. But this was not so easy, for this would have been *spiritual*—the thing that has been done is *carnal*. Elements of the world are received and multiplied. Jesus has been forced back at a distance from the sinner. He has been put into “the thick darkness,” under cover of fleshly observances and rites, and at the end of a long path through the aisles of a sanctuary, where He waits to receive the homage of a fearing and bondaged people. This is the place and attitude which many teachers (who are daily rising in the esteem of the people), make the blessed Saviour to fill and to take.

The Lord Jesus is kept at a distance; religious observances are brought near; and the people (for they have ever been so minded) like the feelings that come from all that which is acted before them, their eye and ear are engaged, a certain sense of God is awakened, but the precious, immediate confidence of the heart is refused. Ah! shall any who love the Lord thus sink down again *into man*, when the Spirit would have them up into *Christ*!—“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit are ye now made perfect in the flesh? ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.”

Thus speaks the aggrieved Spirit in the Apostle over those, who once had been eminently his joy, but were now his sorrow, because *they were turning again to the weak and beggarly elements wherewith they were desiring again to be in bondage*—because they were deserting faith for religiousness, “the simplicity that is in Christ,” and in which the “*virgin*” or “*uncorrupted*” mind

ever walks, for the ceremonies and observances of "a worldly sanctuary."

But *religiousness* is neither faith nor righteousness. With the Pharisees it was adopted as a relief for a bad conscience, under cover for evil—in them, it was, therefore, opposed to righteousness; with the Galatians, because there had been a departure from the truth,—the simplicity that is in Christ—in them, therefore, it was opposed to faith. The Galatian cannot properly be said to have been a Pharisee, it is true; but the Spirit of God had a serious question with both.

But I may just further observe, that in our passage, (Matt. ix. 6, Mark ii. 9, Luke v. 24), the Lord seeks to lead man away from his own reasonings and calculations to Himself and His works. He perceived that the Scribes were "reasoning among themselves," and then proposed to them what He was doing—"that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (He said unto the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee arise, and take up thine couch, and go into thine house."

How simple, how precious! And on this hangs the grand distinction between *faith* and *religiousness*, of which I have just been speaking. Religiousness, or man's religion, gives the soul many a serious thought about itself, and many a devout thought about God. But faith, or God's religion, gives the soul Jesus, and the works and words of Jesus.

And yet it is faith, and faith only, that secures any end that is valued of God. Faith "*works by love*,"—faith "*overcomes the world*,"—faith "*purifies the heart*,"—by faith "*the elders obtained a good report*." Religiousness does not this. It ever "*works*" by *fear*, not by love. It does not "*overcome the world*," but oftentimes *takes it away within to some recess or hiding*

place. It does not "purify the heart" by giving it an object, a divine object to detach it from self, but *keeps self in a religious attire ever before it*, and leaves the conscience *unpurged*. And in God's record it gives no "good report." From the beginning to the end of that record, it is the people of religion, the devout observers of carnal ceremonies, those who would not "defile themselves" with the judgment hall, that have stood most cruel in resistance of the truth. But it is the men of faith, the lovers of the truth, the poor broken-hearted sinners who have found their relief in Jesus "forgiving sins," who have stood and laboured, and conquered, and have their happy memorial with Him and in the records of Him whom they trusted, and in whom, by faith, they found their eternal life, and sure and full salvation.

"Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen." J. G. B.

CHRISTIAN WALK.

MY DEAR BROTHER IN THE LORD,—

It might be well in these sad days, when so much positive evil is being everywhere manifested, to write a few short remarks on the principles of Christian walk; rather with the view of leading the saints who read your periodical to search the Scriptures on that subject, than anything else. I have jotted down a few thoughts, which I now convey to you, trusting they may be of use to those who read your periodical.

The Christian's walk through this world is founded on

his position in Christ. Christian responsibility never begins till the saint is established in his position. As a child of Adam he was responsible, and the law was the perfect measure of his responsibility. He was to love God with all his heart, etc., and his neighbour as himself; but in that condition he was utterly lost. Now through redemption he is forgiven and justified as a sinner, but not only that—he is entirely delivered from his state and condition as a child of Adam, and brought into the family of God; the Father's name is revealed to him, he is sealed by the Spirit and cries "Abba Father." In that new position he is responsible, no longer as a child of Adam, but as a child of God. As a child he is responsible to obey his Father; as a member of Christ he has a common responsibility with the other members of Christ to hold the Head. To illustrate my meaning more clearly—all responsibility in this life is founded on a relationship already formed; such as a wife's to her husband, a child's to a father, a servant's to a master. The responsibility must be formed before the responsibility commences. It would be preposterous to tell a strange boy in the street to walk as my child, he would not understand his responsibility to do so; but let him be adopted into my family, and then teach him his responsibility, he will understand the meaning of it.

It is on account of not seeing this principle clearly, that much of the doubt and darkness which pervades Christendom is caused, as well as the failure in the walk of Christians.

Now there are three great parts of the individual Christian's position, from which his responsibility flows: 1st. He is born of God. 2nd. Christ in glory is the object of his faith. 3rd. The Holy Ghost dwells in his body, as a temple.

I begin with the first as that most commonly known

amongst Christians, though it comes last in order in the Epistles, that is, that the Christian is born of God. This is a state which he has in common with all Old Testament saints, and connects itself with the government of God, a principle which is especially taught in Old Testament Scripture, Israel being the centre of God's government on the earth. Christians are under the government of the Father as children born in a family, and are responsible to obey Him. Obedience is founded on life. Commandments are addressed to that life as its rule. The law was the rule to the flesh or old man, the Father's commandments and the law of liberty to the new man. See 1 John i. ii. ; James i. 17-25 ; 1 Pet. 3-17. The Christian, born of God, and thus addressed, does righteousness and loves the brethren (1 John iii.), but the general principles of government are the same at all times, modified by the revelation of the Father's name, and refer only to this life and the new-born soul's walk through this world. James and Peter, in this view, give a very wholesome connection with Old Testament Scripture, teaching that the man born of God needs a rule, which he finds in the Word of God, which is profitable for reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness, so that the man of God might be thoroughly furnished to every good work. 2 Tim. iii. 16. Here Paul was alluding specially to Old Testament Scripture, in the knowledge of which Timothy had been brought up as a child.

We now come to the other two parts of the Christian's position, which may be said to be those properly Christian, that is, not belonging to the saint in Old Testament times. 1st. That a glorified Christ is set before him as the object of faith, the righteousness of God by faith is revealed to him. Founded on this, "the just shall live by faith." Rom. i. 17. 2ndly. The Holy Ghost dwells

in his body as a temple, and he is called to walk in the Spirit.

As to the first, the righteousness of God as now manifested in Christ in glory, is seen to be in the believer's favor consequent on redemption having been accomplished. Rom. iii. 21, 22. The Christian believes; his sins are forgiven through Christ's blood, and Christ is made unto him righteousness. He is justified, reckoned righteous by faith in Him, a Person outside Himself, who has wrought out his redemption, and given him deliverance from sin's power. Founded on this position the walk comes in; the just shall live by faith; as dead and risen he is to yield himself to God (Rom. vi. 13.); having put off the old man, and put on the new, he is to put off the fruits daily of the former, and to put on the fruits of the latter. Ephes. iv. 20-29; Col. iii. 8-14. He waits by faith for the hope of righteousness, that faith working by love. Gal. v. 5, 6.

But the second great work of Christianity is that the Holy Ghost has come down from heaven, consequent on the exaltation of Christ as man, and has sealed the believer, giving him the knowledge of his sonship, and of all the things freely given to him of God, so that his body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. John xiv. 20; Rom. viii. 15, 16; 1 Cor. ii. 12, vi. 19. God dwells in him. Now he has positive power; it is no longer a simple yielding himself up to God (Rom. vi. 13), but by the Spirit he mortifies or puts to death the deeds of the flesh. Rom. viii. 13, 14; Col. iii. 4. Walking in the Spirit, he does not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. Gal. v. 16. He is called to be an imitator of God as a dear child (Ephes. v. 1), forgiving as God forgives, showing his character as light and love. It is no longer simple dependence on an object outside you, and set before you as an object of faith, but power come inside you, upon

which indeed there is also need of dependence, but it is power acting on the flesh from within, as also manifesting the life of God in the soul. God works in the Christian both to will and to do of His good pleasure. This principle also is in direct contrast to legal obedience. Led of the Spirit the Christian is not under the law (Gal. v.); and yet as not under it and dead to it, and walking after the Spirit, he fulfils its righteousness. Rom. vii. 4, viii. 4. I think if the saint kept these three different parts of the Christian position apart in his mind, and connected them with three different parts of the Christian walk, much difficulty would vanish. It is true the parts blend together in the Christian, but they are distinct in themselves, and need to be seen distinct in the mind so as to understand our proper position and walk.

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

A. P. C.

SIFTED-OF SATAN, AND KEPT OF GOD.

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."—LUKE xxii. 31, 32.

God's thoughts are not as our thoughts. There are two ways especially in which we prove this. The one is in our judgment of sin; the other, in our apprehension of the dealings of God with regard to it. As to the first it is ever true, what the Lord said to Samuel: "man looketh at the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." As to the latter, how slow are we to understand that grace is the delivering power from the dominion of sin. Let us compare some thoughts of ours with regard to these two things with what the word of God says as to Peter's fall and Peter's recovery.

When the Lord is dealing with Peter's soul in regard to that fall (in Jno. xx.) He draws him from looking at the outward appearance to looking on the heart. He does not ask, "Simon, son of Jonas, couldst thou deny Me with oaths and curses;" He asks, "Simon, son of Jonas, *lovest thou Me more than these?*" Peter had professed, "though all should deny Thee, yet will not I." True love to his master had spoken out there in him; but also, self-ignorance and self-sufficiency, twin companions ever in the soul of man. Still it would seem a little thing to most of us beside that which took place in the high-priest's palace afterwards. So in some respects it was; and yet it was the really important thing to get at in the matter of self-judgment, for it was the root of the other. And God had permitted it to mature into the awful fruit of denying that loved Lord and Master, in order that that unsuspected evil of the heart, the blight and bane of all good, might be discovered and judged.

And it will be ever found that that which is at the bottom of all failure in the Christian's life and walk is self-complacency in some form. The Phariseeism within us is the deadliest enemy of Christ and God we have. Weakness conscious to ourselves is our strength and blessing, for Christ is fulness and strength, ever to draw from at our need, and the sufficiency of grace is known in proportion to our felt need of it. But the "God, I thank Thee, I am not as other men" of Phariseeism has no thirst and never comes to Christ to drink, and if humbled by the evil which comes out as the consequence, borrows from the future to make up the deficiency of the present. It would always sooner borrow and pay back than be a simple debtor to one who gives "without money and without price." Moreover, the first wrong step is the point of departure from God. Every successive step may carry us further, it is true; but there is

no restoration until we have come back to the place where God's path and ours separated, and we ceased to walk with Him. Otherwise, however much we may lament the evils which are the consequence of this, we cannot have strength against the evil, but while we own it, fall into it again as helplessly as before.

It is thus the Lord leads Peter back to the way from which he had departed. And as He restores (or "converts") him from the error of his ways, He bids him as so converted, "strengthen his brethren." "Feed my sheep," "feed my lambs." He who has found out through his weakness the secret of strength, can point out that secret to others.

But let us trace a little the steps by which this point is reached, for it was not all at once in Simon Peter's case. He had had, according to the Lord's words, to be sifted in Satan's sieve first. He had been another Job, and Satan, the accuser of the brethren, had been before God about him, and as with Job, he had prevailed to have him (with a certain limit) in his hand. The true and tender love of the Lord to His disciple had not interfered to save him from the trial, but on the contrary given him up to it. It was needed, absolutely so. But the advocate had been with the Father in view of all that that sifting process would bring out: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Here was Satan's limit. He could not prevail to overthrow the confidence of the soul in Christ, even amid all that which tended to do so.

This advocacy had preceded the outward fall. It was not Peter's repentance that brought it about, but his *sin*. The Lord, who had already marked this first step of departure from the living God, had been with the Father about it, before Peter had known the sin himself. "If any man *sin*, we have an advocate." Blessed

assurance ! We have not to move Him to intercede ; we have not to come to Him that He may go to the Father for us. No ; before Peter's eye had been upon his sin, Christ had seen it and been interceding for him ; before Peter's heart had turned to the Lord about it, the Lord's heart had borne Peter on it before His Father ; the limit had been affixed to Satan's power, and the faith of the poor failing one made proof against it.

Thus Satan's sieve was to become a blessing to the one he laboured to destroy. It was to sift the chaff of *self-confidence* from the wheat of true faith. Only the former was to perish, the latter to be brought out in triumph from the assault upon it.

How needful the prayer of the gracious Advocate ! Faith tends to fail not so much in view of outside difficulties, but in view of inside corruption. It is this, when grace is not properly known, that puts awful distance between the soul and God, and makes all other things a burden or a terror. God has provided for us in His grace, that the spring of confidence in Him should never fail for the heart that turns to Him. The heart set upon its own ways and not on Him, tastes not of that spring ;—cannot of course reckon upon God in a path which is not His. But there is *no* point from whence, encompassed with whatever failure and evil, the soul of the wanderer from God may not turn if it will to Him, and cast itself and its sins and its burdens upon Him. Unbelief would interpose a preparatory process of setting oneself right first, and thus in the meantime keep the soul at a distance. Faith brings us with the consciousness of all things wrong, to put our feet into the hands of Him who alone can cleanse them, that we may have “part,” in real living fellowship, “with” Him.

I see this order in the Lord's dealings with Simon

Peter. First, "the Lord turned and looked on Peter." Surely a look which, recalling the warning He had given him, recalled along with it the remembrance of the intercession for him already made,—and made that his confidence in Him he had just denied, might *not* fail. What confidence that of itself would give! And how keen the sense of that grace would make his sense of his sin against the gracious and blessed Advocate, *our* Advocate, with the Father! It is *grace* that gives true judgment of sin, as well as breaks its dominion.

But this look of Jesus is not all that Peter gets. Steadily the Lord's love pursues the erring one for the purpose evidently first of all of winning him back to full confidence in it. And the next thing we hear is from the lips of the angel at the tomb after the resurrection. "He is risen . . . go tell His disciples *and Peter*, that He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you." (Mark xvi. 7.)

Peter is thus singled out especially for gracious mention as the one who of all the disciples needed such assurance. Next, we have the two from Emmaus coming to Jerusalem with their tale of having seen the Lord, and they find "the eleven gathered together and them that were with them, saying, the Lord is risen indeed, and *hath appeared unto Simon*." (Lu. xxiv. 33, 34.) As Paul reiterates: "He was seen of Cephas, *then* of the twelve." (1 Cor. xv. 5.) We have no particulars of that interview; the fact alone is given, that before the Lord appeared to any other of the eleven, He appeared to Peter. That is what is to have significance for us. Who can doubt the grace that in all this sought first of all the reassurance of Peter's heart in the love of Him against whom he had sinned. Then, along with the rest he listens to and drinks in the words of peace first published by the Maker of it: "Peace be unto you;"

and again, "Peace be unto you," and "His hands and His side" the demonstration of it. Not one word yet about Peter's sin: the heart restored and set at rest before the ploughing up of the conscience is commenced.

But Peter has now his feet in the Lord's hands. Distance has been removed; the sweetness of the old intimacy has been restored. Then follows the scene in Galilee, where having toiled all night at fishing, and in vain, in the morning the old miracle which had first brought Peter's conscience into exercise is renewed. The Lord discovers Himself to them in a draught of fishes, but he who that first time had said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord," now as soon as he finds out who it is, casts himself into the sea to come to Jesus. They find a fire of coals upon the shore, and fish laid thereon and bread. Love has prepared all, but did that "fire of coals" not speak to him who had stood and warmed himself at such a fire but a short time since? Yet he dines there with Jesus, face to face with his sin, but with his sin put away. Did it cloud the gladness of his heart? It solemnized, no doubt; but grace had triumphed so gloriously over all,—love had so displayed itself,—that with Christ in that sweet company, sorrow itself became the handmaid of joy, and ministered to his blessing.

So they sat and dined; "and when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me *more than these*?" That was what he had professed; but what had the event proved? Peter can only plead that spite of all that had taken place, the Lord knew his love to Him. He had so miserably failed, as to destroy all evidence of it for others; only He who knew all things could know that it was there. Thus he had come behind the rest of the disciples, and could look back to and abhor that misplaced confidence in himself which had wrought so ruinously.

It is thus the Lord washes the feet of his disciple, seating him in His own presence to do so. And now being "converted," or restored fully as to all that in which he had gone wrong, he can strengthen his brethren: "Feed my sheep—my lambs." Only the weak can strengthen others. Nor only so: he shall now be able to go even to prison and to death for Christ, the very thing which he had so rashly professed ability to do, and in which he had failed so signally. "When thou shalt be old, another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God." How perfect and beautiful this triumph of grace in Simon Peter! All this is a deep and precious lesson for our ears and hearts. We need not fail, as he did, in order to learn it; but how sweet to know that if we do fail, grace never fails towards us, never fails to carry out its purposes and counsels of blessing for us. Let us remember only that the Nazarites' long hair is the secret of our strength, as we read in Samson. The woman's long hair is the token of subjection and dependence; but it is the secret of a power which overcomes the mightiest opposing forces. Let that be lacking, our strength is gone, and a woman's hand may afflict us then. The Lord grave it deeply on our souls!

SCRIPTURE OUTLINES.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN (*con.*)

Thus in chap. viii. we have the soul set free to enjoy; in chap. ix. and x. we have the place of enjoyment into which it is brought,—acquaintanceship with Jesus, and as the result, green pastures and the Shepherd's watchful care; the Jewish fold of ordinances giving up the

sheep to Him from whom no hand can pluck them evermore.

The blind man who receives his sight in the 9th chapter is both a type, and also a living example of spiritual sight received. Blind from his birth, as we are, the works of God are made manifest in Him; Jesus, the light of the world, is revealed to him. The clay made with the spittle, spread upon his eyes, might seem to make his blindness but more hopeless, just as the humanity of Jesus was the offence to carnal men; but the water from the pool of Siloam, the operation of the Spirit of God, the "Sent One" (for Siloam means sent), revealing Jesus, the light breaks in: "he washed, and came seeing."

The figure is there dropped, and the work in the soul brought forward in plain terms. The revelation of Jesus is not all at once, but what he knows he *knows*. No wisdom of the learned, no authority of the synagogue, nor both together, can shake his conviction or hinder his confession. Jesus has opened his eyes; "He is a prophet": is it not what we first realize concerning the Lord? A prophet's work is done upon our souls; we were blind and now we see:—not yet, as we shall, His glory; not yet, perhaps, our own blessing; still our eyes are opened and we take things not upon the testimony of others as a blind man does, we are outside the region of tradition, reasoning and conjecture; we have not opinions, speculations, human authorities,—we *see*; not everything, but still we *see*.

The ecclesiastical authorities find this to be a stubborn and presumptuous man. The fellow, born in sins, is actually teaching *them*. "And they cast him out." Then comes for him the full, sweet, blessed revelation: the glory of the Son of God shines in upon him; he believes, and worships.

Then the whole secret is disclosed: the shepherd of the sheep has come unto the Jewish sheepfold, calling his sheep by name and leading them out. There is to be no more a "fold" at all*; they "go in and out," and find pasture. He is gathering around Himself a "flock" in liberty, yet in security,—in obedience to His voice, and satisfaction, for infinite love and power care for them. The principle here is of the utmost importance for us, if we would understand what Christianity is in its practical character. The fold was a system of ordinances given of God, no doubt, but which still, if it kept evil out, restrained the sheep. Nor did it infallibly keep evil out. The thief and robber might climb up over it.

The law checked man's will. All *moral* law is needed because that will is wrong; no law against dishonesty would be needed, if it were not in man's heart naturally to be dishonest. If I had a friend's arm upon the street, and as I left him at the entrance of a store, I were to say to him, "Don't steal," he would ask me quickly enough, "Do you take me for a thief?" Now that is exactly how the law does treat us. It supposes lusts and a wrong will, and it forbids them; stops my will, perhaps,—never changes it. No man was ever made honest by a law to that effect, and the man who is kept honest by it is dishonest at heart.

Now Christ's obedience, which is our pattern surely, was *never* the obedience of a *stopped will*. In Gethsemane, indeed, He said, "Not my will, but Thine be done." There it was the cup of wrath He had in view, and if He had not shrunk from that, He would not have been the Holy One He was. But that is not in question for us, since, blessed be God, no wrath can ever be ours. The obedience, then, to which we are sanctified,

* In the latter part of v. 16 it should be read, "There shall be one flock (not fold,) and one shepherd."

is not that of a will stopped, but of a will that *needs no stopping*, for us a *changed* will then. With Christ the only purpose of His heart in coming to the world was, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." Thus if He hungered in a wilderness, that was no reason with Him for the putting forth of power which He had and used for others. "Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God doth man live." Upon that word He waited.

And "My sheep follow Me," He says. That which changes the will is the knowledge of this good Shepherd, who laid down His life for the sheep. By Him, the Door of the sheep, they enter and are saved and go in and out and find pasture. Their path and portion are prepared by Infinite Wisdom itself, guarded by Almighty Power, endeared by the unsearchable Love of that wondrous self-sacrifice. Why should they need prison walls to shut them up to that pleasant portion? The Shepherd's voice, the Shepherd's eye, the Shepherd's rod, are more effectual preservatives.

The Jewish "fold" then is gone. It is "one flock," whether gathered from Jews or Gentiles, and "one Shepherd": living guidance, effectual protection, and love's ceaseless care.

If men take up stones to stone Him now, it proves a blindness with which it were vain to argue on the highest ground. Out of their own law He convicts them, veiling His proper glory; and then, escaping out of their hand, goes away beyond Jordan to where John at first baptized. The nation have not learned that Jordan lesson yet.

ANSWERS TO SPECIAL QUESTIONS.

(11.) A letter from a correspondent, too long for insertion, raises some questions which it may be important for him and others to get answered from the Word of God.

First, as to any being saved after the Church is taken up to be with the Lord, 2 Thess. ii. 8-12 decides very simply and very solemnly, that none of those who "receive not the love of the truth" in the day of grace still present will be saved afterwards. "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that **THEY ALL** might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Terrible as the thought is, it is not to be evaded or escaped from.

Secondly, therefore the "book of life" cannot be produced in *their* favour at all events before the "great white throne" (Rev. xx). And it would be mere folly to suppose so, because according to his own theory the people he speaks of he believes have been living and reigning with Christ a thousand years before the great white throne, after which it would be surely too late to ask if their names were written in the "book of life." Again, if they had been living on earth during that time (when there seems to be no death save as judgment), it could not apply, for the subjects of the judgment of that day are only "the *dead*," and they are all "judged according to their works," which is utter damnation.

(12.) What is "the Lord's day" of Rev. i. 10? Is it "the first day of the week"? or is it not rather the same as "the day of the Lord" elsewhere in Scripture?

Ans.—The expressions are not the same at all in the original. In Rev. i. 10 it is an adjective that is used

for "Lord's" for which we have no representative in English except "Dominical," which would be a very harsh substitute for it, and have no advantage. I only mention it because if the Spirit of God is pleased to use these different expressions there is certainly a meaning in it.

Then look at the passage and it becomes clear. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me," etc., or literally, "*I became* in the Spirit . . . and I heard." This connects in the most exact way, his being in the Spirit on the Lord's day with the following communication. But of what nature was this? Most certainly it had not relation to the day of the Lord, which will not come till the apostacy and revelation of the "man of sin," therefore not till the saints of the present time are removed to heaven. Whereas the apostle here sees the Son of Man in the midst of the candlesticks, the place He is now in as occupied with the condition of "the churches," according to His own interpretation of the vision.

"The Lord's day," on the other hand, when we apprehend it as the first day of the week, the day connected with our whole position as Christians through the resurrection of Christ, is full of significance as to the style and character of this New Testament prophecy. It is from this position the apostle sees everything, in the intelligence of his own place as one risen with Christ and passed out of the world. It is thus he has to "turn" to see the vision, which is all in that sense "behind" him, as having to do with earth. We too, in order to get the profit of this divine communication, must be "in the Spirit on the Lord's day." There would be fewer and less serious mistakes among us, if we were.

(13.) Would you explain what is meant in 1 Tim. iv. 8-11?

Ans.—The “bodily exercise” of v. 8 refers to the general principle of asceticism from which the forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats would spring. *Spiritual* exercise unto godliness was the thing to be aimed at as that which brought all blessing with it for time and for eternity. The living God in whom he trusted was as Creator “Saviour” (preserver, caretaker) of all men, specially of those that believed. The point is all through from the beginning of the chapter that the God revealed in Christianity is also the Creator, and has not set aside the things which His care and love have instituted for the blessing of man as man,—thus, marriage and the use of flesh as food. Nor has He pleasure in the mere ill-treatment of the body. The creature is not, as such, evil; godliness will teach the right use of all.

(14.) In 1 Tim. iv. 14, and Heb. vi. 2, with reference to “laying on of hands,” I have understood from Acts xiii. 3, that “and laid their hands on them” implied fellowship in the work whereunto they were called by the Holy Spirit: is there more than this in it? is it what is in Acts viii. 17? In Heb. vi. 2 it is, together with “baptisms” called a “doctrine;” what is the doctrine? also in “baptisms,” or “washings” as some translations have it?

Ans.—“Laying on of hands” is found in Scripture in very various connections, and that both in the Old and New Testaments. In Heb. vi. 2, “teaching of baptisms and laying on of hands” refers entirely to the Old. They were things that belonged to the “word of the beginning of Christ” (v. 1 *marg.*) as the Old Testament, apart from the light of the New, is called. Along with this teaching of ordinances which belonged to the Jewish system, was the teaching also of many important and

fundamental truths, "repentance from dead works, faith towards God, resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment." These things of course remain, but Judaism taught along with this a system of ordinances. All this was the foundation of the Jewish system. It was not to be *again* laid (v. 1) as the foundation of Christianity, which is Christ Himself, and Christ not only come into the world, but dead, risen, and at God's right hand in glory.

The passage does not mean then that baptisms and laying on of hands had a "doctrine" (which is true, of course) but *were taught*. They were part of the Jewish "teaching," as the word rendered "doctrine" literally is. The baptisms were the various purifications of the law; the laying on of hands especially referred no doubt to the mode of transferring sins to a sacrifice, a point of central importance for the Jew.

Now this "laying on of hands" was thus as to its meaning the identifying the victim with the one who offered it. This thought of identification seems everywhere prominent. It said as it were to the one upon whom hands were laid, "You are as myself." Of course this might give in application various shades of meaning. In the simplest form, as Acts xiii., there was no communication of gift or power; it was the expression of fellowship, oneness of heart. Very often there was the communication of gift, as distinctly in 2 Tim. i. 6. Among the Jews the Holy Ghost was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands (Acts viii. 18). Healing was also conveyed often in the same way (Mark vi. 5; Acts xxviii. 8). In the case of the deacons (Acts vi. 6) the laying on of hands was used in the conveyance of their office. It is probable the same thing was done in the case of elders, but it is only arguing from analogy, and from a probable reference to it in 1 Tim. v. 22.

THEY'RE DEAR TO GOD.

O that when Christians meet and part,
These words were graven on every heart—

They're dear to God!

However wilful and unwise,

We'll look on them with loving eyes—

They're dear to God.

O wonder! to the Eternal One,

Dear as His own beloved Son;

Dearer to Jesus than His blood,

Dear as the Spirit's fix'd abode—

They're dear to God.

When tempted to give pain for pain,

How would this thought our words restrain,

They're dear to God.

When truth compels us to contend,

What love with all our strife should blend—

They're dear to God.

When they would shun the pilgrim's lot

For this vain world, forget them not;

But win them back with love and prayer,

They never can be happy there,

If dear to God.

O how return a brother's blow!

The heart whose harshness wounds thee so

Is dear to God.

Oh! who beneath the Cross can stand,

And there from one hold back the hand—

Dear to our God!

How with rough words can we conflict,

Knowing each pang our words inflict,

Touches the heart once pierced for us!

The hearts we wring and torture thus

Are dear to God!

Shall we be there so near, so dear,

And be estranged and cold whilst here—

All dear to God!

By the same cares and toils opprest,

We lean upon one faithful breast,

We hasten to the same repose;

How bear or do enough for those

So dear to God!

JUDGMENT IN ITS RELATION TO THE GOSPEL.

"In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel."—Rom. ii 16.

THAT the judgment to come *has* relation to the Gospel this verse in Romans bears witness, and it is exceedingly important to apprehend clearly what the relation is in which it stands to it. The practical test of a gospel of Divine origin or mingled with human adulteration is in its ability or not to fill the soul with peace and give it liberty in the presence of God. That peace cannot consist with anything less than a full present salvation by grace alone without works,—a complete deliverance from all liability to wrath to come. A human gospel will be found ever to appeal to the principle of fear, (*tormenting* fear, the fear of being lost,) in order to keep the soul in a straight path and produce holiness and good works for God. In the Divine, *this* sort of fear and love are opposites, and "perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment," so that "he that feareth is not made perfect in love."

This appeal to fear is often very openly made. Men are exhorted to "work out their own salvation with fear and trembling," forgetting altogether that the ground of that exhortation is one which, if understood, must necessarily cast out of the soul fear as to being lost. The ground is this, that "it is God which worketh in you to will and to do of His good pleasure." More literally, "it is God who worketh in you *the willing and the doing.*" Surely, if *that* be the ground, it cannot be an argument of danger, but of security,—a motive to fear indeed, but to holy, reverential fear, as of a child towards a parent, not of a slave towards his master, or of a criminal towards his judge.

But that last is, on the contrary, the very position in

which the believer is placed in the current and so-called gospels of the day. God is looked at as a judge, and as a judge before whom yet our case is to be tried, and that for final settlement as to whether we are to be for eternity lost or saved. We are to be "judged," as they misquote scripture, "according to our works." Of course if that be so, and if there is any meaning in such a trial, it is natural to suppose there must be uncertainty up to then as to the result. This is in fact what is largely taught and held. With a good many there is indeed a happy practical inconsistency in this respect, because the Spirit of God within them is better to them than their creed. But even so the day of judgment is a cloud to most when they think of it, for freedom is by the *truth*, and they do not know the truth.

All forms of conditional salvation will be found to be based essentially upon error as to the day of judgment, and with the demolition of this error they all fall to the ground. Hence, how important to have a right understanding as to it.

Now it is true that "it is appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgment." If this passage be examined, it will be found that there is a clear contrast made in favour of the Christian. "*As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and to them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*" (Heb. ix. 27, 28.) It is plain as to death, that there are exceptions. Enoch did not die, nor Elijah. And the Apostle says expressly as to believers, "We shall *not* all sleep." To those who are alive and remain to the coming of the Lord, death is not appointed; they are simply "changed," and caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

It is plain, then, that believers do not necessarily die.

Scripture is equally plain that they are not judged at all. Traditional teaching obscured this for the translators of our common version, and *they* have consequently obscured it for the readers of it, but the word in John v. 24, translated there "condemnation," is the same as that in verse 22, rightly there translated "judgment." "He that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come unto JUDGMENT,* but is passed from death unto life." So again in verse 29, "they that have done evil" come forth "unto the resurrection of *judgment*," not merely "damnation." Damnation it would be, no doubt; but the wrong rendering obscures the important fact that to "come into judgment" is to come into "damnation." Such is the truth, as all scripture witnesses.

Thus, if I return to Rom. ii., I find there plainly that while the principle of the day of judgment will be to award eternal life to patient continuance in well-doing, and on the other hand indignation and wrath, "tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil," the practical result for any that have to be "judged according to their deeds" will be that "as many as have sinned without law shall also PERISH without law, and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law." Thus there can be no hope for any, for "ALL have sinned," and while we are expressly assured, in order to cut off hope from any upon that ground, that those that have sinned without law shall *perish*, the judgment of the law for those under it is, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them," so that "as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." Woe, then, to him who is looking to pass safely through the terrors

* Dean Alford's and the Bible Union version both give "judgment." It is the only possible rendering.

of the day of judgment by finding justification then. The psalmist, long before the gospel day, is wiser. "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord, for in Thy sight shall *no man living* be justified." That is true, then, if it were a servant of the Lord, or a child of God, as the psalmist was: no man coming into judgment could be justified before a holy God. And what is the remedy then? Simply the Lord's own, "he that believeth * * * shall not *come* into judgment."

To mix up this with such passages as Rom. xiv. 10-12, or 2 Cor. v. 10, as if, taken broadly, they would be in contradiction with the Lord's word in John v., is only to show the power of things we have been brought up in over the mind. It is of course just as true, that we shall *all* appear before the judgment seat of Christ and receive there for things done in the body according to that we have done, whether it be good or bad,—this, I say, is just as true as that, on the other side, we shall not come into judgment. The judgment seat has to do with the reward of works, not with the acceptance or rejection of our persons. Indeed, neither in the judgment of the great white throne nor here is this or can this be the question. We are taught *now* to know ourselves lost or saved, justified or under condemnation. Nothing is left as to this for a day of judgment to decide.

Look at it as to both classes. Does Paul, gone for 1800 years to be, even while absent from the body, present with the Lord,—does Paul, I say, wait for the day of judgment to determine whether he is rightfully there or not? On the other hand, is he who (according to our Lord's representation, Luke xvi.), having died and being buried, lifts up his eyes in hell, being in torment,—is he unaware of what his condition is? Surely on neither side could there be left anything for judgment to decide. As a matter of damnation or salvation all was

already settled, the exact apportionment of reward or meting out of punishment might and did remain to be settled in the day of award for either, but that is all.

Then if we look at the way in which for either class the judgment seat is reached, we may well admire the blessed harmony of revealed truth. In either case, for the dead in Christ or for the dead sinner, resurrection precedes judgment. In this there is distinction of time as well as character. "Every man in his own order," says the Apostle; "Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." (1 Cor. xv. 23). Not all men together, then, but they that are Christ's in a separate company, apart altogether from the rest; as 1 Thes. iv: "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and the *dead in Christ* shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Now, observe, this is before judgment has been executed—even the judgment of the living. *—and before the Lord has come to earth. Nor is, how long? the question either. The point is, that *before* He appears to execute judgment He gathers up all His saints in one company to Himself, so that *when* He comes to earth, He "cometh WITH ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon all." (Jude 14-15). Or, as the Apostle puts it (Col. iii. 4,) "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, *then* shall ye also appear with Him in glory."

Thus, there is no cloud left upon the prospect. Called up, whether living or dead, in Christ, in that day, by His own voice to meet Him coming in His love to re-

* Scripture separates widely between the judgment of the living and the dead, two things which are ordinarily confounded together. Matt. xxv. 31 refers to the former alone, and Rev. xx. 12 alone to the latter.

ceive us to Himself, there can be no after-challenge as to whose we are. "Raised in glory," or changed into it, the very condition in which I reach the judgment seat would assure me (could I possibly doubt it), whose and what I am. Nor ever from the first moment of my conversion to Him am I taught to doubt it. It is settled, divinely settled, that I have eternal life, and shall not come into judgment.

People may ask here, what then about the separation of sheep from goats when He is 'come to earth, as in Matt. xxv. 31? I answer, it is the judgment of the living nations when He appears with all the company of His risen and glorified saints. The testimony of the Word is, that after He has received his saints of the present and the past to Himself, He does not come on at once with them to the earth. A pause ensues, long enough to allow of the conversion of others to Himself, who are not joined to the company of heavenly saints, but form the beginning of the earthly blessing. From these are separated all things that offend and them which do iniquity, in order that "the meek may inherit the earth." No doubt, this may require deeper looking into. But it should be simple that those who are caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and come with Him to execute judgment when He comes, cannot be the same as those picked out and separated by the judgment when He comes.

The even balance of truth then is preserved, and the perfection of the Divine word fully vindicated. The gospel remains unclouded by suspicion. The heart is left free to enjoy the sweet assurances of a love which has provided for all things up to the day of judgment itself. And "herein is love made perfect with us, that we should have boldness in the day of judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world." Already have we a

place in Christ before God, and are thus as He is. If the eye of the Holy One rested on us as we are in ourselves for a moment, He could not tell us so ; but seeing us in Christ, it is only Christ He sees, and Christ can never change. It is no conditional salvation we have got then, or one conditioned only upon what Christ is for God. In that beauty we abide.

He who has given us such a place would have us know it without question, and enjoy it to the full.

CHRIST, NOT CREEDS—A WORD ON “WHAT HAVE I?”

Many of the stays we have had in a former position are necessarily lost for faith. Now, there is always danger, when the soul has got away from certain landmarks, because of not having their guidance, of its getting astray. If Satan cannot keep persons shut up through habit, he seeks to get them astray. These landmarks keep a person out of the place of faith, but then they do preserve from rationalism and the like that float about the world.

Take, as an instance, the Roman Catholic system, it is infidel as to almost every part of the Gospel ; if I believe there must be a purgatory, that is the denial of my being purged from my old sins ; again, the repeated sacrifice of the mass is the denial of the once-offered and eternally efficacious sacrifice of Christ. It is infidelity ; but infidelity in a shape that keeps its credit in great orthodox principles. There is a check upon man's will ; but it is not truth secured. Where we find Satan leading souls astray is, that certain facts are owned, but when we come to the application of these facts it is all wrong. Truth is so far admitted that it looks like disrespect

to call this in question, but after all it is respect for Christ. Whilst one may be very thankful that the Providence of God has provided certain things, the consequence is that when the soul is let loose and gets into the region of faith, where faith is not at work, the soul, if not guarded by reverence for Christ, kept stayed upon Him, runs wild.

There is a tendency of the hour to latitudinarianism, and we must beware of it. The character of the infidelity of the day is not wicked stickling against truth, but indifference with regard to it. God is made to be indifferent to everything the devil pleases to bring in, and this is called *charity*.

It looks exceedingly disagreeable, hard and harsh, when that is resisted, when truth is endeavoured to be held in faithfulness. Latitudinarianism is the character of the rebellion of the day—rebellion against Christ. It is well to look Satan in the face, and to call Satan's doing by Satan's name. It is said we are not to judge; but one point makes the soul quiet and steady as to this—can I act, dare I act indifferently to the truth? This settles the mind, where one might be reasoning upon the rightness and wrongness of this or that. *I dare not*, and that most distinctly, as the broadest principle that can possibly be for the Church of God. If we have got away from the apathy of that which does not act upon conscience, we have got away *for Christ*. We are redeemed into godly, unhesitating faithfulness to Christ. A question of bearing with ignorance, infirmity, and the like, is altogether another thing. God is charity; and God is not, and can never be, indifferent to a single thing that concerns the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

How far, in the constant intercourse we have with the world, is it found that the spirit of the world is kept out? Many and many a thing to which we were dead a

while since we may not be dead to now. It is always by truth that the Lord works. If God has brought in great and blessed truths, and refreshed souls by them, there comes to be the bearing of this on every-day practice of life, and the soul is brought to prove, when the enjoyment of truth declines, whether it has got the faith that will last. We shall find that faith is not so much put to the test in making great sacrifices as by patient continuance in well-doing. If Abraham had been mindful of that country from whence he came out, he might have had opportunity to have returned, (Heb. xi. 15). So Paul, "I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ," (Phil. iii. 8). Now, truth will not do that for a man; unless he has Christ as an object he will soon not be able to say, "This one thing I do, &c.," (v. 13.)

What is needed is reference to Him who alone is power. There are evil days coming, and the stays and props men have been leaning on, God takes away for *faith* before they are taken away from them in *fact*. If official truths were taken away would not ten thousand errors spring up, and perhaps only error be maintained. I do not doubt dark days are coming; what the Church has to do is to carry the light within it. We have been accustomed to lean upon official truth—it is going down in the world—and God is making His people feel that we must have that to lean upon that requires faith, and that when we have lost our props we must have that kind of faith that is not held up by props.

Is there individual, earnest purpose of heart to hold the truth because it is God's truth, when we have lost that which is man's?

Should we fear when the Lord is sifting? Not a bit. "I will sift them," says the Lord of Israel, "among all

nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth." (Amos ix. 9.)

It can never cease to be true that Christ has a body down here. There may be failure, but faith can never give up the fact that, in God's mind and in Christ's affections, there is a body, and a body to be owned. Herein is faith. David prays, "Let it even be established, that Thy name may be magnified for ever, saying, The Lord of hosts is the God *of* Israel, even a God *to* Israel." We can bring down from the Lord the grace that is needed for the Church as it is.

As to the bearing and connection of prophecy on practice in the Church, we have to distinguish between a moral perception of the state of things around us and prophecy. We may not see a single thing that we can fix upon as the accomplishment of prophecy, but we do see principles at work, the end of which will be the accomplishment of prophecy. Prophecy is the revelation of God's facts in establishing his principles. A certain grand act of God establishes a judgment upon man's conduct on the one hand, and man's conduct on the other. The separation of the tares and wheat is an actual judgment of things definitely which have been discerned in principle all through; but that discernment was not the fulfilment of prophecy. Principles are at work and certain occasional judgments, but the spiritual mind will discern the principle at work. It was not prophecy when the Lord said, "How is it that ye can discern the face of the sky and the earth but do not discern this time?" (Luke xii. 56). Persons ought to be able to discern the times, they ought to be able to discern by spiritual perception the principles of evil that will be accomplished in prophecy. I see things at work, and get, in the full development, warning to my soul about what is going on now.

The spiritual man does not take prophecy as a present thing. The power of blessing is what he has in actual, living communion now with the Lord Jesus Christ. "This thou knowest," says the apostle, "that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me. Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." He could not rejoice in circumstances, but then he must rejoice in the Lord. We give ourselves, when it is not so, the anxiety of the world's condition. Instead of its resting in gloom upon the disciple's spirit, the word is, "and when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." (Luke xxi. 28.) It is to us a *promise* that the Lord is going to shake, not the earth only, "but also heaven." (Heb. xii. 26.) But if we have that which ties us to earth, it will not be realized as such. "Here we have no continuing city." The trials and difficulties we meet with in the progress of things toward judgment make us feel that. We can not count upon the Protestantism that gives us quietness and liberty to preach the Gospel. All this is very uncomfortable to one not in the place of faith, to one seeking fleshly ease.

In the address to the angel of Sardis (Rev. iii. 6), there is as solemn a word as any, and one that shews us how God maintains His standard when we have given it up: "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found thy works *perfect before God*. Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent. If, therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee *as a thief*, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." What do we find in the epistle to the

Thessalonians, where the Church is addressed in its own position of waiting for the Lord? "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. *But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.*" (1 Thess. v. 1-4.) The professing Church is treated as the world. When we turn to the address to the Church of Philadelphia, (Rev. iii. 7-13), He leaves the Church this: "I know thy works; behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." There was personal faithfulness to Christ. "Behold I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." And what of the coming of Christ here? The very opposite to what is said to Sardis. "Because thou hast kept the word of *my* patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out, but I will write upon him the name of *my* God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from *my* God, and I will write upon him *my* new name." As they had been identified with the patience of Christ, they would be identified with all the power of that name.

CHRIST'S SYMPATHY—A WORD ON TEMP- TATION.

HEB. II. 18 ; IV. 15—ROM. VIII. 3.

Does the renewed soul want the sympathy of Christ in its sinful feelings? No: its language is that of the apostle, (Rom. vii.), "the evil which I do I allow not;" "it is *no more* I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." The renewed soul wants the sympathy of Christ's strength to judge these feelings and put them down. It does not desire sympathy in sin, but strength against it.

It is in the new man ~~we~~ we are one with Christ; it is by Christ risen we are quickened; and His sympathy is with us in our new man, which manifests itself by striving against sin, hating and condemning it; by saying, "it is no more I;" and by bearing trials of opposition from without, which press upon us as holy persons, and which we suffer, and *in proportion as we are holy persons*. The sufferings of Christ in us are the sufferings of a holy, loving nature, in the midst of evil. Our giving way to sin is not the sufferings of Christ in us: our remedy for *that* is the atonement of Christ—what He suffered *for us*—and the entire absence of sin in Him who represents us, is our comfort. With the knowledge of forgiveness we seek to walk in the strength of the new life, in the conflicts of which we have His full sympathy.

We should want sympathy in the sorrow of actual transgression, were Christ to sympathize with us as to sin. And yet even in this, we have that which may be termed sympathy. But how and where? In His having borne the penalty on the cross; in His having been "bruised for our iniquities and wounded for our transgression." It is precisely in the discovery that He did bear our transgressions, and so hath justified us, in

the knowledge that He hath "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself," that we have comfort under all sense of sin. Our comfort does not consist in *His* having been conscious of our evil disposition, for had He been, He could not have been said to have "known no sin," and therefore could not have been "*made sin*" for us, in that full, unlimited sense which our need, as believers in Him, demands. Our need would not have been met had there been in our representative subdued sin—a mind kept always dead, a consciousness of evil such as a regenerate man has. His would have been no real, adequate sympathy for sinners such as we are. We must be atoned for in all our sins; and by Jesus, *MADMAN SIN for us*, we are so atoned for, we get full sympathy. That is, we get peace and comfort at the first, through the work typified in the great day of atonement, and again by the Spirit's witness, as seen in the type of the red heifer. The blood of bulls and goats shadowed forth that one "putting away of sin," which Christ effected by the sacrifice of Himself; and by His blood on the mercy seat we have access to God. In the kept ashes of the red heifer, sprinkled with running water, we have the *continual* witness that sin *has been* put away by the sacrifice. To both these the apostle refers in Heb. ix. and refers as *purging the conscience*, which is what we want as to sin—not sympathy,* save this immense, invaluable sympathy, but Christ has put it away.

But we do want actual sympathy in a godly life; for we are living under the effects and trials of evil and sin in the world, though belonging to a higher scene spiritually. It may be ours to suffer pain for Christ, reproach and shame enough to break the heart; contradiction,

* We cannot want sympathy as to sin till we are conscious of it. If then we have Christ's sympathy, from similarity of trial, He must have been conscious of it, too! This would destroy every ground of hope.

desertion, want of sympathy and likemindedness. In return for love we may have hatred, misrepresentation and words daily mistaken, snares laid to entrap and dishonour the name of God through us. These things, if we fail not under them, must be utter pain to us. Then there is the insensibility of those around to the love of God; the evil estate of the Church of God's planting; the little fruit of grace in those who receive the Lord; the insensibility to the hopes He sets before us; the blindness to His testimony on many important points; the prevailing of Satan's power over so many. Now, the more we are like Christ, the more grace we have, the more holy we are, the greater sense we have of His love, the greater love we have to men and to the Church, the more and greater will be our sufferings; and if drawn into the activity of love, the more must be our endurance of the contradiction of sinners. Though feelings such as these are ours regarding the evil around, they are not necessarily connected with sin in us; on the contrary, they are the feelings of the new man which abhors sin, and needs the sympathy of Christ. He was perfect in spirit and thought, and therefore perfectly felt the evil. Had there been any one evil in His nature, He could not have felt as He did, the thorough evil all around him, but *there was none*, and therefore He can have perfect sympathy with the trials of the godly; for, when we read of His being "tempted like as we are," the apostle is speaking for the comfort of saints in trial, calling them to consider Him who endured the contradiction, lest they be weary. This is the pure sympathy the saint wants, the sympathy of one who, in Himself, had no acquaintance with evil, and therefore no tolerance of it.

And now, as to the word *temptation*. To be tempted is another thing from having a lust to sin—the carnal

mind. Temptation is used in Scripture, not for internal sin at all, nor in connection with it, save where it is the actual giving way to the temptation, by reason of sin. "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed." (Jas. i. 14.) "Tempted" here is the giving way to the trial. But temptation, otherwise, is just the trial of what is in the person so tried; and this may be very various. God, in this sense, may be tempted. We know from His very nature, and by the Word, that He "cannot be tempted with evil," yet it is said of Israel, "they tempted God in the desert." They tempted, and were "destroyed of the destroyer." God was put to trial as to what He was, and this was just their sin. In Him, it need not be said, absolute, essential perfection was found. "Neither tempteth He any man," in the way of evil or lust, yet "God did tempt Abraham;" He put Abraham to trial, and proved the grace which He had given Him, saying thereon, "Now, I know." (Gen. xxii. 12.) Exhibition of grace was the result of the trial, of the temptation, here. So, we pray, "Lead us not into temptation," the word clearly does not mean lust or evil, but a trial of what is in us. We know our weakness and therefore add, "but deliver us from evil," or the evil one. But the Spirit of God did lead Christ into temptation, (Matt. iv., Luke iv.); not surely into any exercise of an evil nature, but into Satan's trial of what He was. The first Adam, confessedly innocent and having no sin, yet was tempted that he fell into sin; so that clearly, here, temptation does not imply existing evil or a sinful nature. He was tried and fell; weakness and fallibility being there, though not sin. We are tempted—what is in us is tried—and in our nature evil continually is found. Through divine grace, however, as new men in Christ we may get the victory and "be more than conquerors," glorying in tribulations, happy as enduring.

The *sinful nature* then is distinct from the temptation, though discovered by it. Christ was tempted—tried in all points—according to the likeness of his brethren, and, as the result, nothing was found in Him but perfectness. Adam was tried, and fell. We are tried, and, owing to our lack of strength in Christ, and to our not mortifying the “old man,” evil often shows itself, and we are “drawn away and enticed.”

If sin were an essential element in temptation, then would sin be justified in all our temptations. But with us as new men in Christ, the opposite is the case. “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man”—a human temptation—and “God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” (1 Cor. x. 13). God can give all needed strength to the inner man; therefore, to yield as we often do, is sin and is unjustifiable. We ought always to overcome, and sin ought always to be condemned. It was in doing this *perfectly*, that Christ “condemned sin in the flesh.” (Rom. viii. 3.) He placed Himself as to trial, fully in our circumstances, and having never, in any sort or sense, given way, He proved that what does give way—the lust that entices and makes us yield to temptation—is sin. Thus he has condemned sin, not in *His* flesh, but in *the* flesh; being Himself without sin, passing through all the temptations and finally being made a sacrifice for sin. He has proved and condemned sin in us, though He gives us peace concerning, and in spite of it, because of His sacrifice for sin. His being tempted in all things *apart* from sin, is precisely the way in which He has condemned it, not in its acts, (that had been done, and would again be done in due time), but in its source. More correctly, “God condemned sin in the flesh,” by

the exhibition of a tempted man, in every point without it. The law could not do this ; it found sin everywhere and only called it into knowledge and even into action. The law was "weak through the flesh ;" it connected itself with men as they were, leaving sin as it was ; it might prove that man had sin, but only thereupon condemned them. But God has effectually done what law failed to do, by sending His own Son, free from every spot, stain, or motion of sin—free from it in His nature. Sending Him in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, He condemned, in propitiation withal, sin in the flesh ; and the life which we have of Him strengthened in His might by His spirit in the inner man, judges and condemns it in us, as not according to Christ. The force of the passage depends upon the absence of sin from Christ's nature. The sinlessness of His nature, and consequent *perfectness* under temptation, proves that what gives way in us is *sin*. It is that in us which was not in Him, and which yields to the trials of Satan : it is sin, and it is condemned.

And this, as to the fact, is the doctrine of Scripture. "He was in all points tempted like as we are, (according to the likeness He took), yet without sin—apart from sin—it formed no element in His temptation. The "yet without sin," is the same as in the passage, "He shall appear the second time *without sin*." (Heb. ix. 28). As free as He then will be from it, so free was He in the temptations He went through. Thus, we have the express testimony of Scripture on the point. Every trial, every sorrow, every circumstance in which the enemy of our souls would try Him, He was tempted with. In His nature He was sinless. He sympathizes with us in every trial of ours as new creatures. He judges and strengthens us against the suggestions of our "old man," which God *has* judged. With it he

can have no sympathy now. On the cross He *has* shown His sympathy as to sin, in delivering us from its power and consequences; and this He alone, as knowing no sin, could do, by being made sin for us.

KEY-NOTES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS we may take up first of those which relate especially to individual life and walk. It gives our furnishing for it by the coming in of that which is the perfect fulfilment of Old Testament types, and more. We have the substance of all, but in One in heaven, which necessarily puts us upon a path of faith in the meantime until we reach it.

In the very first verses we have the heavenly position of Christ, but after having revealed to us Divine glory, and then purged our sins that we might be able to enjoy it (i. 1-3). Then what He is to us in that place above; not our place in Him, but the fulness that there is in Him to meet our need as passing through the world.

First, He is Son of God, inheriting thus a more excellent name than angels (i. 4-14), yet also Son of Man, made lower in His love than they, to taste death for every man, and thus attaining all power in the world to come (ii. 5-9). It was necessary that He who took hold upon the seed of Abraham should stoop to know their whole condition, that He might, as their Saviour-leader, perfected (as that) through sufferings, break the power of their adversary (14-15), make atonement for their sins (17), and know how to succour them while passing through the scene of trial (18).

As Captain of salvation, He is now contrasted with Israel's former leaders. Moses had served in the house

in the which God had dwelt (but behind a veil) in the midst of the people. The truth now, of which this was the imperfect shadow, is that His people *are* His house; Christ not serving in it merely (although that, viii. 2), but *over* it as Son. Again, the true "rest" for faith was not the land into which Joshua (iv. 8) brought the people, but one (the true Sabbath) wherein God Himself rests. To this we labour on, and the Word of God tries us by the way, detecting the unbelief of the heart, as with those whose carcasses fell in the wilderness the command to enter Canaan (chap. iii., iv).

Our weakness, which the wilderness exposes, introduces us now to the high-priest. We must remember that ch. 2, 3, is simply the *Jewish* high-priest, and that the Lord is contrasted with them as to this in vii. 26-28. His title is two-fold: first, that *as man* born into the world He was Son of God; secondly, that He went through all that was against those for whom He exercises His office (v. 5-10). The *order* of His priesthood is what Melchisedek's was in the way he is presented in the history,—underived and unchanging (vii). It is not that He is acting yet after the *manner* of Melchisedek; that will be in the millennium. He is fulfilling the Aaronic types, but is not a priest after his order, and is a heavenly not an earthly one. But the law hung altogether upon the priest; the priesthood therefore being changed, the law is changed, and we now draw nigh to God, as under the law none could do (18, 19). The law made nothing perfect; the work of Christ has done this for us, taken us out of the ranks of *sinners*, and therefore the high-priest who "becomes" us is One "*separate from sinners*" (26).

Ch. v. 11-vi. 20, is a parenthesis; a warning, in view of their dulness in apprehending Christian truths, against slipping back into Judaism. The things in verses

1, 2, were all found in Judaism, which, along with many eternal truths, taught also a system of ordinances, as baptisms (the Jewish purifications), and laying on of hands. Spite of what was true in it, if they forsook for it the Christian privileges and profession, they would be found open rejectors of the Son of God (4-8). Still, where the apostle had seen real fruit in any of them, he was persuaded this would not be; and to these he speaks of the absolute certainty of their hope (9-20).

Ch. viii.-x. goes on to show how the work of Christ separates *us* from sinners; * so that such a high priest becomes us. His ministry is "established upon better promises" than those of the old covenant under which Israel failed. In *that* it was a question of their fulfilling of their responsibility; in the *new* covenant all is absolute promise, God securing the fulfilment of the whole—not "*thou shalt*," but "*I will*" (6-13). Accordingly, with the old covenant "carnal ordinances" only were connected, which could not perfect the conscience before God. They were only the types of that which really avails, and even as to that a shadow, not the perfect image (ix.-x. 1).

Thus the constant repetition of the Jewish sacrifices was simply the standing witness of their own inefficacy. If God really purged, it was perfectly and for ever. So the one sanctified by the offering of Christ was perfected perpetually by it, so as to have no more *conscience* (not consciousness) of sins (x. 2-14). This the Holy Ghost witnessed of as belonging to the new covenant, the sins of those converted to God no more coming up in His mind (15-18). The holiest was therefore now accessible to a people upon whom sin never could be

* We must remember that, all through, *Hebrew* Christians are addressed; although, of course, the truth is substantially the same for any *Gentile* believer of the present day.

charged. Duty was to "draw near," the heart being cleansed by the blood of Christ from a bad conscience, and the body (the outer man) by the application of the Word of God (the "pure water"), v. 19-22. All blessing lay herein, and therefore none outside it, so that those who forsake this ground find nought but judgment (23-39).

What follows is exhortation based upon the doctrine thus developed. Being called to walk thus through the world as pilgrims, and without even the sensible though carnal things of Judaism, they are reminded that *faith* was always that by which men obtained a good report. It alone availed for acceptance (xi. 4), walk (5, 6), and testimony (7). It wrought patience under trial (8-19), apprehension of the mind, and experience of the faithful goodness of God (20-22), renunciation of the world (24-27), triumph over opposition (29-30), endurance of persecution (33-38). But above all this cloud of witnesses to a faith which pleased God, Jesus Himself had furnished the complete example of it in His own person (xii. 1-4).

The path too was a needed discipline of God for His own, the discipline of a love ever seeking the blessing, the holiness of those whom He loves as children (5-12).

Then as to the sensible things of Judaism, *they* were all characterized by Sinai-darkness, which even overshadowed Moses' own soul (18-21); while Christians are brought face to face with a grace filling heaven and earth finally with blessing, so that even the *shaking* of heaven and earth becomes to us a promise, as introducing a kingdom never to be moved (22-29).

The final exhortation is to go forth to Jesus outside the camp of Judaism, to find there "an altar" whereof we are privileged to eat the already accepted peace-offer-

ing, and where we as priests can offer up our acceptable offering of praise and of a consecrated life, confessing the name of Jesus.

SCRIPTURE OUTLINES.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN (CONTINUED).

The eleventh chapter reveals where these green pastures for the flock of Christ are to be found. They are found upon resurrection ground, and to enjoy them as we ought the power of resurrection must be known. Death is upon all the scene below, and the Lord has not come to alter this as to the old creation, but to lead us outside it and above it. This is brought before us as usual in this Gospel, the spiritual truth embodied, so to speak, in the outward facts of the death and resurrection from the dead of Lazarus. A *risen man* lives and moves among men, a witness to the power and glory of the Son of God. Of course with Lazarus it was restoration merely to natural life among men; but we must not stop short at that, but view it as the type and figure of that spiritual truth to which the Lord gives utterance, and which is the key-note of the chapter,—“I am the resurrection and the life . . . he that liveth and believeth on me shall never die.”

The disciples are all under the power of death, either on the one hand vainly looking for the Lord to use His power to keep it off, or when they find that He does not do this, prostrated by its presence. “Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick.” He *did* love all of them, yet after He hears it He tarries still two days in the same place where He was, and lets him die. Then when He says at last, “Let us go unto Judea again,” they marvel that

He should go back to where so lately they had sought to stone Him. When they find He means to go, love itself in them can only say, "Let us go also, that we may die with him." Death fills their vision. They cannot comprehend the quiet words, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth," to refer to that which is such a source of disquietude to themselves. Then when He comes to Bethany, Martha meets Him with the words, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died," words so natural indeed for all of us, alas but too much so, but which are a mere mistake nevertheless.

"Thy brother shall rise again," answered the Lord. "Yes," says her poor stricken soul, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Orthodox enough in her belief, but the thing so far, far off for comfort. As it is with many of us Christians here to-day; we know that the world passeth, we know it is one beyond in which lie all real hopes, and yet this is not enough to bring us out from under the power of present things. The world passeth, but yet we will enjoy it while it lasts. We have no mind to walk outside it in the meanwhile; when it comes to an end with us, of course we must.

But now come the words which I have before remarked give us the key-note of the chapter: "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth on Me shall never die."

Death *had been* in the past, even for believers; they had had to meet it and pass through it. His power on their behalf would be manifested in that last day of which Martha had just spoken; having died, they yet should live. But there was a different thing for those now living who believed: for He being come and passing through death in His own person, abolished it

henceforth for faith. As of old the Ark had cleft the way through Jordan, so that the smallest child in Israel's host could pass dry-shod through its stream, even so now the power and reality of death were gone. He that, then living, believed, had no more death to meet; Himself was "the Resurrection;" believers in Him were landed the other side of death without meeting it, and their whole "life" began upon the other shore. "I am the Resurrection and the Life . . . he that liveth and believeth on Me shall never die."

Sweet life! amid the eternal realities already of that good land, our inheritance for ever! There are the pastures ever fresh, where nothing withers, and where the "still waters" are never ruffled by a storm! Are you there, reader? It is just faith in Him that carries us untouched through the water-flood, and gives us our Gilgal on the other side. Christ has died. We die not, but *are* dead, "dead *with him*." We have passed through death, quite untouched by it, for all its waves and billows passed over and spent themselves on Him. He has come through, and brought us through with Him, "dead with Christ, risen with Christ." "Believest thou this?" is the Lord's own challenge. Martha did not; true and orthodox as again her faith was, that He was "the Christ, the Son of God, that should *come* into the world." The faith of most of us practically reaches no further. But what about the one who has *gone out* of the world, rejected by it, and has ascended up where He was before? Has He left us down here "orphans"? Or are we indeed risen with Him, the Resurrection and the Life?

Spite of her orthodoxy, Martha is puzzled, and she runs away to find one that will understand this better. "The Master is come and calleth for thee," she says to Mary. But even Mary has in this little more intelli-

gence than Martha. Still the sorrowful wail over the old creation: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." "When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled, and said, where have ye laid him? They said, Lord come and see. Jesus wept." These human tears have a strange and unlooked-for power over Him. It is no more with words He answers, but with deeds. He asserts His authority over death, and as He has asserted Himself the Resurrection He makes the power of resurrection known. Divine energy is in the word which calls forth him four days buried and corrupt, and Lazarus walks among men a living man. So, dear reader, do we want, not doctrine merely, but the forth-putting of the self-same power, that we may know this new life by which the Son of God is glorified. A wonderful testimony, indeed, is this risen man to Him. "Then many of the Jews believed on Him." And again, "Much people of the Jews therefore knew that He was there, and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom He raised from the dead; but the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death, because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus." Ah, that was indeed glory to the Son of God; and if it woke up the persecutor too, the malice of the persecutor was, under the controlling hand of God, the means only of working out His own blest and unailing purposes.

This subject is continued on in the twelfth chapter. Jesus is seen at the beginning of it once more at Bethany, the place of resurrection, and in company with those who had now experienced the power of it. "There they made Him a supper." Not often was there such a thing for Him. Another example is in very beautiful contrast

with this. Levi the publican, just called himself from the receipt of custom, "made Him a great feast in his own house," and gathered in a great multitude of publicans and sinners to it. That too was to the Lord's mind. He can find His joy in meeting us in grace upon the lowest level. Just so the Samaritan woman afterward feasted him (see John iv. 31-34). Grace in Him can meet us anywhere, but still most gladly meets us in the blest place in which it came to put us, as in Bethany, the place of resurrection. But Bethany was surely the fittest place possible, and those around Him just the fittest company. The various attitudes in which they are seen are also most appropriate. "Martha served." "Lazarus sat at the table with him." And Mary, she has her box of precious ointment to spend upon the Lord. Thus service, communion, and worship are represented, and Jesus is the spring and power of all; the house is filled with the odour of the ointment, the testimony on the one hand of the soul's deep delight in Him, while on the other of the death which He must die in order to furnish forth such a scene of blessing. "Against the day of my burying hath she kept this," says the Lord.

And here, just in view of the Cross, of which they are to be the precious fruits, we have grouped together some other glories of the One so soon to suffer. He is not only to be the head and centre of such a resurrection-company as we have seen gathered round Him, but King of Israel also, and then Son of Man set over the world to come. Thus He now rides in triumph into Jerusalem, and there the Greeks (or Gentiles) enquire after Him. "The hour is come," He says, "for the Son of Man to be glorified." But there once more the shadow of the Cross passes over His soul. The corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die, or it abides alone. His soul troubled as it might be with the dread reality before it,

He seeks not escape from it, but seeks the Father's glory in the very place of the death. That glory of the Father secures His resurrection (Rom. vi. 4). The world is left under judgment, the prince of it to be cast out, but He lifted up from the earth to be the centre of attraction, the uniting point for all men.

Once more the people cavil, but He argues with them no more. He merely bids them walk in the light the little while they have it, and withdraws from them. Though He came not to judge, His words would judge those who rejected them; though He spake according to the Father's commandment, and that commandment was life everlasting.

A very distinct portion of the Gospel closes here.

PRAISE.

FATHER, thou hast given gifts
Richly for thy chosen sons;
Thou hast promised lofty things
To thy lowly little ones.

"Praise is comely"—

Give us, Lord, a heart to praise.

Grace and mercy thou dost give,
Royal gift for pilgrims' part;
Living streams of waters flow,
Ever welling in thy heart.

"Praise is comely"—

Teach us how to hsp it forth.

Thou hast portioned us with love,
Boundless as the heart's desire;
Thou hast stored for us in Christ
More than neediest need requires.

"Praise is comely,"—

And to thee we praises bring.

THE HEALING OF THE ISSUE.

"And much people followed Him, and thronged Him. And a certain woman which had an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, when she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched His garment; for she said, If I may touch but His clothes I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague."—MARK V., 24-29.

That we should find in the miracles of healing which the Lord wrought upon the body, the types and patterns of spiritual healing, cannot be thought strange. This healing of the soul was certainly the great thing in His mind always. That of the body was a display of Divine power soon to pass away. The records remain not only as the witness of that power manifested in goodness among men, and manifesting the glory of the Son of God. According to His own words with regard to the healing of the palsied man, it was that they "*might know*" that the Son of man had power on earth to forgive sins," that He bade him arise, take up his bed, and go unto his house. The bodily healing, which they *could* see, was to be the assurance of the reality of the spiritual healing which they *could not* see.

This, of course, was not saying that the one was actually a type or figure of the other, but it prepares us at least to find without much wonder the lesser miracle speak of the greater. Nor must we be surprised that no such interpretation of what is here is given us. The perfection of the picture is that it speaks to the eye for itself without the need of any. Even so has the healing of the bloody issue spoken ever since the day of its record here by one "*moved by the Holy Ghost.*"

The expectation of a miracle had brought for a moment a crowd around the Lord. A ruler of the synagogue had besought Him for his daughter, lying at the point of death. "And Jesus went with him; and much

people followed Him and thronged Him." It was for the most part an idle crowd, just such as would be shouting at no distant time, "Away with Him! away with Him! crucify Him!" There is no hint of anything better as to them. Their thronging and pressing upon Him was no good sign, but the reverse. If they "followed Him," it was outside interest, not love or reverence for Him. No "virtue" went out of Him whom they pressed on, for their need, if need they had. They had no real dealing or intercourse with Him at all.

It is very like what is going on at the present day, when, in these professedly Christian times, a crowd is pressing in the self-same way around the Lord. There is much apparent "following." If we look closer, how much through outside influences, how little from real heart for Christ Himself. How few can speak of "virtue" which has come out of Him for them; of eternal life which they have gotten through Him; of justification from all things by His blood.

Amid all this, however, a need that nothing else can meet brings the soul to Christ, and the touch of faith finds virtue in Him as of old. "A certain woman which had an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse"—how many who read this, perhaps, will say, "That is my picture. How many remedies have I tried for my condition, and I am as far from peace as ever, and more hopeless than ever now of finding it." But let us look at what is here more closely.

"An issue of blood twelve years." A slow, steady, unchecked draining of the life away. A thing not in all its dread significance perceived at once, but surely making itself felt as time goes on, paling the brightness of all the eye looks on and stealing away all vigour of eh-

joyment, untill the pall and shadow of death lies everywhere, and life is labour, and all under the sun is vanity. Know it as we may, or not, this is everywhere a disease we suffer from. Little, if at all, understood in the flush and fervour of youth when the world is yet untried, its reality gradually, but too soon, steals in upon us. "The world passeth away." There is a doom upon it. Its freshness fades. Its blossoms wither. He that drinketh of this water thirsts again; and it becomes more and more impossible to find even temporary satisfaction from it.

This is the effect of the "issue of blood." It is what sin has wrought. It is the mark of Cain, "a fugitive and vagabond upon the earth." Everything is fleeting, nought abiding. Death is the palpable mark upon sin. And oh, when the eye is opened, what a world! Could there be aught but death for it? Could it go on, such as it is, for ever, under the eye of a holy and good God?

But it is *my* sin that brings the want and weariness and dissatisfaction everywhere into my own soul. It is that I am away from God. For if able to look up out of the midst of it all to One enthroned above it, infinitely good as infinitely great, and with Divine power working out unfailingly the counsels of Divine love,—weariness and unrest would be gone, and acquaintance with Him would give peace, deep and unbroken.

But, alas, when I think of Him, conscience has its tale to tell against me, and cast me off from confidence in Him. My indifference, my enmity to Himself, become in my thoughts the argument, (judging Him by myself), that *He* must be careless of or hostile towards me. Sin is upon me, alas, condemning me before Him, and sin is *in* me, accusing Him to my heart; and yet it is with Him I have to do. Here, then, is my issue of blood, draining out of my soul its all of life and joy and satisfaction.

"An issue of blood twelve years!" But that was not all with this poor woman. She "had suffered many things of many physicians." The effort to get relief had thrown her into the hands of those who could accomplish nothing for her, but only added to her affliction. How sure a thing it is, if we have felt anything of *soul-sickness*, that we shall be prone to try any and every invention of man, rather than the Lord's own simple and effectual way of healing. And the equally sure result is, if we are under Divine teaching, that we find suffering instead of healing. God's gospel is the "gospel of peace;" all other gospels fall short of this. Indeed these others are all one at bottom; they bear the marks of one mind from which they all come, for if it is not God's truth we follow, it is the devil's lie.

Thus all men's religious inventions will be found to base themselves upon and suit themselves to the natural thought as to God. They suppose Him against men, and needing to have His heart turned to favour them; and for this purpose some work of man's own needed, to make (as they put it) their peace with Him. Herein is torture enough for a divinely awakened soul. For what is he to do, who has never yet done even his bare duty? How is he to make up for the past, who is for ever adding to his sin? Or if God's mercy will put away the past, still what about this present constant falling short? Will God excuse him again in this? If so, in how much, for this mercy must surely have a limit? "Keep the commandments?" This in the whole he cannot. But "do the best he can;" this too, he finds, he *has* not. Will God,—can He, accept less than even this? Where then draw the line, and upon which side of the line,—accepted or rejected,—does he stand?

Thus all is suffering here, for to such questions there is no answer. Under this system of treatment, if we are

in earnest, like the woman in this story, we are "nothing bettered, but rather grow worse." The end is total bankruptcy, and that every way: "she had spent all that she had."

In such a condition there is one advantage, and that a great one: the "many physicians" disappear. For one simply "lost" they have no remedy,—can hold out no further hope. But one physician, and but one method of cure remains.

"None but Jesus
Can do *helpless* sinners good."

What strange faith comes into the soul at the end of so many trials! "When she had heard of Jesus, she came in the press behind, and touched His garment; *for she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.*" What gave her such strange assurance? Just her need. He suited her so well. His grace in its freeness commended itself so to her. He was no vender of patent medicines, made no profit of the help He brought her. His wondrous prodigality of blessing flowing out of Him for every need, was the broad seal of heaven to His commission. It spoke in her heart with all the sweetness of Divine authority, and she gave herself up to the joy it brought, without a doubt.

This is the kinship—so simple, and yet so much misapprehended,—between "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." For repentance is indeed that which introduces us to the blessed reality of what He is. We "repent," and we "believe the Gospel." Not as if repentance were a legal condition, or legality at all, but on the contrary, the break-down of it. To "abhor ourselves" with Job is not self-righteousness; it is self-emptiness, the conviction of helplessness and evil, to which only the freeness and fulness of the Gospel suits. It is not the *doing* of something for God, but the

conviction of *inability to do*; which shuts us up to simple receiving of the "*gift* of righteousness." Then how simple indeed faith is, and how suited and sufficient a Saviour Christ becomes.

The faith of the woman with the bloody issue found its answer from the Lord: Faith always does, for all it counts upon Him for. "And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she *felt in her body* that she was healed of that plague."

Notice how the Lord's healing distinguished itself from all others. It was no lengthy process. He did not put this woman under a course of treatment, as some interpreters of His dealings with the soul would make Him in that case do. No, it was *immediate* healing. "Straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up." How blessed is this! How sure that as to soul-salvation the Lord's way is precisely similar. "Thy sins be forgiven thee," were His first words to the palsied man. "Thy faith hath saved thee," to many another. Nowhere did He put those who came to Him through a probationary course to get their sins forgiven and to find peace with God. And now we are assured in the Gospel of a peace *made*,—a "peace *preached*" or proclaimed as made. "*He is our peace.*" Faith welcomes this, and enters into it at once.

First faith, *then* feeling; "she *felt* in her body." "Ah," says some one who reads this, "that's what I am waiting for. I want to *feel* that I am healed." But observe, dear reader, *she* did not *wait* to feel. She said, "If I may but touch, I *shall* be healed." She touched, with the assurance that the touch brought healing with it. How much more should you come to Him now with the assurance that *you* are received, when He says, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Come to Him, saying, "I know Thou receivest me," and

you will find feeling the result of faith ; but if you *wait* for feeling to tell you you are received, you are dishonouring Him by discrediting His word, and how can you expect happy feelings while you are doing so ?

Here all is in its place. Her feelings were the honour put upon her faith. She had hold of the blessing, never doubting it was hers, although she had no other assurance but the grace which was flowing out around. We have, on the other hand, the distinct positive word of the Lord that whoever comes to Him is received.

"Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up." And what a wondrous healing is that with us, when the "salvation of God" makes us to know the "God of salvation." Not against us, as we thought, but having righteous title to show Himself for us through the Cross of Jesus ; our "issue of blood" healed by the shedding of the blood of our spotless Substitute. No work of our own sufficing ; but no work of our own needed. And all revealed in such unclouded light, that not to have simple certainty of it is unbelief, and sin. How the heart is brought back to God by this wondrous manifestation of what He is, and is to us ! He who has given Jesus for us is the One in whose hand all things are. To know this is quietness and assurance of heart.

One word more. In the case of this woman, the Lord claims from her the public acknowledgment of what she had got from Him. She would have stolen the cure and got off unperceived. But no ! she must own *Him* now, that He too may own *her* before them all. "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole ; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague." Let me urge this upon all healed ones, the claim which the Lord makes on them for open confession of Him. It is everything for happiness as Christians to be confessors of Christ, to be open, decided followers of His. It will cost us something before a

world which rejects Him still, but it is a small cost, for an infinite gain; for the principle is always true, "Them that honour Me will I honour." The Lord give us boldness, beloved brethren, and devotedness to Him who has bought us with His precious blood, that we might be a people formed for Himself, to show forth all His praise.*

WHY THE FLOOD CAME.

A LESSON FOR OUR TIMES.

"And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord." Aye! the presence of the Lord suits not man when he is bent upon wickedness and self-will, and as with the younger son, who having asked for "the portion of goods which falleth to me," not many days after gathered all together and took his journey into a far country, so likewise here it is written, "Cain went out from the presence of the Lord"—the action was his own. He went out thither where his own way—"the way of Cain"—might be undisturbed.

Fallen human nature has a religiousness of its own, as had Cain. Among the heathen it is to be seen in full development. It will not bow to the true and living God, nor own His way of grace and mercy in Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent; it cannot bear His people; its pleasure leads it out from the divine presence, and there it gets a name upon the earth.

Let us glance at the family of Cain.

His first-born he calls Enoch, (or "dedicated"); he built a city and named it after his son "Enoch." Was it like Absalom that he desired the name to be remembered? *Dedicated* to whom? for what? Whatever he thought, the city looks like an open act of rebellion against the Lord, though a sorrowful confession of his

own distaste to the future wandering life to which he himself had been doomed. But his family had a name on the earth, for the city was called by Enoch's name. How unlike the heavenly Enoch of the next chapter, who passed over the earth lightly, and left no record save a heavenly one behind him!

Next we find in Cain's family polygamy, which "was not so at the beginning," as said our Lord. But here we read, "Lamech took unto him two wives."

The name Lamech is said to signify "strong." That he was a remarkable man, one greatly characterized in his place, day and family, for energy and wisdom of a certain kind, cannot be doubted.

In one branch of his family, leaving the city, there was a son who was the first ensample of a Nomad cattle-holder; in another son was found the head of the science and art of music—"the father of all such as handle the harp and organ." His other wife's children, too, were not without name, and one of them, Tubalcain, was an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron.

Thus polygamy, character on the earth, and the arts and sciences were found in Cain's family.

Lastly, this "strong one" knew how to subserve himself in his day and generation, by a self-made application to himself of those parts of God's former sayings to Cain which might suit his own purpose. He argued, and gave it out as a testimony, that as God was pledged to vindicate the wilful murderer, Cain, sevenfold, He would vindicate him (an unwilling man-slayer) seventy times seven.

Such was the family of Cain: a little world (or orderly system) set up by man, in which to make himself happy without God, and out of God's presence. Solemn thought, that reprieve of judgment should be frittered away in self-devised conceits and fading pleasures! Poor

world ! all its pleasures are but for a season ; its day of reckoning is coming, and then where will be Cain's family ? Where will be those that have walked in his "way ?"

The insignificant thing is spoken of first, and afterwards that which is of importance. Cain's family is chronicled, and then comes Seth's family—that is, the world first, and then the line of promise, blessing and descent.

"And Adam knew his wife again ; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth ; for God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew."

Cain was under sentence ; and of his own accord he had gone out from the presence of the Lord ; a new line is "placed" or "set" (Seth) in the place of Abel, who had been the representative of the household of faith. To Seth a son was born, and "then began men to call themselves by the name of the Lord"—so I read it : that is, as Cain was recorded as remarkable for cities, arts, sciences, character, &c., out of God's presence,—so the family of Seth took up *this* as their distinctive mark, "we are the Lord's." Sweet privilege for the meek and lowly, *this* ! But if it were done in pride of heart, it would be the harbinger of judgment. The Lord takes care to put in juxtaposition with this, "And Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image," and he called his name Seth.

The likeness and image of fallen Adam clave still to those who on earth were the Lord's, and were *His* line for blessing and testimony. First observe, how far from brilliant, either as to the things of God or the things of earth, this line of Seth was. As to the earth, nothing glorious is recorded : no city built and named ; no bettering of the human race by discoveries, inventions, or the

effort to strike out some new path, or to bring in some new convenience or pleasure into the family. And this was no bad token for it either. For what is the power by which all these things are cultivated? It is the knowledge of good and evil, which came with the fall, and nothing else. And what do they, in our present condition, bespeak? Of nothing but expediency to meet felt and confessed necessity. In Eden there was no necessity, and until the fall no expedient. The first thought of blending circumstances together so as to meet need, which we read of, is in Gen. iii.—“And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons.” And the second is like unto it (iii. 8); “And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.”

A cover from their own eyes, and a covert from the presence of the Lord, was what in these two expedients, these two wise blending of circumstances, they sought; and is not *a cover from our own eyes and a covert from the presence of the Lord* (something which by darkening our minds may make the sense of His presence less painful) to be seen by faith on all that man thus glories in—arts, sciences, &c.? He seeks them for *himself*, he being in ruin, and without the manifested presence of God with him. In the new heavens, in the new earth, what will be the place such things will have? One need not ask; where God shall be all in all, they could not live.

Down to verse 18, chap. iv., the birth, the living till marriage, the becoming parents, the living after that, the number of children, and the deaths, is pretty much all that we read of. The continuity of the line of blessing which would be found in the *seed to come*,—that was the

great thing for man ; though, to grace divine, every little circumstance of the people of His choice is dear ; every hair numbered ; every circumstance cared for ; and precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints. Still, though the Lord's people are not to be great on the earth in its things, it is, and ought to be, a most humbling thing to see how few attain to any place of distinction in Him or His things. Six links in the pedigree, and no Enoch yet : none as yet of whom the Lord could speak as that they had found grace publicly to identify themselves with Him. I speak not now as to the question of standing in the line of testimony, or as to that of being individually blessed, but of this—why so many of those who are in the line of testimony, who are individually blessed, keep not practically their position of testimony and the power of their blessing, so as to make it manifest to all ? Why, alas, do so very few keep it at all, so as to be manifested to others, and to have their good works go before them ?

God is not unmindful of any work and labour of love for His name's sake ; and that He loves to say the most that He can for His servants, who can doubt ? He made good the standing of Job before his friends better than Job could ; and how graciously withal, does He make them taste the pre-eminency—they must be blessed through Job. He gives Job, too, a better character than he could give himself (Jas. v. 2.) And who can read the eventeenth chapter of John's gospel and not be astonished at the thoughts which the blessed Lord expressed to His Father about His poor feeble disciples. It is the mother's eye which makes the first-born babe so peculiar to her sight ; it was faith-estimate of the people which made Balaam say such things about Israel ; and it is the Lord's own heart makes Him speak so of His disciples. There is no unwillingness in God to praise us

—quite the contrary ; but as for us, there are fifty Lots for one Abraham. And who of us, judging the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye and the pride of life, are walking in heavenly spiritual Nazariteship, as we should ?

But now as to Enoch. His name signifies “dedicated.” If he was dedicated to the Lord of Heaven, and for a testimony upon earth to Him, then his name was as well chosen as was that of the other Enoch in Cain’s family. if dedication to human interests on the earth was that which he was meant for.

We may notice as to this Enoch, the name of his son Methuselah—“(at) his death he sends,” as if some great event were before his mind. And the death of Methuselah just preceded the deluge. Then observe the testimonial for Enoch. His excellency consisted in deeds wrought or service (as men count service) done ; but he had chosen the better part—God was in all his thoughts, and his life told it—“He walked with God.” He walked with God ! Blessed privilege, and open to every member of the family in the household of faith, in every age—*enjoyed*, however, but by few. “He walked with God, and he was not, for God took him ;” and “by faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death ; and was not found because God had translated him ; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God” (Heb. xi. 5), and the testimony in Jude closes his history. “And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him” (ver. 14, 15.)

Brilliant exception to the rest of those whose honoured place was in the line of testimony and blessing before the deluge. How soon after Philadelphian praise and beauty does Laodicean failure and pride appear upon the scene; and how soon after Enoch does the night close in upon the antediluvian world. Indeed it may be that, like the testimony of Peter and John in Jerusalem at Pentecost, Enoch was the token that evil had risen to its measured limit and that judgment was at the very door; for oft, as has been remarked by others, a display of light and power is not the harbinger of blessing to that before which they are set, but of judgment on it and of salvation to others.

Lamech, who, self-deceived and deceiving, prophesied smooth and soft things, was one sign of those last days. He cheered his friends by a testimony that Noah, his son, whose name was well called ("Rest" or) NOAH, "shall comfort *us* concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed." But they to whom he spoke *were all swept away in the flood*, not when Noah "comforted" those to whom God had given sorrow, but when God gave "rest" to Noah in the ark. And who can read of Lamech's conduct in this respect, and think of the way in which, in our own day, the professing church is using prophetic Scriptures, and not tremble! If men will have a "rest" on this earth,—if they think to have glory under the present heavens, and the exaltation of man as he now is,—they will find it in Babylon, the harlot and city; but all there is Godless, Christless, and without the Spirit; earthly, sensual and devilish.

This is not our rest, it is polluted. Noah's inheritance and prospects lay under another canopy, in another sphere altogether, to that which Lamech supposed, and Lamech's tone of speech and thought, though different

from the open wickedness which is afterward spoken of, chimed in with it, and tended to blunt the edge of the prophetic word of judgment coming. As one might have answered Noah, when he was a preacher of righteousness and preparing for judgment, "Nay, your own father and family correct your folly; hear what he said, and how piously he spake." Infidelity does not always scoff openly.

The *second* mark of the last days is recorded, *Ch. vi. 1, 2.* "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

The sons of God were, I presume, those who called themselves by the name of the Lord, and the daughters of men were in Cain's family. And observe, the corruption was from *within* the separated body. It is not said, "The sons of men took of the daughters of God,—but the reverse. It was God's witness which was betraying itself, was mixing the lines which God had separated. And what wonder, when a Lamech was the preacher? Earnestly did Paul warn upon this same subject: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father to you; and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

Alas, if I spake here my thought as to ourselves, it is this:—The world has too much hold over *us*, for us to see how much association with it we have. I condemn no one; I speak for myself and the church of God; the saints are not heavenly and divine in character, as their Head would have them, they are not here below like the widow that is desolate and trusts in God.

Thirdly, man had tampered with God's Word; had trampled down, for the sake of indulging the lust of the eye and the flesh, the barriers which God had raised for His testimony upon earth. The next thing (and what wonder?) is, there is violence against his fellows; "the earth was filled with violence." When the people who are separated unto the Lord outwardly and in profession become known on earth for their giants—their mighty men, their men of renown,—it needs no great acquaintance with the human race, or with the Divine government, to be able to say that violence among men will soon plentifully show itself; and then judgment from the Lord will quickly follow. The boast of our day is not in height of stature nor in width of shoulders, but its boast and glorying is not in the Lord alone; intellect is man's pride now. How perfect is the word of our God in warning as in guidance, and it has said, "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord; for he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited" (Jer. xvii. 5, 6). It is impossible to trust to man *and* the Lord. "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. vi. 25). And again, "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither

let the mighty man glory in his might, and let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exerciseth loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness on the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord" (Jer. iv. 23, 24).

The pride of man has already lifted him above family, title and wealth, in this land and in Europe at least; but not above *intellect*. And when that comes to be honoured, as it will be ere long, with full homage, then will men's hearts be blinded thoroughly to every folly. Let the French revolution be heard, if men will not hear Scripture; and let the stupid follies of the age of *reason*, and its immediate connection with the reign of *terror* be thought of. No considerate mind can doubt that we are on the eve of most eventful times in the history of both Christendom and the world. What are the saints of God about, and where are they? There is but one Power that can keep them free from other influence, and that is the Holy Ghost. Are they led by Him? are they walking in Him? or, are they loose and lax in their walk, yielding now to one influence, and now to another, as it may chance to suit their convenience? The Spirit of God knows all the landmarks of truth; can detect every shoal and sandbank of error. What a blessed thing to have such an One for guide in such a day as this!

May the saints of God humble themselves under Him, and He will enable them to see and understand far more of the written Word than they now do, and give them more power too, to use what they have. But let them get and keep themselves entirely separate from evil. Let "cease to do evil, learn to do good," be the guide of their lives.—*Extracted.*

"CONTINUANCE."

It is a good thing to keep in mind the words, "patient continuance in well doing." It is the character of the Christian's walk, as given in the second of Romans. To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honor, and incorruptibility, God will render eternal life. The two things go together, eternal life at the end, here patient continuance in well-doing. The end is sure and blessed, but the way to it, as here laid down, is also our sure portion.

There are times of excitement in the Christian life, but in the time of quiet, the daily round, the heart is more deeply tested. That which is of God is confirmed; what is not, is sifted. We learn of God for ourselves, and learn to be patiently subject to Him; so wholesome a thing, because there is less danger than usual of what is merely of nature entering into our enjoyment. It is proved whether we are walking with God like Enoch, or only with our brethren like Lot, and whether we are walking before God, under His eye. Pure religion and undefiled *before God and the Father* is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. Patient continuance in well-doing is by the power of God, and under the eye of God. Such passages are full of sweetness to us, for we find the need of patience, while we rejoice in the well-doing. And we who have come to God, know that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. There must be no vagueness or uncertainty about this. And then we seek for glory, honor, and incorruptibility. And that glory, the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, sheds its light on every little deed we do. We have been called by the gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Seeking that, we

continue in patience here : " Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

E. S. L.

KEY-NOTES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS, as it was the earliest written, so is it the simplest in character perhaps of all the epistles. It presents us with a beautiful picture of what conversion to God is. The Thessalonians had been but a very short time converted, but the whole country round was full of the wonderful change that it had wrought in them. The word had come to them "in power and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance," and the "work of faith and labour of love and patience of hope" spoke very manifestly of their election (i. 3-5). They had accepted a path of suffering in the world, sustained by the joy of the Holy Ghost within them (6). They had turned from idols to the living and true God, and, delivered from coming death, were waiting for their Deliverer, the Son of God from heaven (9-10).

We next see how much the character of the workman influences the character of the work. Ch. 2 gives us the earnestness (2), sincerity (4), and self-sacrificing love (9) of the true workman, accompanied by a personal holiness which gives power to exhortation of others (10-12). Thus coming to them, the word of God had wrought effectually in them, and given them to be sharers of Christ's rejection by the world (13-16). On the other hand they were carried on the Apostle's heart as a precious burden only to be laid down at the feet of Christ in glory (17-20), and his solicitude made it as it were a

matter of life or death to him that they should stand fast in the Lord (iii. 9), and he knew that all their present brightness was not of itself a guarantee that the grossest evil would not come in (iv. 1-12).

Faith, love and hope are the characteristics of the Christian. The Apostle now develops what the last of these is in more detail. They were not to sorrow over those that had fallen asleep in Christ, as if these were thereby shut out from their portion with Christ in the kingdom. These would God bring with Him when He came to set it up (13-14). Indeed they would be raised before even the change of the living saints; and while the Lord was yet "in the air," before He came to earth at all, all would be caught up together to meet and be with Him (15-18).

But as for the times and seasons connected with the *day* of the Lord, Christians had no need to be informed. It would take the world by surprise like the night-visit of a thief; but the "day" could not so surprise those who were already of it—its own children; for them it was salvation and not wrath, and if faith and love were their breast-plate in passing through the world, the hope of this salvation was a helmet for the head.

THE SECOND EPISTLE is here as elsewhere a supplement to the first. It gives the development of the evil which will have its judgment in the day of the Lord, and we find, also, that it is not merely the ungodliness of a heathen world, but a mystery of iniquity within the professing Church itself, to end in utter apostacy and strong delusion as a divinely sent judgment upon those who while they had the truth received not the love of it, that they might be saved. In contrast with the coming of Christ it gives the coming of Antichrist, with all power and signs and lying wonders, the full energy of Satan, to meet his doom on the day of the manifestation of Christ's presence (ch. ii).

The beginning of this evil was even then in the Church; the way to meet it was by firm adherence to the word of God, withdrawing from every one who walked disorderly (iii.), jealous of the least appearance of the lawlessness, which was ready to come in as a flood, as soon as the providential restraint upon it which there then was should be removed (ii. 7.)

SCRIPTURE OUTLINES.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN (*continued.*)

In the chapters that follow, the Lord's departure out of the world is at hand (xiii. 1.) and implied in all that He does and says. Nevertheless, the disciples are not to be left orphans (xiv. 18. *marg.*) He is coming to them, to be with them still for faith, and they see Him, while the world does not. The new position that He is taking does not sever them from Him, but makes their portion with Him even now a heavenly one, while they wait to be actually received to Himself in the Father's house (xiv. 2, 3).

We see, then, how necessary a link the doctrine of the 11th and 12th chapters is with the following ones. Hence in the 13th, loving them with an unchanging love, not blind to the evil in them, but with all power to ensure their blessing. He cleanses them that they may have part with Him (8.) The literal feet-washing, which offended Simon Peter, had a deeper meaning than he could then understand (7). It is the practical cleansing by the gracious ministry of the Word from all the defilements that we gather by the way. The *feet* are what come in contact with the ground. The man so cleansed is already in other respects clean. He is *bathed* before as to the whole body, (as the first "washed" in the

10th verse literally means. The spiritual meaning is thus evident. The first washing is "the washing of regeneration." But the regenerate man still needs to have the daily defilements of the way cleansed off in order to have "part," or fellowship, with Christ. This is not forgiveness, but the Word of God judging everything contrary to Him so as to give the soul practical deliverance from it, that we may have company with Him who cannot walk with us in evil ways.

For this, there must be the putting our feet into Christ's hands. If we have gathered defilements, He alone can cleanse us. We must put our feet at once, with all their defilements, into His hands, that He may cleanse them. There is no condition of soul in which we may not, if we will, turn to Him and find Him near to us as ever, yea, stooping in His love in only the more lowly fashion, to serve us still. In that near and intimate place which grace has given us, and which, therefore, never can be forfeited, will He teach us what sin is, and make us abhor it and ourselves because of it.

But let us mark the gentleness and tenderness of the Lord's ways here. No lowlier service could love assume than this of one who "knowing that the Father had given all things into His hand, and that He came from God and went to God, riseth from supper and laid aside His garments, and took a towel and girded himself." What "grace" unites with "truth" in this symbol of deeper things. No evil passed unnoticed but love occupying itself with it,—judging the sin—cleansing the one who has fallen into it.

And how deeply important the remembering this in that second application which the Lord makes of this act of His to a similar duty which we owe to one another. "Ye also ought to wash one another's feet." We must be *at* one another's feet, if we would wash them.

No lordly superiority to one another,—no bitter judgment of evil—can interpret aright this lowly and loving service. What need to remember the admonition: "The servant is not greater than his lord, neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him." Yet does he add: "if ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." For is it not, indeed, a happy privilege to be partaker with the Lord in that ministry of blessing so dear to His own heart? And what a result of happiness on all sides would there be, were these words more heeded, and this care for one another more habitually exercised.

What follows this is the treachery of Judas. Having gone unchecked and unchanged through all the manifestations of Divine love and glory in the Lord Jesus, the result is he is made thereby a fit tool for the devil. The sop from the Lord's own hand, the mark of favour and intimacy, which might, if anything could, have stopped him in his already conceived purpose, being received in hardness only hastens his ruin. "After the sop Satan entered into him." He goes out immediately into the night, and the Lord begins once more to speak of His death, but as that in which the Son of man is to be glorified, and God glorified in this wondrous Son of man. God glorifying Him in turn would be the issue: but that would take him out of the world where His own still were. They could not follow him yet. In the path which He was now treading He must be alone. Left to themselves in the world, they were each one to be His representatives to one another, in such sort that the love they bore to Him would be manifested by their mutual love among themselves.

Simon Peter, ignorant of himself and of what the Lord has before him, protests his ability to follow Him now, and even "lay down his life for His sake." The Lord lets him know he had but strength to carry him

into the danger, and no more; before the cock crew he would deny Him thrice. In face of all that, He can add: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me." To that issue was He bringing Simon Peter. To it, blessed be His name! He is bringing all His own: from *self-trust* to confidence in Him, and that as what frees the heart alone from trouble.

A FRAGMENT.

If I have been shown truths that my brethren around me have not seen as yet, where there is nearness to God, real spiritual power, these truths are ministered in grace; but all other truths, common to myself and my brethren, are maintained in their place. Let me get all the truth I may, if I am near God I know myself as a poor sinner, less than the least of all saints, like dust in the balance, but Christ has His place. I have a universal link with all saints. But I have a weapon in my hand and power in my heart.

If there is not this blessed flow of spiritual power and affections, *the truths I hold become a badge, and I become sectarian.* But to what is that traceable? To the want of that power that keeps everything in its place, and at the same time gives their full value to common truths. Our very blessings will otherwise become a snare of sectarianism. There is no use in putting the best two-edged sword that ever was in a man's hand, if it would be wielded inexpertly.

When people set up to make a testimony they make a show of themselves. If we take the place of weakness, God will show Himself. If we set about bearing a testimony we shall show our weakness. It is a narrow path. In the presence of God I find I am nothing, but God is

there, and these are weakness and strength together. With any truth and every truth, if you have not God, it will only be the display of weakness and wretchedness. It is not charity to go with any in the broad path. Keep in the narrow path; *have a narrow footway and a large heart.*

ANSWERS TO SPECIAL QUESTIONS.

(14). With reference to a previous question, a correspondent asks, "Is the Book of Life to be opened to no avail?" at the judgment of the dead (Rev. xx. 12), as he infers it would be if no names of those in question were to be found in it.

Ans. It is perfectly clear that all the dead at that time are "judged according to their works" (ver. 13), and clear also for those who will listen to the Psalmist, that upon that ground "no man living can be justified;" clear also, that in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, the self-same day here spoken of, "as many as have sinned without law shall also *perish* without law; and those that have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law" (Rom. ii. 16, 12), and the law curses all under it (Gal. iii. 10): On the other hand, the one whose name is written in the Book of Life does not "come into *judgment*" (John v. 24), and cannot therefore be one of these judged ones. If it be asked, why then the opening of the Book of Life at all? I believe, for my own part, it is the recognition of the "Lamb's" title over all flesh; while the "whosoever was not found written" is a solemn warning to those who in a day of profession have a "*name to live,*" like those in Sardis (Rev. iii. 1). The Book of Life is thus represented as having been, so to speak, in man's hands, who has written in many names only to be blotted out again,

when the Lamb corrects the book. *Then* no other names remain than those "written from the foundation of the world in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain." This is the proper force of Rev. xiii. 8.

Our correspondent thinks, however, that 1 Peter iv. 6 connects itself with his thought of some being found in the Book of Life. I give a perfectly literal rendering of the passage, which may help more distinctly to bring out the force of it: "For this cause also to dead persons was the Gospel preached, that they might be judged, indeed, according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." The Apostle has been speaking just before of how the unconverted Gentiles viewed and spoke evil of the conduct of the converted ones, whereas they themselves were shortly to be called to receive *God's* judgment. For this very cause, he adds here, was the Gospel preached to you, who were then dead [in sins], that while on the one hand men judged you in the flesh, you might receive real life by it, and live according to God in the spirit. The judgment here is not a divine but human one, a judgment formed in the flesh by men incapable of any other,—the world's judgment of true saints living a true and spiritual life according to God. Thus it is not at all connected with Rev. xx. 12.

(15). What is meant by the saints being called "a kind of first fruits of His creatures." If the Church is the first fruits what is the harvest?

Ans. *New* creation is what is called "the creation of God," the perfect idea in His mind, the thing He aims at. Of this Christ is "the beginning" (Rev. iii. 14). The thought is a similar one here. The saints of the present time are the beginning and pledge of the fruition of all God aims at. The harvest will be the complete accomplishment, and to it all the saints of the millennial age

belong. First fruits and harvest are used in various connections in Scripture. As to the present time, Christ risen from the dead is the first fruits, "they that are Christ's at His coming, the harvest" (1 Cor. xv. 23, and comp. Matt. xiii. 30). While in Rev. xiv. 4, 15, first fruits and harvest are used with reference to different companies of saints gathered for earthly blessing.

(16). As to the further questions concerning the Lord's day:—the expression "*on the Lord's day*" is identical as to the preposition with "*on the first day of the week*" in Acts xx. 7. In both cases, it is "*on,*" or "*in.*" Thence nothing can be argued from it.

Next, as to the Gospels and Acts &c., giving "the first day of the week," and not "the Lord's day," is in nowise against their identity. The first expression was evidently the only intelligible one in the Gospels; and in the other passages (which are only two in number, Acts xx. 7 and 1 Cor. xvi. 2), I do not doubt its special appropriateness. In the Gospels we have at least abundant reason for such a term as the Lord's day being applied to it, while in Rev. i., the special suitability of it is very evident. "I was in the spirit *on the first day of the week,*" would be far less so. For one in the spirit, the resurrection day would very naturally surely be the *Lord's day*.

"THOU SHALT CALL ME ISHI" (HUSBAND).

Many beauteous names thou bearest :
Brother, Shepherd, Friend, and King :
But they none unto my spirit
Such divine support can bring.
Other joys are short and fleeting,
Thou and I can never part ;
Thou art altogether lovely,
ISHI, ISHI of my heart.

Earthly loves are very lovely,
Passing, passing fair they seem ;
But they come and go before us
Like some bright and happy dream.
Thou art a reality,
Mine the more when I shall wake ;
These I cast aside as nothing,
ISHI, ISHI, for thy sake.

In thine own fair realms of glory,
In the holiest above,
Choirs of angels chant the story
Of thy wondrous, matchless love.
All my longings are contented,
All my wanderings turn to Thee,
Pole-star of my restless spirit,
ISHI, all in all to me.

When the sun of life is setting,
When the shades of evening fall,
And upon earth's fairest vision
Cometh darkness like a pall ;
When the sun of life is setting,
I shall see thy glorious face,
Finding in thy loving bosom
My eternal resting-place !

—American Messenger.

THE DEMONIAK.

MARK V. 1-20.

"That which doth make manifest is light." The presence of Jesus in the world made manifest its true condition. The various forms of human wretchedness which met His eye and were ministered to by His hand, were not in general unwonted or exceptional forms. Each had its place, and each gave some distinctive feature to the picture of our poor fallen humanity as it lies around us at this very hour. And therein lies for us much of the blessedness of watching our Lord's ways amid a scene like this, where sins and sorrows like our own meet not mere exposure but relief from Him, in whom, as God manifest, "light" and "love" are one.

The story before us may be pleaded, however, as an exception in some measure to this. Without delaying to reason as to it, I desire to point out how, when we look somewhat deeper than the surface, we shall find still what has direct reference and application to ourselves, to the condition of the world—of man at large. But here, as commonly enough, that which is external and bodily is made the type of spiritual and internal things.

"And when He was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs, and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder, and the fetters broken in pieces; neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones."

How terrible a picture of the power of Satan over man ! How still more terrible to find under this bodily possession the type of a spiritual power exercised far and wide over those in whom as "children of disobedience" the "god of this world" works ! There are some features strongly enough marked here to identify this working wherever found.

1. He "had his dwelling among the tombs." The place of death and corruption is Satan's familiar haunt. He delights in the ruin his hands have wrought. But how manifestly his triumph over man is seen, when he can inspire his infatuated victim with his own tastes, and make him a willing captive in the scene of his own degradation. But you think, perchance, reader, "this does not apply to me, however." Of that you must judge for yourself, of course. Certain I am for my part, that this earth we tread is far less the home of the living than of the dead. Its buried generations lie thick-strewn around us. Death is the seal and stamp of God upon a scene which sin has blighted. And from man to the worm of the dust, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop upon the wall, the creature is made subject to vanity. All die. "Sin has reigned unto death."

And thus we are not, when our eyes are opened, "dwellers" but sojourners. "The world passeth away." It is so plain a fact it would not be thought necessary for any to be reminded of it even for a moment. As the Psalmist says, man "seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others." Yet what does he add as to those who see this ? "Their inward thought is that their houses shall continue forever, and their dwelling-places to all generations ; they call the lands after their own names. Nevertheless, man being in honour abideth not ; he is like the beasts that perish. This their way

is their folly ; *yet their posterity approve their sayings.*" (Ps. xlix. 10-13). Thus man takes possession of what he cannot keep. In his heart he is a "dweller," where even for sight and sense he is a sojourner only ; and although God has come in with the proffer of eternal life, and opened heaven to the outcasts of earth, alas little attraction is there for men in general. They are still characteristically dwellers among the tombs, and their wisdom approves itself not as that which "descendeth from above," but as what is *earthly*, sensual, *devilish*" (Jas. iii. 15). "Devilish ;" for what evidence of being under Satan's power could there be more, than when dying men cling to a dying world in spite of very sight and sense, of reason and self-interest alike ? when they would sooner have their toilsome, careworn life, grey hairs and furrowed brows, and disappointments and bereavements all together, than the heaven they so often say they *hope for*, but I fear me, only as the one alternative with hell ? Have you your "dwelling among the tombs," reader ? not loving them of course, but your heart knowing no better portion than a home in the valley of the shadow of death,—in a world which passeth away, and the lust thereof ? If so, how little are you different from this poor demoniac of Gadara, save that the devil that had possession of *his body*, has (alas) possession of *your soul* !

2. But look now at the second characteristic. "And no man could bind him, no, not with chains ; because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces, neither could any man tame him." Just such, once more, are men. Not this man or that man, but men in general. For what are laws, all laws, human or divine, but chains and fetters cast round men ? chains that they often break ; but without

them who would trust another? Take the most plausible advocate of the goodness of human nature; watch him in his dealings with others, and you will soon find what real confidence he has in the goodness which he vaunts. How many of his neighbours will he trust with twenty dollars without good security? and how many of his neighbours would trust *him*? And take away the restraint of law and who would trust himself unarmed upon the public road? You will perhaps say, it is of the exceptionally bad we should have cause to be afraid; but all experience proves you would soon scarce know whom to trust; and Scripture confirms this with its simple, broad, decisive statements. "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." Who has not "lusts"? How long with any before opportunity would combine with fear of punishment removed, to work out the attempt to gratify those lusts? "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God; they are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that EVERY mouth may be stopped, and ALL THE WORLD become guilty before God." How vain, then, to plead exception for any! But—

3. "Neither could any man tame him." What do the efforts of men in this respect amount to? Alas, how do they proclaim their utter disbelief of all

attempts of this kind, who assert that if you preach to men on God's part, and from His love alone, the free gift of a complete, a present, and an eternal salvation, then you open the flood-gates of immorality at once. And though this is only the blindness of unbelief, how can they more tell out their inmost thought that man can never be tamed,—no, not by all the love that God can show him, but that he must be bound with fetters and chains, with the restraint of fear of the day of judgment, because he never can be converted to the pure love of God and good?

4: "And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones." What a spectacle of utter misery! And even so, men are moral suicides. What more common than the expression, "He was an enemy to nobody except himself." And though that is not true of any, for none can injure himself without injuring others; still it is ever true, that of all enemies, a man's worst one is himself. Indeed without our own help no enemy could injure us. Our fleshly lusts, our self-righteousness, our unbelief, with the thousand other evil growths that intertwine themselves with these, are our most real and deadly foes. And whether "in the mountains" of spiritual pride and self-sufficiency, or "in the tombs," the abodes of more palpable corruption, "crying, and cutting himself with stones" is still man's most constant occupation. It is a terrible picture; but a most true and life-like one. Every "child of disobedience" is one in whom "the prince of the power of the air" thus "worketh."

But we are now to look at the demoniac's deliverance. "But when he saw Jesus afar off he ran and worshipped him." That it was not the devil brought him to the feet of Jesus we may be quite sure; and we may get in

this more than a hint of how the devil's power is exercised over those in whom he works. It is not the direct might and mastery of a superior being. Mere force this way would not be suffered. But even if "the god of this world blinds the mind, lest the light of the glorious gospel* of Christ shines in," it is only the minds of "those that *believe* not," and who thus by the rejection of God's grace and love shut themselves up under Satan's power. It is not that the Word is not witness to itself. It is not that the light shining is not evidence for all. No: the condemnation is that "light is come into the world, and men *loved* darkness rather than light." Not that they were ignorant that light was there; but they loved and chose darkness. Will was at work, and the heart rejecting. Thus man yields himself up to the devil, and then and thus his blinding power is exercised, until the deluded soul finds perhaps a hundred good reasons for rejecting what he never wanted to receive. How little conscious we are of how the understanding is controlled by the will, and how men may end by becoming "honest infidels" to the truth, who yet never became so in an honest way.

With Jesus in the scene the power of Satan is broken. "When he saw Jesus afar off he ran and worshipped him." Reader, have you ever done so? Of course, I do not mean, do you go to church on Sunday, or "say your prayers." But I mean, have you ever in your heart of hearts owned and bowed to the One whom man has rejected, and whom God has put at His right hand in glory? Your salvation lies in this, for "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." The way out of Satan's power is in the truthful acknowledging of Him, who was manifested

* Rather, "the gospel of the glory of Christ."

that "He might destroy the works of the devil." Put yourself under His authority and power, and He will manifest it on your behalf and for your deliverance. "Come unto me," says He, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I WILL give you rest."

But in a strange way does the poor victim approach the Lord: "And cried, saying, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God that thou torment me not." Here is the devil and the man's voice mingled, and in such a way you cannot distinguish them. And with how many to whom the Lord has been saying, as we learn He had been here, "Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit," is this the case? For how many come, beseeching Him, the Deliverer, "not to torment them!" With an awakened conscience, and the meaning of the Cross not seen, how natural the thought that the holy and the just God must be against them! And how much positive influence of Satan too is there in this, when He has so distinctly declared His grace, and justified it by a work done for sinners, and for sinners only! Oh that every one did fully understand that it is Satan's work to impute enmity to the good and gracious God, who gave His Son for us, as if *He* needed to be "reconciled," or have His heart changed towards us, whereas it is we, not He, that need the reconciliation. Reader, the "just God" and the "Saviour" are One. The righteousness of God is revealed in the Gospel—in good news to men. God has got title to show out His love to us, by the Cross; and sin is no hindrance to the blessing of those that come to Him, for Christ died for sinners.

"And He asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion, for we are many. And he besought Him much that He would not send them away out of the country." Then follows a solemn

word. "Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. And all the devils besought Him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave."

The solemn thing is that men (though not all men) are called "swine" in Scripture. "Give not that which is holy unto dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before *swine*, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again, and rend you." Again, "it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." Thus the "swine" are those who, possessed of their own sensual lusts, value not the precious things of God though presented to them. Such may have had "the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. ii. 20) though never so as to change the nature, but only skin-deep, washing off the pollutions of the world without, but not reaching to the corruption of the heart within (comp. ch. i. 14); leaving the swine still swine, and of course finally to go back to wallowing in the mire once more. How many such there are, in the heat of so-called "revivals," whether true or false, converted, as they thought, to God, but who in result are found only to have known enough of "religion" to make light of it altogether. In many cases, too, false teaching gives its help to persuade them that it was real conversion they had, though it was not able to keep them out of the world six months, nay, one month, or a week. Thus they can the more thoroughly despise it, knowing the poor worthless thing it was to them. But how solemn this backsliding, when we see in it, as Peter speaks, the manifestation of the swine's nature, and contemplate their "latter end, worse with them than the beginning."

And what more appalling than even the hint, if you will call it no more, that is given by this narrative, that they may be as he out of whom the devil went, but only to return with seven others more wicked than himself, to enter in and dwell there ! “ And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out and entered into the swine ; and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and were choked in the sea.”

Reader, if you be a rejector of God's precious truth, beware ! Is it impossible that He whom thou rejectest may leave thee to manifest the awful reality of Satan's power, driven for the warning of others, headlong to destruction ?

Yet let me say, if the voice of Jesus lingers in your ears,—if you are not yet deaf to it utterly,—still it says, “ come,” and you may come ; and still, whosoever cometh, He will in no wise cast out.

“ And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done. And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, *sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind.*” What a contrast in every feature to the man he was : the shame of nakedness removed ; the restless wandering changed to peace ; the untamed maniac, a terror to all around, now in the quiet possession of himself ; the company of Satan changed for the sweet companionship of the Son of God. Oh to have in our soul the deep reality of all these blessings ! Reader, in their fullest meaning, they are the portion, every one of them, of him who has come to Jesus. If you have done so, come and count over the jewels in thy casket ; if thou hast not come, still the Lord keeps all this for thee ; if thou covet it, it may be thine.

“ *Sitting.*”

For He giveth rest. Himself has done all, finished all, proclaimed it "finished." The grace of God *brings* salvation consequently to all-men (Tit. ii. 11). You have not to work for it, but to take it. If you *have* come, He has received you. You may say, I have not rest; but you have title to it; and His word must be your assurance, *not* your feelings, that He has received you. He casts out *NONE*, not *you* then. Take His word for it, and you will rest.

"Clothed."

"Behold," says the angel of the Lord to Joshua (Zech. iii. 4), "I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." It is God's own hand furnishes this clothing, and clothes with it too. "The best robe" comes to us from the Father's hand and love. "He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." "All *our* righteousnesses are as filthy rags;" but Christ "is of God made unto us righteousness" (Isa. lxi. 10; lxiv. 6; 1 Cor. i. 30).

To those then who believe, Christ is made over. God appropriates Him to them, that the shame of their nakedness may not appear. They are "in Christ" before God, and His beauty and glory are seen upon them. Not only is there "no condemnation," but they are "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. i. 6), and "as He is, so are they even in this world" (1 John iv. 17).

One more blessedness of this cleansed and delivered man of Gadara: he was—

"In his right mind."

For, reader, however "their posterity approve their sayings," the "way" of the men of this world, wise in their generation as they may be, is "folly," and none but he who has Christ has really "wisdom." If you think not so yet, a few steps more upon the road you are taking, and you will be convinced of it. The opened

eye of faith alone sees things as they are. God's estimate of the world will stand. The things "seen" are but "temporal;" the things "unseen" are yet "eternal." "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment." Happy and wise alone is he who can say with the apostle, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." "He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him," says the Lord himself, "shall never thirst."

"And they were afraid. . . . and they began to pray him to depart out of these coasts." Were these in their right mind, alas? Do you know that many who are in like manner respectful to the Lord, are only yet praying him to leave them to the devil? Do you know that multitudes of so-called Christian worshippers, are only respectfully bowing Him out of their houses and hearts? Do you know that for multitudes (to change the figure), Christ is but a dressed-up image to be worshipped in the churches, and left there till the next occasion? not the living One, not the gracious Master and Lord, not the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother, not the companion of the heart and life? And do you know, that in such cases the only *true* prayer they ever make Him is, "Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways?" How different with the really delivered soul: "And when He was come unto the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed Him that he might be with Him." And this desire is of Himself, and shall be fully satisfied. We shall be "ever with the Lord." Before that day comes there is a brief but blessed interval of service given: "Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis

how great things Jesus had done for him ; and all men did marvel."

May such be the testimony rendered to the Lord Jesus, dear reader, by you and me.

"THAT GOOD PART."

LUKE x. 42.

There is a "part" which the Lord Himself calls "good"; and this, be it observed, is not salvation with all its blessings; neither is it service with all its rewards.

True, salvation delivers the soul from judgment and brings it to God; salvation relieves the soul from the awful load of sin and its consequences, placing it in the favour of God and giving it to rejoice in Him; salvation sets free the soul and fits it to render a service of love and thanksgiving, as the Apostle writes in Tit. ii—"The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously and godly in the present world, looking for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Thus, grace not only brings salvation, but it likewise teaches the denial of our ungodliness and worldly lusts. It saves, and then leads the soul in paths of holiness, enabling it to serve in the joy and liberty of redemption.

But, however "good" salvation may be, or however blessed and becoming is the service that the saved and happy soul delights to render, there is yet another "good" which lies within the reach of that soul.

In the closing verses of the 10th chapter of Luke, we find

the Lord Jesus a guest at the house of a certain woman called Martha. A beautiful scene! Not that the Lord declined the invitation of Simon the Pharisee, or refused to enter the house of Zaccheus the publican; not that He disdained the feast of Levi, with its crowd of publicans and sinners, or again that He found no shelter in the house where Peter's wife's brother lay sick of a fever. We find Him in each of these houses suiting Himself to the circumstances of each, but in this Bethany house there is an air of friendliness, of homely and holy familiarity—of repose and freedom, that is not to be met with in the others. "The ever homeless stranger" found more than a welcome here. Within this house He could reckon on one who found it her delight to serve Him, and, in His own words, to serve Him "much," too. He could also count on that which, as I have already suggested, is better than service, and which as the story declares is ~~now~~ highly appreciated by Him. Mary had chosen "*that good part.*"

And what is this good part if it be not Salvation, and if it be better than ~~that~~ service which is "perfect freedom"?

We read that Martha "had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word." It was the position and occupation of Mary that drew forth His praise. She placed herself at His feet, and sitting there she heard His word. But it was not so with Martha. She was equally dear to the Lord, but not equally near to Him. And this made all the difference. The place we hold in personal communion with the Lord determines our spiritual character, and forms our spiritual status. Martha was occupied with His service—Mary with Himself. To serve Him is right indeed, but service must subserve communion. To be ever occupied with service is to become "careful and troubled about

things"; but to abide in heart communion with the Master—to sit at His feet and hear His word is to make choice of "that good part which shall not be taken away." And surely, beloved, in a day of such widespread religious activity as the present—unprecedented perhaps since the times of the Apostles—when the door is widely opened of the Lord, is there not the danger of quantity rather than quality marking our services? The surface is broad, but is the character of the work proportionately deep? Are we looking for extent or reality? Is there not room for pride when we can tabulate large results? Have we grasped in our souls the truth of Luke xiv. 25, 35: "Whosoever he be of *you* that forsaketh not all that he hath he cannot be my disciple." Have we in spirit and in truth entered ourselves into such discipleship? And are we looking for it in our fellow-christians? Should it not be generally enforced that the Lord looks for fruit, whether thirty, sixty or an hundred fold?

But then what is the secret of all this? If there be much service with little fruit that is pleasing to Him—if, as in another day, there be much sowing and little brought in that really bears the stamp of His approval, where can we find the key to that spiritual sacrifice that is acceptable to God?

Grace instructed Mary as to the discovery of it. It lay at Jesus' feet, and she accordingly laid herself there. Let us trace, briefly, the result of her career.

In John xi. we again find her "down at His feet." Indeed, she appears to have sought no other place. Whilst her more restless sister had gone to meet the Lord on His approach to Bethany for the purpose of raising Lazarus, whilst she learned her inability to enter into the words of the Lord as to His being the resurrection and the life, and whilst she had to retire from

His presence and call her more deeply spiritual sister—that sister "sat still in the house" and calmly awaited the Master's call. When it sounded she "rose up hastily and went out . . . she fell down at His feet," and there, may I say, found herself at home. She did not need to retire from His presence. She had learned the blessedness of being there. She could tarry beside Him and let Him unfold His tenderest thoughts and feelings. Oh! the blessedness of that seat. Oh! how rich are the unfoldings of divine love and truth to the soul that has found its abode there.

I will quote one more episode in Mary's life. In John xii. we have the crowning act of her truly acquired intelligence. The feast is spread before Him. His disciples are also present. Martha, true to her character, serves, Lazarus sits at meat, but Mary takes a pound of ointment of spike-nard, very costly, and anoints *the feet of Jesus*, and wipes His feet with her hair, and the house is filled with the odour of the ointment. So rich a libation appeared prodigal and superfluous in the covetous eyes of Judas Iscariot. He would rather have seen the ointment turned into money and then given to the poor. Judas was a would-be philanthropist, "not that he cared for the poor," still less for the Lord, but money was his idol, and the love of it his curse. At any rate, Mary's deeply significant action was nothing more in his estimation than a "waste." Poor man, blind as he was to all that was spiritual, how totally unconscious was he of the intense delight that this sacrifice occasioned to the Lord. "Let her alone," said Jesus, "against the day of my burying hath she kept this."

But which of His disciples had apprehended the fact of His burial? Had the beloved Apostle whose head had leaned on his bosom—had the bold and energetic Peter? Nay, Mary alone had matured this solemn truth, and the

faith which she had gathered at His feet now shone conspicuously. She alone entered into the truth of His death and burial; and now she anoints His feet with ointment and wipes them with the hair of her head. She lays her glory at His feet!

A beautiful history is that of Mary. On each occasion, whether in Luke x., John xi, or xii, we find her "*at his feet*," and therefore the quality of her service was exceedingly rich. She had found the secret of true service. She had learned that quality is to be valued above quantity. She engaged her affections with the Lord Jesus Himself, and found her fruit from Him.

Need I say, my beloved fellow-christians, that I seek not to discountenance quantity? Far be the thought. Can we do too much? Look around on the broad fields that are "ripe unto the harvest." Harken to a hundred Macedonian cries that re-echo in our ears! Shame upon us that our feet are so tardy and our tongues so fettered. Oh! for energy of heart and soul in seeking the salvation of the lost multitudes around us and for the blessing of the lambs and sheep of our Shepherd's flock. Can we not say—

" My heart is full of Christ and longs
My glorious Master to declare,
Of Him I'd make my loftiest strains,
I cannot from His praise forbear."

But what I seek to advocate and press on myself and on all is, that we should habituate ourselves to the *feet of Jesus*, to that place of self-renunciation and self concealment, to that place of divine enlightenment and surest blessing, to that place of security and of power—so that it may be less a question of "giving to the poor," whatever claim they may have upon us, than one of "doing it unto Me."

If only our object be right our service will not be

wrong. If the eye be single the whole body will be full of light—and this is needed.

The Lord give us to choose "*that good part* which shall not be taken away."

J. W. S.

21st July, 1874.

WHATSOEVER IS NOT OF FAITH IS SIN.

I do not know practically a greater safeguard for the child of God than the observance of this very simple rule would be. In a day of confessed difficulty, when on every side you are met with complaints of how hard it is to know what one ought to do, there is yet a very simple path put before us in such words as these: "At least walk in no path that you are doubtful of; wait and wait upon the Lord, until you *do* know." How little is this done, however. And how much darkness is the result of its not being done; and how much loss of peace and blessing. We do not thoroughly like dependence; and yet dependence is the necessary condition of the creature. To be independent belongs to God alone, and when we seek it, we would be still as gods, according to the old suggestion as far back as Eden. But to be reminded of our nothingness, to be cast on God for wisdom, is a pain to us. We are too proud to confess ignorance humbly. Confess it we may, but the practical issue is, if we have to own we have not light as to anything, we too often use it as an excuse for slips and blundering, whereas the truth for us is what leaves us without excuse, that "*whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*" But we cannot have *faith* about our path, until the Word of God has assured us as to the path. And to go on without this is either to make little of whether I go wrong or right, or else to suppose that God has given

me up to darkness ; either way a peril to my soul and a dishonor to Him.

The trouble will be found just here, that our own wills are set upon some course, and therefore the eye is not single. For if we had no motive to act but that the Lord would have it so, where He had not declared His will we should have no motive at all for action, and *there would be no impatience*—we should simply wait as having no motive. Alas, the having a motive in our own wills is just what darkens our perception of the Lord's mind, and keeps us in a state of ignorance, for which we blame Him, when all the fault is our own.

Did we know ourselves better, and all that on every side encompasses us,—above all, did we know better the heart of Him who has given His Son for us,—how blessed a thing would it be to know that *He* has a will and a path for us where no ravening beast is found, but where He Himself leads His own in peace and pleasantness ; and that we are never left to do our own wretched wills or walk in our own unhappy ways ! And did we see it so, suppose we carried this thought out to the minutest tittle of our conduct, it *could not* be legality, while yet at the farthest remove from lawlessness. How sweet to give ourselves up to the guidance of One so set upon our blessing, and with whom the very hairs of our head are all numbered. Rest, satisfaction, communion, are all implied here.

KEY-NOTES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS.

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS gives us Christian *experience*,—not the occupation with self, good or bad, which goes under that name with multitudes, but the blessed experience of Christ's sufficiency in all circumstances whatever, to him who has Christ before him, to

whom "to live is Christ." It is of importance to observe that the whole of the epistle must be taken together in order to the realization of its parts. For instance, it is not every Christian who can say, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." The man to whom to live is Christ is he who can.

The first chapter gives the circumstances, and the principle of the Apostle's life amid them. The circumstances were all what we should naturally call adverse: A prison in Rome; among professing Christians even, some preaching Christ of envy and strife. His principle, "to me to live is Christ." His "salvation," therefore, not from Cæsar's prison, not from wrath to come, but from all that would hinder Christ being magnified in his body, whether by life or death. For this salvation, consequently, all things work, and he is so master over all the circumstances that he can decide his own cause before Cæsar. To the Philippians also, this same joy and confidence belonged. It was a gift to believe in Christ, and a gift to suffer for Him.

Chapter 2 gives Christ as the heart's occupation, forming in us the mind that was in Him. It is here as One in servant's form we see Him, self-emptying of the form of God, and stooping ever lower in His grace down to the death of the cross itself,—a course which has ended, however, with exaltation over all, and that from the hand of God. So commended, so endeared, was the example of One who sought *not* His own. Alas, few followed it; *all* sought their own, though a Timothy and an Epaphroditus were bright and all the more notable exceptions.

Chapter 3 is occupation with Christ in another character: in glory, that is, on high; the goal and the prize of the race, to win Him, and be found in Him. If the knowledge of a *humbled* Christ is guidance for and en-

dearment of the path, the knowledge of the *glorified* Christ is what gives power to pursue it. What can hinder or turn aside one for whom side by side with Christ all things else are "dung" and "loss?" It is only what they are; but here is one whose eye is opened to discern it. And thus, laid hold of by Jesus for the possession of all in Him and with Him above, he seeks to lay hold of all in the energy of a faith, which counts nothing to be attained till the whole blest portion is,—which does therefore but one thing, forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching onwards to those things which are before.

Again, in the professing church below the walk of many was in entire opposition to all this. Occupied with earthly things, and their God their own restless and craving self (their "belly"), they were enemies of that cross which crucified to the world; while the believer, a citizen of heaven, looked for the Lord to deliver him out of the scene, even transforming the body into the likeness of His own.

Chapter 4 gives the joyful and assured result of all this. Joy in the Lord ever and always; as to all else "yieldingness" (moderation), the Lord being at hand. All requests made known to Him, all burdens cast on Him. The heart free to meditate on good; contentment in *whatever* state, abased or abounding, full or hungry, in abundance or in need; able for all things through Christ giving ability. This not only for Paul, but "*my* God shall supply all *your* need." How? "According to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Amen.

SCRIPTURE OUTLINES.

THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN—(CONTINUED.)

The whole of the discourse that follows with His disciples (ch. xiv.-xvi.) is the expansion of those words, "believe in Me," the certifying to them of that blessed heart-rest, which would flow from the knowledge of Himself in the new place He was now about to take.

Three things enter into this. First, His own essential oneness with the Father; secondly, their oneness with Him gone into the presence of God for them; thirdly, the coming of the Holy Ghost, by whom as One dwelling in them, not only would the knowledge of all this be theirs, but the Father and the Son abide with them (xiv). Fruitfulness, as abiding in the Vine (xv), and witness-bearing for the Lord in a judged world (xvi) follow, and flow out of, these three primary things.

He had so linked them with Himself in His walk with them down here, that they should have understood that a place with Him in the Father's house would necessarily be theirs. No link with Him, or of His forming, but must be eternal. His temporary absence was but to prepare a place for them,—a place whence He Himself would come to receive them to Himself. Whither He was going then, they knew, (that is, He had told them), and the way they knew (xiv. 1-4).

Thomas, thinking of a mere local "where" the Father's house was, denies all knowledge of the place or way. The Lord answers that He Himself was the "way:" whoso found Him could not fail to find the Father's house. Not only that, he found the Father in Him,—the One to whom the house belonged. For there was no other God, left unknown still, for the heart that knew Himself. The Father was in the Son;

the Son was in the Father ; he who had come to Christ had no further road to travel,—had already by Him come to the Father, and could come only by Him. Thus He was “ Way,” and also “ Truth,”—the one perfect revelation of the Father, and of all things by this, and again also “ Life,”—the supply of the need of the soul that came to Him, and its competence to apprehend and enjoy the revelation made. His words, His works, were what the Father spake and did by One who had come to be in manhood the perfect and only instrument of this manifestation (5-11). And now that He was going back to the Father, the work being accomplished which He came to do, still mindful of that Father’s glory manifested in the Son, greater works still should be performed by the believer, and whatsoever they asked in His name He would do (12-14.)

Nor would He leave them in the world orphans. He would come to them, be seen by them, though not in such a way as the world could recognize ; even by the Spirit of truth, *another* Comforter, never to leave them, and not only dwelling *with* them (as He had done) but to be *in* them, giving them the consciousness of His presence, who was in such sort their Life, that because *He* lived, they should live also. At that day they would know themselves in Him who was Himself in the Father, and, by His Spirit, also in them in the world (15-20). How marvellous this knitting together of God and man which faith in the unseen Jesus brings us into ! As I have said, all this is the expansion of “ believe in Me.”

But we are reminded that it is to the obedient one the manifestation of Jesus is made. Obedience (not emotion) is the true test of love ; and where the soul thus shows its desire after Him, it gives Him also the opportunity He covets of making it anticipate the

joy of the Father's house, "my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (21-24.)

The result—with much more to be communicated when the Comforter should come—was present peace, the peace in which He Himself walked, keeping the heart from trouble. Those words here again repeated, "Let not your heart be troubled," show that the circle of blessing is complete. We have come back to whence we started.

The 15th chapter is the pendant to this cluster of precious things—the fruitfulness which is the result of abiding in Him whose fulness for them has just now been revealed. Israel, of old, the vine which God had planted, has failed after all His care, and brought forth only wild grapes. Christ takes this place now, the true and unfailing Vine. Fruitfulness depends upon abiding in Him, practically owning Him as the source of supply, and drawing from Himself continually. He was the vine, the disciples the branches, fruit-bearing branches now, clean* through the word He had spoken to them, and under the Father's care as husbandman, who purged* every fruit-bearing branch, that it might bear more. *They*—the eleven—were already in this condition, but He supposes that there might be branches which would bear no fruit; these would be taken away, and a man not abiding in Him be cast forth as a branch and withered, a thing absolutely worthless and fit only for the fire. This covers the whole ground of Christian profession. It is not the unity of a body, which if it lose one of its members is maimed for ever. A member of Christ's body cannot perish; a branch of the vine may. The language

* There is a connection between the two words here, "clean" and "purged," which it is hard to preserve in English. The "cleanness" is the state produced by the "purging."

used is strikingly appropriate, for while the Lord says to the eleven, "I am the vine, *ye* are the branches," and also, "no more can *ye* (bring forth fruit) except *ye* abide in Me," He could not threaten *them* with being cast forth and withered; here He changes the language at once and says, "If a *man*," while in the very next verse He returns to "if *ye* abide in Me," where it is a gracious promise and utterance, and not a threat.

Just so it is throughout Scripture, for all Scripture is the product of the One divine mind. Never is one who is said to be born again, or saved, or to have eternal life, put upon conditional ground in order to final salvation. *Professors* of Christianity are; and the conforming, or not, to the conditions is the test as to whether the profession is a true one before God or not.

Fruitfulness then, on their part, was what glorified the Father; keeping Christ's commandments, they should abide in His love; nor, though there *were* "commandments," did He call them servants, but friends, for, unlike servants, they were given to know all that He had heard of the Father (xv. 1, 15.)

Chosen for this place, and ordained to bring forth enduring fruit, they were to be His witnesses in a world which had now fully shown out its enmity against the Father and the Son, and which His works of power and love had left without excuse. They would find in it still the same causeless enmity against Himself, exhibited against them for His sake. For all was over with the world: the very presence of the Comforter, so great in blessing for them, that it was even expedient that *He* should go away that they might have it, would be the demonstration† of the world's sin; for the Spirit

† "Reprove" (xvi. 8), is rather "convict," demonstrate against the world. It is not the work of the Holy Ghost in converting souls that is here intended. The fact of His being here, consequent on Christ's absence, is the proof of the rejection of Christ.

came to testify of Him glorified and at the right hand of God. But why was He not in the world? Alas, it had not believed on Him (9), and in righteousness He was gone, to be seen no more as they had seen Him in His grace (10), for they had rejected Him and chosen Satan for their prince, and put themselves under judgment with the prince that they had chosen (11).

But for His own the Spirit of truth would be the revealer of unutterable things, receiving of the things of this if rejected yet glorified Christ, gone back to that Father's presence, which He had left to come into the world. Thus the little while of sorrow which lay immediately before them being over, His return from the dead would fill their hearts with a joy no more to be so clouded. Access to the Father, immediate access to the Father, would be theirs as the result of that work of His; they would not need to ask *Him*, that *He* might ask the Father for them, they could go directly to the Father in His name, (comp. 23, 26) and find the love of the Father towards them as His, manifesting itself freely forth.

Once more, the reiteration of "peace" tells us we have travelled round the circle. First and last, and giving character to all between, the assurance of a "love" alone "perfect," the "love of Christ which passeth knowledge"—"perfect love" which "casteth out fear, because fear hath torment."

ANSWERS TO SPECIAL QUESTIONS.

(17.) What is the difference between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God? When Jesus is speaking of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. vii. 11, 12), He

calls the Jews "the children of the kingdom," which shows that they were born into it, while we learn from John iii. 3, that entrance into the kingdom of God is only obtainable through the new birth. Yet we find Him speaking of their being thrust out of both kingdoms, as if they belonged to both (Matt. viii. 11, 12; Luke xiii. 28.) We find also that both kingdoms are compared to the same things, these things being evil (Matt. xiii. ; Luke xiii. 18, 21.) I can understand how evil has got into the kingdom of heaven, but not into the kingdom of God, which John iii. 3 shows must be a different thing.

Ans. The perplexity arises from not sufficiently distinguishing the present condition of the kingdom from its future one. The "kingdom of heaven" or "of God" is the *same* kingdom under a somewhat different aspect, but widely differing in condition according to the time contemplated. In either case it is the kingdom in the hands of the Lord Jesus according to Matt. xxviii. 18: "All *authority* is given unto Me in heaven and in earth ;" but now ruling as Son of God upon the Father's throne, by and by as son of man upon His own (Col. i. 13 ; Rev. iii. 21). The one period is, as often said, that of the kingdom and *patience* of Jesus Christ (Rev. i. 9) ; the other, that of His kingdom and *glory*" (1 Thess. ii. 12). In the first period, evil is borne with, and found in the kingdom, according to the parables of Matt. xiii. &c. In the last period it is put down with a strong hand. The passage in John iii. 3 as to the necessity of new birth in order to see the kingdom of God, is scarcely stronger than that in Matt. xviii. 3 as to the need of conversion to enter the kingdom of heaven. In both cases the kingdom of the future is in view. And we know according to Matt. xiii. 41, that out of the kingdom of heaven "the angels shall gather all things that

offend, and them which do iniquity, and cast them into a furnace of fire," before the millennial peace and blessing. Thus none but the converted will enter the future kingdom, of those who have been brought under the responsibilities of it in its present form. In Mark x. 15 we have similarly, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein;" and the application of the parables of the sower, the mustard seed and the leaven, to speak of no more, show the terms, kingdom of God and of heaven, to be nearly synonymous. That the Jews are called the "children of the kingdom" in viii. 12, does not show that they or any others are *born* into it. Born into the present kingdom they could not be, for it is by the sowing of the Word that the kingdom is set up, after Israel has rejected the King. As to the future one, the passages already quoted show that they could not be born into that. They are called the "children of the kingdom," I believe, as being as Jews the natural claimants of the promises, but thrust out because of their unbelief, at the moment they would make good their claim.

The distinction between the terms "kingdom of heaven" and "of God," I apprehend, is in this, that "earth" is the natural antithesis to "heaven," as "man" is to "God." Hence the kingdom of heaven always relates to the whole scene, and is more strictly dispensational; whereas the kingdom of God over man may be individual, and gives more the moral character. Thus you find the kingdom of God is not "meat and drink," &c.; kingdom of heaven could not be used there.

“WHO LOVED ME.”

Gal. II. 20.

Three little sunbeams, gilding all I see.
Three little chords, each full of melody.
Three little leaves, balm for my agony.

“WHO”

He loved me, the Father's only Son.
He gave Himself, the precious, spotless One.
He shed His blood, and thus the work was done.

“LOVED”

He loved—not merely pitied. Here I rest.
Sorrow may come—I to His heart am pressed.
What should I fear while sheltered in His breast?

“ME.”

Wonder of wonders, Jesus loved *me* ;
A wretch—lost—ruined—sunk in misery.
He sought me, found me, raised me, set me free.

My soul, the order of the words approve.
Christ first, me last, nothing between but LOVE.
Lord, keep *me* always down, *Thyself* above.

Trusting to Thee, not struggling restlessly,
So shall I gain the victory.

“I—yet not *I*”—but Christ—“Who loved me.”

H. W.

"OR ADDETH THEREUNTO."

GAL. III. 15.

"If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," is a sort of stock text with the deniers of the Gospel. Upon such a foundation they imagine they can build firmly their doctrine of works for salvation. It is vain to object that the very text they quote says nothing of "salvation." It is equally in vain to urge that "keeping the commandments" is not keeping half or a quarter or a tenth part of them, and that no man ever kept them yet in the full and proper sense, so as to make out righteousness before God upon that footing. Their thought is still, that God being merciful, has put us in His mercy under a less severe law than formerly; that instead of requiring us now to keep the *whole* law, He only now requires that we should do the best we can, and His mercy in Christ will make up our defects.

Against this thought of theirs all Scripture is one united protest. The law itself, speaking to those under it, declares there is none righteous, no, not one (Rom. iii. 10, 19.) The Gospel declares that instead of the law having been rendered milder, "as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse," (Gal. iii. 10). The distinct statement of a Christian and inspired man is, that "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James ii. 10). The declaration of the Lord Himself is, that "till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matth. v. 18). The positive statement of the apostle is, that therefore "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in God's sight" (Rom. iii. 20). And again, that "by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of

works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. ii. 8,9). And once more, as to the impossibility of mixing up man's works with God's grace, he elsewhere adds:—"And if by grace, then is it no more work, otherwise grace is no more grace; but if it be of works, then is it no more grace, otherwise work is no more work." (Rom. xi. 6).

Thus simple and decisive is the testimony of the Word. In the passage which heads this paper we reach the same result by another road. "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little and there a little," that blindness and ignorance may be at least without excuse; that none may walk in darkness save he who loveth not the light.

In the epistle to the Romans the law is looked at in a different way from that in the epistle to the Galatians. In Romans it is looked at from the side of human experience of it. "That which was ordained to life *I found* to be to death" (Ch. vii. 10.) It is his own experience, what it turned out to be on trial. In Galatians, on the other hand, the question is not so much how *man finds* it, as how *God gave* it. So much the more weighty is the argument as against the Galatian heresy, that it is God who is shown to be against it. Now the way in which God gave the law is convincing proof that the one thing he did *not* intend by it was to "add it to," or make it part and parcel of the Gospel.

It is this that the apostle is saying here,—“Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness * * * and the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall *all nations* be blessed. So then, they which are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.”

Thus clearly did God announce, four hundred and thirty years before the law, not only that Abraham himself stood in a righteousness, which was the righteousness of faith, but also that upon the same principle blessing should be to all nations. "*In thee shall all nations be blessed,*" was the appointing this man, blessed through faith, the first father of a line of such believers, blessed in like manner through believing. Such is the apostle's argument; but the Scripture is still fuller and more distinct than this. "Now to Abraham and to *his seed* were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many, but as of one; and to thy seed, *which is Christ.*" This second promise is to be found in Gen. xxii, after the offering up of Isaac, the vivid type of the offering which is the anti-type and fulfilment of all other offerings, the offering of the true beloved and only-begotten Son. It is with this before Him, that God says, "*In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed,*" filling up what was lacking in the former promises by the announcement of *how* it is that for all the nations of the earth this blessing of faith can be.

"Through faith," because, and only because, it is through Christ that blessing comes. Thus in the double promise the Scripture did indeed preach the Gospel, and claim for it the field of the world. The terms of it set aside the possibility of blessing for any upon any other principle. And then, mark, this was 430 years before the law. This is the apostle's argument, that *being* 430 years before, and a simple, absolute promise from God, the law could not disannul it *or be added to it*.

"Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereunto." How much more is this true if the covenant be *God's*. "*And this*

I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was 430 years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." Add the law to the gospel and you disannul the gospel, "for if the inheritance be of the law it is no more of promise." Law and promise—absolute promise, or what God counts such—are opposites, contraries. They cannot be joined. God having secured everything by promise, law is excluded by the very fact. Suppose I come to you to-day, and assure you I will do such and such things for you. I make no condition, mention no terms at all. To-morrow I come and say, "These are the conditions, and if you fulfil them I will do for you as I said." You would rightly answer, "Conditions! you said nothing yesterday about conditions, but if you repent of your promise, it is no matter." "God is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent."

The "blessing of Abraham" then must needs "come upon the Gentiles through Christ," and so "through faith," and nothing can be added at all by way of condition. How blessed, and how simple! "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." "He that heareth my word," saith the Lord, "and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life." No condition, absolutely none, may be added to this absolute promise.

All good deeds of man as man are what the law enjoins. Love to God, love to one's neighbour; all that springs from these. Nothing of all this is required for justification. You are bidden to believe in One who, Abraham's true "seed," fulfilled the type of Isaac's sacrifice in His own person. Upon Calvary the question of the salvation of all believers was settled between the

Father and the Son alone. The offering is accepted ; all is done—done for you because a sinner. You are called not to do a work, but to believe in this work done for you, a sinner. “They which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.” “Only believe.” These are the terms of God’s absolute promise. Let none presume to “disannul or ADD thereto.”

MOSES AT THE WATERS OF STRIFE.

NUMBERS XX.

It is an exceedingly establishing thing for our souls, fully to perceive that God is dealing with us on the ground of His own relationship towards us, and that He never deals with us on any other. This is as true in discipline and present correction, as in anything else—correction from our Heavenly Father, because He is our Father.

“I will visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes,” is among the covenant dealings of Ps. lxxxix. 32. God cannot pass over the sins of His saints, as over those of the world. He brings under present discipline. Sin in a saint of God is much more fearful than in an unbeliever, since the glory of God suffers so much more from our hands. That which might appear a trifling thing in another, is not so in us. We need to apply the balance of the sanctuary, so as to discern what is according to God and what is not.

Further, it is most full of comfort to see that God is able to record in His Word the failures of His saints, and that He does not hesitate to record them. He is showing us in them, and through them, as things written for our admonition, that, notwithstanding this failure, His faithfulness never fails. But it requires a deepened tone of spirituality to perceive that God thus visits

the sins of His people, and yet that their blessing, through His grace, shall not fail as to the end. "Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from Him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips." He cannot suffer His truth to fail; He cannot deny Himself. (2 Tim. ii. 13.)

Another very remarkable thing, is, that the sins recorded of the saints are not unfrequently those which we should have supposed them least likely to fall into. For instance, Peter's fall, most largely recorded. Again, David's foul sin. And when we come to Moses, there is failure too, in him. We find that that which is recorded here is mentioned in many other parts of the word. "He spake unadvisedly with his lips." Moses himself records it over and over again, to show that even an unadvised word (that which might be regarded as a light thing) is not passed over unnoticed.

Now, I believe that where we sin much, is in this very respect; in speaking unadvisedly with our lips. As St. James says, "in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body" (James iii. 2.) When I find an unadvised speech of Moses, in a chafed moment, thus recorded, I see the deep necessity there is for having a bridled tongue. It is here that Satan gets such advantage over us—yes, where God's saints have constant need of correction is for unadvised talk. The amount of sorrow brought upon souls is hardly to be estimated; perhaps it is not too much to say, that almost all the mischief that arises amongst saints, is from speaking unadvisedly with the lips.

God is able to record these things in which His saints have grieved Him, but this does not hinder His truth, this does not hinder the one being in the glory

with the Lord, concerning whom such failure is recorded. *Then* he will be able to look back and trace all the way in which God has led him, and see how all has been overruled for good.

I would just notice, by the way, that which is remarkably testified of the Lord Jesus as standing where Moses failed. When He was here, all sitting down in the seat of the scornful of those who sought to entangle Him in His talk, all the contradiction of sinners against Himself, all their cavils never drew out an unadvised word from His lips. On the contrary, when He was attacked on every hand—by Pharisees, by Sadducees, by Herodians—after He had met them all, His wisdom shone conspicuously forth in silencing them with the simple question: "What think ye of Christ? whose son is He?—if David call Him Lord, how is He his son?" (Matt. xxiii. 41, 45.) And Jesus is our example; as Peter tells us. "If, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps: who did no sin neither was guile found in His mouth: who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." (1 Peter ii. 20-23.)

But let us turn to the narrative before us:—"Then came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin in the first month: and the people abode in Kadesh: and Miriam died there, and was buried there. And there was no water for the congregation, and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. And the people chode with Moses, and spake, saying: Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the Lord! and why have ye

brought up the congregation of the Lord into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there? And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt to bring us into this evil place? It is no place of seed, or of figs, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink." (v. 1-5) It is no uncommon thing for those who have known redemption through the blood of the Lamb and the passage of the Red Sea—perfect deliverance from Egypt, to murmur thus, because of not having the vines, and figs, and pomegranates.

But what can Moses and Aaron do? They have not any resources in themselves, they can only cast it before the Lord. "And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces."—(v. 6.)

But what I desire to press upon our consideration here, is this, that it is frequently, when we have been near the Lord, when we have in humility laid the matter before Him, just on returning back amidst the circumstances, something unforeseen occurring, that failure is at once manifested.

"And the glory of the Lord appeared unto them." How blessed this for Moses! And our portion is peculiarly that now; whatever the popularity, whatever the trial—whatever the circumstances may be, the moment we get before the Lord, the glory of the Lord appears. It is this God places before us, for the comfort and stay of our souls.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying: *Take the rod*, and gather thou the assembly together, thou and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock; so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink." (v. 7-8.)

At the bidding of the Lord, the rod had been cast down, and it had become a serpent; at the bidding of the Lord Moses' rod stretched out over the Red Sea, the Red Sea had been made dry land and Israel had passed over on dry ground, and the waters had been divided; the rod being stretched out again the Lord had overthrown the Egyptians in the midst of the Sea. The moment he is told to take "the rod, Moses ought to rest simply in the Lord. But, beloved have we not found it very hard, when we have had difficulty and taken it before the Lord, to leave it entirely with Him, to wait for His comment?

We are instructed, through that which we are considering; that the Lord expects we should attend most minutely to His word. "Speak ye *unto the rock* before their eyes," is the direction. We find that when they have gathered the congregation together before the rock Moses speaks *unto the people*, and speaks unadvisedly with his lips—here is failure. It is a little thing, but the Lord must notice it. And so with things in us which are as blemishes, as spots and wrinkles; if the Lord Jesus has "loved the church and given Himself for it," in order that He might "present it to Himself a glorious church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish," when there are these spots and wrinkles, they displease the Lord. In Rev. ii., iii., the Lord Jesus Christ is seen walking in the midst of the churches with the eyes of fire (not in the world,) to the end that "all the churches may know that I am He who searcheth the reins and hearts." In His discipline He may be dealing with that in us which we know nothing about, but which He sees. Just as His intercession for Peter—"I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not" (Luke xxii. 31-34,) was before Peter ever thought at all of deny-

ing Him. "He searches the reins and the hearts;" and we need to give heed to Him. It is a very solemn thing for us to despise the chastening of the Lord. He chastens us because we are beloved, because we are His.

It was this sin caused Moses to lose Canaan, and the high honour of leading Israel over Jordan into the land. We, too, are losers by sin, though it may be that, through the grace of Him with whom we have to do—His restoring grace—the soul is brought upon higher and firmer ground. "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Could Peter ever forget the lesson of restoring grace? He was placed on higher ground—higher, stronger ground, as to the establishment of his soul, than that on which he stood before his fall. Our very sins and failures are overruled for our good.

There is one very remarkable feature of God's dealings presented to us in this picture. He ever delights to honour His saints in the eyes of others,—but then they must not seek their own honour. He will honour His servants, but the moment we step out of the servant's place, to take, as we judge it, a higher one, He humbles us. The Lord Jesus Christ, the one faithful servant of Jehovah, was always hiding Himself, that God might appear, and God was always honouring Him in the eyes of others, "approving Him by wonders, miracles, and signs." When we honour God, He honours us; "them that honour me, I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Sam. ii. 30). God says to Moses, "Take the rod, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes: and it shall give forth his water, and *thou* shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so *thou* shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink." *Thou shalt do it.* This was a high honouring of Moses in the sight of all Israel. But then Moses takes the rod, and says, "Hear now, ye rebels, must *we* fetch you

water out of this rock": that is, he does not *sanctify the Lord* in the eyes of the congregation: it is "we," not "the Lord." No sooner do we assume to be anything, than we get out of the servant's place.

But further, we have some little insight given us here into the deceitfulness of sin. "Moses took, we are told, "the rod from before the Lord, *as He commanded him*" (verse 9). He obeys up to a certain point, but there he stops; it is an act of partial obedience, and partial obedience must always be allied to self-will. "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees," &c.; their obedience was exceedingly partial, they took those parts of the law which gave them honour in the sight of others, doing it to be seen of men, but passed by that which would have involved self-denial. And it is too frequently so with us in our service, we are found self-seekers, pleasers of men. He takes the rod *as the Lord has commanded him*. "And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them," there is disobedience! God has never commanded him to do that; He has commanded him to speak unto the rock: "Hear now, ye rebels, must *we* fetch you water out of this rock!" (verse 10.) What words! O Moses, Moses! O sad picture of the flesh! Moses, the man of God, speaks unadvisedly with his lips! "The man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth," (Num. xii. 3.) but the meekest man on the earth is here the one to say, "Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of the rock!" Putting himself in the place of God! the one of whom it is testified, "it went ill with Moses for their sakes, they provoked his spirit so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips." They chafe his spirit, they grieve him—the meekest of men—by their murmurings, and he says,

"Hear now, ye rebels, must *we*"! That odious word "we"! most odious word in the mouth of a saint! Everything that we have and all that we are, we have and are by the Lord's grace, and all must be used to His glory.

Moses has forgotten the rod. What is Moses! Nothing;—he has no power to fetch water from the rock, and he has forgotten the present power of God, that which alone can enable him to do it; he has forgotten God, he is thinking about himself. Here we see again the sin of our hearts, in the using of the very grace which God has given us, for the purpose of self-exaltation, to say "we." But this is a sin which would not be noticed by the world; because the world only talks of "I," and "me." Not so faith. Paul says, "By the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me," (1 Cor. xv. 10). Ashamed to be forced, as it were, into this mention of himself. The flesh would seek to use the very grace of God, the light of God, the truth of God, the power of God, to exalt ourselves. That may seem a little thing which is recorded of Moses here, but when we come to take it to pieces, to analyse it, we feel it to be most odious before God. So it is with us, if the light which God has given us, the truth and knowledge we have, are made stepping-stones to self-exaltation.

"And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice." He has been told to speak to the rock, but he *smites* it twice," as though divine power has need of being seconded by human energy. But still "the water came out." God's faithfulness is not touched by the failure of his servant. So is it with us; one may preach the gospel of strife and contention, (Paul could

rejoice even in this, since Christ was preached, Phil. i. 18,)—and yet not hinder God's sovereignty in owning His own ordinance. Moses fails, but God does not deny Moses to be his servant, neither does He deny the power of the rod. "Moses took the rod, and smote the rock twice, and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank and their beasts also" (ver. 11). God may be using an individual's ministry for blessing to the souls of others, when He is about to discipline that very person, so used of Him. He abideth faithful—He will not (blessed be His name !) deny His own truth, though mixed up with much of weakness, of foolishness, and even of self, in those who preach it.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them. This is the water of Meribah, because the children of Israel strove with the Lord, and He was sanctified in them. We have the failure of Moses mentioned in several other parts of the Word, some of which we will now consider.

Chap. xxvii. 12-14—"And the Lord said unto Moses. Get thee up into this mount Abarim, and *see* the land which I have given unto the children of Israel. And when thou hast seen it, thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered. *For ye rebelled against my commandment* in the desert of Zin in the strife of the congregation, *to sanctify* me at the waters before their eyes: that is, the water of Meribah in Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin. Moses lose Canaan through speaking unadvisedly with his lips, but, beloved, does that alter God's intention of blessing him everlastingly? or is it not rather the occasion of proving that "His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting towards them that fear Him." However necessary

it may be to chasten Moses and to hold him up as an instance of a rebellious saint, this cannot cause God to "alter the thing that has gone out of His lips." We afterwards see Moses on the mount of glory, with the Lord, in the transfiguration. (Matt. xvii. 3, Mark ix. 4, Luke ix. 30.) When there, he could doubtless look back, and see the path by which the goodness of the Lord had led him, and the links of the chain which we cannot see, and how that God had made all things "work together for good." It is an exceedingly establishing thing for us to see that, "whom He loveth (He loves unto the end) He chasteneth." It is His saints whom He chastens; He hates sin, and He will show, in His dealings with His children about it, what a fearful thing it is. We must not expect, because we stand in Christ in perfect righteousness and because we are heirs of glory, that He does not mark our sins; this, on the contrary, is the very reason that He does, in order that we may be made to see that it is an evil and a bitter thing to sin against God the Lord.

Deut. iii. 23, 28.—"I besought the Lord at that time, saying, O Lord God, thou hast begun to show thy servant thy greatness and thy mighty hand; for what God is there in heaven or in earth that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might? I pray thee *let me go over and see the good land*, that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain and Lebanon, but the Lord was wroth with me for your sakes, and *would not hear me*; and the Lord said unto me, *Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter*. Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward and eastward, and behold it with thine eyes: *for thou shalt not go over this Jordan*. But charge Joshua and encourage him, and strengthen him, for he shall go over before this people, and he shall

cause them to inherit the land which *thou shalt see.*' The Lord denies the prayer of His saint. The Lord may deny the prayers of His saints or He may answer them in a way we little expect. It was thus in respect of Paul's thorn in the flesh,—“for this cause,” he tells us, “I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me;” the prayer was not answered in the manner the apostle looked for it to be—“And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee : for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.) The thorn was needed ! God may let, and sometimes does let, the consequences of the sin of a saint hang over him all the time he is here. The saint Moses prays, but the Lord denies the prayer of His saint. They have just come to the very border of the land, and Moses says, “Let me go over and see the good land.” But the Lord tells him, “Let it suffice thee ; speak no more unto me of this matter.” What graciousness there is in this, “Let it suffice thee ;” we see here all God's restoring mercy ; it seems, so to speak, as if He hardly could deny Moses, as if, were he to be importunate, He could not refuse him. It was wiser, it was better, it was more for the glory of God, that Moses' prayer should not be answered ; but there is something exquisitely tender in the reply of the Lord—“Let it suffice thee,” just as in that to Paul—“My grace is sufficient for thee.”

Deut. xxxii. 48-52.—“And the Lord spake unto Moses that self-same day, saying, Get thee up into this Mount Abarim, unto Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho : and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession : and die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people ; as Aaron thy brother died in Mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people : *because ye trespassed against me among the*

children of Israel, at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; *because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel.*" We see here the way in which the Lord is able to tell of the sins of the saints—to record the failures of the saints. Let man narrate the life of his fellow-man, he seeks to hide his failures, and why? Because he wishes to exalt the man. Let the Holy Ghost write the life of a saint, He records the sins and failures of that saint, and why? Because He exalts the grace of God. It is a blessed thing too, beloved, when we can use even our failures to exalt the grace of God. The Lord says of Moses, "Ye rebelled," "ye transgressed," and yet we find, after all this, Moses speaking face to face with God in confidence, and in intimate intercourse. He tells Moses the reason why he cannot go over the Jordan; the desire to see the good land that is beyond, is pleasing in His eyes, and He gives him a Pisgah view of it. God is able to tell us how wisely He disciplines us. Nothing shall hinder the purpose of His grace concerning us: He is determined that nothing shall alter the thing that has gone out of His lips; "whom He justified them He also glorified;" but then it is between justification and glorification that there comes in all this discipline.

Deut. xxxiv.—"And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah that is over against Jericho. And the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah unto the utmost sea, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palmtrees, unto Zoar. And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not

go thither. So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died the in the land of Moab, *according to the word of the Lord*. And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated."

It is the Lord who buries Moses, and after a time He brings him out (as we have seen) in the glory of the Lord Jesus on the mount of transfiguration. We find there, not Joshua—the one who led Israel into the land—but Moses—the one to whom this was denied.

Beloved, let us remember that it was a little thing—an unadvised word that occasioned to Moses the loss of Canaan. And let us remember, moreover, that the governance of the tongue is more pressed upon us in the New Testament than almost anything else. "By thy word thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned," (Matt. xii. 37.) Seeking to exalt ourselves is rebellion against God.

The Lord grant that we may see that we are exposed to a searching judgment to which the world is not exposed, because we are His saints, and that He may have to shut His ear to our prayer. He is "the only wise God," and He may be more wise in denying than in granting. May we be found walking before Him unto all well-pleasing.

HELPS WITH THE USE AND APPLICATION OF SOME SCRIPTURE TERMS.

3. SIN, FLESH, THE OLD MAN.

"Flesh," the most corruptible part of man, that upon which death most easily and most evidently works, is in Scripture naturally taken as what distinguishes him

as a child of sin and of mortality ; while its being that which most plainly craves for constant renewal, makes it again distinctive of him as the restless and lustful creature that he is. It becomes in this the apt expression of his nature as a fallen being ; and so you get it very early in Scripture. "My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that *he also is flesh.*" That is what he is,—his nature as fallen : his "flesh" characterizes him. The lowest materialism would have to own that physically he is more than that ; but that, though in itself not evil, as I need hardly say, may be the fitting type or picture of what he is as possessor of a frail and evil nature.

This use of the term is frequent in the New Testament. As our Lord applies it in the well-known words to Nicodemus : "That which is born of the flesh is flesh ;" all that comes of this fallen nature partakes of the characteristics of that nature. Therefore the absolute need of the communication of a *new* nature, no change in the old being possible : "Ye must be born again."

So, *when* born again, it is still said, "In me, that is, in my *flesh*, dwelleth no good thing." The old nature remains, and remains unchanged, but we have a new one from God, and therefore the perfect contrast of the old, for He could not communicate an evil, or half evil, thing. So that, looked at from this side, "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin ; *for his seed remaineth in him*, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 Jno. iii. 9). That is, the seed, or spiritual nature he has received, so absolutely refuses sin, that the man who has it never can practise sin as he did before.

Once more as to the flesh, "the mind of the flesh* is

* In the common version, "the carnal mind," but "of the flesh" is not here equivalent to an adjective, and to make it so lessens the force. Alford's version has it as above. The Bible Union leaves it "carnal mind."

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).

(2). This brings us to the second expression, "the old man." It is not the same in meaning as "the flesh," but is *the man in the flesh*,—man identified with, and characterized by the old, corrupt nature in which he lives and walks. In the cross of Christ "our old man was crucified with Him" (Rom. vi. 6). Not, "ought to be crucified in us," as some seem to have it; nor yet, "is being crucified in us day by day," as others say. No, it *has* been crucified with Him (Christ), judged in His cross, and put away from before God's sight for all who believe. Thus we are "not in the flesh" as Christians.

But as to our *conscience* we may be in the flesh, when as to our place before God we are not, and this is the loss practically of power and of peace. Therefore are we bidden not to die to sin, but to reckon ourselves dead to it, because Christ died to it (as our representative) once. (Rom. vi. 11.) Those who have died with Him, are no longer on the ground of children of Adam, but in Christ, the second man.

(3.) "Sin" is, of course, one of the largest of terms. It is defined for us in 1 John iii. 4, as—*not* "transgression of the law,"* but—"lawlessness." It is the principle of evil, whether abroad in the world at large (Jno. i. 29), or in the fallen nature of man, of men individually, "sin in the flesh," "sin that dwelleth in me," or manifested in the positively committed "sin," which it is of all

* A positive false translation, in which, however, through the blinding power of theological teachings, nearly all translators and commentators concur. Yet nothing is more easy than to demonstrate its falsity. For not only have we the expression elsewhere "transgression of the law"—an entirely different one; but the word here used is the noun form of the one in Rom. ii. 12, for sinning "*without law*"—lawlessly,—and expressly said of Gentiles who have not the law (v. 14) or rather, "no law."

importance to distinguish, however, from that of which it is the manifestation. Thus in James i. 15, we have lust bringing forth sin, in Rom. vii. 8, sin on the other hand bringing forth lust.

In the first part of Romans (i-v. 11), it is positively committed *sins* the apostle deals with, as in James. In the second part, it is *sin* in the nature of man rather. But every passage must not be pressed as applying to the nature. The word is too large a one, and the context can alone decide in what way applied.

KEY-NOTES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS.

The Epistles of Peter and of James alike dwell upon Christian walk and practice. The difference seems to be this, that while Peter gives the *general principles* of the walk, James insists upon the details, the works which test (for man) where true and living faith is. For this reason we may invert the order of these Epistles as we find them in our Bibles, and take Peter first.

The FIRST EPISTLE, then, gives the general principles of the walk after this manner. [The Christian is one chosen to the obedience of Christ and to be sprinkled with His blood, begotten by the resurrection of Christ to a heavenly inheritance, kept for them, and for which they are kept, by the power of God through faith. Salvation is ready to be revealed at Christ's appearing; in the meanwhile there is trial of faith, tried as gold is because of its preciousness, and under the holy government of a Father-God, who, without respect of persons, judges according to every man's work. The apostle exhorts *then to soberness and reverence in view of the

* It is the believing Jew who is addressed both by Peter and James, who laboured among the circumcision. This, while it gives a peculiar character to these epistles, and special force to many passages, in no wise of course affects their application to ourselves, for in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile.

cost of redemption, and the revelation of God in Christ as those also who in the midst of a world where all flesh is grass, have received an imperishable life through the word of the gospel. So far all is individual; but these living stones are being built up together upon the Living but rejected Stone, into a spiritual house, God's dwelling-place, wherein as individuals they draw near to Him,—holy priests with spiritual sacrifices. Moreover as those admitted into His presence, they are a chosen people, a *royal* priesthood, a holy nation, a people for a possession, to *show forth* His excellencies, as called out of darkness into His marvellous light (i-ii. 10.)

These are the things which give character to the Christian's walk. Therefore as a stranger and pilgrim he is to abstain from fleshly lusts, to be subject to every human institution for the Lord's sake, to fulfil his path of service in whatever relationship to others he may be found, doing well, and if suffering for it, taking it patiently. For although according to the general principles of the government of God, none will harm the follower of good, still to suffer for righteousness is only to find peculiar blessing,—is no real exception therefore to these principles. For *sins* he ought not to suffer, for Christ once suffered for sins, and that should be enough (ii. 11-iii.)

Christ, then, having suffered for us in the flesh, we are to arm ourselves with the same mind,—to suffer, but not to sin. The judgment of God will reverse men's judgment, and in the meanwhile, not only is Christ glorified in those suffering for His name, but the suffering is also in His hands a discipline for His own, corrective judgment for His house, which if severe, shows what the final judgment of the sinner will be from the same holy hands (iv.)

The SECOND EPISTLE brings into this picture, as usual, the circumstances of the last days, when it would not be merely the world in opposition, but false teachers among professed Christians introducing pernicious heresies, and denying the very Master that bought them. Not some merely, but many would follow them, so that the way of truth would be blasphemed. Two things, naturally accompanying each other, characterize this evil of the latter days, the despising of authority (subjection to which the first epistle had insisted on), and the lawless indulgence of their own lusts (ii.); from which would follow the scoffing denial of all judgment, and of the Lord's coming,—taking advantage of the long-suffering of the Lord, which waited, not willing that any should perish in a judgment none the less sure to come (iii.)

In view of such a state of things, what is pressed for is diligence and energy, that having found in the knowledge of God and of the Lord Jesus all things pertaining to life and godliness, that knowledge might work practically in them the full development of Christian character, and not leave them idle and unfruitful. He with whom these things was not present, was blind, forgetful of what had been done for him and whither he was going. He with whom they were, confirmed to his own soul his calling and election, and would have not only entrance but *abundant* entrance into the everlasting kingdom (i. 1-11).

He adds, that there abides for us now, instead of the living apostle, his word, confirming the prophetic Scripture, eye witness as he had been of the power and coming of the Lord Jesus, seeing His majesty, and hearing God's own voice utter His delight in Him on the mount of transfiguration (12-21).

The EPISTLE OF JAMES insists that works are the

needed test *for another* of the faith which he cannot otherwise see in me. This is his doctrine of justification by works, "not before God" (as Paul declares Rom. iv. 2) nor in the day of judgment, but before men when they see what faith produces. Again this is not mere morality, as the examples brought forward prove (ii. 21-25).

Faith not merely believes that God is (ii. 19); it brings the soul into quiet subjection to Him. This the exercise under temptations works (i. 2) single-mindedness therefore (6-8), rejoicing in the true exaltation which God gives, and in abasement too of all that will pass away (9-11). Temptation *with evil* is only the outbreak of human lust, not from God, from whom only every *good* and perfect gift comes, and who has begotten us by the word of truth (12-18). This should work the reception of the word thus engrafted in us, and which is for practical salvation (21), and which calls not to be hearers merely, but doers of it (22-25). We have then the owning of the Lord Jesus in the owning of His people, especially the poor (ii.); the bridling of the tongue (iii. 1); the repression of envy and strife (14); and of the pride of life (iv. 4). The character of the exhortations is such as to need little in the way of explanation, however important they may be, and are.

ANSWERS TO SPECIAL QUESTIONS.

(18) A brother writes: "As to your articles on Advocacy, I do not understand your saying that we put our feet into Christ's hands, &c. Do we seek Him before He washes our feet? Of course we do not, but I speak of what your figure suggests to me."

Ans. That the Lord is always first in *any* seeking

should be simple for all who know what *they* are, and what His grace. The passage in John xiii. makes this plain, for He it is who rises from supper and lays aside His garment, and takes a towel and girds Himself. It is He who seeks them out, and not they Him, for this purpose. But on the other hand surely there may be in us what answers to Simon Peter's conduct, a refusal in one way or other of the grace on His part, instead of yielding ourselves up to receive the loving service He would do us.

Let me say here, too, what should be simple, that this feet-washing is not Advocacy of course, though it is the Advocate who does it. Nor is there the least idea intimated of our going to the Advocate to obtain His intercession. This thought is distinctly set aside by John xvi. 23, 26. The way has been opened for us directly to the Father, and remains always open. He intercedes too in His own love and knowledge of our need, without our asking. All this is simple and sure. Our coming to put our feet into His hands for washing is another matter, and the *result* of His previous intercession for us. (Compare the article, "Sifted of Satan," p. 154.)

(19) What is the difference between the typical teaching of the Red Sea and Jordan? Is the Red Sea the death of our enemies, the Jordan of ourselves? Is it in the Jordan we are dead with Christ?

Ans. The difference between the Red Sea and Jordan is nearly the difference between the doctrine of Romans and Ephesians, which Colossians to a certain extent unites. Thus in Romans we have "dead with Christ," but not "risen." In Ephesians, *not* "dead," *but* "risen." In Colossians both "dead" and "risen with Christ"; but with this we stop, with a "hope laid up in heaven,"

and as "made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light;" while there Ephesians lands us, actually "seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

There is thus a most instructive gradation of truth in the three epistles, and if there is, as there surely is, divine wisdom in thus exhibiting it to us, it will be for our profit to distinguish the separate points of view, which the types of Exodus and of Joshua equally distinguish. In Exodus as in Romans we have the negative side more, our deliverance from Divine *wrath* and judgment (in the Passover,) on the one hand, our deliverance from *bondage*, (at the Red Sea) on the other. In Joshua it is neither deliverance from wrath nor bondage that is in question, but the bringing of the delivered people into the land of their possession, plainly answering to the "heavenly places" in Ephesians.

This will give us, if we follow it out, the key to the details. The Passover and the Red Sea deliverances answer respectively, as perfectly as can be, to the two parts of the doctrinal argument of Romans: from ch. i-v. 11, the righteousness of God for us through the cross, and justification and peace as the result; while from ch. v. 12-viii. the question is not of justification from offences, but of captivity to a law of sin and our deliverance therefrom. This is so plain, it ought not to need much comment. We have the very song of triumph on the other side of the sea in the latter part of Rom. viii., and the language in which the apostle constantly expresses his doctrine seems so directly borrowed from the types of Exodus as to cut off all doubt as to the application of the latter. Let any one with the history of Israel's deliverance before him, compare such expressions as: "Ye were the servants (slaves) of sin,"—"sin hath reigned unto death,"—"captivity to the law of sin." Need there be doubt that they are the interpretation of

Pharaoh's rule over God's people of old? and that he who of old hardened his heart against the word of Jehovah is thus a type of that "flesh," the mind of which is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be?

Again, mark the way of deliverance. Not by any hand of our own, but by the power of God cleaving a way for us in the death of Christ through death itself, a path by which we pass dryshod and untouched by it to the other side: "dead with Christ," yet death therefore a deliverer only, the old man perishing, as Pharaoh at the Red Sea. All this our deliverance, that we might live unto God. According to the language of the apostle, "our old man crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve (be slaves to) sin." Look at once delivered Israel trembling and crying out, unconscious of Who was with them, when, on the banks of the Red Sea, Pharaoh's chariots of iron are coming up, and then compare this other cry of the converted man.—"I see another law in my members *warring against* the law of my mind, and *bringing me into captivity* to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?"

This decides, that while it is indeed the "death of our enemies" we have at the Red Sea, it is no less the "death of ourselves." The flesh is our worst and deadliest enemy, and what betrays us to every other, and there could be no proper deliverance for us that left it undealt with. And God's way of dealing with it is by the cross, teaching us there to reckon our old man crucified, ourselves dead, that having no confidence in the flesh, we may be free to occupy ourselves wholly with the Lord. Thus having our new place in Him, all that we were as children of Adam for ever gone from

before God, and gone for faith, we may give ourselves up to the joy of what He is. Then, "beholding the glory of the Lord we are changed into His image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit." The joy of the Lord is strength and holiness.

This is as far as Romans goes, but it does go so far. It gives all needed for full deliverance. Resurrection is not in it, save *His* for us, and that "if we have been planted in the likeness of His death, we *shall be* also in the likeness of His resurrection." This is of course a very different thing from being now actually risen with Him. Ephesians, on the other, hand gives our being "risen," but *not* (formally) our being "dead with Him." It shows us dead *in sins*, and quickened out of that condition. Colossians gives both dead and risen with Christ. The type in Joshua is so far like Colossians, that in the twelve stones left in Jordan, and the twelve stones taken out of Jordan, it gives both death and resurrection in one view, but it shows us, like Ephesians, where those Gilgal stones are set up, upon the Canaan shore, our purchased possession.

Thus if the Red Sea is the border of Egypt (the state of nature,) the Jordan is the border of the wilderness (the world as a place of trial and of pilgrimage.) The two things are linked together in many ways, it is true, for the latter is only the completion, in the mind of God, of the former. Thus, as soon as the people are across the sea, they anticipate the Jordan-passage (Exod. xv. 15-17.) And when they are across Jordan, then the Lord speaks of the reproach of *Egypt* being rolled away (Josh. v. 9.) And this is connected with the circumcision of the people the second time, they having all come circumcised out of Egypt, and having lost their circumcision in the wilderness. Again, whereas they all came out of Egypt armed, they are now formally

acknowledged as "the host of the Lord" (v. 14). All this shows us that the tarrying in the wilderness has been an interruption to God's thoughts, which now only find their completion. In His thoughts, *so far as our position is concerned*, we are not left in the wilderness a moment, but he that is dead is also risen with Christ, and seated too in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. The working out of these things in our understanding and our hearts is a very different matter; and the types present them to us as they are realized practically in those taught of God to receive His thoughts.

How few know in any measure what the book of Joshua thus typically means. How few in the energy of faith are laying hold of their possessions in the heavenlies. It is this that makes it so hard to speak of. Yet it is only as we are apprehending what is ours above, that we find ability to retain our circumcision in the wilderness, to maintain our character as those freed from Egypt's bondage, or to be practically "good soldiers of Jesus Christ,"—in our place as belonging to "the Lord's host."

"TILL HE COME."

"Till He Come,"—Oh let the words
Linger on the trembling chords;
Let the "little while" between
In their golden light be seen:
Let us think how Heaven and home
Lie beyond that "Till He come."

When the weary ones we love
Enter on their rest above,
Seems the earth so poor and vast,
All our life-joy overcast?
Hush! be every murmur dumb!
It is only "Till He come."

"THE GOSPEL OF THE GLORY."

2 COR. IV. 4

The words which are in the common version, "the glorious gospel of Christ," should be rather "the gospel of the glory of Christ." This is not only the literal translation, but the one required by the context, whether we glance back at "the glory of the Lord" in ch. iii. 18, or forward to "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," in the verse but one following. In either case it is the Lord Himself in glory, risen from the dead and at the right hand of God, that is spoken of. It is His glory there, as man, although much more, and even as man "the image of God," which is "gospel," that is "good news" to fallen man.

To Paul himself, let us remember, the first revelation of the truth had been the revelation of Christ in glory. With a brightness which eclipsed the glory of the noon-day sun it had shone down upon the persecutor, lighting up his very inmost soul, and bringing him face to face with One upon the throne of heaven whom he knew not—face to face with *himself*, whom he never yet had really known. What a meeting! What a discovery! The Lord, *his* Lord, unknown up to that moment; he, in that moment stricken from the heights of Phariseism into a deeper "ditch" than Job's,—but now, "touching the righteousness which is of the law, blameless," "Pharisee of the Pharisees," and now sinner among sinners, the very chief of sinners!

What effected the mighty change? What will do it equally for you, reader, or any one in his position,—*one moment's sight of "THE GLORY OF THE LORD."* Aye, no flesh can glory in *His* presence, whether revealed in vision as to Paul, or simply by the entrance of the Word, in the power of the Spirit bringing light divine

into the inner man of the heart ; still if one might have whereof to glory, yet "*not before God*," the true test of whether a soul has been "*before God*" is here.

And let it be noted well, the hinge of the controversy between God and man is now the God-man in the glory. "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father; he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also," yea, "whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God," (1 John ii. 23, iv. 15). Once more, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved," (Rom. x. 9). Surely there is "*good news*" in a glory which, when revealed to the soul, is the salvation of the soul to which it is revealed !

But let us not mistake the matter ; there is something different from merely receiving a tradition, accepting a belief in which one has been educated, and the "*in-shining of the light*" of which the apostle speaks. Just as much difference as between beholding the sun shine, and accepting like a blind man the warrant of others that it does.

Have you ever "*beheld His glory*," beloved reader ? Have you "*believed with the heart unto righteousness* ?" Is there heart-interest in the matter with you at all ? Have you ever "*confessed Jesus, Lord* ?" Does your soul own Him as its Lord, indeed ? Mark, it is a question of life and death ; for "*if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*"

But what direct "*good news*" does "*the glory of Christ*" bring ?

What would it be to you, if in the pinching of poverty and famine, you suddenly heard of the exaltation of

one whom you had known and well known, a companion, a friend, an intimate, to the throne of the land? Need I ask?

Just such a friend, aye, "a friend of *sinners*," has been Jesus. None such ever trod this earth beside. When he says, "All power is given unto *Me*, in heaven and in earth," is there no good news there? Ah, the more power His the more help mine! I am rich, if He is,—at least, if He be the same Lord Jesus that was once the man of sorrow for me here.

But that is not all. Suppose the friend I just now spoke of, had taken for me the burden of my debts upon himself; suppose I had actually seen him sign the bond, and assume the responsibility of them all. Multiply all that a thousandfold. Let it be *sin*, not *debt*. Let the Cross be the place of the assumption of my responsibility, the death He died my actual penalty. This is all the simple literal fact for the believer. What then to Him the resurrection, ascension and glory of the Son of God in the heavens?

"The glory of Christ"—of a *Man*: "the Man, Christ Jesus." Manhood in Him, not drawn merely out of the slough, and degradation, and damnation of sin, but taken up to God and glorified with the glory which He had before all worlds!

Not only then is condemnation gone, penalty endured, justice satisfied; there is infinitely more,—a positive and not a negative blessing only. For as *man* He has gone up; as *man* He is in glory. He has conquered and won for man; for man, earned and deserved; for man acquired and possessed. "The glory which Thou hast given me, *I have given them.*"

"The glory of Christ, who is the *image of God.*"

That completes the blessedness.

He is "the image of the invisible God ; if "no man has seen God at any time," "the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him."

We are not left to ask with Philip, "Lord, show us the Father." The Father is not *one* God and He another ; He and the Father are One.

Nor are His attributes divided ; as if justice were the Father's, love the Son's ; as if the Father merely received what the Son offered ; as if the Cross of the Son were a shield from the wrath of the Father. No, God "loved," and He "gave": "God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life." If God gave Him up to die, God raised Him from the dead,—took the side of those for whom He suffered, whether He gave Him up for them in love, or took Him up for them from the dead in righteousness; His righteousness is on our side, as well as His love, and whether I look up to Him who is on the throne of glory, or remember Him in His unparalleled humiliation upon earth, it is God I see in the man,—*God-man*, as He must be, for who but God could thus show forth God ?

All this "the gospel of the glory of Christ" preaches to me,—to all who believe in Him. How is it, it has been so much forgotten ? Reader, may the God of this world not blind your eyes to it.

SOME QUESTIONS TOUCHING OUR LORD'S HUMANITY.

A correspondent has sent us some questions upon this subject, the importance of which seems to claim a more distinct notice than could be given under the usual

heading. The letter containing them is too long for insertion here, but all the questions will be found taken up in the order in which they are proposed.

With regard to the first quotation, that "the second Adam was, *as to his manhood*, the Lord from Heaven," it was a hasty expression put forth by one who was as far as could be from holding the error implied in it, and who, when it was pointed out to him, publicly withdrew the statement. It was laid hold of to prove that the writer had the views of certain Gnostic heretics who denied the Lord's real humanity,—a charge so much the more unjust because in the same book, only a little further on than this quotation, there was a direct denial of this error by name.

But the inaccuracy of this expression no doubt for many might bring in question the real and valuable truth with which it was connected. I cannot find the quotation as to the Lord's body being called a "heavenly vessel," but I do find it stated that it was "free from every seed and principle, not merely of sin, but of *mortality*." Surely that is true, and most important. If the Lord had had in His body a "seed or principle of mortality," He would have been a poor, dying man, like any of us. Such an expression does not imply simply "a body that *could* die," but a body that *must* die, at least according to the law of its nature. But "the wages of sin is death." "Dying thou shalt die" was the penalty of the transgression of the first Adam, and the last Adam was not under it. He *could* die, and so could Adam innocent; but inherent tendency to die he had not, any more than Adam. Even when "found in fashion as a man; He humbled himself and became obedient to death, even the death of the Cross." It was a further *humbling* to Him, even after becoming man, to die; and a voluntary obedience for which the Father has

highly exalted him. So He presents it as a thing the "title" to which was His. "Therefore doth my Father love me because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No one taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power (title) to lay it down, and I have title to take it again" (John x. 17, 18). Was it, I ask, a thing the sentence of which was already working on Him, of which He thus spoke? I have read in a so-reputed orthodox book, that perchance the blessed Lord suffered in mid-life because it would not have done to see the Saviour with grey hairs! It is the natural fruit, I own, of the doctrine of His life being vicarious from His birth, but it is as baseless as that doctrine. Scripture disowns it altogether. Even on the Cross it is not His suffering there from which He dies. Crying with a loud voice, in witness of His unexhausted strength, He gives up His own spirit to the Father.* In Matthew it is expressly said, "He *dismissed* His spirit." The centurion, when he "saw that He *so cried out*, and gave up the ghost," said, "Truly this man was the Son of God." When Pilate heard He was already dead, he marvelled. Every circumstance shows and is designed to show, that to the last He had authority (according to His own saying) over death, and *not death over Him*. I repeat it, that death is the wages of sin, —passed upon all men for that all have sinned. If the blessed Lord was not of this class, as He was not, He could have no seed of mortality in Him. He could stoop to death, and did, but then only when He "bare our sins in His own body;" and that was "on the tree," and nowhere else (1 Pet. ii. 24). And there we have the most distinct evidence what a voluntary surrender

* The expressions differ in the different gospels. In Mark and Luke it is simply "He expired." In John "He gave up His spirit." In Matthew, "dismissed."

of His life it was. The question of vicarious life suffering I must reserve for another paper.

The next quotation, if it be one, is made ambiguous (I should suppose,) by the want of its context. To say simply and alone, that "the incarnation was not Christ taking our nature into union with Himself," would naturally perplex, if it did not mislead, though what follows (if in connection) would suggest the explanation "that between humanity as seen in our Lord, and humanity *as seen in us*, there could be no union." Our correspondent asks, "How does that agree with Heb. ii. 14-17?"

I have said that the first sentence (or part of a sentence) *standing by itself*, is ambiguous, and therefore objectionable. The expression "our nature" might be understood simply as humanity, or as the text in Hebrews puts it, "flesh and blood." Then, I need not say, it would be downright heresy to speak so. But on the other hand "our nature" is commonly used for "fallen nature," and this is what is evidently intended. It is not the Lord's taking humanity that is denied, but "*humanity as seen in us*." Certainly, the Lord did not, and could not, take *fallen* human nature into union with Himself. He took flesh and blood,—was true man; *truer* man, if I may so speak, than any of us, just because humanity in Him was without fracture.

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death," &c. He took flesh and blood, the nature of man as God made it, not as sin made it. But He took it that He might suffer and die. Of suffering and death He was capable, and in grace suffered and died. But there was nothing in His nature, even as man, that necessitated this. The translation of Heb. ii. 16 is wrong, and might mislead. Any one may

see by the italic letters that there is nothing about "nature" there. It reads really as in the margin, "He taketh not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham He taketh hold." So when it is added, "wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren," it is not that He was "made like" them in all things *by incarnation*. We were shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin. He was "that holy thing" conceived through the supervention of the Holy Ghost, and the overshadowing of the power of the Most High. Certainly *that* is not being "in all things made like." But these words apply, not (as the mistranslation of the 16th verse would seem to make them) to His taking flesh, but to what, *when* made flesh, He needed to pass through. This Holy One was taking up not an angel's cause, but that of believers, the seed of Abraham. They were not holy ones He laid hold of, but sinners under the consequences and exposed to the dread penalty of sin. Therefore taking up these He must be made like them, must put Himself into all their circumstances, make Himself at home in all their condition, that He might know how to meet it and minister to those in it.

But I apprehend there is more than this involved in the statement, that "between humanity as seen in our Lord and humanity as seen in us, there could be no union." I apprehend that it refers to a very common misstatement, that in incarnation Christ became bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. Many have taken this up without weighing it, and find it too cheering and comforting a thought, perhaps, to be willing to give up. Many, I fancy, even believe it to be Scripture. Not only is it not that, but involves a serious error. The Scripture statement is that as united to the risen and glorified man, "*we* are members of *His* body, of His flesh, and of His bones." Or take it as in the type in

Genesis, from whence people no doubt take their expression. It was Eve of whom Adam said (and he was "the figure of Him that was to come," Rom. v. 14), "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh." It was the woman "taken out of the man," during the mysterious "deep sleep" which fell upon him. And plainly if there be figure there, it is not that of the Lord coming into union with mankind on the ground of a common humanity, but that of the Church (whom Eve, according to Eph. v., represents), taken out of the second Adam, fruit of Divine power working by His mysterious death-sleep, and united to Himself raised from the dead.

The difference is most important. He Himself speaking of His death and its result, assures us, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit," (Jno. xii. 24). He could not unite Himself with man as man, but only, upon the basis of His work, with those who believe in it, and take the ground of it before God, who are partakers of eternal life, of the Divine nature. And *their* union is not with One down here in the flesh and in the world, but with One dead out of it, and risen, and in another sphere. As the apostle says, "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more; therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," or as the words mean, "a creature new in kind," (2 Cor. v. 17). People refer this to simple moral transformation; it is more: "Christ after the flesh" was perfect morally,—as perfect as now: but it is a risen and ascended Christ we have to do with, and in whom we are.

All that the soul finds precious, His nearness, sympathy, oneness with us, is here maintained, but set upon true, and therefore immeasurably higher ground. His sympathy is manifested as with the new man, not the

old. All that suits not with the new condition is judged, not sympathised with ; but weakness amid the trials and difficulties of the path below, sufferings and trial as the result of being in the midst of things contrary to us and to God, met perfectly in the grace of Him who came to know and minister to our condition, but ever as the One come from God, and going back to God, heavenly in character all through.

But to return now to the quotations. The next we think our correspondent has misunderstood. It *is* an error "to suppose that the reality of the incarnation involves the condition of either Adam fallen or Adam unfallen." This is not a question of "nature" but of "condition," as the quotation itself shows. The *condition* of Adam fallen was that of a dying sinner in a world spoilt and suffering from the sin introduced into it. The condition of Adam unfallen was that of an innocent, unsuffering man in Paradise. Was either of these conditions the Lord's? Clearly not. His was that of the Holy One in the midst of a sin-laden and groaning world. Surely that is widely different. The quotation says that the *reality* of the Incarnation does not *involve* either of the former conditions : that is, that while the Lord became true man, was *really*, not seemingly incarnate, that does not imply His being in either. It is a very needful caution not to make the suffering He in grace passed through an argument for His being One in whom all through His life the curse and wrath upon sin were working. *On the Cross* He was "made a curse," but only there He met "indignation and wrath." The Cross stands out in unmistakeable contrast thus with His life as man up to it : just as the "Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani," with the outspoken witness of God elsewhere, "this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Yet even on the Cross, as we have seen, we find distinctly

One over whom personally death had no title, but One who had title (as no creature could have) to "dismiss His spirit" and to die.

I turn now to the question of His resurrection-life. Our correspondent quotes, "In His resurrection-life He had not assumed into His sacred person the blood shed on the Cross. The 'life of the flesh is in the blood,'" and asks, "What other sense can one make of that, than that Christ did not live again as man?" But that is not at all its sense. A risen man is a *man*, surely; yet is it expressly said, that "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," (1 Cor. xv. 50), and that with regard to resurrection. Therefore, for the living, when the Lord comes, the necessity of being "changed;" "we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed:" (ver. 51). We shall be still men, but not "flesh and blood." He, whom we look for, "will change the body of our humiliation into the likeness of the body of His glory," *(Phil. iii. 21). Now, if our "spiritual body" is to be thus like His, not "flesh and blood," and yet we find Him claiming for Himself "flesh and bones," (Luke xxiv. 39), what can we gather but that the "blood,"—the vehicle of change as we know it to be, "the life of all flesh," as Lev. xvii. 14 declares it,—is that which He as risen did not take up again, and which the spiritual body will not possess?

As to John x. 17, 18 being against this, it could only be made to do so by a narrowness of interpretation which Scripture itself rejects. Certainly He laid down His life, "dismissed His spirit," and as certainly took it again in resurrection, but not in its old conditions. Life is a many-sided, complex thing, and according to the

* So the revised translations, as Alford's and the Bible Union, change the "vile body" and "glorious body" of our common version.

aspect in which we regard it we might say, He took it again, or that He never took it again, or even that He never laid it down, for "all live unto God," even the dead.

Other questions raised will more naturally come up in connection with the enquiry, which we must reserve for another paper, Was our Lord's life vicarious, according to the common doctrine of the day?

"GO STRAIGHT FORWARD."

I happened to be going to a meeting the other day—one of those bright and happy seasons of spiritual refreshment and blessing, when the Spirit of God bears the souls of His people up into His presence, and when all gloom and grief and earthly care are banished from their hearts, by the rich influx of joy that results from the sense of the preciousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I had walked fifteen miles or thereabouts, mostly over ground unknown to me, and had yet a good many more to travel, and finding that the road was becoming less and less public and serviceable, I took the opportunity of asking a shepherd, with whom I had the fortune to meet, if he could inform me as to the way. For a moment he paused, as though to determine upon the best and surest road, and then he firmly replied, "*Go straight forward.*"—"Thank you," said I, as I passed on. Well, I followed his advice unhesitatingly. Faith in his word prevented the least question in my mind. I did not consult my reason nor pursue a path that appeared more way-worthy. I felt confident that my informant was better acquainted with the country than myself, and so I went resolutely forward. Presently, however, my road changed its firm macadamised charac-

ter altogether, and became little better than what in that region is called a "loaning" or lane. Yet I followed on. But soon the lane ended in a gate, into the bars of which thorn branches had been twined, so as to make the security greater, and to prevent the sheep or lambs from escaping. This gate stood right across my path, and beyond it no road other than a mere track could be seen. For a moment the thought struck me that I must be wrong, but as quickly was it dispelled by the authoritative words of the shepherd; "*Go straight forward.*" I passed the gate and followed the footpath. Everything seemed to tell me that I had gone wrong. Before me was a hill, over the brow of which my tortuous little track ever seemed to wind—yet on I went. I was determined not to deviate a hair's-breadth from the words of the shepherd; and true enough, after a long but lightsome journey, I found myself in the distant farmhouse, where the meeting was to be held.

I obeyed the command of the shepherd, and although many a time the rugged nature of the country and my own inclinations suggested a slight deflection from the strict word of command, yet it turned out in the end that obedience, undeviating, unfaltering, unbending obedience to it, in spite of circumstances and personal ideas, was wisdom.

Now this is a rather long introduction to the brief exhortation which, by God's help, I purpose to lay, my Christian reader, before you.

The word of God enjoins you to "turn not to the right hand nor to the left," to "let thine eyes look right on and thine eyelids look straight before thee," to "let thine eye be single, and thy whole body full of light." Now this is most important. It implies purpose, reality and objectivity. It proves that you fulfil the command to be "not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving

the Lord." That is, His business is yours, and there is the thorough absence of all sloth or idleness. Your soul is at work, your heart is engaged, your entire moral being is engrossed. Like a runner you compass the goal, your eye is set on the winning post, you follow the example of Paul in forgetting the things that are behind and in reaching forth unto those things that are before, you are pressing toward the mark for the prize. There is spiritual celerity in your movements; you are commanded by your object, you have got beneath its power and are the resultant of its force. All this is proper. Now Christ is the object of the Christian. He it is by whom the soul is attracted; His wondrous magnetism lures it onward. There is the power of His love to draw and of His promise to sustain. "For me to live is Christ," said the apostle Paul. He had found both motive power and object in Christ. The love of Christ constrained him. He could do all things through Christ who strengthened him; and to win Christ was the all-absorbing, all-consuming desire of his soul. To him Christ was all. When laboring in Corinth—that Sodom of wrath and profligacy,—he "determined to know nothing among them but Jesus Christ and Him crucified." When writing to Timothy he told him to "give himself *wholly* to those things." In short, his life as a Christian was an unbroken tissue of devotion to Christ. Whatever was dear to the Lord was also dear to the apostle. The interests of Christ were his interests; the work of the Gospel, the ministering to the saints, the edification of the body of Christ, besides personal self-denial in ten thousand ways, claimed his energies and delighted his soul. He was a man of purpose. True, he was an apostle, and not a whit behind the chiefest of them, but he was a man of like passions with ourselves, and his object is ours. There are not to be found two:

rules of life in God's Word, one for an apostle and another for the general run of Christians—what applies to the foremost servant of Christ applies also to the Christian whose earthly calling may demand his attention from Monday till Saturday. Christ is the one only rule of life. There is none beyond and none lower. That which fails to comport with Him should be laid aside at once—for "he that saith he abideth in Him ought himself so to walk even as He walked." Calls to special services there may be. All Christians are not possessed of similar gifts, but all are bound to serve the Lord Jesus Christ—"we all with open face beholding the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory." This is incumbent on all, none are outside this precious enclosure.

And even in secular and perishable affairs, is it not pleasing to see a man of enterprise, of conception, of energy? How contemptible is the drone or the man of indolence! How his life is wasted in *ennui* and weariness! But what shall we say of a Christian, whose interests are eternal and infinitely precious, in a state of supineness, indifference, or sleep? It were well-nigh a contradiction in terms. How ungainly would appear a noble trans-Atlantic steamer rocking on the waves, making no way because her steam was shut off, and shut off for no reason? Such an event could not occur. But in how many a Christian is the steam-power shut off and the vessel becalmed—or, on the other hand, the power devoted to the world and its wretched bubbles, which ought to be spent for Christ. Well may the apostle cry: "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead!" Now the man who sleeps is certainly not dead; very like death, but not dead. Oh, can a Christian be death-like! Alas, yes! On all hands Christians are asleep, and though possessed of divine and

eternal life, are like the *dead*. Awful sight! sickening spectacle! heart-rending vision! Oh, ye sleepers, awake! awake! Arise from among the dead. Be alive to your true interests. Shake off the world. Begin to live. Set the prize before you. Struggle for the crown. Ah, true, difficulties abound; and so much the better. The reward will be the nobler. Come, sirs, courage! The lions are chained; the burning, fiery furnace is cooled by the presence of the Son of God. Christ wants you. You are His. Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. Entrust your all to His care, and "go straight forward." J. W. S.

KEY-NOTES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS.

The Epistles of John have (as every one must have remarked) a special character of their own, which separates them widely from those we have been looking at. They take up the Christian as one born again, and having the Holy Ghost, to develop the working of this new life which he has got. Christ is our life, and we are made partakers of the Divine nature. Therefore as God is love and light, and grace and truth (which correspond to these) came by Jesus Christ, so they trace out these as inseparable from each other and from the manifestation of the believer's life, along with what they involve also, the confession of Christ Himself as Son of the Father.

The FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN is the full-length development of these principles. He begins with Christ as the Word of Life, the manifested eternal life, declared to believers that in the knowledge of

Him there may be fellowship with the Father and the Son, and that their joy might be full (i. 1-4). But God, known in Christ, is not only light, but He is "in the light"—perfectly revealed as well as perfectly revealing all things. This tests the reality of Christian profession, for the Christian walks in the light, in the knowledge of God and of himself, finding the sins which the light brought out, met by the blood of Jesus, and his heart cleansed from unrighteousness by the grace manifested towards him (6-10). Thus the apostle writes unto them, that they "sin not." But suppose any one sin—he will only suppose the possibility of it, no more—"we have an Advocate with the Father," (that sweet name of relationship abiding unchanged) and one who cannot possibly forget either what is due to God, "Jesus Christ the *righteous*; and He is the propitiation for our sins" (ii. 1, 2). But the proper fruit of the knowledge of God (3) and of His love (5) is in obedience to His Word (3-5). He that says he abides in Christ ought himself to be walking even as Christ walked (6), nor was this any *new* commandment, save as the shining forth of the light (through the rent veil) dispelled the darkness, and gave the truth that was in Christ to be in them also (7, 8). He that professes to be in the light, moreover, and hates his brother, shows that he has never been really there (9-11).

These, then, are the general principles. The apostle now addresses Christians, * as forgiven ones, in the different stages of growth in this new life: fathers, young men, and babes. Even the babes knew the Father; the young men had overcome the wicked one; but the fa-

* As is well known, the word for "little children" is a different one in verses 13 and 18 from what is used elsewhere in the epistle. In these two verses alone are babes in Christ intended. Elsewhere believers in general are addressed.

thers knew Christ, not surely so as to need learn no more, but so as to distinguish Him from all else, not merely (with the young men) from Anti-christian snares, but from the world which yet to these was full of peril. For the fathers, then, the apostle has no special admonition (13, 14). The young men he warns as to a world which they had not yet proved (14-17). * The babes, young in the truth, more liable to be deceived by the presentation of what purported to be, but was not, Christ, he warns as to Antichrist, but still treating them as those in possession of the truth and of the Spirit, independent therefore of the mere teachings of men (18-27).

We now have more developed the three general tests of Christianity, righteousness (ii. 29-iii. 10), love (11-23), and the indwelling Spirit (24-iv. 6).

First, as to righteousness: *He* is righteous, and every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him. Now, at the present time, are we children of God, soon to be like Christ in glory. Now it is impossible to have this as a hope without seeking to be as like Him as possible in the meanwhile: "every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." Moreover sin is lawlessness, †—insubjection,—and *He* was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him is none: to know Him and abide in Him makes the practice of sin impossible, and the seed of the holy and life-giving word abides in him who by it is born to God.

Then as to love, Christ is again the pattern and power: He laid down His life for us; we ought to lay down ours for the brethren, and this practical love to the brethren

* It is manifest that although these titles, "fathers," "young men," and "babes," refer as above said to growth in the new life, yet that this is not to be wholly disconnected from the thought of age in natural life. One who had gone through the world already and known it, even if newly converted, would not ordinarily be in the same danger as a young man.

† See p. 271, and note.

is the necessary fruit and manifestation of the love of God dwelling in us. Moreover, in this way our hearts find confidence in the presence of God, and our prayers acceptance.

The third test is the Spirit. "And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us." Now the Spirit witnesses of Christ. There might be spiritual power which was not of Christ. The Spirit of truth would be known by the confession, not simply "*that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*"—mere orthodoxy,—but of Him so come.* Two other tests: the spirit of error would find acceptance with the world; and again, he who knew God would hear the apostles.

He proceeds (ch. iv. 7) to the further and deeper consideration of this Divine love which, first manifested towards us, when we had none, perfects itself in us by the reproduction of itself. We are to heed carefully this, that true love in us is especially the love of *one another*, the family love of the children of God, and that it is the fruit of the knowledge of God alone. The love of God has been manifested toward us in the gift of His Son, this is the argument for our love to one another (11). We find *in us* the invisible God in this mutual love in which God's love is perfected in us (12); and we know we dwell in Him and He in us, by the Spirit, His gift (13). This is the portion of every one who confesses that Jesus is the Son of God. We have known and believed God's love to us, and believing it we dwell in it, and so in Him (16). How can we enjoy it so assuredly? It has perfected itself with us, † in delivering us from

* Alford gives it correctly: "Every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ come in the flesh, is of God," and so in the next verso. The Bible Union retains the old translation.

† The marginal is the true reading: "love with us made perfect." "*Our love*" is a gloss, and not a translation. Alford and the Bible Union both give as in the margin.

fear right up to the day of judgment itself, by giving us to be now even in this world identified with Christ, and so as Christ is (17). Thus tormenting fear is cast out by this perfect love: he that fears shows only that he is not perfect in it (18). Our love to Him is based upon His love to us (19); loving Him we love all His (20-v. 1); but then this love to the children for the Father's sake cannot consist with disobedience to the Father, which is on the other side of the proof of love to Him (2, 3). To this obedience the world is indeed a hindrance, but which he who has seen in the One crucified by the world the Son of God, by that faith overcomes (4, 5).

By water and blood He came: with cleansing for us and expiation of our sins; both in the Cross whereon He died; and the Spirit, who is truth, bears witness (this refers, of course, to John xix. 34, 35). These three then, the Spirit and the water and the blood, agree in one. And this is Divine witness, both that God has given us eternal life, and that it is in His Son that He has given it. * He that hath the Son then, hath the life; that is, every one who, believing on His name, receives Him (comp. John i. 12, 13).

Practical confidence in God, exercised in the intelligence of His will, flows from all this, (comp. iii. 21, 22,) then showing itself most Christ-like when manifesting itself in intercession for the brethren (14-17). The last three verses sum up in brief the principles of the epistle.

The SECOND AND THIRD EPISTLES give us from opposite sides that inseparability of love and light for the Christian, which has been already before us. The

* It is well known that verse 7 is without real authority. It came in from the Latin "Vulgate." The passage should read: "For there are three that bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one."

Second, that *love* calls for the maintenance of *truth*. The Third, that *truth* requires the manifestation of *love*. The Second Epistle, simple as it is, demands the most serious attention in these days. The fact (a solitary one in Scripture) that a woman is addressed, gives additional force to what is enjoined. She, who could not speak in the assembly,—who might, if any, have thought herself excused from such action, is straitly enjoined to refuse admittance within her doors, nay, an ordinary salutation, to one who brought not the doctrine of Christ. He that greeted him became partaker of his evil deeds. Is this love? many would incline to ask. The apostle answers, “This is love, that we walk after His commandments.”

The Third Epistle, on the other hand, commends the reception and helping forward of those who went forth for Christ's name sake, “that we might to be fellow-helpers to the truth.” How “the truth,” on both sides, has place in the apostle's heart! If we wonder at this, we should ask ourselves, what is this “truth,” and what does it, and what has it done for us?

THE EPISTLE OF JUDE closes—sorrowfully and yet brightly closes—the list of the epistles. Sorrowfully, for its burden is not merely of sin but of *ruin*, of all set up so far,—of apostacy. Brightly, because God abides, and the “sanctified by God the Father” are still the “preserved in Jesus Christ.”

The ruin had begun. When he was about to write of the common salvation, he had rather to warn them to contend earnestly for the faith which was already, with some, suffering shipwreck. Already those had crept in among Christians (4) whom Enoch had long ago prophesied of as the “ungodly,” to be judged when the Lord came (14, 15). The character of these men is much

as Peter in his second epistle gives it, lustful, and casting off authority. But there it is "sin,"—here, the "leaving their first estate" (6), that is in question. And it is a downward, irrecoverable course: "the way of Cain," "the error of Balaam," then the open uprising, the "gainsaying of Core" (Korah). In this they "perish," for God's hand is not slackened, and they "were of old ordained to this condemnation" (4).

The exhortation to the saints is not merely to "contend" for the faith, but to "*build themselves up on it*,"—to take the place of dependence, "praying in the Holy Ghost,"—and to keep themselves in the love of God abiding for them with all the wealth of blessing, and all the security it ever had,—"*looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life*" (20, 21). Towards others, the exercise of discriminating pity, with abhorrence of the evil. Finally, the epistle ends as all will end, with "glory, majesty, dominion and power to Him able to keep from falling, and to present faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,—to the only wise God OUR SAVIOUR."

SCRIPTURE OUTLINES.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN (*continued*).

It is no wonder that the prayer which follows and closes this part of the Gospel should be so full of that of which we have seen the Lord's heart so full. First, the Father's glory, for which He had come into the world. Inseparable from that, the blessing of His own, a blessing the fulness of which is oneness with Himself, oneness in this way with one another. That they might have this, know it, exhibit it practically in the world, is what He asks for them, separateness from the world and

from its evil, set apart to God after His own likeness who was taking for them now a place on high.

In the presence of the Lord pouring out His heart unto the Father, anything of mere critical analysis ought to be out of question. But it has pleased Him, nevertheless, that it should be uttered in our hearing, that we should understand what is His care and occupation now that His work is accomplished and He is gone back whence He came. For all through this prayer His work is taken as accomplished, although actually the Cross had not yet been endured. But it was just before Him, foreknown and anticipated, with all its results of glory and blessing. It was in His hand, that Cross itself; and He was master of the scene and all that belonged to it; and so He speaks.

First, then, the Father's glory is in His heart, and His own glory He desires in order to that: "Father, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." This is the voice of Him who says, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O my God." Thus it was that if He had authority over all flesh, it was to "give eternal life to as many as the Father had given Him." It is the Father's will all through. Again, "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." The Sent One was the declaration of the Sender. Once more: "I have glorified Thee upon the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." And now, as the Sent One, He looks for His recall back to the place He had left to come into the world, but into which now as man He enters: "And now, Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." (Chap. xvii. 1-5).

Next, He presents His disciples to the Father, as that Father's own—His gift to Him. He had manifested

to them His Father's name, and they, as keepers of the Father's word, knew Him as the source of all, and from whose heart the beloved Son Himself had come to them. For these He prayed:—not yet for the world, for other purposes were first to be accomplished in a people chosen out of the world, and called to heaven. The double ground of this prayer is, "they are Thine," and "I am glorified in them"—the worker, in the fruit of His work. Now He asks that in that world which he is leaving they may be kept in the power of that name committed to Him,—one, as He and the Father, in living and spiritual unity. (6-13).

But this involved separateness from a world which hated them because they were not of it. It was not His mind that they should be taken out of it, but kept from the power of the evil one who ruled it. The word of the Father would be the means of their practical "sanctification" or separation from it, and Himself set apart as a man on high * the power of that separation, giving them a living object for their hearts, outside the world, and by occupation with which they would be "changed into the same image." (2 Cor. iii. 18). For that which our hearts are supremely set on gives us character, and love in man tends to assimilate him to the one he loves. Even so, occupation with Christ is what practically makes the Christian, not a mere negative separation from this or that, but positive separation "to the Lord." Nothing else will keep anyone outside the world but this. But then, having separated them from the world unto Himself, He sends His separated ones *into* the world to be His representatives in it, even as He was in it as the Father's (14-19.)

The next verse lets us know that not alone for those around Him at that time was the Lord interested.

* "I sanctify myself"—set myself apart as pattern and object for faith.

Carefully does He give us all who have believed the word of those then sent forth, a place with them in His prayers for His own. How blessed to be at such a time remembered! How solemn to remember that what was upon his heart then was "that they all may be *one*, as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." A holy, spiritual oneness in the Father and the Son, so manifested that the world might see it and believe! Ah, how have we answered to that tender solicitude of the Lord's heart for us, with Calvary but a few hours off, lying before Him in full sight, as it was. "*One?*" Yes, as practically we abide in the Father and in the Son, we are necessarily so. It is no *mere* external unity He speaks of. A corpse is not really "*one*," but already disunited members hastening on to more manifest dissolution; the spirit quickening the whole is what alone makes the different members one. This unity has all else in it then for our souls. How far is it realized—how far seen by the world, this one family, * this family of God? Alas, we have united with the world,—we have divided from one another; we have ourselves forgotten the oneness instead of teaching it to the world (20-21).

And the world has *not* "*believed*," but the time comes when it will *know*. When will that be? Not till Christ, who is our life, shall appear, and we also shall appear with Him in glory. "*And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one; I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in One; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me*" (22-23).

* For it is not the "*one body*" which is anywhere seen in John, but the one family of the children of God which, scattered in the Jewish system, Christianity unites. The figure of the body, just employed, is used only as a figure.

Oh, (if the world believes not,) that every child of God did know and believe, before the day of manifestation comes, how dear he is to God. But there is something more in this treasury of blessing, the Saviour's heart, for us: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me" (24). Thus our occupation here will be our occupation forever; but when no more through a glass darkly, but face to face, what will that near and intimate vision of His glory be!

The last verses put before the "*righteous Father*," who will deal in righteousness with every one, the contrast of a world which has not known Him, and Himself and His own who have. To these He had Himself declared the Father's name, that they might have in them, dwelling in their hearts, the love of the Father's heart, and Christ whom that Father's love embraced, at once its manifestation and delight.

THE BRIDE.

Midst the darkness, storm, and sorrow,
One bright gleam I see;
Well I know the blessed morrow
Christ will come for me.

Midst the light, and peace, and glory
Of the Father's home,
Christ for me is watching, waiting,
Waiting till I come.

Long the blessed Guide has led me,
By the desert road;
Now I see the golden towers,—
City of my God.

There, amidst the love and glory,
He is waiting yet ;
On His hands a name is graven
He can ne'er forget.

There, amidst the songs of heaven,
Sweeter to his ear
Is the footfall through the desert,
Ever drawing near.

There, made ready are the mansions,
Glorious, bright, and fair ;
But the Bride the Father gave Him
Still is wanting there.

Who is this who comes to meet me
On the desert way,
As the morning star foretelling
God's unclouded day !

He it is who came to save me,
On the cross of shame ;
In His glory well I know Him,
Evermore the same.

Oh, the blessed joy of meeting,
All the desert past !
Oh, the wondrous words of greeting
He shall speak at last !

He and I together entering
Those bright courts above ;
He and I together sharing
All the Father's love.

There no shade nor stain can enter,
Nor the gold be dim ;
In that holiness unsullied
I shall walk with Him.

Meet companion then for Jesus,
From Him, for Him, made ;
Glory of God's grace for ever
There in me displayed.

He who in His hour of sorrow
Bore the curse alone ;
I who through the lonely desert
Trode where He had gone.

He and I in that bright glory
One deep joy shall share ;
Mine, to be for ever with Him ;
His, that I am there.

T. McK.

A FRAGMENT.

The place which *faith* has with regard to walk and life is not enough apprehended, even by the Christian. "Faith, if it have not works, is dead," is the assertion, not that works *ought* to follow faith, but that they necessarily do. People often say, "I fear my faith is beyond my practice in this or that respect." There may be truth up to a certain point in this. In so far as it only amounts to the old heathen acknowledgement : "I see the better, I pursue the worse." But it will be found that after all, the faith—meaning by that a Divinely wrought persuasion of things—is lacking if the practice is. No amount of effort to get the conduct right can really avail, save as it is directed to a deeper realization of things as before God, where faith brings and where alone it can be duly exercised.

FATHER GRASSI'S CONFESSION OF FAITH.

The following confession of faith of the Rev. Father Paolo Cavaliere Grassi, on his renunciation of Popery, is extracted from his letter to Cardinal Patrizi, Vicar of the Diocese and City of Rome:

How did I resolve to shake off the yoke?

For me the decision was not without difficulties; and more than once I threw away non-party books which convinced me that the Roman Curia is not that of Christ. And I have longed to find the powerful book that would convince me to the contrary.

One book alone I could not throw away—the book of the Holy Scriptures. This is, I said to myself, inspired by God; in it are the maxims of the Redeemer, the acts of His apostles; it must, therefore, be the touchstone that teaches to discern on which side is truth, on which side is error. I have read its pages with joy and love, and in them I have found conviction, strength, light and life. In them I learnt to know Jesus Christ as my only Saviour and Mediator, who shed His blood to purge me from my sins. In them I have listened to the voice of the beloved Shepherd, inviting me to Him for salvation. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved,” I felt often repeated to my heart while reading the Testament of Christ. Then I would think, Ought I to believe? Should I not work in order to believe? No; the word of God would answer me: “Thou art saved by grace through faith, and that not of yourself, for it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast.” Then I would reflect, “So the good works I have done, so many confessions, fastings, penances, masses, alms, have not saved me?” No. “Man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” Then I comprehended what Jesus had done for me. I

went to him with my sin ; to Him, inviting and calling me, saying, "Come unto Me, weary and heavy laden, and I will give thee rest." I accepted Christ as a propitiation for my sins, as the One who paid all for me, I believe in Him, and being justified by faith I have peace with God. Your Eminence, I am already saved, I have now eternal life. I feel it in my heart. I feel the witness of the Holy Spirit, which says to me, I am a son of God. I feel I am saved, and this certainty of salvation within me is so strong that I am ready to seal this faith with my blood.

Who shall separate me from the love of Christ? shall tribulation? shall famine? shall persecution? shall death? No! neither death, nor life, nor height nor depth, shall be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Having arrived so far, I understood the necessity of good works, not to save us, no, for we are justified by faith ; but as a witness of our faith and for our justification before men. Then I understood that there can be no good works but those that spring from a living faith, working by love ; and it is for this motive that you see me now putting off all things of the past, and my old habits, that I may dedicate myself wholly to the service of Christ. I am not moved by interest, or by secondary and human motive, but only by the love of Christ, which is in me, and calls me to make known the peace, pardon and life I have found.

Then I applied myself more earnestly to the study of the Holy Scriptures, and found also the Bride of Christ, the Church. I saw this Church, which is the mystical body of Christ, and therefore the complement of Christ, who makes it one, complete and perfect, in communion with all His members. He has become the Head of all things in the Church—He, the chief corner-stone, upon

whom the building joined together is rising into a holy temple of the Lord. He loved His Church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify it, purifying it by the Word of Life, and present it in His sight, robed in glory, without spot or blemish, or other defect, holy and immaculate. This Church He has established as the pillar and ground of the truth, that now by the Church it may be known to principalities and powers in heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God, and that throughout all generations in all ages the glory may be to God in the Church and in Christ. True, the Church is now in the desert and in solitude; but now is the assembling of the saints, and this Church awaits the wedding day of her Bridegroom, when at the sound of the trumpet, at the voice of command, it will be lifted up above the clouds in the air to meet the Lord, and will then be with the Lord forever. We, with the Word of God in our hand, recognize now a Vicar in this Church. Christ has ascended into heaven, and His Vicar has remained here on earth in the midst of the Church to teach, lead and sanctify the faithful; but, your Eminence, the Vicar I find not in the Vatican—I find not in Pius IX. and his predecessors. The Vicar of Christ is the Holy Spirit. When I am gone I will send you the Holy Spirit, said Christ, and He will convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and judgment; He will teach you all truth; He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you. This Spirit is sent by Christ into the Church, the Comforter, that it may multiply; this Spirit unites to Christ in one sentiment and communion of heart all His brethren; He bestows His gifts in the Church—to some the gift of the Word, some teachers, some pastors, and some prophets, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ (Eph. iv. 11—13).

Becoming more diligent in the study of the Word, I found that God being Lord of Heaven and earth, He dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with men's hands as though He needed anything, seeing He giveth to all life and breath and all things (Acts xvii. 24—25); nor ought we to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device (verse 29). But Christ, the only Pontiff of future blessings, is the excellent and perfect tabernacle not made with hands, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead, and all Christians with Him are the chosen generation, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, the peculiar people; and all those who are led by the Holy Spirit to the living stone which is Christ, are as living stones built upon Him, as a spiritual house, a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (1 Pet. ii. 4, 5).

In the Word of God I have found but two sacraments instituted by Christ, Baptism and the Lord's supper. Baptism, or immersion, when the Christian believed, as it was instituted by Christ, was practiced by the Apostles, and in the Catacombs by the primitive Christians, as a witness and obedience to Christ, as a figure and symbol of the death and resurrection of Christ, of death and burial to sin, and resurrection to a new life; the Lord's supper as a remembrance of the broken body of Christ, of the blood shed by Him for the remission of sins, as a witness left to the Church, that by those symbols of bread and wine, the Church might show forth the death of the Lord till He comes.

I have also examined the history of the Primitive Church of Rome, and I find that she had no other faith or hope but that which I procured from the Holy Scriptures ; yet how glorious was the witness of that Church in Rome whose faith was spoken of throughout the whole world ! How many glorious champions sealed this faith with their blood !

Then, by the grace of God I decided to abandon all that had been added to the Church of Christ in these latter times, corrupting it and rendering it material and worldly. I return to the Church of the catacombs, to the Church of the martyrs, to the primitive apostolic Church in Rome. It is not I, therefore, who have seceded from the Church, but you who have seceded from her.

WAS OUR LORD'S LIFE VICARIOUS?

We are now to look at the concluding topic in the letter referred to, (see p. 284). Our correspondent asks, "How is it proved that our Lord's life-sufferings and obedience were not vicarious? Presbyterians teach that 'His life-sufferings from Bethlehem to Calvary were the true ground of our justification,' and that, 'He obeyed the law in our stead.'" Again, "What is meant by His being 'made under the law,' or by His being 'obedient unto death?' How did He 'learn obedience by the things which He suffered?' (Heb. v. 8), or in what sense was He 'made perfect through suffering?' " (Heb. ii. 10).

Let us first look briefly at the question of justification. In Scripture usage, justification is always *from* sins and guilt,—acquittal,—clearance from charge and accusation. It has no idea in itself of giving merit or title to reward. Thus "by Him all that believe are justified *from* all

things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts xiii. 39); "he that is dead is justified from sin" (Rom. vi. 7, *marg.*). Again, "Who shall *lay anything to the charge* of God's elect? It is God that *justifieth*. Who is he that *condemneth*?" (Rom. viii. 33). Or again, "I know nothing by (*i.e.* against) myself; yet I am not thereby justified, but he that judgeth me is the Lord" (1 Cor. iv. 4). Once more, "The free gift is of many offences unto justification" (Rom. v. 16).

Now when God becomes "the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus," what is the *ground* upon which according to Scripture He justifies one who is a sinner, and ungodly? Let the Scripture answer: "Being *justified* freely by His grace through the *redemption* that is in Christ Jesus"—"redemption through His *blood*" (Eph. i. 7),—"whom God hath set forth to be a *propitiation* through faith in His *blood*" (Rom. iii. 24). "That, being now justified by His *BLOOD*"—(Rom. v. 9). Or again, "he that *is dead* is justified from sin; now if *we* be dead *with Christ*"—(ch. vi. 7, 8).

Now this is the language of Scripture, exclusively. Does it speak of "life-sufferings" justifying, or of death, of blood, and that alone? I know, of course, that "life-sufferings from Bethlehem to Calvary" are meant to include the cross. All I ask here is, Does Scripture teach us so to mix up His life and death together, as together justifying?

It is quite true that I have omitted purposely, as yet, the passages which speak, not of justifying, but of *righteousness*. My reason is, that I desire to keep the things distinct from one another which Scripture in its wisdom, which is perfect, distinguishes.

"Righteousness" is in three places, and in three only, in the New Testament, a "righteous *act*" or "sum of righteous *acts*" (Rom. ii. 26; v. 18; viii. 4). In

every other case it is a *quality*.* Thus the "righteousness of God" is His being righteous, His character as such. This, declared by the death of Christ, (Rom. iii. 26), is revealed in the gospel as the hope and confidence of lost and guilty men, (i. 17), for as surely as Christ died for sinners, the sinner who shelters himself in Him is safe by the very fact that God is righteous.

Righteousness for a man, a sinner, is a character he is credited with: he is accounted righteous, righteousness is reckoned or imputed to him. That is, not a sum of righteousness,—so much doing—but a certain character, as I have said. In one place (Rom. iv. 6-8), righteousness imputed, is just sin *not* imputed. But if "Christ is made unto us righteousness" (1 Cor. i. 30), this of course goes very much further; nay, as being in Him before God, every believer is necessarily "righteous as *He* is righteous," (1 John iii. 7); all the value of Christ, of Him who glorified God on earth, whether by life or death, attaches to him.

Thus "by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous" (Rom. v. 19). I have no intention, as I have no desire, to exclude His blessed life from this "obedience." But this is not *life-suffering*, even though He suffered doubtless in the path of obedience, nay, "*learned* obedience by the things that He suffered." This means, He learned what it was—a new thing for "the Son" to obey, and to suffer in obeying.

So again, that "He became obedient unto death,"

* The first word is "*dikaloma*," the second, "*dikałosunē*." "The termination—*ma*, denotes the *result of an action*, and is affixed to verbal stems. Thus, *prasso*, *prag-*, gives *pragma*, a *thing done*, an *action*; and the obsolete *rheo*, *rhe-*, forms *rhema*, a *thing spoken*, a *word*."

"Substantives in *osune*, connected with adjective stems in *on-*, rarely in *o-*, denote a *quality*; as . . . *dikałosune*, *righteousness*." (Handbook to the Grammar of the New Testament, published by the Religious Tract Society of England, pp. 154, 156).

In Rev. xix. 8, the word is really a plural, "*dikałomata*," "the righteousnesses of the saints."

that is, that death itself, lying in His path, was not refused by this obedient One, is surely true. Obedient He was in a life tested by suffering which had no equal ; and obedient in death, where that was "even the death of the cross." By this obedience, perfect and entire throughout, one whole in life or death, we are made righteous, I again say. And here all that is really precious for the heart in the thought "He lived for us" as well as died for us, finds its expression and its justification.

But this is *not* the justification of the thought of a "vicarious life." By this term is intended, of course, His being in our place, Sin-bearer therefore, from His birth. The place of sinners,—*our* place,—would be necessarily for Him that of a sin-bearer. Let me express this in the language of a very popular writer, extreme language, no doubt, but it is well to see where such thoughts carry us. Says Dr. Horatius Bonar thus : "He was Himself the true Sacrifice, the bearer of sin. As such He lived and died. In all that He did, and in all that He abstained from doing ; in the places which He visited, and in the places which He abstained from visiting, He kept this in view. He was loaded with our sin, our curse, our condemnation, our leprosy ; and as such, He must keep at a distance from the holy and the clean."*

The last sentence will be disclaimed as expressing the views of many, perhaps. I would fain trust so. Still it is the language of one whose writings have widespread acceptance among Christians, and those so-called "evangelical" at the present day. And the general thought is one which is evidently implied in the statement that the Lord's "*life-sufferings* from Bethlehem to

* "The Banished One bearing our banishment," in *The Christian Treasury*, 1861, p. 314.

Calvary are the true ground of our justification." Here His "life-sufferings" are looked at as the *penalty* endured in our behalf,—are mixed up with the entire, contrasted sufferings on the cross,—and are made the ground of a justification which, if it could have been effected in that way, would have absolutely rendered the *death* of the Lord unnecessary. That is not meant of course, I know; but it is right to show the consequences involved in that which those who hold it do not follow out to its consequences.

But let me ask now, where is the proof from Scripture, that the Lord bore sin for us "from Bethlehem to Calvary?" I read, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body ON THE TREE," (1 Pet. ii. 24). People have tried to make even this text speak another language. The marginal reading here gives "or to the tree," and many have tried to elaborate their own doctrine out of this. But it is impossible.* And the same thing will be found elsewhere in this very epistle, as iii. 18, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God, *being put to death in the flesh,*" &c. So universally: "Without shedding of blood is no remission;" "and having made peace through the blood of His cross;"† "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin."

And thus when He cometh into the world, saying, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me," what takes the place of these many ineffectual sacrifices of the law? was it a *sacrificial life* or *death* that did so? Of which does Scripture

* The word "bare" is the ordinary word for sacrificial bearing; and the word for "upon" the very word which has that meaning more simply and positively than any other word in the language. Alford and the Bible Union revisions both reject "to" and give "upon."

† It has been actually attempted to make the shedding of His blood in *circumcision*, of the same character and value with the "blood of the Cross." How decisively this is denied here, I need scarcely say.

speak when, having produced that saying of His, "Lo! I come to do *Thy will*, O my God," it adds, "By the *which will* we are sanctified, through the *offering* of the body of Jesus Christ once?"

If then, "without shedding of blood is no remission," did His "life-suffering from *Bethlehem*" put away sin? If "by the blood of the *cross*" He has made peace, did He bear sin all His life through, unavailingly till then?

Scripture declares in the most decisive way, that it was the suffering outside the gate of Jerusalem,—the suffering of the cross therefore,—which gave sanctifying power even to His bloodshedding. "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high-priest for sin, are *burned without the camp*; wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered *without the gate*" (Heb. xiii. 11, 12). How distinct the place and character which such words give the Cross! The only place where atonement was or could be made, is the only place where He could be the Sin-bearer.

I shall touch the question of the law presently. Let me first ask my reader's attention to the consequences of this doctrine of the Lord's being "loaded with our sin, our curse, our condemnation" all His life. For these consequences are to obscure the glory of His Person, and take away from the preciousness of His having "lived for us."

What was He in the world? The Light of it. What was that light? "The glory of the Only-begotten of the Father," the One "*in the bosom* of the Father."

But, I ask, Could there be the *shining forth* of the glory of One in the Father's bosom, in any due and proper way, in One all His life under wrath and curse? Sure I am, that the simple reader of Scripture, following step by step the course of that Son of the Father upon

earth, would never dream of *His* being then in the sinner's place, bearing that sinner's due, when the Father's voice gave its witness of delight in Him; when upon the mount of transfiguration "He received from God the Father *honour and glory*, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory," &c., (2 Pet. i. 17). Surely "honour and glory" are not the sinner's due; and one who, as Dr. Bonar tells us, "kept in view" His being in the place of Sin-bearer "in the places which He *visited*, and in the places which He abstained from visiting," and who, "if permitted to resort to Jerusalem," he further tells us, "could only do so as a stranger or way-faring man, who comes in with the crowd during the day, but retires at night—" surely One in such a position and with such constant remembrance of it, could never even have "visited" the "holy mount!"

But enough of this. Till the Cross, the whole Gospel history is witness, He was *not* in the sinner's place. No, He was declaring the Father, doing the works of the Father, the Father hearing him always and always with Him. How different when that awful shadow fell upon the Cross, and the sufferer on it took up the language of the 22nd psalm:

"My God! my God! why hast Thou forsaken me? why art Thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God! I cry in the daytime, and Thou HEAREST NOT . . . Be not far from me, for trouble is near, for there is none to help . . . But be not Thou far from me, O Lord, O my strength, haste Thou to help me."

There were other sorrows, I know. What element of bitterness did not then enter into the cup of the man of sorrows? But above all, *this* sorrow—a far-off God—was the crushing, decisive sorrow of the Cross.

* "The Banished One," &c., p. 314.

To the difference between this and the whole previous part of our Lord's life, no Christian can be altogether blind. But it is a marvel that any should not see that here alone is the sinner's place taken,—the sinner's due received,—that here alone was that fulfilled, He was “made a curse for us.” When and where was this? Mark further—“as it is written, Cursed is every one that HANGETH ON A TREE” (Gal. iii. 13).

But we have not yet done with this doctrine of vicarious life. The law! what about the law? Was Christ not “made under the law?” Did He not fulfil it in our stead, and thus work out our robe of righteousness? And if the Cross alone is what meets our sins, is not His law-fulfilling the righteousness which fits us for, and entitles us to heaven?

Scripture answers:—

Christ *was* “made under the law;” *did* fulfil it therefore, and that perfectly, as He must, being under it and the perfect One. So far all is plain. But there is a wide gap between this and what follows in men's thoughts. The moment I say, “He fulfilled it *in our stead*,” I say it without Scripture. “He magnified the law, and made it honorable”—true. Not a step further will the Word carry you in this track. Why is it, it NEVER says, “He fulfilled the law in our stead?” Why is it, that it *never* says, “His law-fulfilling is our righteousness?”

Because it has a very different,—a contradictory thing to this, to say.

The system which speaks of Christ's law-fulfilling as our righteousness, speaks on this wise. It puts you down as one under the law, to get to heaven by. The law promises heaven or eternal life to obedience. It denounces the curse on disobedience. Now then, it is not only necessary to have our sins borne, our curse taken for us. That would still leave us without a po-

sitive title to heaven; it would free us from hell but no more. And *there* comes in the necessity of a positive meritorious *fulfilling of the law for us being needed, as well as curse endured.*

Space fails just now for the consideration of this system. I propose rather to set side by side with it the Scriptural one, for the establishment of this will of course suffice to set aside the other.

Scripture then speaks of man, if under law, as under the condemnation of it merely, a lost sinner. For such, as soon as they believe in Christ, not only is His blood the purging of their *sins*, but they themselves are, in the death of Him who died for them, "dead," and passed away from before God as sinners, part of the old creation. They are in this way, "dead to *sin*" (Rom. vi.), "dead to the LAW," (Rom. vii.), and no longer "living (alive) in the *world*" (Col. ii. 20). As another way of expressing it, they are "not in the flesh" (Rom. vii. 5, viii. 9). Thus then, there is no fulfilling for men belonging to the old creation, begun and ruined in the first Adam, the responsibilities attaching to *that* condition. No, it is ended and over before God on the Cross of His Son, with all that belongs to it. And those who have their place in Christ before God have a place under the *last* Adam, in *new* creation, new creatures altogether, old things passed away, and all things become new (2 Cor v.).

Nor did the last Adam take up the first Adam's responsibilities to fulfil them, and ~~so~~ secure the blessing which he failed to obtain. It is a mistake and a serious one. The first Adam and the last are not only type and antitype: they are, on that very account, *contrasts*. "The first man, Adam, was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit . . . The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven" (1 Cor. xv. 45, 47). Now as are the two,

so are their responsibilities, and so is the work with which each is connected. To the first Adam it was never said, "Do this, and you shall go to heaven," but on the other hand, "Do this, and you will *die*." His responsibility was to *retain his place*, not acquire a new one. Nor could *any* law-keeping on his part have entitled him to a higher place than that in which he was created. No creature can do more than *duty*, and none can acquire a title to be raised above his natural condition. Hence the law which was the test of man, never says, "The man that doeth these things shall *go to heaven*," but "shall *live* in them." Had it found the perfect man for which it looked, he would not have died and gone to heaven; no, he could not have died at all. But *all* died. Yes, because "all have sinned." The law says, "There is none righteous," and leaves man there.

And now comes the work of the last Adam. Not being a mere creature, He *can* merit. But instead of putting Himself under the first Adam's responsibility to restore the condition of the earthy, He closes for those who believe in Him their entire connection with it, giving them in Himself (His work completed, and He in the value of it, as man, gone up to God), a new place of blessing, heavenly, in the Divine favor which rests upon Himself. This place was never attached to law-keeping; no man fulfilling that could ever have hoped for it, be he Adam the first or any of his sons.

And to say that the law, the measure of mere *man's* obedience, was the measure of *His*, by whose obedience many are made righteous, is to confound the lowest with the highest, man's work to keep his first estate, and Christ's to bring men out of the ruin of it to the heights of glory where He Himself is for us now. Was He no more than perfect man? was His work no more than

Adam should have done? and are the results no more than if the first man had walked in his integrity? Alas, where have we got, if it be needful to ask such questions.

Doubtless He fulfilled the law, for the greater includes the less, and His obedience was beyond and above law altogether. Not in our stead did He fulfil the law, but by dying took us out of the condition to which law attaches, to give us a new place in grace which nought but grace could give, and which will be the wonder of eternity that grace could give us.

KEY-NOTES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS.

The Book of REVELATION, the only prophetic book in the New Testament, connects of course with the prophets of the Old. Yet, there is contrast, chiefly in this, that the Church and the heavenly portion of the saints, lie so largely in view in the former, while in the latter they *never appear at all*. Unless this is seen, all is confusion in the interpretation of these; even the more, perhaps, because the earthly things are so constantly the figures of the heavenly. As to the matter of the book, it is a disclosure to Christ's servants of things shortly to come to pass, and right on to the new heavens and earth of the eternal state. The division into "things which are"—the present time—and "things which shall be *after these*" (not as vaguely given in our version "hereafter") is important. The "*after these*" is taken up again in the 4th chapter, (v. 1,) showing when this division commences. The first three chapters then are "the things which are," evidently a prophecy of the whole present Christian period. This may be made plain in the following way:—

1st. "Seven" churches are addressed. Seven is the perfect number, and a complete representation of the church period prophetically would be, in perfect harmony with other Scriptures, given in seven successive pictures such as these churches give. Compare the seven parables of the kingdom of heaven, Matth. xiii.

2nd. The seven churches are actually made the representatives of Christ's servants in general, for the revelation is to *them*, yet sent expressly to these churches.

3rd. Christ is not merely in the midst of seven Asiatic assemblies, and not careful about their state alone. And the seven candlesticks have reference very plainly to the one *seven-branched* candlestick in the (Jewish) holy place, the symbol of the testimony of the Holy Ghost.

4th. At the end of every address, every one that hath an ear to hear is called to hearken to what the Spirit says to the churches, showing the importance of what is said to every one.

5th. The last four addresses give repeated notice that the Lord is coming, and after these chapters the Church is no more found or addressed on earth; but the saints are seen worshipping up in heaven (ch. v). The Lord, too, takes the title of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, witnessing that He is now taking up Israel's cause, and in ch. vii, Israel is accordingly seen as the object of His care, in contradistinction from the multitude of *Gentiles* also, come out of the great tribulation.*

But the great proof is the way in which the addresses themselves agree with what we know from history and prophecy of the Church's past and future. Thus we know, in the apostles' days it had lost first love, and

* Compare also the papers at pp. 40, 98, 123, for further proofs and explanation.

that its final end as a professing body on earth will be to be spued out of Christ's mouth, the true saints being taken up to heaven (2 Thess. ii. 1, 2). Thus Ephesus and Laodicea have their counterparts. Smyrna, following Ephesus, gives the Church under persecution (as under the heathen emperors) with the rise of a Jewish party in the Church itself, (such as is evidenced in the ritualism of almost the earliest "fathers.") Pergamos shows, *after* the persecution, the Church "dwelling" in the world—"where Satan's *seat* (really "throne") is;" its *establishment* from Constantine on; and as a consequence, Balaamites and Nicolaitans. Thyatira next gives us Popery, the *woman* (type of the church, true or false) with the significant name of the old idolatrous persecutor of God's people, systematizing these Balaam abominations, while claiming inspired, infallible teaching, as "prophetess." Here there is the first warning of the Lord's coming, Jezebel (I doubt not) continuing down to it, and then (after the Lord has taken His own) in the "great tribulation" cast into a bed with her associates in iniquity, the kings of the earth (ii. 22). We next have Sardis, not characterized by doctrinal evil, but by lifeless profession, a state of things which national churches (as those of the Reformation were) necessarily supposes; yet godly ones amid them whom the Lord owns. Next, in Philadelphia, a few who keep Christ's work, and do not deny His name, and who keep also the "word of His patience," that is, wait for Him who is Himself waiting to have His own with Him above. Here comes in the promise to "keep them from the *hour* of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that *dwell* upon the earth,"—a glance back at ch. ii. 13. It is added now, "I come *quickly*," as if to tell us of the way of escape from the world's "hour." Finally, Laodicea, as before

said, shows us the utter rejection of the professing body.

The apostle is now caught up to heaven and sees the throne of God with the "living ones," or cherubim, and out of it thundering and lightning, judgment coming upon the earth, still with the bow of promise circling the throne, the witness that spite of judgment God remembers His covenant with creation. Round the throne, the four and twenty thrones with their occupants, the elders, tell of the kings and priests of the world to come, who in the next chapter ascribe the glory of redemption to the Lamb, and speak of a coming reign upon the earth. It is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, as already noticed, who, as the slain Lamb, (on the ground of His sacrificial work) takes the book of Divine counsels and opens the things to come.

The opening of the seals (ch. vi.) gives us an introductory sketch of what is coming: conquest, civil war, famine, pestilence, persecution of saints, anticipation of the Lamb's wrath; through all this (ch. viii.) a company of Jews (vii. 4), sealed to preserve them alive for blessing on the earth; then a multitude of Gentiles who come out of the "great tribulation" (9). It is no more the Church in which is neither Jew nor Gentile.

Accordingly Jerusalem will be found the centre of the prophetic fore-ground in the chapters which follow, which give us in detail the Divine dealings with the earth during the interval between the removal of the heavenly saints, and the Lord's appearing with them to judge the world. This last is in ch. xix. After ch. x, and the little open book, things take plainer shape and come more into connection with Old Testament prophecy. The two witnesses in ch. xi., are God's testimony in Israel during the last half-week of Daniel's 70; the reference to which is constant at this point (xi. 2, 3;

xii. 6, 14 ; xiii. 5). The woman in ch. xii, is Israel, of whom after the flesh Christ came. He, the man-child, is caught up to heaven, and (the present time being passed over, as generally in prophecy) I doubt not those who are to share this rule (comp. ch. ii., 27) are here seen in Him. Then there is war in heaven, and Satan, cast out, persecutes the Jewish people. The beast of ch. xiii., 1, the fourth beast of Dan. vii., the Roman empire revived, and under its last head is his instrument in this, but the lamb-like second beast, or Antichrist, the subtle spiritual energy in subjecting men (xiii., 11). The corrupt ecclesiastical power of Christian times is seen in ch. xvii. xviii., destroyed at last by the beast, and the just judgment of God ; after which the marriage of the Lamb is come (xix.), and He comes with His saints to the judgment of the beast and the kings of the earth. Satan is bound (xx.) and the millennium follows, the saints martyred during the interval being seen as added to the number of those who reign with Christ (4, 6). There is then the final outbreak at the end of the thousand years, the judgment of the (wicked) dead at the great white throne, and new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness (to xxi. 8).

The final vision is that of the new and heavenly Jerusalem, and is as to time millennial ; but the main features are surely not to pass away. As the Old Testament prophecy closes with the rising of the Sun of righteousness, so does the New with "the bright and morning star."

SCRIPTURE OUTLINES.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN (*concluded.*)

The great distinguishing features of John's Gospel are prominent in the closing chapters. All through them the glory of the Word made flesh, the Son of the Father, shines. All through them the perfection of His work, the *whole burnt-offering* character of the sacrifice. His own witness to this—"It is finished"—is found alone here. And in simple majesty of a will, which no circumstances could compel, but which is set upon the Father's glory, He lays down His life, none taking it from Him. Another Isaac, He bears the wood of the offering* to the appointed place; but for Him no substitute is found, for He is Himself the Lamb of God's providing, the Substitute for men.

How perfectly in character is the scene in the Garden here. The agony, the human weakness,† are omitted; and if the intimacy to which He had admitted the chosen twelve, allowed one of that number to betray to His enemies the place of His resort, they find One in the Divine knowledge of all that lay before Him, coming forth to meet them. It is He who asks, Whom seek ye? And when He tells them He it is they seek, they all go backward and fall to the ground. He might have withdrawn Himself, but gives Himself up to drink the cup the Father has given Him. Like Gen. xxii., the real transaction is between the Father and the Son. A word of His suffices to secure His disciples. To free Himself He will put forth no power. He just shows that He has it, and that His offering of Himself is free-will offering.

The high-priest, questioning Him of His doctrine, He

* It is only John who notices that our Lord bore the cross (xix. 17).

† It is well to remember here, that it was only *bodily* weakness to which the angel ministered (Luke xxii. 43).

refers to what He had ever spoken openly to the world. The Jewish question is not raised. All through the Gospel He is outside Judaism; and they have settled on the ground of expediency that He shall die for the nation. Still they are zealous for the law, and that they may keep the Passover, will not go into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled. How the light shines in there! How it reads as if the books were opened at another day of judgment!

Pilate would make it all a mere Jewish question. The nation through their leaders had delivered Him up to him who was himself no Jew, and could be supposed to know nothing for himself about a king of the Jews. But if the governor had nothing yet to fear, so much the more had the *man* in the One who was indeed a king, but not of this world, and a witness to the truth, which every one who was a witness of the truth, heard.

Pilate is alarmed; but, as ever, where there is not real Divine work in the soul, the natural cause for fear outweighs the supernatural, the people are a nearer argument to act than a far-off God and a dim futurity. So, after a vain endeavor to save the One whom he pronounces innocent, or rather to save himself from the guilt of condemning Him, he scourges, and then delivers Him up to the people's will.

Upon the cross, again there is no weakness, and no noon-day darkness, no cry of desertion: it is the Creator of heaven and earth laying the foundation of new creation. If He says, "I thirst," it is as One accomplishing the things which had been forespoken of Him. Then announcing the perfectness of all His work by "It is finished," He renders up His spirit.*

To this perfection of the work for man there is then

* "Gave up the ghost" is not sufficient, as it is merely equal to "expired," and used for that in Luke xxiii. 46. It is another expression here.

the three-fold testimony of the Spirit, the water, and the blood (comp. 1 John v. 6, 8). The order of this witness in the epistle is the order of application; here in the Gospel it is the historical and Divine order. Here the blood of atonement is the first as the foundation of everything; then the water of purification comes also from the side of a dead Christ. These are the answer to man's condition, to the thrust of the soldier's spear, the causeless enmity of the heart to God. For expiation and for purification, Christ must die. Founded upon that is the work of the witnessing Spirit, the power of realization of these things to the soul.

Passing on to the 20th chapter, and the resurrection, we find, what might be anticipated, the acceptance of the offering and of those for whom it is offered, carried further than in the other Gospels. Not alone is "all power" His; not alone is "peace" theirs. Those who believe are accepted in His acceptance, and "He is not ashamed to call them 'brethren.'" The word to Mary Magdalene is, "Go to my *brethren*, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God."

When He comes into their midst, it is as last Adam, to give them a place in the new creation, of which He, as risen from the dead, is Head. "The first man, Adam, was made a living soul; the last Adam is made a quickening spirit." Hence, if God breathed into the "first man, Adam," the breath of life, the last Adam, the quickening spirit, "breathes on" His disciples and says, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Thus are they dowried and sent into the world His representatives in it, as He His Father's.

The addition as to Thomas' unbelief is one of those pictures of Israel in a future day, which after the manner of the Spirit in this evangelist are appended to

what forms the main part of the book, in witness that God's purposes for His ancient people are not altered, but only in suspense, during the time of the gathering of the heavenly people.* John's is eminently, as we have seen, the *Christian* gospel, and this reminder is only the more sweetly and perfectly in place on that account. Here Thomas is without doubt the type of the Jewish people, at first unbelieving, brought to faith only by the actual sight of Jesus, leaving still the greater blessing for those who (as the Gentiles now) "have not seen and yet have believed."

With this, as is plain by the two verses which close the chapter, the Gospel in a sense ends. The 21st chapter is again an appendix, wherein, among other things, Peter (and we all with him) is made to know the meaning of that washing of the feet which in the 13th chapter he could not yet understand. By the "fire of coals" and in the three questions there, he learns to connect the shameful scene at the high-priest's fire with his own boast "though all should deny Thee, yet will not I." But he learns it in the presence of a grace which admits no distance, and which, while giving him in the meanwhile a precious ministry of love to the flock of Christ, strengthens him (when the natural energy of youth is gone,) to do the very thing in which he had failed before, and lay down his life for that gracious master.

There are dispensational applications into which I cannot enter here. The Lord lead my readers far beyond this meagre outline into the priceless truths of this His precious Word.

* Similar passages we have seen in ch. i. 43; ii. 22; iv. 43-54; xii. 12-21.;