

**THE**  
**Christian's Helper.**

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**“By love serve one another” (Gal. v. 13).**

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**1914**

**(Issued during 1913).**

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**LONDON :**

**W. H. G. BLATCHLEY, 27 LANCEFIELD STREET, QUEEN'S PARK, W.**



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## NOTES OF AN ADDRESS ON EPH. V. 25-27.

I WANT to get before our hearts, beloved brethren, if I can, distinctly and clearly, what the interests of the Lord Jesus Christ are upon this earth to-day. We need to be clear about it; for if we do not know what His interests are, and where they centre, we cannot act either individually or collectively, consistently with those interests and in suitability to Him.

Scripture tells us that God loved the world. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (John iii. 16). I am sure we are all familiar with and delight in that blessed truth. It lets us see where the love of God was centered—God loved *the world*. It is not some special individuals in the world, but the world itself—the world looked at in its concrete form—the whole world. It takes in all and shuts out none.

Then for the display of that love, and the carrying out of the purpose of God's heart, the Lord Jesus came down here saying, "Lo I come to do Thy will, O God"; and by His one perfect offering of Himself on the cross He glorified God about the whole question of sin, and opened up a righteous channel for God to act consistently with all that He is in Himself, and take poor sinners into favour and give them a new life and nature and eternal blessings with Himself. All that is very blessed indeed and our hearts know it in some little measure, thank God. We have learnt how He has satisfied His own heart in the way He has taken to satisfy ours, and we have found our rest in it.

"God so loved the world." It never says Christ loved the world; nor does it say God loved the Church. It says, "Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it." If we want to know what are Christ's interests to-day—where the circle of His interests are to-day, we have the answer in this beautiful passage before us: it is the Church. The Lord thinks everything of the Church. The circle of His interests all centre there in this present day. He loved it and gave Himself for it, and He is engaged in active service on high to-day on

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behalf of it; and He is going to take it to glory to be with Himself by and by, and then bring it back and display it in all the brightness and splendour of His own glory with which He will adorn it, when it will shine forth as the Holy City, New Jerusalem, having the glory of God—the Bride, the Lamb's wife.

It is an immense thing, for our souls to get hold of that, and to find ourselves in the power of it. Especially is it needful for those who are young in the ways of the Lord. It is a great thing for us all to see that the affections of the Lord's heart flow out at the present time to His Church and not to the world. The second Psalm says, "Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." But the Lord has not asked for that yet. He says in John xvii., "I pray *not* for the world, but for them whom Thou hast given Me out of the world." By and by He will ask for the world, and God will give it to Him; and as Son of Man He will possess everything. Son of Man is the widest title the Lord has, and as such He will possess and reign over all things (Ps. viii.).

In connection with His love, there is a very beautiful passage in John xiv. last verse; "But that the world may know that I love the Father," etc. You see He is in the fullest fellowship with the mind of His Father, and He goes forth to accomplish His will and prove to the world that He loved His Father. And how did He prove it? He said, "Arise, let us go hence," and He went to the cross and there laid down His life, and thus in the very sorrows and agonies of death itself, He proved His perfect obedience, and devotedness, and love to His Father.

Then there is another view of it, "The Son of God, who loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*" (Gal. ii. 20). Here it is seen in its individual character. We are each privileged to say – and how blessed to be able to say—"The Son of God loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*." That is how it is told out to each one of us: in going down into death itself, in order to meet and put away for ever everything that was against us and thus

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win the affections of *our hearts* by that marvellous revelation of the love of His own heart.

When we come to Ephesians v., it is neither His Father nor individuals, it is the Church. "Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it." It is the Church as a whole, and His love is seen in the same blessed way, never stopping short of death—"He gave Himself for it." Blessed Saviour!

We have another picture of it—you remember it perhaps—in that beautiful passage in Matthew xiii. 45-46. A certain merchantman was seeking goodly pearls, and "when he had found *one pearl of great price* he went and sold all that he had and bought it." It was just *one pearl!* But He knew its value! How wonderful to think of the Lord selling all that He had to buy it! That is just another way of reading "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it." The pearl is the Church, it is the *one* thing of value to Him, and all His affections and interests centre in it. He will have other interests on earth by and by of course, but meanwhile they centre in the Church.

The Church had its commencement on the day of Pentecost: that was its birthday. Of course there were saints prior to that. There were saints from Abel downwards, but they do not form any part of the Church. It is formed by the Holy Spirit indwelling each individual and uniting us to each other and to Christ the Head in heaven. It is "the Church, which is *His body*" (Eph. i.), and which will be displayed as *His Bride* in the day of glory (Rev. xxi.). He gave Himself for it. He will present it to Himself by and by, and it will be the object of His love for ever and ever. All His interests centre in it, and every one has to know that in their own souls, so to come into the power and enjoyment of it. I cannot be in either the power or the joy of it if I don't know it. How gracious of the Lord to make it known so that we may be in His mind about it. It is a sorrowful fact that the majority of the Lord's people have not the slightest idea about the Church. If you doubt it, talk with them; you will soon see they know nothing about it.

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They simply say, "He saved my soul and I'm going to be in heaven when I die"; and I say, Thank God for that! That is a great thing to be able to say? Some will add, "And we must work for God and do all we can to get others saved." Very blessed thing, surely! But is there nothing more than that? Surely there is, and He would have us in communion with Himself about that which lies nearest His heart, and thus be able to act intelligently and consistently with it.

It may be objected, Surely the Lord died for more than the Church. Does Scripture not say "He tasted death for every man"? Certainly it does; "He tasted death for every man." We cannot be too clear as to the extent, the far-reaching extent, of the death of Christ. There is such value in the blood of Christ that it gives God *title* to bless *all men*. But we know, alas! that all men will not be blessed; many refuse it. It is only those who receive Christ that find the blessing, and it is they who constitute the Church, and it is *that* Church that He loved and gave Himself for. *That* is the pearl of great price; and however much it may be tarnished through the failure of the saints He is going to make it just what His loving heart would have it, and then present it to Himself in all the glory He can put upon it and clothe it in, to be with Him in His Father's house for ever. Is it not wonderful!

Then we have the way He takes in order that His thought about it may be accomplished. He has given gifts to men (Eph. iv.)—"Set some in the Church" (1 Cor. xii.) for the benefit of the Church. "He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers." He has made the fullest provision for it so long as it is here. The evangelists go and get the stones out of the quarry, and the pastors and teachers square them and fit them into their place. Then there is the Spirit guiding and controlling so that every member and every joint and band adds their share to the building up and edifying of itself in love. Nothing is left to human wisdom to invent as an improvement on the Divine plan. Christ



*Notes of an Address on Eph. v. 25-27.* 5

is the Head of His body, and He by His Spirit guides every member of it and knows just what is needed so long as it is here in the place of need. I will not enlarge upon this but I think you will grasp the idea that I have been trying to set before you. Thank God there are some to be found who have grasped the truth, and seek to answer to the mind of the Lord, and are acting on these Divine principles. We do not say we are the Church. We must never be so presumptuous nor so foolish as to say such a thing. We are not even a testimony to the Church or an expression of it. We are simply a testimony to its ruin, and in the midst of that ruin are seeking to carry out Divine principles, and we find the favour and blessing of the Lord in doing that. We seek to be in fellowship with the mind and the heart of Christ; and if we seek souls it is that they might be brought into the Church. If we meet saints we seek to instruct them with a view to their intelligently apprehending their place and acting consistently with it. We do not seek to restore anything, but in His presence, and according to His mind, seek to act with Him and for Him.

Just a word or two more. What is it the Lord has before Him in the future? He is going to present the Church to Himself "a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but holy and without blemish." Is it not a precious thought? It lets us see *Who* He is. Who could do that but a Divine Person? Alas, there are many spots upon us now—the marks and defilements of the journey and our failures in it. *Then* there will be no spot. Wrinkles are the signs of trouble, and care, and worry, and old age. Just think, dear brethren, the Lord is going to present us to Himself without a trace of any of these. He will have no spot, no wrinkle, no furrow on the brow of *His* Bride when He presents her to Himself. Blessed, precious Lord! Yes, we are to be the true Eve of the last Adam. Eve was not presented to Adam as his body, but as his bride and wife, and while we *are* the body of Christ we are to be presented to Himself by Himself as *His* Bride, and we are to share

with Him not only all His loving heart can give to us, but delight ourselves in viewing glories that are peculiarly His own and because they *are* His own.

In Revelation xxi. the Church is seen coming down out of heaven as the Bride, the Lamb's wife, and set forth as the Holy City, New Jerusalem, “having the glory of God.” As a light bearer on the earth the Church has been a sad failure. The history of the seven churches in Revelation ii. and iii. makes that clear. The Church did *not* display Christ; nay she glorified herself. But in the eternal state all the blessed results of His work will be manifested and she will be seen then setting forth in every conceivable way all the perfections and glories of Christ. The light of the city is simply reflected light, and every precious stone that sets it forth but different views of His glory. He is everything and shines forth in all. May our hearts enter into it more fully, dear brethren, and live in the power of it, thus answering here and now to His heart, for His glory and praise.

W. E.

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### “BE YE ALSO ENLARGED.”

(2 Cor. vi. 13)

It is easy to level the charge of narrow-mindedness and bigotry at others; as easy as it was for Ahab to inveigh against Elijah, “the troubler of Israel”—and with just as much truth. That charge has been flying about for not a little while; and just as long as there are those who love their own way and refuse the “old paths” of divine appointment so long will there be those who raise the now time-honoured cry of bigot, and rail against calling things by their true names.

But to act as in the fear of God; to walk according to the truth of God; to obey the commands of the Lord Jesus, and to keep His words, are essential still for the true saint; and upon this he will be bent, desiring above all things the approval of God, and, as expressed in our Epistle, to be acceptable to Christ whether here or when before His manifestation seat (chap. v. 9).

*“ Be ye also Enlarged.”*

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Paul, in addressing the Corinthian saints, desires their enlargement. Could any, reading his letter doubt his love for them? Why, his deep devotion to them is one of its most manifest features. His deep heart-yearning for them, his watchful care over them, his untiring interest in them, shines everywhere. And in the following exquisite passage we surely have revealed the secret of his deep love, and intense devotion: “For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (chap. xi. 2). There it stands written plainly for our learning—not simply the place they had in Paul’s heart, but the transcendent place Christ held there.

“That I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” gives, then, his grand purpose, and what kind of advice one with such a purpose would give them it is surely not difficult to conceive. Nothing but what would further his desire, and lead up to the consummation so ardently longed for.

But we need not imagine; for what he, the suited instrument in the hands of the Holy Spirit, wrote to them, we find on the page of Inspiration. The Apostle desired their enlargement. He wished them to be expanded. There was something wrong evidently. Like many to-day in this world where deception is practised, and self-deception is rampant; where error looks so broad and truth so narrow; where right is excluded and self-choice predominates; they were, whilst presumably broadening out in thought and action, actually becoming narrowed and restricted, involving loss for time and for eternity. By being taken up with “lying vanities” they were “forsaking their own mercy.”

And as a father solicitous for their real welfare, and pitiful and tender even in dealing with their wrongs, does Paul recall them. “I speak as unto my children” he says. “Now for a recompence in the same, be ye also enlarged.” The observance of the exhortation would necessarily bring them rich blessing—the promised recompence.

*“ Be ye also Enlarged.”*

He was enlarged in heart towards them. In confidence he spoke to them. His path was one in which he found much suffering; a path in which amidst other paradoxical features he was as one having nothing; yet possessing all things. But the Corinthians—what did they know about those things? “Ye are straitened in your own bowels.” Their estimation had been that their instructor was the one narrow and restricted; and that he would “narrow” them in heart and action. The very opposite was the truth of the case; for they were the straitened ones, missing the reward which follows the observance of the truth.

Were they children of God? That is not exactly the point which the Apostle leads to. But rather, were they in the conscious enjoyment and bliss of such near and dear relationship to the Lord God Almighty? That was the question. Such bliss was their proper portion. Had he not said, “I will be a Father unto you”? but the conditions which were attached to this declaration they were deliberately setting aside by the latitude which they allowed themselves. And what loss ensued!—the loss of present communion with the Father. The unclouded light of His countenance could not shine upon them. A loss this, that no one can estimate.

“Be ye enlarged,” wrote the Apostle. They had been broadening out, but in a wrong direction. They were excluding God whilst including the world. How exceedingly narrow they were then in their broad-mindedness! Wherein lay the remedy? For them, and for us, true enlargement comes only through a true entering into the mind of God as revealed in His Word. And subjection to that Word is incumbent upon each of us. Through such subjection deliverance from our own narrowness comes.

And now the secret comes out. What part had they in His mind with unbelievers? To separation unto His Name He had called them; but they had embraced unbelievers, forming alliances with them. And how pertinent the series of questions Paul now puts to them. Would that all God's people would pay due heed to them. Could they, called to righteousness, fellowship

“*Be ye also Enlarged.*”

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unrighteousness? Could they, “children of the light,” make common cause with what was of darkness? Could they who were truly “of Christ” and “not of the world” make it appear as though there was agreement between Christ and Belial? Could they, “saved by faith,” join hands with one who lacked that precious essential? What agreement could there possibly be between the temple of God and idols? And—significant words—“ye are the temple of the living God.” Forgetfulness of this was bringing sorrow in its train.

For with such “broadness” as is here implied, God could have no fellowship. They were shutting up “bowels of affection,” and were straitened in themselves. That continuing, they would cease to be channels of Divine love. It is the Apostle John who informs us that, “Whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected” (1 John ii. 5). Only in obedience can it be enjoyed, and in the power of that it flows out.

Faith in God and obedience to His Word will oftentimes narrow our paths but never our hearts. Let us not be deceived by the many, and plausible theories advanced. Shall we let those who lack faith set our standard for us? If we do we shall find ourselves robbed of inestimable blessing and joy. “Great peace have they that keep Thy Word.” The large heart, a heart filled with love from on high, and the feet in the holy path of separation set out by our God, are the requisites for the saint. In that path the Apostle would set the Corinthians that he had devoted to Christ; and therein his words will keep us if we heed them.

Resources for this are not in ourselves. Turning to God will always bring the needed help. What else means the word at the opening of our chapter?—“Now is the acceptable time; *now* is the day of succour.” God’s ever-present *now* speaks of supplies ever accessible to us. He does not desire that His grace should be received in vain, but rather looks for a true and manifest result from receiving it. May we be so truly “enlarged” that the response to His grace that God looks for may be His.

H. F.

## F A I T H.

“THROUGH faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear” (Heb. xi.). Faith has an immense advantage over reason, though there is nothing in what faith accepts that is unreasonable. Evidences of a personal Creator meet us at every turn. Men may consider the works of God; in truth God invites them to do so. They may, and they have, discovered many of nature’s secrets, and they may, if God permits them, discover many more. The vastness of God’s works should bow the heart in lowly wonder and praise, making us feel how small and insignificant we are. The Psalmist wrote “When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man that Thou art mindful of him? and the Son of Man that Thou visitest Him?” (Ps. viii.). The heavens lay bare their existence and utter their testimony, only when the light of the sun is withdrawn. What an amazing spectacle! What a lesson book to read out of! When the sun arises, all fades away, but in his light we behold the world in which we live; and in the warmth which he imparts, we learn our dependence. What would become of man and beast if the sun were to be removed? The sea, too, affords its marvellous testimony to the wisdom and goodness of the great Creator.

What means did God employ? His Word. For what purpose did He create? “For Thy pleasure they are, and were created” (Rev. iv.). And when? Who can tell us? “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” The date is unrevealed. It is a Divine secret. Not so the making of the earth (which by some means had got into a state of chaos—another of God’s secrets) fit for the dwelling place of man. “For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth.” By His Word He did it. “Let there be”—“and there was.” How simple! How sublime!

Space is infinite. God fills it. He is everywhere. Man is finite, very so. He is on the earth and cannot get off it. Here by the will of Him who made him;

and here only so long as He is pleased to allow him to remain; having notice to quit, or rather, to resign his soul and spirit to God; being as to his body subject to death from which he cannot escape. One insignificant creature, a mere speck in the vast universe, trying to conquer the elements, yet unable to conquer the evil that is in himself. Selfish and self-centred, he boasts of his intellect, his great attainments, his marvellous discoveries, yet all the while a fool; for he does not know the God who made him and still cares for him. True, he has discovered very much, but these things were all there before him. So intoxicated with his cleverness is he, that he boasts and struts about like a proud peacock, yet does each one carry secrets in his breast he dare not reveal to another.

God he does not know, and thinks he can very well dispense with Him. See what a wonderful creature *I am! Behold me!* I am lord and master here! I am learning to fly! I am annihilating space! I do not need revelation. I have no use for the Bible. I have proved it to be a fraud. Look at the discoveries which science has made. Why, we all sprang from monkeys! We had a tail once! See how we have developed! how we have improved! Now we are advancing, step by step! To what? To death and the grave, and what then? Suppose after all that there is a heaven, and a hell, and an eternal existence, spite of your unbelief and of your self-adulation. Forgetting God, ignoring His existence, is a poor preparation for meeting Him.

To believe in a personal Creator is more rational than to deny that there is one. And if He made all things, and all creatures, both small and great, it is irrational to imagine He can be indifferent to the need or the condition of any. Faith understands that the worlds were framed by the word of God, and that He made all, and upholds all. Revelation states it, faith accepts it, and wants to know how the Divine Being can be approached, and recognises the presence of sin. Revelation tells of its incoming, and of God's judgment on the sinner, but acquaints the sinner with what he needs to know.

So we read, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." Cain knew there was a God and desired to worship Him, but made himself the judge of what God should receive. He needed no death to take place. Therein was his folly. Abel offered a lamb with the fat thereof; approaching God by means of shed blood. Faith led him thus to act. His condition as a fallen creature was owned, and his need of one to die for him was acknowledged, and he was accounted righteous, God intimating that to him. What a comfort that must have been! To be accepted by God, to be accounted righteous by Him, is a blessing of transcendent importance. Abel may, and did, suffer death from the hand of his wicked brother, but Abel was right with God and eternally saved.

We are next informed that "Enoch was translated that he should not see death; for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God." He walked with God three hundred years, and was not, for God took him. There is a moral order in the selection of these examples of faith. It is but right that walking with God should follow acceptance by Him; that communion with God should follow where the sin question is settled. That walk is personal; intensely individual; yet needs no cloister, nor removal from ordinary relationships. Enoch was a family man, yet he walked with God.

There is a testimony to the world, and God will judge it. By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, prepared an ark for the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. Noah, we are informed, was a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly. Grace was not his theme. The knowledge of acceptance, of being accounted righteous, and next walking with God and having communion with Him, are necessary before any are fit to bear testimony for Him to the



world. And of Noah we read that he walked with God. To be on terms of friendship with the ungodly make it impossible to bear a faithful testimony of impending judgment; and, whether men believe it or not, "Everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" awaits every unbeliever.

To be saved from it by faith in Christ, in His precious blood, to be brought to God, to know and to adore Him, to be sure of eternal glory, to be with and like Christ, are the glad tidings that should now be proclaimed to every sinner who repents of his sins and comes to God through Jesus.

Next follows the call of God to Abraham to break with country, kindred, and his father's house. Abraham is not told to cease to love them, but he is called to put God first in everything. How hard to nature is this! Faith alone can accomplish it, and by faith Abraham did it. This may be rightly termed the obedience of faith, obedience even to the forsaking of all. History tells us that it was not until his father was dead that he did this, and even then he brought his nephew Lot with him, who proved a real hindrance, from whom he was obliged to separate at a later date. Hesitancy marked him at the first, but at length he obeyed. Then God got His true place in the soul of Abraham, when he no longer tarried half-way, and rose above nature to do God's will. It is the business of faith to look up and see God in His supremacy, in His love and grace and glory; and seeing Him, to walk before Him, continuing in the path of dependence in true pilgrimage and strangership.

The second phase of Abraham's faith is continuance: What of ours? How many who begin well slide away toward the world like Lot did.

Sarah is brought before us as furnishing an example of faith. God had said, Sarah shall have a son. She was past age and her lord was as good as dead, but by faith she received strength for bearing fruit. Nature's incompetence was surmounted by faith; for God had spoken and He could be trusted to fulfil His promise, which He did.

But God would put the faith of His servant Abraham to a severer test for Isaac (laughter)—faith had gained a victory over nature's incompetence—the son whom his father loved and in whom the promises of God were to be made good, for it is said, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," was by divine command to be taken a long journey and there put to death, and to be offered up as a burnt-offering. What a triumph faith gained that day; for Isaac's death, to the mind of Abraham, would not set aside God's promise; for He would surely raise him from the dead.

So far we have faith's understanding, sacrifice, walk, testimony, obedience, continuance, victory over nature, triumph over death. Thus Isaac and Jacob each blessed their children by faith. In connection with the future they were sure, and could speak with becoming certainty. Joseph too, knew that God would bring the Israelites back again to Canaan, and even his bones are to be carried thence; for if dead, his faith had counted on deliverance, and he would lie in the land of promise with his fathers.

Then we have the faith of Moses' parents in daring the wrath of Pharaoh. They hid their infant son, who, in divine providence, became the adopted son of the proud monarch's daughter. Brought up in ease and splendour, yet, when he grew up, he refused to be called her son. The world had lost its charms for him; for God's people Israel were, and he would be, as indeed he was, one of them. They were slaves and in cruel bondage, but God was their God; and Moses refuses the pleasures of sin, and accounts "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." What a precious example of faith is this!

Victory over the world was manifested in Moses; for he refused it when its honours, wealth and pleasures were in his possession; and many years afterward he led forth the host of the Israelites from Egypt, daring thus to defy the haughty Pharaoh with all his military power. His eyes were upon Jehovah. He saw by faith the invisible God. Before Moses did this he kept

the passover and the sprinkling of blood, evidencing thus faith in the fact that the people stood in need of shelter from divine judgment. The blood upon the lintel and side-posts of their houses could alone secure them from the sword of the destroyer, who slew all the first-born in Egypt, whether of man or beast. God's holiness must be cared for in a proper manner, of which He, and He alone, is the judge. Moses by faith kept the passover, and Jehovah took the lead; for He would dwell in the midst of a redeemed people.

“By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land; which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.” A simple and defenceless people pass in perfect safety through the waters that proved utter destruction to their enemies! Forty years the Israelites wander in the wilderness, fruit of unbelief; so no example of faith is furnished from that period. Grace brought them into the land of promise. “By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days,” leaving a small part erect on which the house of Rahab stood. She and all in her house were saved from the judgment that cut off all the rest. She was saved by faith, evidence of which was furnished by her conduct. “She had received the spies with peace.”

And now the inspired writer hastens on, for to enumerate all that faith has done, would need volumes. He cites four examples from the Judges, but not in historic order: Gideon, Barak, Samson, and Jephthah. It may be that Gideon is the brightest of the four. He had to do with God for himself. Barak needed the presence of Deborah, a kind of human prop. Samson was not in his walk at all consistent, and Jephthah makes a rash vow. There was much of failure, for the times were dark; but there was faith, and God honoured it, as He ever has done, and will continue to do. David is noticed before Samuel who closes the list of names cited. The prophets also had faith and did wondrous things. Women received their dead raised to life again, of which the widow of Sarepta and the woman of Shunem are examples. No form of trial,

no possible circumstances, could any saint pass through in which faith could not count upon God and triumph. These are the heroes in God's account of whom the world was not worthy. Should the Hebrew Christians fail? Should they turn back to a system no longer owned of God? No! no! Shall we in our day fail? Shall we judge by sight and sense? or by the Word of God alone? Shall we hold it fast in real, living faith, to find God Himself more than enough in days of confessed difficulty, contending if need be for *the faith* once for all delivered to the saints? Every true and honest soul will say Yes! May God help and keep us true, for His name's sake. Amen.

E. R. W.

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## 1 SAMUEL II. 12.

WE are here brought face to face with the grave and terrible low state of affairs in Israel. Morally, the priests are seen to be as bad as the heathen by which they were surrounded; so that no wonder it should presently come to be proverbial, "Like priest, like people." The priesthood was God's appointed way of approach to Himself, and when those who were thus highly privileged, are found disgracing the position grace has placed them in, and dishonouring the name of the One they draw nigh to, what could the result be but disastrous in every way to the whole nation? Sad, indeed, is the history of the priesthood: for God must needs step in and judge what was impossible for Him to condone, and the more so since the guilty ones were so highly favoured. But, blessed be His name, man's failure opens the way for Him to introduce His remedy and get glory for Himself.

Our portion, then, opens with the tidings that Eli's sons were sons of Belial: "they knew not the Lord." Alas! so near and yet so distant. The One they represented they were unacquainted with. And their actings made this only too apparent, for by their vile doings they caused men to abhor the offering of Jehovah (verse 17). Sacrifices were brought to them to offer to Jehovah, but neither the desires of the offerer

nor the glory of the Lord swayed the young men in their self-willed course, for they thought only of their lusts and would gratify them. Was it any wonder that men should forget to connect with the offering what Jehovah would have them do?

If every dark cloud has its silver lining, it is because the sun is shining behind the cloud. So, if God gives us to see light gleaming out from the midst of the darkness caused by man's failure, it is because He is behind and above all, and effectuates His own purposes, spite of every foreign element introduced by the flesh and the devil. Here, then, is the silver lining:—"But Samuel ministered before the Lord." In measure it could be said of him that he was growing up "as a tender plant" before Jehovah, and was indeed being fitted, from his very youth, to fill the important place destined for him by God. He would by and by be installed in that office when the priesthood was set aside, and would be the channel for maintaining the relationship of the people with Jehovah.

But it is a precious sight this little one growing up there before the Lord girded with a linen ephod. Surely He was preparing a servant for Himself, and at the same time showing that He was not going to forget to be gracious. Hannah, the diligent pleader and happy worshipper, had received him as a gift from the Lord, and had lent him to the Lord for ever! But she was not an unmindful mother, gratified with having received her desire and fulfilled her vow; for, simple as the fact might be, yet it is recorded for us to notice that a token of her love and remembrance she carried with her as she went year by year to sacrifice with her husband. That "little coat" is eloquent with testimony to Hannah, and is sweet with the fragrance of love for Samuel.

Aged Eli seems, also, to appreciate the presence of the little one and blessed Elkanah ere they return to their homes. His words are heard on high, and Hannah becomes the rejoicing mother of three sons and two daughters. Would we receive the blessing of the Lord? Then, "Honour the Lord with thy

substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine" (Prov. iii. 9-10). Hannah in her way teaches us this lesson, for in honouring the Lord she got great gain. Sweet picture! that reveals to us the unshortened arm of the Lord; and that behind the outward evil, grace was working slowly but effectually and giving to faith the blessing sought.

But again (ver. 22) the darkness is present; and now we are brought to see Eli's responsibility in connection with his sons' misdeeds. Eli heard what his sons did unto all Israel, and spoke to them about it, solemnly and earnestly; and doubtless were there any conscience left his words would have had some weight: "If a man sin against the Lord who shall intreat for him?" But they were far on in the path of self-will and wickedness, and would not listen. Hence they were *fitting themselves* for that destruction which they made inevitable, though in long-suffering mercy Jehovah bore with them.

But where had they been nurtured? How had they been trained? The answers to these questions will provide plenty of material for lengthy reflections. The Holy Spirit is evidently drawing a contrast just here to the upbringing of Samuel and that of the sons of the high priest. For again we are told that "the child Samuel grew *on*, and was in favour both with Jehovah and also with men." Precious testimony! (ver. 26) the like of which was borne to the Holy One who, coming to do His Father's business, is yet found subject unto His earthly parents (Luke ii. 51-52).

Another section now opens in which we have Jehovah pronouncing judgment upon the house of Eli, and recording also the reasons why it was absolutely necessary that judgment should take place. A man of God appears to aged Eli, and first speaks of God's sovereign choice of the tribe of Levi and of the house of Aaron to fill the priestly office and perform the priestly functions, and also that to them His holy things had been given for them to feed upon. His

sons, as we have already read, caused Jehovah's offering to be abhorred. Eli, as high priest, was of course responsible, and to him God's sentence is revealed. "Wherefore kick ye at My sacrifice and Mine offering, which I have commanded in My habitation." Granted that his sons were the actual perpetrators of the sin, yet to Eli it is traced. And of what was he guilty? He honoured his sons before Jehovah, humouring them in their path of wilful wickedness. True he addressed words of remonstrance to them (verses 24-25), but plainly, had Jehovah's honour only actuated him, how he would have found a remedy to stay his sons as they sought only their own ease and lust, and thought not at all of what was Jehovah's due. Stringent measures were necessary, as we see put forth in another day by the One of whom it is written. "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up" (Jno. ii.). No such zeal marked Eli; no holy energy did he display to vindicate the outraged honour of Jehovah; but, content with speaking in warning, he yet honoured them above Jehovah. Intensely solemn is this, and solemn above measure the sentence that follows. Had Jehovah said that his house should walk before Him for ever? "Be it far from Me," He now says, "for them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed." Thus Jehovah viewed the ways of Eli, and lays down an immutable principle upon which He acts always securing the glory for Himself.

Immediate judgment was to follow, but the resulting sorrows would be of long duration. The arm of Eli would be cut off; an old man should not be found in his house; and he should see an enemy in Jehovah's habitation. And the sign given was that his two sons should die in one day; all of which Eli lived to see come to pass.

But a faithful priest would Jehovah raise up; one that would do "according to that which is in My heart and in My mind; and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before Mine anointed for ever."

God has His own way of accomplishing His purposes in righteousness and bringing again into blessing those

to whom an everlasting priesthood had been promised. But into this I do not now enter. Of His "anointed" Jehovah again speaks, and also of His faithful priest that should ever walk before His King. Two distinct persons, then, are here mentioned, and we have outlined for us that the priesthood of the Millennium will be under the King as it were, who will have the right ordering of it. Is this not what is foreshadowed by David and Solomon assigning the priests their courses, etc., in the temple service?

But I must close. Man's failure and sin make the judgment of God a necessity; but spite of this we are privileged ever and anon to see Him acting in such a way that whilst maintaining His holiness inviolate, He yet secures the glory due to Him through the blessing of His people.

May we each be enabled to gather up here a little and there a little for our own souls as we ponder and meditate upon His Word.

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By the cant word "thought" is generally meant contradicting the plain meaning of Scripture, and starting new notions. A man who preaches plainly what God reveals is said to be an echo of the Puritans, a dealer in platitudes, a repeater at second-hand of exploded dogmas; but to find some new lie every week, to shake faith in inspiration every time you open your mouth, and make them believe that there is nothing certain, but that everything is a mere matter of opinion—that is "thought and culture" in these days!

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O blessed Lord, how doth Thy grace,  
 Shine forth in all Thy ways,  
 In every circumstance and place,  
 In those eventful days.  
 God glorified in all Thy course—  
 The manger to the tree;  
 God's love—its channel and its source—  
 We recognise in Thee.



## BARABBAS AND THE TWO THIEVES.

EACH of the four evangelists mention Barrabas by name and tells us something about him. Matthew contents himself with saying, "They had then a notable prisoner called Barabbas." He does not give any particulars about the reason for his being put into prison. Mark says, "And there was one, named Barabbas, bound with them that had made insurrection with him who had committed murder in the insurrection." Luke tells us that he, "for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison." John passes over the crimes of which Mark and Luke have put on record, and tells us what they do not, that "Barabbas was a robber."

We learn from Matthew and Mark that it was a custom that the governor should release a prisoner at the feast (the feast of the passover). Luke says that of necessity he must do so. Pilate, therefore, had no choice. Not so with the priests and the people. They were free to choose any one among the prisoners then in custody. Their choice was deliberately made. Barabbas, who was a robber, a sedition-maker, and a murderer was chosen; and such a choice tells what was in their hearts.

As for Jesus, nothing would content them but crucifixion. "Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? All say unto him, Let Him be crucified. And the governor said, Why, what evil hath He done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let Him be crucified" (Matt. xxvii. 22-23). God had His own purposes to accomplish through the death of His Son, and this Peter declares in Acts ii. 23. But that in no wise excused their conduct; and in chap. iii., the same Apostle tells them in plain and forceful language that "God hath glorified His servant Jesus whom ye delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate when He was determined to let Him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of life." They would set free a man, a

22 *Barabbas and the Two Thieves.*

notorious criminal, to continue in a course injurious to government, to life and property, rather than let the One whose record was without parallel in human history continue amongst them. This record is briefly stated in a message to John the baptist thus: "The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them" (Matt. xi. 5).

What of the two thieves? Their voices had not been heard when the release of Barabbas was requested. Their names are not recorded, but we know that when Jesus was crucified so were they, "on either side one, and Jesus in the midst." Their crucifixion was called for by their crimes according to the law then existing. Justice placed them on those crucifixes, but on the central cross One hung against whom no charge of wrong could be truthfully brought—One, of whom His adversaries themselves bore witness that "He saved others"—One of whom some officers sent to apprehend Him came back without Him and said: "Never man spake like this Man." Envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness put Him there. Man nailed to the tree, the Holy One of God. During His life He was charged with being "the friend of sinners." It was true, blessedly true! On the cross He is taunted with these words, "He trusted in God that He would deliver Him." True, how true!

Voices are heard; not the voices of the priest and scribes, nor of the Roman soldiers, nor of the fickle multitude; but the voices of the malefactors hanging on either side. Matthew tells us, "The thieves also, which were crucified with Him, cast the same in His teeth." Even the intense pain they must have been enduring did not stop them from having a fling at the patient, spotless One. Mark says, "And they that were crucified with Him reviled Him." Luke informs us thus, "And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Him, saying, "If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us." To this Jesus made no reply. Both had, as Matthew tells us, "Cast in His teeth"

*Barabbas and the Two Thieves.*

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the same words about His trust in God. One only reviled as Luke wrote, but was immediately rebuked by his companion with these words, "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this Man hath done nothing amiss." What effect this rebuke had on the one to whom it was addressed we know not.

The dying thief speaks again, and this time to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." An instant reply came from Jesus beyond what he asked or thought: "*To-day*, thou shalt be *with Me* in paradise." He was the Lord. He was the King. He would come into His kingdom. To be remembered at that distant period was all the poor thief requested, but that would not satisfy the heart of the dying *Saviour*. "*To-day*"—precious words!—You and I shall be together in paradise! What a meeting! made possible only by the atonement effected through the being made sin of the One who knew no sin. The thief and the *Saviour* would be together to part no more for ever!

What was it, we may ask, that so embittered the chief priests and scribes against Jesus? Many to-day would strongly condemn their conduct and flatter themselves that they would never have been guilty of such wickedness. But that is not the truth; for the heart of man is ever the same. To flatter ourselves, to believe in our superiority, our kindness, and goodness, and so on, is to deceive ourselves. Were we tested as they were we should do just as they did. I am, of course, speaking of what we should do if not really converted to God. Jesus was like no other Man. He was light, and as such made manifest all who came in contact with Him. A thief may pose as an honest man, but if he meets with one who exposes his hypocrisy, who humbles him in the dust, one of two things happens: either he is contrite and confesses and seeks for mercy, or he becomes bitter; and this grows until the time comes that he can vent his wrath and rid himself of the presence of the one who has told him the truth.

It mattered not who came across the path of the despised Nazarine, be he Pharisee, Sadducee, or scribe, each in turn met with such an exposure. What should have happened should have been true repentance. Then the One who had exposed their true state would have been loved and thanked. The Friend of publicans and sinners would then be their Friend; for they were indeed sinners of the vilest and the worst kind. They had made themselves aprons like Adam and Eve to hide their nakedness, but when God sought the guilty pair the aprons did not conceal their condition. Jesus was God, and was on earth seeking sinners, but all attempts to hide the truth He laid bare. He preached righteousness in the great congregation, and of Him it is written, "I have not refrained My lips, O Lord, Thou knowest." He was the faithful expositor of hidden wickedness, not with the object of making people angry, but rather to lead them to seek for mercy.

There is no stronger proof that the Bible is the Word of God than the fact that it encounters hostility in the heart of man. Press its statements, and men get enraged. If it be a mere nothing why all the anger and hatred? Why not have pity on the poor deluded Christians? Ah! it is often seen that they have what others have not. Paul and Silas sang praises to God when their backs were bleeding, when thrust into an inner prison and their feet made fast in the stocks. What strange men they must have seemed! They could joy in God when in the most distressing circumstances. May God give many to know themselves and the precious Holy Saviour. He it was who said to His unbelieving brethren, "The world cannot hate you, but Me it hateth, because I testify of it that the works thereof are evil" (John vii. 7). All who did not believe on Him, be they His brethren, or the Jews in general, with their different classes—priests, scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees—were all of the world—were all in the darkness and lovers of it. They could not believe; for they sought honour one of another, and not the honour that cometh from God only.

E. R. W.

## THE STORM AND THE CALM.

(Mark iv. 35-41).

WHEN reading the Gospels we must ever remember that the incidents given us were not chosen haphazard, but deliberately by the Spirit of God; and of them it can be said that they are written, that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing we might have life through His Name. Each sign, each incident, serves to open out the perfections and glories of our Lord; to display to our wondering eyes, the grace and power that were in Him; and thus to confirm our faith in His adorable Person.

One of our Lord's busy days had come to a close. With many parables—that being His customary way of teaching—He had spoken unto the multitude. And “when the even was come, He saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side.” They were to take the journey together. He would be there with them. So the multitude is dismissed and “they took Him even as He was in the ship” (ver. 36). His labours over for a time, the Master, with head resting on a cushion, is soon asleep in the hinder part of the vessel. How sweetly such a sight speaks to our hearts of the perfect way in which He had come into man's place and circumstances—into all those circumstances incidental to true humanity. Perfect, peerless Man He was!

But soon they were in the throes of “a great storm of wind.” From the language used, it was evidently a storm of unusual severity. The surging waves dashed over the sides of the ship, and “it was filling.” But the Master was undisturbed by the storm. He slept, but His rest was broken by His perturbed followers, who were evidently amazed at their Master's apparent indifference. The storm raged, but He slept on. Disaster appeared inevitable. They would perish, for they could not possibly weather such a storm. Yet He slept on!

So their wonderment found vent in an utterance that revealed how earnest they were in their fears and how

faithless. Awaking Him, they cry, "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" What a question! And yet how the facts, the bald facts of the case, such as men take into consideration, appeared to bear them out. The storm was real. The ship was fast filling. To the bottom they must go!

But no! They are to learn that their Master with them was their salvation. They are to see what He could do. His apparent indifference but tested their faith in Him. That test proved their faithlessness, but notwithstanding, they behold the salvation of the Lord—salvation from the prevailing circumstances; and they are made to realise that His power, when need arose, was available for them.

And let us note the calm dignity of the Lord. Their cry is heard; and in the quiet realisation of power that they should have reposed in, He arose, administered rebuke to the wind, and to the sea He said, "Peace, be still," The rebuke was heeded. The command was heard. "The wind ceased, and there was a great calm." Then, when He had thus graciously allayed their fears, He said to them, "Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?" Two questions He put to them, difficult, in one way, to answer, but in another, easy of explanation—difficult when we think of Him, but easy when we remember their frailty. They had not made much progress in learning *who* their Master was: and even here, as we note the grace that actuated Him, the *power* manifested for them is the prominent thing before their eyes, and that produced "a fear exceeding," and their exclamation is instructive as to this: "*What manner of man is this?*" Ah indeed! The like had never been seen here! One was with them to whom the wind and sea yielded ready obedience. The Creator was in company with the creature, and we can exclaim with adoring hearts,

"Oh! what grace, what power were His."

And taking up their words for ourselves, how very much there is in them for us: "Even the wind and sea obey Him." "He sits above the waterfloods," and He is Lord of all. And the wind and sea may well

stand for the circumstances against which we have to battle in the journey of life. Often allowed doubtless for the specific purpose of testing our faith, how often that opportunity is missed, and our lack of that precious element is made apparent. Does it not sometimes appear as if the Lord were asleep? indifferent to our trials and troubles. Have we not thought so, as circumstances, like the wild waves of a storm-tossed sea, have incessantly dashed about us, threatening at every moment to overwhelm us? The cry, "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" tells of the passing of faith—our inability to grasp a golden opportunity for showing spiritual perception and confidence in Him.

But deliverance comes. Our failure to trust makes manifest the resources that there are in Him, though the lesson *could be learnt* in allowing the storm to have its vent, meanwhile seeking grace to quell the rising fears of the heart. Amid varying experiences, the psalmist said, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee." Blessed resolve! But better still the heart utterance of one whose soul waited only upon God; "Trust in Him *at all times.*" We need the sunshine and the shower; the cold cutting north wind, as well as the balmy south, to bring forth the sweet perfumes of faith and quiet confidence in His love and changeless purpose concerning us. He holds our hands, and lifts up our heads. Perish we cannot. But He will glorify Himself, and magnify His grace, bringing us nearer to His heart as we pass through storm and stress. Blessed be His Name for it; and let us say, "For this we thank Thee."  
H. F.

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### JOY AMID SORROW.

O MY soul! praise the Lord for His goodness;  
Linger not on Thy sorrow and shame;  
Rise, respond to the heart that is calling,  
To honour His Word and His Name.

Mixed with tears are the songs of my praises,  
So immense and so rich is His grace,

*Cleave to the Lord.*

That my heart overflows with emotion  
Being clasped in my Saviour's embrace.

The clouds that loomed on the horizon  
Are dispelled by His power from above ;  
And He tells me in accents so tender  
To implicitly trust in His love.

Though the waters are deep, they are moving,  
If their movement I cannot discern ;  
And I know in His love, He is with me,  
That in patience His ways I might learn !

Though the trials are fiery they're tempered,  
And fanned by the sweet-smelling breeze  
Which is wafted to me from His presence,  
Who just deals out my needs as *He* sees.

J. H.

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**CLEAVE TO THE LORD.**

Acts (xi.)

It is worthy of remark, that in this chapter we have the first account of Gentile converts : of the receiving, in sovereign goodness and grace, poor sinners who had not even the promises to boast which God had given to the Jews. To such it is, too, that Barnabas comes with the earnest exhortation contained in verse 23 : "That with purpose of heart they should cleave unto the Lord." What Peter was taught here as to the Gentiles we all have to learn as to ourselves. When the blessed news of grace and pardon first reaches a sinner's ears and heart, he rejoices in the thought of pardon and forgiveness. He does right. Jesus, the blessed Son of God, has met him in mercy with His precious blood. But with this the light enters into his soul. When there have been deep discoveries of sin before the soul has become happy, the peace of the soul is more settled. The sin to which grace is applied is in a measure already known. But when, through the proclamation of divine pardon, without previous convictions the soul has suddenly received joy, though there is always the discovery that we are sinners, the



*Cleave to the Lord.*

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knowledge of the depth of sin in the heart, and what has to be forgiven and cleansed, is very small. The consequence is, that after God has called us, and the divine light has broken into our souls, we feel disturbed and uncertain, and even begin sometimes to doubt the fact of our being cleansed. This is wrong. The deeper discovery of sin and the knowledge of our own heart is useful. If we walk humbly and near to God, this knowledge will be made, comparatively speaking, peacefully; if not, in humiliation and failure. But you may not call unclean what God has cleansed. God has brought cleansing and pardon to us down here. We have not to wait for it until we go up there. God has cleansed you. You are clean *now*. But I desire to lead you to some further exercise of heart upon it, and clearer apprehension of God's ways; a fuller exercise of conscience, that your peace may be as solid as your joy was genuine when you first heard of grace and forgiveness. In Luke xv. the great principle set forth is, that it is God's happiness when we are brought back to Him. Of course the joy of the restored one comes in, but is not the primary thing. The object of all three parables is not to show our joy, but the joy of God in our restoration. The three parables all teach the same grace, but we get, I believe, the joy of the Son, of the Spirit, and of the Father. But remark that in the two first we find a grace which finds and brings back what was lost, without any further question of the state of the soul. In the third we have man's departure even into the lowest degradation of sin, and what passes in his soul on his return, till he is clothed in divine righteousness, with Christ, in His Father's house. God has foreseen and provided for the whole case of the sinner. The younger son was as really a sinner when he left his father's house as when he was eating husks with the swine. He had abandoned God to do his own will. But the Lord pursues the case to the full degradation of sin, for sin degrades man. The young man comes to himself, turns back towards God, is converted; but he has not yet met God, nor has he the best robe on

him. He did not know in his conscience Divine righteousness. When he really meets his father, not only is he in tender love—only the more shown because he had been lost—received when in his rags into his father's arms, but he is made righteously fit for the house, clothed with Christ. His father was on his neck when he was in his rags; but he was not received into the house in that state. He could not have been. But God has provided for the sinner what Adam in his innocence had not. He has provided Christ. Grace reigns through righteousness. The best robe, no part of the son's portion before he left, is now put on him, and he is fit for the house to which that robe belonged. All the extent of the soul's departure from God has been weighed. The soul may be exercised about it, and will till self is wholly given up as a ground on which we can stand with God. No going in legally as a hired servant—before God it is rags and exclusion, or the best robe and joyful admission. All true experiences lead to that emptying of self, and Christ all, and we in Him before God. Then, as I have said, our peace is as solid as the joy of the thought of forgiveness was blessed, and the joy itself deeper, if not more genuine. Another truth is connected with this. God having perfectly cleansed us by the blood of Christ, the Spirit dwells in the cleansed heart. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." The Spirit gives us the consciousness of our relationship as dear children. "Because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." What manner of persons ought we to be, who are the temples of the Holy Ghost? we may well continually ask ourselves. But do not let failures make us doubt that we have it. Low and wretched as was the state the Galatians had fallen into, they never doubted they had the Spirit of God; but they were getting wrong as to the ground of their standing, as to how they received it; so that the apostle had to ask them, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of

*Cleave to the Lord.*

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faith?" (Gal. iii. 2). "We are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance." We have life as truly as Christ is alive; but we are not yet in heaven. The thief, indeed, was privileged to be taken directly home, believing only to-day, but to-day the first companion Christ had in paradise. We do not look for such immediate departure, but our ground is the same: we are as truly saved, but not so soon to be in heaven. Rather have we to go through this evil world; to go through it as crucified with Christ, dead indeed, but risen—to go through it with His Spirit dwelling in us. Be careful lest you grieve that Spirit. You have to go through the world bearing the name of Christ upon you. See that you bring no reproach upon that blessed name by being *inconsistent*. The world will be sharp to exclaim, There are your Christians! You will have to go through the world with God dwelling in you. To carry this treasure in an earthen vessel Entrusted with this treasure, an habitation of God through the Spirit. Of course it is only through His grace that you can carry such a treasure through an evil world; but there is power in Christ, there is sufficiency in Christ, for all He would have you to do or be. He exhorted them that they should cleave to the Lord. Depend on Him! Some are allowed to have a long season of joy on first believing; but God knows our hearts, and how soon we should be depending on our joy, and not on Christ. He is our object! joy is not our object. Do not let your joy lead you to forget the source of it, and then it need never wane. This joy is right and beautiful in its place; I am not saying a word against it—God forbid. But I warn you against resting in it. Do not let your joy be your dependence. Do not lean on it for strength. There is danger of joy, however genuine, making you forget how dependent you are every moment. Depend upon Him—cleave to Him with purpose of heart. Do not be content with being happy (may you continue so); but with Paul, forgetting the things which are

behind, press on, etc. (Phil. iii.). I have seen many Christians so full of joy that they thought there was no such thing as sin left. It is true, sin no longer remains on you; but the flesh is *in* you to the end. The old stock is there, and you will find that, if you are not watchful, if divine life is not cherished and cultivated in your hearts by looking at Christ and feeding on Him, it will be putting forth its buds; if it does, they must be nipped off as they appear. No good fruit comes of the old stock. It is the *new* that bears fruit unto God. But though the flesh is in you, do not be thinking of this, but think of Christ—cleave to Him; and may your souls be maintained in this truth, that Christ is your life! ay, that Christ is so your life that Christ must die (the thought of which is blasphemy) before you can perish. And as He is your life, so is He the object of that life. "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20). As you grow in this knowledge of Him, a joy grows deeper than that of first conversion. I have known Christ more or less between thirty and forty years, and I can say that I have ten thousand times more joy *now* than I had at first. It is a deeper, calmer joy. The water rushing down from a hill is beautiful to look at, and makes most noise; but you will find the water that runs in the plain is deeper, calmer, more fructifying.

Observe: they are exhorted with purpose of heart to cleave to the Lord. A distracted heart is the bane of a Christian. When my heart is filled with Christ, I have no heart or eye for the trash of the world. If Christ is dwelling in your heart by faith, it will not be the question, What harm is there in this, or that? rather, Am I doing this for Christ? Can Christ go along with me in this? If you are in communion with Him, you will readily detect what is not of Him. Do not let the world come in and distract your thoughts. I speak especially to you young ones; we, who are older, have had more experience of what the world is; we know more what it is worth; but it all

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lies shining before you, endeavouring to attract you. (What does it fill its shop windows for else?) Its smiles are all deceitful; still it *is* smiling upon you. It makes many promises it cannot fulfil: still it *promises*. The fact is, your hearts are too big for the world, it cannot fill them; they are too little for Christ, for He fills heaven: yet will He fill you to overflowing.

Observe again: it is, *Cleave unto the Lord*. Not cleave to duty, or law, or ordinances (though these are good in their places), but to the *Lord*. He knew how treacherous the heart was, and how soon it would put anything in *His* place. You will have to learn what is in your heart. Abide with God, and you will learn your heart with Him, and under His grace; else you will have to learn it with the devil through his successful temptations. But God is faithful; and if you have been getting away from Him, and other things have been coming in and forming a crust round your heart, and you want to get back again, God says, What is this crust? I must have you deal with it, and get rid of it! Remember, Christ bought you with His own blood, that you should be His, and not the world's. The denial of this fact is an artifice of the devil. Do not let the devil come in between you and God's grace. However careless you may have been, however far you may have got away from Him, return to Him; doubt not His joy in having you back—count upon His love—look at the sin which led you away with horror, but do not wrong Him by distrusting His love, any more than you would an affectionate husband or wife, by throwing a doubt on their love if you had been for a moment ungracious. Hate yourself, but remember how He has loved you, and will love you until the end! Mistrust not His work—mistrust not His love. "It was granted unto the Gentiles to have repentance unto life." All is of God!

I would have you carry away in your minds three things which by grace are given you. 1st, cleaving to the Lord; 2nd, perfect forgiveness; 3rd, a purged

conscience. To illustrate this last, take the case of Peter. He denied his Lord – denied Him to a serving-maid; but the Lord had turned and looked on him, and he had gone out and wept bitterly. A few weeks after this (Acts iii.) he could say that they were a lost and ruined people, because “they denied the Holy One and the Just;” the very thing he had done himself, in a worse way too, for he had been with Him as His friend for three years. But his conscience was purged; he knew he was forgiven; and now he could turn round, and fearlessly charge others with the very thing he had done himself.

One word more. Talk with Him. Never be content without being able to walk and talk with Christ as with a dear friend. Be not satisfied with anything short of near intercourse with Him who has loved you with such manner of love!

J. N. D.

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### “THE BRIDE, THE LAMB’S WIFE.” WHO IS SHE?

To the above question there seems to be various answers. It is not so many years ago there would have been but one; students of the Word would have replied at once—the Church. To-day, other answers being given, it becomes us to know what Scripture teaches on the subject, for it, and it alone speaks with authority and settles the question; and until we have learned for ourselves what it teaches, we shall be affected more or less by the various conflicting statements that are advanced by one and another to-day.

It has been taught by some that Israel is the Bride. One or two passages of Scripture will, I trust, clear the minds of any who are subject to the Word. I will also quote the words of another which puts the matter in a clear and concise way. “The Bride is ‘the Bride of the Lamb,’ not the Bride of Jehovah, though He who is the Lamb is Jehovah. Both Israel and Jerusalem are viewed as the *wife* of Jehovah. He being a Husband to *both of them*, though for a time, because of their sins, they had been cast off. (See for Israel

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Hos. i., ii.; and for Jerusalem Isa. liv. 5). The term *Bride*, too, necessarily suggests to us a relation to the *Bridegroom* very different from that of a divorced or cast off woman, with whom her husband resumes nuptial relations. In this last case, of course, they have been interrupted, broken off; in the former they never existed. Now what Jerusalem's relations were with Jehovah, and what Israel's were likewise, the prophets have told us (Ezek. xvi., and Hos. ii 2). The *Bride never was* in such a relation to the Lamb, and *never will be* to Jehovah."

Again, "The marriage of the Lamb takes place *in heaven*, (Rev. xix. 6-9); the renewal of nuptial relations with Jehovah and Israel takes place *on earth*. Israel will not be a *bride*; the Church is not a *wife* for a time cast off." Several other points of difference might be noticed, but this clear distinction will surely satisfy any subject mind.

Others there are who teach that *all the heavenly saints* form the *Bride*. That is, Old Testament saints, the Church, and those saints martyred after the Church is gone; making up the companies mentioned in Rev. xx. 4. Now there are two words translated "lamb" in the New Testament and applied as titles to the Lord Jesus. "*Amnos*" is a title connected only *with the past*, and occurs but four times in that part of Scripture. John i. 29, 36; Acts viii. 32; and I Pet. 1. 19. It was given to the Lord Jesus on earth and connected with earth, and relates to sacrifice, dealing with sin, and redemption by blood. He was the *Amnos for God and for us*; but as such He has no bride. Jesus was *alone* as the sacrificial Lamb, and it is important to remember this.

But there is another word translated Lamb—" *Arnion* "— a title of *the future*. It occurs twenty-nine times in the book of Revelation, and is found nowhere else. It means *a little lamb—a lambkin*; and denotes insignificance and rejection: not the thought of the Lamb for the altar, but the *rejected Lamb*— now raised to the throne, and kingdom, and glory. The world-rejected One, despised and slain, is there

seen in the highest heaven, given the highest place in glory, and a kingdom and a Bride, in connection with the world to come—the Millennium—in answer to His rejection and shame.

The present is the time of His rejection, while He is on high. The present is likewise the time that His Bride is being brought, blessed, and fitted to be His wife hereafter. Here it is she shares His rejection, as there she will share His glory. Now such a place and portion, I judge, could not correctly be attributed to saints of a *past* dispensation. We could not speak of them as associated with Him as the Lamb; nor could we speak of them as the objects of Christ's present, unceasing love and devotion as His *espoused* Bride, in order to fit them for the position of wife hereafter (Eph. v.). It will not fit with the general tenor and teaching of the New Testament on the subject.

It is well to remember that Paul in his ministry in connection with the Church as the espoused chaste virgin (2 Cor. xi. 2; Eph. v.), presents her as being fitted *here* in order to be presented *there*. He takes the Church *up* to heaven. John, on the other hand, brings her *down* and presents her in her displayed beauty and glory to the world in the character of the holy city. He does not, however, see her in her relations to the Bridegroom, nor does he describe the marriage; none are permitted to do that. That is a sight reserved wholly for those who are *in* heaven. He describes her as she is seen coming *down from God out of heaven*. She must therefore have been taken up previously. It is the same blessed Person, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the same Bride in each case, only spoken of in keeping with the ministry of each of these Apostles. We do not therefore expect to find in Paul's epistles the Lord set forth as the Lamb (Agnion), nor the Church spoken of as *His* Bride. At the same time we *do* find teaching about the Bride as the Bride of Christ, though the word *Bride* is not used: as likewise the Bridegroom is *supposed*, though not mentioned. But are we to reject the *truth* because of the absence of the words? If so, we shall find ourselves compelled



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to reject some foundation truths for the same reason ; a thing for which I think, none are prepared.

We read " Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it." That does not include Old Testament saints. It is the Church. Not even the individuals who form it are here viewed as the objects of His love (though each one can say, " He loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*"). It is the whole Church—the concrete idea, and the Church exclusively. And what is the actual state of the Church that He has set His affections on and given Himself for? Is she suitable to Him? Does she answer to the desires of His heart concerning her? Is she fit to take her place as His wife? Far from it. There is a moral fitness and an education so to speak, required for the position she is destined to occupy as the Bride of Christ; hence the need of His present ministry and service.

Objection has been taken to the use of the term " Bride of Christ " because of the absence of the words. But what have we here? It is *Christ* who loved the Church and gave Himself for it. It is *Christ* who is sanctifying and cleansing it. It is *Christ* who is going to *present it to Himself*, a glorious, unspotted, un-wrinkled Church, holy and without blemish. Are we then to reject the truth because of the absence of the word? Why is the figure of husband and wife used here, if bridal relationship is not contemplated in the " presenting her to Himself " in the future? Why the evident reference to Adam when Eve was brought to him? It is not the truth of the one body that is in view. The Lord does not present His own body to Himself. In that character it is *part* of Himself. A man does not marry his own body; nor is a man's wife his body: though he ought to *love* her as his own body. If this does not teach that the Church is the Bride of Christ, what can it mean? And if it does, then it excludes all others, for none others can have a place in the Church, and therefore cannot form part of the Bride.

At present she is viewed as *espoused* to Him as a chaste virgin (2 Cor. xi. 2); not yet seen as ready, but

being made ready: and made so by Himself, and for Himself; the joy of doing it a joy peculiarly His own, as the joy of anticipation of the marriage day—the day of presentation to Himself must be likewise specially His own. As before noted, we do not expect to read here of “the Bride, the Lamb’s wife;” that is a title of the future, taught only by John and connected with earthly display: whereas, as the Bride of Christ, it is wholly what she is *to Him now and for Him in heaven*, and taught by Paul. Not that there are two Brides. No, it is one Bride; and He who is the Christ of the present is the Lamb of the future.

Yes, it is Christ and His Bride the Church: she in her subjection now: He in His faithful love, cleansing and fitting her for the nuptial day. Then in the day of display to earth, it will be as “the Bride, the Lamb’s wife” she will come forth. That is, the rejected One with the Bride who shared His rejection are seen together, *satisfied*. Then descending to earth, decked and dowered for display to earth, she will be seen in all her splendour and glory as the holy city New Jerusalem. Mark, not the *heavenly* Jerusalem.\* How could these things be true of, or applicable to any other saints than the Church? Impossible! It is not a question of setting aside, or depriving Old Testament saints of blessing; God will see to it that they lose nothing; but the place that He has given the Church according to His eternal counsels, and in His ways as revealed in His Word.

Then again in the words of another, “The false bride --the harlot”(Rev. xvii., xviii.)—is surely the harlot of this *Christian period*, not a Jewish adulteress; and if she be the *Christian* harlot, then the *true Bride* must be the chaste *Christian* woman, or there would be no contrast; for what is the false fornicating *Christendom* a travesty of, save of the pure Church of God that shall come out of the awful defection as “the Bride, the Lamb’s wife.” And surely this witness is true. For if the saints of the past dispensation *do* form part of

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\*All the heavenly saints are on the burgess roll and *belong to the latter*. Only the Church of God *compose the former*.

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the Bride, it certainly seems incredible that for 4000 years or so, Satan should have no counterfeit of her on earth, and only begin when the Church is on the scene. In fact, it is so opposed to the ways of the enemy in his hatred and opposition to all the ways and truth of God, that that one fact alone would almost settle the question.

Then we might ask again, Can such language be applicable to heavenly saints after the Church is gone? From what has passed before us we are compelled to say no, it cannot be; they form no part of the Bride any more than saints of the past dispensation. They partake in the first resurrection and live and reign with Christ as do all the heavenly saints (Rev. xx. 4). They are *not*, however, "partakers of the heavenly calling:" neither were Old Testament saints before them. They, like them, have an earthly calling, and because of their faithfulness they are slain, and obtain heaven instead of earth. They are not losers in being slain, but gainers; hence we read, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord *from henceforth*" (Rev. xiv. 13). They lose *earth* but gain *heaven*.

There is one company, however, that some might feel inclined to look upon as part of the Bride because it says of them, "These are they that follow the Lamb (Agnion) whithersoever He goeth" (Rev. xiv. 4) But it will be observed these are a company *on earth*, who pass through the awful horrors of that time of tribulation and are blessed with the Lamb *on Mount Zion*. They are not a company of heavenly saints. It is therefore evident they cannot form part of the Bride.

The more we examine the language used in Scripture and its connection, the more we see that the expression, "The Bride, the Lamb's wife" is only applicable to the Church and excludes all others. It does not deprive others of heavenly blessing, or sharing in the reign with Christ; but they have *not* that place of nearness to the Lamb as His Bride. Blessed indeed are those who are "called to the marriage supper" (Rev. xix.). Wonderful privilege surely! But who can they be if all the heavenly saints form the Bride? Where do

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these come from? We can hardly apply such language to the angels. Would it not rather be spoken to and of those possessed of a like nature, and like feelings, and in a like position with ourselves as saved by grace, but who are *not* the Bride, though invited to share in the joy at the wedding feast? Such invited guests, I should judge, can only be the heavenly saints who do *not* form the Church--"the Bride, the Lamb's wife"

The Lord give our hearts to apprehend more clearly the wonderful place and blessing that is ours in Christ according to His eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ before the world began, so that we may be formed by it here, while we wait His return to take us there to enjoy it in its fulness and perfection forever, and as "the Bride, the Lamb's wife."

*New Zealand.*

WM. EASTON.

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UNSTOP my deaf ear, give me a sensitive spirit, let my soul thrill, and my heart throb, and my whole being delight to obey every syllable that falls from Thy blessed lips. "Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to Thy voice; cause me to hear it."

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"HE must increase, but I must decrease" (John iii. 30). How fitting was it that the Baptist should thus speak, and to his own disciples. Party feeling was at once crushed; rising jealousy was nipped in the bud. The culminating point in his remarkable career had been reached and passed. But who could put a limit to the increase connected with the Lord?

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Forth from our closet may *we* come,  
Strengthened with might our course to run,  
The eye on Christ above;  
Still cleaving alone to His blest side,  
Beneath His sheltering wing we hide,  
Abiding in His love!

## THE LIVING GOD.

“FROM eternity, from the beginning, or ever the earth was”; long ere “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy” at the laying of its foundations; before the morning stars themselves, or the sons of God, had begun to be; before ages had commenced to run, or time to be reckoned, God was; and He was “the living God.”

As there was a Trinity in unity, so “the living Father” had “life in Himself”—“the eternal Spirit” was “the Spirit of life,” and “the Word” “in Him was life.”

Again, “God is light,” and “God is love.” From eternity He was so. But the light shone only for Himself—He dwelt in it; and the love had no existing object outside the glorious Trinity in whom it was, and who was it. “From eternity, from the beginning,” “wisdom” was “by Jehovah, as one brought up with Him; . . . daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him.” “In the beginning . . . the Word was with God”; “the only-begotten Son . . . in the bosom of the Father”; in the abode of love. Thus it could be said, that all was God, and God was all.

From eternity He lived—“the living God.” “With Him was the fountain of life”; but as yet from that fountain no life had flowed forth to created beings till in living power “He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.” Then was there a manifestation of “His eternal power and divinity” through created things. Majestic unfoldings of almighty power displayed themselves before created eyes fashioned on purpose to behold them. Bright gleams of the light streamed forth, and fair traces of the love exhibited themselves before intelligences endowed to understand, and hearts formed to respond to them. Tokens enough there were of divine and personal power and character to leave “without excuse” the created intelligence that, knowing Him, should refuse to glorify Him as God, or to retain Him

in its knowledge. The majestic shining forth of the Creator was there, and proclaimed Him "the living God."

Still there was no manifestation of "the life." The depths of the divine nature were yet unsounded. "The light" and the "love" had found no adequate expression. "Grace and truth" had not yet come.

Dwelling "in the light unapproachable," neither man nor angel (John i. 18), "no one," had "seen God at any time." He could not be seen, for the light was "unapproachable." "From the world's creation the invisible things of Him are perceived, being apprehended by the mind through the things that are made, both His eternal power and divinity"; they could be studied there, they could be known in measure there; but no created being could draw nigh to God to gaze upon Himself, to read His character, to behold His glory as it was in Him. None could behold that light but One who was in it. None could declare Him who dwelt in it save One who "came out from the Father"; "the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, HE HATH DECLARED HIM."

R. H.

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## THE FRIEND OF GOD.

"THE Friend of God!"—what an incomparable title! How much there is implied in it, both for the one to whom it was given, and for those who follow after.

One man, and one only, do we read of to whom the title is applied—the patriarch Abraham; and three times in the Scriptures he is so designated. Bold must that one be, who would, unwarranted, bestow a title so dignified and blessed upon the most exalted of mortal men. To be valid it must have Divine sanction; for otherwise it would seem to savour of presumptuously intruding into a proscribed circle.

And what a vista of blessing and communion the mention of the title brings before the mind. For what is the basis of friendship? Our Lord lets us into the secret when HE introduces His disciples into

that holy place of joy and delight. "I have called you friends," He says, and then proceeds to show what justified His saying so: "For all things that I have heard of My Father, I have made known unto you" (John xv.). With the *friend* there are no reserves. He is admitted into the confidence of the heart, and is allowed to know the family secrets, as it were. The inner doings, *the ways*, are revealed to him. No passing acquaintance could have this intimacy!

But proceeding. With the history of Abraham we are familiar. Are there any indications in that history that Abraham occupied such a unique place? For we must remember that it was a mere man, king Jehoshaphat, who first bestowed it. Let us refer to what he says.

Difficulties confronted the king. His enemies were about to encompass him, and in his fear he sought the Lord and proclaimed a fast for his people. Then, standing "in the house of the Lord before the new court" he lifted his heart in prayer, and said, "Art not Thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before Thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham, Thy friend for ever?" (2 Chron. xx. 7). Here the fact of that blessed friendship is mentioned, but no direct reason is given for conferring such a precious appellation, though there is a pertinence in the use of it on such an occasion by the king. The holders of the land about to be invaded were Abraham's seed, and he was God's friend. A forceful appeal indeed! Would He not intervene for His friend's sake?

Are we to infer, from the way Jehosaphat speaks, that *he* bases the title—feels free to confer it—because of the greatness of God's gifts to the patriarch? Probably not. We must most likely look deeper than that. The king would know that the land was granted in perpetuity to Abraham and to his seed. To the seed because of Abraham, but to Abraham because of—what? Wondrous reason!—because He, the Almighty God had undertaken to be the God of

Abraham. In His sovereign choice He called him, and brought him into such a place and position of intimacy, that those privileged to see the man in that place and the enjoyment of that intimacy, instinctively felt that such an one was "the friend of God."

A gift does not necessarily prove friendship, though *manifested love* is sweet. What part does the heart play in the gift? That is important. It is recorded of one of the Roman emperors that on the return of two generals from an arduous campaign, he gave to one an immense bar of gold; to the other he gave a kiss. The one that received the gold envied the one that got the kiss. Ah! which of the twain should we judge to be *his* friend?

And turning back to Genesis, we can see how the title is justified; for that it is so we know, Jehovah himself being proof thereof. He does not resent its use, but the rather takes it up and uses it in a precious passage in Isaiah wherein He seeks to confirm the confidence of "Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham My friend," in Himself (Isa. xli. 8-10). Jehoshaphat had read rightly. He was God's friend!

Now see them in Gen. xvii. It is our privilege, and we speak with reverence. Jehovah appeared to Abram, and set out his path for him. He was exercising His own sovereign goodness and grace, and who shall say Him nay? On his face the patriarch fell, and "*God talked with him*" (ver. 3). This is the revelation we are looking for--God in converse with a creature--God telling out the secrets of His heart--God foreshadowing what He would do for the one to whom He spoke. "As for Me" (ver. 4) He begins; for His mind was established; He knew what His purpose was; and who could get Him to alter? These revealings were as the kisses of *His* mouth for the one He had brought so near to Himself!

And on a like memorable occasion, we read of Jehovah saying, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" (Gen. xviii. 17). Is it not affecting and blessed? It is as though He said: "I must tell him My inten-



tions—what I purpose to accomplish!” It is not now the sweet story of what sovereign grace would effect for him; but the solemn fact that the sword of judgment was hovering over the guilty cities of the plain; and fall it would. God knew assuredly that Abraham had an interest in those cities; and his heart was drawn out in earnest entreaty and intercession. And when the stroke fell, and the wicked cities were doomed to destruction, how cheering to read that “God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow.” He knew the secret yearning of that heart—and was not unmindful of it. Truly he was “known of God.”

Then, passing to the reference of James, we have another point indicated for us. There was, as of necessity there must be, an answer to the overtures of God to Abraham. God could not speak to an indifferent heart, but found the answer He desired and sought in the one to whom He spoke. What was characteristic of the patriarch? Let us hear what James says. “*Abraham believed God.*” Yes, that it is. God spoke. Abraham believed. The prevailing feature in, and the pervading power of, his life was faith. And so James adds, and the connection gives the addition a precious significance, “He was called the Friend of God.” This is the human side then, the answer of the heart to the communications of God. And as then, so now; and the words of our Lord for us are, “Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.” Grace, sovereign grace alone, brings us so near; but we little realize what we lose by not allowing the Word to have its power over us. Abraham heard, believed, and wrought, and the enjoyment of having fresh communications from above were his—the joys of that friendship of which we have read, lightening his heart. Oh! that we may hear, believe, and work, perfecting faith by rendering a ready and hearty obedience to the words of the Lord. Then the moral condition prevailing will be such that the joy of being *practically* Christ’s friends will be ours.

H. F.

## PROOFS OF INSPIRATION.

THERE are some who may ask with a real desire to learn, HOW MAY WE BE ASSURED THAT THE SCRIPTURES ARE THE WORD OF GOD? To this let us now turn.

It would be strange, certainly, if God had spoken in language man could understand, and for man's everlasting blessing, and yet had left him in real doubt as to whether or not he did possess a revelation from his Creator. God does not thus mock His creatures. He desires, too, that His children should have fellowship with Himself. But how can that be if we know not, cannot know for certain, what is His mind?

“No man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of a man which is in him, even so the things of God knoweth no one (not merely ‘no man’), but the Spirit of God” (1 Cor. ii. 11).

A revelation, therefore, is requisite if any creature is to know them. Now God has chosen man, His people, amongst men, to have understanding of His mind. Wonderful privilege! Immense blessing! The thoughts and purposes of God hidden from ages and generations (1 Cor. ii. 9-10; Col. i. 26) are now made manifest.

But are those so deeply concerned in them to remain in uncertainty regarding God's revelation of them? Oh, no. How then, some may ask, shall we be sure about this? If we turn to Deuteronomy xviii. 21-22, we shall find a principle there enunciated of use to us—

“If thou shalt say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken.”

Thus God guarded His people of old from being led away by pretended revelations. They were to judge of the word by the results. Now we can judge of it in a similar way. But for Israel it was the prophetic word of which they were thus to judge. With us it is the revelation God has given for our instruction and encouragement which we can test by this principle. For the Word of God professes to act on souls in ways which are characteristic either of what God is, or of what He does, and these characteristic actings of the Word are proofs that it is God's Word.

*Proofs of Inspiration.*

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1. **THE WORD QUICKENS.**—God is the source of life. If we speak of the Father, He is called the living Father (John vi. 57), having life in Himself (John v. 26), deriving His being from no one. If we think of the Son of God, we read, “In Him was life” (John i. 4), and He is the life of all who believe in Him, for—

“He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 John v. 12).

In keeping with this the Word of God quickens.

“Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth” (Jas. i. 18).

“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pet. i. 23).

Now these two, James and Peter, themselves subjects of the quickening power of the Word, have placed on record how it acts; and the Master Himself, who came from heaven, also declared this when He told Nicodemus that—

“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God” (John iii. 5);

for water, here, is the emblem of the Word of God.

2. **THE WORD CLEANSSES.**—But this leads us to another acting of the Word. It not only quickens, but it cleanses, acting on the soul as water does on the body. Hence we read—

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto, according to Thy Word” (Ps. cxix. 9).

God is holy, and the man who is subject to the Word is thereby cleansed from his old evil ways. And this the Lord Jesus fully corroborated, when He said to the eleven—

“Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you” (John xv. 3).

Thus the Holy Ghost in the Old Testament affirmed how the Word could act, and the Lord Jesus, speaking of the eleven after Judas had gone out, declared that it had really acted in this way on them. They were examples of the cleansing action of the divine Word. But, thank God, they stand not alone in this, for the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of His body, the Church, has cleansed (or cleanses) it by the washing of water by the Word (Eph. v. 26). With this passage then

before us we can understand the meaning of the figure used in John iii. 5, where water is a symbol for the divine Word. For the Word showing the person what he ought to be, and in consequence manifesting to him what in himself and in his ways is contrary to God, he, if subject to its teaching, separates himself from that which by the Word he learns is inconsistent with Christian life and practice. Thus the Word cleanses. How it could act the Psalmist, as we have seen, long ago declared. How it acted on the eleven the Lord affirmed. And that it can effectually cleanse every soul which is subject to it, the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, described in Ephesians v., plainly intimates.

3. THE WORD ENLIGHTENS.—This the Psalmist also found, who has placed on record what it was to him—

“Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. The entrance (or, opening up) of Thy Words giveth light ; it giveth understanding unto the simple” (Ps. cxix. 105, 130).

“God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all” (1 John i. 5). To that which He is the written Word corresponds, and by its entrance into man’s heart enlightens him, and dwelling in the saint of God sheds light on his way.

4. THE WORD DISCERNES THE HEART.—It can do what no word of man ever did, being —

“Quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. iv. 12).

No instrument is like it, no weapon so sharp, no edge so fine, detecting as it does, for the instruction of him who is subject to it, that which comes from the soul, the emotional part of man, in contradistinction to that which comes from his spirit, and discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart. Nothing then is there in man’s innermost being which the Word cannot search out and lay bare. And this is its action on the heart of a saint, who needs this application of it, as he pursues his path across the scene of this world. It is part of God’s provision for His people in

the wilderness. What care on the part of God for His people! It is God's prerogative to search the heart, and try the reins. "Deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" as man's heart is, who can know it? Man knows it not. How often has that been illustrated, as crimes, which at one time would have been abhorred as too bad to be committed, have afterwards been registered against the memory on earth of such as have been left to carry out the desires of their fallen nature (2 Kings viii. 13). What, however, man does not know, God does; for it is His prerogative to search the heart (Jer. xvii. 9, 10). So His Word acts in accordance with what He is and does, and thus proves whose Word it really is.

5. *THE WORD INSTRUCTS.*—Born of the Word it is also the means by which the soul is instructed, and by which the believer grows unto salvation, as Peter most probably wrote (1 Pet. ii. 2). And to this Paul bore witness, as writing to Timothy he reminded him of the value of that inspired Word, which was able to make souls wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Thus the Word of God acts. It quickens, it cleanses, it enlightens, it discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart, and by it the saint, the child of God becomes wise unto salvation. Its characteristic actings show whose Word it is, for it acts in accordance with the nature and ways of God towards sinners and towards saints. Hence, each one who hears the gospel of the grace of God; and receives it, has proof in himself whose Word it really is. The question then for the soul is not one for argument or intellectual apprehension, for the man himself who receives the truth is a living witness that the revelation is from God.

And by-and-by those who now reject it will learn whose Word they slighted on earth, when the prophetic announcement of the Saviour is fulfilled—

"He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath One that judgeth him: for the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John xii. 48).

But, thank God, the person who learns that the Word is of God through being quickened, cleansed, enlightened, and instructed by it, will never know that it is from God in the manner the Lord has described in his last appeal to the world in the Gospel by John. For it is from His last appeal, as given us in that Gospel that we have quoted, when, in the urgency of desire that souls should hear Him and live, He—

“Cried and said, He that believeth on Me, believeth not on Me, but on Him that sent Me. And he that seeth Me seeth Him that sent Me. I am come, a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness” (John xii. 44-46).

But what a solemn thought, that in the other world there will be no difference of opinion as to whether or not the written Word is from God. The saints will know it, and be for ever the proofs of it. The lost, who have heard it, will then know it, and will suffer for ever because they rejected it. C. E. S.

### THE ETERNAL LIFE MANIFESTED.

A MAN, albeit inspired of God, has been able to write: “The life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.” For “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth,” and His glory was beheld by human eyes—“the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father.”

“Grace and truth” in their fulness—the highest expression of the “love” and “the light”—had come; for “the life was manifested,” and in its actings “the light” shone out—“the life was the light of men.”

Pure absolute truth concerning God and His nature found its expression in Him who said, “I *am* the truth;” in Him who “*was* the true Light.”

And the “love” too, was manifested in that “only-begotten Son” sent into the world; for He was there not only “that we might live through Him,” but also that Himself might “be the propitiation for our sins;” and “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

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John, having seen that manifested "life" displaying in living activities the nature of God, could now tell out that "God is light," and "God is love;" nay, more, could "*show unto us* that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested."

"The Word was made flesh, and *dwelt* among us." From the manger to the cross "the life" was in manifestation, as He dwelt among men, showing out in living power the nature—the moral glory of God.

"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father;" and we by grace have seen Him. Not alone to those who with the natural eye beheld is the vision of glory confined. We too, know the Father, and have seen Him; for "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in *our* hearts" also, and we too have "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Adoringly we have followed in spirit the manifested "Life" in His pathway through "the valley of the shadow of death"—a world where "sin hath reigned unto death"—and "the light" has shone upon us, and the "love" has warmed us. And "we have known and believed the love that God hath toward us;" and we have found "the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us." And we have loved "the light," and rejoiced in "the light," and have been at home in "the light"—our happy abiding-place; for we have received from Him "the light of life," and have been made "light in the Lord."

We have stood by the manger at Bethlehem, and have marvelled at the love that could induce the eternal might to clothe itself in dependent feebleness. We have looked in on the Jewish home in Nazareth, and witnessed the perfection of subjection to human parents in Him whose name, though "a child . . . born," was "the everlasting Father." We have stood by Jordan, and have beheld the "love" associating itself in grace and sympathy with the sinful in their repentant turnings toward God; "the light" displaying itself in so fulfilling righteousness. We have *followed Him into the wilderness, and been spectators*

of the victory of "the Light" over darkness, as the choicest wiles of its chief ruler were calmly shone through, exposed, and foiled. We have lingered with Him by the well of Sychar, and seen "the light" shining in its manifesting power into the heart of a poor Samaritan sinner, revealing her to herself, and the "love" bending in grace to meet her in her fallen condition that it might lift her from it. We have sat at the feet of the "Teacher come from God," and, "wondering at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth," have felt that "He spake with authority," even the authority of "the Light." We have seen "the life" in the presence of physical death always triumphant over it—bringing in life from the dead—and have seen the "love" acting through it for the consolation of a widowed heart, or the restoration of a household's joy. We have seen it in contact with spiritual death "a quickening spirit," giving life to "as many as the Father hath given" Him. We have witnessed "the light" flashing with lightning gleam through the hypocrisies of scribe and Pharisee, and have traced it in patient forbearance enlightening the dulness of fisher-men disciples. We have beheld "the light" scathing the startled consciences of the accusers of the adulteress, and the "love" dismissing with solemn admonition, but uncondemned, the sinful occasion and instrument of their malice. We have seen "the light" reproving a mother's untimely intrusion on a sphere beyond her, and have admired the "love" that, in His hour of deepest anguish, forgetful of His own suffering, could care and provide for that mother a protector and a home. We have seen "the light" in undimmed lustre, at the table of the hollow-hearted Simon, rebuking His host, and the "love" throwing its protecting mantle over and shedding the joy of forgiveness into the penitent heart of the "sinner" that washed His feet with her tears. We have seen the "love" reposing in the bosom of the home-circle of Bethany, and anon "the light" defending there the blameless, and tearing the mask from the face of dissembling covetousness. We have seen again "the



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light" portraying the "love" in the grace of "the good Samaritan" towards the outcast Jew, and revealing it in the heart of the Father, in its yearning compassion for the prodigal son.

In every attitude, in every position, in every relationship wherein we have seen Him, "the light" and the "love" have gone hand in hand as "the life" has manifested itself through them—their twin glories now discernible in their distinctness, now shading off into each other, now blending, now overlapping or enfolding each other—for there was "love" in "the light" and "light" in the "love"—ever in their united witness displaying "the brightness of His glory"—the moral glory, the moral nature, of God.

And when at length we have stood, under the shadows of night, in the garden of Gethsemane, and, listening awe-stricken to the outbreathings of His agony, have seen the gloom of that hour of the power of darkness dispelled by the glory, as the cup, in deepest love to man, was taken submissively from His Father's hand; and as we have trod behind the glowing footprints of "the light," and felt the throbbings of the "love" from every pulsation of His heart, as He passed from Gethsemane to the high priest, from the high priest to the judgment-hall, from the judgment-hall to the cross; and as we have stood, in the very atmosphere of divine love, at the foot of the cross whereon He was lifted up, a spectacle of scorn to men, of admiration to angels; and have seen blended there, in sevenfold brilliancy and harmony, all the moral attributes of Godhead—the grace and the truth, the justice and the holiness, the wisdom, the goodness, and the mercy—prismatic rays, if one may so speak, of the pure light of the glory of God—we have bowed, and we have worshipped. And when, finally, our eye has turned upward through the heavens opened to Stephen, and has beheld "the Man" in the glory of God, we have prostrated heart and soul before Him as we have owned, "This is the true God and the Eternal life."

R. H.

## THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES BRIEFLY SKETCHED.

BEFORE entering on the subject which heads this paper it may be well to ascertain the cause which necessitated and led up to the setting aside of God's own chosen people who had hitherto held the sceptre of earthly government, being set apart by God to maintain His authority on the earth ; but, alas ! in this we know how miserably they failed. The Kingdom itself became divided (see I Kings xi. 31-32), B.C. 984. About nine years later, B.C. 975, the actual breach took place, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin being henceforth known as *Judah*, and the remaining ten tribes as *Israel*. About 50 years later, B.C. 721, we find Israel grievously sinning against the Lord their God (2 Kings xvii. 7-17), and they so provoked the Lord to anger that He removed them out of His sight, none being left but the tribe of Judah only (verse 18). So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day (ver. 23).

Turning now to 2 Kings xxiii. 26-27, we find the anger of the Lord was also kindled against Judah—  
“And the Lord said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel.” This we find was carried out under the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (2 Kings xxiv).

Zedekiah, the last of the kings of Judah, was placed on the throne by Nebuchadnezzar after he had besieged Jerusalem and carried away Jehoiachin, the former king, to Babylon (2 Kings xxiv. 8-16). Zedekiah rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar (verse 20), and in the ninth year of his reign Nebuchadnezzar came against Jerusalem, and after a siege of sixteen months took the city and carried away Zedekiah, bound with fetters of brass, to Babylon (2 Kings xxv. 1, etc.), B.C. 588. Nebuchadnezzar was the son of Nabopolassar, with whom for a brief period he conjointly reigned. He commenced to reign alone about B.C. 604, and with him Gentile rule was first established under the hand of God ; who having, as we have already seen, ceased to use His people Israel to maintain His authority

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on the earth, transferred that authority to the Gentiles, and so an entirely new era was entered upon, in which the Chaldees under Nebuchadnezzar became the controlling power. Luke in chap. xxi. 24, speaks of "*the times of the Gentiles*" thus:—"And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." This will not eventuate until the Lord Jesus comes in person, bringing Gentile rule to a close and exercising His authority upon the earth as King.

Diverging for a moment, I would just remark that the term, "times of the Gentiles," must not be confounded with the somewhat similar expression, "the fulness of the Gentiles," which conveys a wholly different thought. The Apostle Paul, in chapter xi. of Romans elucidates this under the figure of "the olive tree," Abraham being the root: God having promised that in him should "all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xii. 3). Israel having failed to comply with what God had enjoined, are, as a consequence set aside for the time being, and the Gentiles, who were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel," taken up.

This the apostle illustrates by "some of the branches broken off," and the Gentiles "grafted in," i.e., into the place where God, according to His promise to Abraham, "the root" of the olive tree, could bless. Being grafted however into the olive tree does not suggest life, as might be supposed, but rather responsibility, which is clearly implied by the words—"If thou continue in His goodness; otherwise thou shalt be cut off": and hence God's free offer of mercy, as far as *they* were concerned, closed.

Israel having refused God's proffered mercy, the offer of mercy is now made to the Gentiles that they might be saved; this, however, will terminate at an earlier period than "the times of the Gentiles," viz., when this present day of grace, in which the gospel of the grace of God is being proclaimed, shall have expired, the exact moment being, when the saints are caught up to meet the Lord in the air, then, and not till then, will "the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

To again resume—Nebuchadnezzar being now fully established in his kingdom, dreams a dream “where-with his spirit was troubled” (Dan. ii. 1). The dream had gone from him, and the magicians and astrologers were unable to tell him the dream, much less to interpret it. Daniel, however, goes in to the king and requests time to be given him to make known the dream and the interpretation thereof; and he, with his companions, are cast upon God, who, in a night vision revealed it to Daniel. Before making it known to the king he pours out his heart in thanksgiving to the God of heaven, the alone revealer of secrets (vv. 20-23). Passing on now to ver. 31, we get this far-reaching dream made known to the king, as follows:—“Thou, O king, sawest, and, behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee, and the form thereof was terrible. This image’s head was of fine gold, and his breasts and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass. His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest, till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, and no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.

Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of heaven, hath he given into thy hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron; forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things; and as iron that breaketh

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all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes part of potter's clay and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay, and as the toes of the feet were part of iron and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle.

And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it break in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter; and the dream is certain, and the interpretation sure."

What then is the typical teaching of this great image seen by the king? We have first "the head of gold," the interpretation of which Daniel makes clear in verses 37 and 38: Nebuchadnezzar himself being that head of gold, and Babylon, as we have already seen, being the kingdom over which he presided. Nor is there any difficulty in determining the meaning of the "breasts and the arms of silver," on which both scripture and history are in strict agreement, viz., Media and Persia, or as it is usually designated, "Medo-Persia." Chap. v. 28 determines this:—"Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." The third great kingdom, to succeed the Medo-Persian, typified by "the belly and thighs of brass," is the Grecian, referred to in chap. viii. and mentioned in history as the third great empire.

The fourth kingdom, set forth in figure by "his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay," is not

actually named in Daniel, but occupies a large place in the pages of history, where we find it referred to as "Rome." This figure presents a double aspect of this kingdom, which will receive due attention later on.

The four kingdoms then, typified by the great image, are:—BABYLON, MEDO-PERSIA, GREECE and ROME being the four great Gentile kingdoms announced in this vision, which should each succeed the other, the first of these kingdoms being named "Babylon" by Nebuchadnezzar (chap. vi. 30).

The city itself is said to have been the most magnificent city ever built; its form was an exact square, 60 miles in circumference, the walls were 87 feet in thickness, and 350 feet high: there were 100 gates of solid brass, 25 on each side, and from these ran 25 streets which crossed one another at right angles, each 150 feet wide, and fifteen miles long. The river Euphrates flowed through the centre of the city from north to south, spanned by a wonderfully built bridge, on one side of which stood the magnificent temple of Belus, of enormous dimensions, and on the other side the grand palace of Nebuchadnezzar.

The kingdom itself lay between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, and is stated to have been some 400 miles in length by about 100 in breadth. Nebuchadnezzar held universal sway, God, as we learn from Dan. ii. 37, 38, having made him a king of kings, and wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of heaven, He had made him ruler over all.

Following on from Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the next striking event in his history we find recorded in Dan iii., viz., the golden image which he set up in the plain of Dura. The site, doubtless, was well chosen so that the golden image might be visible to the whole of the vast multitude who were assembled to witness the dedication. The height of the image was 60 cubits, and the breadth 6 cubits, which would represent about 119 feet by 12 feet. The setting up of this image is the more remarkable following so soon after the interpretation of the dream, in which

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Nebuchadnezzar owned that Daniel's "God is a God of gods, and Lord of kings" (ch. ii. 47). This recognition however of Daniel's God appears to have quickly passed away from the king's memory, and we now find him commanding idolatrous worship, the penalty for disregarding this command being the casting into a burning fiery furnace. Daniel's companions Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego refused to bow to the golden image, trusting to *their* God to deliver them. At the king's command they were bound and cast into the fiery furnace, but "upon their bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them." It is worthy of notice that as Gentile rule commenced with idolatrous worship so will it in like manner terminate (see Rev. xiii. 14, 15).

From ch. iv., we learn that Nebuchadnezzar had a second dream which he related to Daniel, the interpretation being as follows:—"They shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass like oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will." After a lapse of twelve months, this interpretation had a most literal fulfilment. As he walked in his palace, "the king spake and said, Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? While the word was in the king's mouth there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O King Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; the kingdom is departed from thee. In the same hour the dream had its accomplishment, and Nebuchadnezzar was driven from men, and did eat grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws." Seven times were to pass over him, *i.e.*, seven years; and at the end of that period his under-

standing returned, and he acknowledged the Most High.

After his death he was succeeded by Belshazzar, his grandson, who we are told in chapter v. made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and had the golden and silver vessels, which his father (or perhaps grandfather) had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem, brought to him to drink wine out of; and as they drank the king saw the fingers of a man's hand writing on the wall which filled him with consternation, inso-much that his knees smote one against another.

Daniel is called to interpret the writing, which was "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin," the interpretation being, "God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it. Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." We read in verse 30, "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain"; and thus ended Babylonian rule which lasted over a period of 66 years.

After the death of Belshazzar, we find it recorded in Daniel v. 31 that Darius the Median took the kingdom; and this brings us to the second great empire, the Medo-Persian. There is no very definite historic record regarding the reign of this first monarch.

H. M.

*(To be Continued.)*

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"In the midst" of heaven's bright throne  
 See the Lamb who did atone,  
 There by God exalted high,  
 Object He to fill the eye;  
 "Living creatures" give Him praise,  
 Hear the songs the "elders" raise,  
 See the angels veil the face,  
 Peoples magnify His grace—  
 "He is worthy, bless His name,"  
 All creation doth proclaim—  
 "He is worthy," saints can cry,  
 "Who by dying brought us nigh."



## LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

ON the Lord's last night on earth, the night before He was crucified, He gave practical proof of the love He bore to His disciples, His own in the world, by washing their feet. On the morrow He would die for them. He instituted the Supper—the Lord's Supper—explaining its meaning briefly but clearly: and He also washed His disciples' feet, setting forth symbolically the present service of His love on high; for it was, and is, His desire that those He loves should have part with Him.

His death was needed to meet the question of our guilt as sinful creatures; for it is the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, which cleanses us from all sin. In the feet washing the saint is kept practically clean from defilement whilst walking through the world; for it is true that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Whatever in our walk is unsuited to the relationship in which we stand—to the home to which we are going—to the glory and the inheritance in which we shall share—He sets Himself by the water of the Word to cleanse us from it all.

And this service of His is set before the disciples as an example they are exhorted to copy in their dealings with one another: "Ye also ought to wash one another's feet." They were in very deed to love one another. Did they want to know the measure? "*As I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*"

We dwell with delight upon the grace of the Lord Jesus. We think of His great patience with His disciples, and marvel at the pains He took to instruct them, but we are prone to overlook the reproofs He at times administered. But love was the spring in each case, be it teaching or reproofing. Love, Divine and therefore holy love, varied its action according to the real need; which He knew far better than they. He gave both the sweet and the bitter in suited measure on every occasion. How sweet to Peter's spirit it must have been to hear the Master say, "Blessed art thou Simon Barjona." But not so "Get thee behind me Satan." Yet love uttered both. It has been often

said "that love is blind," but that is a libel upon love. God's love was not blind. He saw our desperate need, our wickedness; He knew our every sin; yet for us He gave His only Son, and Jesus loved us and gave Himself for us.

But before we can enjoy the benefit of what He suffered for us, we must taste the bitterness of learning something of what we are—something of what God is in His holiness—something of the godly sorrow which worketh repentance. In this case the bitter comes before the sweet and that serves to make the sweet sweeter. Do we not all, sooner or later get the rod, the rod of chastening? Every son does, but bastards may escape (Heb. xii.). Love smites. Love embraces. How sweet are the kisses of divine love! How salutary, though unpleasant, the stripes we receive, are, and must be. Love does all. If we do not like the rod of correction we must see to it that "we walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise." Let us be very sensitive as to our Father's will and be always obedient. Disown us He cannot and will not; but holiness and obedience He must have. Hence He chastens.

God's children have their privileges which they are to enjoy in common. They have each one their responsibilities, first to God and to each other. How is it that we have brothers and sisters? Simply because one Father begat us: "Of His own will begat He us by the word of truth." Then my first duty is to my Father. I must obey His will, even if all others refuse to do so. I can have no duty to my brothers and sisters that clashes with my Father's revealed will. The path He has marked out I must walk in. Be there few or many in the path, my duty is clear.

It is a fact we learn from God's holy Word that those most obedient, most separate from the world, are but few in number and but lightly esteemed. Take the Word of God as our guide in everything, and we find it casts its light on everything. So the saint need never be in doubt as to the right thing to do, or not to do. The will to do is the all important thing to have,

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and then the proper course will become plain. Is it the will of God that we should sanction the divided state of Christians? Ought it not rather to be a cause of real heart sorrow? According to God's Word it is a proof of carnality, the walking as men. It is the world's principles in the Church, with the heavenly character gone and true spirituality lost. God's Assembly is one. The Body of Christ is one, of which there is but one Head and that is Christ in the glory. Each true believer is united to Him and by consequence to each other. Members of Christ, that is the prime fact, but members also one of another. The Body of Christ was formed by the baptism of the one Holy Spirit.

Let us shut out of view for a moment the vast area over which God's saints are scattered on the earth, and just see as God sees one Assembly, one Body of Christ. No distinctive names can be in it. The saints were "first called Christians at Antioch." We need not object to that name. God has a family on the earth, and all who belong to that family are termed brethren. Who is it that is not ashamed to own them?—to call them brethren? Jesus the blessed Son of God. And why? Because they are each one sons of God (Heb. ii.). His Father is also their Father: His God is also their God (John xx.). They are moreover addressed as "Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." Why, then, are they so divided? having interests so diverse that they cannot walk together? The joy of the Father's love, the exquisite delight in the Son by the power of the Holy Spirit, is well nigh lost, and in their place a host of earthly things of little moment, of trifling value, are being eagerly pursued.

Then, if we remember God's Assembly, which is also Christ's Body, where have we got if we can tolerate avowed sectarianism? if we can be members of something narrower than the one Assembly of God? So far astray have most Christians got from the precious simple truths we are commenting on, that they express great surprise if one tells them, in answer to the enquiry, What are you? A Christian, or, A believer in Christ? Yes, yes, say they, but you must belong to

some denomination or other. It is vain to disown it, for they will have it to be so. How sad it all is! Thank God there are some who prize these truths, and who seek to acknowledge them in a practical manner; who will neither join in services of a sectarian character nor partake of the Lord's Supper on denominational ground. The gifts from the ascended Christ are valued, and liberty is found for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Many of these gifts may be, and really are, found working and ministering in support of human systems. What then? shall we go where they are? No, no! for that is to prefer the gift to the Giver, and to become a party to disobedience. We have left what may claim to be the Church, but is not; what is of man but not of God. To return is impossible. It would be building again the things we have destroyed. It is not love to tolerate dishonour to Christ, nor to sanction disobedience to God's revealed will.

The utter ruin of what purports to be the Church of God is clearly foretold in the Word, and the path for faithful souls is marked out, and provision made too, thank God! provision so plain, so rich: "Where two or three are gathered together unto My name, there am I in the midst" (Matt. xviii. 20). Two or three, perhaps ignorant, lacking human culture, poor and despised, but with Jesus in the midst. *If gathered unto His name*, not else. Gather as party men, as members of a sect, and you cannot have Christ's presence and it is plain you have it not; for the machinery for carrying on the service is of man.

Christ in the midst is everything. To Him eyes are turned. To Him ears would listen. His words warm the heart. His presence makes heaven below. No better meetings can be found outside heaven itself. The holiness He desires, and the truth, of which He is the living embodiment, must be maintained, or there will be poverty indeed. Shut Him out by loose and evil ways, or by fundamental error, and we have the worst of all. The path is narrow. In it the worldly and the disobedient cannot walk. Love seeks no other, and is satisfied with Jesus only.

E. R. W.

## TRUE SERVICE.—(John iv.)

LET us next turn to see exemplified in this history, the *spirit* in which true service should be performed. The woman had left the well, the disciples having already rejoined the Lord with the food which they had purchased in the city. The draught of water from Jacob's well we read not that He ever got. Now to food, which the disciples had brought, He seemed indifferent. Yet refreshment and meat He had found and that as He talked with the woman. "Master, eat," was the request of the disciples, who, now to be taught by Him, had addressed Him by the Jewish appellation of "Rabbi". The woman had learnt her lesson—viz. that Christ had come; the disciples were to learn theirs—viz. the *spirit* in which true service should be performed, as illustrated by the example of the Master Himself. For His answer, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of," told of something, which they had not brought, that ministered sustainment to Him. Unable to comprehend His meaning, their thoughts, like those of the woman, being confined to temporal things, He graciously explained, as He added, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work" (John iv. 31-34). Thus He, the sent One of the Father, shows us what true service is—the simple but faithful performance of the work marked out for the servant. Labourers are too often influenced by the manifestation or otherwise of results. The Lord's meat as a servant was to do the appointed work whatever the results might be.

Was He insensible to results? Far otherwise, as Isa. xlix. 4 and Matt. xi. 20-24 declare. But perfect servant, as perfect in everything else, His meat was to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to finish His work. True, in doing it He must have had joy, a joy we cannot measure, as He saw one poor sinner's heart opened up by His teaching, like a flower expanding under the warming influence of the sun, and knew that the blessing communicated to her would be fruitful in blessing to many a soul in that city. But His meat was found elsewhere. What simplicity and what faithfulness do these words

bring before us, the Master's teaching for His disciples, and that Master Jehovah's Servant, and Jehovah's Fellow! (Zech. xiii. 7).

Whilst sitting by the well the Lord had ministered to one poor woman's soul. But now it would seem, that, lifting up His eyes, He saw, and drew the attention of the disciples to, the sight of the people trooping out of the city to meet with Him. "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields: for they are white already to harvest" (John iv. 35). God's blessing on the soil to produce an abundant harvest could not be enjoyed for four months yet; nevertheless there was a harvest to be reaped at once, the result of seed sown long before, which had germinated, and now was rapidly ripening under the presence of Him, who will by-and-by appear to Israel in their land as the "Sun of Righteousness."

It was harvest-time then at Sychar, a time unknown before in the annals of that fertile district. A joyous time is that of harvest, even in the natural world. Of this the Word bears witness (Isa. ix. 3). But a joyous thing it is also, when there is a harvest of souls to be reaped. Of this the disciples were now to have experience, though in a way and in a place quite unexpected. That Judæa, so recently stirred by the preaching of John the Baptist, should have yielded such results, would not have seemed surprising. Or that Galilee, in which a welcome reception was awaiting the Lord (John iv. 43), should be the field where such an operation should first commence, would not have seemed to them unnatural. But that Sychar, where we read not that John had preached, nor the Lord had previously laboured, was to be the place, in which the disciples should first taste the joy of reaping, must have been most unexpected. What others have since known, they were now to learn, how cheering it is to the heart of a faithful servant of God, when reaping time arrives, and the labourer, or labourers, have only to enter on a work made ready to their hand. It is a blessed thing to see souls bowed down under the power of the Word, and prepared to take their

stand henceforth in God's strength as servants and true followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The power at such times of those who wield aright the sword of the Spirit seems immense; but they are but men, liable to be taken advantage of by the enemy, and so need, as the disciples did, the Lord's gentle reminder, that to reap is not everything, happy and inspiring as that service is. Others, as in this case at Sychar, may have sown the seed, which at length produces such a bountiful crop. "Herein," said the Lord, "is the saying true, One soweth and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labour" (37, 38).

The disciples were to be there but reapers, one set of the servants made use of in that portion of the field. Those who had laboured in earlier times, who had sown the seed, had passed away; but the Lord did not overlook them, nor allow their labour of sowing to be forgotten in the bright, genial days of harvesting. The names of some who sowed the seed (in this case the hope of Messiah's appearance) the Old Testament may furnish. But who kept alive that expectation in the hearts of the Samaritans, by teaching them what was written in the sacred page, we cannot now tell, and probably the disciples in their day were almost in as great ignorance about it as we are. But whoever they were to whom the Lord referred, He would have us to understand, that neither their names, nor their labours, are overlooked by Him. How gracious is this! How encouraging to those who toil during the sowing season, and depart this life without witnessing the joy of harvest, to remember the gracious announcement of the Lord of the harvest, that "he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth, and he that reapeth, may rejoice together!" (36).

How apt are men to judge of the labourer's usefulness by the apparent results of his work! How apt, too, are they, in time of harvest, to regard the reapers, as the one and only class of labourers who have tilled the

soil! Not so the Lord. He knows who have ploughed up the ground, and sown the seed, in the sunless days of autumn and winter, or in the blustering days of spring. And when the harvest is reaped, and gathered into the barn, He will remember them, and own what share they have had in the work carried on for Him upon earth. It is well, it is right, to rejoice when harvest time of this character arrives in any locality; but the time for full joy about it cannot come, till a perfect estimate can be formed of the crop, and then the sower and the reaper shall rejoice together.

Are we called to sow? Let us work on undaunted, though we see not the fruit of our labour. Are we allowed to reap? Let us work diligently, remembering the responsibility which rests on us, but ever mindful that others may have a share in a coming day in the joy of that harvest, which we in the Lord's goodness have been permitted to reap. What joy would it have been, doubtless, to those of earlier days, who had kept alive the expectation of the Christ, if they had lived here long enough to have seen Him! Many prophets and righteous men had desired to see what the disciples saw, but survived not to that day. Will they be deprived of their joy? No. They shall see the day of Christ's glory and the crop which has resulted from seed sown by them in patience, and under difficulties known, perhaps, only to themselves and to God.

All who labour for God upon earth shall see the result of their work. "The sower and the reaper shall rejoice together." The Lord will not dissociate them. So, though spoken of in a different matter and in a different connection, may we not say, "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder?" The Lord's words about the labourers are worth remembering, cheering to the sower, sobering to the reaper.

But what, it may be asked, is it to sow? It is to disseminate faithfully the testimony of the day, whatever that may be, which has been committed to God's servants. To reap is to gather in souls by ministry, as the fruit of the seed sown. But who are to reap,



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and when? This the Lord decides, and here allotted to the disciples their portion of work in the field. "I sent you," etc. Their commission was from Him; and He who never makes a mistake, did not send them into the field before the crop was ready for their service.

Just come from Judæa, where they had enjoyed no reaping, they found at Sychar the crop ready for the sickle: for, taught to expect the Messiah, the Samaritans were willing, when they knew of Him, to receive Him. To have attempted to reap in Judæa would have been labour to little profit. To have commenced sowing at Sychar would have indicted a want of discernment as to the condition of souls in that city. To have concluded from their success at Sychar, that all Samaria was ready to receive the Lord, would have been manifestly erroneous, as the treatment He met with in one of the villages of Samaria at a later period of His life clearly demonstrates. All this, surely, can speak to us, where sowing and reaping may go on almost side by side. The work in one place is no criterion of what that in another should be; nor does it follow, that the labourer, highly blessed in one locality, has only to move to another, to find that field also quite ready for his reaping hook. C. E. S.

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## THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES BRIEFLY SKETCHED.

(Continued).

AFTER the death of Darius he was succeeded by Cyrus King of Persia, who was the son of Ahasuerus, the Artaxerxes of Nehemiah, which means "the great king" an appellative in a similar way to Pharaoh. Ahasuerus was first married to Vashti, whom he soon put away for her disobedience, and married Esther, the adopted daughter of Mordecai the Jew, who plays a prominent part in the book of Esther. The issue of this second marriage was Cyrus, who was so surnamed by God in the remarkable prophecy of Isa. xlv. 28, xlv. 1-3—"That saith of Cyrus, he is my shepherd,

and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him: and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: . . . that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel." By a comparison of more recently ascertained chronological dates, Cyrus was so surnamed by God nearly 200 years before his birth: one of the many internal scripture proofs of the divine origin of the Bible.

In Ezra 1-2, we read—"Now, in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah." The prophecy of Jeremiah (ch. xxix. 10) is now fulfilled, the 70 years captivity having expired, and those who had been carried away into Babylon, came again into Jerusalem and Judah, every one into his own city (Ezra ii. 1), the number being 42,360 (v. 64). Cyrus also restored the vessels of the house of the Lord which Nebuchadnezzar had taken away (ch. i. 7). We find in ch. iii. 10, the foundation of the temple of the Lord was laid about B.C. 425, and it was not finished until the sixth year of Darius (Hystaspes) the king (Ezra vi. 15) about B.C. 405 (corrected date), thus a lapse of twenty years took place between the laying the foundation of the temple and its completion; we have, however, to deduct from this some fifteen years in which the building was hindered through opposition, etc. The building therefore occupied about five years.

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Another notable event which occurred during the Persian monarchy, was the building of the city of Jerusalem and its walls, under Nehemiah (Neh. ii. 5). This took place in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes (Astyages—Ahasurius) B.C. 454 (corrected date). The Persian Empire was brought to a close by the defeat of Darius (Codomanus) by Alexander—(date uncertain).

The next great empire, typified by “the belly and thighs of brass,” was Greece, of which Alexander the Great became emperor. He was himself a Macedonian, becoming king of Macedonia after the death of his father, Philip II. He subdued the Greeks about a year later, and after conquering several smaller states, defeated the Persians. His victory over the Persians led to the submission of the chief provinces of western Asia; Cappadocia followed after a brief resistance, and all Asia Minor was subdued in a comparatively short time. He also conquered Tyre after a long and tedious siege, which is said to have lasted from December to June. He then conquered Syria and Egypt. In the following year he learned that Darius was concentrating the forces of his empire near Babylon, and Alexander advanced through Asia, crossing the Euphrates into Mesopotamia, where no resistance was offered, and soon after encountered Darius, whose army fell into confusion and Darius fled. Babylon then opened its gates to the conquerer, who, after gaining other victories, fell a victim to intemperance and died at Babylon B.C. 323. After his death, four of his generals—Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy Lagus, established themselves as sovereigns and divided the kingdom, which was never conquered by others, but fell to pieces of itself. There appears to be little doubt that the four kingdoms referred to in Dan. viii. 22 are those of the four generals of Alexander the Great, who divided the kingdom after his death.

We now arrive at the fourth great kingdom, Rome, “strong as iron,” “which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth” (Dan.

vii. 23). History informs us that Rome was founded by Romulus, its first king, B.C. 753. The earlier history of Rome is to a large extent unreliable up to the reign of Camillus, born about B.C. 440, who was designated "the second founder of Rome." As far as can be gathered from history, Rome had six distinct forms of government, i.e., from B.C. 753, when it was founded, to A.D. 475, when it ceased to exist as a kingdom, and this is borne out by Scripture. In Rev. xvii. 10, where this great empire is unquestionably referred to, we find this statement :—"And there are seven kings ; five have fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come : and when he cometh, he will continue a short space." The word "kings" in this verse is generally interpreted to mean, heads, or forms of government. At the time the Apostle John wrote, five of these kings had passed away, one then existed, the Imperial, and the other was not yet come. Thus we find history is indirectly supported by Scripture, six being accounted for up to the Imperial form of government ; when the kingdom, as such, ceased to exist. "The other yet to come" will be the revived empire in a ten kingdom form referred to in Dan. vii. 24, and which will spring into existence some little time before the close of Gentile rule. This will be entered upon more fully later on ; the mere fact is now stated.

The six forms of government which history brings to our notice, are as follows :—First Kings, second Consuls, third Dictators, fourth Decemvirs, fifth Consular Tribunes, and sixth the Imperial form. Under this last form of government it is stated there were 60 emperors ; Augustus being the first, and Augustulus the last. He, it is said, abdicated, and Odoacer assumed the title of King of all Italy.

Augustus Cæsar, the first imperial head, commenced his reign B.C. 31 ; it would however appear that he was not proclaimed emperor until B.C. 27. It was during his reign that Christ was born. Herod the Great was then reigning as king in Judæa, and to ingratiate himself with the Jews he almost rebuilt the temple, the material used being white marble.

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Herod, it was, who sent "the wise men from the east" to Bethlehem to search for the young child (Jesus) in order that he might destroy him: being, however, warned of God in a dream, they returned to their own country another way. Herod, finding his purpose frustrated, sent and slew all the male children about Bethlehem, from two years old and upwards; but God, meanwhile, had sent away Joseph and the young child and his mother, into Egypt, where they remained until the death of Herod (Matt. ii). Another notable event took place in the reign of Herod. John the Baptist, the one who was to go before the face of the Lord to prepare his way (Luke i. 76), was born.

The next Roman emperor was Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, under whom the blessed Lord Jesus was crucified, *the* most memorable event in Roman rule.

The next great event occurred under the Emperor Vespasian, when Titus, his son, about A.D. 69 besieged Jerusalem, and after a vigorous resistance took the city and levelled it with the ground. He endeavoured to save the temple but without effect: the Lord's words to His disciples (Matt. xxiv. 2), "Verily, I say unto you there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down," being very literally fulfilled. The number of Jews said to have perished during the siege is estimated at about 1,100,000, a solemn example of the righteous judgment of God. The very city, where, some forty years previous, these very Jews, by Gentile hands, crucified the blessed Son of God. The Lord's words in (Matt. xxi. 37-38), were truly verified, "Last of all He sent unto them His Son, saying, Thy will reverence My Son. But when the husbandmen saw the Son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill Him, and let us seize on His inheritance." Also in Luke xix. 14: "We will not have this man to reign over us." Again in John xix. 15: "We have no king but Cæsar." They rejected Him who was their rightful King, and were content to continue under Gentile rule. We now pass on to Constantine the Great, the next Roman emperor

worthy of some notice. Under the previous emperor, Diocletian, the Christians suffered the most bitter persecution: "the church in Smyrna" (Rev. ii. 9-10) serves as a scriptural example of this. Constantine, it is said, through a vision which he saw, viz., "a brilliant light in the form of a cross, with the inscription 'In this overcome'—on the same night, a vision revealed unto the emperor the meaning of the appearance, and decided him to assume the mysterious symbol as his cognizance on his standard." Be this as it may, Constantine became a professing Christian and gave tangible proof of this in repealing all the sanguinary edicts against Christianity, which had been in force since the reign of Diocletian. He also issued several edicts for the legal establishment of the Christian religion, and the suppression of all idolatrous worship. On his return to Rome, after defeating Licivius on the plains of Adrianople, he found the Roman people, naturally fond of show and spectacles, by no means pleased with the substitution of the simple rites of Christianity for the splendid ceremonials of Paganism. He became wearied by their remonstrances and insults, which led to his quitting the city and creating a new capital at Byzantium, which, after his own name he called Constantinople. Jovian was the last reigning emperor of Imperial Rome. Before the kingdom become divided, he also is said to have encouraged Christianity. At his death, two brothers, Valentinian and Valens divided the empire into east and west; it subsequently became much weakened, barbaric lords coming in and forming separate kingdoms; it ceased to exist as an empire about A.D. 475, Augustulus being its last reigning head.

No other empire is referred to in Scripture as succeeding Rome, but, as has been stated by another, "the iron and clay elements, as the relics of Rome, are at work more or less in all civilized countries."

We will now turn to the prophecy of Daniel and consider verse 34, in conjunction with verses 41-43 of chapter ii. This, I believe, points to the aspect of the kingdom in its revived ten-kingdom form at the close

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of Gentile rule, which is here typified by the toes, ten in number. In Daniel's vision (chap. vii. 7) "and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns," conveys a similar thought. Indeed, Nebuchadnezzar's dream and Daniel's, are, it might be said, identical, when viewed in their typical character, pointing, as they do, to the same kingdoms, and with the same end in view; only in Daniel's "ten horns" we get a much more extended type of the last phase of the Roman empire than we do in the ten toes of the great image of Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel also gives us the important addition of the "little horn," the significance of which will be admitted when viewed in the light of the book of Revelation further on.

I would here add a few additional thoughts. First, as to verses 42 and 43 (Dan. ii.) "And as the toes of the feet were part of iron and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay." This, I believe, has reference to the last phase of the Roman empire in its ten-kingdom form, when ten kingdoms, it may be some of those now existing, shall form an alliance: we have an example of this in what is known as "the triple alliance," i.e., Germany, Austria, and Italy having mutually agreed to support each other should any one of these powers be attacked by another power. This, however, only serves as an example; the alliance then formed will doubtless be of a more comprehensive and binding character: but the fact will remain that they will none the less be separate kingdoms, each having its own king and internal government: other developments will follow of which Daniel's vision (chap. vii.) gives the forecast.

Turning again to chap. ii. 44, we get the statement, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms,

and shall stand for ever." Here events will be brought to a final issue, mark especially the words—"and in the days of these kings." This surely points to an alliance of the various kingdoms at the close of Gentile rule, when the Lord Himself will come forth for the deliverance of His people, which Zechariah foretells (chap. xiv. 3)--"Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle."

We have now to consider verse 45, "Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter; and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure." "The stone cut out of the mountain without hands" is unquestionably a figure of the Lord Jesus Christ, who will bring Gentile rule to a close; the image is therefore viewed in its entirety, viz., the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, as if the whole still existed, and upon which the stone cut out of the mountain falls, illustrative of the total abolition of Gentile rule, which will be replaced by the ever abiding kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We get yet another dream, which Daniel himself dreamed, in the first year of Belshazzar, recorded in ch. vii. In this vision he saw four great beasts come up out of the sea diverse one from another (ver. 3). The four great empires which the image of ch. ii. prefigured as Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, are here set forth under the figure of "four great beasts," the kingdoms being identical.

We have already seen the rise and fall of these kingdoms when considering the four divisions of the great image, the last kingdom, Rome, terminating its existence as an empire about A.D. 475. In Daniel's vision we get something additional told us in connection with this fourth empire, of which the great image of ch. ii. fell short, and which has yet to receive its fulfilment. In the last clause of ver. 7 of ch. vii.



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we are told that "it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns." In ver. 8 we get something still further, viz., "I considered the horns, and behold there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots; and behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things." In ver. 19 Daniel would "know the truth of the fourth beast," and this verses 23 and 24 supplies. "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. and the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings which shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings."

The Roman empire is here referred to in its entirety. We have already traced it down to A.D. 475 when it ceased to exist. It will however be revived in a future day which "the ten horns" prefigure. These are ten kings that shall arise (verse 24), pointing to a future time, and as the Roman empire has never existed in a ten-kingdom form, this phase of that kingdom has still to be looked for. It is further stated, "And another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings." This last king is identical with the "little horn" of verse 8, and is destined, as we shall see, to play a more prominent part in the history of the world than any of the Gentile rulers who have preceded him.

Regarding this last king we are further told (verse 25), "And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand, until a time and times and the dividing of time," i.e., three and a half years. This scripture finds its counterpart in Rev. xiii. 5-7— "And there was given him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months ( $3\frac{1}{2}$  years).

And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations." This shows the identity of the little horn, or king, of Dan. vii. 8, with the beast of Rev. xiii.

There is also another important personage to whom both the Apostles Paul and John allude. The former in his second epistle to the Thessalonians ch. ii. 3-12; and the latter in his first epistle chapter ii. 18-22, viz., "*The Antichrist.*" This personage will act in unison with the beast, the Imperial Roman head, and will, himself, reign as king at Jerusalem. We also find him referred to by Daniel in chapter xi. 36-39, which compare with 2 Thessalonians ii. 4. Turning now to Rev. xiii we get some fuller particulars regarding this personage. In verse 11 we are informed as to his rise, "I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth," which would aptly symbolize the Jewish nation, in contrast to the sea which symbolized the multitudes out of which the first beast took his rise, and with whom he will be so immediately identified; then his lamb-like form—"he had two horns like a lamb"—which would so fittingly portray the Lord Jesus, whom he will personate. We find, however, he fails to sustain the lamb-like character which he assumed, for, "he speaks as a dragon," which very clearly manifests his satanic character as the antichrist. But the apostate Jews will be deluded by the satanic power he will exercise, so that he will cause them to worship the first beast. He will also cause fire to come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, bearing with the Apostle Paul's prediction in 2 Thess. ii. 9 "whose coming is often the working of Satan, with all power, and signs and lying wonders." This will truly prove a testing-time for the Jewish people, with the result that all who are not whole-hearted for God will apostatize and yield willing obedience to "the Antichrist." The Lord's words in John v. 17, "If another come in his own name, him ye will receive," will be fully verified.

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As it was in Nebuchadnezzar's day, when he caused the golden image to be set up and worshipped, even so at this time; for the Antichrist will cause "the dwellers on the earth," i.e., the apostate Jews, to set up an image to the beast, which we also find he will have power to give breath to, and to make the image of the beast to speak with the alternative, that "as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." He will further cause all "both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads, and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, the name of the beast, or the number of his name"; and so Gentile rule will terminate as it begun, with idolatrous worship.

There yet remains one more important event which will bring Gentile rule to a close. In Rev. xvi. 13, the outpouring of the sixth vial, we find, "three unclean things like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet (Antichrist), the trinity of evil; these, verse 14, "go forth unto the kings of the whole world to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty." We get further important particulars in chapter xvii. 12-14 "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen and faithful." Connecting this with chapter xix., we find heaven opened, and one seated upon a white horse (verse 11), "And his name is called the Word of God," (verse 13), "the armies of heaven followed him upon white horses," (verse 14). Passing on to verse 19, we get the opposing forces. "And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war with him that sat on the horse and against his army." Then

*The Satisfied Saviour.*

the result (verses 20, 21), "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone (compare Dan. vii. 11), and the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh." This last struggle against the Lord of lords and King of kings brings Gentile supremacy to a final end, and brings *the times of the Gentiles* to a close. Then will follow that which was foreshadowed under both Nebuchadnezzar's and Daniel's prophetic visions, Dan. ii. 44 and vii. 14, viz., the kingdom and reign of the Lord Jesus Christ, of which Rev. xi. 15 is the verification--"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever." H. M.

**THE SATISFIED SAVIOUR !**

Jesus! Man of Sorrows once,  
 Man of Patience now!  
 Soon a Man of Joy shalt be;  
 Holy, true art Thou!  
 God's Beloved, God's dear Son,  
 All Thy Father's will hath done!  
 Glorified in heaven above,  
 Seated on God's throne;  
 Waiting, coming very soon--  
 Coming for Thine own!  
 Fruit of sorrow, wrath and blood,  
 Fitted for the eye of God!  
 Home; sweet word! Thy home as Son  
 We, too, shall enjoy;  
 Sharers of Thy glory then,  
 Bliss without alloy!  
 See Thee, with Thee, like Thee be;  
 Happy Saviour! happy we!

E. R. W.

## THREE BURIAL SCENES.

(Deut. xxxiv. 6; Mark xv. 43-47; Acts viii. 2).

THERE is something both solemn and pathetic in thinking of the burial of Moses. For one recorded slip in a life of devotedness he was debarred entrance into the promised land—"He spake unadvisedly with his lips" at the waters of Meribah (Numb. xx. 7-13). A great deprivation surely! But God honoured him with a burial such as no man ever had before, and none will ever have again. The Lord buried him.

Probably the whole congregation saw him start from the camp to go up to the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, as the Lord commanded him; and doubtless they wept and mourned to think that was the last time they would ever see their beloved leader; but they could not accompany him. They were not allowed to see either his death or his burial. They saw him start; they never saw him return. None were allowed to carry him, or lower him into his grave; God was going to do it all Himself; but what an honour to Moses!

There in the silence and solitude of the lonely valley of Moab against Beth-peor, with no human eye to see, the Lord Himself gently laid the body of His "faithful servant" (Heb. iii. 5) to rest. How sweet the thought, that the Lord put him to sleep and buried him. How gently and lovingly would He do it! "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints," we are told (Ps. cxvi. 15). How easy to imagine then those gracious hands lovingly closing the eyes of His servant when the last, long breath was drawn; and then with infinite tenderness carefully wrapping His servant's garments round him and laying him away to rest. Praise for ever be to His holy and blessed name. He would not have a "Mecca" made of Moses' tomb, so we read, "and no man knoweth of his sepulchre to this day."

There were, however, two witnesses to that scene—Michael the Archangel, and Satan; but the latter was prevented from either removing or making known

that sacred spot. But he knew it. And when at a later period the body of Moses was wanted for the transfiguration scene along with that of Elijah, Satan disputed with the Archangel his right to touch it (Jude 9). We can easily understand that, because the Lord Jesus had not died and "annulled him that *had the power of death*, that is the devil" (Heb. ii. 17). He had not yet taken from him "the keys of death and of hades" (Rev. i. 18), and so he asserted his right over the bodies of men. But all to no purpose. The divine command must be obeyed, and the body of Moses was taken from its resting place to be again honoured in appearing along with Elijah in that scene when God put honour and glory on the head of His beloved Son on the holy mount, and then doubtless it was placed once more in its lonely resting place till the resurrection of the just.

Centuries rolled away after the Lord had buried Moses, and "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth *His Son*, made of a woman, made under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. iv. 4, 5). What a wonderful thought! The Son of God was here in the world! "He went about doing good, healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him" (Acts x. 38). All kinds of disease He healed. Death itself was powerless before Him. Israel's King was present among them with proofs of His power and willingness to deliver them from all their enemies, and establish them in blessing. But alas, the human heart had no desire, and no place for Christ. They were willing enough to have the blessings, but they did not want the Blesser, and so cried, "Away with Him! Away with Him! Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" How awful the thought! How frightful the guilt! "And they crucified Him," and have still to answer for the murder of God's Son.

A few reverent hands took that precious body down from the cross, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in the new tomb "wherein never man was yet laid."

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Loving eyes watched, not only "where He was laid" (Mark xv. 47), but "how His body was laid" (Luke xxiii. 55). Malignant hate too was seen in sealing the stone and setting a watch lest the body should be stolen away, as they thought. God also was deeply interested in the burial of His Son. He had buried His servant. He allowed His servants to bury His Son who had "made His grave with the wicked," but who got it "with the rich in His death" (Isa. liii. 9). Nor will He ever forget those two men whose affection led them to rise above all human fear, and go and beg for and bury that precious body. No, God will never forget it; nor yet the mistaken love of those devoted women who went to the grave with their spices to do what love could do to the dead body, forgetful of His words that He would rise again the third day. Blessed be His Name. There were few mourners at *His* funeral; but all the heavenly host must have been interested spectators, and God looked on.

Then again, when Jesus was risen and gone on high, made Lord and Christ (Acts ii. 36), and His servants were carrying forth the testimony at the risk of their lives, how interested the Lord Jesus was as He *stood* and looked down from heaven on His faithful servant Stephen as he became the first Christian martyr! Can we imagine that scene was nothing to the heart of Christ? No, indeed! And so the heavens were opened that the dying saint might see the loving and approving look of his Saviour and Lord.

Not only so, but the Lord must have been intensely interested when He saw "devout men carry Stephen to his burial and make great lamentation over him" (Acts viii. 2). It is not wrong to feel the loss of useful Christian men, nor yet to express it in "great lamentation." The Lord Himself wept at the grave of His friend Lazarus (John xi.). And when human nature expresses its sorrow at the loss of relatives or friends, we have the *sympathy* of the blessed Master who, in the days of His flesh, felt the same as we do, but whose mighty *power* will likewise be seen in a not far distant day when He will call forth the sleep-

ing saints, and change the living ones, in order to have them all with Himself for ever.

No one carried Moses to *his* grave. One or two carried Jesus to His. Devout men, and probably many of them, carried Stephen to his. More may carry some of us some day if the Lord does not come. If so, He will be an interested spectator, and will watch *where* and *how* the body is laid. He has redeemed us by His precious blood. Our bodies are His as well as our souls; and the Redeemer and His redeemed must be together or His glory as Redeemer would be lost. How interested then He must be in all those who have believed in Him to the salvation of their souls. In life or in death they are His. He died for them, and sought them, and found them to make them His own. He has cared for and kept them all along the way, and if death should reach them in the ordinary course of events, He will find His place among the company who will follow them to the grave, and be the most interested spectator at the burial.

We look, however, for something better than that. We look for "the Lord Himself to descend from heaven with a shout; with the voice of the Archangel, and the trump of God; when the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we who 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*" (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17). No death then. No burial then. No lamentation then. The solitary tomb of Moses in the unknown valley will yield up its occupant, as the new tomb of Joseph yielded up the body of Jesus, and *all* the saints will rise together and be "ever with the Lord." Thank God, for "that blessed hope."

New Zealand.

WM. EASTON.

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How often do we remain content with a mere scanty pittance of spiritual good, when God has blessed us with "*all* spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus"—when He is glorified in our practical possession of them—and when He has said to us, "Covet earnestly the best gifts."



## LIFE.

THE character of our subject changes here. Hitherto it has been contemplative; now it becomes doctrinal. We have been gazing on the life in its manifestation; we now address ourselves to the investigation of the manner and effects of its impartation to men.

In our English version of the Scriptures, two words, *eternal* and *everlasting*, are employed in different passages to translate what in the original is represented by a single word. I state this for the sake of the English reader, as I shall throughout this paper employ but the one word *eternal*, whether in quoting texts or otherwise.

The passages in which *eternal life* is named divide themselves into four groups or classes: first, those in which it is spoken of as a *present possession*; secondly, those in which it is referred to as a *future hope*; thirdly, passages in which it is named in a way sufficiently general to apply to either or to include both senses; and, fourthly, passages in which it is employed of the Lord Jesus Christ in person. From these I shall select such as may best serve for the bringing out of the truth; adding a fifth class, in which, though the word life is not found, the connexion with the subject is intimate.

As pertaining to the first class, I adduce the first clause of John iii. 36, and John v. 24: "He that believeth on the Son *hath* eternal life;" and, "He that heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, *hath* eternal life, and shall not come into judgment; but *is passed* from death unto life."

In both these passages the affirmation is express and clear, to the effect that *eternal life* is something already possessed by the believer; he hath it—not may or shall have, but "hath" it; and in the latter text the statement is strengthened by its repetition in another form; namely, that he "is passed from death unto life."

In chap. x. 28 of the same Gospel, the Lord states of His sheep, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of my hand;" where eternal life is presented as a

present gift, whose possession guarantees His sheep to eternity against all danger of perishing. Since eternal life is a gift that must endure for ever; a life that once existing were ever extinguished, would not be an eternal but only a temporary or contingent life.

In 1 John v. 11, 12 we encounter the reproduction of both the above quoted statements. "This is the record, that God *hath given* to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." God has given—not may give or shall give; and he that hath the Son *hath*—not may or shall have—the eternal life that God has bestowed. The verse immediately following these (v. 13) carries the matter a step farther; affirming not only that believers *have*, but that, through what the apostle has written, they may *know* that they have this most precious gift and possession. "These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, who believe on the name of the Son of God."

Further, in this same epistle of John (chap. iii. 14, 15), we have not only the assurance that we, believers, "have passed from death unto life," as we found it put by the Lord in the Gospel, but this, in contrast with the declaration that "no murderer hath eternal life *abiding in him.*"

I would direct the attention of the reader specially to this last expression, along with a similar one in John vi. 53, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life *in you,*" as making it clear that the eternal life spoken of is a thing that *abides in* the person who has it. And this I would have him note, in contrast with the texts of the second group, to which I now turn.

Matt. xxv. 46. "These shall go away into eternal punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."

Observe the change. In the last Scripture looked at, eternal life was a something in the person: here it is something into (or unto) which the person goes away.

From the remaining texts of the second class I select, as sufficient for my present object,

1 John ii. 25. "This is the *promise* that He hath promised us, even eternal life."

Titus iii. 7. "Made heirs according to the *hope* of eternal life."

Matt. xix. 29. "Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or wife, or children for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall *inherit* eternal life."

Rom. ii. 7. "To them who by patient continuance in well doing *seek for* glory and honour and incorruptibility, eternal life."

Rom. vi. 22. "Ye have your fruit unto holiness, and *the end* eternal life."

In these passages it will be remarked that *eternal life* is put as a promise, a hope, an inheritance, and the end of a course or career; all which is in the strongest possible contrast with what we found in those of the previous class. All there was present; all here is future. There it was held in possession; here it is contemplated in prospect.

On Rom. ii. 7, I will remark, in passing, that it and its context, while setting forth the principles of God's righteous judgment, do not deal with the question of man's ability to claim eternal life on such grounds, which it is the burden of the main part of the epistle to demonstrate he can not. Death, as "the wages of sin," is the righteous due of "every soul of man that doeth evil;" and to this there is no exception, for "there is none righteous, no, not one;" so that if any receive or enter into "eternal life," it is as "the gift of God," though a gift bestowed on the perfectly righteous ground that it is the object of the epistle to establish and make clear.

It can hardly be denied, that there seems on the surface of the question some difficulty in understanding how eternal life can be both possessed and hoped for, enjoyed and anticipated; for "hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth [or possesseth], why doth he yet hope for?" Many have been stumbled by the difficulty; and opposite schools of doctrine, according as they have laid the greater stress on this side or

on that, have insisted, the one on its present certainty, the other on its contingent futurity, and the consequent impossibility of its possession being either present or ascertainable.

✻ But *all* the Scriptures before us are equally the Word of God; are entitled to full and equal weight in the determining of truth; and can never be pressed on any one side, to the weakening of the other, without error as the result. Whatever be the truth taught in these Scriptures, it is one truth; harmonious, consistent, and embracing all that is affirmed, without straining or distorting, without weakening or exaggerating one or other part.

Whatever then the phrase "eternal life" may import, it must of necessity comprehend both something presently enjoyed by the believer, and something still future to him—an object of hope. In order to the understanding of it, the first thing to be laid hold of is a clear sense of what is meant by *life*.

In our current every-day speech we employ this word constantly in two distinct senses. We have the phrases, "vegetable life," "animal life," "human life," "angelic life," "divine life;" and also the phrases, "a gay life," "a bad life," "a dissipated life," "an honest life," "a good life;" or, again, "English life," "Australian life," "prairie life," "bush life," "camp life," "sea life," and the like. A moment's consideration will convince the reader that between the meaning of the word *life* in the former, and that in the latter set of phrases, there is a very marked difference.

If we speak of "vegetable life," we designate something *active in the vegetable*, which enables it to perform what are known as vital functions; such as to grow, to put forth leaves, flowers, and fruit—that which makes the plant or tree, as growing in the field, to differ from the piece of dead wood we break up to kindle the fire with, or shape into some utensil or piece of furniture.

If we speak of "animal life," we refer to something *active in the animal*, that enables it to move, breathe,

eat, sleep, and the like—that makes the cur that runs yelping and capering about the street to differ from the carcase of his companion, just crushed beneath a cart-wheel or killed by poison.

What that subtle “something” is, whose absence from within the corpse leaves it motionless and subject to decay, and whose presence in the living thing or being—man, animal, or vegetable—communicates activity and preserves from corruption, it is difficult or impossible to define. It cannot be seen, handled, weighed, or measured, exposed to the scrutiny of the microscope, or subjected to the tests of the retort or the crucible. Like heat, light, and electricity, it baffles the wisdom of the sage. He may give it a name, but he cannot define it. He may classify its actings; he cannot explain them. Its every-day name is “life,” and for conveniences of an occasion it may be spoken of as “the vital principle;” but that term, however useful in its way, is but a cloak for ignorance; it helps to no knowledge of the thing itself. For want of a better however, it may be used with advantage in our present investigation, in order to bring out the distinction between the two senses of the word “life;” and one may say that, when we use such phrases as “animal” or “vegetable life,” we refer to the “vital principle” that resides and acts within.

When, on the other hand, we employ such expressions as “bad life,” “honest life,” “gay life,” “wicked life,” a very different thought is presented to the mind. We are now speaking, not of anything residing in a person, but of a course of action or conduct outwardly pursued—a class of activities of an external kind. “A bad life” means a persistent course of bad conduct; “an honest life,” a persistent course of honest conduct; “a pious life,” a persistent course of pious conduct; and so forth. It is the vital principle or vital powers of the indwelling life *exercised in a given way— a way, mode, state, or condition of living existence.*

So when we speak of “English life,” “Australian life,” we describe these powers or activities as *exercised within a given sphere.* If I say of such a young man,

“He has grown tired of English life, and has embarked for Australia to have a taste of the novelties of ‘bush life,’” I do not for a moment mean to imply that he has laid down or cast aside the life in its inner sense—the vital principle, as we have agreed to call it—which he had in England, in order to get another in Australia; but I mean that the young man, having tired of the sphere which England afforded for the exercise of his living powers, has carried these with him on shipboard in order to seek for them a fresh and more genial sphere abroad. He does not *get* a new life when he arrives in the Australian bush, but he *lives* a new life, in the sense of exercising the powers of the life he carried out with him in a sphere and consequently in a course of activities that are new to him—*he enters on a new condition of existence, in a new sphere.*

Such then are the two distinct senses in which our every-day speech employs the word “life:” the one as descriptive of the indwelling principle, or what else we may choose to call it, whose presence within is the source or spring of all living action, and distinguishes the living creature from the inanimate corpse; the other, as descriptive either of a condition of living existence, or of existence or action in a given sphere.

These two senses of the word “life” being kept in view, all difficulty as to the harmony of the word, and all occasion of doctrinal confusion disappear. It is then seen how “eternal life” is both a present possession and an object of hope in the future, because in Scripture the Holy Ghost employs the language of men, and accordingly we find this same distinction of sense in His employment of the word “life.” The passages of the first class we looked at describe “life” as an indwelling energy—that with which, in Eph. ii. 5, the believer is said to be “quicken,” or made alive, as that old-fashioned word means—life as a *principle*, spring, or source of spiritual activities, in contrast with the condition of spiritual death—death in trespasses and sins—pretty much as we have bu

now contrasted the living man or animal with the putrid corpse. The passages of the second class point out the eternal condition of existence in blessedness to be enjoyed in a sphere, divinely provided for the activities of that life in a coming day, when "at home"—its true and proper sphere in short; for here the eternal life that dwells in the believer is "from home;" a thing out of its element, like a fish out of water, or a man under water; and as neither fish nor man can enjoy rest or comfort when out of their own and introduced into a foreign element, no more can the *eternal life*, communicated from above to the believer—or the believer as quickened with it—be at rest or in comfort while retained in a sphere where it is clogged in its activities by a "body of death," dwelling side by side with a nature that is "enmity against God," and surrounded by evil abhorrent to its own nature. No! God, who has bestowed *eternal life* on the believer, has prepared for it, in the glorious future, a sphere of action proper and suitable to it, in association and in nearness to Himself—a sphere to be entered on at the end of that pathway of holiness, along which, "through patient continuance in well-doing," it aspires, onward and upward, seeking for "glory and honour and incorruptibility;" the proper goal of its expectations and its hopes. Heavenly in its origin, it seeks a heavenly sphere—its proper home; holy in its nature, it pants, and, while sojourning here follows after, holiness, as that which alone is genial to it, and wherein alone its activities can find unhindered play.

Fellow-believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, has your heart entered into the apprehension of the gift you have received from God? Do you know (as the Holy Ghost, in John, desired you should) that you have *eternal life*? Dilute not God's language; degrade not God's truth by the falterings of unbelief! Presume not, when God says "eternal," to substitute in your thoughts "that may become eternal." His word is, "He that believeth *hath* ETERNAL life;" he has it now, and it is eternal *now*—eternal in its very nature and in its essence; it cannot cease to be.

And while "in this tabernacle" do you "groan, being burdened"? Do the motions of that life, whose aspirations are clogged by evil without and within, cause you to enter into the spirit of a pilgrim and a stranger as to this earthly sphere, and draw out your heart in a yearning for a better, even a heavenly country? . Courage, and onward! Press toward the mark for the prize of your high calling of God in Christ Jesus. That prize is "eternal life," a state of existence named by the self-same name as the indwelling life that craves it, and that fits you for it; \* in a sphere whose atmosphere is the presence of God, and whose central object is the Christ of God, whom having not seen you love; in whom, though now you see Him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the *end* of your faith, the salvation of your soul. The life which now stirs within your soul you will not leave behind you on this earthly shore to receive another in a coming day; but you will live by it eternally in that sphere which its Author has prepared for it, into which you will "enter" (Matt. xx.) to go no more out for ever.

\* This is true also of some of the phrases I have employed to express the first sense of life. "Human life" sometimes means the course of human existence, and so may "angelic life."

R. H.

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## A STUDY ON "STRENGTH."

"The glory of a young man is his strength" (Prov. xx. 29). PSALM cxlvii. 10, tells us that Jehovah "taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man," but, "Jehovah taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy" (verse 11). We are also informed that a horse is a vain thing for safety (Ps. xxxiii. 17), and that his strength giveth no delight to Jehovah (cxlvii. 10).

There is much in Scripture as to how strength may be obtained, retained, and used, according to wisdom.

"Once, twice, have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God," the result of God speaking to the Psalmist (lxii. 11). Job knew something of power



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when he said, "Will He plead against me with His great power? No; but He would put strength in me" (Job xxiii. 6). Daniel is a beautiful illustration of this, when—because of exercises he had passed through and the terrible effect that the revelation from God had upon him (Dan. x. 15)—"When He had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground and I became dumb. And, behold, One like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto Him that stood before me, O my Lord by the visions my sorrows are returned upon me, and I have retained no strength. For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remaineth no strength in me, neither is there any breath left in me. Then there came again and touched me, One like the appearance of a man, and He strengthened me, and said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when He had spoken unto me I was strengthened and said, Let my Lord speak for Thou hast strengthened me."

Strength was given to one "greatly beloved," who, knew his weakness, but appealed to the One who "giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increaseth strength.

In Psalm xxii. 14, we read, "I am poured out like water and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels, my strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death." At Calvary there was no relief for the One whose inward cry is made known in Psalm xxii. He was alone, forsaken of God, bearing divine judgment, that you and I who believe in Him, may know what it is to be strengthened of God. "He was crucified in weakness" (2 Cor. xiii. 4); "suffering the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. iii. 18); and being brought near He has made known to us, that it pleased Him to choose the weak things, and place a treasure in an earthen vessel "that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of

us" (2 Cor. iv. 7). The record of some in a past day is that out of weakness they were made strong (Heb. xi. 34).

Now we inquire, How is this strength to be obtained? "Trust in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength" (Isa. xxvi. 4). "In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul" (Ps. cxxxviii. 3). "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." "Their strength is to sit still." "Blessed are all they that wait upon Jehovah" (Isa. xxx. 7-15-18). "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength," the effect of which is graphically described in the closing verse of chapter xl. Then, in Psalm xxvii. 14 "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."

Clearly, then, in quietness, confidence, trusting, and waiting upon God the heart is strengthened and renewed. "I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength" (Ps. xviii. 1). The Apostle was informed—"My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. xiii. 9). A certain company of old went on "from strength to strength" (lxxxiv. 7).

There is encouragement "to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might" (Eph. vi. 10); and "thou therefore . . . be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. ii. 1). Consequently for one to plead his own weakness as an excuse for inactivity, is dishonouring to, and disbelieving God, who has said "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (1 Cor. xvi. 13). This is a day when others are giving up. Are you my reader? What would a general think of his soldiers, if they pleaded weakness as an excuse for not executing his orders? In things of this life when there is an element of danger there are plenty of volunteers; or in warfare, if a position has to be carried, "theirs to do or die," to merit applause, or a corruptible reward.

For the believers, "If God be for us who can be against us? Let it be your motto, "Having done all to stand. Stand therefore" (Eph. vi. 13-14). God

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95.

expects that in the power of faith, His children will hold that which has been communicated to the soul by the Holy Spirit from the Word, and that no position in which God has placed one should be vacated—without "thus saith the Lord"; and on no account should weakness that may be natural to us lead us to abandon God-given responsibilities.

Moses pleaded an excuse as the greatness of the task entrusted to him loomed up before him. Elijah in a later day requested that his life might be taken away. God in sovereign grace strengthened him with food for a forty days' journey; but in His holy and wise government accepted his resignation. Let us in this day beware!

Jeremiah in a dark, dark day realised and valued God and His Word, and found joy and rejoicing thereby (Jer. xv. 16), and proved the truth of Ps. lxxxiv. 5. "Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee." And although his soul drooped for heaviness, "strengthen Thou me according to Thy word" (Ps. cxix. 28) was his experience.

Perhaps pain and weakness of the body are the most trying to the young, but, even then, the Word meets the suffering one; for "Jehovah will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing; thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness" (Ps. xli. 3).

Now, as to how this God given-strength is to be used. We have in Col. i. 10-11, "strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." In the tenth verse the Apostle has requested for them that they might walk worthy of the Lord. Strength is required to walk, for fruit-producing. An unhealthy, weakly tree cannot produce perfect fruit; and here, in every good work with increasing knowledge of God, unto patience and long-suffering, is the object for which he desires the Colossian saints to be strengthened, and that with joyfulness; not mere endurance, but having the joy of God filling the soul.

In Scripture an ox is frequently typical of patience. A load may be laid upon it under which it struggles

## A Study on "Strength."

along with endurance characteristic of itself. But you and I are not merely to perform that which is entrusted to us as a duty; for our verse would have us to be joyful—fulfilling our trust and doing unto Him the duties of every-day life in a way worthy of the great truths made known in the following verses: made meet for the inheritance of the saints—delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love—the One who has redeemed us and given us to know, even now, the forgiveness of sins. In turning to Eph. iii. 16, the Apostle's prayer comes before us, in which he desires that the saints should be "strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man," in order "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth and length, and depth and height: and to know the love of Christ." Strengthened, then, to comprehend (or rather, apprehend, *N.T.*) the fulness and immeasurability of God, to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and "to be filled with all the fulness of God." We are to be as a tiny vessel placed in the immensity of that fulness—filled inside, and surrounded with that which the Apostle cannot find language to describe. Happy, thrice happy people! "Happy is that people that is in such a case, yea, happy is that people whose God is Jehovah" (Psalm cxliv. 15).

1 Peter v. 10 brings before us another prayer, that those he was writing to after having suffered awhile might be made perfect, stablished, strengthened, settled. It is easy to run with the crowd, and be full of energy when everything goes well; but there comes a time of testing, and our verse makes known that suffering is a means in the discipline of God to make perfect. For as we learn our own imperfections, it will cause the soul to lay hold on God, made known in the Word, and this in turn will establish the heart. A stronghold may be strengthened by fortifications, so the simple, confiding, obedient saint will be strengthened, settled by "the God of all grace who hath called

us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus" to witness in a scene of confusion for Him.

Let us face the questions. How far are we answering to what God has made known to us?—How far do I allow God to have His way with me?—Does my soul know what it is to draw its strength from God? J. G.

### "I JESUS" (REV. XXII.).

WHAT unspeakable words of comfort! "*It is I*" had banished distress and fear from their hearts on a former occasion; and now to John, who knew the bliss of reclining on the Lord's bosom, and whose mind was far from apprehending all he had seen and heard, how must this personal address of who He was, and what He was, have spoken? "The root and off-spring of David, the bright and morning star." All blessing reposes in Him; and the weeping of the night disappears with the advent of the morning, for 'tis then He comes, "the bright and morning star."

But with such a presentation, and at such a time, can there be silence? Impossible; and so the strains of "Come" are heard from Spirit and bride. The invite goes forth to those that have any longing or desire after Him, and lastly to whosoever will to come and drink of the water of life. This, notice, is an interruption, somewhat similar to what we have in chap. i. when Jesus is there revealed, and the saints burst forth with their song of praise. And can't we understand this?

Verse 18 resumes the thread of the communication cut short by this display of grace. None must take from, or add to the Word of God. Christendom, as such, is guilty of this, and so the judgment of God comes upon it. How solemn! But yet once more is heard, "Surely I come quickly." This is comfort for *He* says it; it is refreshment, for *it is Himself*. The response goes forth, as is only meet, "Even so, come Lord Jesus." Can we join in this, as those earnestly desiring to see Him?

The Book closes with the commendation of His grace. And here we find what we do not in any other part of

*A Study on "Knowledge."*

John's writings, for this is Paul's usual salutation. But until He comes His grace is our provision for the way, and He has told us that *it is sufficient*. This closes these simple musings on this wondrous book, and I trust that you may have derived some blessing and comfort from them. To Him be the praise, who alone can bless. And to myself I would say that it is not what we know, but what we act upon, that gives power. We are responsible to know and to have desires towards Him. To those who seek Him He gives wisdom.

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**A STUDY ON "KNOWLEDGE."**

I HAVE been impressed for some time with the amount of language there is scattered abroad in the name of knowledge, as if knowledge only meant a comprehensive vocabulary. Thus a man of wide reading would be a man of wide knowledge; forgetting the fact that there is such a thing as the multiplication of words *without knowledge* (Job xxxv. 16).

After searching the Scriptures, it was deemed advisable, by way of contrast and comparison, to give, without comment, a few references, by no means exhaustive, to show how important the subject is, and what it is.

Contrast and compare :

Job xxxviii. 2	with	Prov. xix. 7.
Prov. i. 7.	„ „	xxii. 12.
Jas. iii. 13	„ „	ii. 5, 6.
Psalm lxxiii. 11	„	Psalm xciv. 10; and Job xxxvi. 3, 4.
Job xv. 2, 3	„	Job xxxiii. 3
„ xxxvii. 16	„	Prov. iii. 20; and Ps. xix. 2.
Prov. xxx. 3	„ „	ix. 10.
Hos. iv. 1-6	„	Mal. ii. 7.
Luke iv. 76, 77	„	Acts iv. 13.
Isa. liii. 11	„	2 Pet. i. 5-8.
1 Cor. xiii. 2	„	1 Cor. viii. 1.

“And this I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment (Phil. i. 9).  
J. H.

## PSALM XI.

THE two preceding psalms are introductory to a section (11-15) which had for its subject the utterances suitable to the faithful remnant in the last days. "In the Lord put I my trust," is an oft repeated statement of the psalms. Who else could be reposed in? From whom could help come but from Jehovah? Those who knew Him not might bid "flee to your mountain," like an animal to find refuge from its enemies. But not from the hills did the faithful expect, or look for, help. "In the Lord put I my trust." All else would fail, like brittle reeds; and in Him alone does faith realize security.

But such is this that, spite of the presence of enemies, fear is absent, and calm pervades the hearts of those whom faith governs. The mountain would prove a very poor refuge from the wicked who seek to upset the upright in heart.

But a very weighty question is asked in verse 3:—"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" The force I take it is just this: Suppose Jehovah does not appear, and hence all hope, as far as earth is concerned, fails—for the foundation of their hope was the manifestation of Jehovah on their behalf—what were the righteous to do? where should they look for their resource? The three Hebrew captives said to the king when threatened with the fiery furnace for refusing to bow and worship "the golden image," "our God *is able* to deliver us; and *He will* deliver us out of thy hand" is their emphatic assertion, for they knew Him. But it might be His will that they should suffer; and so they add, "but if not, be it known unto thee that we will not serve thy gods." Implicitly they trusted Jehovah. He might not immediately appear, *but this faith anticipates and still trusts.*

So in our psalm. In this world there is now no adequate expression of God's ways in government. That will be apparent when His King reigns. But though appearances may be against them, the faithful still hold on their way; and, "strong in the strength which God supplies," find a resource in Him.

What a lesson we can learn from this. There is always a resource in days of declension and departure; and "the foundation of God standeth sure having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His." Here is comfort and help for us when it looks as though the enemy is gaining a complete triumph. Our trust must ever be in Him, who is our "*all in all*;" and we must, through grace, tread the path obediently, humbly, and yet withal, rejoicingly.

In spite of what might appear to be, those who have confidence in Jehovah, know of a surety that He is in His temple—the place of holiness, and from whence blessing issues—and also that His throne is stable in the heavens. "What shall the righteous do?" was asked. Why still repose in Him who is the Eternal One! "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." Now along with the assurance of the stability of Jehovah, is stated a truth of immense comfort to those under trial, "His eyes behold, His eyelids try the children of men." What *Christian* is there who has not derived comfort from the word "All things work together for good to them that love God?" Their latter end must be blessed, for in His gracious all-wise hands everything tends that way. He may try and test, but His eyes are upon His own, and His purpose is, most surely, to accomplish their good. "The righteous," then, He tries. *This* is the time of experience; *presently* the time of full fruition, glory, and joy, when all His counsels shall have been fulfilled, and, as polished shafts, His own shall emerge from their trials.

"The righteous Lord loveth righteousness," is always true. How unspeakably precious to have it thus stated! The upright look up and find solace and sustainment in His countenance. Sorrow may endure for the night, but joy cometh in the morning. Then shall His King reign in righteousness. Then shall peace, the work of righteousness, be known and abide, His people dwelling in quiet resting places (Isa. 32). In the meantime, "His countenance doth behold the upright," and for them He will appear to their blessing, and His own glory.



## LUKE XIV.-XV.

PUT together, these are wonderful chapters. In the first the Lord visits our world; in the second we visit His. In the fourteenth He makes Himself acquainted with our ways; in the fifteenth we are called to acquaint ourselves with His. This is the grand moral distinction between the two chapters, and nothing can exceed them in interest. In the fourteenth chapter we find that nothing satisfies Him. Are you prepared for this conclusion? In the fifteenth chapter everything is suited to Him; and if *we* are divinely intelligent, and divinely sensitive, we shall find that nothing in *man's* world and everything in Christ's world would do for us. It is the grand character of the Apocalypse that there is not a thing in it but suits the mind of the glorified church.

Chapter xiv. opens by the Lord being invited to eat bread in a Pharisee's house, and as He enters, at once all the sympathies of His mind are intruded on. The house is a type of man's world. "As He went in they watched Him;" and there came in a poor man that had the dropsy, and He asked them, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" Now why did they hold their peace? It was a hypocritical silence. They ought to have answered, but they wanted to catch Him. Oh! what wretched, miserable tricks these hearts of ours can play! Your heart is under the lion and serpent—violence and subtlety—Satan is represented as both these. "Which of you shall have an ox or an ass fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day?" Ought you not to have gathered your answer to the question from your own ways? The Lord takes us on our own showing, and exposes us out of our mouth and our ways. I don't want anyone to shew me what I am, I know very well.

In verse 7 He has entered the house, and looked around. That is exactly where we fail. We are so much taken up with ourselves that we do not look around to see things with the eyes of the Lord. The

Lord came with the heart and resources of God to dispense blessing; but with the eye, and ear, and sensibility of God to acquaint Himself with the moral of the scene. What does he see here? First, the guests, and *they* do not please Him; He saw they chose the highest room. Now suppose you had the eye of God, and looked on the scene around you day by day, would you not see the same thing? We savour too much of it ourselves, and, therefore, cannot testify against it. Christ was infinitely pure, so that He could detect the smallest bit of impurity. He saw that it was pride that animated the scene under His eye, and you and I must have very false notions of what is abroad if we do not see the same thing? The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life mark the spirit that animates the scene around us. Now He looked on the host, but there was no relief for Him there. Selfishness in another form showed itself to Him. It was not the poor, the maimed, and the blind that the Pharisee asked to his feast, but his *rich* neighbours were seated on his right hand and his left. Here the heart of Christ tells itself out in calling those who cannot recompense Him. It is very happy that Christ cannot be pleased with your world. What would your Lord Jesus be to you if He could put up with such a world? If Christ could have found sympathy with man's world as delineated here, you and I could never have been saved. He acted on directly contrary principles, or we should never have had to talk of salvation.

Now one of the company says, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God;" a gracious moment I believe; I do not say whether it ended in good or not, but a certain gracious instant passed over his soul. The Lord was not unaffected by it; He paid attention to the interruption. Oh! the precious and perfect humanity of Jesus! His deity was equal to the Father's. His humanity was equal to yours and mine; not in its corruption, but in all the beautiful traits that could adorn it in its perfection. He waits and indites the parable of the marriage

supper. The man had said, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God," and the Lord brings out this parable to exhibit eating bread in the kingdom of God. This shows that the Lord is willing to wait on the secret stirring of your spirit, and give it a suited response; and that word of the man that sat at table gives Him occasion to expand before his eyes a feast spread in the heavenly country. And, oh! what a different one from that here!

Not one of the bidden guests come. No, and not one single bidden guest since Adam will be at that table. What do I mean? There must be more than an invitation. God must fill the chairs as well as the table. He must force His guests in, as well as fill the board. He sends His servants and says, "*Compel* them to come in, that My house may be filled." There is a peep into heaven. Did you ever see such a place in your life? The richest feast ever seen, and not one there that has not been compelled to come in. And does God put up with this? If there had been only the mission of the Son, there would never have been a single guest. If there had been only the mission of the Holy Ghost, there would have been no feast spread. What a wonderful exhibition of the love of God! If you had prepared a kindness for another, would you like to find an indisposed heart in him? No, you would not ask him again, but would say, "Let him go and get what he values more." But there is the double mission of the Son and the Spirit. The Son prepares the feast, and the Spirit prepares the guests, so that not a single merely bidden guest is there; they are *compelled* guests. What an exhibition of the wretched heart we carry! One has bought a piece of ground; another has bought five yoke of oxen; anything but the Lord's feast. This is the contrast between God's table and man's.

When the Lord had delivered the parable, as He was leaving the house great multitudes followed Him, and He turned and said, "Whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after Me, he cannot be My disciple." Now, how do you treat the Lord Jesus? Do you look

at Him as a pattern, an example? "Well," you will say, "I *ought* to do so," and I grant it; but you and I are thoroughly wrong if our first communion with Him is as a pattern; it must be as with a Saviour. The multitudes followed Him as a pattern, and the Lord says, "If you *will* be like Me, you must give up everything."

The next chapter opens with publicans and sinners, and *there* is communion of soul with Him as a Saviour. The moment the Lord got that object He was at home. He passes on through all till "publicans and sinners" draw near to Him. He had entered and left the Pharisee's house, and His spirit had not breathed a comfortable atmosphere; but when a poor sinner comes and looks at Him, that moment His whole heart gave itself out, and uttered itself in the three beautiful parables that follow.

It is impossible to follow the Spirit of Christ in this chapter without being comforted. Could I know Christ as I would know Him if He could find a home in *my* world? No! but He says, if I can't find a home *here*, do you come and find a home with *Me*. You have disappointed *Me*, but I will not disappoint *you*." As one said once, "In preaching the Gospel the Lord said, 'Well, if I cannot trust *you*, *you* must trust *Me*.'" It is another version of the same thought here, and these beautiful parables show one leading and commanding truth—that God's world is made happy by sinners getting into it. Do you believe that you, as a sinner, are important to heaven? Whether you believe it or not, it is true. It is not our gain in the matter of salvation that is presented here, but God's joy, and that only. He takes these homely figures that our thoughts may not be distracted, and that you may learn that you are lost. But you learn, too, the joy of God in recovering you. I do not believe a richer thought can enter the soul of man. I sit down in heaven, not as a recovered sinner only, but as one whose recovery has formed the joy of heaven. *Now* you are at Christ's table, in Christ world, and you see what kind of place it is.

As for the poor lost sheep, if left to itself, it would only have wandered farther still; and as for the piece of money, it would have lain there till this hour if the woman had not searched diligently till she found it.

Now let us combine these two chapters. In xiv. you get the words, "Compel them to come in," and in xv. you get the prodigal compelled. We were observing the missions of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, but He enables me to read it. If I could not read it, it would be no use to me. Now I ask *what* is this compulsion? It is not against your will, but you are *made* willing in the day of His power. Take, for instance, the prodigal. When he was brought to his last penny and began to be in want, *he came to himself*. This was the beginning of the compelling, when the poor prodigal opened his eyes to his condition. What did the Lord do to the heart of Lydia? He *opened* it, and her opened heart listened to what Paul spoke. The mighty, compelling power showed itself here, when the poor prodigal looked round on his condition, and said, "What shall I do?" The Holy Ghost makes you willing when He makes you see your need, and that death and judgment are before you. He stirs you up by this, till He puts you on the road to God. One poor soul says, "I had better begin to look out for eternity:" another is terrified by the thought of death and judgment. He will take you in any way. The thing is to get your back to the land where once you lingered. The poor prodigal says, "I will arise; I have found out the end of my own doings; I will go to my father;" and back he goes, and back he is welcomed! The story of the prodigal beautifully illustrates the *compelling* of the previous chapter. Zaccheus wished to see Jesus one morning, and up he got into the tree. That was the compelling of the Holy Ghost. Oh! what two chapters! Christ disappointed in *your* world, and you satiated in Christ's world!

J. G. B.

## DIVINE ORDER.

Most of the readers of the Christian's Helper are aware that there is an interval between verses 1 and 2 of Gen. 1. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth;" and God, who is a God of order, could not certainly have created the earth in the state in which the second verse describes it: "And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep." What was the cause of the chaos is left untold. None but God could tell, and He is silent. So must we be. We do gather from Isa. xlv. 18 that a change had come: "He created it not a waste" (R.V.).

When, however, God began to work with the object of fitting the earth to be inhabited by all kinds of living creatures, He formed out of the dust of the earth, a creature called man; differing in many ways from all the others. We read, "And the Lord God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." There was then a creature distinguished from all the others in outward form, and having a *living* soul; a creature, made in the image of God and after His likeness also, to whom dominion over all was given. He was a responsible creature, highly gifted, highly privileged, God's representative, the image of God upon the earth.

Man, Adam, gave names to all the other creatures and thus began the work of representing God in this scene. He was, however, unlike all the others in this: he was alone, having no one to commune with—gifted with speech, but no one to understand him; no one to share his thoughts. "God said, It is not good that man should be alone, I will make him an helpmeet for him." Let us observe—not to supersede him; not to share in the position of being God's image on the earth; not a possible rival; but an helpmeet for him. Thus the Creator's care for the solitary man was evidenced; for He made a woman and brought her to him. She was bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh; a helpmeet, a companion, and a wife.

Before the woman was formed, God said to Adam, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Adam therefore was made, and was placed in headship on the earth as God's image, and his responsibility to God was put before him ere the woman existed. To *them* at a somewhat later time God said, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it." God, then, instituted marriage before sin came into the world, for the express purpose of increasing the race. Be *fruitful* and *multiply*, and the Creator devised the union of the male and female to that end. The prophet says "And wherefore one? that He might seek a godly seed" (Mal. ii. 15). Alas! suited companionship is often forgotten, and God's intention as to the race interfered with; shirking the trouble and responsibility of a family. Can God bless efforts to cheat Him? efforts to defeat His own order? Not so.

When sin entered through the craft of the serpent, God came down in the cool of the day and called, "Adam, where art thou?" Into the details I need not now enter. God sifted the matter, and with the facts before Him, passed sentence on the serpent, on the man, and on the woman. He did not take away the headship from Adam, nor put him out of being His image. Eve, who acted apart from her husband in a matter she had learned only from him, is by God in government, placed under the rule of her husband. Such was the immediate result of disobedience. God has never set aside man as His image and representative. He has never reversed those words "He shall rule over thee." God's order, therefore, must be observed if His approval is to be had, and His blessing enjoyed.

That women should compete with men in public life is foreign to God's idea. Equal many women may be in wisdom and understanding, but that is no warrant for her stepping into man's place. In so doing she is apostatising from God's own order. Indirectly a good,

true woman has far more influence than a man. Indirectly, if true to God's order, she helps and often sways her husband in the right direction, and is almost adored by her children. "Her price is above rubies." "Her children rise up and call her blessed: her husband also and he praiseth her." Does it not shew how far from God things have drifted, when the possession of power to vote, to rule, is demanded, and violent methods resorted to, to force men to yield what they have no permission from God to grant? Think of ministers of religion taking sides with female claimants. Alas! however do they read their Bibles. One has never seen in all this public controversy God's mind referred to, nor His Word sought after.

God's order for man and woman abides. In the Church she is to be silent. When she prays to God her head should be covered. She is not to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man. But who cares to-day for God? for His will? for His holy Word? Apostasy prevails everywhere. The Church claims to teach. But she is feminine—is subject to Christ. She is not to teach, but she is to obey. Christ is her Head, and He instructs by means of the gifts He bestows. He gave gifts for the work of the ministry; for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come, etc. Away then, with all these interferences with the rights of the Divine Being, whether that of the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit.

Since the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and the coming down of the Holy Spirit, God is calling out from Jew and Gentile: He is forming a company for the heavens. The risen and glorified Man is not only the Head of His Body, the Church, but is also the Head of a race; and, further, is the head of all principality and power. As long as the Church is on the earth, the Divine order as to man and woman is continued, but as members of the race, the spiritual race of which Christ is the Head, the difference of sex is done with, and all are regarded as the sons of God. Individually all are equal, but the Church, as a corporate thing, will be the Bride, the Lamb's wife.



She will be subject to Him, and delight to be so; having all the love of His heart, and sharing in much of His glory. She will not compete with Him, nor desire what He, and He alone, must have. In all things He must have the pre-eminence. She will not sing her own praises, nor live to please herself, but His glory and joy will be her great and never-ending delight.

It is true in actual every-day experience in married life, that there is often too much friction. That should not be among true believers in Christ. Love is thoughtful and considerate, and if the husband be that to his wife, then the reverence she owes to him, and the obedience due to him, become far easier. But whether the one fails or the other, the duty is clear in either case. It is the will of God that is in question, and in the doing that is great reward. It is possible to make too much of attendance at meetings and the claims of service, and to leave the wife and the family too much to themselves, with a sorrowful result.

God is a necessity to us all. We cannot do without Him. Oh, to live only to please God, to do His will, and to delight to do it! For this, grace is always available. There is no grace for wrong-doing, but there is the rod of chastening. Let us never forget that. We may deceive our own hearts, and also deceive others, but to deceive God is impossible. E. R. W.

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“THE end of the commandment (or, charge) is love out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned.” Paul speaks then of love out of a pure heart—a heart from which every motive and thought comes by the Holy Ghost from a nature within capable of enjoying God in light; which loves to think the thoughts of God, to walk in His ways, to look forward to be with Him; and to enjoy Him even now; and, having such a hope, to purify himself, even as He is pure.

## THE SON OF MAN.

WHAT is man, if you look at him under the light of the glory of the heavens? what is he, this creature of earth, *enosh*, "frail man" or the "son of man," ordained to come into his inheritance by a way so characterised by weakness, and which so perfectly marks God's estimate of him? Ah, you must take in Christ to find the answer. He, too, is Man—yea, the Son of Man: come down to manhood in this significant weakness which in Him united to Deity itself is the manifestation of the moral glory of God, so that it is set *above* the heavens, those created heavens whose glory had just now made man look so poor and contemptible! What are they now to Man in Jesus? to the Son of Man?

Here then is He of whom a later psalm speaks as "the Son of Man whom Thou hast made strong for Thyself" (lxxx. 17); and His exaltation and kingdom are the necessary result. Gone down to the lower parts of the earth for the suffering of death, He is "ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things" (Eph. iv. 10). In Him, as the angels at His birth declared, God has shown His "good pleasure in men" (Luke ii. 14, Greek). It is manhood as God made it at the beginning, which God has thus taken up in the Person of Christ, or the psalmist's challenge goes after all unanswered.

True, it may be, and it *will* be, in very different *condition*. As, for instance, the "spiritual body" of the resurrection is very different from the "natural" or "psychical body," as we have seen. Yet even here the identity of the body itself is assured us. That which is sown a natural is raised a spiritual body: identity as to the person is maintained under even such a change of condition as this implies; "*we* shall be changed," but it will still be "*we*." And it is man and the son of man that the psalmist sees, at first so poor and weak, and now so unutterably glorified in Christ our Lord. Otherwise, I say again, the psalmist's question remains unanswered, and must ever remain unanswered.

*The Son of Man.*

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This being so, the Lord's constant use of this term becomes intelligible throughout. He uses it as the simplest and most intelligible one, which no one, so to speak, would deny, and yet which upon His lips conveys so much: "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" (Matt. xvi. 12). Son of Man, just by its common application to men at large, He must be, of course; and yet in His application of it to Himself it becomes distinctive by its very universality: for who would dream of speaking of himself as "the Son of Man," except as implying that He was more than this meant as to other men? The Lord might address the prophet in this way, as reminding him of what he was, but no man, speaking among the sons of men, could distinguish himself by what was not distinctive. If it *were* distinctive of *Him*, then He was the Son of Man in some sense that others were not; not less truly so, but more: and so He was—the *One* Son of Man upon whom the shadow of the fall had never been: Man, and of man, yet in more than all the promise of his first creation; God's Man indeed, justifying that creation itself, as all else had dishonoured it; and thus having in Himself the promise for men of a new creation, by which they too at last should fulfil the purpose of the Creator; "Lord of the Sabbath," as He who shall bring in, in such wise as to be violated no more, the rest of God.

But for this the Son of Man must suffer, must be lifted up, "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness," giving His "flesh" thus "for the life of the world"; but "glorified" in this ability to work out in the extreme of human weakness the purposes of God. "God" thus "glorified in Him," He must "also glorify Him in Himself," yea, "straightway glorify Him."

In such Scriptures the "Mediator, the Man Christ Jesus," is set before us. They show us, if there could be question of it, how His perfect manhood had to do with the atonement wrought. And while on the one hand it is said that "we are reconciled to God by the death of His Son," and that "God sent forth His Son

to redeem," yet, when we come to the details of this glorious work, the *lifting up of the Son of Man* is that by which is indicated for us the bearing of curse by which "Christ redeemed us from curse" (Gal. iii. 13); "for it is written, cursed is every one that *hangeth on a tree.*" Throughout, it is one blessed Person; but Scripture is perfect in the way these things are put. If it would win our hearts with the amazing gift that God has given for us— if it would show the power that has laid hold upon us— then it speaks of the work of the Son of God. If on the other hand we are to think of the actual suffering and sin-bearing, then it sets before us Christ, or Jesus Christ, or the Son of Man; and the last is more the Lord's own language, while the former is that of the apostles. The two may be put together where it says, "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son," but it is a false emphasis that would pass over the first part of this, to fasten itself upon the last. We have many times over, "the blood of Christ, of Jesus, of Christ Jesus, of the Son of Man, of the Lord, of the Lamb"; *once*, "God's Son," is added to this.

It is one Person throughout, and all these wondrous names are His; but Scripture is in such delicate adjustment that it is easy to disturb the balance of it. As surely as we do, we find in result that we are losing the equipoise of truth itself. A false emphasis upon the truth is the beginning of error.

The "Son of Man" speaks of what the Son of God became in order to redeem us. It insists upon His manhood, true, full manhood, by which He became, for His believing people, the typical, representative Man before the eye of God. As this the "meal-offering of first-fruits" (Lev. ii. 14-16) sets Him forth. But, really to avail for them, He must go beyond this type, and be the Sin-bearer in their behalf. For this He becomes the Christ, the One Anointed to be Prince and Saviour. For this He dies the death of the Cross, and becomes, as risen from the dead, the "last Adam," Head of a new race of men.

In this we are but touching things that we must take up later. What remains for us here is but the

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connection of this title, "Son of Man," with the prophecies of the future, which the Lord takes up from Daniel's vision of the world-empires, and applies to Himself. All judgment is given to Him because He is the Son of Man (John v. 27); and here we find in fact Ezekiel's vision perfected. With full knowledge of man, with abundant tenderness for man, Himself the Representative Man before God, it is He to whom it belongs to settle all things on the basis of a righteousness which He has glorified. "The likeness of the appearance of a Man" upon the throne comes into realization, and the vision of Daniel takes full place as the hope of Israel and of the earth. It is indeed connected with the appraisement of responsibilities, and solemnity of judgment to come; when the Son of Man comes with the glory of His Father and with His holy angels, He shall reward every man according to his works; but this can adjust itself to the gospel and to a hope that shall not disappoint. The Son of Man is the true Bridegroom of His people, and judgment itself only clears the way for the exhibition of all the fulness of a grace which the fact of His manhood sufficiently reveals.

Yes, hope, full, glorious hope is in this title of the Son of Man. It cannot be separated from it. It is for David's house what the branch out of the root of Jesse is, but wider in its promise and tenderer in its implications:—a Son of Man in whom alone man's cut off years renew themselves, and now with Divine strength. The hosts of heaven wait upon Him, zealous to do His pleasure; but our hearts go back to One amid the scanty group of His disciples, giving them as the pattern for their imitation, and an inlet into the glory of heaven itself, the "Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

F. W. G.

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**FAITH** unfeigned—full and perfect trust and confidence in God Himself, as One who is for him, come what will, One who knows no change, and that nothing can move Him from His love.

## ETERNAL LIFE IN THE BELIEVER.

HAVING got so far clear as to the harmony of the Scriptures which teach of *eternal life* as both a present possession and a future hope, we are in a position to advance with humble and subject steps, in the enquiry after such farther light as Scripture furnishes relative to its character, as introduced into the believer.

On turning to 1 John i. 1-2, we find *eternal life* spoken of as "that which was from the beginning," was "with the Father," and was "manifested" unto men.

On passing onward to the fifth chapter of the epistle, we read that this manifested life was, as we have already seen, a Divine person, "the true God;" and in the same verse we find it identified with the Lord Jesus Christ; who, in John xiv. 6, announces of Himself, "I am . . . the life."

Here then is a sense of *eternal life* distinct from either of those we have examined; viz., that of the fourth group, or class of passages already indicated—a sense which applies it to a Divine person, styled in 1 Cor. xv. 45, "a quickening (or life-imparting) Spirit," and in John v. 21, co-equally with the Father, the quickener of whom He will.

As a Divine Being—the self-existent, ever-living One—He is in Himself essentially "the life," and its author or giver to all others; yet in continuance of the last quoted passage (v. 26) we meet with the affirmation, that "as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." Here He is not said, as in the other passages, to be the life but to have it in Him; and this too, not as before, of His own nature, but by gift of the Father, and yet in such wise that He has it now as the Father has it.

Here, then, we are confronted with the unfathomable mystery of the person and being of the Lord Jesus Christ as uniting in Himself both Godhead and humanity. As God, life is as essentially His own—as eternal and self-existent in Him, as in the Father Himself (John i. 4); but as to His humanity, born in time, the privilege of having life in Himself as it is in the Father, is a derived result of that mysterious union into which the

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humanity of the Lord has been taken with His divinity. That life which is proper to God dwells as fully in the incarnate Son as in the Godhead itself, according to that other Scripture (Col. ii. 9), which declares that "in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

We have thus reached the knowledge that the "eternal life" spoken of in the word is none other than "the life of God" (Eph. iv. 18)—the life which is proper to God, and which at the incarnation took up its abode in all its divine fulness in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now this glorious person is God's "unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. ix. 15) to as many as receive Him (John i. 12), "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life;" in accordance with which, *eternal life* is said (Rom. vi. 23) to be "the gift of God."

Then farther, in exact agreement with all this, we find that this is God's "record" proposed to the acceptance of faith, "That God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son," so that "he that hath the Son hath life."

The result then of these Scriptures is to make it perfectly clear *as to fact*, however mysterious it may remain as to the *nature of the thing*, that the "eternal life" with which the believer is quickened or made alive, and which he *has* as an actual possession "abiding in him," is none other than "the life of God," the same that in its infinite fulness dwells in the Lord Jesus Christ—His own life; and this, as it is of the utmost importance to observe, the believer has, not as a gift which on its bestowal becomes detached from its source or spring, but, in inseparable connection with Himself, where it is enjoyed in common or in communion with Him. "God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in His Son." It is not an emanation from Him, a something given out from Him, as life was breathed into Adam at the first (Gen. ii. 7) but, on the contrary, the believer is taken into communion (joint participation) of the life, as it continues

to dwell in the fountain-head itself ; a thought to the apprehension of which even the facts of our natural life may be allowed to contribute, since even there we are familiar with a life pervading and animating all the members of the body in common, each member having the life *in* it, yet not separately or independently as its own possession, but only in common with all the rest, and with the fountain of life in the head or heart.

If we next proceed to search the Scriptures for something relative to the actings of eternal life in the believer, we shall find in 2 Cor. iv. 10 that the believer is exhorted to manifest in his body (not his old Adam-life, which is still in him, but) "the life of Jesus;" by which I understand, that as he has in fact the same life in him which was and is in Jesus, it is expected to show out its presence in the guiding and controlling of the body in which it resides, in a manner suitable to the character of Him whose life it is ; or, in other words, suitable to itself. (Compare also Rom. vi. 4, 12, 13.)

In Gal. ii. 20 a believer, describing under Divine inspiration his own condition in relation to life, expresses it as Christ living in him ; and in speaking with Colossian believers concerning the same life in them (Col. iii. 3, 4), tells them that Christ is their life ; and as Christ is absent in the heavens, he says of them, "Your life is hid with Christ in God:" while, as descriptive of unbelievers, in contrast with believers, who have eternal life, he affirms of them that they are "alienated from the life of God" (Eph. iv. 18).

Now, such language is not the random expression of human ignorance, but "the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth"—words chosen by infinite wisdom to clothe and convey to our knowledge, so far as we are capable of entering into it, the truth of God on the matter in hand.

R. H.

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**N**EARNESS to God is always accompanied by the heart overflowing with the joy which His realized presence necessarily produces, as well as by a spirit of intercession for the objects of God's love on earth.



## GOD AND MAN.

THE Bible opens with the sublime declaration that "God created the heaven *and* the earth." There is perhaps a deeper significance here in the conjunction "*and*" than appears at first sight in a superficial reading of the text. Men have discovered that the earth on which they live is but a tiny unit in the vast concourse of similar bodies which we call the universe. There are other planets in our solar system immensely larger than our own, while our solar system itself is but one among countless myriads, of which the stars, which deck so brilliantly our glorious "heaven" are believed to be the central suns.

Science therefore would teach us to regard our planet as but a small item in creation, and would never lead a man to speak of "the heavens *and* the earth" as the Bible does, as if these were the two grand divisions of God's creation.

"Are the stars inhabited?" is a question often asked but never answered. No man can tell, and the Word of God gives no information on the subject, so we need not try to discover. Of the earth God says He "formed it to be inhabited" (Isa. xv. 18), but of none of the heavenly bodies does He say the same. The Bible clearly reveals to us the amazing truth, that, passing by all these glories of His creative power, His all-searching eye, and His all-loving heart are fixed upon this little earth which He made to be the abode of man. Not the stars which obey his commands and move through space with the most marvellous exactitude, but the inhabitants of this little planet are the objects of his tenderest care. It is evidently, therefore, with deep significance that the inspired writer, instead of saying simply that "God created all things," wrote that He created "the heaven and the earth."

It is a wonderful world in which we live, so full of exquisite beauty, so marvellous in its intricacies and adaptations. In one sublime sense it may be regarded as the centre of God's universe. So marvellous was its beauty when first it came from the hand of the Creator, so glorious was the purpose for which He

created it, that when He laid the corner stone thereof "the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job. xxxviii.), it was a thing of delight to the angelic hosts, who had doubtless heard the counsel of the Triune God saying, "Let US make man in our image, after our likeness."

And what an amazing revelation! To all the heavenly host, to angel and to archangel it is now made known, though not yet in the fulness of its glory, the great eternal purpose for which "God created the heaven and the earth." The ultimate goal, the Christ of God, the union of God and man, may not yet have been fully revealed, but at least it was made known that the very acme of creation, a being in the very image and likeness of God, was about to be brought forth, and it filled the heavenly courts with joy.

Alas for man! The crown is fallen from his head, cast vilely away. "What is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou visitest him?" "But we see Jesus."

So man was made "in the image of God," and herein lies the immeasurable distance between him and every other living creature upon earth. Science, or the wisdom of this world, would fain ally him with the beasts of the field and the fish of the sea, and delight to think of him as a being evolved from the lowest form of life. But the Bible tells us that "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." Of all other animate creatures God had said, "Let the earth bring forth," and "Let the waters bring forth," and these had brought forth "abundantly," in their myriads, but one solitary man was "formed" by the skilfulness of His hands, as it were, and received the breath of life directly from his Maker. How exquisitely beautiful is the human "form," how wonderfully sublime is the human "soul." How marvellous is the mechanism of the body, and yet how much more marvellous is the "mechanism" of the mind connected with the brain. And so precious in the sight of God is a human life that if it be taken,

then He will require it "at the hand of every beast and at the hand of man and at the hand of every man's brother" (Gen. ix. 5-6). Thus does He, in His infinite love, guard every human life, "for in the image of God made He man."

It was for this man whom God was about to create, that He formed the earth to be an abode of loveliness, so surpassingly lovely indeed, that even to the present day we are finding out more and more of its beauties. Sin has terribly marred it, and brought upon it a blight and a curse, but apart from these the wonders of creation are ever being unfolded to our vision.

The Scriptures reveal to us, the marvellous and unique position of man in the universe. God gave him dominion over the works of His hands, and when he vilely cast away the crown, and gave his allegiance to Satan, the Lord God did not crush him nor cast him off, but came down to seek and to save that which was lost. Oh the tender pathos of the question, "Adam where art thou?" and the infinite depth of love which even then gave promise of a Deliverer, who should bruise the serpent's head! "For God so loved the world," the world that had risen in rebellion against Him, and that went on sinning more and more, and that said at last when He sent His beloved Son, "This is the heir, come let us kill Him."

Yet His love did not cease, but patiently, long-sufferingly He has waited, and is waiting still. He spared not His own Son. He gave the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world to be the Propitiation for the whole world, on the ground of which Propitiation He beseeches men to be reconciled to Him.

One great characteristic of sin is, that it is "enmity against God;" and man's natural heart is full of enmity against that holy, righteous and ever blessed being who has loved with so great a love. All heaven rejoices in the love of God to man, and Christ Himself manifests His joy "in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke xv. 10).

*Brown.*

## THE WORLD.

SOME may feel led to ask, "What is the world?" It would be difficult to find a term more inaccurately defined than "world," or "worldliness;" for we are generally disposed to make worldliness begin a point or two above where we are ourselves. The Word of God, however, has, with perfect precision, defined what "the world" is, when it marks it as that which is "not of the Father." Hence, the deeper my fellowship with the Father, the keener will be my sense of what is worldly. This is the Divine way of teaching. The more you delight in the Father's love, the more you reject the world.

But who reveals the Father? The Son. How? By the power of the Holy Ghost. Wherefore, the more I am enabled, in the power of an ungrieved Spirit, to drink in the Son's revelation of the Father, the more accurate does my judgment become as to what is of the world. It is as the limits of God's Kingdom expand in the heart, that the judgment as to worldliness becomes refined. You can hardly attempt to define worldliness. It is, as some one has said, "shaded off gradually from white to jet black." This is most true. You cannot place a bound and say, "here is where worldliness begins;" but the keen and exquisite sensibilities of the Divine nature recoil from it; and all we need is to walk in the power of the Spirit, in order to keep aloof from every form of worldliness. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."

Walk with God, and ye shall not walk with the world. Bold distinctions and rigid rules will avail nothing. The power of the Divine life is what we want. We want to know the meaning and spiritual application of the "three days journey into the wilderness," whereby we are separated for ever, not only from Egypt's brick-kilns and taskmasters, but also from its temples and altars.

C. H. M.

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It is one of the great questions of the day, Is the unity of Christians to be founded on *love for the truth's sake*, or on indifference to it?

## A FEW THOUGHTS ON ACTS II.

THE gift of and descent of the Holy Ghost was the fulfilment of the promise of the Father (Acts i. 4; and ii. 33), and based upon the accomplished work of Christ, which glorified God, condemned sin in the flesh, and put away the believer's sins for ever. Everything that a holy and righteous God could require to meet His outraged Majesty, and vindicate His holy nature and character, had been rendered to Him by the Second Man, who in grace took the guilty man's place, and undertook to vindicate God—"annul him that had the power of death, that is the devil" (Heb. ii. 14)—and save and bring to glory in His Own likeness those whose cause He had espoused; and God had accepted that sacrifice, and declared His satisfaction by the resurrection of His Son who did it, and the descent of the Holy Ghost, one part of whose mission is to testify to the glory of Christ (John xvi. 14).

Already had the Passover been taken out of type into antitype in the death of the Lord Jesus at the cross. Already, too, had the "wave sheaf," waved on "the morrow after the Sabbath" (Lev. xxiii. 11), received its fulfilment in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus on the first day of the week. And now as the feast of Pentecost is running its course, just near its close, a little company whose faith and affection had bound them to the One who was now a glorified Saviour, were with "one accord" gathered together in the upper room, waiting as directed (Acts i. 4), when suddenly they hear a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind which filled the house. J.N.D. in a footnote to that verse (Acts ii. 2) in his N.T. says, "They heard blowing, as of hard breathing." Thus the advent and presence of the Holy Ghost on earth was heard and felt in the midst of that little circle by the sound of "hard breathing." A little picture of this is seen in John xx. 22. The One "whom the world cannot receive because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him for He *dwelleth with you*, and shall be *in you*" had now come (John xiv. 17). That verse had now received its fulfilment, and the

Spirit was present *with* and *in* them (verses 2-4). Their waiting time was ended, and "the power from on high" had come to them—fallen upon them—and was with and in them. The true and antitypical Pentecost had come and received its fulfilment.

More than that. They not only *heard* and *felt* His presence, and became *individually* His dwelling place, as well as collectively, thus becoming the Body of Christ as well as the House of God (though the *teaching* as to this only came out subsequently with the ministry of Paul), but they *saw* the symbol of that presence—"parted tongues as of fire," and learnt what it meant in a special way for them, and "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Not the symbol of *the dove*, as He came upon Christ at His baptism (Matt. iii. 16), God having found a perfect Man in whom was all His delight; but *divided* tongues *appeared* unto them, *meeting in grace* what had been *given in judgment* (Gen. xi. 7), in order that all the world might hear the glorious heaven-sent news of God glorified, and consequently an opened heaven—a seated Christ—a present Spirit—and an assured welcome to the Father's arms and heart for the vilest of repentant sinners—truths gradually unfolded as time went on as the result of the Spirit's presence here, and Christ's on the Father's throne there. Thus on that memorable day we have the antitype of Pentecost fifty days after the presentation of the wave sheaf; and here on that day we see the first of the two loaves of the *new meat offering*, "the first-fruits unto the Lord;" as in Acts x. in the house of Cornelius we have the other, so making the "two wave loaves" of Jew and Gentile, a new meat offering, the first-fruits unto the Lord of that harvest from the corn of wheat which fell into the ground and died (John xii. 24), and which the Holy Ghost had come down to gather out for God and heaven according to God's eternal purpose which He had purposed in Christ Jesus.

There is another very beautiful touch in this connection seen in Rev. vii. There we see the great

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multitude out of the great tribulation--“A multitude which no man could number of all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues.” They have a standing before God and His throne in righteousness (white robes); and as victors (palms in their hands); and ascribe salvation to God and the Lamb. They have “washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, therefore are they before the throne of God.” The blood of the Lamb has washed them and made them fit, and given them title to be there, to *serve* Him day and night in His temple, while He *tabernacles over them*. Never more shall they hunger or thirst, nor the sun light upon them, nor any heat. Exposed as they had been, and made to feel the pain and bitterness of all these things in the great tribulation, they now experience deliverance, and feel the tender shepherd care of Him who had passed through it all before them in order that He might be able to succour *them as they* passed through it, and whose hands now lead them to the fountains of living waters, and “wipes the tear from every eye.” Blessed, precious, peerless Saviour! O that hearts only knew Thee!

Thus we see tongues given in *judgment* on human sin in Gen. xi. Then in *grace* to meet human need in Acts ii. And lastly we see the countless multitude from every tongue, and tribe, and peoples, and nations, gathered under the beneficent rule of the Lord Jesus in the Millennial earth, *serving, worshipping and praising* God and the Lamb.

But let us observe here, it is *not* a heavenly scene or company that is set before us in Rev vii. The Church does *not* go through the great tribulation. She is expressly kept “from that hour of temptation” (Rev. iii. 10). And the only *heavenly* companies who *do*, are the martyrs under the fifth seal (chap. vi.); and those slain by the beast in ch. xv.; and both companies are seen with the other heavenly saints (that is, the Old Test. saints and the Church) thus making the full complement of heavenly saints as seen in chap. xx. 4. It must therefore be an earthly scene, and an earthly company of saints, and so it is! Thank God for the

comforting assurance given ere that awful time sets in, that there will be so many at that day "washed in the blood of the Lamb" and spite of all the devil's efforts to destroy them.

What a marvellous thing then is the presence of the Holy Ghost! What a stupendous fact! the third Person in the ever glorious Trinity, God the Holy Ghost is on earth! He has been pleased to make the people of God collectively the sphere where He deigns to dwell, and thus forming the house of God (Eph. ii. 22; 1 Tim. iii. 15); and the hearts of God's people individually likewise are taken possession of, thus constituting them members of the Body of Christ and members one of another (1 Cor. xii. 13; Rom. xii. 5). "He filled all the house," and, "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts ii. 2-4). Then, of course, we see the blessed results of that fact begin to unfold themselves. It was not necessary for any individuals to talk about themselves, and proclaim their baptism with the Spirit, and that they were filled with Him. The fact spoke for itself in its manifestations and results as the Spirit enabled one and another to tell the various nationalities gathered in Jerusalem, and in their own tongues "the wonderful works of God" (verse 11).

When Peter stood up to speak and explain this remarkable phenomenon, he shows them from their own Scriptures that a like thing was prophesied of by Joel to occur in the last days (chap. ii). But this was not it. There are many things that Joel speaks of that did *not* take place then, but will in a future day. But it was the same kind of thing that Joel speaks of, so they need not be so astonished. The result of that address by Peter was, 3,000 souls were converted, and the grace of Christ, and the power of the Holy Ghost so filled all their hearts that "they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine, in fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (verse 42). "And all that believed were together, and had all things common" (verse 44). Although there was as yet no break with the temple and its ritual—could not be in fact—yet, the



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saints came together as a distinct company, by themselves, distinct from both Jews and Gentiles, and God added to their number daily. A new thing had commenced though as yet unnamed.

What a wonderful thing then, we may well say, is the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth. As saints we are not half alive to it. What could we not do if we really believed it and were governed by it? We know He indwells all the saints and never leaves them. We are sealed by Him to the day of redemption, thank God (Eph. iv. 30) But do we know what it is to be "filled with the Spirit"? We look not for another Pentecost: there could be but one. Nor can we accept as of God the extraordinary manifestations we sometimes hear of, and which seize men and put them into such a state as to write "*confusion*" on it, though labelled by them as "a baptism of the Holy Ghost." God is not the Author of such grotesque imitations of Scripture facts, however much men may seem to father them on Him. We ought, however, to judge ourselves for our coldness and supineness, and deadness, and not excuse ourselves in any way, for we are told to "be filled with the Spirit," and certainly there would be more manifestation of power amongst us, both in *saving* and *gathering*, if we were thus filled.

But we must not make the Spirit our object. Christ must ever be the object for our hearts, and the more we are occupied with Him the more will the Spirit fill us and use us for the Lord's glory. At the same time we must guard against seeking, as some seem to do, for a sort of super-spiritual state, distinguished by peculiar manifestations of whatever kind; otherwise Satan slips in "as an angel of light," and gives what is so earnestly sought after and thus deceives and ruins souls. Christ alone must be our object, and "I" disappear. "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." And depend upon it that the Christ-occupied and Spirit-filled man will talk much about Christ, little about the Spirit, and none about himself. May we know more of the power of these blessed things!

*New Zealand*

WM. EASTON.

## FAITH AND PATIENCE.

(Heb. vi. 11-20).

FAITH and Patience have a very prominent place in the Word of God, and it is surely quite obvious that they are essentials for the saint of God, from the moment of his arrest by God right unto his entrance into that eternal glory to the obtaining of which he has been called (1 Thess. v.).

Faith is the principle of his life; for "the just shall live by his faith." And it is the hand by which the resources of God are appropriated to present use—for real progress in the things of God and of Christ. And *patience* is submission spelt another way—a will subject to His will—restfully waiting for the consummation of His gracious and wonderful promises.

A forceful exhortation found in a later portion of our epistle reads: "For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (x. 36). Hearts are tested by the waiting. The length of the journey sorely tries the pilgrim often. But faith, having grasped the promise, with patience waits for its fulfilment, calmly confident that the right time for the full fruition will be His time, and that "in quietness and confidence" strength is to be found. His pleasure is in those who go forward. That way, and that way only, we behold Jesus, for He is yonder, "set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

And in our Scripture we are warned against slothfulness, and are exhorted to follow those who "inherit the promises." And if we ask how they do this? we are told that it is through faith and patience. With difficulties of no mean order confronting us, with discouragement tending to depress us on every side, we surely need the same urgent plea to continue in "the full assurance of hope unto the end" as these early saints, and to step out with renewed energy until the promises come to birth. Yet a little while and then?—Home!

Upon what is our confidence based? Upon nothing

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less than the Word of God, the oath of God, and the position of Jesus within the veil. Here surely is ground for "strong consolation." And this *consolation* is the fruit of God's grace to the "heirs of promise." How clearly shines out the truth of the psalmist's declaration that "He taketh pleasure in His people."

And a reference to the patriarch Abraham opens the story of this great grace. To him God appeared. To him was a promise given. Could Abraham trust God's word? He could; for "Abraham believed God." But more was added, not for Abraham only, but looking down the ages, for the "heirs of promise" (ver. 17). God confirmed the promise by an oath. Here then, are the two immutable things—the word and the oath. Faith counts the first sufficient, but overwhelming grace provides the second. Of God it is said that He was "willing more abundantly." "How good is the God we adore"; and that goodness in innumerable ways reveals itself.

God made promise to Abraham. Long, long years he waited, but, "after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise." Abraham saw the "multiplying" of which God spoke begin with the birth of the two sons of Isaac. How was his faith and patience rewarded!

We have a hope of which we "lay hold," and must not relax our grasp. And it is also "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast." This is not the salvation of the soul, but the hope we receive when saved. It is cast within the veil, so linking us with heavenly things. Not temporal blessings but eternal here are contemplated, and the Lord Jesus in His official capacity as Priest is viewed as "Forerunner." His very presence there is to assure us of the certainty of the fulfilment of the hope given us of God. He has entered; we shall follow. And no change, no loss can accrue on account of change in our Forerunner, for of Him it is written, "Having become a High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

In the midst of transient things, of trials and numerous discouraging circumstances, may our faith

be stimulated by the calling to mind of this encouraging Scripture which shows the impossibility of failure of the "hope set before us"; and may the blessing of endurance be ours as we wait with patience for that time, when, as His blood-bought ones, our feet shall tread the heavenly sanctuary where our Great High Priest already is.

H. F.

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## THE NEW BIRTH.

THE commencement of life is connected with birth. It was at the moment in which we were born into the world that we began our separate existence, with a life of our own.

Eternal life in the soul has, in like manner, its commencement in a new or second birth—a being "born again;" the unfoldings of which truth are first encountered in the conversation of the Lord with Nicodemus (John iii.) Here we have, first, the declaration of its necessity, "Ye must be born again;" "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" then the ground of this need, in the fallen and corrupted condition of the life and nature of which we have been treating, expressed in the affirmation, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and followed immediately by the corresponding statement, "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

If the former of these expressions teaches a derived identity of nature, equally so does the latter. If the one shows the bringing into existence of something that did not exist before, having a nature identical with that of the being whence its existence was derived, exactly so does the other. Whatever is conveyed by the "that which" of the one phrase has clearly a correspondence as to reality in the "that which" of the other. It is not the expression of a mere change in the character of the former thing, but a thing wholly distinct from it, and as new in itself as the other was when it first came into being.

In the new birth, then, there is introduced a somewhat wholly new, a something "born," as truly as the

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man himself was "born" at first; and this new thing is said by the Lord to be "spirit," and as such to meet the necessity of the case which demands a new birth for the man, in order to his fitness for the kingdom of God, for which, the fact that as "born of the flesh" he "is flesh," disqualifies him.

Concerning this new birth, its origin is referred directly to God. In 1 John the characteristic phrase for it is "Born of God" (iii. 9; iv. 7; v. 1); while in the Gospel (i. 13) this truth is brought out in the most unmistakable and exclusive manner—"Born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Here are excluded, first, natural descent—it does not run in the blood; secondly, the agency of the man himself, "the will of the flesh;" thirdly, the agency of others, "the will of man;" and then the closing and positive statement limits it absolutely to God. In the preceding verse moreover the gift of power to become children (begotten ones) of God is ascribed to the person "received" by faith—Christ, who is also in 1 Cor. xv. 45 said to be "a quickening Spirit," and in acts iii 15 "the Author (or Originator) of life," while in John iii 5, 6 the direct agent in the act is affirmed to be the Holy Ghost.

That there should be much that is mysterious in a subject where the actings of the Triune God are concerned is to be looked for; and the subject is only to be approached with unshod feet; but this much is perfectly clear from the Word, that there is a positive action of Godhead in the new birth, whose result is, the derivation to the person of something, in his soul, variously spoken of as "spirit," God's "seed," and "life" or "eternal life." This new-born existence in the soul has the nature of Him of whom it is born, "the divine nature." As such it is of course impeccable in itself; and the person who is the subject of this mighty creative act (2 Cor. v. 17; Eph. ii. 10), as we have seen, when viewed merely in reference to it (1 John iii. 9), is spoken of in terms expressive of this; and in the proportion in which he walks in or

after the Spirit will, his practical ways be holy (Gal. v. 16, 18, 25; Rom. viii. 4).

Another important agency in the new birth, intimately allied with the Divine Spirit, as the instrument through which He works, is "the word of God," spoken of in John iii. under the figure of "water," "born of water and of the Spirit," whose explanation is more fully given in 1 Peter i. 23: "Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." I discern a very marked exactness in the employment of the language here: it is, "born out of seed," the preposition being one expressive of origin; and "through the word," the preposition there being expressive of instrumentality. I do not therefore from this understand the "seed" to be "the word" here, any more than in 1 John iii. 9; but take it to be the same thing which is said to be "spirit" in John iii. 6 as the offspring of God, the Divine Spirit. The "word" is His instrument in this solemn transaction, and hence it is "through the word" In Luke viii. 11, it is indeed said, "The seed is the word of God;" but there I take the subject to be different; it is the seed of the kingdom that is in question, not the seed of God in the new birth. In the interpretation of the figure employed in the parable to set forth the propagation of the kingdom in the earth, the word is the seed; in the mighty act of the new birth, it is the instrument of the Holy Ghost for the implantation of the divine seed of life and spirit, in some mysterious way, into whose character the blessed Master seems to forestall our prying when He compares it to the wind, whose effects Nicodemus could discern but whose goings and comings were beyond him.

Perhaps one might say that "spirit," as used in John iii. 6 ("that which is born of the Spirit is *spirit*,") is life and nature, or life with its characteristic nature. It may be more; but it is at least that. Not life alone, nor nature alone, but both together; for "life" cannot act or show itself without displaying "nature;" nor can "nature" (*i.e.*, spiritual or moral nature, with

which alone the question has to do) exist apart from life, or be known apart from its actings.

The substance of what I learn from Scripture about the new birth is, that Christ, as "the last Adam, . . . a quickening Spirit" (1 Cor. xv. 45), gives power to as many as receive Him to become children of God by their being born of God (1 John i. 12, 13); that this birth, or being "born again," is through the agency of "the Spirit" and instrumentality of "the word," figured by "water" (John iii. 5; 1 Peter i. 23; Jas. i. 18); that the product of this new birth is "spirit" (John iii. 6), or "life"—"eternal life" (John iii. 15, 16, 36; v. 21, 24; x. 10; xvii. 2; 1 John v. 12); that "His"—God's—"seed remains" in the man (1 John iii. 9); and that He is "light" (Eph. v. 3). Then I find him expected to walk as a child of light, whose fruit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth (v. 9); to bring forth "the fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. v. 22); to show forth the virtues of Him who has called him out of darkness (1 Peter ii. 9); all which things are manifestations of "nature," or of "*life*" acting characteristically, so that their equivalent is given in 2 Cor. iv. 10, 11, when it speaks of "the life of Jesus" being manifested in the man's body.

When God created man at the first, He imparted life to him from Himself: "The Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." It was not generation, but creation. His life emanated from God; but once imparted to Adam, it was *all in him, was his life*, and so he could corrupt its nature by his fall. In the new birth there is not the impartation of life as an emanation, so communicated to the man as to be *in him*, as separated or apart from its source; but the life is enjoyed in common with God, its fountain, and hence at the very moment in which it is said to be "given to us" (1 John v. 11) it is still said to be "in His Son"—in Him, as I take it, not merely in the sense of headship, though that is also true, but in Him as its inexhaustible fountain of supply; so that, unlike the life of the first Adam, it is in its nature incapable of corruption, and the man—viewed

abstractedly or with reference to it alone—cannot sin, because he is born of God.

In a letter lying before me an objection is advanced against the truth, in the form of a *reductio ad absurdum*, thus—“By my first birth I partake of the human nature, and so am a man; by my second birth I partake of the divine nature, and so am God.”

This looks very plausible, but the premise is as unsound as the conclusion would be blasphemous. Fairly put, it should have stood as follows, and then it never would have been advanced: By my first birth I partake of the human nature, and so am Adam; by my second birth I partake of the divine nature, and so am God.

Between Adam and the “I” there intervene a number of generations, which opens the loophole for the equivocation. If an immediate descendant of Adam be taken, the parallel will apply better, since between God and His children of the new birth no successional line intervenes. Let the name of Seth be substituted for the “I,” and it would stand—By his first birth Seth partook of human nature, and so became Adam; by his second birth Seth partook of divine nature, and so became God.

The absurdity is palpable. What then is the truth? Did not Seth partake of human nature? Certainly. Did he not, as born again, partake of the divine nature? Just as certainly. But Seth’s participation in human nature did not make him Adam, but his child. By his first birth Seth partook of human nature, and so was a child of Adam; by his second birth Seth partook of divine nature, and so was a child of God, which is precisely what Scripture teaches. (John i. 13; 1 John iii. 1, etc.).

The fallacy of the objection lies in the confounding of “man,” the race, with “man” (Adam), its progenitor. Adam is the father of a *race*, and Scripture and custom give his name “man” (which is simply the translation of the Hebrew “Adam”) to the entire race. God in the new creation is not the father of a race; nor does He transfer His name to the children



born of Him in the new birth, though they partake as truly of His nature as Adam's children of his.

In another letter the same objector says: "This, if true, puts them on a level with the Lord Jesus Christ. If they have the nature of God and the nature of man, what more had He?" He had the divine life and *being*—He had Godhead as well. He was from eternity "the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father"—"the Word," which not only was in the beginning "*with God,*" but who "was God" (John i.)—"the true God, and the eternal life." (1 John v. 20).

This strange confusion between *being* and *nature* existing in some minds, on the ground of which they infer that participation of the divine nature cannot be without participation in the Godhead, runs counter to one of the commonest facts of our ordinary human life. The babe in the womb lives of its mother's life, yet is a distinct entity from the mother; does not share her being, though it partakes of her life and nature, and moves or exercises vital functions independently of her volitions, of which Genesis xxv. 22, 25, and Luke i. 41, 44, are Scripture examples. Here then are two distinct beings—the mother and child—having a life and nature in common, the mother imparting her life and nature to the child without any resulting confusion of being or of personality; and shall there be found among God's own children those who, yielding to the puny reasonings of human intellect, question the fitness of Scripture language and teaching, and would limit the power of God to impart to His children His life and nature, without thereby confounding them with His Godhead?

R. H.

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WE are in the wilderness, and there we have to meet with trial, sorrow and difficulty; but so long as we have the happy privilege of betaking ourselves at all times, and under all circumstances, to One who reveals Himself in His manifold grace, in connection with our every necessity and weakness, we need not fear the wilderness.

## THE CHURCH WHICH IS CHRIST'S BODY.

It is the business of faith to receive the testimony of God in all its fulness. Yet how many are quite content with the knowledge of the forgiveness of their sins, and the prospect of going to heaven (as it is termed) some time in the future. God has revealed much, very much, more than this. It is not the Gospel in its completeness by a long way. The Gospel of God (see Rom.) is about a Person, and that Person is the Son of God: "Who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Son of God from all eternity, He became, or was (in time and God's time too) made of the seed of David. He became a man. What a Person! Divine and human! God and man!

That Person had to die for sinners. He had to surrender the life He had taken as born of a woman to meet our deep need, to glorify God, to take up the whole question of sin, and finally to put away sin altogether, morally by His sacrifice, but removed by power on the ground of the sacrifice of Himself. Jesus died. He who was the source of life, the Creator of all things, the only begotten of the Father, became flesh that He might be able to die for men, for sinners, and thus open a way for God to accomplish His plans and purposes, settled even before the heavens and the earth were created.

What a wonderful work He did for God, and what a lot God must needs do for Him. The question is, What can Divine righteousness do for the Son of God as a man who lay in the grave? What can the Father's love do for His beloved Son in whom He found His delight? To take up the subject in the measure in which it is unfolded in the Word, even if the writer were equal to the task, would be too long for the pages of this magazine.

We will look for a little at Eph. 1. Paul prays for the saints, and passing over verses 17 and 18, we come to "the exceeding greatness of God's power to usward

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who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world (or age) but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." That One who was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, who died and was laid in the tomb, has been raised from the dead by the power of God, and is seated at His right hand in the heavens, above all things, and all persons; everything everywhere given unto Him, and put under His feet; and given Him in all this wealth of power, dominion, and glory, to the Church which is His Body, the fulness (or complement) of Him that filleth all in all. Christ is the Head of His Body, the Church. To Him personally all is given, but the Church, viewed as forming a part of that mystic Man of whom we read in chap. ii.: "To make in Himself of twain (Jew and Gentile) one new man, making peace" is associated with Christ in all this vast inheritance and blessedness.

We are told what Divine power has already done for Christ. We are instructed, too, about what that power is pledged to do for believers in Him; what, in Divine reckoning, has been already accomplished; for our God calls those things that be not as though they were. So we read of "quickened together with Christ, and raised up together," and of being "seated in the heavenlies in Him." It is done as a moral fact. It awaits literal accomplishment until the Lord Jesus comes for His own. Then His Body will be complete. Then He will obtain His Bride, the future Wife of the Lamb. Do we not read, "Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it

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should be holy and without blemish " (Chap. v. 25-27).

He gave Himself for it at the cross. His love is active in serving now in view of the future. But there is a present service of love suited to the need here below. "No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church; for we are members of His Body." How blessed a part of Himself! How deeply He cares! He must do so! He cannot forget the least members of His Body. He has, moreover, provided for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ. This is accomplished by gifts which He, who has ascended up far above all heavens that He might fill all things, has given. Provision is thus made that each one should 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. Babyhood is to pass; saints are to be proof against winds of doctrine on the one hand, and the cunning craftiness of deceivers on the other. Their business is to speak the truth in love; to grow up into Him in all things who is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love.

It was given to Paul to fulfil (or complete) the word (Col. 1. 25); not by writing the last book, which John did, but by unfolding the truth of the mystery. Need we wonder, then, at the deep concern he had for the saints at Colosse and Laodicea, and in fact for all who had not seen his face in the flesh; that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God; in whom (or in which) are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge?

The Church, or rather, Christ and His Body, the Church, is the crowning of the story of grace. God has surpassed in this every other thing. All the

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treasures of wisdom and knowledge are displayed here as never before. How our hearts should prize it! How we should earnestly long to have, to hold, to love, to keep, to live in the joy thereof.

There is but one Christ, and He is seated at the right hand of God ; a man, but a man who is also God, and in whom, when here in flesh, all the fulness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell. All that God is has been revealed in and by Him. The story is told. The truth is revealed. Philosophy and man's intellect are left far in the rear ; and now that this blessed Man has been into death and the grave and is risen and glorified, all the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth in Him bodily. Christ is all. We are complete in Him. This is not acceptance, but the concentration in Him of all that can be required for need, for delight, for the whole range of truth. Go where you will. Look where you will : to God in His supremacy and majesty—to angels—to principalities and powers—to the heavens—to the earth—to creation in the past—to new creation—Christ is all ; and He is the head of His Body, the Church. Oh, the grace of it ! A sinner saved by His blood has become a necessity to Him, a member of His Body, a part of Himself.

Did we as saints of God really enter into these grand realities, how we should stand apart from all contradictions thereof. Sectarianism is from beneath for it denies the truth of the one Body, and it gives a false view of Christ's relation to the Church—one Head, one Body, one Christ. How often people say we cannot act on this truth now. See how divided things are. It is fully admitted that the times are difficult, but Christ suffices. Two or three gathered together unto His name and there He is in the midst. These companies may be very feeble, and not have much intelligence, but if truly gathered unto Christ's name, He is with them. Satan has succeeded because of difficulties in introducing the error of independency. That surrenders all ; for there is but one Body, one Assembly of God on the earth. Independency has a charm for indolent

souls, for moral cowards, but not for those who are holding the Head. Far better to find oneself alone if faithfulness should call for it, than be in a big company by sacrificing any part of divine truth. Truth is God's, not man's. Oh, to know the preciousness of Christ as God desires that we should, and to reach the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ!

E. R. W.

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## A LETTER.

DEAR BROTHER,

Many eloquent sermons have been preached that have had but a passing reference to the text; but, after all, the important thing for those who would possess God's mind *is the text*—God's Holy Word. It is an exceedingly easy thing for us to have other people's notions, or our own ideas, so possessing the mind as to exclude the entrance of that Word which alone gives light. For the Scriptures alone are authoritative; and I am sure, sad though the reflection is, that many who love our Lord Jesus Christ, little realise how insubject to that authority they are.

Well, coming to our subject, the enquiry is—Why is the term *Atonement* used only in Old Testament, and the term *Propitiation* only in the New?

The difference in the dispensation, and the difference in the manner of God's dealings with man, will help to provide an answer.

In the O.T. we find God instituting the ritual of sacrifice in connection with Israel, a people brought outwardly near to, and in relationship with, Jehovah; and it is as applying to them that atonement is there spoken of; and into all the blessings of the atonement, as accomplished on the tenth day of the seventh month, Israel came. It was not individual but corporate—national.

Now atonement, as set forth typically in Lev. xvi., covers the *whole* work of Christ—that work in its bearings both Godward and manward. Two goats were required—one, “the Lord's lot,” and the other, “the

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people's lot." Both were necessary for the making of atonement; but they give us, as has been said, "the distinction of propitiation and substitution."

In the N.T. God is not dealing corporately with a favoured nation, but with men individually; and there in His Gospel the conclusion is reached that "all (Jew and Gentile) have sinned and come short of God's glory" (Rom. iii). How does God address such? He sets forth "Christ a propitiatory through faith in His blood." Note the language used by the Holy Spirit. He says, not "an atonement" but "a propitiatory:" and in 1 John ii. 2, Christ is said to be "the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the whole world."

All the component parts of atonement are found in the N.T., but they are viewed separately. It is on the principle of faith that we individually come into the fruits of Christ's perfect work; and so when God proclaims salvation to sinful men, the great necessity is to show that His nature has been adequately cared for; that of His holiness there has been no abatement; that He remains *just* if He becomes a *Justifier*. Hence the use of the term propitiation.

For this answers to "Jehovah's lot" in Leviticus, the blood of which was sprinkled on and before the mercy seat; and was, as another has said, "for His glory tarnished in this world by sin, by His grace to satisfy the exigencies of His nature. He must needs be glorified about sin." Surely, and because so satisfied and glorified, the glad tidings go forth to every creature, and "*whosoever will*" is freely preached. The acceptance of "the propitiatory" set forth by God, places the one accepting in a company which adoringly exclaims, "He bore our sins in His own body on the tree." For such the distinction between propitiation and substitution unites in the complete work of Christ as foreshadowed on the great day of atonement; for they are brought into the full effects of that peerless sacrifice, and they learn that as He so fully provided for God's glory, so He has as perfectly met their individual need,

and each is entitled to say, "He loved me and gave Himself for me."

I trust this may help. Let us seek to be workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. So shall we have the approval of our God.

H. F.

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A GOOD conscience—a conscience that can know God in the unsullied purity of light and holiness in which He dwells; and, knowing Him thus, to have the answer of a good conscience in His presence, and that it stands on an unclouded title to be there.

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WHAT does the sight of those wounds, of that humiliation, call forth from Thomas? "My Lord and my God." This too is what we may say as we think of His humiliation. Because He has veiled His glory, the world sometimes questions whether He was more than mere man. Faith says, Show me the lowest point to which He went, and I rejoice and delight to own Him there as my Lord and my God.

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WEAR on thy breast the plated armour bright,  
 'Twill give thee confidence amid the fight;  
 The consciousness of righteousness in ways [days]  
 Shall give thee strength through long and dreary  
 The conscience clear—an uncondemning heart  
 Will to thy soul a strength and joy impart,  
 A confidence in God, which nought can quell,  
 Though ranged against thee all the powers of hell;  
 'Twill make thee stand when others round thee fall,  
 And still to stand when thou hast vanquished all.

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OBSERVE "come and see" in verse 5 (Psalm lxvi.); "come and hear" in verse 16; for the manifested works, or works in the earth (the operation of His hand) are proposed to *sight*; the hidden works, or works in the soul (the operations of His Spirit), are proposed to the ear. The whole psalm is an utterance of great liberty and joy of heart, and savours richly of the gladness of God's chosen in the days of the kingdom.



## A GOOD START—A CONSISTENT CONTINUANCE—A TRIUMPHANT FINISH.

It is an immense thing when a soul makes a good start. The old saying, "A good start is half the battle," is a true one. There are a great many who make a bad start and so never make progress. We can only make progress as we walk in the path the Spirit has marked out in the Word; but He is ever ready to help us when He sees our heart is set on it; if not, then our life will be a stunted, dwarfed, and useless one, deprived of the joy of walking *with*, and working *for*, and talking *to* God. And as we have only one life here, and can never live it over again, it will not be a comfort to us on a death-bed, or in the near prospect of the Lord's return and meeting Him, to know that we have wasted it.

For an example of a good start, we could not turn to a better than the one recorded in Phil. iii. The Apostle could say "If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, *I more*" (verse 4). There was not a man his equal. He mentions *seven* things which marked him off, far away beyond and above all others, and that is the position and condition we find him in when he makes his start. He was perfectly satisfied with himself, and glorying in himself. He lived in the lime-light of his own superiority until another light shone in: a light he had never seen before, and brighter than any natural or artificial light: so bright, so dazzling, that it struck him blind to all outside, and illuminated his whole moral being to such an extent that he saw there and then and forever that he was not the greatest saint on earth, or the best man out of heaven, but "the chief of sinners" (1 Tim. i. 15), and only fit for hell. It was "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6) that revealed this.

In that meeting and interview with Christ in glory, there was such a revelation given to Paul of his utter ruin in the very springs of his moral being; and such

an attractive power in "the man in the glory" whose acquaintance he had now for the first time made, that everything he had counted gain before he now counts "loss for Christ." His standing—his learning—his religion—his zeal—his blameless life:—all were given up—all were counted loss, and worse than worthless, compared with the knowledge of Christ and the righteousness which is from God by faith. Everything he set a value on he discarded and cast off, no matter what it was. "I count *all things* but loss" he said. Self in whatever form was so loathsome, so hateful, that he was glad to get rid of it and be found in Christ where all is new—a new creation and suitable to God.

Thus his conversion, his start, was a clean cut from everything he was connected with before, "Old things are passed away, and behold all things are become new, and all things are of God" (2 Cor. v. 17). He did not try to break with things piecemeal. Now-a-days people seem to think that they cannot give up the lusts of the flesh all at once but may do so gradually. For instance one man views the drink question in that light—another the smoke nuisance in the same way; and they want to break with them little by little. I tell you it is a mistake. You must follow Paul's example and quit the lot, no matter what they are, right straight away or you will be a failure. The best time to do it is at the start when the heart is full of its first love. Indeed if you got a real sight of yourself, and a good shaking over hell at the start, you would be done with everything for the knowledge, possession, and enjoyment of the Lord Jesus.

There is another beautiful example of this in the Old Testament in the case of Jonathan (1 Sam. xviii.). When David returned with the head of the giant in one hand and his sword in the other, Jonathan was so carried away in his admiration and love for David, that he stripped himself of everything he valued and laid them down at David's feet. How delightful it is when Christ gets a similar hold of a soul at conversion and everything of the old man goes at once! Not

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only the giving up the *sins* of the flesh, but the old *self* goes, and Christ comes in and fills the mind and heart and governs the life in the power of the blessed Spirit. That, and only that, is a good start. When you see saints, young or old, clinging to practices, which, though not *sinful* in themselves, nevertheless are of the flesh, and hankering after, and sometimes going after, the flesh pots of Egypt, which they know in their own consciences are not compatible with the place and state God has set them in, and seen by their fear lest any Christian should see them; if it is not an evidence of a bad start, it is at least an evidence of a heart that has not found Christ to be a satisfying portion.

I saw a man the other day walking along the street with a cigarette between his lips. Of course there is nothing remarkable about that. Ah! but this man I speak of professes to be a Christian. I happen to know that man, and he did not at the first make a clean cut away from all his fleshly lusts, and consequently he has made no progress since; and certainly there was no testimony to old things having passed away and all things become new with him, and he is a dwarfed Christian, and practically a dumb and useless saint. Surely that is not what God has saved us to be? Nor is it.

It is important to learn that God has made a complete settlement of *what we are*, as well as of *what we have done*, in the cross of the Lord Jesus. Not only are the sins gone—put away for ever—never to be remembered again (Heb. x. 17), but the man who committed them has been judged, and can now say, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20). "Our old man has been crucified with Him, that the body of sin should be annulled, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. vi. 6). What a complete settlement and riddance this is. A mighty deliverance both from sins and the power of sin, and a place of

liberty given us in a risen Christ and enjoyed by the power of the indwelling Spirit. Liberty not to sin, but to live to God, and serve and worship God (Rom. viii. 1-4).

It is, however; one thing to make a good start, but quite another thing to *consistently continue* in the path. Many make a start who break down on the way. Some who even make a good start sometimes break down. Happy is the man who can say through the grace and goodness of God, "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great" (Acts xxvi. 22). This was the language of the same man who made such a good start and gave up all for Christ. He had not broken down, nor changed his mind in any way; neither had he been deceived and disappointed. He knew what he was in himself, and did not trust in himself; but he also knew what he was in Christ, and the resources he had in Him, and could say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv. 13); hence he turns from himself, and *seeks* and *obtains* help from God, and so continues in the path that grace had set him in.

Now this is just where so many fail. They know as a doctrine that they are "without strength" in themselves, but in *practice* they are still found trusting self, and as they are continually being disappointed by their failures, they become disheartened and drop behind and fall a prey to Amalek. It was Amalek who smote the hindmost of the people when Israel was escaping from Egypt (Deut. xxv. 17, 18). Be assured the front rank is the safest and the best place after all—right in front in the fighting line. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." Lose faith and courage and lag behind, and you will soon be harassed by the enemy, and, may be, give up altogether.

Paul was a seasoned veteran. He had passed through campaign after campaign, but he had no intention of giving up. He continued to witness for Christ who had won his heart at the start, and satisfied it all the way through. He had no thought of being super-

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anuated till he got to heaven. His life was a glorious and consistent continuance in well-doing (Rom. ii. 7).

The question might well arise here, How does God give the help to continue? Is there any particular or well-defined line to be followed to obtain it? I think there is. I think it will be found in occupation of heart with Christ where He is. We see it set forth in 2 Cor. iii. 18. "But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit." And Stephen is a beautiful example of it (see Acts vii. 55-60).

The same blessed Saviour who won our hearts at the first by His love unto death, in order that we might be saved, is now on high in the glory—a living Saviour, and an Object for our hearts day by day. But the transforming power of that glorious Object is only known by those who, by faith, see Him where He is, and consequently their affections flow out to Him and their bodies are presented a living sacrifice (Rom. xii. 1). The Holy Ghost who indwells them is the power for all this.

There is a beautiful illustration of this in 2 Kings ii. Elijah was being taken away, and asks Elisha, "What shall I do for thee before I be taken away?" And Elisha said, "Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." And Elijah said, "Thou hast asked a hard thing, nevertheless if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so." Then we read, when the supreme moment came, Elisha saw the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof, and he received Elijah's mantle which fell from the departing prophet. His request was granted and it showed itself in his subsequent life. May it be ours to be so occupied with that glorified Saviour there, that we shall walk "even as He walked" down here.

Then we come lastly, to 2 Tim. iv. 6-8, and we see the glorious and triumphant finish that Paul made as he died the martyr's death here, and passed up yonder

with flying colours. (1) As a *good soldier* of Jesus Christ (ch. ii. 3) he had “fought a *good fight*.” He had not, like some, “turned back in the day of battle” (Psalm lxxviii. 9). He knew no surrender and came off “more than conqueror through Him that loved him.” (2) As a *runner* he had “finished his course.” He slackened not his speed and kept in the course. He took no short cuts in the race, nor unfair means to reach his goal. He had “striven lawfully” and followed the rules of the game and finished on the track. (3) As a *steward* to whom a deposit had been entrusted he “kept the faith.” He had lost everything of his own; position—reputation—wealth—health—and about to lose life itself; but what was God’s he had kept. He had “kept the faith”—that precious deposit entrusted to him and was about to lay it down at the Master’s feet and receive the crown that was awaiting him. What a wonderful picture of whole-hearted, consistent, continued devotedness to his Saviour and Lord! May it be ours to “go and do likewise.”

The crown of righteousness awaits all “who love His appearing,” but none can *love* that who are not *continuing* in well doing, and such cannot have a triumphant finish like Paul. Demas forsook Paul, having *loved this present evil world*. He did not “keep the faith” like Paul and would lose the crown. Let us brace ourselves up as we hear the Apostle saying “Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ.”

*New Zealand.*

WM. EASTON.

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It is a cave; and a stone lies at the mouth of it. And now the unbelief of Martha would oppose the removal of the stone: of what use can it be to bring to light a man four days buried? of what but to turn a sweet if sad memory into an offence? But the only offence is the unbelief that will retain Him in the tomb, and shut out from the soul, as the Lord reminds her, the glory of the living, omnipotent God.

## THE CHRISTIAN'S ADDITION TABLE.

(2 Peter i. 5-16).

THE Apostle Peter turns here in verse 5 to the practical state of the believers; having given them what would comfort and refresh their hearts, he says, This is not all, now I look at your own state practically. "Besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge." He knew how easy it was to get slothful, and so he exhorts them to give all diligence in thus adding. Virtue is that energy and courage of soul, that knows how to refuse, as well as to choose, like Moses, who "*refused* to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; *choosing* rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season," and so he says, "Add to your faith virtue." You have the faith that connects you with God, and you believe in what as yet you do not see, but now you must add virtue, that courage, which knows how to say "No" to the thousand things that come up day by day, and to press unswervingly on the pathway that is set before us.

Then you may find a person who has this energy, but who is a little rough, and so he says, there is something else needed, lest this roughness turn to rashness, therefore add to virtue knowledge of God, of the mind and ways of God, and of what suits God, for mere knowledge puffs up, this is the knowledge that humbles.

A man that knows God well, cannot know Him without being in His company, and a person who is near to God is tender in his ways, though there may be energy in him to follow on. We need grace from the Lord to add this.

"And to knowledge temperance." Not the mere external restraint, but the cultivation of the inward mystery of the soul day by day, governing ourselves, keeping ourselves in order: and depend upon it if we cannot keep ourselves in order, we cannot keep any one else.

Temperance is that quiet gravity of spirit, that

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equable in every circumstance, like Christ, never upset by anything or any one that came along.

“And to temperance patience.” Temperance will keep me from saying or doing a thing that will wound you, and patience will keep me from being upset by anything that you may do to wound me. Temperance is active, patience is passive!

If you have not knowledge, you will not know how to meet the mind of God. If you have not temperance you will be sure to do something that will hurt someone else, and if you have not patience you will be upset by what someone else may be doing to you.

“And to patience godliness”—God-likeness—walking through this scene, and possessing the divine nature, see that you illustrate it, exemplify it!

Shew me a man's company, and I will shew you what sort of a man he is; and if you are keeping company with God you will be a godly person, for we all resemble the thing we are occupied with. It comes out in a thousand blessed details too every day.

Then in this the Christian's addition table, we have brotherly kindness, and charity, two things that may seem alike, but are different.

Brotherly kindness is a thing that might be merely human, and might degenerate and fade away, and brotherly kindness might only love that lovable sort of people, might be partial, but when I come to charity, it is impartial and unfailing, it is divine. “Charity never fails.” In 1 Cor. xiii. there are eight things it does not do, and eight things it does do, and it never breaks down. It is the very thing our souls need as we go through a scene where everything is against us.

Supposing a person repulsed me, and considered my love interference, brotherly kindness only might say, I will not go back; but charity is a divine thing and says, “I think of the blessing and good of the object, and of the glory of God in connection with that object.”

Charity is not the love that makes light of evil, but the love that seeks the real good of its object.

We have a guide how we may learn if we really love



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the children of God. (1 John v. 2)—“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments.” If you love the Father you love His children.

If we love Himself we love His people likewise, and we seek each other's blessing, but always desiring to meet His mind.

You act as one who goes directly out from God, dependent on Him and obedient to Him, in grace to a person no matter what his state may be. The Lord help us to profit by His word, and to seek to add these things to our faith, for there are many beautiful consequences of so doing.

If there be not this blessed adding, there is going back, for there is no such thing as standing still; if we are not progressing, we are retrograding. “Unto every one that hath, shall be given . . . but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.”

If there be not the desire to press on, to go on with the Lord, what is there? There is only a returning to the things from which the Lord called us out in days gone by. The Lord give us to have diligence of heart in thus adding to our faith, and progressing in the knowledge of Himself.

From the frequency with which the Apostle alludes to the eight things mentioned in verses 5, 6, and 7, it would seem almost impossible to overrate their importance. He brings out the effect of having these things and the result of not having them.

The end of every dealing of God with our souls is to make us know Christ better. If a person goes on with these three verses, you find about that person the savour of Christ. Peter felt that everything that did not lead a person to a deeper knowledge of Christ was of no value. That which puts us nearer to Christ has this effect, we feel how unlike Christ we are, and also it allures us from the world, so that we are more fit morally to pass through the world.

Many a saint of God feels, I am fit for heaven, but not fit for earth, because I am not sufficiently with the

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Lord to be equal to the occasions that arise as I pass through this scene. We feel our impotence and folly, feel how we have broken down as witnesses for Christ. It is only as Christ becomes better known that there is a fitness to pass through this scene.

Verse 9. You will say this is a backslider. Not at all! He is confident about his eternal salvation. "But," you say, "he is blind." Quite true; put the things that belong to the Lord before him, he does not see them, he has forgotten too that he was purged from his old sins. What has he forgotten? Has he forgotten that his old sins were purged away? Not a bit! He has forgotten that he was purged away from his old sins, and so he has turned back to them again, got back into the world, lost completely the sense of what Christianity is as being a heavenly thing, and the Christian as being a heavenly person. There has been a dropping down, and losing sight of the things the Lord has called us to, a dropping down to earth, and its ways, its principles, and its religion likewise, the whole thing has been let go. Bit by bit the standard has been lowered, till there has been a dropping down so far, that the Lord has had to awaken us in a startling way.

Verse 10. Here the Apostle comes in again with the solemn exhortation "give diligence," and it is a thing we need, this holy diligence of soul to keep up, with purpose of heart to the thing the Lord has called us to. Peter alludes, doubtless, in this verse to the terrible fall he had had himself.

"But," you say. "how can we make our calling and election sure?" Who called us? Our Father. Who chose us? Our Father. But this does not do for other people. Who are you to make your calling and election sure with? with the One who called you? the One who chose you? Not a bit, but with every one who watches you, every one who could say, "You a called person! You do not look a bit like it. You a chosen person! No one would think so." You are to make it manifest to the eyes of everyone else that you have been thus called of God.

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Verse 11. That is more than the soul being sustained, kept of the Lord, though that in itself is a wonderful mercy, for there is many a fall in the history of a child of God, that God and his own heart alone knows of.

But is there not something very beautiful about the path of a Christian of whom you could say, from the first till the Lord took that one home, "He never took a backward step, there was not a trip, nothing manifest but a pathway of beautiful devotedness." There is no reference here to forgiveness or pardon, but Peter reverts to his great subject of the government of God, and he says, if you have these things and abound, not only will you be kept from falling, but there passes before his mind the thought of the place, and the portion, and the reward that the saint of God has in the coming kingdom of the Lord, for though the grace of God gives us a common place in heavenly glory, there is such a thing as the kingdom, or a place in the kingdom, and reward for service which has nothing to do with grace. Grace gives us a common place in heavenly glory, but the government of God gives us an unequal place in the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, according to service.

It is a question of the reward that a saint gets from the Lord by-and-by, and there is the same difference in this, as there is between a vessel, that goes abroad, and encounters storms by the way, but has been badly rigged, badly manned, and badly commanded, and though it gets into port, yet it comes up the channel with masts torn away, and tugged by a steamer; and a vessel that comes into port with all sails set, everything in order, and cargo safe.

Peter says, If you do not go on adding, you will fall down by the road, and there will be a sense of loss at the end. There comes a moment when the soul deeply feels, Would to God I had been devoted to Christ, instead of being worldly, cold, trivial, half-hearted. Most beautifully Peter guards the sheep, lest they should fall into the thing from which he would fain protect them.

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Verses 12, 13. We may sometimes think it not worth while to be going over the same things again and again. Not so Peter. And if our hearts are only put in remembrance of these things God be thanked. It will be blessed fruit to our account in the days to come.

Do we not need stirring up? We do. Satan does his utmost to hinder our souls. The Lord lead us to be more watchful, more on our guard against the wiles of the enemy.

Verse 15. How persistent Peter is. "To have these things always in remembrance." "These things," are five times spoken of. It is impossible therefore for our souls to over-estimate the value, and the worth of verses 5, 6, 7, to which the Apostle thus alludes five times after. The Lord grant we may have them always in remembrance, have them engraved upon the tablets of our hearts.

How Peter felt there was no apostolic succession, no one to do the work he was doing, after his death. I leave you, he says, in my Epistle that which may always be a blessing and a help to your souls.

In all ages the people of God have clung in a peculiar way to Peter's Epistles. Why, do you think? I believe it is because they come right down to where we are in the world, and meet us so beautifully with a presentation of Christ, which comes to us and suits us in our need in this world.

We have Satan presented as a roaring lion in the first epistle, and as a snake in the grass in the second epistle, and we have what meets him in both these characters, and preserves us from his devices.

*Anon.*

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It has been remarked that soon after Paul was converted he declared himself "unworthy to be called an *apostle*." As time rolled on and he grew in grace, he cried out, "I am less than the least of all *saints*." And just before his martyrdom, when he had reached the stature of a perfect man in Christ, his exclamation was, "I am the chief of *sinners*."

## THE FATHER AND HIS CHILDREN.

OUR God has been pleased to take up human figures to express spiritual things to us. A father begets children. God too begets children. It is said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 5). In the same writer's 1st epistle we read, "If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is *begotten* of Him (chap. ii. 29, r.v.). "Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is begotten of God (chap. iii. 9).

We do not understand that a believer never sins, for chap. ii. says, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." We do understand that he does not practice sin, for, if begotten of God, he practices righteousness and loves the brethren, manifesting thus the Divine nature as verse 10 expressly states. Each spiritually begotten one possesses the Divine nature, and has received everlasting life, of which Christ was the full and perfect expression when here in the flesh, and it is from Him we receive it. John wrote his 1st epistle, so he states in chap. v. 13, "That ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." The writer calls upon all believers to "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God." And such we are (iii. 1).

We cannot think the relationship was new, but the knowledge of it was. No child ever was born without a human father save Jesus the Son of God. So no one ever was born anew without having been divinely begotten. But no one in Old Testament times was warranted in addressing God as his Father. The revelation of God as Father was reserved for the Son. It is characteristic of Christian times that we should know our Father and rejoice in the peculiar sweetness of the love which He bears to His own begotten children. There is no outward appearance of it, but

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the heart can rejoice in the fact, and purify itself in view of the appearing of the Son, our present hope; for then we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. Our Father would have us know the relationship in which we are placed to Him, and to delight in that precious, peculiar love of His to us His children.

God is love. He commended His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Yes, when we were ungodly and even His enemies. Surely that was the love of pity and compassion. Do we not read, "Of His own will begat He us by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures?" (James i. 18). He wrote of the Father of lights in ver. 17, and of God and the Father in ver. 27. Evidently he knew the Father, but it was not his, as guided by the Holy Spirit, to dwell upon the *manner of the love* which the Father has bestowed upon us: not in the fact of begetting us, but in giving us now, here in this world, the name of children. We do not wait until we reach our home on high to learn of our near and intimate relation with God our Father. We are to know it now, and so know it, "That the love wherewith Thou has loved Me may be in them and I in them."

We are creatures of course, and ever shall be, and as such are responsible; and there is added the new responsibility of children. The enjoyment of our Father's love, His sweet smile of approval are such incentives to obedience, to the acceptance of His will. Are we so foolish as to want our own will? Then it is clear we need the rod, and we shall get it. He nurtures, and He admonishes, and chastens. Poor, foolish, and wayward we often are, but He knows; and if He uses the rod, love holds it, and our good is His object. He is holy and would make us partakers of it, partakers of His holiness. A dear Christian lady said to me, "I do so long for the Lord to come." I knew that she had a great dread of death, so I said, "Is there not some will of your own in that? You do not want to pass through death!" That is natural

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enough; but it is due to our Father for us to say, "Not my will, but Thine be done." It is due to our Saviour and Lord to be willing to depart to be with Him which is far better, and to come to His presence as more than compensating for the humiliation of dissolution. It is right to look for His coming. That is our hope. Meanwhile we are to enjoy our prospects; to enjoy our Father's love; and to delight in Christ. As for the world, we know it is false and worthless, and we do not want it. Christ is infinitely better.

As the second Person in the Trinity, He is the only-begotten of the Father, dwelling eternally in His bosom. As the Son of Man He has glorified God and has been glorified by God; and He is the centre—God's centre, and ours too through grace. He was the manifester of God; for He is God—the revealer of the Father—the medium through which all that creatures can bear to look on of the glory of the Divine Being. He is the light itself, for God is light. And He is the lamp or vessel for shading or toning of that light to suit the measured capacity of those whose ineffable bliss it will be to be with Him and like Him. Yes, He is man, but what a Man! The spouse in the Canticles says that her Beloved is "the chiefest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely. Not so can we speak of ours save as to the last sentence, "the altogether lovely." Our Beloved is God's Beloved also; enough for the Infinite Father's heart; incomparable and of indescribable beauty and moral worth. We may just say, "Blessed Lord Jesus!" and then, Where is the world? Faded, contemptible, and forsaken. We want it not!

E. R. W.

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It is as one who stands by the margin of a lake, and gazes on his own image close beneath him; conceive this contemplator of himself borne gradually aloft towards the heavens, and the image which he still beholds as he soars will deepen in proportion as he rises.

## WATCH AND REMEMBER.

THERE is sketched for us in Acts xx. 17-28, not only what should be, but what then was the part of a true and trusted servant of Christ—a lowly serving man, whom we cannot think of closely without having brought before us the Perfect Servant of Jehovah. He trod in his Master's steps—ever poor enriching others; not frequently ministered to, but finding in the profession of an honest trade, not an hindrance to his service, but a proof of love, the wherewith to meet his wants and those with him. Neither is it a proof of faith lacking when some of the precious hours are occupied in this way for thereby one is enabled to come to the aid of the weak. If our blessed Lord opened His hand to our gaze should we not find the marks of His passion there? And how grudgingly at times was He ministered to of those simple necessities; hungry and thirsty and weary Himself, His disciples also hungering with Him. So they knew the reality of association with Him in the period of His rejection.

How precious the grace and wisdom given to our Apostle! We can picture him, the reverse of shame diffusing his face, as he would hold up, or open his hands, and express “yourselves know that *these hands* have ministered to my wants and to those who were with me.” We miscall our palms honest ones although we may have in part professed and wrought in honest trades, yet in bestowing the fruit of our labours we may not have had our blessed Lord so immediately before us as to enjoy that better part, so God-like. “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Remember that He enjoins diligence to maintain good works, and to do good and communicate are sacrifices pleasing to Him.

“I have *showed* you all things!” What a force and pungency there is when manner of life, in harmony with public and private preaching and teaching, have their suited blend and balance. How cavil is silenced! How His name is preserved from scorn, derision and blasphemy when Christ is lived as well as preached, and pains taken to tread in His steps as well as



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preserve the Spirit of Him at whose feet we have professedly sat and learned and even of Him so much meeker than the honoured servant Moses. We are surely looked to express in our conduct whose company we keep—even to cherish in heart and thought the call we have had from our God—breaking and taking us from the misery and degradations experienced in being bond slaves to sin now to “fellowship God’s Son”—yet still here in the scene of His rejection.

We see, too, in this sketch not only the spirit of a true servant of our blessed Lord, but the faithful word recording failure and unfaithfulness, and so dismal an outlook without and within that one’s heart would readily sink with despair did we not get in rapid, close proximity to “there will come in amongst you after my departure grievous wolves, not sparing the flock” (those who lay claim to Apostolic succession would do well to accept the Scripture statement of the case)—“and from among your own selves shall rise up men speaking perverted things to draw away the disciples after them”—(a double work of the enemy who knows no mercy, seeks to scatter, devour, harass, and demoralise those dear to Him)—but diligence and dependence enjoined, we have those reassuring words to nerve and brace us, let the picture be as dark and dismal as it may, “And now I commit you to God, and to the Word of His grace which is able to build you up and give to you an inheritance among all the sanctified.”

Is it not strange that such mighty matters, involving such issues, should have so small a place in heart and thought—disciples of old slept for sorrow; could not watch with Him one hour. Although furnished so wonderfully with the Word, and having withal the Holy Spirit and so that matters of the deepest import, in our weakness and infirmity we might let slip, forget, or fail in, we have that Word and Spirit to bring things to our remembrance, that we may ever be fresh and vigilant; yet it would seem that not only disciples of a past dispensation show ever and anon that which is so unsuited to any man, especially the man of God, lack in watchfulness over himself and that dependence upon

God and the sense of the supremacy and sufficiency of the Word for the whole of the way. And can we not account for the successes of the enemy and consequently the reverse of those bearing His Name in the habitual neglect of watchful dependence upon God, evidencing mistrust of self. And then we have not always been expressing in our speech and ways the grace of being clothed with humility. When we come to review a little after this sort the surprise is how wonderfully we have been preserved, and we own it has not been due to our devotion and fidelity to Him and His Word, but all of His grace. Yet we should know how hopeless to look for healing and spiritual health to return when we practically rule out the commendations of our Apostle who commends us to God and the Word of His grace—when we in action, assume to know the way and have sufficiency in ourselves for the path and His service. Yet how easy and precious, and what comfort and solace would be found, did we but draw near in trustful confidence. Oh! what infatuation and what folly to cherish and cling to our own way, to turn back upon the God who loves us, and upon Christ who gave Himself for our sins to deliver us from the world, from his servants and guides whom he raised up to prompt us. Yet they of Asia turned from Paul, and we have but in sorrow to add, history has been so sorrowfully repeated in our own times as we are witnesses to departure and little concerns for our holy faith in Europe, America, and Australasia. He abides faithful however, and His Word and Truth abide, and it is open to all who believe, to know and enjoy the calm of His presence, to have the joy of being heard and answered as we cry in our need and distresses. We may be weak, erring, ignorant, but the more sensible we are of these set-backs and deficiencies the more may we appreciate what it is to be commended to God, to His Word, to cleave to the Lord, to keep ourselves in the love of God, pray in the Holy Ghost, to rejoice always in the Lord. May writer and reader know more of this for His precious Name's sake.

W. B.

**THE EPISTLE OF CHRIST.—2 Corinthians iii.**

You read a person's character in his letter. Now the Christian is Christ's letter to the world. In verse 3, the apostle speaks of him as "the epistle of Christ" written by the Spirit of the living God in fleshy tables of the heart, and contrasts him with the law written on tables of stone. A Christian is, therefore, a person upon whose heart the Spirit of God has engraved Christ, just as truly as God wrote and engraved the law upon the tables of stone, so that the world may read Christ in the man, as an Israelite might read the law on the stones. Now, how far can we, according to this definition, call ourselves Christians? We have come short, I doubt not, we have blotted the letter; but I speak of the thing in principle.

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A weary world is this ;  
 No rest of soul is found ;  
 Trouble and sorrow everywhere ;  
 For sin is all around !  
 In Christ alone we find our rest,  
 And in His love are richly blest !

He, now in heaven above,  
 Sits on His Father's throne ;  
 Yet cares for every feeble one —  
 They are in truth His own !  
 He bought them with His precious blood,  
 That He might bring them home to God !

He's coming very soon—  
 I wish He'd come to-day—  
 For He will raise or change each one  
 And take us hence away !  
 Oh ! what ecstatic bliss 'twill be  
 His glorious Countenance to see !

E. R. W.

## EPHESIANS VI.

“AND the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, *which is the WORD OF GOD.*” The Lord uses this word, which “is quick and powerful, and sharper than any *two-edged sword,*” in searching our hearts, discerning their thoughts and intents, convincing us of sin, and laying low our pride; but here we find he says to the saint, “Do you take this ‘SWORD’ as part of the ‘ARMOUR’ to be *used* by you in conflict with Satan.” This can only be done efficiently in the Spirit; if the flesh uses it, there may be rebuke taken where there ought to be comfort, or encouragement where reproof is needed. This “weapon of our warfare” is “mighty,” not through man’s intellectual use of it, but through an honest, humble dependence on God the Holy Ghost, the Spirit that abideth in us, who is “greater than he that is in the world” (Satan). But it is only as being on the opposite side to Satan that we can use it aright. It is not with, “such a thing is *expedient,*” &c., that we have to meet Satan, but with, “*God says so;*” “*It is written.*”

Would Satan present us something better than that which God has given (the way in which he tempted Adam), we are “sanctified unto *obedience,*” and have this assurance, “If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” Our Lord might have prayed the Father and He would have given Him twelve legions of angels. He need not have suffered; but He came “*to do the will* of Him that sent Him.” By doing that will He has saved us. What is the place wherein we are set? That of Christ when in the world—*obedience.* The great thing to be sought after is practical conformity unto Christ. “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”

The place of *sanctification* is ours; and that “*unto obedience.*” It is in this way that the “word of God” has its power over us. A man may be saying, “I wonder what the meaning of this text is”: put him in the place of temptation, and he would find it to be his very strength—that wherewith to oppose Satan.

J. N. D.

## THE APOSTLE'S SUPREME DESIRE.

(PHIL. iii. 10, 11).

THE Epistle addressed to the Philippians by Paul breathes of Christ in every part of it. It is an exquisite and matchless presentation of Him in varied characters. And if we ask why these saints were so favoured, we find the answer in their then prevailing condition. They were yearning for Christ, and where there are hearts ready to receive, there is a gracious God ready to minister of that *preciousness* which is His portion for those who believe (1 Pet. ii.).

Look at that instructive little word in the first chap. ver. 3, which should read—"I thank my God upon my whole remembrance of you." How very much that reveals of the consistent and Christ-honouring lives which they had led from the day when they first fellowshipped the Gospel. Of whom else could he say so much? Not over the *whole path* of the Corinthians, nor of the Galatians, could Paul look and give thanks for the whole remembrance of their past. So here the Spirit was free to take of Christ and minister Him to them for their joy and refreshment.

And in one respect, at least, this 3rd chapter in which Paul's supreme desire is expressed, is unique. It gives the personal experiences and aspirations of a man of like passions with ourselves, but where shall we find so forcefully shown the attractive and energising power of Christ over the human heart?

The Apostle wanted to fully follow Christ, and he was drawn along by an irresistible power. Like the spouse in the Canticles he had prayed, "Draw me;" and then, under the magnetic influence of that Blessed One in the glory, he *ran* after Him. In Christ were centred his highest, brightest hopes. He was in the most glorious way *illuminated*.

And in the light of that illumination he wanted to follow Christ, but not along the beaten track, if one may so say—the upward path—but from the glory down to humiliation and suffering, and thence home

to His house and heart for<sup>ever</sup>. Thoughts of the glory were not uppermost in his mind ; but rather, of Christ in all His displayed beauties ; and of all that his adored Lord had passed through he desired to have a measure of practical experience, that he might be enabled to have fellowship with his Master in all things.

On the way to Damascus, with the most ardent desire in his heart to clear the earth for ever of the name of Jesus, he was "*apprehended*" by the One he persecuted. What an event for Paul ! and what glorious results accrued. Jesus, the once despised Nazarene, came into his life, and the whole bearing of his career was altered—every fibre of the being of this once impetuous and headstrong man was touched. His life was placed upon a new pivot, and from henceforth he would know no man after the flesh. Old things had verily passed away ; all things had become new. The sight which he had had of the glorified Man was the beginning of this new career, in which the One but<sup>lately</sup> so lightly esteemed occupied the first, the central, and the last place. Christ had become a necessity to Paul—his "*all in all.*" Earthly ambitions gave place to heavenly yearnings, and the knowledge gained at Gamaliel's feet would bear no comparison with the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.

Now read our verses carefully, and the weighing well of every word will bring suited recompense. We find revealed the way, so contrary to all natural desire, along which Paul wished, in his new found ardour, to travel to reach his Lord. He would tread the way his Master had trod. So in his quest of Christ, the Apostle commences from the glory—from Christ Himself in His peerless excellency, down through His resurrection, to the deep depths of His suffering and humiliation, in as far as he could be identified with the Lord, seeking conformity to His death—wondrous desire!—if by any means he might attain to the resurrection from among the dead. For this would place him in Christ's presence, not for a glimpse of

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His glory—not for a passing sight, but for eternity, to the intense delight of both Saviour and saved.

“That I may know Him.” The desire thus expressed bespeaks a yearning almost immeasurable. It is not the knowledge of relationship of which the Apostle here speaks; for, in its measure, that is possessed by the youngest as well as the oldest of God's saints; but rather the knowledge of Christ as the only sufficing Object for both heart and mind—for time and for eternity. There is a wealth of meaning in Paul's *know*. It has no reference to any mere superficial knowledge. Here we dive deep. It means, this knowing Christ, practical acquaintance with what He is intrinsically. It means being near enough to the heart of Christ to be able to enter into His immeasurable love, His perfect obedience. It means the ability to follow Him in spirit along the path wherein His matchless devotion to His Father was so wondrously displayed.

And suitably the Apostle desires to know “the power of His resurrection.” This was Divine power exerted on His behalf who was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father (Eph. i.; Rom. vi.). No other power could possibly avail for Paul, or for any other, with such an exalted aim. In Gethsemane's garden Christ desired the fellowship of those who were favoured to be there with Him. But none could watch with Him one hour. But, as revealing the cause of the failure, the Lord graciously said that though the spirit was willing the flesh was weak. But our Apostle, ere coming to the fellowship of His sufferings, desires the exercise of that power now in a spiritual way, that he might be morally supported in that place by a strength having no connection with the flesh, but rather which in its exercise takes us from a place of sin and death, and puts us into one of Divine favour and unalloyed joy, and sustains us there!

Down through His resurrection to the fellowship of His sufferings Paul's desire takes him. In so far as it was possible he would know what His Master passed through. This is not the *way* of man, nor the *desire* of the flesh. Its aspirations are not to know the moral

glory of sufferings, but the reverse. It seeks the place of authority for self-display.

But how little one seems able to dilate upon such a theme. How closely it touches one. Is Christ so known in His superlative excellencies that conformity to His death is yearned for? Conformity, not to His life, but to His death! What a triumph for Christ! It was in death that "self-renunciation was practically, entirely, perfectly, manifested in Christ," and that was what Paul was after. May further meditation on this lead us, in "undivided energy of purpose," to press towards the mark and prize of our calling on high.

H. F.

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### A NOTE ON ONESIMUS.

IN reading the epistle to Philemon recently, I was struck afresh with the ways of God in His wisdom and grace in connection with the run-away slave Onesimus. His conversion did not *alter*, or deliver him *from* the relationship which existed between him and his master, though in a *new* relationship with God, through grace, and delivered from the power of Satan. Nor would the Apostle take upon himself, as by right, to retain Onesimus with him even for service in the Gospel, and thus seem to appropriate the slave and usurp the rights of the master; so he sent him back to Philemon, not now as a slave, but above a slave—a brother beloved. Onesimus has therefore to return to his master and his bondage, a slave still, but the Lord's free man. He has to go back and carry out all his responsibilities from a new motive, and by a new power and energy—the Holy Ghost, and "adorn the doctrine of God his Saviour" in the old relationship and let others see the transforming power, and the sustaining power of the love of Christ.

How beautiful and blessed this is, dear brethren! Just think of a slave, compelled by the power of the grace of God and the love of Christ to return to his bondage from which he had fled, and become an ornament to the doctrine in that very bondage. What



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an example for us to-day to "go and do likewise" in the different relationships of life where grace found us and blessed us. God does not deliver us from them, however trying they may be, but expects us to glorify Him in them till He sees fit to call us out of them. "Let every man abide in the *same calling* wherein he was called" (1 Cor. vii. 20)—"With God" (ver. 24). Should the calling be such that God could not be *with him* in it, then he must see to getting out of it.

How sweet to think of Onesimus going back to his master with all the guilty past forgiven, and received as the Apostle himself, to be henceforth profitable and useful! What a picture of *forgiveness, acceptance, and acceptability!* The dark, guilty past obliterated in the light of a changed and happy present, with the joyful prospect of a blessed meeting with Paul in his "prepared lodging" when the time arrived for him to come to them. The picture is really a lovely one, with most important principles standing out in bold relief for our souls' instruction.

WM. EASTON.

*New Zealand.*


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**THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.**

BEFORE attempting to pen a line on the above subject, I would frankly acknowledge that some nine or ten years since, I wrote certain papers which were adversely commented on, and in which I went too far—farther than Scripture warrants in distinguishing between the Deity and humanity of our blessed Lord. It may appear strange to some, but never did I write with more personal delight and heart enjoyment of Christ than when I wrote those papers; and this helped to make it difficult for me to realise I had blundered. I see I did so, and am thankful that grace was given to own and to withdraw all I had written. Many, to my certain knowledge, got much help. How good is our God! How often He uses blunderers! Blunders are blots and things to be ashamed of, but

how true it is that grace abounds. I have at times felt that my withdrawal, due to the Lord and to the consciences of many who were troubled, may have perplexed others, who in consequence, would be hindered from learning all that God would have us know about His beloved Son. In that way Satan would gain an advantage, and the truth that sanctifies, suffer loss; not, of course, in itself, but in the souls of many of God's saints.

"This is life eternal," said Jesus, "that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." Peter wrote, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord." Life eternal, received on believing in the Son (see John v. 24), qualifies and capacitates for knowing God and Jesus; and grace and peace are multiplied as we grow in that knowledge. Paul, too, with an ardour that was heaven-born and intense, said, "That I may know Him (Jesus), and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death" (Phil. iii.).

I take it that danger lies in allowing our minds to work upon a certain Divine secret—on what is purposely hidden from us; and it was pointed out by the blessed Lord when here in the flesh, that "no man knoweth the Son, but the Father." We do know, and it is of fundamental importance that we should do so, that Jesus was God—was the only begotten Son of God—was the Eternal Son of the Eternal Father. Of course, He is that now and ever will be. I know of no such expression in the Scriptures as "The Eternal Son," but the truth is plain enough. Ever and always God, yet He was not the Father, though He revealed the Father. He was not the Holy Spirit: He was the Son, and there could have been no Father without the Son, for the Son was the only-begotten of the Father. A man is a man even though he remains unmarried and has never begotten a child, but he is not a father. God is God, but in the Godhead there are persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the same in

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essence but distinguished clearly in the Word. He, the only begotten of the Father, stooped in infinite grace to become a man, a real man. Begotten in time—conceived miraculously in the virgin's womb—born of a woman—of Him it is written, "Thou art My Son, *to-day* have I begotten Thee" (Ps. ii.; Heb. i. and v. 5).

Thus was He the Son of the Father in a twofold way. Herein is a mystery: one personality embracing Deity and humanity; distinct in their nature but united in Him. *How* is the secret left untold and purposely so? Into that we must not pry. As Divine He had no beginning; as a Man He had. A little babe nursed in the arms of a fond mother, and suckled at her breast, yet at the same time the Maker and Upholder of all things. There was no need to assert that Jesus was human. His birth, infancy, boyhood, and manhood were so manifest to the eyes of all. His Deity—how different! One must be taught of God to see Almighty God in Jesus viewed as a man, and He is largely so presented in the Word. God was with Him—God approved of Him—God was in Him. Peter, in the house of Cornelius said (Acts x. 38), "Jesus of Nazareth, how that God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost and with power . . . for God was *with* Him" (R.V.). "Jesus of Nazareth, a man *approved* of God" (Acts ii. 22). "God was *in* Christ" (2 Cor. v. 19). "For *in* Him all the fulness was pleased to dwell" (Col. i. 19, 20); and after death and resurrection, "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (chap. ii. 9). Neither of these statements explicitly say that He was God.

If we turn to Isa. vii. 14, we read, "A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (God with us). And in chap. ix. 6 it is said, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." Who is He? "And His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, (or Father of Eternity), the Prince of Peace." What a marvellous person! In chap. xi. He is before us as man, yet shall He act as a Divine person; for in ver. 4 we read, "With the breath of His lips shall He

slay the wicked." In chap. 1. He says "I clothe the heavens with blackness, I make sackcloth their covering," and yet He occupies the learner's place. God and Man! We can distinguish but cannot divide: "I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not My face from shame and spitting; for the Lord God will help Me" (verses 6, 7).

The Son the virgin bare was Man—was the Son of David—He was that holy thing, which, as was announced to her beforehand, should be called the Son of God. But more, He was Immanuel—God with us! He was The Mighty God, and The Father of Eternity. He, too, in the plenitude of His Divine power, clothes the heavens with blackness, and makes sackcloth their covering. God is here surely! Yet, being also man, He could have His ear opened to receive instruction, could give His back to smiters, could receive every conceivable insult, and could meekly bear all, trusting in Jehovah God to help Him. As a lowly, obedient, trusting Man, He was tempted of the devil. He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be so tempted, and it was as a man He overcame by obedience to the written Word. He might have crushed the tempter by Divine power, but no! He became man to be what man should have been, but was not. How Jesus honoured the Word, God's written Word, quoting, too, from the book that modern critics would place upon the shelf, disputing its authorship and so forth. Jesus owned its Divine authority; He Himself obeyed its injunctions; and the devil never questioned it, which he certainly would have done had the critics been right. The One who came from heaven, the only-begotten of the Father, the Creator and Upholder of all things, owned as Scripture this book of Deuteronomy. Did He not know? Is not His sanction worth infinitely more than the opinion of some men, who, in presuming to be wise, have become fools?

Jesus, a Man like unto us in having a spirit, soul, and body, but yet how unlike! In Him was no sin.

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He was a holy Man. Like us He had a human mother; unlike us He had no human father. His conception was miraculous. He was not of Adam's race. He was unique. He stood alone. Never one like unto Him before, and never will there be another. True, we, believers, are to be like Him in the future, but that is like unto what *He is now*, not like unto what He was in the days of His flesh. A feast of delight the earth afforded to God the Father as He looked down upon the sin-stricken earth, for thereon was His beloved Son who was here as a Man to do His will and to glorify God. In His heart there was not only obedience but the delight to obey, and His motives, desires, and acts were of priceless value to God. Should we wonder that He keeps the mystery of His person from man? God's interest in Him is, must be, very far superior to ours.

Jesus knew what it was to be hungry, to be thirsty, to be weary, to need sleep, to look for comforters but to find none. How these things attest His humanity! Disease and death had no claim on Him. Capable of dying He was. Liable to die He was not. He, the Son of God, became a man that He might die, and this alone would show that we must not say He died only as a man which in one sense is true. But a person dies, and His person was both Divine and human. God as such cannot die for He is immortal. Jesus could, and did die, for He was God and man. Death terminates human life; defiled by sin in us it is forfeited. Jesus shared in flesh and blood (and "the blood is the life") that He might give it up in grace for us. That blood was certainly human, not Divine, but His personality must needs give the value of all that He was to it, and we read, "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

I know of no life that He laid down but the life He took in becoming man. Eternal life He certainly had and is the source thereof for us; but that life, even if we die, is not terminated. It does not cease at death, and it would not be eternal if it did. Jesus died. In that He died He died unto sin once; in that He liveth

He liveth unto God. The days of His flesh, in the which He offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, are ended, and never will be resumed. The risen and ascended Jesus is now what we through grace look to be, but are not here, nor can be. "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

On the cross, "Jesus cried with a loud voice, Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit, and having said thus He gave up the ghost" (Luke xxiii. 46). He died. He was buried. Yet He lived; for He it was who affirmed that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, long since dead, were living, and in fact, that all lived to God. Death then was not a person's end. It ends the life of a person, when the body, formed out of the ground, returns to that out of which it was taken, but the soul and the spirit survive in every case. Jesus died, yet Jesus lived, and was in Paradise, and there received the penitent thief whilst His body lay in the tomb. "It was not possible that He should be holden of death," nor could God suffer it. "*Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell (or hades); neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.*" "Thine Holy One" refers to the body, the only part of any man that is mortal and that on account of sin. Jesus, the sinless One, could and did die, but death had no claim on Him. He died in grace for sinners. He died to glorify God. He died to annul the power of the devil. He died that eventually creation might be reconciled to God. He died! yes, He became dead. Oh, the grace of it! the moral beauty of it! The power of it! It is the theme of incomparable sweetness! the wonder of angels! the delight of all the redeemed for evermore!

The humanity of Jesus was that in which the eternal life was manifested (1 John i.)—all its moral characteristics were therein displayed. So, too, God was manifested. He was God manifest in the flesh. It is not for us to single out certain things and say Deity had no part in them. He hungered, He thirsted, He ate, He drank, He was weary, He slept, He died.

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These in themselves belong to humanity, not to Deity. He walked on the water with human feet but surely by Divine power. Interest in His disciples in their distress made Him do so; an interest human no doubt, but Divine in its fulness and depth. Jesus wept tears—human tears. Was that all? That sigh, that groan, those tears, human though they were, expressed the deep feeling of the infinite God. Compassion, sympathy, tenderness, love, all combined, were expressed thus in human words and deeds, showing how near God had come to His poor sinful creatures in this lowly, despised Man. They crucified Him. They killed Him. Had He not been a man they could not have done so. Whom did they crucify? Jesus of Nazareth? Yes, but they crucified the Lord of glory. They killed the Prince of life. Literally, of course, they did not, but they crucified Him who was the Lord of glory, and they killed Him who was the Prince of life; and therefore the guilt of their act is judged by the truth of what He was in Person, clear evidence of which His works as well as words afforded. So, too, Jesus died, and while God as such could not die, it was true that He who was God died. It was the Divine glory of His Person, that gave its value to His sufferings and death. The body and the blood belonged to Him. "*This is my body.*" So, too, with the blood. No right-minded man would talk about the blood of God, or the body of God, but we cannot divide. United were His Deity and His humanity, forming together One Person. We can distinguish but cannot separate.

Since Jesus died and rose again, and ascended up to the right hand of God, He fills certain offices. He is Priest and Advocate, Shepherd and Bishop, and will be King over all the earth in a coming day. Viewing Him as a man, these offices were a glory to Him. Viewing Him as Divine He glorifies the office. Do we not read, "So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an high priest."? He waited for a call. As man He is priest, yet we read, "Jesus, the Son of God, abideth a priest continually." Think of Jesus

as "God over all blessed for evermore," and it must be at once seen that to reign as King over the earth is very great condescension. Nothing can dignify Him. He dignifies all He touches. He sits, though a man, at the right hand of God; and has sat down on His Father's throne. These facts attest His Divinity. None but a Divine person could sit there. As Man He is the first begotten from the dead—He is the head of new creation—He is the head of His body the Church—He is the head of all principality and power. In these various headships He is alone. There cannot be two heads. So it is not the truth to sing, or to say, "And *all* His glory share." We shall be like Him—wondrous fact! Union with Christ does not involve participation in the Deity, nor in the honours and the glories that belong to God alone. We shall worship Him. We shall adore Him; yet shall we sit with Him on His throne and we shall reign with Him! E. R. W.

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### UNBELIEF, ITS CAUSE AND CURE.

IN each case with the disciples, as brought before us in Luke xxiv., we find perplexity. They are troubled, scarcely knowing what to do. There and here is it not much the same? Do we not find in all such cases, and in our own perplexities, different phases of unbelief? But in the Lord's words to Martha (John xi. 40) may we not find a key to the *cause* and *cure* of unbelief? He says, "Said I not unto thee?" He had spoken words which were intended to meet the case. Faith acting upon these words would have been free from trouble and perplexity though the circumstances may have been there all the same. Martha had been told not only what would have lifted her above the trouble, but against the dark back-ground of the trouble she would have seen, in a new light, the glory of God. But she had *forgotten* His words, hence the unbelief and perplexity. Yet, oh! such is His grace, He will permit her to see the glory of God.

So with the disciples in connection with the death and resurrection of the Lord. Why are they cast



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upon themselves and giving way to the thoughts and reasonings of unbelief? Why have they to be thus questioned by the Lord: "What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk and are sad?" It is simply because they have forgotten His words. Could they, can we, ever be aright in circumstances that God has not provided for in His Word? Is there not always a word that would be God's own answer to the circumstances? Surely there is, and if we are perplexed and giving way to unbelief, like the disciples and Martha, it is because we are culpably ignorant of, or have forgotten, the word the Lord has given for the occasion.

In what we read in Luke xvii. 31-34, and other instances, see how gently, lovingly, yet faithfully, the Lord tells His disciples about His death and resurrection. The Shepherd was to be smitten and the sheep scattered, but He was to rise from the dead, and they were not to fear, but to count upon God, and with girded loins and lights burning they were to be like men that wait for their Lord (Luke xii.).

In Luke xvii. we see how graphically He entered into the very details of what He was to suffer and how He should rise again the third day. They had been told, and He had told Martha, what would suit in the circumstances. Has He not also given us in His perfect Word what would always meet our circumstances? Yet how often may He not say, "Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldest believe thou shouldest see the glory of God?" This tender rebuke shows the cause of our unbelief. *We have forgotten His words.*

The disciples had real truth in minute detail, and that from a perfect Teacher. Yet "they understood none of these things." Hence they soon lost it all, and when the time came they were unbelieving and perplexed. It was not the hearing of the truth from a perfect Teacher, however plain and remarkable it might be as to detail, that would avail them in the hour of need. The truth required to be *understood*, and *remembered*, and *applied* at the proper time.

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Why was it not so? There was not the moral state necessary for the reception of the Word. They were not taking heed how they heard. What was more, their *wills* were in the way. They wanted the glory of the kingdom without the cross. The Lord was telling them that the cross must first be endured. The flesh would avoid suffering; they willed that it should be otherwise, and so they understood none of these things, and hence forgot His words. Was it not the same with Martha? Is it not much the same with us? When the cross or suffering is involved, how often is there a perverse will, accompanied by a low moral state, and a darkened understanding, and consequently a bad memory! The warning or the guiding word has been given by a faithful Lord. It is unheeded, and so we pass on into the circumstances, and in our perplexity have to learn and judge our negligence. That tender rebuke, "Said I not unto thee?" not only shows that we had forgotten His words, but that we were in a wilful or low moral state, when the Lord would have prepared us for the coming trial. Then we must reap as we have sown.

Well, how can we avoid this in future? He suggests the simplest way possible. The cause of unbelief is forgetting His words, so the cure for unbelief is the remembering of His words. You see this in Luke xxiv. Those men in shining garments at the sepulchre say, "*Remember how He spake.*" Though those who came to the sepulchre were "much perplexed," this perplexity and unbelief were dispelled when "they remembered His words." To the two on the way to Emmaus the Lord did not at once bring comfort nor reveal Himself. Though He is there as the risen Saviour, He first calls attention to the Scriptures. "He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." It is just once more that tender rebuke, "Said I not unto thee?" He calls to mind the forgotten words, and then, when their hearts are burning under the influence of the words, He reveals Himself. They now believe and see the glory of God.

Surely by these things, so simply presented, we ought to learn much that will be for our own blessing and for the Lord's honour. Instead of having to stumble in perplexity and unbelief when any tests or peculiarly trying circumstances come upon us, by remembering His words we might have the calmness and clearness of faith, and see the glory of God. These lessons will apply to our individual circumstances and to whatever affects us in connection with being gathered to the name of the Lord. No doubt it means exercise and keeping in the place of dependence, that our ears may be open to hear the words of the Lord. Our wills likewise must be curbed, our understandings enlightened and our memories refreshed if we would be kept from dishonouring the Lord by unbelief and from having our hearts sad and perplexed. We see, then, in a measure, the cause of unbelief and its cure. Then if, instead of forgetting the words of the Lord, we remember them, that will prepare the way for the Lord, to reveal Himself, so that, come what may, instead of so stumbling in perplexity and unbelief, faith would keep us in the light and we should see the glory of God. W. C. J.

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## RESURRECTION.

“GRIEVE not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed *unto the day of redemption.*”

As with “eternal life,” so with “redemption;” there is a double usage to the word, a present and a future reference. At one time (Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14) *we have* redemption, at another we are *sealed unto its day*, as above, or *waiting* for it, as in Rom. viii. 23.

Redemption means deliverance from bondage or any other perverted position. When spoken of as a present possession, it is “the forgiveness of sins,” the realised redemption of the soul, which has already been brought back to God from the bondage under which it was to sin, Satan and death. When spoken of as future, it refers to the body, which, though its redemption price has been paid, has not yet been actually restored to

liberty from the bondage of corruption, but awaits this in the resurrection. When "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 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;" for though "we shall not all sleep, we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Then, when these bodies of our humiliation shall have been thus "fashioned like unto the body of His glory," and "Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we also shall appear with Him in glory," to sit with Him on His throne as promised throughout the era of millennial glory.

Such is the "day of redemption" unto which believers are "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." That blessed One, having once taken possession of this "mortal body" as His temple, will never relinquish His claim on it, even though for a season He suffer it to be taken to pieces and returned to dust. "He that raised up Jesus from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by *His Spirit* that dwelleth in you" (Rom. viii. 11).

If the believer has already received, as (praised be God!) he has, eternal life and a new nature, fitting his soul for the presence of God, so that he can be fitly occupied in "giving thanks to the Father, who *hath made him meet* to be partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light," it is not so as yet in respect of the body in which he dwells; that is still a "body of death," a "mortal," a dishonoured and corruptible body; a body of humiliation, in which he groans, being

burdened, awaiting its redemption as the completion of his blessing.

Concerning the resurrection body of the saint, we have two pieces of distinct information; the one, that it will be fashioned like to the body of Christ's glory (Phil. iii. 21); the other, that it will be "raised a spiritual body" (1 Cor. xv. 44).

Of the *aspect* of that glorious body to which it is to be assimilated, the mount of transfiguration may furnish us a conception; of its *properties*, so different from those of the present, we may learn somewhat from Luke xxiv. 31, 36, 39, 51; John xx. 19; Acts i. 9, which indicate its superiority to certain so called "laws of matter," to which our present frames are wholly subject.

In respect of the phrase "spiritual body," I will only remark here, that it stands contrasted with "natural," not with "material," as is apt to suggest itself to some minds.

Such a redeemed and glorified body will be a suited abode for the redeemed and fully restored soul, with its eternal life and divine nature—a vehicle for the manifestation of that life in worship and service, as well as for the enjoyment of God and of that blessed and glorious One, after whose own image it is fashioned, and whom it will "see as He is"—a prospect that may well sustain the heart of the suffering pilgrim saint during the little season he is called to live for Christ down here. If service be now hindered by this "body of death," be it borne in mind that the glory to God is scarce, if anything less, in the manifestation of the life of Jesus in our "mortal bodies," in the face of opposition and obstacles, than in a more perfect manifestation of it in those spiritual bodies that will offer no hindrance, in a scene where all will be genial, and imperfection at an end.

Though outside the scope of the subject we have been dealing with, one would scarcely, in the present day, be faithful to the Lord, in taking leave of such a theme, without entering an indignant though sorrowing protest, against the evil doctrine that is gaining such

a hold on the minds of men, concerning the final punishment of the wicked. On the one hand the doctrine of annihilation, and on the other that of restoration after an epoch of purgatorial or atoning suffering, are sapping the foundations of the doctrine of the cross, to the injury of many souls.

Scripture is by no means so full in detail on this awfully solemn and painful theme—doubtless, more painful by far to the Divine Spirit than to us—yet nothing is lacking in clearness as to the facts, if there be but simplicity to receive them.

That not only the souls of the wicked will survive their separation from the body, but that they will also be raised again to life in the body, is clear, amongst other Scriptures, from the accounts furnished to us of the judgments of the quick and dead (Acts x. 42; 2 Tim. iv. 1).

In the prophetic outline of the former, supplied by our Lord Himself in Matt. xxv., the living wicked, in their bodies, as they stand “at His appearing and His kingdom,” are seen to be dismissed into *eternal* punishment—a punishment as enduring as the eternal life into which the righteous inheritors of the kingdom “go away.”

Besides this judgment of the living, the Lord pre-intimates a “resurrection of judgment” in contrast with “the resurrection of life,” which is the hope of the believer (John v. 29). Of this judgment we have the vision in Rev. xx. 5, 12-15, where we see “the rest of the dead,” who “lived not again” in the first resurrection, nor *until* the close of the thousand years of millennial glory, standing then before the “great white throne,” judged according to their works, and cast into the lake of fire, called the second death; whose description, as given in verse 10, is not that of annihilation, but that they “shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever.”

Nothing is clearer in the word of God than the co-equal certainty that the wicked will live on to eternity, in the energy of that fallen and corrupted life and nature in which they now walk in death, and that the

saints of God will live on to eternity, with God, in the energy of that new and eternal life with which they are quickened in the new birth, and in which they now live, in the flesh or body, by the faith of the Son of God, who loved them and gave Himself for them.

That there is "no life but in Christ" is the devil's lie. That there is "no life *for or with God* save in Christ" is God's precious and eternal truth. The near approach, in sound, of the lie to the truth—nay, its almost identity as to sound with the Scripture, whose sense it overturns—ensnares the souls of many. And what wonder? for "even Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light."

R. H.

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## AFTER DEATH.

God gives people, at times, according to the real bent of their hearts' desire," . . . because of this, 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*" (2 Thess. ii.). If men will not have the truth when it is put before them, they shall, assuredly, have a lie. If they will not have Christ, they shall have Satan; if they will not have heaven, they shall have hell. Will the infidel mind find fault with this? Ere it does so, let it prove that all who are judicially dealt with have fully answered their responsibilities. Let it, for instance, prove, in Pharaoh's case, that he acted, in any measure, up to the light he possessed. The same is to be proved in every case. Unquestionably the task of proving rests on those who are disposed to quarrel with God's mode of dealing with the rejecter of His truth. The simple-hearted child of God will justify Him, in view of the most inscrutable dispensations; and even if he cannot meet, and satisfactorily solve the difficult questions of a sceptical mind, he can rest perfectly satisfied with this word, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" There is far more wisdom in this method of settling an apparent difficulty,

than in the most elaborate argument; for it is perfectly certain that the heart which is in a condition to "reply against God," will not be convinced by the arguments of men.

However, it is God's prerogative to answer all the proud reasonings, and bring down the lofty imaginations of the human mind. He can write the sentence of death upon nature in its fairest forms. "It is appointed unto men once to die." This cannot be avoided. Man may seek to hide his humiliation in various ways; to cover his retreat through the valley of death in the most heroic manner possible; to call the last humiliating stage of his career by the most honourable titles he can devise; to gild the bed of death with a false light; to adorn the funeral procession and the grave with the appearance of pomp, pageantry, and glory; to raise above the mouldering ashes a splendid monument, on which are engraved the records of human shame. All these things he may do; but death is death after all, and he cannot keep it off for a moment, or make it aught else than what it is, namely, "the wages of sin."

C. H. M.

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I would go home, but Thy purpose is stronger ;  
 Softly 'Thou sayest, "My way is not thine ;  
 What if I would thou should'st tarry here longer ?  
 Is not thy will in subjection to Mine ?  
 Why dost thou shrink from the shade in the distance ?  
 Have I not brought thee through perils of yore ?  
 Do I not know all the pains of existence ?  
 Have I not traversed life's pathway before ? "

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THE needed point is reached, the strong man converted to weakness is now fit to strengthen his brethren; and, as Peter descends step by step the ladder of humiliation, step by step the Lord follows him with assurance of the work for which he is destined. "Feed My lambs," He says, "tend My sheep, feed My sheep."



**“ HOLD FAST,”—“ KEEP,”—“ CONTINUE,”—  
“ WATCH.”**

(2 TIMOTHY).

THIS portion of the blessed word of our God is the chart of the saint now in a special degree. The *conservative* as well as the *separative* power of the truth in the soul is of the deepest importance, for thus alone are we sanctified, as it is written, “ sanctified by truth ” or “ in truth.” The truth is endeared to our hearts as it is known and believed *in relation to Christ*, apart from Him, it may become to us but the articles of a creed which we no doubt accept as orthodox, but which our hearts are not devoted to in the loyalty of affection ; it is dear to us as known and believed, as it has been made our own in communion with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, whose truth it is, “ the truth of Christ ”—the truth of God.

If there be one thing which more than another we ought to take to heart, it is just how little a place as such it has in the *affections* and *consciences* generally of the saints ; the surrender of it by man, the opposition by Satan, his deadly attempt to discredit it by any means, ought to break our hearts, if indeed we have hearts to be broken. Instead of this, how coldly we can speculate on what is at issue, reasoning about what we are pleased to call *vital* truth, *fundamental* truth, and the like. Alas ! it looks very like the woman in the days of Solomon ; is it not the case that we are not unwilling to have that which is *not our own* cut to pieces ? It seems indeed as if we had got so far away from Christ Himself, so deep down in the earth or the world, so conformed to the ways and manners of the age, *money making and loving too*, prospering in everything but the one thing, enlarging our borders and deepening our interests in this world, that we are not disturbed or offended or moved by any slight cast upon the truth. The mistakes and failings of those who stand for *truth* and *righteousness*, are largely dilated upon by some, but scarcely a voice raised by such in

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defence of the truth assailed by Satan and surrendered by man. ' What an illustration of Acts xviii. 17! The words which head this paper abundantly prove the nature of the demand, which the last days would make upon the faith and affection of the saints; they are specially addressed to Timothy, it is true, still they no less express what every true-hearted follower of Christ owes to his Master and Lord. The words themselves point to the fact that a strain of no ordinary severity must be expected by all who love the truth. If we are exhorted to "hold fast," it very plainly declares that an attack will be made to induce us to let go; indeed, the nature of the assault is revealed in the exhortation given by the Spirit through the apostle in view of it. But observe what the Holy Ghost here presses on Timothy: he was "to hold fast [or have] an outline of sound words." How significant and important is this; it is the exact contrast to human definitions and speculations of the poor finite mind—for Timothy had heard no form from Paul, but words and doctrines. It was therefore not the *form* he was to keep, but he was to have an outline, and he was to be enabled by grace to affirm clearly what he held. How important this for our souls in this day, when Satan attempts to thrust upon us human definitions and speculations of man's mind, to beguile us from the divine simplicity of the truth. But further, not only was he "to have" or "hold fast," he was also to "keep," by the Holy Ghost which dwells in us, the good deposit entrusted. How clearly this points to a trust deposited, which it will be the constant aim of the enemy to assail: this "good deposit" is to be guarded with all care and diligence. The Spirit of God here contemplates a day when attacks upon the truth would demand the most affectionate and faithful maintenance of it by loving hearts; but observe, it is a *spiritual* guarding of it which is pressed, for it is "by the Holy Ghost." It is the opposite to all carnal contention and energy, "for the arms of our warfare are not fleshly, but powerful according to God" (2 Cor. x. 3, 4). It points to the fact that it is in view of God, bringing Him in, through

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God—it is very blessed and comforting to the soul to be reminded that the Holy Ghost, by whom we are to keep or guard this precious deposit, is “the Spirit of truth”—how blessed to know that it is in the company of, and by the power of such as He is, we are to keep and guard the truth. On this point then our diligence of soul and exercise of conscience should be, as to walking in His company, even that of Him who is the “Spirit of truth”—this will carry us outside all those influences and motives which so deceive and blind the heart. When we are moving with the “Spirit of truth,” the truth becomes of prime importance with us; our love is then “in the truth;” our walk “in the truth;” indeed everything is of small moment, compared with the truth “for the truth’s sake, which abides in us and shall be with us to eternity.”

But there is a further injunction to Timothy, relating perhaps more to his own *practical* life than the foregoing, “But thou abide in those things which thou hast learned, and of which thou hast been fully persuaded, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.” Observe that Timothy had *learned* and been *fully persuaded* of the things in which the Spirit of God urges him to abide. The word abide is that which conveys to the heart the thought of *home*; he was to abide in those things as a man in his home. The endearing nature of the word, I need not delay to point out: may the Lord give His saints in this day to thus abide in the truth, to abide in it, because it abides. But alas! how little is there of that which is here said, namely, the having *learned* and having been *fully persuaded* of the truth. What can more forcibly convey to our hearts the preciousness of the truth in God’s estimate of it, than this? O that it might be more the home of our hearts, so as to abide in it, in divine continuity and affection, He who is the truth as He is the life, more entirely filling our thoughts, that we might thus count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, suffering the loss of all things for Him, and counting them dung that we may have Christ for our gain. It is vain for

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us to plead our solicitude for the flock of Christ, or for ecclesiastical principles, if we can afford to see the truth of Christ cut to pieces or frittered away. In such a case we simply deceive ourselves, alas! how much there is of it! May the Lord graciously let in His light on all this. Has there not been a drinking of wine and strong drink, and hence a mournful inability to put a difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean? (Lev. x. 10). The truth, unwelcome as it may be, is, alas! this, *many have lost their Nazarite-ship*; the Delilah of to-day, the world, has shorn them of their strength; *discernment*, as well as *appreciation*, have well-nigh fled; the strange voice is now no longer strange, "for truth is fallen in the street . . . . yea, truth faileth, and he *that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey*" (Isa. lix. 15).

What a description of a state of moral degradation in which Israel once were, and which, alas! finds its counterpart in this day; those who have eyes to see, can behold. And may I not add further the words as also true that "our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us. . . . In transgressing and *lying against the Lord*, and departing away from our God, *speaking oppression* and revolt, conceiving and uttering *from the heart* words of falsehood"? May He who is rich in mercy, affect the consciences and hearts of His own in this little "last hour," that arising from their carnal slumber and world bordering, convicted yet confiding, they may return to the Lord, and be found at His coming, now so near, affectionately listening to His own words and walking in them. "Behold, I come quickly, *hold that fast* which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

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LET us not provoke the Lord to jealousy. We have in His friendship an all-sufficient and overflowing cup of comfort. Whatever our matters, they are an occasion of friendship to the Lord; and the deeper the adversity, the more tender and the more mighty the friendship of that love.

## LIBERTY.

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free” (Galatians v. 1).

It is no doubt an immense thing to “stand fast” in the liberty, but it is absolutely necessary in the first place to know what the liberty is and how it is obtained. Liberty is not a mere doctrine to be held in the head; it is a *practical*, everyday experience in the heart and life, and carries with it joy, and peace, and gladness, and makes the face and life to shine. Now it is because there is so much ignorance as to it, and how to obtain it, that we see so little of it evidenced in the lives of the Lord’s people. So many are satisfied with knowing their sins are put away and they will be in heaven at last, but there has been no break with the world, except in its grosser sinful forms, and the line of demarcation that separates them from that which is “not of the Father but of the world” (1 John ii. 15-17) is not known, or if known not practiced.

What God wants His people to apprehend is, He has wrought for His Own glory, through the sacrifice of His beloved Son at the Cross, and the consequent indwelling of the Holy Ghost, to deliver them not only from their sins and the penalty attached thereto, but from the power of sin as a master (Rom. vi. 6-7); from the law (Rom. vii. 6); and from the rudiments of the world (Col. ii. 20); so that they may be free to live unto God “in newness of life,” and worship and serve Him “in newness of spirit;” and that thus He may have here, in a scene of contrariety, where everything is gone astray and out of harmony with the mind and will and marred by sin, a people in holy suitability to Himself—a people in whom He can find His pleasure—who are in the world but not of it, “delivered from this present evil age” (Gal. i. 4), and “waiting for His Son from heaven” (1 Thess. i. 10), to be like Him in glory (Phil. iii. 21). This is really what God is seeking for His people, but, alas, how few have grasped it and respond to it.

It is most important that saints should learn that not only have we been “once purged” and all our

sins gone for ever, never to be remembered by God again (Heb. x. 17); but our moral history as sinners, children of the first Adam, has closed in the cross and death of the Son of God. The old and oft told story of the soldier drawn in the conscription is well known, but will bear repeating here, and help to elucidate the subject.

We are told the soldier was drawn, but paid another to take his place. His substitute took his place and name, and went to the war and was killed and his name accordingly taken off the roll as dead. After a while another draft was made in the same place and this same man was again drawn to serve, but he pleaded *I am dead*, and pointed out how his substitute had been allowed to take his name and place in the previous draft of men and had been killed in action so the authorities could not again lay claim to his services since he was *legally dead*, and therefore legally free from the military service of his country, and his plea was accepted. He was not actually dead, but his substitute was actually and literally dead, and that death was *his substitutionally*, therefore while not literally dead, he was legally dead to all military claims.

Now let us be clear about this severance from Adam. It does *not* mean that we have severed *every* connection with him—we have not. We are still liable to all the sad and sorrowful effects of sin, and even death itself if the Lord does not come. “As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Rom. v. 12). Again, “As in Adam, all die” (1 Cor. xv. 22). So that while here in this world, as to our actual physical condition we are still connected with the first man Adam. But it *does* mean that our *moral history* as in him has closed at the cross in the death of the Lord Jesus—our soul’s history, so to speak—and God sees us as no longer in Adam, but “in Christ.”

In our natural and sinful state as human beings we are both morally and physically in Adam; we belong to the race of which he is the federal head. But the moment we come to be “in Christ,” we belong to the

new race of which the second Man and last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the Head. By believing in Him who died for us and rose again our moral connection with the first man is severed and we become identified and associated with the Second Man. He was our *Substitute* in all that He suffered on the cross. He is our *Representative*—our New Head in the glory; and what is true of Him as the Head of the race is true of every member of the race. His actual and literal death for sin and to sin is *reckoned* as ours; while His life is ours—"Christ is our life"—to be lived and enjoyed in the power of the Holy Ghost. We have not yet ceased our *physical* connexion with Adam, as I have said, for that is by means of our bodies: but at death or the rapture we shall instantly cease all physical connexion with the first man, and, by and bye, in *spiritual bodies*—bodies of glory—we shall be in the fullest and absolutely perfect sense "in Christ"—spirit, soul, and body, and like Christ in glory. Meanwhile our bodies are the Lord's—He has bought them—they belong to Him—but they are not yet *redeemed*: we wait for that (Rom. viii. 23), and meanwhile they are to be used for Him as vessels for the display of the new life, by the power of the Holy Ghost (2 Cor. iv. 7-10-11).

As we have already noted, we are dead to sin—dead to law—dead to the rudiments of the world, and are "alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord." We cannot therefore continue in sin. Law has no more claim on us (though we are not lawless); while the world with its human ordinances appeals in vain to one who has died and is reckoning himself so (Rom. vi. 11).

We freely admit it is exceedingly difficult to grasp this great delivering truth of death with Christ, because all our *experiences* are against it. Indeed, it is only when we have learnt in a practical way the hopeless badness, and utter ruin of ourselves as men "in the flesh," and that as such it is "impossible to please God," or alter the flesh in any way, that we are led at last to see that it is no longer a question of what our *experience* is, but of what has taken place in the death

of Christ, and our identification as before God with the risen and glorified Man, the last Adam, as members of the new race, and that God looks upon the members as occupying the same position as the Head as beyond sin—beyond judgment—beyond death— and risen with Christ and belonging to a scene where everything is new and all our interests are there, so that we are formed by the new Object, and the new things which now govern our hearts. The Holy Ghost indwelling us, the new power for making it all good to us and working it all out in practical everyday life. It is His indwelling presence which also makes us “members of the Body of Christ,” but this, of course, is another line of truth and which we are not occupied with at present.

Now all this precious delivering truth may have been preached to saints over and over again, or read by them in pamphlets no end of times; but it only affects the drum of the ear, or merely interests their religious minds as “wonderful truth,” unless there is positive unhappiness over constant failure to live a holy life and so please God and enjoy God; and until the truth is accepted *in spite of all experience* that we are no longer “in Adam,” but “in Christ”—no longer “in the flesh,” but “in the Spirit”—that God has dealt judicially with our old man in crucifying it with Christ—that we have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless we live. “Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Gal. ii. 20). And thus our moral connexion with Adam, our moral history as sinners, is severed, and we are in Christ risen, belonging to the new race, and are thus “new creation,” and in a position where everything is *new* and everything of *God* (2 Cor. v. 17-18); and where the Holy Spirit as the new power is free to occupy us with a new Object—Christ in glory—and fill us with all joy and peace in believing.

It is all new, and all the work of God Himself for His own glory. “He that hath wrought us for this



self-same thing is God (2 Cor. v. 5), so that our very bodies will share in this wonderful redemption and be made like unto Christ's glorious body hereafter. This is what gives us liberty. How blessed! God never again sees us as in Adam. He ever sees us as in Christ. He has "condemned sin in the flesh by the sacrifice of His Son" (Rom. viii. 3), and has nothing more to say to it, and He tells us this that we may take sides with Him and have nothing to say to it either. Our whole state as sinners has been met, as well as our sins put away for ever, and we are thus brought into holy liberty to be here to God's good pleasure.

But instead of Christians believing and enjoying this liberty which is theirs in Christ, many of them are busy trying to *restrain* the flesh, or trying to improve the flesh, instead of seeing God has *condemned* it and judicially dealt with it at the cross and has nothing more to say to it: and so they go floundering about like a man in a bog: the more they try to pull out one leg, the deeper they sink the other; and so it must and *will* continue till they are led to say, "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth *no good thing*"—but "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vii. 18-25), and they learn they are in Him, and neither in the flesh, nor in Adam: and then their experience will be formed by the enjoyment of liberty—Christian liberty—holy liberty—liberty to serve, praise, and worship God as new creatures in Christ.

Let us "stand fast then in the liberty wherewith Christ makes us free," if our souls have at all entered into it. Remember it is *practical* and *experimental* truth, not a dry doctrine; and we can lose the *enjoyment* of it if we become careless and worldly. And oh! what a dishonour, after receiving such a blessing and at such infinite cost, if we should be found using high-sounding phrases as to our being "heavenly men," and looking askance at those whom we think see not "heavenly truth," while our lives are altogether contrary to such expressions and marked by worldliness, selfishness and pride. We have the Holy Ghost

to support us so we are without excuse, but we must set ourselves to go in for it and "stand fast" in it. David said, "One thing have I *desired* of the Lord, *that will I seek after*" (Ps. xxvii. 4). If we go in for it the Spirit will teach us and support us, and give us the enjoyment of it. May it be the enjoyed portion of all, and may we "stand fast" in it.

*New Zealand.*

WM. EASTON.

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## GOD SUFFICES FOR HIMSELF.

HE is worshipped! He is praised! He is adored! And it is written, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me." We are not to think that He stands in need of anything that a creature can confer. Is it glory? He is the Father of glory. No need has He! To receive from any creature is an act of gracious condescension on His part. To be allowed to bless His holy name is to be blessed indeed. Do we pay aught into His treasury? Who created us? Who gave us being, life, and food and all things? God the Eternal, the Infinite. Are there worlds innumerable? He made them. He was before all in solitary state. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—a trinity in unity.

He created. Why? "For Thy pleasure they are and were created." Creatures, too, whether for the heavens or for the earth, He made them. He spake and it was done. What majesty! What quiet sufficiency! No effort! God, the all-sufficient for Himself is and must suffice for all His works and for all His creatures. All receive from Him. All depend upon Him. He loves; for He is love; but the love wherewith any creature loves Him came from Him, and is like a stream of water from the Great Supreme, refreshing many in its course, and returning back from whence it came.

If gladdened by God in wondrous grace, my glad heart rejoices to tell Him how good He is. I bask in His sunshine. I enjoy His beneficence. I live upon His bounty. I suck in the honey of His Word. I lose

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myself in the vast ocean of His love. I have found Him in *Jesus*. Jesus has brought God to me and me to God. I have the tenderness of man and the infinitude of God in *Jesus*. I love Him and cannot help doing so; but there is no credit due to me. Oh, how He loves!

God, being the Creator of all creatures and all things, is the Sustainer of all, and the Possessor of all. It is the creature's duty to obey Him, to trust in Him, to confide in Him, to open our mouths wide that He may fill them. It is ours to receive. It is His to give. The joy of giving is His. We are foolish enough at times to think we can give to Him. "But who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For *of Him, and through Him, and to Him* are all things" (Rom. xi.). The Divine Author, Sustainer, and Upholder finds His satisfaction and delight in ministering to need, be it that of angel, man, or beast. From all those creatures to whom understanding to know Him has been given, He expects thanksgiving and praise. Not because He is in need of adulation, or hungers for homage and adoration, though it is His just due, but it is the creature's happiness and blessing that He is most concerned about, and the absence of a proper return to Him would be sin of a very grave character which His holiness could not endure. God requires only what would be a consistent return from those who are His and who receive of His bounty. Where that is not, there judgment must follow. But that is His strange work. He delights in mercy. He is essentially a Giver. He gave His Son, and it may well be asked, "How shall He not with Him also *freely give us all things?*"

E. R. W.

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WHOEVER conceived of such a God as this, whose dwelling-place is eternity, and yet whose abode is with a lowly human soul; whose presence fills infinite space, and yet who condescends to revive a humble human heart?

## THE ENSNARING EFFECTS OF THE VISIBLE.

It is solemn to reflect, in this day, on how the *visible* and the *human* are being used to supplant the *invisible* and the *spiritual*. Every art of the enemy, his profound skill and dexterity, his many-sided and deeply laid plots, are all in requisition at this moment to destroy, if it were possible, and in any case, alas! to deteriorate and tarnish, every testimony to the reality and power of things not seen.

It is very instructive to note how, even in days when "sight" and "nature" were the ground on which man walked before God, as tested and proved by Him, God had His own independent witnesses to the only path suited to Himself in a world where everything is in revolt, and manifesting to the consequences of departure from God. *Faith*, not sight, is that great principle, as we find from Hebrews xi.; and this line of life and power was maintained by these worthies amid trials and sorrows of no ordinary kind.

The earliest departure from this divine path of faith is recorded in Genesis xii., in the very same scripture which tells us of the call of Abram "out" from country, kindred, and father's house. Set free by "death" (see Acts vii. 2-4), "glory" had its full weight with Abram; and very blessedly did he rise and go forth from every visible thing, as expressed by country, kindred, and father's house, "into a place which he should afterward receive for an inheritance . . . not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looketh for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. xi. 8-10.)

As thus brought forth by glory and death, to walk the invisible path of faith, the visible for a time ensnares him. The famine, that was seen, took a firmer hold upon him than the "God of glory," who appeared to him in Mesopotamia, and afterwards when he was in the land of Canaan. Being thus deceived, he

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sought for help in Egypt and *found Hagar!* which "answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children" (Gal. iv. 25). Note well in this scripture the contrast between "Jerusalem *which now is,*" and "Jerusalem *which is above.*"

Another instance of the seductive power of the visible is recorded in Genesis xlvi. Most blessed is it to see faith, the invisible power, triumphing in Jacob over all that marked his previous checkered history, as we behold him rising superior to nature and its claims, when he laid his hands on the head of Ephraim, the younger of Joseph's two sons, "*guiding his hand wittingly;*" yet equally distinct is the snare of the visible, seen in Joseph's displeasure and dissatisfaction thus expressed: "Not so, my father; for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head."

There is likewise a very solemn coincidence between this break-down of faith in Joseph, when being invested with the forfeited portion of Reuben (1 Chron. v.), and the actings of the same Reuben afterwards in Israel's history, when, in conjunction with Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh, he erected "a great altar *to see to*" (Joshua xxii. 10). But of this more further on.

How blessed and encouraging to see in the last moments of the patriarch on which we are dwelling, the fruit of the patient, gracious ways of God with him! How cheering to see a man whom *sight* and *sense* controlled in no ordinary degree, now in faith the witness for God, intelligent, subdued, and elevated: "By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph, and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff." And equally comforting is it to hear one who was continually contravening the ways of God by the visible and natural, thus accept death for himself upon it all: "Behold, I die; *but God shall be with you.*"

Another striking instance of the perverting power of the visible is presented in Moses, when called of God to be the deliverer of Israel. Solemn it is to reflect on what little stay his soul derived from the promised "Certainly I will be with thee," of the "I am that I am" (Ex. iii.). Observe how the absence of the visible

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and the human, "I am not *eloquent*, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am *slow of speech*, and of a *slow tongue*," are his pleadings to be excused; and this in the presence of the most marked display of the *super-human*" (see chap. iv. 2-7). This was not that faith which characterised him at the first, when he "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." Then the visible was of no account to him; but he has drooped in soul, as it were, since then; and now, as Abraham went into Egypt for help and got Hagar there, so Moses turns to the same quarter and gets Aaron, his trial and affliction afterwards. [This is viewing the incidents in their moral not typical bearing.—Ed.] Very solemn it is to contemplate how this same Aaron, given to Moses in the day when he craved for the outward and the visible, as we have seen, was the very man who ministered to the people in their idolatrous craving after the visible, when they "saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount" (Ex. xxxii. 1); and the same Aaron of whom it is said, with respect to the molten calf which he himself had made, "and when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it."

In the same manner afterwards, in their history in the wilderness, did they crave for "a captain" (Num. xiv. 4), in order that they might return into Egypt, where Abraham went in the famine, and where, alas! many a child of God now turns in like circumstances, in order to find some visible countenance or support. Both "calf" and "captain," the one made and the other desired, are but the ensnaring meshes of the visible and human. We know that "these things were our examples," that is, types (1 Cor. x. 6). The Lord give us to study it, and take it to heart, as to how far we, as His people to-day, have not dropped down, a thousand-fold more than they, into the perverting line of sight and nature.

It is very solemn to note the *moral* order in which the apostle, in the above scripture, refers to the circumstances in Israel's history, on some of which we have been dwelling. The spring of all was the

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insufficiency of the unseen, the craving for the visible; then having obtained the lusted-after object, it becomes their idol; next follows unholy alliance with Moab (fornication); and lastly, the captain is desired, as the calf had been made. This moral, not historical, order is very solemn, as setting forth the course of the professing Church of God up to Laodicea, which is the great boaster of the visible (Rev. iii. 17), and which, when full blown, will be spued out, and then carried by Satan's great visible power on earth (Rev. xvii. 7).

But we must turn to Israel's history in the land for a little, to see how this terrible principle ensnared them in all their course. Alas, even when they were *in type* a dead and risen people (across Jordan), and in the land of Canaan, their first failure was from this very principle we are considering. First, observe what a testimony Jehovah gave to his thoughts and ways, in the manner in which Jericho was surrounded and captured. There was the entire absence of any visible display in power, but there was to be that which is the invariable concomitant of real power, namely noiseless equanimity (Joshua vi. 10).

Has not all this its own special voice for His saints of this day, who professedly occupy the ground on which Israel stood typically when in Canaan? Has it not a double voice as well? Does it not distinctly tell us what the mind and thoughts of the Lord are, as to the real power of that which is *invisible* and *supernatural*? But does it not also very clearly indicate our true place as across Jordan, namely, *that we are dead men*, and helpless in every human point of view? The Lord give us to ponder the weighty instruction which is here conveyed to faith.

Now the very next chapter is the record of how the visible ensnares, for we read of Achan making confession of his sin in these words: "When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and *took* them" (Joshua vii. 21). How solemn the rise, progress, and issue of the bewitching effects of the visible!

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We will turn now to another striking exemplification of our subject. It is supplied to us in the history of Reuben's great altar, "TO SEE TO." (Joshua xxii. 10). This act of the two and a half tribes was in perfect moral accord with the position they had taken. That position is thus sorrowfully expressed, "*Bring us not over Jordan*" (Num. xxxii. 5). They were under the power of the visible, they possessed "a very great multitude of cattle." What could be more *natural* than that they should seek the spot most suitable to their circumstances? And if in that day there were to be found men of such narrow and extreme thoughts as to press the fact that the other side of Jordan was the true possession of God's Israel, and that taking it this side or looking for it this side is abandoning the call and purpose of God, how would not Reuben and his associates resent all such visionary and transcendental notions as these? And is it not Satan's great object in this day as in that day, to hinder the people of God, and keep them out of their true and rich blessing, by despising and scorning the unseen land beyond the river, and presenting some visible Jazer and Gilead instead? May the Lord give to His saints in this time of sifting, the wing of faith to rise beyond the snares and nets abounding in the land of sight?

But mark the beginnings of this great altar. We read: "When THEY SAW the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that behold, the place was a place for cattle." It was the same principle exactly that operated in Lot, who "lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar" (Gen. xiii. 10). The sight principle confounds the garden of the Lord and the land of Egypt. Just think of these two put together: "Egypt" and "the garden of the Lord!" What a contrast! The one is *above* and *unseen*; the other is *below* and *visible*. Jordan separates them. And alas! there are not a few to-day who have lifted up their eyes like Lot, and like Reuben, and *seen* well-watered



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plains, and places for cattle, and are settling down, or are settled down, on *this side of Jordan*. It is thus evident that there can be no security whatever from the ensnaring effects of the things seen, save as the soul is consciously kept in the light of what is unseen; and that cannot be, if *the other side of Jordan* is abandoned, as the only sphere for faith to rest in.

Thus to return to this history of the two and a half tribes, we find that their "*great altar to see to*" was in perfect keeping with their choice of what they had seen *this side Jordan*: it was a craving after the visible. It was a subtle wile too. They did not mean or intend to abandon the worship of the God of Israel; but, having made a false choice in settling down in Jazer and Gilead, their human expedient is the erection of the great altar to see to, something *visibly* great, somewhat that appealed to the eye; an attempt in reality to bring God to man's ground, instead of man to God's. How solemn! It is not necessary to pursue the history further, or to point out how the other tribes resented this act of Reuben. My one object on dwelling on it so far has been to point out the principle involved, and how deceiving and ensnaring the visible is.

It is very instructive also to observe how, in the close of Joshua (chap. xxiii.), the people are warned in the most solemn way against the inevitable consequences of being ensnared by *visible worship* (ver. 7), and *association in a natural way* (that is, yielding to *what is seen*) with the people of the Lord (ver. 12); and this is precisely what came to pass. How solemn! They were in the *true standing*, yet incompetent to maintain it. Then, in chap. xxiv., it is the same line of most solemn prophetic exhortations. They had been worshippers of the visible (idolaters), and the snare would be to return to it. All being finished, Joshua "took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that was by the sanctuary of the Lord. And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; *for it hath heard* all the words of the Lord which he spake unto us."

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I shall now turn to one more instance of the power of the visible and its consequences upon Israel, and that is, the way in which it acted upon them so as to hinder the observance of the Sabbatical year. In this instance it is all the more remarkable and solemn how the visible turned them aside, inasmuch as there was a special provision made by Jehovah to meet the case (see Lev. xxv. 20-21). The desire of His heart was that the land should keep a Sabbath unto the Lord: "The seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the Lord." Nothing could be more distinct, or beautiful in its import and typical bearings. Did Israel observe and cleave to the mind of Jehovah as to this? Observe the solemn warning of chapter xxvi. 43: "The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her Sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them;" as well as verses 33, 34: "And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths." Such were the prophetic warnings which follow immediately the ordinance of Jehovah as to the sabbatical year, yet how lost upon the nation, ruled by the visible, as it is clear they were, in refusing to keep it! In vain, as far as they were concerned, did Jehovah promise, "I will command My blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth *fruit for three years*" (chap. xxv. 21). The visible work of man's hands, their *sowing* and *reaping*, was greater and better to them than His blessing. Thus they lost their highest favour, and 2 Chron. xxxvi. 20, 21 records the execution of the predicted sentence in these solemn words: "And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon, where they were servants to him [the king of the Chaldees] and his sons, until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: to fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, *until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths*; for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil three-

score and ten years." How solemn all this ; yet how blessed to see that when they were in Babylon and all visible means of help gone from them, and entirely in the hands of their oppressors, then those, who were really faithful to the Lord, found out where alone their real resources were—even in God Himself.

May His saints to-day have grace to ponder and weigh in His presence the weighty lessons which this history affords, that, amid the increasing tendency to turn away from the line of life and faith, grace may either preserve or recover a true remnant for the Lord, broken-hearted ones who, amid sorrow and pressure, cleave to Himself, whom, having *not seen*, they still love.

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## FAITH.

No system of philosophy, however refined, however exalted, can bear up the soul amid the stormy waves of earthly sorrow. The Christian only can be resolute and calm while his cherished hopes, one by one drop into the quiet grave. The believer alone can "suffer, and be strong." The children of this world may maintain a calm composed exterior, they may be quite alive to "the dignity of non-complaint," but within is either the darkness of cold despair, or a hurricane of agonised passions. But the child of God knows his Father's hand, his Father's voice, and his Father's smile, and he looks onward to that glorious hour when mortality shall be swallowed up of life.

Such is the faith which upholds all God's saints in a troublous world ; therefore they may well go forth to meet the shadowy future without fear, and with a tranquil trusting heart, because they *know* that their Master walks on the waters, stilling the tempest, and steering their frail, helpless bark according to His infinite love and wisdom, and, ere long, He will bring them unto the haven where they would be, and anchor them safely on the shores of the heavenly Canaan !

**I WILL NEVER LEAVE THEE NOR FORSAKE THEE.**

I have said it, I will keep it ;  
My word surely cannot fail ;  
Rest upon it in thy spirit,  
Let not unbelief prevail ;  
If the waves are raging high,  
Fear not, I am ever nigh !

Men and Satan may oppose thee,  
Everything seem dark and drear ;  
Then's the time to count upon Me,  
I have said, Be of good cheer ;  
Tremble not, for by thy side  
I have promised to abide !

I thy Shepherd, Friend and Saviour,  
Lover, Lord and Master too !  
I have wisdom, I have power,  
Nothing can my will undo !  
All things work alone for good  
Unto those cleansed by My blood !

I make sorrow, suffering, trial,  
Bitter as they are, most sweet !  
Pray, there shall be no denial ;  
Come and sit down at My feet !  
Soon the desert shall be past,  
Thou shalt reach the home at last.      E. R. W.

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AGAIN, in order to minister one must receive ; and if the fruit takes its character from the seed, must receive only the truth. How important, then, to take heed what one hears ! and what one measures out to others will be more than recompensed again : a thing as true of ministry of the Word, as of practical conduct : for heaven's law is scattering for increase—you do not alienate from yourself what you give to others, but gain the more ; and still this opens the way to fresh gain : to him that hath shall be given. Every bit of truth acquired leads on to fresh truth : every sphere of usefulness found prepares for more.

## SEVEN PHOTOS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL.

(Acts xxvi.)

### PHOTO No. 1.—“A MAD OPPOSER.”

“TURN round and look this way, please,” said the photographer to his customer. “Oh, but I don’t want this scar on my face to be seen,” said the sitter. “Oh, that won’t be seen,” he replied; “we shall touch up the negative and remove everything that is objectionable and make a good picture. I’m sure you will be satisfied.” You see the camera never lies, and the sitter knew that and was afraid of it. It is the artist who “touches up” the camera’s work that tells the lies, in order to make satisfactory, if untruthful, *pictures*. And so God’s camera—His Written Word—tells no lies; it lets us see men and things as they are—as He sees them. It presents *photographs*, not *pictures*.

Our first photo presents the subject to us in his natural and sinful state as “a mad opposer”—(verses 9-12)—deceived and led on by Satan in his mad opposition to “Jesus of Nazareth”—the Man in the glory of God. The enmity to Christ and His people that displays itself in this stage of the Apostle’s life is truly appalling! “Binding”—“beating”—“imprisoning”—“compelling them to blaspheme”—“raising his voice against them at their death”(really—giving his vote against them for their death)—being “*exceedingly mad* against them, he persecuted them even unto strange cities!” Truly he was an “*Inquisitor*” of the first water! What awful depths of human depravity do we here behold. And what darkens the picture more is, that probably Saul had seen Jesus in the flesh, and possibly witnessed some of His miracles, and heard the voice that “spake as never man spake,” while living in Jerusalem and studying at the feet of Gamaliel; but in his fanatical religious zeal, he was both deaf and blind to the “gracious words,” ways, and works of the Lord Jesus, and determined to root out and exterminate this new religion that was threatening the religion of his

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fathers, and "turning the world upside down." Can we wonder when his eyes were opened and he saw his true state that he exclaimed "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, *of whom I am chief.*"

Fellow-believers, and fellow-sinners, behold in the sin-scarred features of this photo, the lineaments of our own fallen natures. Let us not pride ourselves or express pharisaic thankfulness that we have not been guilty of such horrible transgressions. Rather let us thank God we have not been allowed to be put into the circumstances to call them forth. God says of the heart "it is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," and that is as true of your heart and mine to-day as of the greatest sinners that ever lived; whether displayed in blind, fanatical, religious phariseism—or blatant, intolerent, immoral atheism—or in heathen savagery and cannibalism. Put any of us into the circumstances; withdraw the restraining grace of God, and, like "raging waves of the sea," we would "foam out our own shame" with streams of vileness, filthiness, and pollution; or fiendishly delight ourselves in the sufferings and agonies of others like Saul of Tarsus, or the Inquisitors of Spain.

Say not, and think not for one moment that this is a very pessimistic and calvinistic view of human nature and that education has altered man and made him better. Never! "The carnal mind *is* enmity against God, and *is not* subject to the law of God, *neither indeed can be*" (Rom. viii.7), and it is God who says this, and He knows. Could all the wisdom of the sages from the world's commencement to the present be imparted to every man on earth to-day, it would only make them more accomplished sinners than they are. It could never impart a new nature, or make them saints, and that is what is needed. The Lord Jesus made no mistake when He said, "Ye *must* be born again."

Read the records of the police courts and law courts in these days of modern enlightenment if this is doubted, and say, has *education* or that other modern fetish to conjure by, called *environment*, hindered or lessened the sins, slanders, roguery, divorce, murders,

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and unnameable offences, that almost daily defile the newspaper columns, and the educated and rich often the greatest offenders? Alas! no. At the same time it is freely and fully admitted that both education and environment are needful and most important factors in relation to life and character here; but for deliverance from the power of sin, which is the basis for all *true* character, and fitness for the great hereafter, a *new nature* is absolutely necessary—"Except a man be born again he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

Will it be different by and by, after the Church is gone and before the Lord returns to reign? Will education and environment accomplish such a change then; when, in the natural trend of things, men will be still more highly educated than they are to-day, and every science will have reached a state of almost unthinkable perfection? For answer we only need to read the 13th chapter of Revelation, and there we see portrayed by infallible prophetic pen a state of things yet to be witnessed and realized on the earth which surpasses in awfulness anything that has ever been seen before. The doings of the "man of sin," diabolically seconded by the "Antichrist," and both of them inspired and empowered by Satan as the *political* and *religious* leaders of Christendom and Judaism in that day; and the pandemonium which will be the result, will put into the shade the despotism of Nebuchadnezzar, the villainy and horrors of the Spanish Inquisition, or the hell-let-loose-upon-earth of the French Revolution. And all *that* in the midst of and *spite* of education in its perfection, both in arts and sciences, but without God.

Ah, that's the point, and that is the reason for it all. The wiseacres have become fools (Psalm xiv. i.), in spite of the lessons of history. They give God up and He gives them up (Rom. 1); and this is to be the result, till He sweeps the corrupt and corrupting mass from the scene with "the besom of destruction," and "He comes whose right it is," and all will be given to Him. Yes, to Him who was "despised and rejected of men," and whom men, educated and ignorant, com-

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bined against and crucified between two thieves as a malefactor; with the sign of earth's curse for a crown placed upon His holy and blessed head; and who is now sitting waiting in the heavens till God "makes His foes His footstool"—"Jesus, the Son of God." It is His by creatorial rights. It is His by redemption titles, and He will take possession of it by conquest and the execution of judgment on those who have taken possession and retain it by usurpation.

No! No! A thousand times no! It is neither education nor environment that is the crying need for men's souls to-day. It is not *reformation*—it is "*regeneration*" that is needed—"a new birth"—a new life and nature given by God, and received by broked-hearted penitents. Man *must* return to his God, the God of the Bible, and he must do it now, in this the day of grace or be lost for ever. But being a sinner he *must* return as a penitent, and learn that God is "God our Saviour," and He *saves*. He does not *help* to save, or merely show the way to be saved—He does it all Himself, and *saves sinners* who come to Him by Christ to be saved.

**PHOTO No. 2.—"A STRICKEN AND HUMBLE PENITENT."**

(Verses 12-15).

To see a man in the condition of a humble penitent is a sight for heaven; and of such it is said, "likewise joy shall be *in heaven* over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance." And again, "there is joy *in the presence of the angels of God* over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke xv. 7-10). What a revelation of the heart of God is here disclosed! And what an answer to the lie of Satan, and the fear and dread in the heart of sinful man! There is joy in heaven! There is joy in the presence of the angels of God! Not over saints or unfallen creatures, but over "*one sinner that repenteth.*" Do not whisper it, or tell it with bated breath and mournful visage. Treat it not as a funeral dirge in the minor key. Shout it out! Make heaven and earth ring with it. It is worth telling, and worth



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hearing. Let your own countenance show that you enter along with them into the joy of it. Ding it into the ears and hearts of sinful men—"There is *joy in heaven*," and joy on earth, too, "over *one sinner that repenteth!*" Hallelujah!

What a different photo it is from the first one, we are invited to look at here. No longer the raging, rampant madman, rushing hither and thither on his satanic mission of hate and opposition to Jesus, to bind, and beat, and slay the harmless followers of the Saviour; but prone on the earth—stricken down—not by the sword of judgment, but by a light "above the brightness of the sun," which revealed not only what *he was* in himself; but *who* it was he was persecuting. "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." This Jesus of Nazareth was alive in the glory, and the Lord of glory; and he, poor sinful worm of the dust, in his blindness and ignorance was arrayed against the Son of God. What a revelation! And what a revolution consequent thereon!

Behold this "blasphemer and persecutor!" See those open yet sightless eyes! those hands stretched out in helplessness for some one to lead him! Think of those three days of "solitary confinement" when he neither ate nor drank, and was shut up in his blindness to the contemplation of self in all its hideous and sinful reality as discovered by "the glory of that light!" (Acts ix. 3-9). What could such an experience as that produce in this champion sinner, other than cast him on his face on the earth, to wail out in David's language when *he lay all night on the earth* in a similar state of conviction: "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight"—"Have mercy upon me, O God"—"Have mercy upon me" (Ps. li.). And there can be little doubt that Saul of Tarsus, during those three days of darkness and distress, wailed out in the anguish of his broken heart many of the expressions which fell from David's lips in *his* exercises, as well as those peculiar to himself. And heaven looked on and rejoiced at the sight and the sound.

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My reader, have *you* ever experienced anything of this in your soul's history? Have you answered in any way to photo No. 2, and realised what it is to be a stricken and humble penitent? Forget not it was Jesus Himself who said, "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke xiii. 3). Know therefore, that between salvation and perishing lies the bridge of repentance over which you must cross to meet the Saviour; but what a welcome He will give you when you *do* meet Him! Every soul that ever came to Christ, came by that road. Deep *conviction* of sin, leads to real *repentance* for sin, true *confession* of sin, and ends in the blessed knowledge of *forgiveness* of sins (Ps. xxxii.). That is the road that leads to pardon, peace, and paradise. Reader, have you travelled it?

How blessed to be led in spirit by the Holy Ghost down into the valley of humiliation, then by way of the cross of Calvary, and the new sepulchre in the garden, out on the resurrection side, and on by way of the Mount, and up in the cloud to the seat at the right hand of God; there to see the Redeemer as He sits alone in His glory waiting the day when He shall surround Himself with all His redeemed, and then bring them out and display them in all the glory wherewith He has adorned them, to a wondering and admiring world (John xvii. 24; 2 Thess. i. 10). What a journey to take!

When Paul made the acquaintance of "the Man in the glory" on the road to Damascus, and as soon as the great question of sin was settled in his soul's experience, he set off to "run the race that was set before him" (Heb. xii. 2) in order to reach Him. He had discovered another and a new object in the glory of God, and, blind to all objects here, with eye and heart set on Christ up there (Phil. iii.), he never stopped or faltered in the path till the Roman axe severed his head from his body and set his spirit free to be "with Christ, which is far better."

He now waits *with* Christ there as we wait *for* Christ here; then "at the last trump" we shall rise

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to meet the Lord, and in bodies of glory fashioned like unto His own body of glory, we shall be "ever with the Lord." Conviction leads to repentance, and repentance leads to salvation, and ends in "glory with Christ above."

**PHOTO No. 3.—"A COMMISSIONED OFFICER."**

(Ver. 16).

A commissioned officer is one selected and sent by the king or his representatives for some special position or service. Few, however, have their commission given them verbally from the lips of the monarch himself. To be addressed and commissioned by the sovereign in person is indeed a very high honour.

Our third photo shows us our subject receiving this exceeding high honour from the lips of the King of kings: and from the ground where he lay as a stricken and humble penitent we hear him told to "rise and stand upon thy feet;" not as having been touched with the sword and styled "Sir Knight," and thus given a worldly status among his fellows, but as chosen and commissioned for a heavenly service on earth, a service that would be encompassed with dangers and end in death; but would likewise result in glory to the King who commissioned him, and eternal blessing to multitudes of his fellow-sinners to whom he was sent. He was not one being sent on a forlorn hope, whose motto was "Death or Glory," but one who knew his Master—knew the power and resources that were at His command, and who cheerfully accepted death if needs be, with the certainty of glory. Paul was therefore a "death *and* glory" man.

"But rise, stand upon thy feet for *I have appeared unto thee* for this purpose," said his Master. How great the honour! The Lord of glory appearing to, and talking with His servant! For what purpose? "To make thee a minister and a witness, both of the things which thou hast seen." And what had he seen and heard? He had seen a glorified Man at the right hand of God, and learned that all His own on earth are linked up in such close union with Him that He

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speaks of them as "*Me*"—"Why persecutest thou *Me*?" But there was more even than that; he was to be "a minister and a witness of those things in which *I will appear* unto thee." Everything the Lord had said and showed, or would show to him, he was to be a minister and witness of. Not merely one who would speak of them, but whose life would be a living exemplification of them; therefore a witness in that double sense—one whose life could be summed up in that one short, telling sentence, "For me to live is Christ." The greatness, glory, and majesty of the One who was his Master, and the importance of the commission with which he was entrusted, ever after commanded and controlled the life of Paul; and to carry it out no difficulty, danger, or even death itself could affright him. He only lived that "Christ might be magnified in his body," no matter "whether it be by life or by death." From henceforth he was Christ's commissioned officer.

And is not every true servant of Christ a commissioned officer? Surely he is. Not commissioned in exactly the same way as Paul was by *seeing* and hearing the Lord, but none the less by the power of His Word coming home to the conscience, and the constrainings of His love filling and flooding the heart, thus compelling them to run His errands whatever they may be, or in more risky and dangerous service, taking their lives in their hands in the midst of heathen darkness, superstition, or savagery, in order to carry His message and tell them of the love that led Jesus to "taste death for every man" in order that a righteous way might be found to save all who wished to be saved. What an honour! yet how feebly it is responded to by those who owe their all to Him.

"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do," and "here am I, send me," ought to be the language and the feeling of every true heart as we stand at "attention" in His blessed presence and await His commands.

WM. EASTON.

*New Zealand.*

## MOTIVES WHICH LED THE LORD TO DIE.

THE death of the Lord Jesus Christ is no secret confined to the breasts of a few upon earth. We have not to inquire of the learned if it really took place, nor have we to search through the literary treasures of an oriental monastery to make sure about it. Christendom owns it, the world in general acknowledges it. The manner, too, of His death—crucifixion—is well known. The Roman Catholic devotee by his crucifix confirms it; the Protestant, too, by the cross, whether worn as an ornament for the body, or put as an emblem on his Bible, bears witness to it; and the very walls of our picture galleries, as well as painted windows in churches, give evidence that the historical facts of the crucifixion are not to be classed amongst things of which there is any doubt.

But why did He die? To answer this question we are shut up to one source of information—the revelation of our God. Turning to that, we can learn the motives which led Him to go to the cross, the purposes to be wrought out by His death, and the practical teaching of His death, as set forth for the instruction of His people. To a consideration of *motives* which actuated Him in dying on the tree, the reader's attention is sought in this paper to be directed.

It was nothing new for man to die when the Lord expired on the cross. Many, doubtless, who saw Him on that tree, must have been familiar with the symptoms which presage the near approach of death. But why was death allowed to work amongst men? The Bible alone can answer this, and it does give the answer in clear unhesitating language, "By man came death" (1. Cor. xv. 21); and again, "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. v. 12). Death, then, reigned over man, because Adam sinned. And as often as the opened grave receives its tenant, whatever men may have to say about the good deeds and fair fame of the one whose body is thus committed to the dust, we have to acknowledge that it is the corpse of a sinner which is thereby buried out

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of our sight; else the individual would not have died, the frame would never have decayed, death could not have claimed it as its victim.

For a man, then, to die is no merit. He cannot exclude the angel of death from his presence. He cannot deprive him of his prey. To this Solomon bears a sad yet sober testimony as he writes, "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death; and there is no discharge in that war, neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it" (Eccles. viii. 8). Every one must say this witness is true. By iniquity a man may elude punishment upon earth; by bribery he may corrupt his jailor, or procure a sentence of acquittal from an earthly tribunal, but he cannot purchase immunity from death, he cannot even delay its unwelcome visit from him. At the moment appointed by God the thread of human life is snapped, and death holds undisputed sway over a body once animated and active. Death has a rightful claim on all who are born in sin. A martyr may, indeed, surrender his life for Christ, but he, least of all, would view that surrender as meritorious. The grace bestowed on him to die for his Saviour would be uppermost in his mind. His Master had claimed his life, and he would surrender it, that the Lord thereby should be the more glorified, and His sustaining grace be more than ever proved. But his life, the martyr would own, was not his own, and he only surrendered what belonged to another, when called upon to do so by Him whom he served. How different is the language of Scripture when it speaks of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. No man taketh His life from Him, the Lord declared of Himself when on earth (John x. 18), and added, "I lay it down of Myself." Scripture keeps this ever in our remembrance, as it tells us three times over that "He gave Himself," "Who gave Himself a ransom for all," etc. (1. Tim. ii. 6), "Who gave Himself for us" (Titus ii. 14), "Who gave Himself for our sins," etc. (Gal. i. 4). Of none but One could such words be written. He must be man to die. He must

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be God to give Himself to die. For no mere creature, of whatever order in the universe, has the right thus to dispose of himself, and to treat his life as his own. But the Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself. Thus none could have claimed His life. Death could not claim it, for death entered the world by sin, and "in Him," as John writes of the Lord, "is no sin," (1. John iii. 5). Human law could not demand it, for the Jews could establish no charge against Him when He stood before the High Priest. And Pilate, and Judas, and the centurion, all those who had to do with His death, as well as the penitent thief, concurred in confessing His innocence.

But He died. Very different, however, was His death from that of any righteous man. Jacob gathered up his feet in the bed, and gave up the ghost (Gen. xlix. 33). Stephen commended his spirit to the Lord Jesus, and fell asleep (Acts vii. 59-60). The faithful Christian can say that to him to die is gain (Phil. i. 21).

The simplest believer can prove that the sting of death is gone for him. Death is his, and it is for him annulled (1. Cor. xv. 56; iii. 22; 2 Tim. i. 10), as he enters by faith into the enjoyment of that which the Lord has effected for His people by His cross. Death, however, to the Lord Himself was a very different matter. He was, indeed, strengthened till it was accomplished. But read of Him in the garden. Recall His prayer there to His Father. Remember the visit of an angel to strengthen Him. Think of His agony, when He prayed yet more earnestly, and His sweat, was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground (Luke xxii. 42-44), and say if the anticipation of death on the cross was a light matter. Again, read His words on the cross, recorded by Matthew and Mark, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me" (Matt. xxvii. 46; Mark xv. 34), and let each one ask himself if that death on the cross, not now in anticipation, but in all that He went through thereon before He could give up the ghost, was a thing of no moment, the mere passage from a world of sin to paradise and glory? No; it was to Him an awful reality. None but Himself will ever know what death

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on the cross was to Him. Many ungodly ones will know what it will be to feel the weight of God's anger resting on them, but what that must be for a perfectly holy being to bear, the Lord alone has experienced. What were the motives, then, which led Him to travel to the end along that road which,

“ Uncheered by earthly smiles,  
Led only to the cross ! ”

From His own lips we learn about them, as it is from Himself, we apprehend, but how faintly, what death on the cross was to Him.

Addressing the multitude at Galilee, He acquaints them with the purpose of His incarnation, “I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me” (John vi. 38). To obey the Father He became man. To obey the Father He went to the cross, “Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; Mine ears hast Thou opened; burnt-offering and sin-offering Thou hast not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God” (Ps. xl. 6-7). Obedience to God was His delight, even if divine wrath on the cross was to be borne. “I delight to do Thy will.” What a motive for His death—God's will to be thereby accomplished. Others could bring sacrifices; He was to offer Himself. He became obedient, as we elsewhere read, to death—the death of the cross. Death on the cross was not robbed of any of its awful accompaniments, yet He delighted to do God's will. To suffer there was no delight. To do God's will by suffering thereon was to Him delight. He obeyed. That exaltation and dignities should be His in consequence is no surprise. Both Old and New Testaments speak of them. “Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He hath poured out His soul unto death,” is the prophetic statement in Isaiah (liii. 12). “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name,” is the announcement in the New Testament (Phil. ii. 9), of God's recognition of His obedience.



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Disobedience had characterised Adam. Obedience even to death is declared of Him. But other motives we read of. The Psalms referred to acquaint us with His intercourse with God about His death. Elsewhere we learn what He publicly uttered about the cross.

Greeks, Gentiles, desired to see Him, and had communicated their wish to one of the Lord's immediate followers, who, though a Jew, bore a Gentile name. These Gentiles, proselytes perhaps of the gate, for they had come to the feast, made Philip the bearer of their request, which, in company with his fellow-townsmen of Bethsaida, he conveyed to his Master. The answer of the Lord is both full and instructive. The hour of His glorification approached, but that could only be effected after His death. And death on the cross was for Him the appointed road to the position of the great centre for all men, which He would one day publicly occupy. But if this is to be His position, why should He die? Why should shame and death be His position, who would one day be the acknowledged centre for all men? Was He so weak, that He must succumb to the death of a slave? Was He so powerless, that death, which others would naturally strain every nerve to avert from themselves, He would be obliged to endure? No. Fallen man thinks first of Himself, He, the obedient One, desired the Father's glory. To ensure that, to have that displayed, He would die.

Was death to Him of little moment? We have seen that when nearer at hand it was not. It in truth never was. So here, whilst openly proclaiming to all a motive for Him to die, He lets all see that He did not desire death for its own sake. "Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour, but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father glorify Thy name" (John xii. 27). By the resurrection of Christ the Father's name would be glorified, as it had so recently been by the resurrection of Lazarus (John xi. 4-40). The multitude had often glorified God, when they beheld the wonderful works of Christ. The Samaritan leper, the woman covered with an infirmity, as well as Bartimæus, had given

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God the glory, when they became the recipients of health, strength, or sight. But the Father's name had been especially glorified when, as Son, the Lord called Lazarus out of his grave; and again would the Father's name be glorified, when He Himself, who is the Son, should be raised from the dead by Him. What motives, then, actuated the Lord in dying on the cross? He sought the glory of Him that sent Him, and that at whatever cost to Himself.

A third motive we learn from His discourse with His disciples in that upper room, where they had kept the paschal feast. Death had no claim on Him. "The prince of *the* (rather than *this*) world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." Holy, spotless, sinless, He was. Nothing in Him could the devil find to answer to his allurements, or to divert the Lord from His path, by the power of death which he could use. In the wilderness the first had been tried and found useless. The second also would fail. Yet the Lord was about to die. And a motive for it He has set forth—"That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given Me commandment so I do." Love and obedience to the Father constrained Him to die. The motive of obedience we have already touched on. That was as powerful as ever. But He would show to the world by His death His love to the Father. The Father needed not this sacrifice to prove the Son's love. Love can be exemplified by obedience (John xiv. 15, 23). Who then had evidenced love (more we could not here say) but equal to His who had always done the things which pleased the Father? A proof of it was not then demanded by the Father, yet a proof of it He would give by dying, that the world, however much it had misunderstood Him, should have in His death, at once a lasting and the strongest evidence, that love to His Father really dwelt in His heart. What He was the world could know from His death. Such a test, however, of love in Him, and given for that purpose, shows surely what the world was, what men were who composed it. How slow they must have been in understanding, how dull in their perceptions, that

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motives which animated Him should need, for the world to know them, the overwhelming evidence of His death.

No wonder that angels should make mention of His death, and proclaim that He is worthy of seven-fold blessing, when from obedience to God's will, to glorify the Father's name, and from love to His Father, and that it should be known, He bowed to death, the death of the cross. It must be natural and proper for them to cry, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." As man He died, and with all that a man could receive He is worthy to be endowed. All who understand about His death must acknowledge that; but would all be satisfied with this acknowledgement? Who of men could join in this tribute—however suitable it is—rendered to Him by angels? The answer is short and decisive. *Not one.* Fallen creatures must view His death in a light very different from that in which unfallen ones can see it; no un-saved soul could speak of Him as angels do. Such language from them would be an open condemnation of their position towards Him. No redeemed soul could be satisfied with the words of the angelic choir; for how could those redeemed by His blood make mention of His death as that in which they have no direct concern? No.

"One string there is, of sweetest tone,  
Reserved for sinners saved by grace;  
'Tis sacred to one class alone,  
And touched by one peculiar race."

For other motives there are which led Him to die, and in these His saints are directly concerned.

Speaking with His disciples on the evening of His betrayal, after Judas had left them to carry out his nefarious design, the Lord said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John xv. 13). What more can any one do for his friends than that? What less has the Lord done? "And hereby perceive we the love," as John writes (1 John iii. 16), referring, it would seem,

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to those words of the Master, "because He laid down His life for us." From love to God, and that the world might know it, the Lord died; for love to His own, He laid down His life for them. All that a creature as an unfallen one needs, the angels surely enjoy. But which of them could use such language as John does? The elect angels do not need such a manifestation of love; the fallen ones will never enjoy it. For He took not hold of angels (Heb. ii. 16); and those of them who fell are kept in chains of darkness, awaiting their final doom (2 Pet. ii. 4). But He took hold of the seed of Abraham, and love for His people drew Him to the cross.

But where are such as those called *us* by John to be found? Who can be numbered amongst that company? The Lord declared that when He drew the contrast between the hireling and the Good Shepherd (John x. 12-14), the "us" of John's epistle are the "sheep" of John's gospel. The hireling fleeth because He is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep; the Good Shepherd would not seek His own safety by flight, because He did care for them. Self-preservation was the thought of the hireling; self-surrender that of the Shepherd. To leave them to the wolf the hireling would be content; to save them from its rapacity would be a motive for the Good Shepherd to die. But more. The sheep did not belong to the hireling; but they do to the Shepherd. He therefore has an interest in them; for them, His sheep, He was content, nay, willing, to die, and thereby proved Himself to be the Good Shepherd. But how are the sheep to be known? The Shepherd it is who describes them: "They hear His voice, and they follow Him, and they know not the voice of a stranger" (John x. 27-35). By these marks they may be known. Varied, then, were the motives which led the Lord to die. To obey God and from love to the Father, a desire that His Name should be glorified; from love, too, to the sheep, caring for them, and because they are His He stooped even to death. Holy ground it surely is when we

touch on such a theme. May it ever be with solemnised and worshipping hearts that we meditate on so sacred a subject as the motives of the Son of God for dying on the cross.

C. E. S.

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### PERILOUS TIMES.

TIMOTHY was well instructed in the truth being Paul's true child in the faith (1 Tim. i. 2); and is called "My beloved child" (2 Tim. i. 2). Of him Paul writes in Phil. ii. 20, "I have no man like minded who will care truly for your state" (R. V.). Sound in the faith was Timothy, and a real lover of the saints of God. He surpassed all others in the estimation of Paul, among the younger brethren at least, not seeking anything for himself as most were then doing. "All seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ," and these were servants of Christ and saints of God, who, not advancing themselves, what interest could they manifest in the real well-being of the saints and their growth in the knowledge of Christ?

Timothy, naturally somewhat timid and weak, needed to be exhorted, and he stood in need of further instruction. Much he already knew. Paul wrote: "But this know that in the last days grievous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of self . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof" (2 Tim. iii.). No wonder that such men become opposers of true servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not infidel by profession, they were yet corrupt in mind, reprobate concerning the faith. One who seeks for himself, loving himself, loving money, pleasure, and so forth, must, if profession of godliness be made, use Scripture to hide his moral pravity, bending God's Word to suit his own ends. No wonder that false teaching soon finds a natural home in such a state of soul!

Do we not see to-day that persons holding high positions in the professing church are quibbling at this, and denying that, until little is left, and simple souls are bewildered. There is one sad feature, sadder than all others, and it is when appeal is made to the

Word as of Divine authority, and a literal text or statement is demanded for a truth or doctrine, which cannot always be found, and yet to anyone rightly taught in the Word is clear and plain.

Take the eternal Sonship of the Lord Jesus. Nowhere, as far as I know, is He so spoken of in the Word; yet, who taught of God can fail to see that Jesus was the Son of the Father from all eternity? Without the eternal Son there could be no eternal Father. Why, then, demand an exact expression for what is simple and self-evident? If God sent His only begotten Son into the world He had One to send—One who stood in that relationship to Him.

One might turn round and ask for a plain statement from these questioners to show when Jesus became that. "To-day have I begotten thee," refers to His birth as a man into this world, and does not tell when the only begotten of the Father became that. In truth He was ever that. Human relationships require that a father must be before a son. Priority of existence is a necessity. Not so in the Godhead. God ever was, so each of the persons in the Godhead is without beginning. Jesus said to His disciples, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go to the Father." And on that never-to-be-forgotten night, His last before He died, He prayed to His Father in the hearing of His disciples and asks among other things that He, the Son, might be glorified with the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. Let us note this: Before the world was, He, the Son, was with the Father as such, and enjoying glory as a Divine person, and we learn from John i. that as the Word He was with God, and was God, the same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. Surely there is no need for further proofs! To call in question the relationship of the Son to the Father in eternity proves great ignorance of the plain teaching of Scripture, and evidences human reasoning and human folly, and is a sad proof of the lack of subjection to the Holy Spirit,

who is not only the Inspirer of the Scriptures, but the Divine Teacher and Interpreter thereof.

I do not for a moment wish to fasten upon any particular person all the sad moral features described by Paul in his letter to Timothy to which I have called attention. God alone knows the heart, but he who degrades Christ is not subject to the Holy Spirit but is influenced by Satan to his own dishonour, no matter what his professions may be.

I was reading lately that God is one and He the Father only—that Jesus was a Man in whom God dwelt, but the Deity was confined to the Father, and the Holy Spirit was not a person at all. Much stress was laid upon what Paul wrote to the Corinthians in chap. viii. 6 of his First Epistle: “But to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things and we are in (or for) Him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him.” What can be said for the honesty of such a use of the Apostle’s language here? Worshippers of idols the heathen were, having gods many, and lords many. Christians have been better instructed. They know of one God and they know Him as Father. They know also of one Lord Jesus Christ. One Father and one Lord!

The Apostle was not unfolding truth as to the person of Christ, but what he did write involves the Godhead of the Lord Jesus; for if he stated of the Father “of whom are all things,” no less does he affirm of the Lord Jesus “by whom are all things.” Besides, the Apostle has in the clearest way possible, taught in Col. i. of Jesus Christ that all things were made by Him and for Him; that He is before all things, and by Him all things consist, or subsist. Even the ungodly Jews who crucified the Lord Jesus knew that nothing less than equality with God was implied in the Lord’s affirmation that God was His Father. They disputed His claim; they denied His Deity; but understood quite well that equality with God He avowed was His.

Do any want to make sure of being lost for ever? They can secure that for themselves by denying the Godhead of Jesus. Did He not say, “He that heareth

*My* word, and believeth on Him that sent *Me*, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment; but is passed from death unto life." "*My Word.*" Why? Because He was the Son of God, and had equal authority with the Father whose will it was that everyone who *seeth* the Son, and believeth on *Him*, should have everlasting life, and be raised up at the last day. All, too, are to honour the Son even as they honour the Father.

If the Father alone is God then the Son was not, nor the Holy Spirit. The personality of the Spirit is denied. He is something impersonal. Let the reader turn to the various references to the Holy Ghost found in John xiv., xv., and xvi. He will find always a person is spoken of, not a mere influence. The devil, too, it is asserted, is impersonal. Strange, is it not, that Scripture everywhere says the contrary. These modern discoverers have found out marvellous things. For them the devil simply means sin in the flesh. In whose flesh? we may ask. Sin is in each of Adam's race, but of Jesus we read, "He knew no sin." He was the Holy One of God. To imply that He was tempted by sin in the flesh is to make Him a sinner like ourselves and thus deny all the truth of His person—both His Deity and His holy humanity. The devil, we are told, placed Jesus on a pinnacle of the Temple and also took Him up an exceeding high mountain. This wretched theory is stupid, wicked nonsense. Michael, the Archangel, Jude wrote, disputed with the devil about the body of Moses. Did Michael, dispute, or contend, with sin in the flesh? Did Michael pay respect to sin? Yet we are told "He durst not bring a railing accusation against Satan, but said, The Lord rebuke thee!"

Again in the Rev. we read of war in heaven between Michael and his angels, and the devil and his angels, and the devil was cast down, and no more place was found for him in heaven. Was sin ever in heaven?—sin in the flesh, remember. If so, then flesh, sinful flesh, is there. Satan is a person, an enemy of God and man. How He must laugh at the folly of those who deny His personality!

E. R. W.



## SEVEN PHOTOS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL.

### PHOTO No. 4.—“A PRESERVED MESSENGER.”

(Verse 17).

THE Master knew the dangers that would beset the path of His servant on such a mission, and He graciously provided for them, and assured His messenger of deliverance from death, whether from Jews or Gentiles, till his commission was executed. Paul was to be “a preserved messenger,” and “immortal till his work was done.”

Nor was he to be left in blind ignorance of the dangers and difficulties of fulfilling such a commission. He could say at another period of his life, “Now behold I go bound in the Spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there. *Save* that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts xx. 22-24). But neither was he allowed to be ignorant of the fact that the Master would care for him and deliver him till his work was finished. How gracious of the Lord to give His servant the knowledge, and the sense in his soul that he would be “a preserved messenger” till his commission was ended.

We only need to read 2 Cor. xi. 23-33 to see the extraordinary dangers, and almost unparalleled sufferings of Paul in fulfilling that commission. Indeed it almost seems impossible and incredible that any human being could endure all that he passed through and live; were it not that the Master was behind it all, making good His Word to His messenger in delivering power until the end was reached. How well might Paul say, “Henceforth let no man trouble me for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus” (Gal. vi. 17). Like a slave branded with the hot iron, so Paul carried *in his body* the scars of his service for Christ. They were his wounds in the battles, his medals for victories. Wonderful servant!

“The times are changed now,” we are told. Thank God it is so, in one way, at least in civilized countries; but they are not in another. If any one will be true to his commission to-day, and be “a faithful messenger,” he will still have to face many a difficulty—many a danger—get many a wound, and many a sore heart—and shed many a scalding tear. Yet, spite of all that, he will be made to realize, like Paul, that the Master keeps His eye upon him, and “will not suffer him to be tempted above that he is able to bear; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape that he may be able to bear it” (1 Cor. x. 13).

What a precious, gracious Master! Yes, we may rest assured that the messenger will get many a night-visit from Him, with its “Be of good cheer”; and His presence will be realized on many a stormy sea to encourage his heart in his dangerous and trying path, and help him “to endure as seeing Him who is invisible.” What encouragement for us to-day! How we often forget that “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever”; and “having loved His own which are in the world, He loved them to the end.”

The messenger when called into service, goes forth with his message taking all risks; assured that Satan cannot prevent him till his work is finished. He is “a preserved messenger” until then. Let us “thank God and take courage.” There is a voice which Satan cannot drown, and which may be heard above the howling storms which may rage round and threaten the Lord’s servants—“Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age.” Whether therefore it be in danger or death, His presence will be known, and His voice heard, cheering, encouraging, sustaining; and at the close receiving the spirit of His faithful messengers to be with Himself.

**PHOTO No. 5.—“A QUALIFIED WORKMAN.”**

(Verse 18).

We do not usually send men to do work they are not fitted for. We expect men to be sent that are qualified, and who will do their work in a workman-

*Seven Photos of the Apostle Paul.*

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like manner. Doubtless there were natural qualifications which the Master saw in Paul; but for the work He was sending him to do, it needed special and spiritual qualifications, and such must be *given* to him. And so at that memorable meeting of Master and man, those capabilities were there and then bestowed on him. Paul was to be "a pattern man" (1 Tim. i. 16), and in that light we see him in all these photos.

It was a truly marvellous work he had to do. He was to be "sent to the Gentiles. To open their eyes." And in this connexion it was the *only* work given him. All that is mentioned in the rest of the verse was to be the effects of it: see N.T. by J.N.D., where it reads:—"To open their eyes, *that they may turn* from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; *that they may receive* remission of sins and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in Me." It needed then a capable workman for such a work as this; and called for both skill and heaven-born wisdom to accomplish it.

We do not expect to see an anchor-smith attempting to forge an anchor with a watchmaker's tools. Nor yet to see a watchmaker attempting to mend a watch with forging tools. Suitable tools and ways must be taken for each kind of work; and so we see this principle carried out in the labours of this skilled workman. When he went into the Jewish synagogues he did not offend them and cut off their "*right ear*" at the first stroke, by preaching to *them* an "unknown God." He took up the history of the nation in their relation to God, and showed their ingratitude and sin in the light of all His love, patience, and goodness, shown to their fathers and to them. And that, spite of all their ingratitude and even the murder of His Son, God was willing and waiting to bless any individual from among them on their repentance. Wonderful grace surely!

Or if he found himself among heathen idolators as at Lystra (Acts 14); or on Mars Hill (Acts 17); he told them of the goodness of God in His providence, and preached to them "the unknown God whom they

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ignorantly worshipped," quoting their own poets to enforce his teaching. And thus we see this capable and skilled workman going everywhere on his Master's business, and successfully doing his Master's work. Eyes were being opened everywhere. And with opened eyes went the turning from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; and also the reception of forgiveness of sins and inheritance among those sanctified by faith in the Lord Jesus. We need only turn to the first Epistle to the Thessalonians to see how beautifully and effectively he did his work—yea, wherever he went.

Nor was his work *confined* to sinners in the preaching of the gospel; there was the building up of the saints by instructing them in the ways and purpose of God as we see in all the Epistles; that each and all might apprehend and respond to that purpose and "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing by the true knowledge of God" (Col. i. 9-11); that thus they might "adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things." Thus the Apostle in all his labours showed himself to be what he wished other labourers to be—"a workman that needeth not to be ashamed."

Truly there are wonderful lessons for all the Lord's workmen to be learnt from the life and ways of Paul as he travelled about doing the Lord's work. He took no holidays. He missed no opportunities. He even worked with his own hands that he might the more successfully work on people's hearts; and the multitudes whose eyes were opened through his labours, to see in the light of eternity "the things that belong to their peace," will rise up hereafter and call him blessed. What an example!

### PHOTO No. 6.—"AN OBEDIENT SERVANT."

(Verses 19-20.)

THE Lord has had so many disobedient servants (doubtless ourselves among the rest), that it is refreshing to look at the photo of an obedient one. How many Jonahs, and Demases, and John Marks there have

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been who have taken their own ways rather than be "obedient unto the heavenly vision"; but who had to find out, as all such *must* find out, sooner or later, that it is "an evil thing and bitter to forsake the Lord" and refuse to walk in the way of His commandments (Jeremiah ii. 19).

From the prospect of all that lay before him, both as to labour and suffering, Paul did not shrink. He did not say like Moses under similar circumstances, "O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since Thou hast spoken unto Thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue" (Ex. iv. 10). Nor like Jeremiah, "Ah, Lord God: behold I cannot speak, for I am a child" (Jer. i. 6). Surely he might have reasoned and said to the Lord then, what he did practically say to the Lord at a subsequent time, "Lord, think of my shameful and guilty past and send someone else. How is it possible for me to be believed in the light of what I have been and done"? (see Acts xxii. 19-20). But no; the short and simple testimony which marks and makes this photo of him was—"I was *not* disobedient unto the heavenly vision." Then verse twenty lets us see something of his travels, and what he preached. Happy man! Jesus had got such a hold of his heart, that his life was counted "no longer dear to him," and he surrendered it to the Master to do what He pleased with it, and was prepared to go to Syria, Palestine, or to the ends of the earth, if needs be, among the Gentiles.

How easy for many to sign themselves to their fellows, "Your obedient servant,———" who would find themselves pulled up if they had to write to the Lord and sign themselves thus. It might possibly be a healthy exercise if some of us, after a day of service were to try it, and write down, "Lord, this day I have not been disobedient unto the heavenly vision—Your obedient servant,———"! It might prove to us that the work had been of our own planning and not His; and that we were pleasing ourselves, and *not* obeying Him; or doing it as fulfilling a legal obligation with the hope of return in the divine blessing.

The Lord certainly looks for and expects obedience from His servants: but it must be the obedience of faith and love. "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me, and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father; and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him" (John xiv. 21). We are saved to serve—to do the will of God—not to do our own will. How we need to be reminded of this! The Lord Jesus Himself when here in this world could say, "I am among you as one that serveth." And likewise, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work" (John iv. 34). How much self-seeking, and doing our own wills there is amongst us. How little of "Lord what wilt Thou have me to do"? May this brief glance at this pattern man stir us up to act like him in a devoted obedience, impelled by the powerful constrainings of the love of Christ "which passeth knowledge."

**PHOTO No. 7.—"A SEASONED VETERAN."**

(Verses 22, 23).

OUR last photo of Paul is that of the "seasoned veteran." At this period of his history, about seven and twenty years had passed away since he started on his arduous, dangerous, and difficult commission. He had had no furlough, no respite, no relief in his work. When captured and imprisoned it was the same as when at liberty. His one object was to faithfully serve his Master and "finish his course with joy." Tired, weary, and worn out *in* the service, he had no thought of being tired *of* it and giving it up; and now as he stands before the King he emphasises this, "Having therefore obtained help of God I *continue* to this day, witnessing"; and lifting up his manacled hands he could say, "I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and *altogether* such as I am, except these bonds." He complained not of his fetters. He envied not the king. He was above and beyond him in moral superiority and the enjoyment of eternal good, and wished that he and all others who heard

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him could be as he was, *except the bonds.*" What a picture!

"A seasoned veteran" indeed! Paul had no thought of giving up—of retiring on "pension" or "half-pay" and taking it easy for the rest of his days. No, no. "I continue unto this day, witnessing," was his language and the set purpose of his life. He still seemed to realise the presence and "good cheer" of the Master given him at Corinth: "Be not afraid, Paul, but speak, and hold not thy peace," and so he *continued* to do it.

Friends might have, and probably did, caution him as to wearing himself out, and the necessity of easing off and so lasting the longer; but neither living or dying troubled Paul; he was on active service, and his only thought was to do as much as he could, and in the very best way he could. Hitherto he had done it, and could say, "I continue" in it. But how had he managed this? "Having obtained help of God" is the answer. He knew *where* to go and *when* to go in order to find help, and hitherto he had found it. He *sought* it, and so *obtained* it, though doubtless it cost him much "strong crying and tears" in his supplications. How loudly does all this say to each one of us serving the Lord, "Go, and do thou likewise."

Then see his low thoughts of self as he progresses in his life and service. He is not elated and self-confident. He does not advance in self-importance. No, no. He could say at one time, "Not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles" (2 Cor. xi. 5). Then, "I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle" (1 Cor. xv. 9). Then, "Less than the least of all saints" (Eph. iii. 8). And finally, "The chief of sinners" (1 Tim. i. 15). Such were the *progressive* ideas formed in the mind and heart of this devoted servant, this seasoned veteran. From our standpoint we look at him with admiration and say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Ere we close the album we might just take one more look and see the close of this marvellous life.

Here it is. "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give unto me in that day" (2 Tim. iv. 6-8). He had reached the end. He had lost everything of his own, but he had kept what belonged to God—the faith. And now he was about to lay down life itself, and enter the audience chamber of the King who commissioned him at the start to report himself to his well-loved, and well-served Lord and Master, but he was "*ready.*"

May these hasty views of this choice servant of Christ stimulate our hearts and lead us to follow the advice he gave to the Corinthians when he said to them, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

WM. EASTON.

*New Zealand.*

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## THE CHRIST OF GOD, THE TRUE CENTRE OF UNION.

THE cross may gather all, both Jew and Gentile: but they are gathered *to Christ*, not to the cross; and the difference is a most important and essential one, because it is of all importance that the person of the Son of God have its place. Christ Himself, not the cross of Christ, is the centre of union. The two or three are gathered to His name, not to the cross. Scripture is uniform in its testimony as to this.

But further, where saints are gathered in unity, without any questionings, they have the truth and holiness to guard. It never was, nor, I trust, ever will be, the notion of brethren, that the truth of Christ's person, or godliness of walk, was to be sacrificed to outward unity. It is making brethren of more importance than Christ. And even so, love to the brethren is false; for, if true, it is, John assures us, "love in the truth, and



for the truth's sake." Supposing a person denied the divinity of Christ, or the resurrection of His body, still declaring his belief in the cross; supposing he declared his belief in the cross and resurrection, but declared it was only a testimony of God's love, and no substitution or expiatory value in it, as many clergymen of high reputation now do, is all this to be immaterial? I shall be told that no true believer could do this. In the first place, a true believer may be seduced into error; and further, the test offered becomes thus the opinion formed that a man is a true believer, and not the plain, fundamental truth of God and His holiness.

If it be granted that the gathering is round the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is quite true; but what person? Would it be equal if He were owned to be God, or if it were denied? If He were the Son, the object of the Father's delight at all times, or if He were a man or really risen from the dead? If it be said, All this is supposed, then neutrality is a delusion, and denies itself. For what I insist on is, that I must have a *true* Christ, and that I am bound to maintain the truth of Christ in my communion. I am aware that it is stated that we can deal with conduct (with morality), but not with these questions. But this is just what appears to me so excessively evil. Decency of conduct is necessary to communion; but a man may blaspheme Christ--*that* is no matter: it is a matter, not of conduct, but of conscience. It is hinted, that perhaps, if it be a teacher, he may be dealt with. In truth, the Apostle desires even a woman not to let such a person into her house. It is not therefore so difficult to deal with. Just think of a system which makes blasphemous views of Christ, which may amount to a denial of Him, to be a matter of private conscience, having nothing to do with communion! And here is the very root of the question.

I affirm that that is not a communion of believers at all which is not founded on the acknowledgment of a true Christ. Where the truth as to this is commonly held and taught, I may have no need for particular

enquiry. But that is not the case here. If I find a person even in such a case denying the truth as to Christ, communion is impossible, because we have not a common Christ to have communion in. But here all faithfulness is thrown overboard. No call to confess a true Christ is admitted: it is a new test or term of communion!

We are to meet as Christians; but a man is not a Christian in profession who professes a false Christ. I cannot judge the state of a person's heart while his profession is false. I may hope he is only misled, but cannot accept his profession. If wholly or not willingly ignorant, it is another matter; but we have to do with the case where, heretical views being held, they are declared to be matter of private conscience; that a false Christ is as good as a true one, if a person's conduct is good. We can judge only of the last. Now this principle is worse than false doctrine; because it knows the falseness and blasphemy of it, and then says it is no matter. I do not own such meetings as meetings of believers; for fundamental error as to Christ is immaterial for communion—a matter, not of conduct, but of conscience.

“If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Suppose a person held Christ was a mere man, and quoted the passages to prove it that God raised Him, and made Him Lord and Christ, would he be received? If not, you do try whether a man has the faith of God's elect; otherwise a Socinian is admissible as a believer, or you make *your opinion* of his being a believer the test, entirely independent of the faith of Christ. It is said, You can only require a person to say he receives all in the Scripture. The supposed Socinian would accept such a test at once. They do so. Why should you ask even that? A man may be a believer, and a rationalist in theory—sad as such a thought is—and not accept all the word of God, and say, I am a believer in the cross. You have no right to make a difficulty. If after this you object to any

doctrine, or insist on any truth, you have not even Scripture to lean on against his denial of it. Scripture says, "Whom I love in the truth," and "for the truth's sake." The other principle says that is no matter. You think the person spiritual, a believer. The truth of Christ is no matter; a false one is just as good.

I add no human document to the divine; I make no term of communion besides Christ. God requires that those who have blasphemed Christ should not be admitted. I am told that it is a matter of conscience, etc., and people cannot read doctrines to know whether He is blasphemed or not. These blasphemers have been received deliberately and avowedly, upon the ground that no enquiry is to be made; and therefore the plea of additional bonds or terms of communion is all dust thrown in the eyes. Is it a new term of communion to affirm that faith, faith in a true Christ (not a false one) is required for communion, and that blasphemers of Christ are not to be received? That is the true question. If persons think they are not safe in *reading* the publications, how are they safe in fellowship and intimacy with those who have written or refuse to disown them? I confess I do not admire this argument. Simple believers do not hesitate, reasoning minds do. Ask a true-hearted believer if Christ had the experience of an unconverted man. He would soon say, I will have nothing to do with one who says that. A reasoning mind might make it a mere matter of personal conscience. Is the truth of Christ's person and His relationship to God a variety of judgment on a particular doctrine? Here is the whole question: *value for Christ, and the truth as to Himself.*

Definitions are not required; but that when blasphemous definitions have been made, the blasphemers should be refused. Is it the Shibboleth of a party to reject such doctrines as, that Christ was relatively farther from God than man when they made the golden calf; and that he heard with an attentive heart the Gospel from John Baptist, and so passed from law under grace? Or is it faithfulness to Christ

to extenuate them by saying, that in such deep doctrines we shall not express ourselves alike?

It is not real love to the members, nor love for Christ's sake, to despise Christ so as to bear blasphemies against Him. The truth of His person and glory is a test for those who are faithful to Him. I cannot talk of liberty of conscience to blaspheme Christ, or have communion with it. Christ, not opinion, is the centre of union; but I never meant, nor do I mean, that a true Christ and a false one were equally good as a centre, provided people are amiable one with another; for this means that union is man's amiability and the denial of Christ. What do I want of union, if it be not union in Christ, according to the power of life, through the Holy Ghost?

The business of those united is *Christ's glory*. If Christians ever unite on a condition of that not being essential, their union is not Christian union at all. I have no reason for union but Christ, the living Saviour. I do not want any union but that which makes Him the centre, and the all and the hope of it. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren"; but to make this a plea for indifference to Christ's personal glory in order to be one with him who, calling himself a brother, denies and undermines it, is, in my mind, wickedness.

J. N. D.

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IN looking for the coming of the Lord, it does not become us to look at it as putting an end to our sorrows, for that would bespeak little communion with God. We should rather look at it as fulfilling God's pleasure, and unfolding what He has planned.

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IN *our* hands the threads are broken; in His hands they have never been rent. In the midst of failed and failing circumstances, the Church ecclesiastically a ruin amidst the wrecked testimony of the ages, God's voice is heard above the din and strife.

## "TO ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST."

(PHILIPPIANS i. 21).

THE mind of the Spirit for you and me to-day is, that we should be channels for the flowing forth of the eternal life that is in Christ, in the midst of the world. He would have a stream flowing forth from us, telling of the God who is its source, and of the Christ who supplies it.

For what does Christ show that all He possesses is ours? Merely that we should be saved? No! He might then have waited till the eleventh hour before He had called us. No! He wants the eternal life to be told out in a world where Satan is master, so that He can point angels, and principalities, and powers to the Church, to learn in us the manifold riches of God's grace. As children of the Father's house, who have known the bosom of the Father, who are like the feet of the glorious Head in heaven, let me ask you if the character of the Head is seen in you? Are you seeking to make the wilderness resound, not merely with the name of the Lord Jesus, but with lives conformed to His character, and to the life of the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven? God has His wishes for His saints, and shall not my heart respond to His desires? See to what an extent Paul carried this. To some it seems a strange thing to press the life of Christ on people; but what would you give for a beautiful watch without hands? And what is a saint if not shewing forth Christ? or a vine if it bear no grapes?

The Apostle would say, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." What was Paul about when he wrote that word? He felt that he was for Christ, and for Christ only, whether in life or in death. He could say, "I have only one object—Christ; and I have only one desire—that Christ should be magnified in my body." If, therefore, they had beheaded Paul, would he have lost anything? No! Christ would have been magnified in his body still. What a striking testimony was that in Cæsar's court! A Roman knew how to face death as a display of courage, but to go forward

to it in the thought that death was gain, because there was a Jesus who had been crucified between two thieves, who was the joy of a man's heart, a Roman could *not* have understood. Let me ask you—since you have known Christ, Christ's heart, Christ Himself your treasure, your life, Christ everything that God could give you—has your thought been, "To me to live is Christ, and to die gain"? It is our privilege while passing through this scene. And how it glorifies the meanest life if Christ is magnified in it! And how does it change death, if to die is gain, Christ being magnified in it! That is what a life of communion with God gives to a man. Ennobled by God most truly. The life of Christ flowing out through me, I am like the hands of a clock through which the movement of the works within shows itself. Is that bondage? Is it legality for Christ to say, "Your bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost, and I expect you to show it"? If this is bondage, would to God there were ten thousand times more of it.

G. V. W.

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### THE GOD OF IMMENSITY.

PLANETS are racing through the sky at the rate of 100 miles each moment, but see how carefully God keeps their time. Jupiter never reaches his goal at any given point a moment too late or a moment too soon. One mistake of a second would wrench the system past all computation. The most unwieldy of the stars comes exactly to time. Turning from the evening sky, the astronomer said, "God is a mathematician." And as the *motions* are exact, and timed to the millionth of a second, so the *masses* are arranged and guarded with the minutest care. God stands with scales more exact than those of the goldsmith. God is minute as well as vast in His universe. If His lines and angles stretch across the whole universe, yet the measurement is exact. What, then, is the inference from these heavens? The stars do not say, "Christ;" but they tell of a minuteness of God's care for worlds that is more than matched by His care for the souls of

men. And how fitting, then, is the belief in a God who *is*, and who is ever *near*; a God who hears prayer, who has cared and cares for man, and who has revealed His grace in the moral glory of the Person and work of Christ, even as the glory of His wisdom and power are displayed in radiant orbs above us.

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WHAT is a law of nature? It is God's usual way of doing things. What is a miracle? God's unusual way of doing things. No law binds Him to do His will in any particular way. In that case He would be imprisoned in His own natural laws. Even the silkworm, that spins its own winding-sheet, at length bursts through its prison. Is the Infinite One entombed in His own world? It is a law of my nature that my arm shall hang down at my side. It weighs just so many pounds, and is attracted by just so much force to the earth; but when I lift my arm, I overmatch the law of gravity. The law exists and acts; but my will, practically and within a limited range, counteracts or suspends the results of that law. My will is above, or stronger, than that natural law, or is *supernatural*. Now if I can work right above a natural law, cannot God much more do so? If I am no prisoner of law, is He fettered thereby? The real wonder is that miracles are so few—that God so generally leaves natural laws to go undisturbed. The entire absence of miracles would be the most improbable of things.—*Extract.*

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THE great tower of Babel in the plains of Shinar would have been the boast of a Nimrod, but Abraham would have turned from it to weep; just as the merchants of the earth bewail that which the heavens rejoice over (Rev. xviii).

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MANY dear Christians, with a troubled conscience, go about the affairs of this life with much prayer; but do they listen to God from day to day? They speak to Him, but do they listen to Him?

## THE WELL OF SYCHAR.

SWEET was the hour, O Lord, to Thee  
At Sychar's lonely well,  
When a poor outcast heard Thee there  
Thy great salvation tell.

Thither she came; but oh! her heart,  
All filled with earthly care,  
Dreamed not of Thee, nor thought to find  
The hope of Israel there.

Lord 'twas Thy power unseen that drew  
The stray one to that place,  
In solitude to learn from Thee  
The secrets of Thy grace.

There Jacob's erring daughter found  
Those streams unknown before,  
The waterbrooks of life that make  
The weary thirst no more.

And, Lord, to us, as vile as she,  
Thy gracious lips have told  
That mystery of love revealed  
At Jacob's well of old.

In spirit, Lord, we've sat with Thee  
Beside the springing well  
Of life and peace, and heard Thee there  
Its healing virtues tell.

Dead to the world, we dream no more  
Of earthly pleasures now;  
Our deep, divine, unfailing spring  
Of grace and glory Thou!

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WE must, beloved, be patient with one another, and modest in ourselves. The time of perfectness is in prospect, and now, even the very occasions of forbearance, though they show our present imperfectness, may be made the instruments for moulding and fashioning our hearts, and constitute some of the fuel of that fire which is refining us under the hand of the Lord.