

Things New and Old,

A

MONTHLY MAGAZINE,

FOR THE LAMBS AND SHEEP OF THE FLOCK
OF CHRIST.



“Feed the flock of God.”—1 Peter v. 2.



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Things New and Old.

GLAD TIDINGS.

(JOHN III. 16.)

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

There are some passages of holy scripture which seem to contain, in a line or two, an entire volume of most precious truth. The verse which we have just penned is one of such. It is part of our Lord's memorable discourse with Nicodemus, and it embodies, in a condensed form, a very full statement of gospel truth—a statement which may well be termed “Glad Tidings.”

It should ever be borne in mind, both by preachers and those to whom they preach, that one grand object of the gospel is to bring God and the sinner together in such a way as to secure the sinner's eternal salvation. It reveals a *Saviour-God* to a *lost man*. In other words, it presents God to the sinner in the very character that meets the sinner's need. A Saviour is precisely what suits the lost, just as a life-boat suits a drowning man, or a physician a sick man, or bread a hungry man. They are fitted the one for the other; and when God, as a Saviour, and man, as a lost sinner, meet together, the whole question is settled for ever. The sinner is saved, because God is a Saviour. He is saved according to the perfection which belongs to God,

in every character He wears, in every office He fills, in every relationship He sustains. To raise a question as to the full and everlasting salvation of a believing soul, is to deny that God is a Saviour. So it is in reference to justification. God has revealed Himself as a Justifier; and, hence, the believer is justified according to the perfection which attaches to God in that character. If a single flaw could be detected in the title of the very weakest believer, it would be a dishonour to God as a Justifier. Grant me but this, that God is my Justifier, and I argue, in the face of every opposer and every accuser, that I am, and must be, perfectly justified.

And, on the same principle, grant me but this, that God has revealed Himself as a Saviour, and I argue, with unclouded confidence and holy boldness, that I am, and must be, perfectly saved. It does not rest upon aught in me, but simply and entirely upon God's revelation of Himself. I know He is perfect, in everything; and, therefore, perfect as my Saviour. Hence, I am perfectly saved, inasmuch as the glory of God is involved in my salvation. "There is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me." What then? "*Look unto me*, and be ye saved, *all the ends of the earth*; for I am God, and there is none else." (Is. xlv. 21, 22.) One believing *look* from a lost sinner to a just God and a Saviour, secures eternal salvation. "*Look!*" How simple! It is not "Work"—"Do"—"Pray"—"Feel"—no; it is simply "Look." And what then? Salvation—everlasting life. It must be so, because God is a Saviour; and the precious little monosyllable "Look" fully implies all this, inasmuch as it expresses the fact that the salvation which I want is found in the One to whom I look. It is all there, ready for me, and one look secures it—secures it for ever—secures it for *me*. It is not a thing of to-day or to-morrow; it is an eternal reality. The bulwarks of salvation behind which the believer retreats have been erected by God Him-

self—the Saviour-God, on the sure foundation of Christ's atoning work; and no power of earth or hell can ever shake them. "Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on him, shall not be confounded." Isaiah xxviii. 16; 1 Peter ii. 6.

But let us now turn directly to the profound and comprehensive passage which forms the special subject of this paper. In it, most assuredly, we listen to the voice of a Saviour-God—the voice of Him who came down from heaven to reveal God in such a way as He had never been revealed before. It is a marvellously blessed fact that God has been fully revealed in this world—revealed, so that we—the writer and the reader of these lines—may know Him, in all the reality of what He is—know Him, each for himself, with the utmost possible certainty, and have to do with Him, in all the blessed intimacy of personal communion.

Reader, think of this! Think, we beseech you, of this amazing privilege. You may know God for yourself, as *your Saviour, your Father, your own very God*. You may have to do with Him; you may lean upon Him, cling to Him, walk with Him, live, and move, and have your being in His own most blessed presence, in the bright sunshine of His loving countenance, under His own immediate eye.

This is life and peace. It is far more than mere theology or systematic divinity. These things have their value; but, be it remembered, a man may be a profound theologian, an able divine, and yet live and die without God, and perish eternally. Solemn, awful, overwhelming thought! A man may go down to hell, into the blackness and darkness of an eternal night, with all the dogmas of theology at his fingers' ends. A man may sit in the professor's chair, stand in the pulpit, and at the desk; he may be looked up to as a great teacher and an eloquent preacher;

hundreds may sit at his feet and learn, thousands may hang on his lips, and be enraptured, and, after all, he himself may descend into the pit, and spend a dismal, miserable eternity in company with the most profane and immoral.

Not so, however, with the one who knows God as He is revealed in the face of Jesus Christ. Such a one has gotten life eternal. "This," says Christ, "is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." (John xvii. 3.) It is not life eternal to know theology or divinity. A man may sit down to the study of these, as he would to study law or medicine, astronomy or geology, and, all the while, know nothing of God, and therefore be without divine life, and perish in the end.

So also as to mere religiousness. A man may be the greatest devotee in the world. He may, most diligently, discharge all the offices, and sedulously attend upon all the ordinances of systematic religion; he may fast and pray; hear sermons and say prayers; be most devout and exemplary; and, all the while, know nothing of God in Christ; yea, he may live and die without God, and sink into hell for ever. Look at Nicodemus. Where could you find a better sample of religious human nature than in him? A man of the Pharisees, a ruler of the Jews, a master in Israel; one, moreover, who seemed to discern in the miracles of our Lord the clear proofs of His divine mission; and yet the word to him was, "Ye must be born again." We have no need, surely, to go farther than this to prove that a man may be, not only religious, but actually a guide and a teacher of others, and yet not have a single spark of divine life in his soul.

But it is not so with one who knows God in Christ. Such a one has life, and an object. He has God Himself for his priceless portion. This is divine. It lies at the very foundation of personal christianity and true religion.

It is above and beyond everything. It is not, we repeat, mere theology, divinity, or religiousness; it is God Himself, known, trusted, and enjoyed. It is a grand, unmistakable reality. It is the soul of theology, the groundwork of divinity, the life of true religion. There is nothing in all this world like it. It is something which must be *felt* in order to be known. It is acquaintance with God, confidence in Him, and enjoyment of Him.

Now, it may be that the reader is disposed to ask, "How can I possess this priceless treasure? How can I know God for myself, in this living, saving, powerful manner? If it be true that without this personal knowledge of God, I *must* perish eternally, then how am I to obtain it? What am I to do, what am I to be, in order to know God?" The answer is, God has revealed Himself. If he had not, we may say, with decision, that nothing that we could do, nothing that we could be, nothing in us or of us could possibly make us acquainted with God. If God had not manifested Himself, we should have remained for ever in ignorance of Him, and perished in our ignorance. But, seeing that He has come forth from the thick darkness, and shewed Himself, we may know Him according to the truth of His own revelation, and find, in that knowledge, everlasting life, and a spring of blessedness at which our ransomed souls shall drink throughout the golden ages of eternity.

We know of nothing which so clearly and forcibly proves man's utter incompetency to do aught towards procuring life, as the fact that the possession of this life is based upon the knowledge of God; and this knowledge of God must rest upon the revelation of God. In a word, to know God is life; to be ignorant of Him is death.

But where is He to be known? This is, in very deed, a grave question. Many a one has had to cry out, with Job, "Oh! that I knew where I might find him." Where is God to be found? Am I to look for Him in creation?

Doubtless, His *hand* is visible there; but ah! that will not do for me. A Creator-God will not suit a lost sinner. *The hand of power* will not avail for a poor guilty wretch like me. I want a *heart of love*. Yes, I want a heart that can love me in all my guilt and misery. Where can I find this? Shall I look into the wide domain of Providence—the widely extended sphere of God's government? Has God revealed Himself there in such a way as to meet me a poor lost one? Will Providence and government avail for one who knows himself to be a hell-deserving sinner? Clearly not. If I look at these things, I may see what will perplex and confound me. I am short-sighted and ignorant, and wholly unable to explain the ins and outs, the bearings and issues, the why and the wherefore of a single event in my own life, or in the history of this world. Am I able to explain all about the loss of *The London*? Can I account for the fact that a most valuable life is suddenly cut short, and an apparently useless one prolonged? There is a husband and the father of a large family: he seems perfectly indispensable to his domestic circle; and yet, all in a moment, he is cut down, and they are left in sorrow and destitution. While, on the other hand, yonder lies a poor bed-ridden creature, who has out-lived all her relations, and is dependent on the parish, or on individual benevolence. She has lain there for years, a burden to some, no use to any. Can I account for this? Am I competent to interpret the voice of Providence in this deeply mysterious dispensation? Certainly not. I have nothing in or of myself wherewith to thread my way through the mazes of the labyrinth of what is called Providence. I cannot find a Saviour-God there.

Well, then, shall I turn to the law—to the Mosaic economy—the Levitical ceremonial? Shall I find what I want there? Will a lawgiver, on the top of a fiery mount, wrapped in clouds and thick darkness, sending forth thunders and lightnings, or hidden behind a veil—will such

a One avail for me? Alas ! alas ! I cannot meet Him—I cannot answer His demands nor fulfil the conditions. I am told to love Him with all my heart, with all my mind, and with all my strength ; but I do not know Him. I am blind and cannot see. I am alienated from the life of God, an enemy by wicked works. Sin has blinded my mind, blunted my conscience, and hardened my heart. The devil has completely perverted my moral being, and led me into a state of positive rebellion against God. I want to be renewed in the very source of my being, ere I can do what the law demands. How can I be thus renewed? Only by the knowledge of God. But God is not revealed in the law. Nay, He is hidden—hidden behind an impenetrable cloud, an unrent veil. Hence I cannot know Him there. I am compelled to retire from that fiery mount, and from that unrent veil, and from the whole economy of which these were the characteristic features, the prominent objects, still crying out, “ Oh ! that I knew where I might find him.” In a word, then, neither in creation, nor in providence, nor in the law, is God revealed as “ a just God and a Saviour.” I see a God of power, in creation ; a God of wisdom, in providence ; a God of justice, in the law ; a God of love, *only* in the face of Jesus Christ. “ *God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.*” 2 Cor. v. 19.

To this stupendous fact we call the reader's earnest attention ; that is, if he be one who does not yet know the Lord. It is of the very last possible importance that he be clear as to this. Without it there can be nothing right. To know God is the first step. It is not merely knowing some things about God. It is not unrenewed nature turning religious, trying to do better, endeavouring to keep the law. No, reader ; it is none of these things. It is God, known in the face of Jesus Christ. “ For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory

of God in the face of Jesus Christ." This is the deep and blessed secret of the whole matter. The reader, so far as his natural condition is concerned, is in a state of darkness. There is not so much as a single ray of spiritual light. He is, spiritually and morally, just what creation was, physically, before that sublime and commanding utterance fell from the lips of the Almighty Creator, "Let there be light." All is dark and chaotic, for "the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." 2 Cor. iv. 4, 6.

Here are the two things, namely, the god of this world blinding the mind, and seeking to hinder the inshining of the precious life-giving beams of the light of God's glory; and, on the other hand, God, in His marvellous grace, shining in the heart, to give the light of the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ. Thus all hinges upon the grand reality of the knowledge of God. Is there light? It is because God is known. Is there darkness? It is because God is not known. No doubt there are various measures in the experience and exhibition of this light; but there is light, because there is the knowledge of God. So also there may be various forms of darkness; some more hideous than others; but there is darkness, because God is not known. The knowledge of God is light and life. Ignorance of God is darkness and death. A man may enrich himself with all the treasures of science and literature; but if he does not know God, he is in a dark, a primeval night. But, on the other hand, a man may be profoundly ignorant of all human learning; but if he knows God, he can walk in broad daylight.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)



THE ALABASTER BOX.

(MATTHEW XXVI. 6—13.)

It is very needful to bear in mind, in this day of busy doing and restless activity, that God looks at everything from one standpoint, measures everything by one rule, tries everything by one touchstone, and that touchstone, that rule, that standpoint is Christ. He values things just so far as they stand connected with the Son of His love, and no farther. Whatever is done *to* Christ, whatever is done *for* Him, is precious to God. All beside is valueless. A large amount of work may be done, and a great deal of praise drawn forth thereby, from human lips; but when God comes to examine it, He will simply look for one thing, and that is, the measure in which it stands connected with Christ. His great question will be, Has it been done *in*, and *to*, the Name of Jesus? If it has, it will stand approved, and be rewarded; if not, it will be rejected and burnt up.

It does not matter in the least what men's thoughts may be about any particular piece of work. They may laud a person to the skies, for something he is doing; they may parade his name in the public journals of the day; they may make him the subject of discourse in their drawing room circle; he may have a great name as a preacher, a teacher, a writer, a philanthropist, a moral reformer; but, if he cannot connect his work with the name of Jesus—if it is not done *to* Him and *to* His glory—if it is not the fruit of the constraining love of Christ, it will all be blown away like the chaff of the summer threshing floor, and sunk into eternal oblivion.

On the contrary, a man may pursue a quiet, humble, lowly path of service, unknown and unnoticed. His name may never be heard, his work may never be thought of; but what has been done, has been done in simple love

to Christ. He has wrought, in obscurity, with his eye on his Master. The smile of his Lord has been quite enough for him. He has never thought, for one moment, of seeking man's approval; he has never sought to catch his smile or shun his frown; he has pursued the even tenor of his way, simply looking to Christ, and acting for Him. His work will stand. It will be remembered and rewarded, though he did not do it for remembrance or reward, but from simple love to Jesus. It is work of the right stamp—genuine coin which will abide the fire of the day of the Lord.

The thought of all this is very solemn, yet very consolatory—solemn for those who are working, in any measure, under the eye of their fellows—consolatory for all those who are working beneath the eye of their Lord. It is an unspeakable mercy to be delivered from the time-serving, men-pleasing, spirit of the present day; and to be enabled to walk, ever and only, before the Lord—to have “all our works begun, continued, and ended in Him.”

Let us look, for a few moments, at the lovely and most touching illustration of this, presented to us in “the house of Simon, the leper,” and recorded in Matthew xxvi. “Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, there came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat.”

Now, if we enquire as to this woman's object, as she bent her steps to Simon's house, what was it? was it to display the exquisite perfume of her ointment, or the material and form of her alabaster box? Was it to obtain the praise of men for her act? Was it to get a name for extraordinary devotedness to Christ, in the midst of a little knot of personal friends of the Saviour? No, reader, it was none of these things. How do we know? Because, the Most High God, the Creator of all things, who knows the deepest secrets of all hearts, and the true motive spring

of every action—He was there in the person of Jesus of Nazareth—He, the God of knowledge, by whom actions are weighed, was present; and He weighed her action, in the balances of the sanctuary, and affixed to it the seal of His approval. He sent it forth as genuine coin of the realm. He would not, He could not, have done this, if there had been any alloy, any admixture of base metal, any false motive, any under current. His holy and all-penetrating eye went right down into the very depths of this woman's soul. He knew, not only what she had done, but, how and why she had done it; and He declared, "She hath wrought a good work upon me."

In a word, then, Christ Himself was the immediate object of this woman's soul; and it was this which gave value to her act, and sent the odour of her ointment straight up to the throne of God. Little did she know or think that untold millions would read the record of her deep-toned personal devotedness. Little did she imagine that her act would be stereotyped, by the Master's hand, on the very pages of eternity, and never be obliterated. She thought not of this. She sought not, nor dreamed of such marvellous notoriety; had she done so, it would have robbed her act of all its charms, and deprived her sacrifice of all its fragrance.

But the blessed Lord to whom the act was done, took care that it should not be forgotten. He not only vindicated it, at the moment, but handed it down into the future. This was quite enough for the heart of this woman. Having the approval of her Lord, she could well afford to bear the "indignation" even of "the disciples," and to hear her act pronounced "waste." It was sufficient for her that His heart had been refreshed. All the rest might go for what it was worth. She had never thought of securing man's praise, or of avoiding his scorn. Her one undivided object, from first to last, was Christ. From the moment she laid her hand upon that alabaster box, until she

broke it, and poured its contents upon His sacred Person, it was of Himself alone she thought. She had a kind of intuitive perception of what would be suitable and grateful to her Lord, in the solemn circumstances in which He was placed at the moment, and, with exquisite tact, she did that thing. She had never thought of what the ointment might fetch; or, if she had, she felt that He was worth ten thousand times as much. As to "the poor," they had their place, no doubt, and their claims also; but she felt that Jesus was more to her than all the poor in the world.

In short, the woman's heart was filled with Christ, and it was this that gave character to her action. Others might pronounce it "waste;" but we may rest assured that nothing is wasted which is spent for Christ. So the woman judged: and she was right. To put honour upon Him, at the very moment when earth and hell were rising up against Him, was the very highest act of service that man or angel could perform. He was going to be offered up. The shadows were lengthening, the gloom was deepening, the darkness thickening. The cross—with all its horrors—was at hand; and this woman anticipated it all, and came, beforehand, to anoint the body of her adorable Lord.

And mark the result. See how immediately the blessed Lord enters upon her defence, and shields her from the indignation and scorn of those who ought to have known better. "When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. Verily, I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her."

Here was a glorious vindication, in the presence of which all human indignation, scorn, and misunderstanding must pass away, like the vapour of the morning before the beams

of the rising sun. "Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought *a good work upon me.*" It was this that stamped the act—"a good work upon me." This marked it off from all beside. Everything must be valued according to its connection with Christ. A man may traverse the wide wide world, in order to carry out the noble objects of philanthropy; he may scatter, with a princely hand, the fruits of a large-hearted benevolence; he may give all his goods to feed the poor; he may go to the utmost possible length, in the wide range of religiousness and morality, and yet he may never have done one single thing of which Christ can say, "*It is a good work upon me.*"

Reader, whoever you are, or however you are engaged, ponder this. See that you keep your eye directly upon the Master, in all you do. Make Jesus the immediate object of every little act of service, no matter what. Seek so to do your every work as that He may be able to say, "*It is a good work upon me.*" Do not be occupied with the thoughts of men as to your path or as to your work. Do not mind their indignation or their misunderstanding, but pour your alabaster box of ointment upon the person of your Lord. See that your every act of service is the fruit of your heart's appreciation of Him; and be assured He will appreciate your work and vindicate you before assembled myriads. Thus it was with the woman of whom we have been reading. She took her alabaster box, and made her way to the house of Simon the leper, with one object in her heart, namely, Jesus and what was before Him. She was absorbed in Him. She thought of none beside, but poured her precious ointment on His head. And note the blessed issue. Her act has come down to us, in the gospel record, coupled with His blessed Name. No one can read the gospel without reading also the memorial of her personal devotedness. Empires have risen, flourished, and passed away into the region of silence and oblivion. Monuments have been erected to commemorate human

genius, greatness, and philanthropy—and these monuments have crumbled into dust; but the act of this woman still lives, and shall live for ever. The hand of the Master has erected a monument to her, which shall never, no never, perish. May we have grace to imitate her; and, in this day, when there is so much of human effort in the way of philanthropy, may our works, whatever they are, be the fruit of our heart's appreciation of an absent, rejected, crucified Lord!

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)



COME AS YOU ARE!

THE following touching story of a mother's love and God's tender mercy, is both instructive and encouraging. We give it from memory, and can only vouch for its being substantially correct.

One night, as the rain fell heavily and the wind shook the door on its hinges, the mother, alone in her cottage, could not sleep. Her daughter had gone astray, and had been absent for some time. The mother knew not *where* she was or *how* she was; but the fear lest she might be out in such a storm, awoke the tenderest feelings of a mother's heart. Oh! that she were under her mother's roof! was, no doubt, her deepest and fondest wish. The ingratitude of the daughter had not quenched the love of the mother. Sorrow deepens such love, and a broken heart makes it tenfold more tender.

The mother arose to relieve her heart in prayer. Blessed refuge for a sorrowful and broken heart! Her prayer must be imagined. But that will be easy for those who have waked and watched for a prodigal's return. But there was One who heard it all, and who was making all things work together for good, for the dear children of His love. The

angels, too, were listening and watching, with admiring wonder, the movement of God's hand, and sharing His joy. They desire to look into such things, and they rejoice when a sinner is converted. But with what deep interest they must watch the ways of God in grace with such a sinner, and receive as a fresh charge a new heir of salvation. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Luke xv.

While the mother yet prayed, and while the storm yet raged, she heard a knock at the door: when she opened it, a well-known voice asked, if she could be forgiven. What a meeting! Who could describe it? "My child! my child!" mingling with the welcome words, "Will you forgive me, mother?" satisfied and overjoyed both hearts. The daughter was shoeless, in rags, and drenched with the wet, but she was now in her mother's arms, under her mother's roof, and she was, after all, her daughter still.

But the deeper joy was yet to come. When the grateful mother was thanking God for her daughter's return, and praying that He would now forgive her sins and save her soul, the daughter whispered in her ear, "I am saved already, mother." Enough, O enough, more than enough, to break a mother's heart over again, but now with overwhelming joy. The daughter proceeded: "About a week ago, I heard a man preaching in the street, and, as I stood and listened, all my sins seemed to come up before me, and I was so alarmed that I ran home to my lodgings, and prayed to God to forgive me, and I believed He pardoned my sins; and then I left for home at once, and have walked all the way."

Beautiful and touching as this scene is, and brightly as the grace of God shines through it all, it is, blessed be His name, no uncommon case. We have known and witnessed many of a similar character. Though, alas! all have not praying mothers, as this one had, yet some have. The Lord's name alone have all the praise and glory.

Many important lessons may be learnt from the above simple narrative : we notice three :—

I. The value of prayer. God's twofold answer to that mother's prayer ought to encourage all hearts to pray without ceasing, but especially those who are praying for a similar blessing. He not only delivered the daughter from the paths of evil, but saved her soul from the depths of hell. God's time, and place, and way are the best. Let us wait on Him in faith, nothing wavering. He always answers faith. The happy day will come when the long-prayed-for one shall be brought to the Lord, and numbered amongst His redeemed. Even though we were called away before it takes place, the prayer of faith remains before Him, and can never be overlooked. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32.) Here, the Lord be praised, the sheet-anchor of faith may be confidently cast; for no circumstance, however adverse, can move it from its stronghold. And, Where, we may ask, is the thoughtful Christian, who has not some special object of prayer before the throne of grace? May we honour God with the unquestioning confidence of our hearts, and seek that His name in all things may be glorified.

II. We have here a word of encouragement for open-air preaching. Little did the preacher know that he was the means of saving a soul from hell—of filling a desolate home with songs of joy; and also, of filling all heaven with music and dancing. Disturbed and interrupted with the noise of the street, he may have gone home quite discouraged, and sought relief in casting all upon God, as many have done before him. But He who forgets not the work of faith and the labour of love, will shew him the happy fruits of his work by and by. And when the

brazen and granite monuments of earthly fame shall have passed away for ever, the sinner saved by grace shall shine on the plains of glory, as the eternal monument of God's own work by means of His feeble workman. Who would not rather be the means of saving one soul from hell, than be the object, even the worthy object, of the greatest earthly fame?

III. We have, also, in the above narrative, a fine illustration of the right way for a sinner to come to Christ. The daughter returned to her mother just as she was, and at once. She was the very picture of misery and wretchedness. Her condition proved her prodigality. She needed not to say a word, but to throw herself on her mother's mercy. The rags spoke loud enough—yes, loud enough and plain enough for that mother's heart. But she came to the right place, and to the right person, and at once. Anything else would have been wrong. Had she remained away until she got shoes and clothes, she might never have gladdened her mother's heart in this world. And this, certainly, was her first duty. The only right way was to return at once and just as she was; and to confess the wrong she had done and seek forgiveness. Nothing could be of so much importance as to relieve the anguish of a mother's broken heart. Every hour's delay would have been heartless cruelty.

And thus, surely, should it be with the lost sinner, when Jesus says—*Come*. He should come *at once*, and come just as he is. Anything else—everything else, must be wrong. Many think, when they hear the invitations of the gospel, that they must in some way or other be better before they can come. They think they must at least find shoes and clothes before coming, and so make a respectable appearance. But this can never be. Every hour's delay is time lost, besides the sin of refusing the love of Jesus. The moment you hear Him say—*Come*, my dear fellow

sinner, be sure that you come, and just as you are. Do you think our Father in heaven would allow a returned prodigal to wear in His presence the shoes and clothes of the far country, even could he find them, and were content to wear them? All know the answer. They would only keep up the remembrance of past ways, which God in grace is willing to forget. "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. x. 17.) See then, O gospel hearer, the sin and folly of delay. Where you are—as you are—come at His bidding. Tarry not for any one, or any thing. Come in faith—doubt not His love—question not His joy and delight in receiving you. But, remember, come at once, and come as you are. And remember also, that whatever you bring with you from the far country must be stripped off and cast away. Not a vestige of the prodigal's sin and shame shall be allowed to remain. "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from *all* sin." Then Satan will not have a rag—a sin to hold by. Every sin—every rag—every sign of the far country will be gone. There is no limit to the cleansing power of His blood.

Oh! glorious truth—blessed certainty! As thou art then, my fellow sinner, *Hear, Believe, Come!* In rags, shoeless, and drenched with the wet of the night, come! There are shoes, and robes, and rings, and fatted calves, and boundless joy and gladness for thee in thy Father's house. Only come, I pray thee, and come at once, nothing doubting. Couldst thou suppose for a moment that there was more love in that mother's heart, than in thy heavenly Father's heart? All the love that is found in human hearts has come from His, and still, were all put together, they would be, compared to His, but as a drop to the ocean's fulness. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." And yet to hear that Father say, on every occasion of a prodigal's

return, and that, too, in the face of cold, icy, self-righteousness, "It is meet that we should make merry, and be glad; for this thy brother was dead and is alive again; and was lost and is found."

"Just as I am—without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidd'st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am—and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am—thy love I own,
Has broken every barrier down,
Now to be thine, yea, thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come!"



THE SAVIOUR'S PRESENT GRACE.

SING without ceasing, sing
The Saviour's present grace;
How all things shine
In light divine
For those who've seen His face.

He's gone within the veil;
For us that place He's won;
In Him we stand,
A heavenly band,
Where He Himself is gone.

There's all unsullied light,
My heart lets in its rays,
And heavenly light
Makes all things bright,
Seen in that blissful gaze.

Such, here on earth, I am,
Though I in weakness roam ;
 My place on high,
 God's self so nigh,
His presence is my home.

My heart is filled with bliss,
Heaven's own eternal joys !
 My soul at rest,
 Of peace possessed,
That world its strength employs.

Thus, in divine delight
Of love so richly given,
 God's works below
 With beauty glow,
His hand, His grace, I own.

And stayed by joy divine,
As hireling fills his day,
 Through scenes of strife,
 And desert life,
I tread in peace my way,

That way is upward still,
Where life and glory are ;
 My rest's above,
 In perfect love,
The glory I shall share.

For ever with the Lord,
For ever like Him then,
 And see His face,
 In that blest place,
My Father's house in heaven.

D.



GLAD TIDINGS.

(PART II.)

IN the passage of scripture which has been engaging our attention, namely, John iii. 16, we have a very remarkable illustration of the character of the entire Gospel of John, and especially the opening chapters. It is impossible to meditate upon it without seizing this interesting fact. In it, we are introduced to God Himself, in that wondrous aspect of His character and nature, as loving *the world*, and giving His Son. In it, too, we find, not only the "world" as a whole, but the individual sinner, under that most satisfactory title of "whosoever." Thus God and the sinner are together—God, *loving* and *giving*; and the sinner, *believing* and *having*. It is not God judging and exacting; but God loving and giving. The former was law; the latter, grace: that was Judaism; this, Christianity. In the one, we see God demanding obedience in order to life; in the other, we see God giving life as the only basis of obedience. In the one, we see man struggling for life, but never obtaining it; in the other, we see man receiving life as a free gift, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Such is the contrast between the two systems—a contrast which cannot be too deeply pondered. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." John i. 17.

But let us mark the way in which this is unfolded in our text. "God so loved the world." Here we have the wide aspect of the love of God. It is not confined to any particular nation, tribe, caste, or family. It embraces the whole world. God is love; and, being so, it is not a question of the fitness or worthiness of the object of His love. It is what He is. He is love, and He cannot be anything else. It is the very energy and activity of His nature. The heart may have many a question, many an

exercise as to its state and condition before God, and very right it should have them. The Spirit Himself may produce such exercises and raise such questions; but, after all, the grand truth shines forth in all its lustre, "God is love." Whatever we are, whatever the world is, that is what God is; and we know that the truth as to God forms the deep and rich substratum which underlies the whole system of Christianity. The soul may pass through deep and sore conflict, under the sense of its own wretchedness; there may be many doubts and fears; many dark and heavy clouds; weeks, months, or years, may be spent under the law, in one's inward self-consciousness, and that, moreover, long after the mere intellect has yielded its assent to the principles and doctrines of evangelical religion. But, after all, we must be brought into direct personal contact with God Himself—with what He is—with His nature and character, as He has revealed Himself in the gospel. We have to acquaint ourselves with Him, and He is love.

Observe, it does not say, merely, that God is *loving*, but that He is *love*. It is not only that love is an attribute of His character, but it is the very activity of His nature. We do not read that God is justice, or holiness; He is just and He is holy; but it would not express the full and blessed truth to say that God is loving; He is much more, He is love itself. Hence, when the sinner—"whosoever" he be, it matters not—is brought to see his own total and absolute ruin, his hopeless wretchedness, his guilt and misery, the utter vanity and worthlessness of all within and around him, that there is nothing in the whole world that can satisfy his heart, and nothing in his heart that can satisfy God, or satisfy even his own conscience, when these things are opened, in any measure, to his view, then is he met by this grand substantial truth that "God is love," and that He so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son.

Here is life and rest for the soul. Here is salvation, full, free, and everlasting, for the poor, needy, guilty, lost one—salvation, resting not upon anything in man, or of man—upon aught that he is or can be, aught that he has done, or can do, but simply upon what God is, and has done. God *loves* and *gives*, and the sinner *believes* and *has*. This is far beyond Creation, Government, or Law. In Creation, God spake and it was done. He called worlds into existence by the word of His mouth. But we hear nothing, throughout the entire record of creation, of God loving and giving.

So as to Government, we see God ruling in unsearchable wisdom, amid the armies of heaven, and among the children of men; but we cannot comprehend Him. We can only say, as to this subject, that

“ God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs,
And works His sovereign will.”

Finally, as to the Law, it is, from beginning to end, a perfect system of command and prohibition—a system perfect in its action as testing man, and making manifest his entire alienation from God. “The law worketh wrath.” And again, “By the law is the knowledge of sin.” But what could such a system do in a world of sinners? Could it give life? Impossible. Why? Because man could not fulfil its holy requirements. “If there had been a law given which could have given life, then verily righteousness should have been by the law.” But no; the law was a ministration of death and condemnation. (See 2 Cor. iii.) The only effect of the law, to any one who is under it, is

the pressure of death upon the soul, and of guilt and condemnation upon the conscience. It cannot possibly be otherwise with an honest soul under the law.

What, then, is needed? Simply this, the knowledge of the love of God, and of the precious gift which that love has bestowed. This is the eternal groundwork of all. Love and the gift of Love. For, be it observed, and ever remembered, that God's love could never have reached us, save through the medium of that gift. God is holy, and we are sinful. How could we come near Him? How could we dwell in His holy presence? How could sin and holiness ever abide in company? Impossible. Justice demands the condemnation of sin; and if Love will save the sinner, it must do so at no less a cost than the gift of the only begotten Son. Darius loved Daniel, and laboured hard to save him from the lions' den; but his love was powerless because of the unbending law of the Medes and Persians. He spent the night in sorrow and fasting. He could weep at the mouth of the den; but he could not save his friend. His love was not mighty to save. If he had offered himself to the lions instead of his friend, it would have been morally glorious; but he did not. His love told itself forth in unavailing tears and lamentations. The law of the Persian kingdom was more powerful than the love of the Persian king. The law, in its stern majesty, triumphed over an impotent love which had nothing but fruitless tears to bestow upon its object.

But the love of God is not like this—Eternal and universal praise to His Name! His love is mighty to save. It *reigns* through righteousness. How is this? Because "God *so* loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." The law had declared, in words of awful solemnity, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." Was this law less stern, less majestic, less stringent than the law of the Medes and Persians? Surely not. How, then, was it to be disposed of? It was to be magnified and made

honourable, vindicated and established. Not one jot or tittle of the law could ever be set aside. How, then, was the difficulty to be solved? Three things had to be done: the law had to be magnified; sin condemned; the sinner saved. How could these grand results be reached? We have the answer in two bold and vivid lines from one of our own poets,

“ On Jesus’ cross this record’s graved,
Let sin be damned, and sinners saved.”

Precious record! May many an anxious sinner read and believe it! Such was the amazing love of God that He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. His love cost Him nothing less than the Son of His bosom. When it was a question of creating worlds, it cost Him but the word of His mouth; but when it was a question of loving a world of sinners, it cost His only begotten Son. The love of God is a holy love, a righteous love, a love acting in harmony with all the attributes of His Nature, and the claims of His Throne. “*Grace reigns, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.*” The soul can never be set at liberty till this truth is fully laid hold of. There may be certain vague hopes in the mercy of God, and a measure of confidence in the atoning work of Jesus, all true and real so far as it goes; but true liberty of heart cannot possibly be enjoyed until it is seen and understood that God has glorified Himself in the manner of His love toward us. Conscience could never be tranquillized, nor Satan silenced, if sin had not been perfectly judged and put away. But “*God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.*” What depth and power in the little word “*so!*”

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)



THE FIRST CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE.

A LESSON FOR THE TIMES.

(JOHN II. 13—22.)

THE world is growing old. The dark shadow of the future seems already falling over it. Christianity, God's latest revelation to man, once seen in all its freshness and power in the first age of the Church, has been sadly corrupted. Large numbers, calling themselves Christians, appear to be such only in name. Infidelity is again boldly rearing its head, and forcing itself into prominence as the only rational position for creatures endowed with reason.

In such a time of acknowledged failure, what is the resource of God's people—what are the means they should use—what the plan they should carry out, to keep alive the spirit of devotion, and to keep hearts true to Christ? An answer to this question has been given by some, and is forced more and more on the attention of all; and we conclude there are but few of the readers of "Things New and Old" who have not met with it in some form or other. For what with a literature especially occupied with this subject, new books of devotion for children and adults, handbills advertising lectures for or against it, public discussions and sermons, the open advocacy of incense and recurrence to obsolete vestments, the exaltation of a human priesthood, and the doctrine of the real presence in the eucharistic elements; we are reminded that its advocates profess to be in the possession of the unfailing recipe for laying hold of the hearts of the multitude, christianizing the world, and reviving practical godliness. To any intelligent observer, such a movement naturally suggests the thought, Is it of God? Is this His way of advancing His kingdom, and giving new energy to those who own Jesus as Lord?

Where shall we turn to discover this, but to God's word

—the unfailing guide of His people in all ages, and the repository of His thoughts, so far as He has seen fit to unfold them? And scripture in this will not fail us: for it furnishes us, from the history of Israel and their spiritual condition at the time of the Lord's first passover after He commenced His ministry, with an example of what effects a ritual, divinely ordered and carried out with scrupulous exactness, has on the natural heart of man.

Brought out of Egypt, led through the wilderness, carried into Canaan, the nations subdued, their inheritance secured to them, they had witnessed, as no other people ever did, the power of God and the goodness of God. Separated from all the nations by ordinances delivered by God to Moses, with festivals of annual occurrence, sacrifices repeated each day, and facilities for voluntary offerings as often as they would: here was an opportunity to shew to all the world how much a religion interwoven with ceremonies, each rite of which was the subject of divine revelation, could do for man in the flesh.

Did it keep alive in their hearts the knowledge of the living and true God? Before they reached the land of Canaan "they joined themselves unto Baal; yea, and ate the sacrifices of the dead." "Have ye offered unto me," says God, by Amos v. 25, "sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves." Was this an isolated case of departure from God? For more than seven hundred years before the captivity of Israel the sacrifices, appointed by the law, had been offered up with little intermission in the land of their inheritance; yet, for near three hundred years before their captivity, the ten tribes had openly renounced the worship of Jehovah, and sacrificed to their calves and the abominations of the heathen. (See 2 Kings xvii. 17, 18.) And Judah, where the temple of God was, and His altar likewise, at last followed the iniquity

of Israel, and even surpassed them in erecting idolatrous altars in the house of the Lord, and carrying on abominable rites hard by that temple which Solomon had dedicated to the Lord of all the earth. Brought back from captivity, and the worship of God restored at Jerusalem, "as it is written in the book of Moses" (Ezra vi. 18), idolatry was put away. But in what condition were the people? Malachi attests their neglect of God's house and want of regard for Him; and the work of the Lord in the temple, recorded in the passage before us, shews forth their forgetfulness of His character and His holiness.

It was not so much on this occasion Messiah presenting Himself to the people, that He did afterwards more fully, but Jesus surveying the spiritual condition of the Jews, and exercising authority in God's house, as His Son. He reproves them. For what? Laxity in legal observances? Of that there was no evidence. Want of scrupulous regard to the teaching of the elders? None could justly charge them with this. Of the washing of cups, and platters, brazen vessels, and of tables, there was no lack. Water for purification after the manner of the Jews was at hand in abundance. Their zeal for the sabbath was notorious. The mere suspicion of a Gentile having entered the court of the Jews was sufficient to set the city in an uproar. They would refrain, too, from entering into Pilate's judgment-hall that they might be undefiled in order to eat of the passover. But with all this professed reverence for the things of God, where was the sense of God's presence in His sanctuary? It was lost. They had the ritual, they kept most punctiliously the outward observances of the law, and yet remained regardless of what befitted the sacred character of God's house. What an exposure this was of religiousness without religion! Religion means the rebinding of the soul to God. Could that be said to characterize those who made the Father's house a house of merchandize? What excuses could be offered for such conduct? Many, perhaps,

if they thought only of their convenience; but none, if they thought for one moment of God. One word from the Lord settles the whole matter, and puts it in a clear light. And this took place at the passover, the feast which of all others was connected with the display of Jehovah's power. Pentecost told of goodness annually vouchsafed them in the land. Tabernacles recalled their dwelling in booths in the wilderness, contrasted with their enjoyment of all the fruits of Canaan. Passover commemorated power exerted to deliver them from the slavery of Egypt. To this feast Jesus went up; and at that season finds the Jews destitute of a right conception of the sanctity of Jehovah's house. And in Jerusalem, the metropolis of Judaism, where the teachers and lawyers congregated, and in the temple where the high priest officiated, the Lord had thus publicly to rebuke them, and not one of the chief priests or scribes, that we read of, expressed his approval of His act.

Was this insensibility the result of long habit, which needed only to be pointed out to be corrected? See these same people three years afterwards, when the Lord Jehovah visits His temple. The chief priests and scribes heard His rebuke a second time administered, saw Him act with authority again, and sought—but what?—*how they might destroy Him*. (Matt. xi. 18.) Fifteen centuries (speaking in round numbers) of nearly uninterrupted ritual observance finds this people, at its close, destitute practically of a right knowledge of God; and ready, on the first opportunity, to crucify the Messiah, the only hope and deliverer of the nation.

But another startling fact is made apparent: whilst burning with zeal for Moses, they were incapable of understanding the words and actions of the Prophet, to whom Moses had commanded them to hearken. They asked for a sign as the law authorized (Deut. xviii. 20—22): He gave them a sign, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” They understood this of the building

before them ; He spake of His body. Misunderstanding His words then, they afterwards perverted what He had said. He said, "Destroy;" He was accused of saying, "I will destroy." Before the high priest two false witnesses averred this. At the cross, the chief priests taunted Him with it. Would God's Son destroy God's temple? They might, and did. Little knew they to whom they spoke, as He hung on that cross. Little knew they of what He had spoken.

What then, it is pertinent to ask, did a ritual, surpassed by none in splendour, do for Israel? It did not keep them from idolatry. It did not succeed in impressing them with a right sense of the holiness of their God. It did not preserve them from crucifying the Son of God. Their history shews, as clearly as any can, that the observance of ceremonies, however minute, of sacrificial rites, however varied, with priestly robes, however rich and elaborate, has no power to allay the enmity of man's heart, or lead it a willing captive to the feet of Jesus. Never can there be a better opening for its success than Israel afforded. Never can there be a more decided failure than in their history is recorded. Yet God will establish again, at Jerusalem, a ritual similar to what He gave them at Sinai. But when? Let the reader mark this, and learn its significance and its bearing on the movement around us. When Israel *shall be converted*, with a new heart and right spirit, and God's law written upon their hearts. See Ezekiel xxxvi. 26 ; xl.—xlviii. Jeremiah xxxi. 21.

Till then what is to be done? How will God carry on His work? How does He keep the hearts of His people in a day of increasing apostasy, and in the midst of a mass of profession, very similar to what existed in Israel when the Lord was on the earth? He acts now as then. What rites and ceremonies cannot effect, His word can. By that He would instruct. By that He would guide. We get this beautifully illustrated in the history before us.

Whilst the Jews were preparing to ask by what authority He acted, unauthorized by the high priest, unsanctioned by the Scribes and Pharisees, "the disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." What more appropriate sentence in the whole volume could they have found than this? Doubtless, the Holy Ghost brought it to their remembrance. It was just the key to the whole matter. It told of one who would be consumed by zeal for God's house; and His action in the temple that day illustrates the words of the psalmist, written centuries before. What the doctors, who had disputed with the child Jesus eighteen years previous to this, in that same house, well versed as they were, surely, in all the wisdom of the elders, did not remember, a few poor Galilean fishermen did. But observe, they were disciples before they remembered this. Is there not instruction for us here? In a day of abounding profession these disciples of the Lord were reminded, not by any of the authorized teachers in Israel, not by any of all those that were present of that word which would explain the new character in which their Master then appeared. God had His eye on those few and insignificant men, and though the Lord vouchsafed a sign when asked, before the Jews got their sign, or even, it would seem, had asked for it, the disciples had that from God which answered any question that might arise in their mind. God's word they found that day suited for the occasion.

Further, we must remember, that there is a timely use of that word. We may misapply it, and so fall into great mistakes. We may misinterpret it, and so disseminate grievous errors. This was just what the chief priests and scribes did. This was just what the disciples, kept by God, did not. The chief priests made use of His words at a wrong time, and applied them in a wrong way. They remembered them before His death; but the disciples, after. For we read, "When therefore he was risen from the dead,

his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them, and they believed the scriptures and the words which Jesus had said." So again we find in this narrative the position of the Jews and disciples contrasted. And of whom were they disciples?—not of Moses: that the Jews called themselves, not merely of God: that the Jews laid claim to be equally with them—but of Jesus, God's Son. To them, and them only, were the words in both cases recalled: the right words and at the right time; and enlightenment came to them by the word. Is it not the same now? We want a recurrence to the word, not a recurrence to ceremonies. We need to be reminded of what God has revealed, not a clearer apprehension of what man has invented.

Such has ever been God's way. David owned it when he wrote, "Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." (Ps. xvii. 4.) We see it was God's way in the days of Paul, when, warning the Ephesian elders of the errors that would spring up in their midst, he commends them to God, and to the word of His grace, which was able to build them up, and give them an inheritance among them that are sanctified. Years after, just before he closed his earthly career, he exhorts Timothy to preach the *word*, to be instant in season, out of season; adding the significant warning, "for the time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine." (2 Tim. iv. 2, 3.) Paul had personally experienced, and Timothy probably, what a religion of ordinances, appointed even by God, could do. They had given it up, had cast away the shadow for the substance; the sacrifices continually offered up under the law for the one sacrifice once for all offered up on the cross; the fragrance of incense for the merits of Christ; the earthly high priest for the heavenly High Priest; the priesthood of the house of Aaron for the common priesthood of all believers.

Shall we go back to what they had renounced? Should we seek to set up what they had abandoned? A religion of ordinances is a religion for an earthly people. It is a going back in worship, as too many have, in heart, gone back in doctrine, to the position of Israel under the law. We would remind such that the only ritual God ever sanctioned is thus described by His Spirit, "*a shadow of things to come*; but the BODY IS OF CHRIST." (Col. ii. 17.) Our part now is to imitate those Galilean fishermen in following Christ—and we shall surely find, as they did, God's word will be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.



LOST ! LOST !

READER, shall this word, "Lost," be inscribed upon the tomb that buries all your hopes and joys? Will you be lost? Would you be lost in the wilderness, and left to famish with hunger, or perish among beasts of prey? Would you be lost at sea, and have your ship ground to fragments amid the roaring tumult of the breakers, and the lee-shore's frowning wrath? Would you cling hopeless to a plank that glides away from your enfeebled grasp? Would you be lost in an abyss of vice and sin, and feel powerless to stem the tide of passion that swept you on to death? All these might be endured; but to be lost in dark eternity, to be dashed a wreck upon perdition's stormy coast; to be plunged hopeless amid the surging billows of the lake of fire; to drop helpless in the jaws of the second death; to see the sun of joy and the stars of hope go out in the blackness of darkness for ever and ever; to be lost from joy and peace, from life and love, from mercy and salvation, beyond remedy or rescue; ah! this you cannot bear.

Dare you take the risk? Do you put this danger far away? Do you say, "I do not intend to be lost?" Christless reader, you *are lost now*! Oh! **your** burdened heart,

that has no peace ; your guilty soul, that cannot rest ; your secret anguish, which smiles may hide but fail to cure ; your mocking jest, that spreads its curtain over a sickening, aching heart ; your mournful memories, that haunt you like the shades of doom ; your hollow calmness, that gives way to secret tears ; yes ! and the sting of conscience, and the word of truth, and the gospel of salvation, and the call of Providence, and the workings of the Holy Ghost, all these tell you that you *are* lost, *even now* ; not fatally, not hopelessly lost, thank God, but yet you *are* lost, and need a Saviour ; lost, and require salvation ! You are a lost sinner, but the Saviour seeks for you to-day. You are a lost prodigal, but the Father waits to welcome your return. Will you come home ? Will you be saved ?

H. L. H.



THE CIRCLE OF BLESSING.

RATHER more than a year ago, the writer was asked by a young man, in London, to go and see a poor old man, who was lying ill of the palsy. He had been, not only a careless, godless man, but openly wicked, and especially in profane swearing. Even at the age of nearly seventy, he could scarcely speak of the ordinary affairs of his business without swearing.

The young man above referred to, hearing an old, grey-headed man using such language, when at his daily work, ventured to speak seriously to him on the subject. Shocked with the oaths he uttered, and thinking on the fearful state of his soul, and on what his future must be if he died in that state, he got his address and called at his house. There he could speak more plainly to him. In the full sense of the word, he had lived without God, and without hope in the world for nearly threescore years and ten. Soon after this he met with a great affliction. The

whole of the left side became paralysed, so that he was fixed to his bed. And now, what an object of pity! Helpless as to the body, hopeless as to the soul, in the depths of poverty, and without comfort from any quarter. Death reigned, we may say, both in body, soul, and circumstances. One half of the poor body was already in the grasp of death, and how near, humanly speaking, was his soul to the depths of hell. But the God of all grace is the God of resurrection. He often makes us feel that all is as death around us, before He begins to work. It was truly so in the case of this poor, palsied, old man; but God had mercy on him. Resurrection life and blessing were on their way to him—they were now near at hand. Hear how they came—

Two or three years before this time, the youngest son of the old man enlisted. He was quartered in the Portobello Barracks, Dublin, when the father was lying ill. Happily for this youth, and for many others also, we doubt not, one of the officers was in the habit of preaching the gospel there. The young soldier was induced to go and hear him, and it pleased God in the riches of His mercy to touch his heart. He was convinced of sin, and fell, as he said, at the feet of Jesus, and found pardon and peace there. He believed that the blood of Jesus had cleansed all his sins away. He was full of joy, and in the fulness of his new joy, he wrote a letter to his father. And this letter, so full of zeal and love, proved to be God's message of mercy to that father's heart. We were privileged to read two of his letters, and both were full of the most tender appeals to his father to repent and believe in Jesus.

These letters, through the Lord's blessing, broke the father's heart; and little wonder. The sweet and touching way he spoke of the love of Jesus, and of His readiness to pardon the chief of sinners, ought to have been enough to melt any heart, but coming from a runaway son—from one who could use the expression, "O my dear father,"

added their power, and produced the desired effect. He burst into floods of tears, and sometimes became quite excited, exclaiming, "O my dear boy!" But God, we fully believe, was at work in his soul. In the fulness of his heart, he believed what his son wrote; he followed his advice—bowed at the feet of Jesus—confessed his sins—cried for mercy and found it. He found mercy where all who seek it find it, and where none ever sought it in vain. It is full and free to all, blessed, for ever blessed, be the God of all grace—to old and young—to the morally good and to the chief of sinners—to the child of tender years, who may never have done worse than say "No" to a parent, and to the hoary headed sinner of threescore years and ten, whose history has been blackened by every crime. Such is grace—the full, free, rich, sovereign grace of God to the sinner who believes in Jesus. Neither age, character, nor condition affects God in shewing mercy. He acts on the ground of the finished work of Christ, which is eternally complete; and all who believe in Jesus rest on the work which He accomplished. Is this the solid ground, may I ask, on which my reader rests?—the finished work of Christ. If thou art looking to thine own doings for rest, or to thine heart for comfort, thou wilt never find them there. Happiness is not to be found in frames and feelings and doings, but in Christ and His finished work. As thou art, my dear reader—in youth or in old age—in the vigour of manhood, or palsied in every limb—the wild roving youth, or the blaspheming old man—believe in the Lord Jesus Christ—believe in the greatness of His love—believe in the riches of His grace—believe in the cleansing power of His blood, and thou shalt not only be saved but perfectly happy.

Look at the two extremes before thee—the burden of the young soldier's letters was the love of Jesus and His readiness to forgive all who come to Him. Though we only read them once, and that with no thought of ever

referring to them in print; yet we can remember how he entreated his father with great earnestness to come to Jesus. No doubt they bore the marks of his history and experience, but his heart was warm and earnest. For the sake of others we give the following as the substance of these appeals. "O my dear father, come to Jesus; He will pardon all your sins, He died for us all on the cross. I believe it now, and I am quite happy. I went to hear Captain T. preach, and I was brought to the feet of Jesus. I then saw what a sinner I had been, but He has washed all my sins away by His precious blood; and if you come to Jesus, dear father, He will wash all your sins away too, and then your soul would be saved. You know He died for us all, and He casts out none that come to Him. He will not cast out you, my dear father, O believe it. He did not cast out me, He has pardoned all my sins. O come to Jesus, my dear father, come to His feet, pray to Him, and He will forgive all your sins."

We can never forget the bursting emotion of that heart, and the flowing tears, as we read these touching appeals by his bedside. They had been read to him before, over and over again, but they seemed as fresh as ever. In order to test the reality of the work, we suggested that there might be nothing more in the change which he had experienced than the natural feelings of a father for a son. But the moment he saw our suspicion, he became very animated, and beating on his breast, looking up to heaven, he exclaimed—"O no; it is the charity of Jesu to my soul—it is the charity of Jesu to my soul—His blood—His blood has taken my sins all away." He was a foreigner, spoke with a strong foreign accent, and had been a soldier in his youth. When we spoke to him of the love of Jesus, and of the blessedness of being with Him in heaven, it was too much for him. He was overcome with emotion. He spoke with full assurance of his pardon and acceptance. The Lord alone be praised. He who was the chief of

sinner once, now quietly rests with the Lord, patiently waiting His coming.

Our main object in writing the above, is to draw attention to what we may call "The Circle of Blessing." We have often observed it in families and in wider circles. God is the fountain of all blessing—the risen Lord is the channel—the Holy Ghost is the power, and the truth is the means.

Take the example before us. God fills the heart of Captain T—— with love to souls—he can no longer be quiet and enjoy salvation alone—he must preach the gospel to others. A meeting place is found, the salvation of God is proclaimed, blessing flows down from the heart of God, a young soldier is converted, and grace flows on. A love for souls is now implanted in his heart—his first thoughts are his own family: God uses natural affection. His father, who is lying ill, is especially laid on his heart. He writes letter after letter, and thus he becomes a preacher of the gospel. His father is converted, and the grace of God that saves him now reascends to God in praise. A perfect circle is completed.

As it is in nature so it is in grace. The vapours that rise from the sea and are carried on the wings of the wind, fall on the earth in dews and plentiful showers. The thirsty ground is refreshed and fertilized—the pools are filled with water—the streams and rivers flow, and carry back to the ocean that which left it in vapours. The sea has lost nothing, and all living have been richly blessed.

Thus should it be with grace and truth. Oh! that every one who receives the gospel, would be faithful in his own sphere, and according to his own ability, in spreading the truth of God—the glad tidings of salvation! Wide, wide as the circle of the Holy Spirit's action, would the blessing flow. May our Lord's own word to His disciples be our motto:—"FREELY YE HAVE RECEIVED, FREELY GIVE." Matthew x. 8.

“ HIS TABLE.”

“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the
Lord's death till he come.”—1 Cor. xi. 26.

In spirit, Lord, we dwell with thee, above
The changing scenes of time ;
We rest beneath thy canopy of love,
Within thy house of wine.

Col. iii. 1—3 ; Cant. ii. 4.

And though a while the vale of death we tread,
(This weary world below,)
Thy shepherd care doth still a table spread
In presence of the foe.

Heb. x. 37 ; Ps. xxiii.

Oft as thy day returns, we love to find
Thou dost the feast prepare ;
We leave the din of conflict far behind,
That holy joy to share.

Acts xx. 7 ; Rev. i. 10.

Thy precious death before our heart and eyes
We worship and adore ;
This broken bread thy pierced hand supplies,
This wine thyself dost pour.

Lev. i. 1—9 ; John xiv. 21—23.

Lord Jesus, 'tis thy soul-subduing voice
That bids us take and eat !
The feast is spread, and we, thy guests, rejoice,
As in thy house is meet.

1 Cor. xi. 23—25 ; Heb. iii. 6.

“ Eat, O my friends ! ” thou sayest to us here,
“ Yea, drink, beloved, drink, ”
More rich the blessing, as thou drawest near,
Than e'er we ask or think.

Cant. v. 1 ; Eph. iii. 20, 21.

Thy broken body once again we see,
Shewn in this broken bread.
This poured wine, O Saviour, tells of thee,
Thy blood for sinners shed.

1 Cor. x. 16 ; Heb. ix. 11—14.

We muse upon the marvel of thy cross,
Thy love beyond compare !
O depth of woe ! O all unfathom'd loss !
That thou for us didst bear !
Phil. ii. 6—11 ; Gal. vi. 14.

Beholding thee, the lowly One, who came
To this dark world in grace,
We give thee thanks, now gathered in thy name,
A large and wealthy place !
John xx. 19, 20 ; Job xxxvi. 15, 16.

Sweet to thine own redeem'd to feed on thee,
In whom we died, we live ;
Sweet the remembrance cup must ever be,
That thou, O Christ, dost give.
John vi. 54—56 ; Luke xxii. 20.

The loaf we share proclaims our happy lot :
“ One loaf ” are we, and *thine* !
Poor as we were, our need is now forgot,
Exchanged for bliss divine !
1 Cor. x. 16, 17 ; Prov. xxxi. 7.

One loaf, one cup, their witness should be heard,
E'en were our voices dumb ;
Yet to thy praise be every bosom stirr'd,
Lord Jesus, till thou come !
1 Cor. xiv. 10 ; Rev. xxi. 20.

H. K. B. E.



GLAD TIDINGS.

(PART III.)

It may, here, be needful to meet a difficulty which often occurs to anxious souls, in reference to the question of appropriation. Thousands have been harassed and perplexed by this question, at some stage or other of their spiritual history; and it is not improbable that many who shall read these pages, may be glad of a few words on the subject. Many may feel disposed to ask, "How am I to know that this love, and the gift of love, are intended for *me*? What warrant have I for believing that 'everlasting life' is for *me*? I know the plan of salvation; I believe in the all-sufficiency of the atonement of Christ for the forgiveness and justification of all who truly believe. I am convinced of the truth of all that the Bible declares. I believe we are all sinners, and, moreover, that we can do nothing to save ourselves—that we need to be washed in the blood of Jesus, and to be taught and led by the Holy Ghost, ere we can please God here, and dwell with Him hereafter. All this I fully believe, and yet I have no assurance that I am saved, and I want to know on what authority I am to believe that my sins are forgiven and that I have everlasting life."

If the foregoing be, in any measure, the language of the reader—if it be, at all, the expression of his difficulty, we would, in the first place, call his attention to two words which occur in our precious text (John iii. 16), namely, "*world*" and "*whosoever*." It seems utterly impossible for anyone to refuse the application of these two words. For what, let us ask, is the meaning of the term "*world*?" What does it embrace? or, rather, What does it not embrace? When our Lord declares that "God so loved the world," on what ground can the reader exclude himself from the range, scope, and application of this divine love?

On no ground whatever, unless he can shew that he alone belongs not to the world, but to some other sphere of being. If it were declared that "the world" is hopelessly condemned, could any one making a part of that world avoid the application of the sentence? Could he exclude himself from it? Impossible. How then can he, why should he, exclude himself, when it is a question of God's free love, and of salvation by Christ Jesus?

But, further, we would ask, what is the meaning—what the force—of the familiar word, "*whosoever*?" Assuredly, it means "*anybody*;" and if anybody, why not the reader? It is infinitely better, infinitely surer, and more satisfactory to find the word "*whosoever*" in the gospel than to find my own name there, inasmuch as there may be a thousand persons in the world of the same name; but "*whosoever*" applies to me as distinctly as though I were the only sinner on the face of the earth.

Thus, then, the very words of the gospel message—the very terms used to set forth the glad tidings, are such as leave no possible ground for a difficulty as to their application. If we listen to our Lord, in the days of His flesh, we hear such words as these, "God so loved the *world* that He gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." Again, if we listen to Him after His resurrection, we hear these words, "Go ye into *all the world*, and preach the gospel to *every creature*." (Mark xvi.) And, lastly, if we listen to the voice of the Holy Ghost sent from a risen, ascended, and glorified Lord, we hear such words as these, "The same Lord over all is rich unto *all* that call upon him. For *whosoever* shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Rom. x. 12, 13.

In all the above cited passages, we have two terms used, one general, the other particular, and both together so presenting the message of salvation, as to leave no room whatever for any one to refuse its application. If "all the

world" is the scope, and "every creature" is the object of the precious gospel of Christ, then on what ground can any one exclude himself? Where is there authority for any sinner out of hell to say that the glad tidings of salvation are not for him? There is none. Salvation is as free as the air we breathe—free as the dewdrops that refresh the earth—free as the sunbeams that shine upon our pathway; and if any attempt to limit its application, they are neither in harmony with the mind of Christ, nor in sympathy with the heart of God.

But it may be that some of our readers would, at this stage of the subject, feel disposed to ask us, "How do you dispose of the question of election?" We reply, "Very simply, by leaving it where God has placed it, namely, as a landmark in the inheritance of the spiritual Israel, and not as a stumbling-block in the pathway of the anxious enquirer." This we believe to be the true way of dealing with the deeply important doctrine of election. The more we ponder the subject, the more thoroughly are we convinced that it is a mistake on the part of the evangelist or preacher of the gospel to qualify his message, hamper his subject, or perplex his hearers, by the doctrine of election or predestination. He has to do with lost sinners in the discharge of his blessed ministry. He meets men where they are, on the broad ground of our common ruin, our common guilt, our common condemnation. He meets them with a message of full, free, present, personal, and eternal salvation—a message which comes fresh, fervent, and glowing from the very bosom of God. His ministry is, as the Holy Ghost declares in 2 Corinthians v., "a ministry of reconciliation," the glorious characteristics of which are these, "God in Christ"—"reconciling the world unto himself"—"not imputing their trespasses;" and the marvellous foundation of which is, that God has made Jesus who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Does this trench, in the smallest degree, upon the blessed and clearly established truth of election? By no means. It leaves it in all its integrity and in its full value, as a grand fundamental truth of holy scripture, exactly where God has placed it, not as a preliminary question to be settled ere the sinner comes to Jesus; but as a most precious consolation and encouragement to him when he has come. This makes all the difference. If the sinner be called upon to settle, beforehand, the question of his election, how is he to set about it? Whither is he to turn for a solution? Where shall he find a divine warrant for believing that he is one of the elect? Can he find a single line of scripture on which to base his faith as to his election? He cannot. He can find scores of passages declaring him to be lost, guilty, and undone—scores of passages to assure him of his total inability to do aught in the matter of his own salvation—hundreds of passages unfolding the free love of God, the value and efficacy of the atonement of Christ, and assuring him of a hearty welcome to come, *just as he is*, and make his own of the precious fruits of God's salvation. But if it be needful for him to settle the prior question of his predestination and election, then is his case hopeless, and he must, in so far as he is in earnest, be plunged in black despair.

And is it not thus with thousands, at this moment, through the misapplication of the doctrine of election? We fully believe it is; and hence our anxiety to help our readers by setting the matter in what we judge to be the true light before their minds. We believe it to be of the utmost importance for the anxious enquirer to know that the standpoint from which he is called to view the cross of Christ, is not the standpoint of election, but of conscious ruin. The grace of God meets him as a lost, dead, guilty sinner, not as an elect one. This is an unspeakable mercy, inasmuch as he knows he is the former, but cannot know that he is the latter until the gospel has come to him in power.

“Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.” How did he know it? “Because our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.” (1 Thess. i. 4, 5.) Paul preached to the Thessalonians as lost sinners, and when the gospel had laid hold of them as lost, he could write to them as elect.

This puts election in its right place. If the reader will turn for a moment to Acts xvii. he will there see how Paul discharged his business, as an evangelist, amongst the Thessalonians. “Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews. And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you is Christ.” So also in that splendid passage at the opening of 1 Corinthians xv., “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.” Ver. 1—4.

From this passage, and many others which might be quoted, we learn that the apostle preached not merely a doctrine, but a person. He did not preach election. He taught it to saints, but never preached it to sinners. This should be the evangelist's model, at all times. We never once find the apostles preaching election. They preached Christ—they unfolded the goodness of God—His loving-kindness—His tender mercy—His pardoning love—His gracious readiness to receive all who came in their true

character and condition as lost sinners. Such was their mode of preaching, or rather, such was the mode of the Holy Ghost in them, and such too was the mode of the blessed Master Himself. "*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*" "*If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.*" "*Him that cometh to me I will in nowise cast out.*" Matthew xi., John vi., vii.

Here are no stumbling-blocks in the way of anxious enquirers—no preliminary questions to be settled—no conditions to be fulfilled—no theological difficulties to be solved. No; the sinner is met on his own ground—met as he is—met just now. There is rest for the weary, drink for the thirsty, life for the dead, pardon for the guilty, salvation for the lost. Do these free invitations touch the doctrine of election? Assuredly not. And what is more, the doctrine of election does not touch them. In other words, a full and free gospel leaves perfectly untouched the grand and all-important truth of election: and the truth of election, in its proper place, leaves the gospel of the grace of God on its own broad and blessed base, and in all its divine length, breadth, and fulness. The gospel meets us as lost, and saves us; and then, when we know ourselves as saved, the precious doctrine of election comes in to establish us in the fact that we can never be lost. It never was the purpose of God that poor anxious souls should be harassed with theological questions or points of doctrine. No; blessed for ever be His name, it is His gracious desire that the healing balm of His pardoning love, and the cleansing efficacy of the atoning blood of Jesus, should be applied to the spiritual wounds of every sin-sick soul. And as to the doctrines of predestination and election, He has unfolded them in His word to comfort His saints, not to perplex poor sinners. They shine like precious gems on the page of inspiration, but they were never intended to lie as stumbling-blocks in the way of earnest seekers after

life and peace. They are deposited in the hands of the teacher to be unfolded in the bosom of the family of God ; but they are not intended for the evangelist, whose blessed mission is to the highways and hedges of a lost world. They are designed to feed and comfort the children, not to scare and stumble the sinner. We would say, and that with real earnestness, to all evangelists, " Do not hamper your preaching with theological questions of any sort or description. Preach Christ. Unfold the deep and everlasting love of a Saviour God. Seek to bring the guilty conscience-smitten sinner into the very presence of a pardoning God. Thunder, if you please, if so led, at the conscience—thunder loud at sin—thunder forth the dread realities of the great white throne, the lake of fire, and everlasting torment ; but see that you aim at bringing the guilty stricken conscience to rest in the atoning virtues of the blood of Christ. Then you can hand over the fruits of your ministry to the divinely qualified teacher to be instructed in the deeper mysteries of the faith of Christ. You may rest assured that the faithful discharge of your duty as an evangelist will never lead you to trespass on the domain of sound theology."

And, to the anxious enquirer, we would say, with equal earnestness, " Let nothing stand in your way in coming, this moment, to Jesus. Let theology speak as it may, you are to listen to the voice of Jesus, who says, '*Come unto me.*' Be assured there is no hindrance, no difficulty, no hitch, no question, no condition. You are a lost sinner, and Jesus is a full Saviour. Put your trust in Him, and you are saved for ever. Believe in Him, and you will know your place amongst the 'elect of God' who are 'predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son.' Bring your sins to Jesus and He will pardon them, cancel them by His blood, and clothe you in a spotless robe of divine righteousness. May God's Spirit lead you, now, to cast yourself simply and entirely upon that precious all-sufficient Saviour !"

We shall close this paper with a very brief notice of three distinct evils resulting from a wrong application of the doctrine of election, namely,

I. The discouragement of really earnest souls who ought to be helped on, in every possible way. If such persons are repulsed by the question of election, the result must be disastrous in the extreme. If they are told that the glad tidings of salvation are only for the elect—that Christ died only for such, and hence, only such can be saved—that unless they are elect they have no right to apply to themselves the benefits of the death of Christ. If, in short, they are turned from Jesus to theology—from the heart of a loving pardoning God to the cold and withering dogmas of systematic divinity, it is impossible to say where they may end; they may take refuge either in superstition, on the one hand, or in infidelity, on the other. They may end in high Church, broad Church, or no Church at all. What they really want is Christ, the living, loving, precious, all-sufficient Christ of God. He is the true food for anxious souls.

II. But, in the second place, careless souls are rendered more careless still by a false application of the doctrine of election. Such persons when pressed as to their state and prospects, will fold their arms and say, "You know I cannot believe unless God gives me the power. If I am one of the elect I must be saved; if not I cannot. I can do nothing, but must wait God's time." All this false and flimsy reasoning should be exposed and demolished. It will not stand, for a moment, in the light of the judgment-seat of Christ. Each one will learn there that election furnished no excuse whatever, inasmuch as it never was set up, by God, as a barrier to the sinner's salvation. The word is, "*Whosoever* will, let him take the water of life *freely*." The very same form of speech and style of language which removes the stumbling-block from the feet of the anxious enquirer, snatches the plea from the lips of

the careless rejecter. No one is shut out. All are invited. There is neither a barrier on the one hand, nor a plea on the other. All are made welcome; but all are responsible. Hence, if any one presumes to excuse himself for refusing God's salvation, which is as clear as a sunbeam, by urging God's decrees, which are entirely hidden, he will find himself fatally mistaken.

III. And, now, in the third and last place, we have frequently seen, with real sorrow of heart, the earnest, loving, large-hearted evangelist damped and crippled by a false application of the truth of election. This should be most carefully avoided. We hold that it is not the business of the evangelist to preach election. If he is rightly instructed, he will *hold* it; but, if he is rightly directed, he will not *preach* it.

In a word, then, the precious doctrine of election is not to be a stumbling-block to the anxious—a plea for the careless—a damper to the fervent evangelist. May God's Spirit give us to feel the adjusting power of truth!

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)



THE ALABASTER BOX.

(PART II.)

THERE is nothing which so thoroughly tests the heart as the doctrine of the cross—the path of the rejected, crucified Jesus of Nazareth. This probes man's heart to its deepest depths. If it be merely a question of religiousness, man can go an amazing length; but religiousness is not Christ. We need not travel farther than the opening lines of our chapter (Matt. xxvi.) in order to see a striking proof of this. Look, for a moment, at the palace of the high priest and what do you see? A special meeting of the heads and leaders of the people. "Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people,

unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas."

Here, assuredly, you have religion, and that, too, in a very imposing form. We must remember that these priests, scribes, and elders were looked up to, by the professed people of God, as the great depositaries of sacred learning, as the sole authority in all matters of religion, and as holding office under God, in that system which had been set up of God in the days of Moses. The assembly in the palace of Caiaphas was not composed of the pagan priests and augurs of Greece and Rome, but of the professed leaders and guides of the Jewish nation. And what were they doing in their solemn conclave? They were "consulting that they might take Jesus by subtlety, and kill him."

Reader, ponder this. Here were religious men, and men of learning, men of weight, no doubt, and influence among the people; and yet these men hated Jesus, and they were met in council, in order to plot His death—to take Him craftily and kill Him. Now those men could have talked to you about God and His worship—about Moses and the law—about the Sabbath and all the great ordinances and solemnities of the Jewish religion. But they hated Christ. Remember this most solemn fact. Men may be very religious; they may be the religious guides and teachers of others, and yet hate the Christ of God. This is one grand lesson to be learnt in the palace of Caiaphas the high priest. Religiousness is not Christ; on the contrary, the most zealous religionists have often been the most bitter and vehement haters of that blessed One.

But, it may be said, "Times are changed. Religion is now so intimately associated with the Name of Jesus, that to be a religious man is, of necessity, to be a lover of Jesus. You could not, now, find aught answering to the palace of Caiaphas." Is this really so? We cannot

believe it, for a moment. The Name of Jesus is as thoroughly hated in Christendom, now, as it was in the palace of Caiaphas. And those who seek to follow Jesus will be hated too. We need not go far to prove this. Jesus is still a rejected one, in this world. Where, let us ask, will you hear His Name? Where is He a welcome theme? Speak of Him where you will, in the drawing-rooms of the wealthy and the fashionable, in the railway carriage, in the saloon of a steam-boat, in the coffee-room, or the dining-hall, in short, in any of the resorts of men, and you will, in almost every case, be told that such a theme is out of place. You may speak of anything else, politics, money, business, pleasure, nonsense. These things are always in place, everywhere; Jesus is never in place anywhere. We have seen in our streets, times without number, the public thoroughfares interrupted by German bands, balad-singers, and puppet-shows, and they have never been molested, reprov'd, or told to move on; but let a man stand, in such places, to speak of Jesus, and he will be insulted, or told to move on and not stop a thoroughfare. In plain language, there is room everywhere, in this world, for the devil, but no room for the Christ of God. The world's motto as to Christ is, "Oh! breathe not his Name."

But, thank God, if we see around us much that answers to the palace of the high priest, we can also see, here and there, that which corresponds with the house of Simon the leper. There are, blessed be God, those who love the Name of Jesus, and who count Him worthy of the alabaster box. There are those who are not ashamed of His precious cross—those who find their absorbing object in Him and who count it their chief joy and highest honour to spend and be spent for Him, in any little way. It is not with them a question of work, of religious machinery, of running hither and thither, of doing this or that: No; it is Christ, it is being near Him, and being occupied with Him;

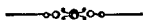
it is sitting at His feet, and pouring the precious ointment of the heart's true devotion upon Him.

Reader, be thou well assured that this is the true secret of power both in service and testimony. A just appreciation of a crucified Christ is the living spring of all that is acceptable to God, whether in the life and conduct of an individual Christian, or in all that goes on in our public assemblies. Genuine attachment to Christ and occupation with Him must characterize us personally and congregationally, else our life and history will prove of little worth in the judgment of heaven, however it may be in the judgment of earth. We know of nothing which imparts such moral power to the individual walk and character as intense devotion to the Person of Christ. It is not merely being a man of great faith, a man of prayer, a deeply taught student of Scripture or a scholar, a gifted preacher or a powerful writer. No; it is being a lover of Christ.

And so, as to the assembly; what is the true secret of power? Is it gift, eloquence, fine music, or an imposing ceremonial? No; it is the enjoyment of a present Christ. Where He is, all is light, life, and power. Where He is not, all is darkness, death, and desolation. An assembly where Jesus is not, is a sepulchre, though there be all the fascination of oratory, all the resistless attraction of fine music, and all the influence of an impressive ritual. All these things may exist in perfection, and yet the devoted lover of Jesus may have to cry out, "Alas! they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." But, on the other hand, where the presence of Jesus is realized—where His voice is heard, and his very touch felt by the soul, there is power and blessing, though, to man's view, all may seem the most thorough weakness.

Let Christians remember these things; let them ponder them; let them see to it that they realize the Lord's presence in their public assemblies; and if they cannot say, with full confidence, of their meetings that the Lord is

there, let them humble themselves and wait upon Him, for there must be a cause. He has said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst." *But let us never forget that, in order to reach the divine result, there must be the divine condition.*



MEDITATIONS ON THE CHRISTIAN'S STANDING AND STATE.

(EPHESIANS I. 15—23; III. 14—21.)

THERE are two things with which every believer in Christ Jesus should be well acquainted; they are of the utmost importance to us, individually. We refer to what may be called, *the Christian's standing and state*—his standing before God in Christ; and the state, practically, which answers to that high and holy standing.

What theme can be more uplifting and strengthening to the soul that knows the Saviour? Let it be thine, O my soul, for a little while—yea, for ever. Meditate, I beseech thee, on this soul-elevating theme! Depend, in all simplicity, on the presence of the Holy Ghost, who only can reveal the Person and position of Christ, and make good to thee, experimentally, thy place in Him. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom. v. 1, 2.) To start with, then, in our meditations, we possess and enjoy, in Christ, everything but glory. This is plain from the passage before us. Being justified—having peace—standing in grace—waiting for glory. We only wait for glory—"the glory of God." And even with that we are now linked in the most blessed way, having Christ in the heart, the hope of glory. "To

whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles ; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Col. i. 27.

The Person, work, and position of Christ, necessarily become with such a theme, the blessed objects of the soul's happy meditations. His *humiliation* and *glory*, as the beloved Son of the Father, fill the whole vision of the soul. Fellowship with the Father and the Son is enjoyed. Love is created in the heart, by the contemplation of His love. In meditating on the Christian's standing and state, Christ Himself must be the centre of our thoughts and of our worshipful adorations ; the heart must overflow, through nearness to Him, in grateful praise. As we *stand* in Him, we must know His standing in order to know our own ; and as we are *loved* in Him, we must know the Father's love to the Son, before we can know His love to us. And surely, in the proportion that we enter into these blessed subjects, and are thus occupied with Christ, our *state* here below will be the reflection of our *standing* in Him above.

The two prayers of the apostle in his Epistle to the Ephesians, most fully, and in order, bring before us the subject of our present meditations. Follow then, I pray thee, my soul, this divine order. And grant, O Lord, that I may see, in thy light, the wondrous depths and heights of thy path and glory, as the once suffering but now exalted Man ; and that I may also taste the sweetness of thy love, and know the inward power of the Holy Spirit. Oh ! that those fervent breathings of thy servant—so long uttered—so often read, but, alas, so little heeded—may yet be fully answered in my experience, and also in the happy experience of all who may read these meditations !

Mark then, my soul, that the apostle in chapter i. 15—23, prays that the saints might know their place, or *standing*, in the risen and glorified Man, Christ Jesus—that they might have a deep and real apprehension of their place before God in Him, as exalted above all principalities and

powers. Consistent with this truth, the saints are exhorted in the last chapter of this Epistle, to maintain their standing against every foe. "Stand therefore," says the apostle; he does not say, *advance*: there is no higher or better place to reach. Hence the word is, "stand therefore . . . and having done all, to stand." In chapter iii. 14—21 he again prays that they might know, and be in that *state* of soul which answers to this standing. Hence, he says nothing in the second prayer about being exalted and glorified, but rather, that they might be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man—that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith, and that they might be rooted and grounded in love. The latter is as clearly *state* as the former is standing.

Secured in Christ, their Head on high,

The saints below may boldly cry—

Praise to our God, Amen!

To God in Christ all praise be given—

For evermore, on earth, in heaven,

Amen! Amen! Amen!

Observe further, in thy meditations, and carefully note, as of all importance, that these two prayers are founded on the two great relationships in which God stands to Christ, and, consequently, to us in Him. This is the key to the better understanding, not only of the two prayers, but of the whole epistle. The apostle commences with this twofold relationship, and has it in his mind all through the epistle: "Blessed be the *God and Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ." He is our God and Father in Him. Immediately after our Lord arose from the dead, He made known this great truth. It is based on accomplished redemption. "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God." (John xx. 17.) Blessed fruit of the Saviour's death and resurrection!

The first prayer is addressed to "the *God* of our Lord Jesus Christ." The second, to "the *Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ." And we find that the main thought in each prayer answers perfectly to these titles. Power and glory, as displayed in the risen Man, characterize the first. Relationship and love characterize the second. The Father loves the Son, and as Son, He has His own place without being exalted. It is as man, once humbled for our sins, and having glorified God in putting them away, that He is exalted, and we in Him. *Love and glory* are the happy themes of the truth now before us. Love to the Son—glory to the Man—and we loved and glorified in Him, and as He is. Blessed truth! Precious to our souls! What grace! what love! what glory! Can anything but praise be heard throughout eternity?

But the fulness of these wondrous truths will be better seen as we meditate on the different parts and petitions of the two prayers.

Verses 15, 16, "*Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.*" How much to say of an assembly of saints—of whom could the apostle say as much now? But Christ had His right place in their hearts, and the saints, as a consequence, had theirs. These two things go together. Faith in Christ—love to the saints. The one is the fruit of the other. The saints will have a very small place in our hearts, if Christ has not His own place there. Viewed in this light, "Love unto all the saints," becomes a true test of our nearness to Christ, by faith. Merely to love those that suit us—whose disposition and ways are agreeable to us, would not answer to the description here given of the Ephesians. Not that we could love all Christians alike, that would be impossible; but we are to love all as the children of God, and for what we see of Christ in them. We must look at them from His point of view, not

our own. True, we may have our special friends amongst the saints of God, and it may be profitable to have such ; but we must be careful in manifesting our special affection for some, lest we should wound or discourage others. Largeness of heart and true affection should be cultivated for the whole family of God.

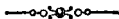
But knowest thou, O my soul, the secret of reaching and maintaining this Christ-like condition—"Love unto all the saints"—not unto *some*, observe, but unto *all* the saints? There is only one way, we believe, of manifesting this rare feature of our practical Christianity. Know, then, that we must ourselves be living sufficiently near the Lord, to see the saints in His light, and learn His thoughts about them. This, and this alone, rest assured, will lift thee above all that may be unlovely in the saints; and from being occupied with self, which always hinders our love to others. Outside of God's presence we are selfish. It is only when in His presence that we lose our selfishness. "If we walk in the light as God is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." (1 John i. 7.) God must have the *first place*, if we are to love one another as His children.

Take an example : The great apostle of the Gentiles was imprisoned at Rome. Everything in his circumstances was calculated to depress and weigh him down. But they did not, they could not. And yet what position could be more trying? Cut off from his friends—from visiting the churches—from the work of the gospel—in old age—in want. And more, trial from a very different quarter came upon him : many, taking advantage of his imprisonment, become very prominent in the work of the gospel, though in a wrong spirit : "supposing," as he says, "to add affliction to my bonds." *But* for his unselfish, large, loving heart, this must have been a great grief to him. But the glory of Christ, and the conversion of souls, were dearer to the apostle than his personal liberty, and his share in the

work; therefore, as one far above their influence, he could say, "What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." "Many—who," as one has beautifully said, "in the presence of his power and his gifts, were necessarily powerless and insignificant persons—could make themselves of some importance, when, in the unsearchable but perfect ways of God, this mighty instrument of His grace was set aside; they could hope to shine and attract attention when the rays of this resplendent light were intercepted by the walls of a prison. Jealous, but hidden when he was present, they availed themselves of his absence to bestir themselves—whether false brethren or jealous Christians, they sought in his absence to impair his authority in the Church, and his happiness. They only added to both. God was with His servant; and instead of the self-seeking, which instigated these sorry preachers of the truth, there was found in Paul a pure desire for the proclamation of the good news of Christ, the whole value of which he deeply felt, and which he desired above all, be it in what way it might."

In writing to his beloved Philippians from the prison at Rome, his heart overflows with joy and love, in spite of everything. His joy in God abounds, and his love to the saints. The children are loved for the Father's sake, and when this is the case, *all* are loved. "I thank my God," he says, "upon every remembrance of you. Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy." A stream of love flowed from that dreary dungeon to the refreshing of the churches—of all the saints; and which has been flowing ever since, to the refreshing of the saints in all ages. Instead of being cast down or terrified by his enemies, he nobly rose above them all, and had his eye and his heart, more effectually turned to Christ, and to his saints, than ever. What but conscious nearness to the Lord could give such holy victory? The enemy might be

permitted to take his liberty from him, and to cast him amongst common criminals; but he could not take his Christ from him, or his love to the saints. Noble example! Blessed lesson for our souls! May we seek to learn it, and faithfully to follow it!



A FRAGMENT.

"TRACTS can go everywhere. Tracts know no fear. Tracts never tire. Tracts can be multiplied without end by the press. Tracts can travel at little expense. They run up and down like the angels of God, blessing all, giving to all, and asking no gift in return. They can talk to one as well as to a multitude; and to a multitude as well as to one. They require no public room to tell their story in. They can tell it in the kitchen or the shop, the parlour or the closet, in the railway carriage or in the omnibus, on the broad highway or in the footpath through the fields. They take no note of scoffs, or jeers, or taunts. No one can betray them into hasty or random expressions. Though they will not always answer questions, they will tell their story twice, or thrice, or four times over if you wish them. And they can be made to speak on every subject, and on every subject they may be made to speak wisely and well. They can, in short, be made vehicles of all truth; the teachers of all classes; the benefactors of all lands."



QUIETNESS AND CONFIDENCE.

WHO yields his will to God's good pleasure,
And hopes in Him, whate'er betide;
To him is grace in ample measure,
Through every time of need supplied.
Secure shall his foundation stand,
He hath not built upon the sand.

What gain we when we faint and languish?

What gain we by our dismal sighs?

What gain we if we tell our anguish

Abroad beneath the morning skies?

More heavy grows the cross we bear,

For all this weary load of care.

To God thy whole desire confiding—

O, rest thee in His sovereign will;

His grace is for thy good providing,

Though sorrow's draught thy cup may fill.

He who thy captive soul hath freed,

Hath ponder'd well thy present need.

He knows the fitting time of gladness,

His love appoints both tear and smile;

Be true to Him, through days of sadness,—

Maintain a spirit free from guile;

So will He come, ere we suppose,

And joy shall follow all our woes.

Think not, when furnace fires are round thee,

That God hath left thee to their rage;

Say not, "Did wealth or power surround me,

His praises should my lips engage."

The rolling years are fraught with change,

Each sorrow hath its fixed range,

How easily the words were spoken

By Him who reigneth over all—

To bid the rich man's staff be broken,

The poor man succoured ere he fall.

God's wonders all His works shall crown,

He lifteth up, He bringeth down.

Give thanks and pray, whilst onward pressing

In wisdom's path with purpose true,

And heaven shall send thee showers of blessing,

Rich mercies every morning new.

The feeblest saint who trusts the Lord,

Hath present help, and sure reward.

GEORGE NEUMARK.

GLAD TIDINGS.

(PART IV.)

HAVING, in our last paper, endeavoured to clear away any difficulty arising from the misuse of the precious doctrine of election, and to shew the reader, "whosoever" he be, that there is no hindrance whatever to his full and hearty acceptance of God's free gift, even the gift of His only begotten Son; it now only remains for us to consider the result, in every case, of this acceptance, as set forth in the words of our Lord Jesus Christ. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Here, then, we have the result, in the case of every one who simply believes in Jesus. He shall never perish, but shall possess everlasting life. But who can attempt to unfold all that is included in this word, "*perish*?" What mortal tongue can set forth the horrors of the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched?" We believe, assuredly, that none but the One who used the word, in speaking to Nicodemus, can fully expound it to any one; but still we feel called upon, as the conductors of "Things New and Old," to bear our decided and unequivocal testimony to the solemn truth of Eternal Punishment. We have, occasionally, referred to this subject in our "Correspondence;" but we believe it demands from us a formal notice; and, inasmuch as the word "*perish*" occurs in the passage which has, for some months, been occupying our thoughts, we cannot do better than call the reader's attention to it.

It is a serious and melancholy fact that the enemy of souls and of the truth of God is leading thousands, both in Europe and America, to call in question the momentous fact of the everlasting punishment of the wicked. This he

does on various grounds, and by various arguments, adapted to the habits of thought, and moral condition, and intellectual stand-point of individuals. Some he seeks to persuade that God is too kind to send any one to a place of torment. It is contrary to His benevolent mind and His beneficent nature to inflict pain on any of His creatures.

Now, to all who stand, or affect to stand, upon this ground of argument, we would suggest the important enquiry, "What is to be done with the sins of those who die impenitent and unbelieving?" Whatever force there may be in the idea that God is too kind to send sinners to hell, there is equal force in the idea that He is too holy to let sin into heaven. He is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity." (Hab. i. 13.) God and evil cannot dwell together. This is plain. How, then, is the case to be met? If God cannot let sin into heaven, what is to be done with the sinner who dies in his sins? He must perish. But what does this mean? Does it mean annihilation, that is, the utter extinction or blotting out of the very existence of body and soul? Nay, reader, this cannot be. Many would like this, no doubt. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," would alas! suit many thousands of the sons and daughters of pleasure who think only of the present moment, and who roll sin as a sweet morsel under their tongue. There are millions, on the surface of the globe, who are bartering their eternal happiness for a few hours of guilty pleasure, and the crafty foe of mankind seeks to persuade such that there is no such place as hell, no such thing as the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; and, in order to obtain a footing for this fatal suggestion, he bases it upon the plausible and imposing notion of the kindness of God.

Reader, do not believe the arch-deceiver. Remember, God is holy. He cannot let sin into His presence. If you die in your sins, you must perish, and this word "perish" involves, according to the clear testimony of holy scripture,

eternal misery and torment in hell. Hear what our Lord Jesus Christ saith, in His solemn description of the judgment of the nations : "Then shall the king say also to them on his left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into *everlasting* fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. xxv. 41.) And, while you hearken to these awfully solemn accents, remember that the word translated "everlasting" occurs seventy times in the New Testament, and is applied as follows : "everlasting fire"—"eternal life"—"everlasting punishment"—"eternal damnation"—"everlasting habitations"—"the everlasting God"—"eternal weight of glory"—"everlasting destruction"—"everlasting consolation"—"eternal glory"—"eternal salvation"—"eternal judgment"—"eternal redemption"—"the eternal Spirit"—"eternal inheritance"—"everlasting kingdom"—"eternal fire."

Now, we ask any candid, thoughtful person, upon what principle can a word be said to mean *eternal*, when applied to the Holy Ghost or to God, and only *temporary*, when applied to hell fire or the punishment of the wicked? If it means eternal, in the one case, why not also in the other? We have just glanced at a Greek Concordance, and we should like to ask, would it be right to mark off some half-dozen passages in which the word "everlasting" occurs, and write opposite to each, these words, "everlasting here only means for a time?" The very thought is monstrous. It would be a daring and blasphemous insult offered to the Volume of Inspiration. No, reader, be assured of it, you cannot touch the word "everlasting" in one case, without touching it also in all the seventy cases in which it occurs. It is a dangerous thing to tamper with the word of the Living God. It is infinitely better to bow down under its holy authority. It is worse than useless to seek to avoid the plain meaning and solemn force of that word "perish" as applied to the immortal soul of man. It involves, beyond all question, the awful—the ineffably awful reality of burning for ever in the flames of hell. This is what

scripture means by "perishing." The votary of pleasure, or the lover of money, may seek to forget this. They may seek to drown all thought of it in the glass or in the busy mart. The sentimentalist may rave about the divine benevolence; the sceptic may reason about the possibility of eternal fire; but we are intensely anxious that the reader should rise from the study of this paper with the firm and deeply wrought conclusion and hearty belief that the punishment of all who die in their sins will be eternal in hell, as surely as the blessedness of all who die in the faith of Christ will be eternal in the heavens. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost would, most assuredly, have used a different word when speaking of the former, from that which He applies to the latter. This, we conceive, is beyond all question.

But there is another objection urged against the doctrine of eternal punishment. It is frequently said, "How can we suppose that God would inflict eternal punishment as a penalty for a few short years of sin?" We reply, it is beginning at the wrong end to argue in this way. It is not a question of time, as viewed from man's stand-point, but of the gravity of sin in itself, as looked at from God's stand-point. And how is this question to be solved? Only by looking at the cross. If you want to know what sin is in God's sight, you must look at what it cost Him to put it away. It is by the standard of Christ's infinite sacrifice, and by that alone, that you can rightly measure sin. Men may compare their few years with God's eternity; they may compare their short span of life with that boundless eternity that stretches beyond; they may seek to put a few years of sin into one scale, and an eternity of woe and torment into the other, and thus attempt to reach a just conclusion: but it will never do to argue thus. The question is, did it require an infinite atonement to put away sin? If so, the punishment of sin must be eternal. If nothing short of an infinite sacrifice could deliver from

the consequences of sin, those consequences must be eternal.

In a word, then, we must look at sin from God's point of view, and measure it by His standard, else we shall never have a just sense of what it is or what it deserves. It is the height of folly for men to attempt to lay down a rule as to the amount or duration of the punishment due to sin. God alone can settle this. And, after all, what was it that produced all the misery and wretchedness, the sickness and sorrow, the death and desolation of well nigh six thousand years? Just *one act* of disobedience—the eating of a little fruit. Can man explain this? Can human reason explain how one act produced such an overwhelming amount of misery? It cannot. Well, then, if it cannot do this, how can it be trusted when it attempts to decide the question as to what is due to sin? Woe be to all those who commit themselves to its guidance in this most momentous point!

Ah! reader, you must see that God alone can estimate sin and its just deserts, and He alone can tell us all about it. And has He not done so? Yes, verily, He has measured sin in the cross of His Son, and there, too, He has set forth, in the most impressive manner, what it deserves. What, think you, must that be that caused the bitter cry, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” If God forsook His only begotten Son, when He was made sin, must not sin deserve infinite and everlasting punishment? We believe the conclusion is unavoidable. We consider that the infinite nature of the atonement proves, unanswerably, the doctrine of eternal punishment. That peerless and precious sacrifice is at once the foundation of our eternal life, and of our deliverance from eternal death. It delivers from eternal wrath and introduces to eternal glory. It saves from the endless misery of hell, and procures for us the endless bliss of heaven. Thus whatever side of the cross we look at, or from whatever side we view it, we see eternity stamped upon it. If we view it from the gloomy

depths of hell, or from the sunny heights of heaven, we see it to be the same infinite, eternal, divine reality. It is by the cross we must measure both the blessedness of heaven and the misery of hell. Those who put their trust in that blessed One who died on the cross, obtain everlasting life and felicity. Those who reject Him, must sink into endless perdition.

We do not, by any means, pretend to handle this great question theologically, or to adduce all the arguments that might be advanced in defence of the doctrine of eternal punishment; but there is one further consideration which we must suggest to the reader, as tending to lead him to a sound conclusion, and that is the immortality of the soul. "God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." The fall of man in nowise touched the question of the soul's immortality. If, therefore, the soul is immortal, annihilation is impossible. The soul must live for ever. Overwhelming thought! For ever! For ever! For ever! The whole moral being sinks under the awful magnitude of the thought. It surpasses all conception and baffles all mental calculation. Human arithmetic can only deal with the finite. It has no figures by which to represent a never ending eternity. But the writer and the reader must live throughout eternity, either in that bright and blessed world above, or in that terrible place where hope can never come.

May God's Spirit impress our hearts more and more with the solemnity of eternity and of immortal souls going down into hell. We are deplorably deficient in feeling as to these weighty realities. We are daily thrown in contact with people, we buy and sell and carry on intercourse in various ways with those who must live for ever, and yet how rarely do we seek occasion to press upon them the awfulness of eternity and the appalling condition of all who die without a personal interest in the blood of Christ.

Reader, let us ask God to make us more earnest, more solemn, more faithful, more zealous in pleading with souls,

in warning others to flee from the wrath to come. We want to live more in the light of eternity, and then we shall be better able to deal with others.

We shall, if the Lord permit, devote our next paper to the consideration of "everlasting life."

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)



CONFESSION: WHAT IS IT?

(1 JOHN I.)

It is not God's will that His creatures should be left in uncertainty about anything which concerns their spiritual welfare. In clear and simple terms He has defined the moral condition of every man by nature: he is a child of wrath, dead in trespasses and sins. Equally clear and simple is His language when, in His grace, He sets before us the way of salvation. "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that 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." (Rom. x. 8, 9.) And this salvation is immediate and complete; for "He that heareth my word," says the Lord Jesus, "and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." (John v. 24.) He has been brought out of that sphere where death reigns, and in which judgment will be executed.

But the knowledge of salvation is not all that we should desire. God would have His redeemed people to hold communion with Himself. For any of the fallen children of Adam to have fellowship with God two things are requisite: the ground must be prepared on which it can be based; the capacity must be imparted by which it can be enjoyed. By the atonement, the ground has been pre-

pared; by the new birth, the being begotten of God, the capacity is imparted. The ground once laid, nothing can change it; the new nature once bestowed, none can deprive us of it. Yet, in point of fact, every saint does not experimentally enjoy unbroken communion with God. Set before God, in grace, as a child, the relationship remains unchanged; but the enjoyment of it is another thing. Defective teaching, as to the work of Christ, and the place of nearness into which all who believe on Him are brought, may, and often does, hinder it. But communion is often interrupted by failure in walk. For He with whom we are allowed this intercourse is a holy God—He is light. He cannot act contrary to His nature by having fellowship with evil, so neither can He admit to communion with Him those who do. "In him is no darkness at all." At the same time John could write, "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." It was not with him a possibility, but a reality. And knowing what it was, he desired for all believers that they also should enter into it. "That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." (1 John i. 3, 4.) Then follows the condition of walk needful for the desire of the evangelist, and surely of God also, for those to whom he wrote, to be fulfilled. The nature of God, what He is, being concisely stated (ver. 5), the walk of the saint must be in accordance with it. Pretension here will not avail. However others may be deceived, God sees all and judges all. "If we say, that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

At this juncture another question comes up. If we have sinned, what are we to do? How can we be restored to communion? To the word we must go to learn this, for it

is God's prerogative to prescribe the terms ; it is our part to observe the conditions.

Here, what grace meets us ! We find He has already anticipated our failure. He cannot allow it ; yet He has foreseen it. " My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not " (chap. ii. 1), is the word of God to every pardoned sinner. Possessed of a nature which cannot sin, because born of God, indwelt by the same Holy Ghost who descended and rested on the Lord when here on earth ; there is no excuse and should be no license for sin. Yet we do sin. So in language, as clear and simple as that which tells us of our condition by nature, and the way of salvation by faith through grace, the word sets forth the provision God has made for our failure, and the directions He has laid down for our observance. The provision is the advocacy of His Son, Jesus Christ, the righteous one, the propitiation for our sins ; the direction for His saints is to confess their sins. (1 John ii. 1, 2 ; i. 9.) It is the blood of Christ which procures the complete forgiveness of sins. It is by the advocacy of the righteous One the failing saint is restored to the privileges of communion. But the child must acknowledge his fault, for the holiness of God must be maintained. How simple are God's ways ; and yet how grossly perverted have been His directions about confession ! What confusion still prevails in the Church of God on this point ! How have men by their misunderstanding and misuse of His simple directions clouded the truth, till the way of salvation by faith in Christ has been forgotten, and the finished character of His work practically denied.

Confession, it is clear, is God's own institution. The children of Israel (Lev. v. 5 ; Num. v. 7) were commanded to practise it. The godly in Israel were baptized of John, confessing their sins. The believer in the Lord Jesus is told to confess. But for what are we to confess ? What should we confess ? To whom must we confess ? These questions answered from God's word will set the matter

clear, and will help souls in a day when doctrinal error abounds, and the teaching of so many is sadly confused.

I. Confession is not for salvation. It is for those who have been saved. For, remark, the apostle includes himself among the number of those who might need it. "If we confess:" yet he wrote when in actual enjoyment of communion with the Father and with the Son. He knew he had eternal life himself, and wrote to assure others of it (ver. 13); and because their sins were forgiven for Christ's sake. (Chap. ii. 12.) It is for the saint who has fallen, not for the sinner yet unconverted, that he here speaks. It is for the restoration of fellowship with God, not for salvation, that he thus writes. Did not David know something of the difference here pointed out, when in Psalm xxxii., after describing the result of his confession to the Lord, he adds, "For this shall every one that is godly make his prayer unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found?" His experience would encourage them.

II. What should we confess? Our sins. Before God in Christ, new creatures, we are told not to sin. From the old nature we never can be free till death, or the change which takes place at the coming of the Lord into the air for His saints. But the "old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." (Rom. vi. 6.) It is the yielding to this nature we have to confess. "If we confess our sins." It is one thing to speak of ourselves as sinful creatures, the common condition by nature of all the human race; it is another thing to confess acts of sin, when the efficacy of the blood of Jesus Christ has been known—a new nature has been received, and the individual has become a temple of the Holy Ghost. If I confess myself a sinner, I am only speaking of what I cannot help. If I confess my sins, I speak of what I ought to abstain from. I have yielded to that to which I had no right to yield; I have done that which I ought not to have done.

III. To whom must we confess? Though not here expressly stated, it is plain it is to God. For against Him have we offended. Acting according to His nature, He must make us feel that the link of communion has been sundered. To Him we must confess, that He may righteously, when the acts have been judged by us according to His judgment of them, receive us again into fellowship with Himself. Saved once and for ever, we have not to ask for an atonement to be made, or to be washed in the blood of Christ. Our standing before Him is perfect. His children before we failed, we are still His children when we have failed. Our relations will remain unaltered and unalterable. We need not then an earthly priest to come between us and God—that implies imperfection of standing. It assumes that the individual acting as priest has a nearer place with God than we have. This was the case dispensationally with Israel: there the people could not go where the priest could—they had no place of service at the altar, no ministry in the sanctuary. Our relationship with God is the closest that can be: children of the Father—the undoubted position of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ—our standing too is in Him before God. If this is forgotten, the thought of confession to an official person is easily taken up, to the grievous dishonour of the Lord, and the great loss of the soul; for confession to an official, call him priest or anything else, is really a relinquishment of the right of access, for the saint who has sinned, to the presence of the Father; a denial of the all-sufficiency of the advocacy of our blessed Lord; and practically an affirmation that man must supply a link which he has not, between the soul and God. It is a return to the position of Israel before the death of the Lord; it is Jewish not christian ground. We have only to look around to see the darkness, ignorance, want of peace and intelligence in the things of God which characterize the professing Church, where this is practised, to learn its true tendency, and to understand its real origin. The

christian standing has been well nigh forgotten, and that in the Church of God.

On the other hand, confession to our fellow creature we may practise. When we have sinned against them, we must confess it to them, ere looking for restoration from God. Have we not this expressed in principle in Matthew v. 23, 24; Luke xvii. 4? If we have not injured them, we may confess our faults to them, according to James v. 16, that prayer being made by them, for us who have sinned, we may be healed. To be anointed with oil, the elders were to be called; for confession of our faults, it is to one another we may resort. How carefully does the word of God guard us against the introduction of an elder, or priest, or any other official, when confession is spoken of!

Confession made, forgiveness follows. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." Need we any man to assure us of it when God has so graciously promised it us in His word? Will any word of man make the word of God more sure? Can man's announcement of it give greater confidence to the heart of God's children? His own character is pledged to accord it: He is faithful, He cannot deny Himself—He is just, He cannot act unjustly. What He is, as here set forth, should surely give confidence to the heart, which no word of man can strengthen—no authoritative declaration of a priest can make more sure. On His word we may surely rely. When we confess our sins, He forgives.

If we would rest here God would not. He not only forgives, but cleanses from all unrighteousness. Pure Himself, He cleanses His saints from all unrighteousness, that the joy of fellowship with Himself may be restored, and we again be before Him as happy, free, rejoicing children.

Mark how God here does it all. We confess: He forgives and He cleanses. What room then is there for man to come in? Who needs an official person on earth to re-admit his soul to communion with God? There is indeed

the power of binding and loosing, but the sphere for its exercise is earth. It is given to the assembly to put away from their midst a wicked person, to forgive him, and to receive him again to fellowship at the Lord's table when assured of his repentance. (Compare 1 Cor. v. 1—5 with 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7.) Discipline in the Church of God must be maintained; yet even in this the word of God lays the responsibility of action on the local assembly, not any person or persons of it. But the subject in John is not discipline on earth, but the restoration of the soul to individual fellowship with God. This is God's own work. Often may we need it where no case for the exercise of discipline by the assembly has arisen. But as often as we need it we find God ready to do it, if only we confess our sins before Him. How unfailing is His grace! How inexhaustible His love!



MEDITATIONS ON THE CHRISTIAN'S STANDING AND STATE.

(EPHESIANS I. 15—23; III. 14—21.)

VERSE 17. "*That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.*" The connection between *teaching* and *praying* is most intimate and beautiful. We naturally turn from teaching or preaching to prayer. It is God's way of relieving the heart. But for the relief which is found in prayer, the heart would soon sink beneath the solemn responsibility of ministering in the weighty matters of the soul. Eternal things may be seen in such a light, and realized in such power, from earnestly pressing their importance upon others, that a weight the most solemn and depressing may be left on the mind. Hence the need of a burden-bearer.

If we attach *Eternity* to the destinies of our hearers, we

invest them with an interest, an importance, and a magnitude, which are altogether overwhelming. Compared with *Eternity* everything which can be reckoned by time, dwindles into utter insignificance. How, where, can relief from the pressure of such thoughts be found? Only in prayer. The testimony, the souls, the eternal results, and the conscious shortcomings too, must all be cast upon God.

To this divine refuge—this place of repose and strength, the great apostle now turns. For the moment he takes the place of intercessor. And now, mark, I pray thee, my soul—carefully mark the *character* of this divinely inspired prayer. Thou hast here the apostle before thee, both as a teacher and as an intercessor. Blessed example!—it is worthy of thy closest study. And first, observe the perfect harmony there is between his prayer and the truths he had just been teaching. He says nothing in his prayer about the forgiveness of sins, or that they might receive the Holy Spirit. Why is this? thou mayest enquire. The answer is, that the *tone* of his prayer is not below the *tone* of his teaching. Some seem to pull down in their prayers, what they have confessedly been building up in their teaching. Not so the apostle. He is perfectly consistent. He seeks to bind up more closely in prayer, what he has built up as a teacher.

The difference, we are ready to admit, between the *tone* of the teaching and the prayers, to which we have referred, may flow from a sense of unworthiness on the mind of him who is ministering in the things of God. And this, in its own place, is to be admired; but, nevertheless, we may falsify the word of God, and contradict our own statements, by praying according to our feelings, or a supposed becoming humility. Intelligence in the word is to be looked for; it is our only safe guide, and the medium of the Holy Spirit's action. At the same time, the prayer may be a truer index of the state of the heart in the presence of God, than the doctrines

which have been advanced. The Lord knows. O my soul, judge thyself!—solemnly, constantly, judge thyself! And may He enable all His servants so to judge themselves, that they may be true and real before Him and before the congregation. We now turn to the lesson taught us by the apostle.

Having addressed the saints at Ephesus as the children of God, and as blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; he could not consistently pray that they might know that God loves them, and that they were forgiven. He had taught them these blessed truths in the plainest and fullest manner. He had assured the Ephesians, and through the same epistle he assures all Christians, that they *are* the children of God, according to the good pleasure of His will—that they *are* before Him as the very delight of His heart—that they *are* pardoned and accepted in the Beloved—that the Holy Spirit dwells in them, both as a seal of their present salvation, and as an earnest of their future glory. These blessed truths are not only revealed to faith, but they are sealed home to the Christian's heart, through the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. "In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed *with* [not *by*, observe, but *with*] that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." In beautiful harmony with these and other great truths which he had taught the saints, he prays that God may give them the spirit of wisdom to understand these marvellous revelations of His grace, and that they might rise, in faith, to the height of His thoughts and counsels about them. This is the burden of his prayer.

But are Christians, let me ask, not to confess their sins and shortcomings to God their Father? Most assuredly; that is just what they need to do constantly. And they cannot walk with God unless they do: but they should never *lower*, by *unscriptural expressions*, the ground of their

standing in His presence. Our standing in the presence of God is in virtue of the work of Christ, and according to the riches of God's grace; and as these can never fail, we can never lose the place they give. Besides, it is "to the praise of the glory of his grace" that we are there. But though we may be deeply conscious of failure as Christians, we should never take the ground of poor, unpardoned sinners before God. This would be to deny our calling, and to bring darkness, confusion, and weakness into our souls. God says we are before Him as His children, pardoned and accepted in the Beloved. We are no longer on the ground of sinners before God, but as children before the Father. In conversion the *ground* is changed. When born of God, we cease to be on the ground of sinners before Him, and are ever after on the ground of children in the family. True, we do not cease to be sinners, in the sense that we sin daily and hourly in thought, word, and deed. The *thought* of foolishness is sin; and who is not troubled with foolish thoughts? But we are to confess our faults as children before the Father, and not as sinners before God. In faithfulness to God and His word, we ought to maintain the ground on which He has set us. Not, of course, that the sin of the child is any the less, but, on the contrary, more grievous, for it is against more light, love, and grace. And, rest assured, the better we understand our calling in Christ, the deeper will be our humiliation on account of failure, and the more unreserved our confession of it. True holiness should characterize the children of God. As it is written, "Be ye holy; for I am holy." Or, in other words, the Christian's state should always answer to his standing. When it is not so, there is too good reason for humiliation and confession.

The question, you will see, is not that the Christian is any better in himself than he ever was, but that his position is changed. His standing before God is no longer in the first Adam, but in the last Adam—the risen Christ. And

he is expected to walk even as Christ walked. "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." Indeed, the scriptures speak of the Christian as if it were just possible for him to sin. "*If*," the apostle John says, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." The possibility of sinning is barely admitted. Such is the dignified manner of scripture, when speaking of the children of God: though, when speaking of our old nature, it affirms there is no good thing in it. And it is worthy of notice that he does not say, "If any man *repent* and *pray for pardon* he will be forgiven;" but, "If any man sin, we have an *advocate* with the Father." Nevertheless, we ought to repent, and repent deeply, when conscious of failure. But, in the meantime, Christ sees to our interests in heaven, and the Holy Ghost sees to our interests on earth, so that we are well cared for; adored be the goodness of our God! What a mercy that we are in Christ's hands! How often we may sin and never be conscious of it; but Christ sees it at once, and meets the need in virtue of His blood, so that the sin never reaches the throne of God. All praise be to His blessed name! The *work* of Christ has set us as children in the Father's presence, and fitted us to be there; and the *advocacy* of Christ maintains us holy, and without blame, before Him in love. The Lord give us to be in the intelligence of scripture, both in teaching, preaching, and praying, and may we stand firm on the great truth, that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.

GREAT ADVOCATE, Almighty Friend,
On Thee do all our hopes depend;
Our cause can never, never fail,
For Thou dost plead, and must prevail.

In every dark distressing hour,
When sin and Satan join their power,
Let this blest truth repel each dart,
That Thou dost bear us on Thy heart.

The apostle refers in his first prayer to "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory." The mighty power of God as displayed in the exaltation of Christ, and of the Christian in Him, is the *prominent* thought in this prayer, but not the only one. The thought suggested by the expression, "Father of glory," is sweet to the heart of the child. While we connect the idea of *power* with the title, "God," *affection* is inseparably associated with the title, "Father." This is most precious to the heart—it sweetens everything. While meditating in wonder and delight on the bright scene of glory which is before us, the happy thought crosses the mind, "My Father's love is the spring of all that glory—the fountain of all that perfect blessedness. He is "the Father of glory."

Great indeed and wonderful is the effect of God's power as here seen by the eye of faith. It is called, "the exceeding greatness of his power to usward 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." But who can speak of the happy combination of *love and glory*? Yet, surely, even the brightest glory, is but the outward manifestation of love. Nevertheless, they go well together—we would not have them separated; and, thank God, they never will: but all will allow that love is the deeper, closer thing. Both will be seen in the millennium. Then the heavens will not be so high above the earth as they now are. They will be, as it were, together. Jacob in vision saw them united as by a ladder, and the many glories encircling the Messiah were seen from earth's point of view. Then the Church will be seen in company with Christ, according to His own word in John xvii. "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that

thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

Here all is plain as to the future. The glory which the Father gives the Son, the Son gives to us, that the world may know that the Father sent the Son, and that He loves us, as He loves the Son. When the world sees us in the same glory with Christ, it will then know that we are loved with the same love. Wondrous, blessed truth! The soul can only bow in worship, while meditating on the grace that shines in these bright scenes of *love and glory*. "But what will it be to be there!" True, my soul, but what of the Father's house? Ah! that is the inner circle, the home of love. What is enjoyed there the world can never know. It will see the glory outside the house, but it can never gaze on the family scenes inside. Is this thy place, O my soul? It is the children's place, I answer, and we are all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus. His word can never be broken. All who are the children of God *now*, will be in the children's home *then*.

O LORD! my pilgrim spirit longs
To sing the everlasting songs
Of GLORY, LOVE, and power;
When heaven and earth and all things yield,
My Saviour will be still my shield
For He has to my soul revealed
Himself my strength and tower.

Who—O who could rest without the full assurance of an eternity of *love and glory*? Pray, dear reader, is this thy blessed hope? It is, surely, worthy of all thy thought—all thy attention—all thy determination; and all sacrifice too, even unto life itself, rather than lose that home of love—that eternal glory. One word settles all, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of

God abideth on him." (John iii. 35, 36.) May the Lord grant unto thee, and unto all who read these pages, His own richest and everlasting blessing, and may we all meet at last in that eternally happy home. *Now believe!*



WHAT THEN?

WHAT then? why then another pilgrim song,
And then a hush of rest divinely granted;
And then a thirsty stage (ah me! so long)
And then a brook, just where it most is wanted.

What then? The pitching of the evening tent,
And then, perchance, a pillow rough and thorny,
And then some sweet and tender message sent,
To cheer the faint one for to-morrow's journey.

What then? The wailing of the midnight wind;
A feverish sleep; a heart opprest and aching;
And then a little water-cruise to find
Close by my pillow, ready for my waking.

What then? I am not careful to enquire;
I know there will be tears and fears and sorrow;
And then a loving Saviour drawing nigher,
And saying, "*I will answer for the morrow.*"

What then? For all my sins His pard'ning grace;
For all my wants and woes His lovingkindness;
For darkest shades the shining of God's face,
And Christ's own hand to lead me in my blindness.

What then? A shadowy valley, lone and dim,
And then a deep and darkly rolling river;
And then a flood of light—a seraph hymn,
And God's own smile for ever and for ever.



GLAD TIDINGS.

(PART V.)

It only remains for us, now, to ponder the last clause of the fruitful passage of scripture which has been under consideration. (John iii. 16.) It sets forth the positive result, in every case, of simple faith in the Son of God. It declares, in the simplest and clearest way, the fact that every one who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ is a possessor of everlasting life. It is not merely that his sins are blotted out, that is blessedly true. Nor is it merely that he is saved from the consequences of his guilt, which is equally true. But there is more. The believer in Jesus has a new life, and that life is in the Son of God. He is placed upon a new footing altogether. He is no longer looked at in the old Adam condition, but in a risen Christ.

This is an immense truth, and one of deepest possible moment. We earnestly crave the reader's calm and prayerful attention while we seek, in some feeble way, to present to him what we believe to be wrapped up in the last clause of John iii. 16.

There is, in the minds of many, a very imperfect sense of what we get by faith in Christ. Some seem to view the atoning work of Christ merely as a remedial measure for the sins of our old nature—the payment of debts contracted in our old condition. That it is all this, we need not say; blessed be God for the precious truth. But it is much more. It is not merely that the sins are atoned for, but the nature which committed them is put to death and set aside by the cross of Christ, and to be "*reckoned*" dead by the believer. It is not merely that the debts contracted in the old condition are cancelled, but the old condition itself is completely ignored by God, and to be so accounted by the believer.

This great truth is doctrinally unfolded in the fifth

chapter of 2 Corinthians, where we read, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (Ver. 17.) The apostle does not say, "If any man be in Christ, he is pardoned—his sins are forgiven—his debts paid." All this is divinely true; but the statement just quoted goes very much further. It declares that a man in Christ is a new creation altogether. It is not the old nature pardoned, but completely set aside, with all its belongings, and a new creation introduced in which there is not a single shred of the old. "All things are become new; and all things are of God."

Now this gives immense relief to the heart. Indeed, we question if any soul can enter into the full liberty of the gospel of Christ, until he lays hold, in some measure, of the truth of the "new creation." There may be a looking to Christ for pardon—a vague hope of getting to heaven at the last—a measure of reliance on the goodness and mercy of God—there may be all this, and yet no just sense of the meaning of "everlasting life"—no happy consciousness of being "a new creation"—no understanding of the grand fact that the old Adam nature is entirely set aside, the old system in which we stood completely abolished.

But it is more than probable that some of our readers may be at a loss to know what is meant by such terms as, "the old Adam nature"—"the old system"—"the flesh"—"the old man," and such like. These expressions may fall strangely on the ears of those for whom we specially write; and we certainly wish to avoid shooting over the heads of our readers. As God is our witness, there is one thing we earnestly desire, one object which we would ever keep before our minds, and that is the instruction and edification of our readers; and therefore we would rather run the risk of being tedious, than make use of phrases which convey no clear or intelligible idea to the mind.

And, further, we would add, that we have no desire to press any peculiar theory or notion of our own. To 'do so could be of no possible value to any one. But no one can look upon the subject of "everlasting life" as a mere notion. And as to such terms as, "the old man"—"the flesh," and the like, scripture uses them in manifold places; for example, in the sixth chapter of Romans, we read, "Knowing this, that our *old man* is crucified with him [Christ] that *the body of sin* might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Ver. 6.

Now, what does the apostle mean by "the old man?" We believe he means our old Adam nature—that nature which we inherited from our first parents. And what does he mean by "the body of sin?" We believe he means the whole system or condition in which we stood in our unregenerate, unrenewed, unconverted state. The old Adam nature, then, is declared to be crucified—the whole system of sin is said to be destroyed by the death of Christ. Hence, the soul that believes on the Lord Jesus Christ is privileged to know that his old nature, his sinful, guilty self, is looked upon by God as dead and set aside completely. It has no existence whatever before God. He sees it dead and buried.

Observe, it is not merely that our sins are forgiven, our debts paid, our guilt atoned for; but the nature that committed the sins, contracted the debts, and incurred the guilt is put for ever out of God's sight. It is not God's way to forgive us our sins, and yet leave us in the sinful nature that committed them. No; He has, in His marvellous grace and vast plan, condemned and abolished for ever, for the believer, the old Adam nature, with all its belongings, so that it is no longer recognized in any way. "He that is dead is freed [justified] from sin." It is not that we are pardoned and our sinful nature left alive. No; we are declared, by the voice of holy scripture, to be crucified—dead—buried, and risen with Christ. God tells us we are

so, and we are to "*reckon*" ourselves to be so. It is a matter of faith, and not merely a matter of feeling. If I look at myself from *my* standpoint, or judge by my feelings, I shall never—can never understand this truth. And why? Because I feel myself to be just the same sinful creature as ever. I feel that there is sin in me; that in my flesh there dwelleth no good thing; that my old nature is in nowise changed or improved; that it has the same evil tendencies as ever, and if not mortified and kept down by the gracious energy of the Holy Spirit, it will break out in its true character.

And it is just here, we doubt not, that so many sincere souls are perplexed and troubled. They are looking at themselves, and *reasoning* upon what they see and feel, instead of resting in the truth of God, and *reckoning* themselves to be what God tells them they are. They find it difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile what they feel in themselves with what they read in the word of God—to make their inward self-consciousness harmonize with God's revelation. But we must remember that faith takes God at His word. It ever thinks with Him on all points. It believes what He says, because He says it. Hence, if God tells me that my old man is crucified—my old nature dead and out of sight, that He no longer sees me as in the old Adam state, but in a risen Christ, I am to believe, like a little child, what he tells me, and walk in the faith of it, from day to day. If I look in at myself for evidences of the truth of what God says, it is not faith at all. "Abraham considered not his own body now dead when he was about an hundred years old; neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb; he staggered not at the promise of God, through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God." Rom. iv. 19, 20.

This is the great principle which underlies the whole christian system. "Abraham believed God"—not something about God, but God Himself. This is faith. It is

taking God's thoughts in place of our own. It is, in short, allowing God to think for us.

Now, when we apply this to the subject before us, it makes it most simple. He that believeth in the Son of God hath everlasting life. Mark, it is not he that believeth something about the Son of God. No; it is he that believeth in Himself. It is a question of simple faith in the Person of Christ; and every one that has this faith is the actual possessor of everlasting life. This is the direct and positive statement of our Lord in the Gospel. It is repeated over and over again. Nor is this all. Not only does the believer thus possess eternal life, but by the further light which the epistles throw upon the grand question, he may see that his old life—that in which he lived in nature—that which the apostle designates “the old man,” or “the flesh,” is accounted by God as dead and buried. This may be difficult to understand; but let the reader remember that he must believe, not because he understands, but because it is written in God's word. It is not said, “Abraham understood God.” No; but he “believed God.” It is when the heart believes, that light is poured in upon the understanding. If I wait till I understand in order to believe, I am leaning to my own understanding, instead of committing myself, in childlike faith, to God's word.

Reader, ponder this! You may say you cannot understand how your sinful nature can be looked upon as dead and gone, while you feel its workings, its heavings, its tossings, its tendencies, continually within you. We reply, or rather God's eternal word declares, that if your heart believes in Jesus, then is all this true of you, namely, you *have* eternal life; you *are* justified from all things; you *are* a new creation; old things *are* passed away; *all* things *are* become new: and *all* things *are* of God. In a word, you are “*in Christ*,” and, “*as* he is so *are* you in this world.” (1 John iv. 17.)

And is not this a great deal more than the mere pardon of your sins, the cancelling of your debts, or the salvation of your soul from hell? Assuredly it is. And suppose we were to ask you, on what authority you believe in the forgiveness of your sins. Is it because you feel, realize, or understand? Nay; but because it is written, "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts x. 43.) "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John i. 7.) Well, then, upon precisely the same authority you are to believe that your old man is crucified, that you are not in the flesh, not in the old creation, not in the old Adam condition; but that, on the contrary, you are viewed by God as actually in a risen and glorified Christ—that He looks upon you as He looks upon Christ.

True, it is, alas, how true! the flesh is in you, and you are still here, as to the fact of your condition, in this old world, which is under judgment. But, then, hear what your Lord saith, when speaking about you to His Father, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." And again, "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world." John xvii. 16, 18.

Hence, therefore, if you will just bow to God's word; if you will not reason about what you see in yourself, and feel in yourself, and think of yourself, but simply *believe* what God says, you will enter into the blessed peace and holy liberty flowing from the fact that you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit; not in the old creation, but in the new; not under law, but under grace; not of the world, but of God. You have passed clean off the old platform which you occupied as a child of nature, and a member of the first Adam; and you have taken your place on a new platform altogether, as a child of God, and a member of the body of Christ.

All this is vividly prefigured by the deluge and the ark,

in the days of Noah. (See Gen. vi.—viii.) “And God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, *The end of all flesh* is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.” Here, then, was, in type, the end of the old creation. All was to pass under the waters of judgment. What then? “Make thee an ark of gopher wood.” Here we have set forth a figure of the new thing. That ark, floating peacefully over the dark abyss of waters, was a type of Christ, and the believer in Him. The old world, together with man, was buried beneath the waves of judgment, and the only object that remained was the ark—the vessel of mercy and salvation, riding in safety and triumph over the billows. Thus it is now, in truth and reality. There is nothing before the eye of God but a risen, victorious, and glorified Christ, and His people linked with Him. The end of *all* flesh has come before God. It is not a question of some very gross forms of “flesh,” or of nature, of that merely which is “vile and refuse.” No; it is “the *end of all*.” Such is the solemn, sweeping verdict; and then—what? A risen Christ. Nothing else. All in Him are seen by God as He is seen. All out of Him are under judgment. It all hinges upon this one question, “Am I in or out of Christ?” What a question!

Reader, are you in Christ? Do you believe in His Name? Have you given Him the confidence of your heart? If so, you have “eternal life”—you are “a new creation”—“old things are passed away.” God does not see a single shred of the old thing remaining for you. “All things are become new, and all things are of God.” You may say, you do not *feel* that old things are all passed away. We reply, God says they are, and it is your happy privilege to *believe* what He says, and “*reckon*” yourself to be what He declares you are. God speaks according to

that which is true of you in Christ. He does not see you in the flesh, but in Christ. There is absolutely nothing before the eye of God but Christ; and the very weakest believer is viewed as part of Christ, just as your hand is a part of your body. You have no existence apart from Christ—no life—no righteousness—no holiness—no wisdom—no power. Apart from Him, you are nothing, and can do nothing. In Him you have all and can do all; you are thoroughly identified with Christ. Marvellous fact! Profound mystery! Most glorious truth! It is not a question of attainment or of progress. It is the settled and absolute standing of the feeblest member of the Church of God. True, there are various measures of intelligence, experience, and devotedness; but there is only one life, one standing, one position before God, and that is Christ. There is no such thing as a higher or a lower christian life. Christ is the believer's life, and you cannot speak of a higher or a lower Christ. We can understand the higher stages of christian life; but there is no spiritual intelligence in speaking of a higher christian life. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life."

This is a grand truth, and we earnestly pray that God the Spirit may open it fully to the mind of the reader. We feel assured that a clearer understanding thereof would chase away a thousand mists, answer a thousand questions, and solve a thousand difficulties. It would not only have the effect of giving settled peace to the soul, but also of determining the believer's position in the most distinct way. If Christ is my life—if I am in Him and identified with Him, then not only do I share in His acceptance with God, but also in His rejection by this present world. The two things go together. They form the two sides of the one grand question. If I am in Christ and as Christ, before God, then I am in Christ and as Christ before the world; and it will never do to accept the result of this union before God, and refuse the results

of it as regards the world. If we have the one, we must have the other likewise.

All this is fully unfolded in John xvii. There we read, on the one hand, "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and *hast loved them as thou hast loved me.*" (Ver. 22, 23.) And, on the other hand, we read, "I have given them thy word; and *the world hath hated them*, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (Ver. 14.) This is as plain and positive as anything can be. And be it remembered that, in this wondrous scripture, our Lord is not speaking merely of the apostles, but, as He says, of "them also who shall believe on me through their word," that is, of all believers. Hence it follows that all who believe in Jesus are one with Him, as accepted above; and one with Him, as rejected below. The two things are inseparable. The Head and the members share in one common acceptance in heaven, and in one common rejection upon earth. Oh! that all the Lord's people entered more into the truth and reality of this! Would that we all knew a little more of the meaning of fellowship with a heaven-accepted, earth-rejected Christ!



JONATHAN.

(1 SAMUEL XVIII. 1—4.)

"AND it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David: and Jonathan loved him as his own soul Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to

David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle."

What an exquisite picture we have here! A picture of love stripping itself to clothe its object. There is a vast difference between Saul and Jonathan in this scene. Saul took David home with him in order to magnify himself by keeping such an one about his person and in his house. But Jonathan stripped himself to clothe David. This was love in one of its charming activities. Jonathan, in common with the many thousands of Israel, had watched, with breathless interest, the scene in the valley of Elah. He had seen David go forth, single handed, to meet the terrible foe whose height, demeanour, and words had struck terror into the hearts of the people. He had seen that haughty giant laid low by the hand of faith. He participated with all in the splendid victory.

But there was more than this. It was not merely the victory but the victor that filled the heart of Jonathan—not merely the work done, but the one who had done it. Jonathan did not rest satisfied with saying, "Thank God, the giant is dead, and we are delivered, and may return to our homes and enjoy ourselves." Ah! no; he felt his heart drawn and knit to the person of the conqueror. It was not that he valued the victory less, but he valued the victor more, and hence he found his joy in stripping himself of his robes and his armour in order to put them upon the object of his affection.

Christian reader, there is a lesson here for us; and not only a lesson but a rebuke. How prone are we to be occupied with redemption rather than the Redeemer—with salvation rather than with the Saviour! No doubt we should rejoice in our salvation; but should we rest here? Should we not, like Jonathan, seek to strip ourselves in order to magnify the Person of Him who went down into the dust of death for us? Assuredly we should, and all the more because He does not exact aught of us. David did

not ask Jonathan for his robe or his sword. Had he done so, it would have robbed the scene of all its charms. But no; it was a purely voluntary act. Jonathan forgot himself and thought only of David. Thus it should be with us and the true David. Love delights to strip itself for its object. "The love of Christ constraineth us." And again. "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ." Phil. iii. 7, 8.

Oh! for more of this spirit! May our hearts be drawn out and knit, more and more, to Christ, in this day of hollow profession, and empty, religious formality! May we be so filled with the Holy Ghost, that with purpose of heart we may cleave unto our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!



MEDITATIONS ON THE CHRISTIAN'S STANDING AND STATE.

(EPHESIANS I. 15—23; III. 14—21.)

VERSES 18, 19. "*The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe.*" God is the source of all blessing. This is the first thought suggested in reading these verses. He is here seen as the author—the source of it all! Blessed, precious thought for the heart! Hence it is said to be *His calling—His inheritance—His power*. At the same time, the blessing is presented as *in Christ*, and *with Christ*, though flowing from God as its source.

When the apostle speaks of the gospel in the commencement of his Epistle to the Romans, he characterizes it

as the "*Gospel of God, concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*" There we have God as the *source*, and Christ as the *subject* of the gospel. Here, it is the bright display of His grace and love in heavenly places, to those who have been gathered to Himself by the gospel. Of course, Christ risen is the bright display to faith of all blessing. But whether it be grace and love to sinners on the earth, or to saints in heaven, the source is the same. The preaching of the gospel—the effectual call—the future glory, and the power which accompanies the truth, and gives a foretaste of the glory, are all of God. Wondrous, marvellous truth, when we think of what we are! But there is no heart in the universe that has been so revealed to us as the heart of God. He gave His Son to die for us. And who ever lay so deep in that heart as the Well-Beloved? Its depths have been revealed. Oh! blessed, full, eternal, unfailing spring of all blessedness, both in time and in eternity! How the renewed soul loves to linger at the fountain! Here linger—here dwell—O my soul! It is thy place of joy and strength—thy highest privilege—thy home for ever. Thou art born of God—born from above. A man's native place is where he was born.

What can be sweeter or more strengthening to the heart, than to fall back upon the thoughts and counsels of God, as the foundation of all our blessing? This ground can never, never change. Before this world was made, our redemption was planned. It was no afterthought of the divine mind. And now, in the risen Christ, and the children of God raised up in Him, is the perfect answer to the eternal counsels of love. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Ver. 7.

But here, note also, my soul, that the fountain is not only the place of sweetest delight to thyself, but of the richest blessing to others. When truly connected with the source, we become the channel of living water to others. It is

said of Moses, when he fled from the face of Pharaoh to the land of Midian, that "he sat down by a well." Beautiful illustration of the Christian's privileged place. He was thus in the right position to help the daughters of Reuel to water the flock. "Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, How is it that ye are come so soon to-day? And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew water enough for us, and watered the flock." Ex. ii.

It is perfectly clear that we must be near to the well of life ourselves, if we would become the channel of living water to others. What a privilege to be enabled to roll away the stone from the well's mouth, and water the Lord's flock when it is gathered together—to be so under the guidance of the Holy Spirit as to minister the truth in due season. Blessed Lord, keep thy servants near to thyself, that they may refresh thy gathered saints with the pure, living waters of the sanctuary.

Jesus! thou art the fountain,
The deep, sweet well of love!
The streams on earth I've tasted,
More deep I'll drink above:
There to an ocean fulness,
His mercy doth expand,
And glory—glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.

Turn now for a little while, my soul, and meditate on the great truth of thy christian calling. "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling." Nothing can be of greater importance to thee than the *character* of God's call. To what, in the greatness of His love, has He called thee—to what has He called every Christian? This is the question. Is it to the *hope* of salvation, with a measure of uncertainty

or insecurity hanging over it? Most assuredly not. In chapter ii. of this epistle it is said, "By grace are ye saved through faith." Salvation is here viewed as a present thing—as an accomplished reality to the soul. The hope of His calling, is what we are called to in Christ Jesus, as the children of God. Christ risen from among the dead, triumphant over all enemies, and exalted to all honour at God's right hand in heaven, is the expression of that which we are called to enjoy by faith now, and which we shall fully enjoy with Christ in heaven for ever. Were the heavens over our head to be opened, and could we see the Man Christ Jesus there; we should then see the Christian's place, privilege, and standing in the presence of God.

Grace begun shall end in glory;

Jesus, He the victory won;

IN HIS OWN TRIUMPHANT STORY

IS THE RECORD OF OUR OWN.

The apostle, in this part of his prayer, refers, we doubt not, to what he had written in the early part of the chapter: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of His will." (Ver. 3—5.) Here all is grace—grace flowing from perfect love, and for the divine glory. But God is seen alone as the Blessor. The spring and power of all the blessing here revealed are in His own heart. It takes its character from Himself. But Christ is seen as the *foundation* of it all. It is *in Him* that we are blessed. He died for us, adored be His name! and washed us from our sins in His own blood; and thus presents us to God and His Father, in the full efficacy of His work, and in the acceptancy of His Person. This is

the foundation on which all blessing, both to the individual and to the Church—both for time and for eternity, securely rests. “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

The heart of the apostle is so full of this great subject, that he breaks forth at once, without any preface, in the highest tones of praise and worship. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” All our blessings flow from the twofold relationship here introduced—God and Father. In the first message sent to the disciples by the blessed Lord, after He arose from the dead, He announces this blessed truth. “Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.” Christ Himself is the perfect man before God, and He is a Son with the Father. We are one with Him in both these relationships.

Redemption is the basis of relationship. Christ had so blotted out our sins, and glorified God in His death, that the way was perfectly clear in resurrection, to introduce *His disciples into the place of sons—into the same place as Himself.* Oh! wondrous truth! Oh! marvellous place of blessing! But, listen, O my soul, it is to the knowledge of this—the faith of this—the enjoyment of this—the practical manifestation of this, that thou art called of God. Explain it not away, I pray thee, think not that it is a mere feeling, but receive it as God’s truth, as a present reality. It rests on the solid foundation of the death and resurrection of Christ. “God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” (Gal. iv. 4—6.) Here again we see God as the great source of our blessing. The *Son* comes from God—the *Spirit* comes from God. God sent forth His Son—He

sent forth the Spirit. We are not *made sons* by the Spirit, but because we are sons in Christ, He sends forth the Spirit to dwell in us. Hence we have not only the *place of sons*, but the *consciousness of sonship*, by the Holy Ghost.

The unscriptural notion of many is, that the blessings of divine relationship can never be really known or enjoyed while we are in this world. Why, in the First Epistle of John, the babes are addressed as knowing the forgiveness of their sins, and the Father. But what can be more true or real to the soul, than the words of the risen Lord: "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father; to my God and your God?" The apostle repeats the same truth, and connects with it the very highest character of blessing which is ours in Christ: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

Is thy faith, then, O my soul, up to this revelation? These are the lofty heights on which thou art called to walk, in the intelligence and power of the Holy Ghost. Doubt not, fear not; God has called thee to this. It is the safest path—the path of faith. David rose in faith to the height of God's thoughts and counsels as to Israel, when he vanquished Goliath in the valley of Elah. Men of lower faith stood fearing and trembling before the boastful giant, and no doubt thought David very presumptuous. But God was honoured by the faith of David, and God honoured David. And so it must ever be. True faith can rest in nothing short of the whole counsel of God. Art thou prepared then, O my soul, to ascend these spiritual heights, and like Israel of old, plant the sole of thy foot on thine own possessions in the heavenly places? Christ is there, my soul, be of good courage—thy standing is in Him. Thou art as safe as He is—thy security is His. The measure of His blessing is thine. We are "blessed with all spiritual blessings, not one is lacking; and they are of the highest order:

they are not temporal, as was the case with the Jews. It is in the most exalted capacity of the renewed man that we enjoy these blessings, and they are adapted to that capacity, they are spiritual. They are also in the highest sphere; it is not in Canaan or Emmanuel's land; these blessings are granted us in the heavenly places; they are granted us in the most excellent way, one which leaves no room for comparison, it is *in Christ*." This is the children's blessing, all praise to our God and Father. It is individual, the Church's blessing is spoken of afterwards. Every child of God, without exception, is blessed according to that which is due to Christ. The measure of our blessing, is the measure of God's value for Christ. It is enough, O my soul. It is the largest and highest blessing revealed. We are blessed in the best place—the best company, and with the best of blessings. Here rest a little in thy meditations—dwell on these three things—the measure is that which can never be measured.

We worship thee, FATHER and GOD!

What rich unfathomable grace,

On us, O Christ, in thee is bestowed!

Children of wrath—our nature's place—

Ransomed with blood, made ONE WITH THEE,

What lengths, breadths, heights, and depths appear!

Eternity, infinity,

Alone of grace the limits are!



WHY WILL YOU DIE?

(AN EXTRACT.)

AND now, reader—you, who know that you are not prepared for Eternity—you, who assume the derisive smile, act the stoic, or play the fool—you, who tell the preacher he labours in vain, that you are proof against his remonstrances and his appeals, that you are neither to be moved

nor melted, that you will abide the issue, that you will brave the peril ; we tremble, we shudder, we weep for you ; and, under a most distressing sense of the failure of our honest effort to arouse you from your dreadful lethargy, we turn to God, and pour forth our sorrow and our prayer—

“ My God ! I feel the mournful scene ;
My bowels yearn o’er dying men ;
And fain my pity would reclaim,
And snatch the firebrands from the flame.

“ But feeble my compassion proves,
And can but weep where most it loves :
Thine own all-saving arm employ,
And turn these drops of grief to joy.”

“ WHY WILL YOU DIE ?” It is true that you are tottering on the precipice, overhanging the fiery lake, but the arm of omnipotent love is outstretched to save you, and you are commanded to grasp it, to “*lay hold on eternal life.*” Again, we say—PAUSE A MOMENT !

There is one voice, if you would only hear it—there is one object, if you would only look at it—which would reverse the whole scene—dispel its darkness, and illumine your future destiny with everlasting glory. That object is Christ crucified ; that voice, the voice of His dying love. Look, then, to Calvary, and *there* behold Him, who laid aside His glory and clothed Himself with humanity, that, by His expiatory death, He might deliver us from the condemnation which we so justly deserve. By that death, infinite in its worth, not only has divine justice been satisfied, and the evil of Adam’s transgression met, but divine holiness has been so magnified and honoured by the judgment of sin in the Person of Christ, that God is more glorified in the salvation of the sinner, than if Adam had remained innocent or unfallen to the present day.

Oh, listen, then, to the voice that sounds from Calvary—

that tells you that such reparation for sin has been made to the divine majesty by Him who died, "the just for the unjust," that now the portals of heaven are wide open to every sinner that will accept salvation in the name of Jesus. How great and terrible, then, must be the pride and hardness of heart, that would turn its back on such stupendous grace !

Oh, dear reader, *believe in Jesus* ; accept Him as your Surety and your Saviour. The moment you do so, every charge of sin is remitted ; for the moment you believe in Jesus all the virtue and all the results of His accomplished redemption are yours. You have not to make yourself fit for glory ; His atoning blood makes you fit as soon as you believe God's testimony about its sufficiency to make you fit. *Believe in Jesus*, and immediately the momentous word "*Eternity*" will become to you a note of joy. *Believe in Jesus*, and ere long the bright day of eternity will burst in boundless blessings on your happy spirit. *Believe in Jesus*, and the holy companionship, honour, joys, and triumphs of eternity will be yours, all that is included in that wondrous expression, "ETERNAL LIFE !"



ETERNITY !

ETERNITY ! *Eternity !*
 How long art thou, *Eternity !*
 And yet to thee Time hastes away,
 Like as the war-horse to the fray ;
 Or, swift as couriers homeward go,
 Or ship to port, or shaft from bow.
 Ponder, O Man, ETERNITY !

Eternity ! *Eternity !*
 How long art thou, *Eternity !*
 For e'en as on a perfect sphere
 End nor beginning can appear,
 E'en so, Eternity, on thee
 Entrance nor exit can there be.
 Ponder, O Man, ETERNITY !

Eternity ! *Eternity !*
How long art thou, *Eternity !*
A circle infinite art thou,
Thy centre an eternal NOW :
NEVER, we name thy outer bound ;
For never end therein is found.
Ponder, O Man, ETERNITY !

Eternity ! *Eternity !*
How long art thou, *Eternity !*
How terrible art thou in woe !
How fair where joys for ever glow.
God's goodness sheddeth gladness *here*,
His justice *there* wakes bitter fear.
Ponder, O Man, ETERNITY !

Eternity ! *Eternity !*
How long art thou, *Eternity !*
They who lived poor and faithful, rest
With God, for ever rich and blest,
And love and praise the Highest Good,
In perfect bliss and gladsome mood.
Ponder, O Man, ETERNITY !

Eternity ! *Eternity !*
How long art thou, *Eternity !*
Who ponders oft on thee is wise !
All fleshly lusts he will despise,
The world finds place with him no more ;
The love of vain delights is o'er.
Ponder, O Man, ETERNITY !

Eternity ! *Eternity !*
How long art thou, *Eternity !*
Who marks thee well, would say to God,
Here judge, burn, smite me with the rod,
Here let me all thy chastening bear ;
For who can stand thy judgments *there* ?
Ponder, O Man, ETERNITY !

Eternity ! *Eternity !*
How long art thou, *Eternity !*
Lo ! I, ETERNITY, warn thee
O Man, that oft thou think on me,
The sinner's punishment and pain,
To them who love their God, rich gain,
PONDER, O MAN, ETERNITY.



CORRESPONDENCE.

1. "W.," Birkenhead. In Romans viii. 26, 27, we are taught that the Spirit maketh intercession for us. He it is who is the Author of every true and right desire in our hearts. He teaches us to pray to the Father, in the Name of Jesus. It is only *by* the Spirit that we can pray as we ought. As to the question of praying *to* the Holy Spirit, we do not think it intelligent. True, the Holy Ghost is God, and is to be viewed in His own distinct Personality; but still the New Testament teaches us that He prays *in* us, *to* the Father, *by* the Son. A person praying to the Holy Ghost can hardly see with clearness the Spirit's indwelling.

2. "F. T.," Hungerford. It must ever be the desire of the heart that loves Jesus to see Him as He is, and be with Him, and like Him for ever. Hence, the proper cry of an affectionate heart is, "Come, Lord Jesus." But, on the other hand, it is our privilege to have fellowship with Him in His long-suffering toward this poor world. "The long-suffering of our Lord is salvation." Blessed be His name, "he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter iii.) We do not think there is any difficulty in reconciling the two things. A loving wife may mourn the absence of her husband, and earnestly long for his return; but he is away preaching the gospel, and she may have such full fellowship with him in his work as to be quite willing that he should prolong his absence, if only a single soul should thereby be brought to Jesus. As to your difficulty about the expression "falling away," in 2 Thessalonians ii. it arises, we judge, from your not seeing the distinction between the Lord's coming to receive His people, and His coming to judge the world, —between His coming as the Bridegroom, and His coming as the Judge. "The day of the Lord" refers to the latter; and, ere that day comes, there will be

a great apostasy or falling away, and "the man of sin will be revealed." It is most needful to understand this distinction. The proper hope of the believer is the coming of the Lord, which may be actualized at any moment; but when the Church has gone to be with her Lord, the man of sin shall be revealed, "whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." This is far too weighty and extensive a subject to be handled in our limited space; but you might study prayerfully 1 Thessalonians iv. 13—v. 10 compared with 2 Thessalonians ii. 12.

3. "E. S.," London. Your MS. has come to hand. It contains some very sweet and true thoughts; but, as a whole, it would not suit our pages. May the Lord bless you, and make you a blessing!

4. "A. M.," Pimlico. If you can lay your hand on volume iv. of "Things New and Old," you will find, page 25, a paper on Hebrews vi. 1—10, which will help you. It may also be useful to your young friend to remember that even though he could not explain this passage of scripture, yet it is impossible that the word of God can ever contradict itself. Now, we read in John x. that Christ's sheep can never perish. We read in Romans viii. that nothing can separate us from the love of God. Hence, whatever Hebrews vi. 4—6 means, it cannot possibly contradict John x. or Romans viii. But the fact is that not one of the expressions in Hebrews vi. 1, 2 rises to the height of regeneration, or sets forth any special feature of Christianity as distinct from Judaism. Passages innumerable of the New Testament, declare that the believer possesses "everlasting life." How can *everlasting* life ever be lost? Impossible. If the believer's life could be lost, it should be termed "temporary or conditional," not "everlasting life." However, you might get your friend to read the paper above referred to. It is from the pen of a dear servant of Christ, now with his Lord, once a Wesleyan minister.

5. "H. A. Unita." We believe the truth of the eternal Sonship of Christ is as distinctly taught in scripture as the truth of the Trinity. The fact that such an expression does not occur, no more militates against the one truth than it does against the other. If the Son is God, He must be eternal. "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." (Heb. i. 8.) It seems to us that the Deity and Eternity of the Son are so indissolubly linked together that whoso denies the one denies the other likewise. May God give us all subjection to Scripture!

6. "J. B.," Manchester. We cannot recall the substance of the letter to which you refer. Indeed we have no remembrance whatever of having received it.

7. "J. M. H.," Edinburgh. We cannot understand how any one calling himself a Christian could presume to speak, as you describe, of the holy and honourable institution of marriage. Neither can we understand why you should have occasion to seek a human opinion on the point, with Hebrews xiii. 4 shining before you, on the one hand; and 1 Timothy iv. 1—4 on the other. Oh! when will people learn to open their Bible and bow down to its holy authority, in all things? We have a most perfect abhorrence of that mock spirituality, sanctimoniousness, and transcendentalism so apparent in the remarks to which you call our attention. To us it seems to be simply holiness in the flesh, which we know is one of Satan's crafty wiles. Marriage was instituted by the Lord God, in the garden of Eden. It was sanctioned by the presence of Christ, in Cana of Galilee. It is pronounced honourable by the Holy Ghost in Hebrews xiii. To forbid it is said to be a doctrine of devils, in 1 Timothy iv. This is quite sufficient for us, let pious sentimentalists and hyper-spiritualists say what they will.

8. "J. F.," Stowmarket. Your MS. has come safely to hand.

9. "H. M. A. C. K." You have only to cast yourself,

in true contrition and self-judgment, on the changeless love of God. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i.) "He restoreth my soul, and leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." Let nothing shake your confidence in the love of God, the work of Christ, or the record of the Holy Ghost.

10. "A Learner," Berkely. John xii. 32 refers distinctly to the death of Christ. Is this not plain from verse 33? "This he said signifying what death he should die." The death of Christ is the ground on which all are gathered to Him. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and *die*, it abideth alone."

11. "R. A. W.," Bristol. In Acts vii. 59 we have Stephen addressing prayer to the Lord Jesus. We cannot see how any one could object to our doing the same. We must beware of being hyper-critical.

12. "J. C.," Near Stonehouse. The question you propose is one for your own conscience to weigh in the light of scripture. It could be of no real use to you for us to say that we could not for worlds occupy such a position, or stand in such a relationship as you describe; inasmuch as each one must act according to his light. We believe the servant of Christ ought to stand perfectly free from human influence. He should have to do *only* with His Lord, both as to his work and as to his support. But in all these things, the rule must ever be, "According to your faith." It is none of our business to judge others; each one must stand or fall to his own Master.

13. "A Young Christian." Be much in prayer for deliverance from this sore temptation. You will also find it healthful to be continually occupied with positive good. This is a good preservative against evil thoughts. May the Lord grant you full deliverance from this grievous besetment!

Several communications stand over.

THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION.

(2 CORINTHIANS v. 18—21.)

THE fifth chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians takes rank amongst the very weightiest sections of inspiration. Its closing lines contain the special thesis of the following pages; but, ere we proceed to handle it, we must call the reader's attention to some most interesting and important points presented in the course of the chapter.

And, first of all, let us dwell, for a moment, on the opening sentence, "*We know.*" In it we have the language of christian certainty. It does not say, "*We hope.*" Still less does it say, "*We fear,*" or "*We doubt.*" No; such language would not express that unclouded certainty and calm assurance which it is the privilege of the very feeblest child of God to possess. And yet, alas! how few, even of the children of God, enjoy this blessed certainty—this calm assurance! Many there are who look upon it as the height of presumption to say, "*We know.*" They seem to think that doubts and fears argue a proper condition of soul—that it is impossible for any one to be sure—that the most we can expect is to cherish a vague hope of reaching heaven when we die.

Now, it must be admitted that if we ourselves had aught to do with the ground of certainty or assurance, then it would indeed be the very height of folly to think of being sure; then, assuredly, our hope would be a very vague one. But, thanks be to God, it is not so. We have nothing whatever to do with the ground of our certainty; it lies entirely outside of ourselves, and must be sought only and altogether in the eternal word of God. This renders it so blessedly simple. It makes the whole question hinge upon the truth of God's word. Why am I sure? Because God's word is true. A shadow of uncertainty or misgiving on my part would argue a want of authority or security in the word of God. It really comes to this. Christian

certainty rests on the faithfulness of God. Before you can shake the former, you must shake the latter.

We can understand this simple principle by our dealings with one another. If my fellow man makes a statement to me, and I express the smallest doubt or misgiving, or if I feel it, without even expressing it, I am calling in question his truthfulness or credibility. If he is a faithful, competent authority, I have no business to entertain a single doubt. My certainty is linked with his credibility. If he is a competent authority, I may enjoy perfect repose as to the matter concerning which he has spoken. Now, we all know what it is to receive in the most unqualified way, the testimony of man, and to repose with calmness therein. It is not a question of feeling, but of receiving, without a single question, a plain statement, and resting on the authority of a competent witness. Well, then, as we have it in the First Epistle of John, "If we receive the testimony of man, the testimony of God is greater." So also our Lord said to the men of His time, "If I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?" (John viii.) He appeals to the truth of what He says, as the reason why, or the ground on which He expected to be believed.

This, christian reader, is a very weighty principle, and one which demands special attention on the part of all anxious enquirers, as also on the part of all who undertake to deal with such. There is a strong and constant tendency to look *within* for the ground of assurance—to build upon certain feelings, experiences, and exercises, either past or present—to look back at some special process through which we have passed, or to look in at certain impressions or convictions of our own minds, and to find in these the ground of our confidence—the warrant for our faith. This will never do. It is impossible to find settled peace or calm repose in this way. Feelings, however true and real, change and pass away. Experiences however genuine, may prove defective. Impressions and

convictions may prove utterly false. None of these things therefore can form a solid ground of christian certainty. This latter must be sought and found in God's word alone. It is not in feelings—not in experiences—not in impressions or convictions—not in reasonings—not in human traditions or doctrines, but simply in the unchangeable, eternal word of the living God. That word which is settled for ever in heaven, and which God has magnified above all His Name, can alone impart peace to the mind and stability to the soul.

True, it is only by the gracious ministry of the Holy Ghost, that we can properly grasp, and ever hold fast the word of God; but still it is His word, and that word *alone*, that forms the ground of christian certainty, and the true basis and authority for the Christian in the entire range of practical life and action. We cannot be too simple as to this. We can only adopt the opening sentence of our chapter, and say, "We know," when we take God's word as the all-sufficient ground of our personal confidence. It will not do to be, in anywise, propped up by human authority. Thousands of the people of God have been made to taste the bitterness of leaning upon the commandments and doctrines of men. It is sure to end in disappointment and confusion, sooner or later. The edifice which is built upon the sand of human authority must fall at some time or other; whereas that which is founded on the rock of God's eternal truth shall stand for ever. God's word imparts its own stability to the soul that leans upon it. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." Is. xxviii. 16.

As is the foundation, so is the faith that builds thereon. Hence the solemn importance of seeking to lead souls to build *only* upon God's precious word. Look at the anxiety of the apostle Paul, in reference to this matter.

Hear what he says to the Corinthians who were in such danger of being led away by human headship and human authority. "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you *the testimony of God*. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." 1 Cor. ii. 1—5.

Here is a grand model for all preachers and teachers. Paul declared the "testimony of God," nothing more, nothing less, nothing different. And not only so, but he delivered that testimony in such a way as to connect the souls of his hearers immediately with the living God. Paul did not want the Corinthians to lean upon him; nay, he "trembled" lest they should be tempted to do so. He would have done them a grievous wrong had he, in any wise, come in between their souls and the true source of all authority—the true foundation of confidence and peace. Had he led them to build upon himself, he would have robbed them of God, and this would have been a wrong indeed. No marvel therefore that he was among them "in fear and in much trembling." They were evidently very much prone to set up and follow after human leaders, and thus miss the solid reality of personal communion with, and dependence upon, the living God. Hence the jealous care of the apostle in confining himself to the testimony of God; in delivering unto them *only* that which he had received of the Lord (see 1 Cor. xi. 23; xv. 3.); lest the pure water should suffer in its passage from its source in God to the souls of the Corinthians—lest he should, in the smallest degree, impart the colour of his own thoughts to the precious truth of God.

We see the same thing in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians. "For this cause also," says the faithful servant of Christ, "thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it *not as the word of men*, but, *as it is in truth, the word of God*, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." (Chap. ii. 13.) Had the apostle been thinking of himself, had he been seeking his own things, he would have been glad to obtain influence over the Thessalonians, by linking them on to himself, and leading them to lean upon him. But no; he rejoices in seeing them in living connection—in direct and realized association, with God Himself. This is always the effect of true ministry, as it is ever the object of the true minister. Unless the soul be livingly linked with God, there is really nothing done. If it be merely following men—receiving what they say, because they say it—an attachment to certain preachers or teachers because of something in their style and manner; or because they seem to be very holy, very separated, or very devoted—all this will come to nought. Those human links will soon be snapped asunder. The faith that stands, in any measure, in the wisdom of men will prove hollow and worthless. Nothing will prove permanent—nothing will endure, but that faith which rests on the testimony and in the power of the only true God.

Christian reader, we earnestly invite your attention to this point. We do indeed feel its importance at the present moment. The enemy is seeking diligently to lead souls away from God, away from Christ, away from the Holy Scriptures. He is seeking to get them to build on something short of *the truth*. He does not care what it is, provided it is not Christ. It may be reason, tradition, religiousness, a human priesthood, fleshly pietism, holiness in the flesh, sectarianism, morality, good works, services so called, human influence, patronage, philanthropy; anything short of Christ, short of God's word, short of a lively, personal, direct faith in the living God Himself.

Now, it is the sense of this pressing home upon the heart that leads us to urge with earnestness upon the reader the necessity of being thoroughly clear as to the ground on which he is, at this moment, standing. We want him to be able to say, in the face of all around him, "*I know.*" Nothing less than this will stand. It will not do to say, "*I hope.*" No; there must be certainty. There must be the ability to say, "We know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, *we have* a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." This is the language of faith—the language of a Christian. All is calm, clear, and sure, because all is of God. There may be an "if" with regard to "the earthly house." It may be dissolved, it may crumble into dust. All that belongs to this scene may bear the stamp of death; it may change and pass away, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever, and the faith that grasps and rests upon that word partakes of its eternal stability. It enables one to say, "*I know that I have.*" Nought but faith can say this. Reason can only say, "I doubt;" superstition, "I fear;" only faith can say, "I know and am sure."

An infidel teacher once said to a dying woman, whom he had indoctrinated with his infidel notions, "Hold fast, Mary." What was her reply? "I can't hold fast, for you have never given me anything to hold by." Cutting rebuke! He had taught the poor woman to doubt; but he had given her nothing to believe; and then when flesh and heart were failing, when earthly scenes were passing away, and the dread realities of eternity were crowding in upon her soul's vision, infidelity altogether failed her; its wretched cobwebs could afford no refuge, no covering, in view of death and judgment. How different the condition of the believer—of the one who, in all simplicity of heart and humility of mind, takes his stand on the solid rock of Holy Scripture! Such an one can calmly say, "*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 me at that day; and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing." 2 Tim. iv. 6—8.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)



THE CITIES OF REFUGE.

(NUMBERS XXXV.)

As Israel lay encamped on the further side of Jordan, in the plains of Moab by Jericho, with the land of their inheritance before their eyes, Moses, by the command of God, spake to them of cities of refuge which should be provided for the manslayer who killed another unawares; and laid down regulations concerning them. This was Jehovah's merciful provision beforehand for all who should be in that land, for the children of Israel who inherited it, for the stranger who might inhabit it, and for the sojourner who might chance to be passing through it. (Ver. 15.) Unlike the generality of human laws, which are designed to meet cases similar to some which have arisen, for which no provision had been made, the laws of Jehovah, for the guidance of His people, were all drawn up and made known before the people had crossed the Jordan, and entered on their inheritance. And so in this case; before the circumstances under which this law could take effect had arisen, Moses promulgated it, that the first manslayer after the tribes received their inheritance should find a city of refuge ready to receive him. And however many centuries might roll by, this law, as long as they dwelt in their land, never grew obsolete or out of date. It needed not, like the laws of our land, frequent amendments, for, like that of the Medes and Persians, it admitted of no change. It was as needed and

as suitable in the days of David or Solomon as it was in the days of Joshua.

The cities, six in number, were so situated, three on the east and three on the west of Jordan, that, wherever the accident might happen, a refuge could be found within reasonable distance. Their names were made known and their locality described, that none should be in uncertainty about them or their position; for uncertainty at such a time might cost a man his life. To one of these cities must the manslayer flee. He could not choose for himself where he would go. They were chosen for him. He had to accept the choice, and make all the haste he could to the nearest at hand. For the avenger of blood might be on his track. If he loitered by the way, or hesitated about his road, the avenger of blood might come up to him. The city was his only sure refuge. The law did not admit of his contending with the avenger for his life. He was not to fight for his life, but to escape for it. Once within the city walls, he was safe; a few yards, or even a foot, would make all the difference. He must be inside to be safe. Then, if conscious he had killed his neighbour unawares, or when acquitted of murder by the verdict of the elders of the city, he could meet his pursuer without fear. There the pursuer dare not touch the manslayer, unless the elders of the city allowed it. Outside the city, if he met him, he could kill him and none could interfere to prevent it. Inside the city, if he had attempted to take his life, he would have broken one of God's laws. Outside, if any had attempted to arrest the course of vengeance, they would have acted contrary to the will of Jehovah.

These regulations were for all in the land, whether inhabitants or foreigners. God thought of all. For anyone might kill his neighbour unawares. All therefore, without distinction of religion or descent, were to share in the benefit of this humane enactment. Life was a sacred thing, not to be taken without due inquisition. An accident

by which a man lost his life did not entail death on the one who had killed him. Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe—such was the law. Perfect justice was to be administered, but not life for life unless murder had been committed.

But observe *three* things these cities were not.

First, they were not a shelter from judgment. The manslayer had to state his cause before the elders of the city, who must adjudicate on it. Josh. xx. 4.

Secondly, they were not a refuge from condemnation. To one guilty of murder they afforded no hiding place. The murderer might fly to one of them, but the law relating to these cities afforded him no hope that he could live. Two witnesses were needful to establish his guilt; but that once established, the elders of the city could not screen him from his just doom. "Blood it defileth the land," was the word of God. "Guilty of death, he shall surely be put to death," was the plain announcement of the Lord by the hand of Moses. The man who deserved to die was beyond the reach of human protection.

Thirdly, they were not the manslayer's home, and never could be the place of his inheritance. Chosen from the cities of the tribe of Levi, they were the inheritance of that tribe, and none of another tribe could share in it with them. The manslayer would feel this. His home, his inheritance was elsewhere. All the days of his residence there he was but a sojourner, an exile, and a prisoner; such was his condition. If his heart yearned after the place of his birth, he could not revisit it till the death of the high priest. The elders of the city could give him no safe conduct or pass to visit, even for a limited time, his kindred and his home. Once he overstepped the limits of the city, his life was in danger from the avenger of blood. How sacred was life in God's eyes! If taken unawares, the man who took it must keenly feel what he had done by perhaps many years of

absence from his home. Yet sacred was his life in God's eyes, for He had provided him a shelter till he could return to the land of his possession; a perfect shelter it was, but that was all. He was there preserved as one who deserved not to die, but as one who had lost for a time the enjoyment, the comfort, the freedom of his home.

For any one then to find an asylum in these cities he must have a title to life. If his title was forfeited he must die. An indefeasible title to life, and that alone, could give him peace in the prospect of the judicial enquiry to take place. With that he could fearlessly present himself before the tribunal, and look his accuser in the face. Conscious that there was no cause of death in him, he could rest assured of the result. But he must have that title to life before he stood at the bar of judgment, ere he could hope for an acquittal. If he had lost it by the deed of murder, none could restore it to him. The elders of the city, however well disposed towards him, could here afford him no assistance. No intervention of his friends or relatives could provide that which he lacked, and which was needful for his continuance on earth. If his life was forfeited, he must die.

Important as the possession of such a title was to the manslayer, is it not equally important to all? What then, we would ask, is the title to life of any one who reads these lines? If we speak of the manslayer in Israel, we speak of a title to life on earth; if of the readers of these lines, of life for evermore. Have all our readers a title to live for ever? Does such a question seem strange to any? It can only be strange to such as know not what God's word has declared. There is a title to life everlasting; but that title is bestowed, not earned; derived, not inherent. The manslayer's title to life on earth was inherent. He had it as a creature of God, but he had to defend it in God's appointed way, that the avenger of blood should not deprive him of it. Our title to life everlasting is bestowed. We have not to

defend it, but to see that we possess it; once possessed, none can take it away, it is everlasting. But there is great need to make sure that we have received it, for "God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." This is far more terrible than the wrath of the avenger of blood. He was a man; he might kill the body, and there his power ended. God's wrath can reach the soul. Through inadvertence or disinclination the avenger of blood might relax his pursuit. God's wrath will surely take effect on all who shall not have been sheltered from it. For if it be revealed against all ungodliness of men, another scripture declares all are liable by nature to it, "For all have sinned." "There is none righteous, no, not one." (Rom. iii.) The sinner then, unless a refuge be provided him from this wrath, must assuredly be overtaken by it, and for ever perish. The murderer in the land of Israel must die. The sinner must suffer death, the second death. Rev. xx. 14, 15.

A refuge then from God's wrath is needed, but not such a refuge as God provided for the manslayer. A refuge for an innocent man will not suit us, for "there is no man that sinneth not." (1 Kings viii. 46.) A shelter from vengeance for one who deserves not to die will not meet the case, for "he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." An innocent man could meet the judgment, but a guilty one cannot; David, a man after God's own heart, was so convinced of this that he cried out, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." (Ps. cxliii. 2.) And again, "If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" (Ps. cxxx. 3.) Condemnation must follow judgment where the one to be tried is a sinner. What is needed therefore is a security from condemnation, and a shelter from judgment. This the sinner can find, for God has already provided it. As the manslayer had the city ready to receive him, the sinner has this

place of refuge open to run into. This refuge is in Christ. "There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." (Rom. viii. 1.) As the names and localities of the cities of refuge were published that all might know which they were, and where they were; so the refuge God has provided for the sinner has been in like manner announced. God's word told of the former, God's word tells us of the latter. The manslayer could reckon on what that word said, and the description of the cities it contained. Shall the sinner not equally reckon on what that word says to him now? "*In Christ Jesus there is now no condemnation.*" Then the guilty one, the sin-convinced soul, can find safety there. *No condemnation!* A sweeping statement, which should most effectually set the heart at rest and that for ever. Now at this present time, "There is *now* no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." Does conscience whisper of past sins? does the enemy recall many an act of disobedience, many a word unadvisedly spoken, many an unholy thought or angry feeling concealed perhaps from outward eyes? To all the sinner can oppose this word of God. The manslayer had to await the verdict of the elders of the city after he entered it. The sinner can know beforehand, can know now, the full deliverance God will give him when *in Christ Jesus*.

Here, then, is the next question, Can the sinner avail himself of this refuge? The Lord Jesus, the refuge, has Himself given a reply in John v. "Verily, verily I say unto you, He that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation [or judgment]; but is passed from death unto life." Clear and simple is the testimony conveyed in these words. There is an escape from judgment. "Shall not come into condemnation [or, as in the original, judgment]." Then there can be no condemnation, for condemnation succeeds judgment. It is not the being acquitted after trial, but the being kept from trial for life at all. The manslayer must

be tried. The sinner is promised he shall not be tried, if he hears the word of Christ, and believes Him that sent Him, i.e., the Father. And the sinner does shew he believes the Father when he hears and accepts the Son. For "he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record which God gave of his Son." (1 John v. 10.) No judgment, no condemnation, to those in Christ Jesus. He shelters the sinner from both, not by the exercise of power as of a strong man who refuses to let judgment have its course, but by having bent to it, and borne Himself the punishment the sinner deserved. In Him who bore "our sins in his own body on the tree" the sinner can hide. In Him risen from the dead is found an everlasting shelter. It is in a risen Christ, who has fully glorified God, who lives to die no more, over whom death has no dominion, that this refuge is found. This is not the result of years of effort. It is not the happy experience which the fathers in Christ may hope some day to enjoy. It is not reached by experience. It is reached by faith, being the present position of all who believe in Him. "We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ." 1 John v. 20.

And now, what the manslayer never could feel, that the sinner saved by grace in Christ can. The manslayer could never feel at home in the city. He was only a sojourner till the death of the high priest. His inheritance was elsewhere. But in Christ we have obtained an inheritance, in Him we are blessed as we never were or could be before. (Eph. 1.) Where our refuge is there is our inheritance, "an inheritance, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." How welcome to the manslayer must his city of refuge have been! How far more welcome should be the shelter provided for the sinner in Christ!



MEDITATIONS ON THE CHRISTIAN'S STANDING AND STATE.

(EPHESIANS I. 15—23; III. 14—21.)

VERSE 4. *“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”* This verse sets before us the blessings of God's call as connected with the divine nature. The fifth, as connected with relationship. These are the two heads of blessing—nature and relationship. They are according to God, as God; and according to the Father, as the Father.

The fourth verse refers to the first. God could not have it otherwise. If we are to be brought into His presence in heaven, we must be there like Himself. Nothing less could satisfy God. He is holy, blameless, and love; and He has chosen us in Christ to be like Himself as to these moral qualities. As Father (ver. 5), He has predestinated us to the blessed intimacies and privileges of a positive relationship. Both characters of blessing—nature and sonship, are united in every Christian; blessed be the God of all grace! But, for the present moment, O my soul, dwell a little on the first. It claims thy closest study. Wouldst thou be without a perfect acquaintance with that which God has chosen thee to be? Thy new nature is thyself, the old will soon drop off. Thy divine nature is thy capacity for the enjoyment of heaven, and all that is to be found there. *Now*, in the capacities of this nature, we joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and have fellowship with the Father and the Son by the Holy Ghost. Better than this, we may truly say, can never be found, even in heaven itself; but we shall know it better and enjoy it more, when all hindrances are removed.

It is God Himself that has chosen us in Christ to be holy and without blame before Him in love. The thought

—the choice—the love, are His own. His be all the praise and glory. Man had no voice in this matter. It was before the foundation of the world. All is according to God, and worthy of Himself. It is the necessity of His nature and character, to have those that are near Him, like Himself. It must be so. The principle is universal. The man of letters chooses for his companions literary men ; and we all choose to have with us and around us, those that are suitable to our nature and ways. God acts upon this principle in the fourth verse. He is holy and blameless and love, and those that are to 'be with Him for ever must be suitable to Him. But on the other hand, it is equally the necessity of His being, to exclude all evil from His presence. Far, far from the God of holiness must all evil be removed. Solemn thought, when we think of many around us. But the day will come, when not only the evil doer, but all evil shall be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. xxi. 8), all must be banished from the presence of God. He could not suffer the least stain of sin, in the most distant part of His dominions, far less on those who are near Him. The following lines are sweet to the renewed mind :

“ All taint of sin shall be removed,
 All evil done away :
 And I shall dwell with God's beloved,
 Through God's eternal day.”

Oh ! that the unbelieving, unpardoned, uncleansed sinner would think of this *now*. *Then*, it will be too late. Now the fountain is open for sin and for uncleanness, and whosoever will may come and wash and be clean. “I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.” Hear, hear, O sinner, hear these gracious words ! They are placed by the very side of that awful verse about the lake of fire. God has thus placed, as it were, side by side, the fountain of living waters, and the

lake of fire. And mark, He says, "I will *give* unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life *freely*"—*gratis*. It is all of grace—free grace. But those who despise the open fountain of living waters, must be cast, with all their evil, into the lake of fire. Awful, solemn warning! Oh! what shall I say unto thee, my fellow sinner? Do stoop, I beseech thee, and drink, and live for ever. The waters are free—free to the poorest—free to the vilest—free to all—free to thee. Think of the difference between the lake of fire and the fountain of living waters. Carefully read Revelation xxi. 6, 8.

The thought of banishment from God in the forsaken place is awful—it is overwhelming. To be banished from God and Christ, from all the good and the holy, from all the pure and the happy, and to be doomed to dwell with all evil, and with all evil doers, and that for ever, is more than we can bear to think of now. Oh! that word—that terrible word, "*forsaken*." Who can bear to be forsaken? It brought from the heart of the lowly Jesus, that mournful and pathetic cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" In richest love and grace, He took that place for us, that we might never have to take it for ourselves; but sin, unrepented of and unpardoned, must take the sinner there. How awful the thought! To be *forsaken* of God and all His goodness—*forsaken* of Jesus and His bleeding love—*forsaken* of the Holy Spirit and all His strivings—*forsaken* of all that can sympathize and love; the poor, desolate, friendless soul must sink into utter despair. May all, whose hearts assure them that they are not prepared for the presence of God, cease from rest until they are. May they never rest until they come to Jesus, and find rest in Him. Matchless is the love that says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." It is His blood, and His blood alone, that cleanseth us from all sin. But to all who trust in Him He plainly says, "He that is washed needeth not save

to wash his feet, but *is clean every whit.*" Once washed in the blood of Jesus, we are clean, "*clean every whit,*" and that for ever. The blood can never lose its power; only the daily defilements need to be washed away, as with the basin and towel. See John xiii. We now return to our beautiful fourth verse. We have only left "the ninety and nine" for a little, to look after a lost one in the desert. May the Good Shepherd lay him on His shoulder!

God is light, and God is love; and we are called to be like Him, and to enjoy Him as such. This is God's calling; but we are the called—chosen in Christ, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. This is the description of God's own character, though it is here given as the character of His children. Surely this is grace in its highest form. It breathes a well-pleased and delighting love. Do think of this, O my soul. Hurry not over the wondrous thought. This is it: when God would tell us what He is Himself, He describes what His children are—a son is the same nature as his father. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." True, He is Love; but He is also Light; and He dwells in the pure unsullied light of His own absolute Deity. And there He has called us and fitted us to be, in the fitness and acceptance of the risen and exalted Man. This is what God Himself has made us in Christ; for ever blessed be His name!

But pray, tell me this: How can Christians be in the presence of God as *holy, blameless, and love*; seeing there is so much in us that is the opposite of all this? This is a point of much importance, and of great practical difficulty with many souls. But the answer is: the apostle is speaking of what we are *in Christ*; not of what we are, or have been, in ourselves. Our old nature is not referred to here—it is passed by unnoticed. Of course the old nature is in us, and no better than it ever was, and we must take care and not let it shew itself. But we are chosen and called in Christ—He is our life; and we are, before God, in

the Beloved One. This is the explanation, and in this the heart finds rest—Christ is *holy* in His character—*blameless* in His ways—*love* in His nature. And we are in God's sight as He is. If God is to find pleasure in His children, they must be like Himself. Christ is the object of God's unqualified delight, and so will we, by and by. This is the hope of His calling. Oh! deep, divine, ineffable, unutterable, unfailing spring of happiness now—of unmingled blessedness hereafter! “We know that, when he shall appear, we *shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.*” Therefore God has chosen us in Christ, “that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.” We are brought thus into His presence and His love is satisfied. Oh! most wondrous, precious truth! All is done, Christ is risen and glorified. “In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” It is only there that perfect blessedness can be found. With what a hope the calling of God fills the heart! His name alone have all the praise.

But this is only the bright side of the answer to the question. The state, or practical ways of the saints, is not always a true reflection of their standing and privileges in Christ. We come far short of what becomes the children of God in many things. How feebly we answer to His love; and how many things we allow that are contrary to Him. Whence come pride, vanity, and worldliness? we may ask. Certainly not from the divine nature. These, and all other evil things, flow not from our new, but from our old nature. Although our standing is in Christ, the flesh is in us, and ought to be mortified. In it there is no good thing. How often we have reason to be ashamed and humbled on account of our many faults. But ere long we shall have done with the flesh entirely, and be perfectly holy and without blame before God in love. He has chosen us to this end, and will in due time accomplish it. This is our sure hope. But in the meantime, may we

seek to suppress our old nature and watch against all its tendencies. We know that we are in Christ now, and have His life in us, notwithstanding all our failures. May we have grace to feed on Him day by day and hour by hour that we may be strengthened to do His will.

"Though our nature's fall in Adam
Seemed to shut us out from God,
Thus it was His counsel brought us
Nearer still, through Jesu's blood ;
For in Him we found redemption,
Grace and glory in the Son,
O the height and depth of mercy !
'Christ and we through grace are one.'"



"GOD IN CHRIST."

AN, God is other than we think :
His ways are far above—
Far beyond reason's height, and reached
Only by childlike love.

The look, the fashion of God's ways,
Love's life-long study are—
It can be bold, and guess, and act,
Where reason would not dare.

It has a prudence of its own,
Its step is firm and free,
Yet there is cautious silence too,
In its simplicity.

Workman of God, O lose not heart,
But learn what God is like ;
And in the darkest battle-field
Thou shalt know where to strike.

O blest is he to whom is given
The instinct that can tell
That God is on the field, when He
Is most invisible.

And blest is he who can divine
Where real right doth lie,
And dares to take the side that seems
Wrong to man's blindfold eye.

O learn to scorn the praise of men,
O learn to lose with God,
For Jesus won the world through shame,
And beck'ns thee on His road.

God's glory is a wondrous thing,
Most strange in all its ways,
And of all things on earth least like
What men agree to praise.

As He can endless glory weave
From time's misjudging shame,
In His own world He is content
To play a losing game.

Muse on His justice, downcast soul,
Muse and take better heart ;
Back, with thy Captain, to the field !
God shall soon crown thy part.

His justice is a bed where we
Our anxious hearts may lay,
And, weary with ourselves, may sleep
Our discontent away.

For right is right, since God is God,
And right the day must win ;
To doubt, would be disloyalty,
To falter, would be sin.



CORRESPONDENCE.

14. "L. P.," Queen's County. 1 Peter ii. 25 refers primarily to Jewish Christians, as you may see by the opening address of the epistle. This will solve your difficulty as to the expression, "returned."

15. "C. T.," R. H. A. Dorchester. We have repeatedly gone into the question of sisters teaching and preaching. (See "Nine Years' Answers to Correspondents.") We believe it is plainly opposed to scripture for a woman to speak in the Church, or to teach, or, in any way, to usurp authority over the man. But if there be a meeting of a private, social character, there is, in our judgment, an opening for the free communication of thought, provided always that the woman keep the place assigned her by the voice of nature and the word of God.

16. "S. L." The word rendered "Transformed," in Romans xii. 2 occurs in the following passages, namely, Matthew xvii. 2; "He was *transfigured* before them. Mark ix. 2, where we have the same words. 2 Cor. iii. 18; "We all *are changed* into the same image." We believe the expression sets forth the truth of the believer's likeness to Christ—the daily putting off the old man, laying aside the things of nature and of earth, and putting on the new man. We are not to be conformed to this world, but to be livingly, practically transformed by the renewing of the mind, through the power of the Holy Ghost, who unfolds Christ to our souls and causes us to grow into His image. May we know much more of this!

17. "E. W.," Margate. As to the question of singing at funerals, it must entirely depend upon our spiritual power at the time. A person may be so bowed down with sorrow as to be wholly unable to sing; but you could not make such an one a model for others, or hinder their singing, on the ground of sympathy with him. We believe nothing can be more magnificent, more morally grand, than

a hymn of praise, a song of triumph, chanted amid the very dust of death. To hear a congregation of saints singing at the grave of a brother or sister, is a positive triumph over the enemy. But if any one be so crushed under the sorrow as to be unable to sing, we feel assured the loving tender heart of Jesus feels the sorrow and puts the tears into His bottle. The one who wept and groaned at the grave of Lazarus would not, we feel persuaded, rebuke the tears and groans of a crushed and desolate heart.

18. "E. E. T.," London. Thanks for Dr. Hawker's lines. They are indeed most precious.

19. "R. B.," London. We can only refer you to our opening article in the May number of "Things New and Old" for an answer to your question. When you have read that, we shall be glad to hear from you.

20. "W. R. H.," Douglas. We may perhaps see it right to publish a new edition of the tract you name.

21. "H. M.," 17th Lancers; and "J. B.," Aldershot. You both write to us respecting John xvii. 4. We are at a loss to see how this passage can have presented any difficulty. Our blessed Lord speaks, in this marvellous chapter, as one who had finished His work, done the will of God, and glorified the Father on this earth. He stands, in spirit, at the close of His earthly career, and is about to take His departure to heaven. Historically, He had to pass through the circumstances of death, after the scene presented in this seventeenth chapter. All this seems perfectly simple.

22. "Ellen E.," London. Your letter has come to hand. May God grant you the desire of your heart, and fill you with the joy of His full salvation. The work is finished. Only give Jesus the confidence of your heart, and then peace like an even river will flow into your precious soul. May the Lord bless you!

23. "E. H.," Peckham. John vi. 53, 54, teaches the indispensable necessity of feeding upon the death of Christ

in order to spiritual life. There is no life in any other way. Under the law, it was death to eat blood. Under the gospel there is no life without it. We live by death. Precious mystery!

24. "C. C.," Witney. Your letter has interested us exceedingly; but you have not given us your address. We observe on the envelope the postmark "Witney;" but you say in your P.S. you "expect to be home on Monday." We can only say, in all sincerity, may the Lord, whom you desire to follow, graciously sustain you, and open the way for you! You have only to go on with Him, acting up to the light which He gives you, and leaving all results with your Lord. He will take care of you.

25. "A. H. M.," Milwaukie, Wisconsin. Accept our sincere thanks for your truly interesting and encouraging letter. Such tidings are like cold water to a thirsty soul. May God bless you, and all those associated with you! Go on, beloved brother, in the name of the Lord. Keep your eye fixed on Him. He will never fail a trusting heart. To Him we do, most earnestly, commend you.

26. "W. K.," Southwark. Your kind and interesting letter has come to hand, for which accept our thanks.

27. "Louisa A. G.," London. The book of Esther is profoundly interesting. It fills a very special place in the canon of Inspiration. We believe its object is to set forth the providential actings of God on behalf of Israel, during the entire period in which He cannot publicly own them as His. You will remark that the name of God does not once occur in this book; but His finger is stamped on everything. He is behind the scenes, watching everything for His beloved people. You have a most marvellous chain of circumstances, every link of which exhibits the hand and the heart of Israel's God, though He does not shew Himself, and cannot own Israel as His. We believe the book of Esther has a special voice for the present moment. God is acting for His people. He is guiding, by His provi-

dence, the vast machine of this world's politics, with a view to the ultimate blessing and exaltation of His people Israel.

28. "H. M.," Brentford. We believe it is to God our Father we have to confess our sins. This must be evident if you will read 1 John i. 5—10. We do not see any difficulty in the matter. It is true we are in relationship with God—our sins are all forgiven—our guilt atoned for—but yet, we are liable to commit sin; and, when we do so, there must be confession ere our communion with God can be restored. This confession and its results are founded upon the atoning work and advocacy of our Lord Jesus Christ. If my child does wrong, he does not cease to be my child; but I cannot allow him to enjoy happy intercourse with me until he fully confesses the wrong. Accept our thanks for your kind and interesting letter.

29. "J. C.," Bradford. We believe the expressions to which you refer, in 2 Thessalonians i. 10 sets forth two distinct aspects of the same people. As "saints"—those whom God has set apart to Himself—He will be glorified in us. As "them that believe," He will be admired in us. God's glory will shine out in His sanctified ones—His admirable work and ways will be set forth in His believing ones.

30. "J. H.," London. Your lines have come to hand.

31. "H. G. S.," London. The special application of Ezekiel xxxiv. is evidently to the shepherds of Israel, though surely it conveys a solemn and needed lesson to all who undertake the work of a pastor in the midst of God's people.

32. "B. M.," T. D. We do not see how you could have acted otherwise. The case is a very sad one indeed; but we do not think you need to feel in any wise burdened in conscience, however deeply your heart may feel the sorrow. May God have mercy upon the poor wanderer and bring him to the feet of Jesus!

THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION.

(PART II.)

It is more than probable that some may find it difficult to reconcile the calm certainty expressed in the first verse of our chapter (2 Cor. v.) with the groan of verse 2. But the difficulty will vanish the moment we are enabled to see the true reason of the groan. "For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven : if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened : not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."

Here we see that the very certainty of having "a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" makes us groan to possess it. The apostle did not groan in doubt or uncertainty. He did not groan under the weight of guilt or fear. Still less did he groan because he could not satisfy the desires of the flesh or of the mind, or because he could not surround himself with this world's perishable possessions. No ; he longed for the heavenly building—the divine, the real, the eternal. He felt the heavy burden of the poor crumbling tabernacle ; it was a grievous hindrance to him. It was the only link with the scene around, and, as such, it was a heavy clog of which he longed to be rid.

But, most clearly, he would not and could not have groaned for the heavenly house if he had a single question on his mind with respect to it. Men are never anxious to get rid of the body unless they are sure of possessing something better ; nay, they grasp this present life with intense eagerness, and tremble at the thought of the future which is all darkness and uncertainty to them. They groan at the bare thought of quitting the body ; the apostle groaned because he was in it.

This makes all the difference. Scripture never contemplates such a thing as a Christian groaning under sin, guilt, doubt, or fear; or sighing after the riches, honours, or pleasures of this vain, sin-stricken world. Alas! alas! they do thus groan through ignorance of their true position in a risen Christ, and their proper portion in the heavens. But such is not the ground or character of the groan in the scripture now before us; Paul saw, with distinctness, his house in the heavens; and, on the other hand, he felt the heavy burden of the tabernacle of clay; and he ardently longed to lay aside the latter and be clothed with the former.

Hence, then, there is the fullest harmony between "*we know*" and "*we groan*." If we did not know for a certainty that we have a building of God, we should like to hold our earthly house as long as possible. We see this constantly. Men cling to life. They leave nothing untried to keep body and soul together. They have no certainty as to heaven. They cannot say, "*we know*" that "*we have*" anything there. On the other hand, they have a terrible dread of the future, which to their vision is wrapped up in clouds and thick darkness. They have never committed themselves in calm confidence to God and His word; they have never felt the tranquillizing power of His love. They have viewed Him as an angry Judge instead of seeing Him as the sinner's friend—a just God and a Saviour—the righteous Justifier. No marvel, therefore, if they shrink with terror from the thought of meeting Him.

But it is a totally different thing with a man who knows God as his Father—his Saviour—his best Friend; who knows that Jesus died to save him from his sins, and from all the consequences thereof. Such an one can say,

"I have a home above,
From sin and sorrow free;
A mansion which eternal Love
Designed and formed for me.

The Father's gracious hand
Has built this blest abode ;
From everlasting it was planned,
The dwelling place of God.
The Saviour's precious blood
Has made my title sure ;
He passed through death's dark raging flood,
To make my rest secure."

These are the breathings of simple faith, and they perfectly harmonize with the groans of a spirit "that looks beyond its cage and longs to flee away." The believer finds his body of sin and death a heavy burden, and longs to be free from the encumbrance, and to be clothed upon with a body suited to his new and eternal state—a new creation body—a body perfectly free from every trace of mortality. This cannot be until the morning of resurrection, that glorious moment, long looked for, when the dead in Christ shall rise and the living saints be changed, in a moment; when death shall be swallowed up in victory, and mortality shall be swallowed up of life.

It is for this we groan, not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon. The unclothed state is not *the* object, though we know that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord; and to depart and be with Christ is far better. The Lord Jesus is waiting for that glorious consummation, and we wait in sympathy with Him. Meanwhile, "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." Rom. viii. 22—25.

Thus, then, beloved reader, we have before us a very dis-

ting answer to the question, "Why does the believer groan?" He groans, being burdened. He groans in sympathy with a groaning creation, with which he is linked by means of a body of sin and death—a body of humiliation. He sees around him, day by day, the sad fruits of sin. He cannot pass along the streets of our cities and towns without having before his eyes a thousand proofs of man's sad state. He hears on one side the wail of sorrow; on another, the cry of distress. He sees oppression, violence, corruption, strife, heartless villany and its victims. He sees the thorn, the thistle, and the brier. He notes the various disturbing forces which are abroad in the physical, the moral, and the political world. He marks the varied forms of disease and misery around him. The cry of the poor and the needy, the widow and the orphan, falls sadly upon his ear and upon his heart; and what can he do but send up from the deepest depths of his spiritual nature a sympathetic groan, and long for the blissful moment when "The creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God?" It is impossible for a true Christian to pass through a world like this without groaning. Look at the blessed Master Himself; did not He groan? Yes, verily. Mark Him as He approached the grave of Lazarus, in company with the two weeping sisters. "When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept." John xi. 33—35.

Whence came those tears and groans? Was He not approaching the grave of His friend as the Prince of Life—the Quickener of the dead—the Conqueror of death—the Spoiler of the grave? Why, then, did He groan? He groaned in sympathy with the objects of His love, and with the whole scene around Him. His tears and groans

emanated from the profound depths of a perfect human heart, which felt, according to God, the true condition of the human family, and of Israel in particular. He beheld around Him the varied fruits of sin. He felt for man, He felt for Israel. "In all their afflictions He was afflicted." He was a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He never even cured a person without bearing upon His spirit the reality of that with which He was dealing. He did not, He would not, lightly bid away death, disease, and sorrow. No; He entered into it all, as man; and that, too, according to the infinite perfections of His divine nature. He bore it all upon His spirit, in the reality of it, before God. Though perfectly free from it all, and above it all, yet did He in grace voluntarily enter into it most thoroughly, so as to taste, and prove, and know it all, as none else could know it.

All this is fully expressed in the eighth chapter of Matthew, where we read the following words, "When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, *Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.*" Ver. 16, 17.

We have very little idea of what the heart of Jesus felt as He passed through this sorrowful, because sinful, world; and we are far too apt to miss the reality of His sufferings by confining them merely to what He endured on the cross; and also by supposing that because He was God over all blessed for ever, He did not feel all that a human heart is capable of feeling. This is a sad loss. Indeed we may say it is an incalculable loss. The Lord Jesus, as the Captain of our salvation, was made perfect through sufferings. See Hebrews ii. where the inspired writer distinguishes carefully between "the suffering of death," and the "sufferings" of the Captain of our salvation. In order to save sinners from

wrath, "He tasted death for every man," and having done so, we see Him "crowned with glory and honour." But in order to "*bring many sons to glory*," He had to be "perfected through sufferings." And now all true believers have the unspeakable privilege of knowing that there is one at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens who, when in this world of sin and woe, tasted every form of suffering and every cup of sorrow which it was possible for any human heart to know. He could say, "Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none." Ps. lxxix. 20.

How deeply affecting is all this! But we cannot pursue this subject here. We have merely touched upon it in connection with the question, "Why does the believer groan?" We trust that the reader will see clearly the true answer to this enquiry; and that it will be most evident to his mind that the groans of a Christian proceed from the divine nature which he actually possesses, and cannot therefore, by any possibility, be occasioned by doubts or fears, on the one hand, nor yet by selfish desires or the insatiable cravings of nature, on the other. But that, on the contrary, the very fact of his possessing everlasting life, through faith in Christ, and the blessed assurance of having a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, causes him to long for that blessed, indestructible building, and to groan because of his connection with a groaning creation, as well as in sympathy therewith.

If any further proof were needed, on this deeply interesting question, we have it in the fifth and sixth verses of our chapter (2 Cor. v.) where the apostle goes on to say, "Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are *always confident* (not doubting or fearing), knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord (for we walk by faith, not by sight)

we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Ver. 5—8.

Here we have two grand cardinal truths laid down, namely, first, The believer is God's workmanship; and secondly, God has given him the earnest of the Spirit. Most marvellous—most glorious facts!—facts which demand the special attention of the reader. Every one who simply and heartily believes on the Lord Jesus Christ is God's workmanship. God has created him anew in Christ Jesus. Clearly, therefore, there can be no possible ground for questioning his acceptance with God, inasmuch as God can never call in question His own work. He will, assuredly, no more do this in His new creation, than He did in the old. When God looked upon His work, in the opening of the book of Genesis, it was not to judge it or call it in question, but to pronounce it very good, and express His complacency in it. So, now, when God looks upon the very feeblest believer, He sees in him His own workmanship, and, most assuredly, He is not going, either here or hereafter, to call in question His own work. God is a Rock, His work is perfect, and the believer is God's work; and, because he is His work He has sealed him with the Holy Ghost.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

“Sun of my soul! thou Saviour dear,
It is not night if thou be near:
Oh! may no earth-born cloud arise
To hide thee from thy servant's eyes.

When the soft dews of kindly sleep
My wearied eyelids gently steep,
Be my last thought, how sweet to rest
For ever on my Saviour's breast.”



MEDITATIONS ON THE CHRISTIAN'S STANDING AND STATE.

(EPHESIANS I. 15—23; III. 14—21.)

HAST thou well considered, O my soul, the blessing of a holy and loving nature? Who can understand the blessedness of it now? What, O what, must the change be, compared with our present unholy, unloving nature! Here pause a moment, I pray thee, and meditate on this great truth. Only think on what must be our happiness, when we shall be like Christ—when we never more can have a thought, a feeling, a desire, contrary to God; far less shall there ever be a look, a word, an action, unworthy of His holy presence. And thus will it be for ever! Oh! wondrous thought! Oh! perfect blessedness! And no fear of a change, or of an end, shall ever cross the mind.

In one sense, this shall be thy heaven; for what were all the blessings that God can give, had we not a nature to enjoy them? But to have a nature which is the perfect answer to what God Himself is, must give a capacity for the highest and purest enjoyments of heaven. And once more remember, that this is thy nature for eternity. When the soul of the penitent thief ascended from the cross on Calvary to the Paradise of God, he left behind him all that he was in himself, and ascended in all the blessedness of Christ. Not one atom of the old nature shall ever cross the threshold of heaven. Glorious deliverance! Having eternal life—a divine nature, through faith in the dying Saviour, and thus made the righteousness of God in Him, he had both title and capacity to enjoy his new inheritance. The bloom, the beauty, the fragrance, the rest, the joys of paradise, shall all be relished by the children of God, and

relished as those only can, who have reached their eternal home, and now breath their native air.

But in the high calling of God, there is more than nature, there is *relationship*. If we would well understand "what is the hope of his calling," we must know our relationship in Christ as well as our nature. We might have had a holy, blameless, and loving nature, and been only servants. The highest angels rise no higher. They are servants waiting on God to do His pleasure. But those whom God has *called*—*called* by His grace—*called* from the place of distance to the place of nearness—*called* from the lowest state to the highest, are *sons*, not *servants*. "Wherefore," saith the apostle, writing to the Galatians, "thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." And the closing testimony of scripture is, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." The son inherits the large possessions of the Father. This blessed truth is the second part of the Christian's calling.

Verse 5. "*Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.*" The Jews of old were called "the people of God"—Christians are called "the children of God." Doubtless Old Testament saints were born again, and in that sense they were children of God; but they are spoken of as *His people*, not as His children. In the same sense they had eternal life; but they are not spoken of as having, or knowing that they had, eternal life. The revelation of these great privileges and blessings was reserved until Christ came. And it was not until redemption was finished and Christ risen from the dead, that He calls the disciples *His brethren*. Then, for the first time, He says, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." Now they are introduced into the place of sons, according to the

position and perfectness of the risen Christ. Christ is a Son—we are sons. True, most true, Christ is the eternal Son of the Father, and none can share that higher glory with Him; but as the *risen Son of God*, exalted and glorified, we are one with Him; and that according to the work of the cross, and the good pleasure of the Father's will.

In all ages God blessed His people according to the revelation which He gave of Himself, as the object of their faith. See Hebrews xi. He made Himself known to Abraham, for example, as the ALMIGHTY; and blessed him as the depositary of promise. Called of God, he leaves his own people and country, though he knew not whither he was going. He believes God and obeys. Having nothing but the promise, he was a stranger in a strange land. But his strangership was his gain. It brought him, in spirit, nearer to God Himself. It led him to desire a better country. He had no wish to go back to his own. God, known as the Almighty, was his trust, his shield, his reward. In the presence of the king of Sodom, though a stranger in a strange land, he confessed and honoured the Lord, as "the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth." He refused to be enriched by the world. He was content to wait upon God, to whom both heaven and earth belonged. Enough for the heart of faith that God knows the need, and how and when to meet it. The God of promise was the object of his faith. He had nothing else; for God gave him none inheritance in the land, "no, not so much as to set his foot on; yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child." (Acts vii.) It was thus that he honoured God as a stranger and a pilgrim, and God is not ashamed to be called Abraham's God. What a testimony! of whom, we may ask, could God now say so much? Abraham was a pilgrim and a stranger on the ground of promise: we, on the higher ground of

oneness with a Christ rejected on earth, and accepted in heaven. Even *now*, our citizenship is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour. Of "the fathers" the Spirit of truth bears this blessed testimony in Hebrews xi. "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly; *wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.*"

Israel, the natural seed of Abraham, was in covenant relationship with God, as JEHOVAH. All temporal blessings in a pleasant land—the choicest of earth's treasures, are their proper blessing. Through their rebellion they have been dispersed under His chastening hand; but they are His chosen people, and will yet be abundantly blessed, and peaceably settled in the land of promise. But the Christian's blessing goes far beyond a promise, or a goodly land. And he knows God, not only as the *Almighty* and as *Jehovah*, but as *Father*. "I will be," He says, "a *Father* unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the *Lord Almighty.*" (2 Cor. vi. 18.) We now return to the verse under meditation.

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ *to himself*, according to the good pleasure of his will." Here the soul finds perfect rest, the measure of its blessing is full. Promises were the stronghold of the Jew; the Christian rests in accomplished redemption. Nothing more can be added to his blessing—nothing more can be desired. More may be revealed to him, and all shall yet be better understood; but these words, "*TO HIMSELF*," are enough. Not only has He chosen us to be *like* Himself, but *near* Himself. Surely it is the expression of the most tender—the most marvellous—the most delighting love. Here are two words, O my soul, for thy long and deep meditation. Never hast thou met with two words more fitted to calm down every rising fear, and hush to eternal rest all anxieties as to the future. Couldst thou ever distrust the love that chooses to have thee near as Christ

Himself is near? Can the Father ever have Christ too near His heart? Can He ever have thee too near His heart? Faith must answer; but the word is plain, "*children by Jesus Christ to himself.*" What can be plainer? What can be truer? What can be nearer to thy heart? It is God's call to *thee*—to every Christian—even the least. He could not do more for His children, He will not do less. It is marvellous in our eyes. Called to be like Him—called to be near Him; and this, mark, is "according to the good pleasure of his will." The children's place and portion will be the display, throughout eternity, of the peculiar pleasure of the Father. Now it is revealed to faith, and as true as it will be then.

The sixth verse gives unity and strength to this twofold aspect of the Christian's calling. "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." This verse sums up the fulness of divine favour to the children, in their effectual calling. We are said to be blessed with all spiritual blessings *in Christ*—to be chosen *in Christ*—to be children by *Jesus Christ*; but we are accepted *in the Beloved*. Here the word is changed to "*Beloved*." It means that we are accepted in the highest object of God's affections. Christ is the Well-beloved of God's heart; He could shew favour to none as to Him; and yet the word is plain, we are accepted, loved, and blessed in Him—in the Beloved. Higher than this, royal favour itself cannot raise us; the heart can only bow and worship and adore in the presence of such love, and in the assurance that it can never change.

Ah! 'tis too vast a story for me to dare essay!

He, source of endless glory—I, but of yesterday.

Yet, since I call him Father and know His boundless grace,
I tremble not, but rather delight His way to trace.

How little we think, when the heart of a poor good-for-nothing sinner is touched by the word of the gospel, that

such love is at work—that such treasures are thrown open to his faith. But so it is. When God calls, He calls sinners, sinners lost and ruined in their sins. But He calls them to be like Himself in nature, and near to Himself in relationship.

Dear reader, before passing on to the subject of the *inheritance*, I must have a word with thee. Thou art as a weight on my heart. Hast thou listened—hast thou yielded to the call of God—to the call of the gospel? Now is the time, to-morrow may be too late. And what a loss thine would be! To believe in Christ—to own and trust Him, is to yield thyself to God's call. To love and follow Christ here, where He was rejected, are the clearest proofs that thou art called of God. The heights and depths, the lengths and breadths, of God's love to thee are in Christ. To receive Him, is to receive all; to reject Him, is to reject all. What a prize, O, my fellow sinner, to lose or win! Think of the noble prize won by that poor woman at the feet of Jesus in the house of Simon—pardon, salvation, and peace. Grace is free—free to all—free to thee. “Let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” We win the prize of eternal life, and all that belongs to it, by accepting it as God's free gift. He who glorified God by putting away sin on the cross, is now saying to thee, “Him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out”—on no account—on no consideration, cast out or reject. Hast thou come then, O my fellow sinner? Come! O come! I beseech thee! Come in the faith of His own words. Let thine eye be up to Christ Himself, and let the invitation which He has given thee be in thy heart; and so coming to Him thou art saved. Saved—what a word!—saved! a soul saved—yes, *thy soul* saved! Saved from sin—saved from death—the death that never dies—saved from the lake of fire—the fire that shall never be quenched—saved from an eternity of misery—saved to an eternity of blessedness—saved to share

the honours and glories, the dignities and privileges of God's beloved Son. O may thy heart bow to Christ, and thy tongue confess His name, before this paper drops from thy hand !

I want an even strong desire, -
I want a calm—a fervent zeal,
To pull poor souls out of the fire,
To snatch them from the verge of hell,
And turn them to a pardoning God,
And quench the brands in Jesu's blood.

Enlarge, inflame, and fill my heart
With boundless charity divine !
So shall I all my strength exert,
And love them with a zeal like thine,
And lead them to thy open side,
The sheep for whom the Shepherd died.



AN INTERESTING QUESTION.

READER, which would you rather, die and go to Jesus, or that He should come and fetch you? Perhaps you will reply in the words of a christian servant to whom the same question was once put by a friend. "Please, sir," said she, "whichever comes first." This was a most excellent answer ; and we may say we have great sympathy with it. But, at the same time, it may not be out of place to offer a suggestion or two as to the blessedness of those who depart in the faith of Christ, previous to His advent in glory.

I. In the first place, they enjoy the privilege of fellowship with Jesus in the special article of the separation of soul and body. Of course, we do not here speak of His death in its atoning aspect. In that He stood absolutely alone, and passed through that in which none could have fellowship. For us to have been with Him in His atoning death would have involved infinite and everlasting wrath. But

we refer to the mere fact of the departure of the spirit from the body. In this, all, who depart from his world previous to the Lord's coming, are privileged to have fellowship with Jesus.

II. In the second place, the saint who falls asleep in Jesus is permitted to taste the exquisite joy of being absolutely alone with Him previous to the great public festivities of the kingdom. The departed spirit, though waiting for the resurrection 'body, enjoys uninterrupted communion with the Lord. We hear a great deal about the condition and occupation of the disembodied spirit which has not the smallest foundation in the New Testament, and with which we are not going to occupy the reader. We shall merely dismiss it as mere superstition or pious sentimentality. Scripture teaches us that the spirit of the saint is with the Lord. It is neither asleep, on the one hand, nor engaged in a manner demanding bodily power on the other. It is with the Lord, in deep unbroken fellowship, and ineffable repose. See Luke xxiii. 43; Acts vii. 59; 2 Cor. v. 8; Phil. i. 23.

III. In the third place, the saint who is called to pass through death is permitted to prove what the Lord can be and do, at such a moment. He has an opportunity of proving what the Prince of Life can be to one passing the valley of the shadow of death. He would have occasion to commit his spirit into the hands of his Lord in a way he could not know were he to be caught up without passing through death.

These considerations are not without interest; and they may prove helpful to some who have a great dread of death, and who, because of this dread, would vastly prefer being changed in a moment and caught up to meet the Lord in the air. It is well for such to bear in mind that whereas, in the old creation, man belongs to death; in the new creation, death belongs to man. (1 Cor. iii. 22.) In the former, death takes every thing from us; in the latter,

death gives every thing to us. In that, death is our master; in this, death is our servant. In that, it is the officer to drag us to judgment; in this, it is a messenger sent to carry us to the bosom of our Lord.

All this makes a serious difference, and is eminently calculated to remove that fear of death with which so many of the Lord's saints are tried. It is well to be established in the great truth that death has lost its sting, and that to die is gain to the believer. To depart and be with Christ is far better.

We would merely add, in conclusion, that the foregoing remarks leave wholly untouched the fact that the Lord's coming is the proper hope of the believer and of the Church of God. May that blessed hope shine more brightly in the vision of our souls!



TOIL AND ITS FRUIT.

THE same lesson over and over again! It often seems as though I were still at the very beginning—no conscious progress—but the same thing repeated perpetually. Surely it is one's dulness, stupidity, and slowness to learn, that makes all this necessary. Shame to the pupil! but praise to the faithful, loving, patient Master who goes on so unweariedly training and instructing us "line upon line, line upon line, precept upon precept, precept upon precept"—and thus He leads us on step by step in His school.

"He taught them as they were able to bear it"—and "*Who teacheth like him?*" Oh! to learn deeply and perfectly *from* Him and *for* Him, so as to bring praise instead of reproach to our blessed Teacher. Very often I am reminded of that anecdote, told somewhere (under the head of "No Royal Road to Music") of the celebrated Italian Singer Caffarelli—who after labouring on and on for six years over the same eternal pages—ceaseless

exercises on the diatonic and chromatic scales — was astonished, when entering on the seventh year (when he still supposed himself to be in the elements), by Porpora, his master, saying to him, “Go, Caffarelli, my son, you have nothing more to learn—you are the first singer in Italy—nay, more, the first singer in the world.”

Is it thus that our capacities are being developed? Is this the meaning of those oft-repeated exercises on those perpetual scales? Is it thus we are learning to sing? If so, may we not rejoice in all those exercises to which we are called to sit down, day after day, year after year? Assuredly we may. It is well worth working for six years at the scales to be told, at the opening of the seventh year, that we know how to sing. We are all at our scales, in some shape or form. Let us be patient, and we shall, very soon, reap the precious fruits.



THE UNFAILING EFFICACY OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.

ALLOW me to say that a *fresh application* of the blood of Christ is unknown to Christianity. There are Christians no doubt, who tell you that you must have fresh recourse to the blood; but they have no scripture for their thought. On the contrary, it weakens the fundamental truth of the efficacy of Christ's one sacrifice, which it is intended, after a human fashion, to commend and exalt: and that is the effect of forming our own thoughts of the use that is to be made of any truth, instead of simply bowing to the word of God. Repetition as to this would prove imperfectness. This foundation has been laid so completely in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that it never requires to be laid again. There is no more the possibility of a fresh sprinkling of Christ's blood, than there is room left for His dying once more to shed His blood. When a soul has found Him and been washed from

sin in His blood, there it abides for ever. This is what makes the sin of a Christian to be so serious. If you could begin again, what is the effect? Not very different from that which his confession before a priest has upon a Romanist. People soon learn to trifle with sin, and to get hardened by its deceitfulness. Although it is a different thing where Christ is looked to, still the moral effect is much the same, as far as the making light of sin is concerned. If a person can again and again start afresh, as if nothing had happened, and begin over and over again for every fresh downfall, sin is never felt nearly so deeply. But we are bound to bring no stain upon that which is washed in the blood of Christ. Yet we are conscious of constant failure.



COMING.

“What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.”

“At even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing.”

It may be in the evening,
 When the work of the day is done,
 And you have time to sit in the twilight,
 And to watch the sinking sun ;
 While the long bright day dies slowly
 Over the sea,
 And the hour grows quiet and holy
 With thoughts of *Me* ;
 While you hear the village children
 Passing along the street,
 Among these thronging footsteps
 May come the sound of *My feet* :
 Therefore I tell you, watch !
 By the light of the evening star,
 When the room is growing dusky
 As the clouds afar ;
 Let the door be on the latch
 In your home,

For it may be through the gloaming,
I will come.

It may be in the midnight
When 'tis heavy upon the land,
And the black waves lying dumbly
Along the sand ;
When the moonless night draws close
And the lights are out in the house,
When the fires burn low and red,
And the watch is ticking loudly
Beside the bed ;
Though you sleep tired on your couch,
Still your heart must wake and watch
In the dark room :
For it may be that at midnight
I will come.

It may be at the cock-crow,
When the night is dying slowly
In the sky,
And the sea looks calm and holy,
Waiting for the dawn of the golden sun
Which draweth nigh ;
When the mists are on the valleys, shading
The rivers chill,
And my morning star is fading, fading
Over the hill ;
Behold, I say unto you, Watch !
Let the door be on the latch
In your home,
In the chill before the dawning,
Between the night and morning,
I may come.

It may be in the morning
When the sun is bright and strong,
And the dew is glittering sharply
Over the little lawn,

When the waves are laughing loudly
 Along the shore,
And the little birds are singing sweetly
 About the door ;
With the long day's work before you
 You are up with the sun,
And the neighbours come to talk a little
 Of all that must be done :
But, remember, that I may be the next
 To come in at the door,
To call you from your busy work,
 For evermore.
As you work, your heart must watch,
For the door is on the latch
 In your room,
And it may be in the morning
 I will come.

So I am watching quietly
 Every day,
Whenever the sun shines brightly
 I rise and say,
Surely it is the shining of His face,
And look unto the gate of His high place
 Beyond the sea,
For I know He is coming shortly
 To summon me ;
And when a shadow falls across the window
 Of my room,
Where I am working my appointed task,
I lift my head to watch the door and ask,
 If He is come !
And the spirit answers softly
 In my home,
“ Only a few more shadows,
 And He *will* come.”

B. M.



CORRESPONDENCE.

33. "E. E.," Barford. Revelation xxii. 18, 19, contains a most solemn warning designed and eminently calculated to guard the divine integrity of this closing section of the inspired canon. We need hardly say that this, like all the other solemn warnings of Holy Scripture, leaves the grand question of the believer's security in Christ wholly untouched. It is a very serious error indeed to use the warning voice of the Spirit as an occasion of doubting the faithfulness of God, and the all-sufficiency of Christ. Assuredly we should give earnest heed to the warning; but for a saint to doubt his salvation, is not a taking heed to the warning of God, but listening to the dark suggestion of Satan. What should I say to my son if he were to make use of my warning voice as a reason for doubting his relationship? I may have to warn him, and he should attend to the warning; but it is as my son I warn him, and it is as his father he hears my voice. But as to Revelation xxii. 18, 19, it does not assume such a thing as a true Christian tampering with the inspired volume. It says, "If any man," &c. In verse 19, the four Editors read "tree" instead of "book."

34. "M. C.," Mere. Acts xvi. 4 refers to the directions given in chapter xv. 29.

35. "J. A. S.," Swindon. There is no foundation in scripture for any such practice as you refer to. We should regard it as resting wholly on a traditionary basis, and as savouring of superstition.

36. "M. R. A.," Norwich. We believe that Jordan is a type of death, in one special aspect, and the Red Sea is a type of death, in another. The Red Sea separated Israel from Egypt, and introduced them to their desert wanderings. Jordan closed their desert wanderings and introduced them to Canaan's wars. Now, these things are our types and it is important to be able to read the type and under-

stand its deep significance. The death of Christ is the great antitype of both the Red Sea and the Jordan. In Him we have died to the world. This is the Red Sea. We have left Egypt and entered upon our wilderness pilgrimage. But Christ is risen and has taken His place on high. He has met the full power of death for us, and made it a passage for us into glory. Jordan overflowed all its banks at the moment when the ark of God drove back its waters, and made a highway for the ransomed to pass over. Death was never so terrible as when the Prince of Life destroyed its power for us, and made it our passage to heaven. But we are not yet actually there; we are still in the wilderness, as to our experience. In spirit and by faith we are in heaven, and we are called to maintain our ground as heavenly men. Hence the conflict in Ephesians vi. Clearly if we were, as to fact, in heaven, we should be done with conflict; and here, doubtless, lies the foundation of your difficulty. Israel had to fight for every inch of Canaan, and we have to fight with spiritual foes in order to maintain our position and character as heavenly men. Take a case. A person is converted in the bosom of a worldly family. He is, as to fact, surrounded by Egypt and its circumstances. But to him it is a wilderness; such is his experience. He is a stranger and a pilgrim beneath his father's roof. But in spirit he soars to heaven, whither the great Captain of his salvation has gone before. He longs to live a heavenly life, to feed upon Christ, the old corn of the land—Christ risen and seated in the heavens. He longs for the grapes of Esheol, and for the milk and honey which flow copiously in the land of his inheritance. This the devil and his agents seek to hinder in every way. Hence the conflict.

37. "H. D.," Jersey. 1 Corinthians iii. 12—15, refers to the nature and character of a man's work in the Church of God. The foundation is laid, and each one is to take heed as to the materials with which he builds. A man

may teach spurious doctrines, or introduce spurious persons into the assembly. All will be tried, and what is false will be burnt up, though the workman may be saved. It is a most solemn word for ministers. The "floor" in Matthew iii. 12, refers primarily to the Jewish nation; but it is a solemn voice for Christendom. A saint may, through carelessness, lose the sense of Divine love and the light of the Divine countenance; but the Lord "withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous." He loves them with an everlasting love. As to the expression "Quench not the Spirit," (1 Thess. v.) it refers rather to the assembly—to Christians when gathered together. You will observe that the following verse speaks of not despising prophesyings. If an assembly of Christians set up any order or arrangement whereby the free action of the Holy Ghost is hindered, they are quenching the Spirit. No doubt, individuals also quench the Spirit when they refuse to give forth that which He communicates. But for the general walk of the believer we have the precious precept, "*Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*" (Eph. iv. 30.) The parable of the mustard seed, in Mark iv. and Matthew xiii., refers to professing Christianity in the world. Its beginning was small and insignificant; but it has become a great thing in the earth. You must distinguish between this and the true Church of God, composed of true believers, washed in the blood of Christ, indwelt by the Holy Ghost, and guided by the word of God. The "new and living way" of Hebrews x. 20, is said to be through the Saviour's flesh—the antitype of the veil. The death of Christ rent the veil and opened the way into the holiest of all. Excuse the extreme brevity of our replies. To go fully into your questions would demand a volume.

38. "W. G. W.," Portsmouth. We should judge that the expression to which you refer merely conveys the idea that Christ appears before God for us in all the credit and value of His atoning work. Hebrews ix. 12 tells us that

Christ entered in once, with His own blood, into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption. The atoning death of Christ is the solid foundation on which the entire edifice of Christianity reposes.

39. "C. S." and "E. J. B.," Bristol. We should consider the application of Isaiah xxviii. 16, to a person running to catch a train or keep an appointment, a perfect piece of absurdity. The use made of this precious passage in the New Testament teaches us, very distinctly, that the soul who simply trusts in the living God and His Son Jesus Christ, will be kept in quiet assurance and perfect repose, come what may. Such an one will never be put to shame, never be confounded, world without end. The Lord be praised for such rich consolation! Accept our thanks for the sweet hymn.

40. "L. H." and "J. T. B.," Northampton. Your kind communications refer to the same subject. We quite purpose, if the Lord will, to reprint the series of papers entitled "Glad Tidings," as a separate tract. Very many as well as yourselves have requested us to do so. May God add His rich blessing!

41. "A. H." 1 Peter ii. 24 refers, as we judge, to the whole of Christ's sacrificial work. It is, as you will, doubtless, have observed, a quotation from Isaiah liii. The lxx. version renders the word "stripes" by a singular noun (*τῷ μωλωπι*). The atoning work of Christ is set forth, in various ways, throughout scripture—"Death"—"Blood shedding"—"Stripes"—"Cross," &c., &c. We doubt not there is always a distinct object in the use of any particular term. Accept, beloved friend, our warmest thanks for your truly kind and encouraging letter. May God bless you most abundantly!

42. "H. A.," Unita. Your communication, with the extract, has come to hand. We cannot enter further upon the subject. May the Lord Himself be your Teacher!

Some other Communications stand over.

THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION.

(PART III.)

WE deem it needful to call the reader's attention to the truth set forth in the fifth verse of our chapter (2 Cor. v.) which was only hastily glanced at in the closing lines of our paper for July. "Now he that wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit."

The believer then, whoever he be, is God's workmanship. What he is, he is through God's own work. The same truth is stated in the second chapter of Ephesians, where we read, "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." This, we may truly say, is a point of the weightiest moment. It claims the grave attention of the reader who desires to be thoroughly established in the truth of God as to what a Christian—what Christianity really is. It is not a ruined lost, guilty sinner seeking to work himself up into something or other fit for God. It is the very reverse. It is God, in the riches of His grace, on the ground of the atoning death of Christ, taking up a poor, dead, worthless, condemned thing—a guilty, hell-deserving sinner, and creating him anew in Christ Jesus. It is, as it were, God beginning *de novo*—on the new, as we may say—to form man in Christ, to place him on a new footing altogether, not now as an innocent being on a creation basis, but as a justified one, in a risen Christ. It is not man's old condition improved by human effort of any sort or description; but it is God's new workmanship in a risen, ascended, and glorified Christ. It is not man's old garment pieced or patched by human device in any shape or form whatever; but it is God's new garment introduced in the Person of Christ, who having, in infinite grace, gone down

into the dust of death, and endured, on man's behalf, the judgment due to sin, the righteous wrath of a sin-hating God, was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and is become the Head of the new creation—"The beginning of the creation of God." Rev. iii. 14.

Now, it must be perfectly clear to the reader, that if our Lord Jesus Christ be, in very deed, "the *beginning*" of God's creation, then we must begin at the beginning, else we have done absolutely nothing at all. We may labour and toil—we may do our very utmost, and be perfectly sincere in our doing—we may vow and resolve—we may seek to improve our state, to alter our course, to mend our ways, to live in a different way—but all the while, we are in the old creation, which has been completely set aside, and is under the judgment of God; we have not begun at "the beginning" of God's new creation, and, as a necessary consequence, we have gained nothing at all. We have been spending our strength for nought and in vain. We have been putting forth efforts to improve a thing which God has condemned and set aside altogether. We are, to use a very feeble figure indeed, like a man who is spending his time, his pains, and his money in painting and papering a house that has been condemned by the government surveyor, on account of the rottenness of the foundation, and which must be taken down at once.

What should we say to such a man? Should we not deem him very foolish? Doubtless. But if it be folly to paint and paper a condemned house, what shall we say to those who are seeking to improve a condemned nature—a condemned world? We must say this, at least, they are pursuing a course which must, sooner or later, end in disappointment and confusion.

Oh! that this were understood and entered into! Would to God that Christians more fully entered into it! Would to God that all christian writers, preachers, and teachers entered into it, and set it forth distinctly with pen and

voice! At the least, we earnestly desire that the reader should thoroughly grasp it. We are most fully persuaded that it is pre-eminently, "Truth for the Times." It is truth to meet the need of thousands of souls—to remove their burdens, relieve their heart and conscience—solve their difficulties—chase away their clouds. There are, at this moment, throughout the length and breadth of Christendom, countless multitudes engaged in the fruitless work of painting and papering a condemned house—a house on which God has pronounced judgment, because of the hopelessly ruined condition of its foundations. They are seeking to do little jobs of repairs here and there throughout the house, forgetting, or perhaps not knowing, that the whole building is very shortly to be demolished by order of the Divine Government. Some are doing this with the utmost sincerity, amid much sore exercise of soul, and many tears because they cannot succeed in satisfying their own hearts even, much less the claims of God. For God demands a perfect thing, not a patched up ruin. There is no use in seeking to cover with paper and paint old walls tottering on a rotten foundation. God cannot be deceived by surface work, by shallow outside appearances. The foundations are bad, the whole thing must come down, and we must put our whole trust in Him who is "the beginning of the creation of God."

Reader, pause here, for a moment's calm and serious reflection. Ask yourself the question, "Am I seeking to patch up a ruin? Am I seeking to improve the old nature? Or have I really found my place in God's new creation of which a risen Christ is the Head and Beginning?" Remember, we beseech you, that you cannot possibly engage in more fruitless toil than seeking to make yourself better. Your efforts may be sincere, but they must, in the long run, prove worthless. Your paper and paint may be all good and genuine enough, but you are putting them on a condemned ruin. You cannot say of your unrenewed nature

that it is "God's workmanship;" and, most assuredly, *your* doings, *your* good works, *your* religious exercises, *your* efforts to keep the ten commandments—nothing, in short, that *you* can do, could possibly be called "God's workmanship." It is yours and not God's. He cannot acknowledge it. He cannot seal it with His Spirit. It is all false and good for nothing. If you cannot say, "He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God," you have really nothing. You are yet in your sins. You have not begun at God's beginning. You are yet "in the flesh;" and the voice of holy scripture declares that "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." Rom. viii.

This is a solemn and sweeping sentence. A man out of Christ is "in the flesh;" and such a man cannot please God. He may be most religious, most moral, most amiable, most benevolent, a loving husband, an affectionate father, a most excellent master, a generous friend, a liberal giver, a genial companion, a patron of the poor, upright and honourable in all his dealings; he may be an eloquent preacher and a popular writer, and all the while not be "*in Christ*," but "*in the flesh*," and therefore he "cannot please God."

Can aught be more solemn than this? Only to think of how far a person may go in all that is deemed excellent among men, and yet not be in Christ, but in his sins—in the flesh—in the old creation—in the condemned house. And be it noted, that it is not a question of gross sins, of scandalous living in all its varied hideous shapes, of immorality, in its deeper and darker shades; no, the declaration of holy scripture is, that "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." This truly is most soul subduing, and calls for deep and solemn reflection on the part of every thoughtful and earnest soul.

But it may be that, to the reader's view, difficulties and stumblingblocks still surround this most weighty subject. He may still be utterly at a loss to know what is meant by

the expression, "In the flesh." If so, it will, we fondly hope, help him, not a little, to remember that scripture speaks of *two men*—"the first man" and "the second man." These two men are presented as the heads of two distinct races. Adam *fallen* is the head of one race; Christ *risen* is the Head of the other race. Now, the very fact of there being "a second man" proves that the first man has been set aside; for if the first man had proved faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. This is clear and unquestionable. The first man is a total wreck—an irreparable ruin. The foundations of the old edifice have given way; and albeit, in man's view, the building seems to stand, and to be capable of being repaired, yet in God's view it is completely set aside, and a Second Man—a new edifice set up, on the solid and imperishable ground of redemption.

Hence, we read, in the third chapter of Genesis, that God "*drove out the man* : and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned *every way* to keep the way of the tree of life." In other words, the first man was driven out, and every possible way of return was closed against him, *as such*. He could only get back by "a new and living way," namely, through the rent veil of the Saviour's flesh. The flaming sword "turned every way," so that there was positively no way by which the first man could ever get back to his former state. The only hope, now, was through "the seed of the woman"—"the second man." The flaming sword declared, in symbolic yet impressive language, the truth which comes out, in the New Testament, divested of all symbol and shadow, namely, that "They that are in the flesh *cannot* please God"—"Ye must be born again." Every unconverted man, woman, and child, is part and parcel of the first man, fallen, ruined, set aside, and driven out. He is a member of the first Adam—the old race—a stone in the old condemned building.

Thus it stands if we are to be guided by scripture. The head and his race go together. As is the one, so is the other; what is true of the one, is true of the other. They are, in God's view, absolutely identical. Was the first Adam fallen, when he became the head of a race? Was he driven out? Was he completely set aside? Yes verily, if we are to believe scripture, then the unconverted—the unregenerated reader of these lines is fallen, driven out, and set aside. As is the head, so is the member—each member in particular—all the members together. They are inseparable, if we are to be taught by Divine Revelation.

But, further, was every possible way of return finally closed against the fallen head? Yes, scripture declares that the flaming sword turned "*every way* to keep the way of the tree of life." Then is it utterly impossible that the unconverted—unregenerate reader can improve himself or make himself fit for God. If the fallen head could not get back to the tree of life, neither can the fallen member. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." That is, they that are on the old footing, in the old creation, members of the first Adam, part and parcel of the old edifice, cannot please God. "Ye must be born again." Man must be renewed in the very deepest springs and sources of his being. He must be God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before prepared that we should walk in them." He must be able to say, in the language of our text, "He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God."

But this leads us to another point. How is any one to get into this marvellous position? How can any soul take up such language? How can any one whose eyes have been opened to see his utter and hopeless ruin, as connected with the first man, as standing in the old creation, as a stone in the old edifice—how can such an one ever reach a position in which he can please God? The Lord be

praised, scripture gives an answer, full, clear, and distinct, to this serious question. A Second Man has appeared upon the scene—the seed of the woman, and, at the same time, God over all, blessed for ever. In Him all begins afresh. He came into this world, born of a woman, made under the law, pure and spotless, free from every taint of sin, personally, apart from every claim of sin and death, standing in the midst of a ruined world, a guilty race, Himself that pure, untainted grain of wheat. We see Him lying as a helpless babe in the manger. We see Him growing up as a youth beneath the parent roof. We see him as a man working in a carpenter's shop at Nazareth. We see Him baptized in Jordan, where all the people were baptized confessing their sins—Himself sinless, but fulfilling all righteousness, and, in perfect grace, identifying Himself with the repentant portion of the nation of Israel. We see Him anointed with the Holy Ghost for the work that lay before Him. We see Him in the wilderness faint and hungry, unlike the first man who was placed in the midst of a paradise of creature delights. We see Him tempted of Satan and coming off victorious. We trace Him along the pathway of public ministry—and such a ministry! What incessant toil! What weariness and watching! What hunger and thirst! What sorrow and travail! Worse off than the fowls and the foxes, the Son of man had not where to lay His head. The contradiction of sinners by day, the mountain-top by night.

Such was the marvellous life of this blessed One. But this was not all. He died! Yes, He died under the weight of the first man's guilt. He died to take away the sin of the world, and alter completely the ground of God's relationship with the world, so that God might deal with man and with the world on the new ground of redemption, instead of the old ground of sin. He died for the nation of Israel. He tasted death for every man. He died the just for the unjust. He suffered for sins. He died and

was buried, according to the scriptures. He went through all—met all—paid all—finished all. He went down into the dust of death, and lay in the dark and silent tomb. He descended into the lower parts of the earth. He went down to the very bottom of everything. He endured the sentence passed on man. He paid the penalty, bore the judgment, drained the cup of wrath, went through every form of human suffering and trial, was tempted in all points, sin excepted. He made an end of everything that stood in the way, and, having *finished all*, He gave up His spirit into the hand of His Father, and His precious body was laid in a tomb on which the smell of death had never passed.

Nor was this all. He rose! Yes, He rose triumphant over all. He rose as the Head of the new creation—"The beginning of the creation of God"—"The first begotten from among the dead"—"The first-born among many brethren." And now the Second Man is before God, crowned with glory and honour, not in an earthly paradise, but at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. This Second Man is the *last* Adam, because there is none to come after Him, we cannot get beyond the last. There is only one Man before God now. The first is set aside. The last is set up. And as the first was the fallen head of a fallen race, so the last is the risen Head of a saved, justified, and accepted race. The Head and His members are inseparably identified—all the members together, and each member in particular. There is no difference. "As he is, so are we in this world." (1 John iv. 17.) There is nothing before God but Christ. The Head and the body, the Head and each individual member are indissolubly joined together—inseparably and eternally one. God thinks of the members as He thinks of the Head—loves them as He loves Him. Those members are God's workmanship, incorporated by His Spirit into the body of Christ, and having no other existence, no other footing, no other rank, position,

or station whatsoever but "in Christ." They are no longer "in the flesh, but in the Spirit." They can please God, because they possess His nature, and are sealed by His Spirit, and guided by His word. "*He that hath wrought them is God,*" and God must ever delight in His own workmanship. He will never find fault with or condemn the work of His own hand. "God is a rock, his work is perfect," and hence the believer, as God's workmanship, must be perfect. He is "IN CHRIST," and that is enough—enough for God—enough for faith—enough for ever.

And, now, if it be asked, "How is all this to be attained?" scripture replies, "BY FAITH." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, *hath* everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment; but is passed from death unto life." John v. 24.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)



SHADOWS AND SUBSTANCE.

THERE is a nobility or a discredit in ancestry, according to what the ancestor originally was, in the rights of his own person and estate. Dignity and rank may have been conferred on him; another may be noble by descent: so that flesh and blood "*hath* whereof to glory." But above all these degrees which are merely human, the first man Adam takes precedence, and claims the pre-eminence, for he was *created*, and stands alone in this relation to his Creator. Moreover, "God created man in his own image, in the *image of God* created he him." Here is indeed true nobility by creative power. "And 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." There would be true dignity in such an ancestor as this Adam, could his posterity trace up their genealogies to the first

man when he stood in this likeness of God in the garden which the Lord God planted eastward in Eden; but what herald at arms dare pass by the cherubim with the flaming sword, upon such an errand as this?

But there is a painful and humiliating contrast to this picture. The consequence of the fall, and the loss of this image of God, morally, through sin; and so we read in Genesis v., "Adam lived an hundred and thirty years and begat a son *in his own likeness, after his image.*" Alas! how is the crown fallen from the head, and the fine gold become dim! In its turn, descent from such an one as Adam fallen, and expelled from Eden, is a disgrace, for "*we are born in sin and shapen in iniquity.*"

How this immense difference in the two states and conditions of Adam, unfallen and fallen, affect the whole character of our subject, is evident from the scriptures referred to. But how strange that contrasts such as these, "planting a garden" and creating a man "in the image of God," and "driving out the man" when he had forfeited and lost all by disobedience should be only historically regarded. Let us however look at these facts closely and seriously, and then see how God in the earliest days brought in His own resources of grace to meet a fallen and an outcast man, and his posterity. If he will reach true nobility *now*, it must be in Christ, by being born again of the Spirit, born of God. "To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." If mankind, in all succeeding generations, have determined to "make a fair show in the flesh," and to glory in descent, and in man, God has determined on His part "to stain the pride of man," to bring down every high look, and to turn this comeliness into corruption. "He will bring to nought things that are," by choosing "things which are not, yea, base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen, that *no flesh* should glory in his presence." "His breath goeth forth, he re-

turneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts *perish*."

In the face of great facts like these, how can it be accounted for that they have so little place between the consciences of men and God—such a feeble hold over the everyday principles and pursuits of the great busy world around us? Is it not because God Himself and the realities which His presence must always bring in before the soul, are excluded—systematically excluded; and men contented to adopt the spirit of the age and to follow the course of the world? Instead of being deluded a second time for *ourselves*, and instead of being thus doubly, *doubly* sold by the artifices of Satan, "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience;" how much better to be near enough to truth and to God to detect the wiles of the devil and to see things as they really are! How much better and wiser to accept the remedy and the resource which God has provided by the sending forth of His own Son, our Lord and Saviour, as the life and the light of men! "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Before Christ came, all that prefigured Him was necessarily taught in types and shadows, whether in temple or tabernacle times; and, even earlier, the same lessons of grace to the sinner were taught in outline by typical names of persons in the world before the flood. For example, "Adam called his wife's name Eve, for she was the mother of all living." And what is this name, under the guidance of God, but life in the midst of death, life out of death, in her promised seed? for God had said respecting Christ, "thou shalt bruise his [Satan's] head." Eve was thus made the depository of promise, and, assuring herself of deliverance from the punishment which God in righteousness had inflicted on her and Adam, when she bare a son,

her firstborn son, she said, in the joy of her heart, "I have gotten a [the] man from the Lord, and she called his name Cain." But she has to learn the deep lesson which all the family of faith have since learnt, that creature effort or acquirement must wait upon and give place to the sovereignty of God. And so we read, "She again bare his brother Abel." What did she want of another son? What lessons had she to be taught, that Cain did not afford? Was not Cain the promised seed that should bruise Satan's head? And in her disappointment and sorrow perhaps, she calls his name Abel, or *vanity*; and so she stamps thus early vanity upon her natural expectations.

But other pages are to be written in the book of human life, and blotted ones too, which will try the heart of this first mother, as they tried the soul of the real and true mother of the promised Seed, to whom Simeon said, when speaking of her Son Jesus, "Yea, a sword shall pass through thine own soul also." "In process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground, an offering unto the Lord; and Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering, but unto Cain and his offering he had not respect and Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him."

God is thus again forced into the place of judgment, not now by disobedience like Adam's, but by murder and bloodshed, and the words "thou art cursed from the earth," tells out the deeper shame of man, as he reads aloud his own sentence, "behold, thou hast driven me out and from thy face shall I be hid, and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth." By faith Abel falls asleep till another and a future day, and Cain "*went out from the presence of the Lord.*" The righteous witness for God is slain and gone, and the murderer left in the world that then was, to fulfil the double character of a fugitive and a vagabond. Wise men, guides of to-day, tell us that this world

since the flood is much more according to the mind of God than the antediluvian one, and far better; but let us see the truth or falsehood of this assurance, where God's perfect and faithful witness to righteousness brought man's heart to the test. What do the mock trial and crucifixion of Christ say? What the voices of the High Priest and priests, Pharisees and elders? What the sentence of Pilate, and what the will of the people? "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Jesus, Lord and Saviour, the righteous witness between the heavens and the earth, cast out and killed like Abel; and Barabbas like Cain, at home in the world which has done it! The blood of Abel calls to God from the ground for vengeance, and so does the blood of His only begotten and well beloved Son, and He will make inquisition for it in the day which is at hand; only in the meanwhile God is preaching peace, by that very blood of Christ, to His betrayers and murderers, and declaring a free pardon and everlasting life to whosoever believeth in Jesus.

Was there ever anything so dark and full of enmity from man to God, as the dreadful cross where they nailed Jesus? Is there anything so bright, so full of love from God to man, as He turns this same cross round, and beseeches man in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God by the death of His Son?

"And Adam knew his wife again, and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel whom Cain slew." What an advance has Eve made in this early school-time of faith, and in her experience of God and His ways! In this new vocabulary the Cain is set aside whom she had gotten from the Lord, and Abel is but vanity stamped on everything outside and around herself; but now Seth is become the man of promise, "For God," said she, "hath appointed me another seed." How blessed and secure is that which comes to us from God, through the channel of His own appointing, and what a cluster of first ripe fruit do we

find in the record of that day: "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord." Precious link, and a moral one too, between God and this adopted family of Seth.

The book of the generations of Adam are in keeping with these ways of God in sovereign grace and power, for Cain and his posterity are out of sight, and out of mind, at any rate they have no place in this new genealogy which recognizes Seth the "substituted seed" and God's appointed head. In this list of antediluvian celebrities we read of an Enoch, and a Noah, and it is instructive to see the purposes of God budding and blossoming on this new stem.

We have already learnt that "men began then to call on the name of the Lord," and now we shall be taught yet further advance, and what a triumphant one, in the world in which man is a driven out creature. "And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah, three hundred years . . . and he was not, for God took him." Before *his translation*, he had this testimony, that he pleased God! A driven out man from Eden, it is true in the person of Adam, when by sin he had separated himself from God, is the first letter of this early alphabet, but a translated man, the man whom God took, is the last. Enoch walked with God and pleased God: how bright in its day was this pathway of three hundred years in a world which was ripening for destruction! The world, before the flood, has told its brightest tale, and let out the secret of translation to the eye and ear of the appointed seed for the heavens and for God.

It yet remains, that a man, to come out again upon the earth as the new depositary of promise, should be provided before all is swept away by the flood. So Lamech begat a son and called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed. If Enoch is for the heavens, as we have been taught, so Noah

is for the earth, and for rest, or for comfort concerning the place where the curse has taken effect, and done its bidding. In Enoch, one need scarcely say, we have the earliest type of the character, walk, and catching up of the Church to be for ever with the Lord, whilst in Noah, the man for the earth, brought out after the terrible judgment of God, into a new world, under the bow in the cloud, as the token of God's covenant with every living creature, founded upon the sweet savour of the altar, the new ground of his own acceptance—we are further taught the character and security of all created blessings. Adam and his world are swept away, and have given place to Noah, and the heavens and the earth which are now.

All these covenanted promises will receive their manifested accomplishment in the millennial earth, when the Enochs will be in their place of heavenly glory with their Lord for closer and more perfect intimacies in this day, when that which is perfect is come, and all that is in part shall be done away! How gracious and suited are the lessons which God teaches by pictorial representations and names in the childhood history of the human race, through an Adam, an Eve, a Cain, an Abel, a Seth, an Enoch, and a Noah, till Moses was called up to receive patterns for his people and his day, which the tabernacle and afterwards the temple displayed in all their glory and symbolic meaning, till they also give place to the great "mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

Bright the prospect soon that greets us
Of that long'd-for nuptial day
When our heavenly Bridegroom meets us
On His kingly, conquering way;
In THE GLORY,
Bride and Bridegroom reign for aye!

MEDITATIONS ON THE CHRISTIAN'S STANDING AND STATE.

(EPHESIANS I. 15—23; III. 14—21.)

VERSE 18. "*And what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.*" This is the second part of the apostle's prayer. The first is, that Christians may understand the nature of their calling; the second, that they may understand the glory of their inheritance; and the third, that they may understand the power which puts them in possession of all that grace has given.

We have been dwelling a little, in our meditations, on the first part. There we learn God's wondrous grace to His children. Their dignity and blessedness is beyond all thought. It is overwhelming. Their birth is heavenly; their nature, holy and loving; their relationship, sons: their privilege, one with Christ. His position as the risen Man is their position; His standing is their standing. They rank with Christ; and their eternal life gives them the capacity to enjoy what He enjoys. And surely, nothing more, nothing better than this can ever be conceived.

And now, O my soul, let thy thoughts dwell for a little on the *inheritance*—the inheritance of God's children. And thou wilt surely find that the inheritance is perfectly suited to the nature and position of the children. And forget not in thy meditations, that this inheritance is thine own; so shall thy thoughts be mingled with praise and thanksgiving. It is the Father's will for the children. Hence it is called "the mystery of *his will*"—the will that was kept a secret, or unrevealed, until the days of the apostle. Christ is before Him, and all is suited to *His* position, and we are joint-heirs with Him. Oh! what a future!—a future of the purest happiness and glory. But the children's chief blessedness will be their nearness to God Himself—the blessedness of His own presence. The inheritance is another

thing, and will embrace *created things*—all created things “both which are in heaven, and which are on earth.” The centre-place will be theirs, because it is Christ’s. And is this to be thy future—thy happy future, O my soul? Above thee—near thee—with thee—is thy Father’s presence—in thy Father’s house! And also, outside thy Father’s house—around that house—what? The vast universe of glory. From the lowly tomb of Joseph where the Lord once lay, to the throne of God where He now sits, shall be filled with His glory. What a spectacle for men and angels! The once despised Nazarene—His once despised followers, *together*, glorified together, in the centre of the glory. Till then, O my soul, seek to walk as becomes a child and heir of God.

Henceforth let each beloved child,
With quickened step proceed,
To walk with garments undefiled
Where’er thine eye may lead.
O largely give, ’tis all thine own,
The Spirit’s goodly fruit:
Praise, issuing forth in life, alone
Our loving Lord can suit.

The expression, “His inheritance in the saints,” is peculiar. It is *God’s* inheritance, and yet it is the *saints’*. They will personally possess it; and, jointly with Christ, it will be under their dominion. It is similar to the expression, “the hope of His calling.” It is God’s calling, but we are the called. Both are characterized as God’s; the former according to His grace, the latter according to His glory. It is this peculiarity which gives to each such excellency and blessedness. We have something very similar in the Old Testament. The land of Canaan was God’s inheritance in Israel. He gave it to Abraham and to his seed for an everlasting possession. But under the law it could not be sold, for God claimed it as His. “The

land shall not be sold for ever : for the land is mine." It is also called, "Immanuel's land." (Lev. xxv. 23. Isa. viii. 8.) In place of Jehovah taking possession of the land by a direct act of His power, he takes possession in the persons of His people, so that it is *His inheritance in His people*. Surely this is beautiful and blessed, it is God acting in sweetest fellowship with His beloved people. Oh ! that they could have seen and valued His love and care !

But when the better and brighter day comes, He will take possession, not of the land of Canaan merely, but of the entire universe : and that by the saints personally—the joint-heirs with Christ. But this grand theme is only referred to in the apostle's prayer ; the counsels of God respecting it are revealed in the middle of our chapter. "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth ; even in him. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Nothing can be plainer, we think, than these words ; but in passing from the subject of the calling, to that of the inheritance, the apostle touches upon a subject which is absolutely necessary to be known, before a soul can peacefully contemplate the coming of the Lord—the breaking up of everything here, and the future glory of the saints. And as some of our readers may not be in that state of settled repose, we will refer to the subject for a few moments.

Verse 7. "*In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.*" In the second chapter, man's condition under sin is fully stated. Here it is merely alluded to in passing. But there the judgment of God is plainly given. Man is dead—dead in trespasses and sins. He is not merely *sick* as some would fain believe ; no, he is dead—morally and spiritually

dead. Nothing can be lower than this. There are degrees in evil, but there are no degrees in death. And as to his present life, he is the willing slave of Satan. This is where the gospel found the Ephesians—where it found us—where it finds all. High as the Ephesians were raised in blessing, they were all raised from this low estate. Need we wonder then at these words, “The riches of his grace?” Our deep, deep poverty is met by the *riches* of His grace. When speaking of saints, the Spirit uses the word, “*Glory* of His grace,” but when speaking of poor sinners, the word is changed to “*Riches* of his grace.” He is *glorious* in grace—He is *rich* in grace. What love, what compassion we see in this! The heart is drawn to Him who thinks of us in our misery, and blesses us according to the riches of His own boundless grace. Far as our sin has abounded, grace much more abounds. But now for the details.

1. We needed *redemption*, and we have it—have it *now* as to our souls. “The redemption of the purchased possession” spoken of in verse 14, and the redemption of the body, we must wait for until Christ come. But the redemption of the soul, which is by far the most important thing to us, is fully and perfectly accomplished *now*. It never can be more so. This is the redemption referred to in verse 7. “In whom we have redemption through his blood.” Not *may*, or *will*, but we *have it now*. All is found in Christ, adored be His name! “In whom”—it is in Him that we see our standing in the presence of God; and it is in Him that we find the redemption, which fits us for it and sets us in it.

“ Salvation in that Name is found,
Cure for my grief and care;
A healing balm for every wound,
ALL, ALL I WANT IS THERE.”

2. We needed *forgiveness*, and we have it—have it *now*. We can never have it more fully. The blood of Christ is

the ground of our forgiveness, and the riches of God's grace *the standard*. Mark the things here placed in contrast;—The sinner's slavery, and eternal redemption. The sinner's poverty, and God's riches. The sinner's sins, and the blood of Christ. *Conditional* forgiveness would be *law*, not *grace*. *Partial* forgiveness would reflect no glory on the blood of Jesus; but full, unconditional forgiveness proves *God's* estimate of the blood, and shews that all blessing depends exclusively upon its value. We *are* forgiven then, according to the value of the blood of Christ, and according to the riches of divine grace. What more, we may ask, can be done?—what more can be needed? God has given His Son, His blood has been shed. More than this, God Himself cannot do, to blot out sin. What an unspeakable comfort—what a solid ground of peace and rest for our souls. His name alone have all the praise!

3. We needed redemption and forgiveness, not according to our thoughts and feelings, but according to God's thoughts and counsels, and we have them—have them *now*; and have both in connection with the Person of Christ. This is everything! We have redemption and forgiveness *in Him*. God is glorified, the riches of His grace are displayed, and our cup of blessing overflows.

Kind hearts are here, yet would the tenderest one

Have limits to its mercy, GOD *has none*.

And man's forgiveness may be true and sweet,

And yet he stoops to give it; more complete

Is love that lays forgiveness at thy feet

And pleads with thee to raise it; only Heaven

Means *crowned*, not *vauquished*, when it says, "FORGIVEN."

But some will say, "How is it then, that I still feel sin working in my heart, if I am so fully forgiven—so richly blessed?" True, sin still remains in the heart. But has God anywhere said that He has put away sin from the

believer's heart? I am sure He has not. What then? He put it away on the cross; He has not put it away from your heart. But just because it was put away on the cross, He has forgiven you, and all who believe in Jesus. Therefore God rests on the completed work of the cross, and that is where you should rest. There is no other ground of rest for a guilty soul in the universe; but faith in the cross, however weak, draws down God's deepest compassion, and the boundless riches of His grace. But on the other hand, all confidence, however strong, that is not founded on the cross, is without God's approval, and must come to nothing. Be content then to know that God dealt with thy sins in the Person of thy Substitute on the cross, and put them away by the shedding of His precious blood. The whole question of sin as to every believer is settled and sealed in the blood of God's dear Son.

But again, the uneasy soul will say, "I am sure I sin daily, and if I live till to-morrow I shall be sinning again, let me watch against it as I may; what am I to think about these sins?" Think of them, O believer, humiliating as they are, as having been judged by God in the Person of His Son on the cross. "His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." (1 Pet. ii. 24.) This will work in thy soul a deeper sense of His love, and of the hatefulness of sin, than anything else can. All true, honest, self judgment of sin, is founded on the assurance that it was divinely judged on the cross. When thou hast no doubt that God judged and put away these very sins on the cross; then thou canst judge them thoroughly in His holy presence. *Self judgment* must go on as long as we are in this world, for sin will exist as long as we are here. But the *divine judgment* of sin was executed *once*, and *finished*. "It is finished," should give perfect rest as to the divine judgment of sin.

If then, O believer, thou wouldst be truly happy in the presence of God, then thou must well understand these two things—*self judgment*, and *the divine judgment of sin and*

sins on the cross. And rest assured that this is needful, before thou canst happily or profitably study the scriptures as to the coming of the Lord, or His millennial glory. It is never a healthy sign for a soul to be enquiring about prophecy that has not settled peace with God. Thus it is that the apostle would have this question fairly before the Ephesians, ere he opens up to them the mysteries of God's will as to the coming glory. How can we calmly and profitably enter into the counsels of God as to the future, if we are not perfectly free from anxiety as to our own salvation?

May we be enabled by His grace to rest where He rests; and to see that it was on the cross that He put away sin, and not from our hearts; and, farther, may there be the fullest self judgment of all our faults and failures, not only because of the loathsomeness of sin in itself, but because God has judged them all once and for ever in the cross of His beloved Son.



U P T H E R E !

OH! the glory and the joy,
Happiness without alloy,
Not a sorrow or a care
Shall we ever know

Up there!

Joyfully the severed meet,
And with rapture loved ones greet;
Nought their gladness to impair,
Partings all unknown

Up there!

Not a trouble, or a sigh,
Nor a tear bedims the eye;
Sweetest songs and music rare,
Echo through the realms

Up there!

No temptation and no pain,
 Can we ever feel again,
 Nought can with the rest compare
 That the saints enjoy

Up there !

'Tis our Jesu's lovely face,
 Beaming full of truth and grace,
 Brightest, fairest of the fair,
 Fount of joy to all

Up there !

Lamb of God, in glory come,
 Call thy loved ones to their home,
 With the saints do thou appear,
 Take thy blood-bought bride

Up there !

E. L. P. R.



CORRESPONDENCE.

43. "J. S.," St. Affrique. We assuredly believe that the disciples had divine life before the Holy Ghost came down. You must clearly distinguish between divine life and the Holy Ghost's indwelling. All the Old Testament saints had divine life. The two things are quite distinct. The apostle prays for the Ephesians, "That God would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man." (Eph. iii. 16.) Here you have both the divine life—"the inner man"—and the Holy Ghost. You have also to distinguish between "life," and "life more abundantly," according to the words of our Lord in John x. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (v. 10.) And, in pursuance of this, we find the risen Lord—the Head of the new creation, in John xx.,

breathing upon His disciples, and saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." This was "life more abundantly," even previous to the day of Pentecost. But when our Lord took His seat at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, the Holy Ghost came down, according to the promise of the Father.

44. "G. M. S.," Bordeaux. (A) During the interval between the Lord's ascension and the day of Pentecost, the disciples were commanded to tarry at Jerusalem until they should be endued with power from on high; and even after that, God's testimony was specially to Israel until they filled up the measure of their iniquities, and were utterly rejected as a nation. (B) If you compare 2 Chron. v. 2, 10 with Hebrews ix. 4, you will find that when the ark was in the tabernacle in the wilderness, it contained the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant. But, when the ark was brought into the temple, there was nothing in it but the tables. The pot of manna and the rod, those memorials of wilderness scenes and circumstances were laid aside, and nothing remained save that which formed the foundation of Jehovah's throne of government in Israel and over all the earth. (c) As to the difference between "Cherubim" and "Seraphim:" the former are the inseparable adjuncts of God's throne of government; the latter would seem from Isaiah vi. to be an order of angelic ministry. (D) John viii. 34, 35 teaches that nothing suits the Father's house but the spirit of liberty. There is no legal yoke, no spirit of bondage there. Sonship is the order, and "Abba" the cry in the Father's house. The law could never introduce the soul into the house, much less give it an abiding place there. Accept our very warmest thanks, beloved friend, for your truly kind and welcome letter. It would be a real pleasure to send you a direct reply, but we are much pressed for time. May God bless you!

Several Communications stand over for want of space.

THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION.

(PART IV.)

THE reader who has travelled intelligently with us through the opening lines of 2 Corinthians v. will be in a position to understand something of the solemn and momentous subject to which we now approach, namely, the judgment-seat of Christ. If indeed it be true that the believer is God's workmanship—if he is actually a member of Christ—associated with the Second Adam—bound up in the bundle of life with the risen and glorified Lord: if all this be true—and God's word declares it is—then it must be perfectly evident that the judgment-seat of Christ cannot, by any possibility, touch the Christian's position, or prove, in any wise, unfriendly to him. No doubt, it is a most solemn and serious matter, involving the most weighty consequences to every servant of Christ, and designed to exert a most salutary influence upon the heart and conscience of every man. But it will do all this just in proportion as it is viewed from the true standpoint, and no further. It is not to be supposed that any one can reap the divinely appointed blessing from meditating on the judgment-seat, if he is looking forward to it as the place where the grand question of his eternal salvation is to be settled. And yet how many are thus regarding it! How many of God's true people there are who, from not seeing the simple truth involved in these words, "He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God," are anticipating the judgment-seat of Christ as something that may, after all, condemn them.

This is greatly to be deplored, both because it dishonours the Lord, and completely destroys the soul's peace and liberty. For how, let us ask, is it possible for any one to enjoy peace so long as there is a single question to be

settled? We conceive it is wholly impossible. The peace of the true believer rests on the fact that every possible question has been divinely and eternally settled; and, as a consequence, no question can ever arise, either before the judgment-seat of Christ, or at any other time. Hear what our Lord Jesus Christ saith in reference to this great question: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, *hath* everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation [or, judgment]; but is passed from death unto life." John v. 24.

It is important that the reader should understand that the word used by our Lord in the above passage is not "condemnation" but "judgment." He assures the believer that he shall never come into judgment; and this, too, be it observed, in immediate connection with the statement that "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." (Ver. 22.) And, again, "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." Ver. 26, 27.

Thus, then, the One to whom all judgment is committed—who alone has authority to execute judgment, by the Father's just decree—this blessed One assures us that if we hearken to His word, and believe on Him that sent Him, we shall never come into judgment at all.

This is clear and conclusive. It must tranquillize the heart completely. It must roll away every cloud and mist, and conduct the soul into a region where no question can ever arise to disturb its deep and eternal repose. If the One who has all judgment in His hand, and all authority to execute it—if He assures me that I shall never come into judgment, I am perfectly satisfied. I believe His word, and rest in the happy assurance that whatever the judgment-seat of Christ may prove to others, it cannot prove unfriendly to me. I know that the word of the Lord

endureth for ever, and that word tells me I shall never come into judgment.

But it may be that the reader finds it difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile this entire exemption from judgment with the solemn fact stated by our Lord that "For every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." But there is really no difficulty in the matter. If a man has to meet judgment at all, he must give account for every idle word. How awfully solemn the thought! There is no escaping it. Were it possible for a single idle word to be let pass, it would be a dishonour to the judgment-seat. It would be a sign of weakness and incompetency which is utterly impossible. It were blasphemy against the Son of God to suppose that a single stain could escape His scrutinizing gaze. If the reader comes into judgment, that judgment must be perfect, and, hence, his condemnation must be inevitable.

We would press this serious matter upon the attention of the unconverted reader. It imperatively demands his immediate and earnest consideration. There is a day rapidly approaching when every idle word, and every foolish thought, and every sinful act, will be brought to light, and he will have to answer for it. Christ, as a Judge, has eyes like unto a flame of fire, and feet like unto fine brass—eyes to detect, and feet to crush the evil. There will be no escape. There will be no mercy then: all will be stern and unmitigated judgment. "I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the *books* were opened; and another *book* was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the *books* according to their *works*. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and the grave gave up the

dead which were in them; and they were judged *every man according to their works*. And death and the grave were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Rev. xx. 11—15.

Mark here the difference between "the books" and "the book of life." The entire scene sets forth the judgment of the wicked dead—of those who have died in their sins, from first to last. "The book of life" is opened; but there is no judgment for those whose names are written therein by the hand of electing and redeeming love. "The books" are opened—those awful records written in characters deep, broad, and black—those terrible catalogues of the sins of every man, woman, and child, from the beginning to the end of time. There will be no escaping in the crowd. Each one will stand in his own most intense individuality in that appalling moment. The eye of each will be turned in upon himself, and back upon his past history. All will be seen in the light of the great white throne, from which there is no escape.

The sceptic may reason against all this. He may say, "*How* can these things be? *How* could all the dead stand before God? *How* could the countless millions, who have passed away since the foundation of the world, find sufficient space before the judgment-seat?" The answer is very simple to the true believer, whatever it may be to the sceptic; God who made them, will make a place for them to stand for judgment, and a place to lie in everlasting torment. Tremendous thought! "God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." Acts xvii. 31.

And be it remembered that "*every man will be judged according to his works*." The solemn session of the judgment referred to in Revelation xx. will not be an indis-

criminate act. Let none suppose this. There are "*books*"—rolls—records. "*Every man*" will be judged. How? "*According to his works.*" Nothing can be more precise and specific. Each one has committed his own sins, and for them he will be judged and punished everlastingly. We are aware that many cherish the notion that people will only be judged for rejecting the gospel. It is a fatal mistake. Scripture teaches the direct contrary. It declares that people will be judged according to their works. What are we to learn from the "*many stripes*" and the "*few stripes*" of Luke xii.? What is the force of the words "*more tolerable*" in Matthew xi.? Are we not plainly taught by these words that there will be a difference in the degrees of judgment and punishment? And does not the apostle most distinctly teach us in Ephesians iv. and Colossians iii. that the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience (or, unbelief) "*because of*" certain sins against which he solemnly warns the saints.

No doubt, the rejection of the gospel leaves people on the ground of judgment, just as the true belief of the gospel takes people off that ground. But the judgment will be, in every case, according to a man's works. Are we to suppose that the poor ignorant savage, who has lived and died amid the gloomy shades of heathen darkness, will be found in the same "*book,*" or punished with the same severity as a man who has lived and died in the total rejection of the full blaze of gospel light and privilege? Not for a moment, so long as the words "*more tolerable*" stand on the page of inspiration. The savage will be judged according to his works, and the baptized sinner will be judged according to his works; but, assuredly, it will be more tolerable for the former than the latter. God knows how to deal with people. He can discriminate, and He declares that He will give to each according to his works.

Reader, think of this, we beseech you. Think deeply, think seriously. If thou art unconverted, think of it for

thyself, for, assuredly, it concerns thee. And if thou art converted, think of it for others, as the apostle says, "Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." It is impossible for any one to reflect upon the great and awful fact of judgment to come, and not be stirred up to warn his fellows. We believe it is of the very last possible importance that the conscience of men should be acted upon by the solemn truth of the judgment-seat of Christ—that they should be made to feel the seriousness of having to do with God as a Judge.

Should the reader, whoever he be, have been led to feel this—if he has been roused by this weighty matter—if he is, even now, asking the question, "What must I do?" the answer is blessedly simple. The gospel declares that the One who will, ere long, act as a judge, is now revealed as a Justifier—even a Justifier of the ungodly sinner that believeth in Jesus. This changes the aspect of things entirely. It is not that the thought of the judgment-seat loses a single jot or tittle of its gravity and solemnity. Quite the contrary. It stands in all its weight and magnitude. But the believer looks at it from a totally different point of view. In place of looking at the judgment-seat of Christ as a guilty member of the first Adam, he looks at it as a justified and accepted member of the Second. In place of looking forward to it as the place where the question of his eternal salvation or perdition is to be decided, he looks to it as one who knows that he is God's workmanship, and that he can never come into judgment, inasmuch as he has been taken clean off the ground of guilt, death, and judgment, and placed, through the death and resurrection of Christ, on a new ground altogether, even the ground of life, righteousness, and cloudless favour.

It is most needful to be clear as to this grand fundamental truth. Very many even of the people of God are clouded in reference to it, and hence it is that they are afraid when they think of the judgment-seat. They do not

know God as a Justifier. Their faith has not grasped Him as the One who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. They are looking to Christ to keep God out as a Judge, very much in the same way as the Israelites looked to the blood to keep out the destroyer. (See Exod. xiv.) It is true and real enough, so far as it goes; but it falls very far short of the truth revealed in the New Testament. There is a vast difference between keeping God out as a destroyer and a Judge, and bringing Him in as a Saviour and a Justifier. An Israelite would have dreaded, above all things, God's coming in to him. Why? Because God was passing through the land as a destroyer. The Christian, on the contrary, delights to be in the presence of God. Why? Because He has revealed Himself as a Justifier. How? By raising up Jesus our Lord from the dead.

There are three forms of expression used by the inspired apostle in Romans iii. and iv. which should be carefully pondered. In chapter iii. 26 he speaks of "Believing in Jesus." In chapter iv. 5, he speaks of "Believing in him that justifieth the ungodly." And, verse 24, he speaks of "Believing in him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead."

Now, there is no distinction in scripture without a difference; and, when we see a distinction, it is our business to enquire as to the difference. What, then, is the difference between believing in Jesus, and believing in Him that raised up Jesus? We believe it to be this. We may often find souls who are really looking to Jesus and believing in Him, and yet they have, deep down in their hearts, a sort of dread of meeting God. It is not that they doubt their salvation, or that they are not really saved. By no means. They are saved, inasmuch as they are looking to Christ, by faith, and all who so look are saved in Him with an everlasting salvation. All this is most blessedly true; but still there is this latent fear or dread of God, and a shrinking from death. They know that Jesus is friendly to them,

inasmuch as He died for them ; but they do not see clearly the friendship of God as expressed in the act of His raising up Jesus our Lord from the dead.

Hence it is that we find so many of God's people in uncertainty and spiritual distress. Their faith has not yet laid hold of God as the One who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. They are not quite sure of how it may go with them. At times they are happy, because the new nature, of which they are assuredly the partakers, gets occupied with Christ ; but at times they are miserable, because they begin to look at themselves, and they do not see God as their Justifier, and as the One who has condemned sin in the flesh. They are thinking of God as a Judge with whom some question still remains to be settled. They feel as if God's eye were resting on their indwelling sin, and as if they had, in some way or another, to dispose of that question with God.

Thus it is, we feel persuaded, with hundreds of the true saints of God. They do not see God as the Condemner of sin and the Justifier of the believing sinner. They are looking to Christ on the cross, to screen them from God as a Judge, instead of looking at God as a Justifier, in raising up Christ from the dead. Jesus was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. Our sins are forgiven ; our indwelling sin, or evil nature, is condemned and set aside. It has no existence before God. It is in us, but He does not see us in it. He sees us only in a risen Christ ; and we are called to *reckon* ourselves dead, and, by the power of God's Spirit, to mortify our members, to deny and subdue the evil nature which still dwells in us, and will dwell until we are passed out of our present condition, and find our place for ever with the Lord.

This makes all so blessedly clear. We saw in our last paper, that "They that are in the flesh cannot please God ;" but the believer is not in the flesh, though the flesh be in him. He is in the *body*, and on the *earth*, as to the

fact of his existence ; but he is neither in the *flesh* nor of the *world* as to the ground or principle of his standing. "Ye," says the Holy Ghost, "are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." (Rom. viii.) "They," says our blessed Lord, "are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." John xvii.

What a sweet relief to a heart bowed down under a sense of indwelling sin, and not knowing what to do with it ! What solid peace and comfort flow into the soul when I see God condemning my sin in the cross, and justifying me in a risen Christ ! Where are my *sins* ? Blotted out. Where is my *sin* ? Condemned and set aside. Where am I ? Justified and accepted in a risen Christ. I am brought to God without a single cloud or misgiving. I am not afraid of my Justifier. I confide in Him, love Him, and adore Him. I joy in God and rejoice in hope of His glory.

Thus, then, we have, in some measure, cleared the way for the believer to approach the subject of the Judgment-seat of Christ ; but we shall not enter upon it now. The Lord may permit us to go into it in our next. We shall close this paper with those memorable words of our chapter, "Therefore we are *always confident*, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord : (for we walk by faith not by sight :) we are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him."

"The Lord of Life in death hath lain,
To clear me from all charge of sin ;
And, Lord, from guilt of crimson stain
Thy precious blood hath made me clean.
And, now a righteousness divine
Is all my glory, all my trust ;
Nor will I fear, since that is mine,
While thou dost live, and God is just."

MEDITATIONS ON THE CHRISTIAN'S STANDING AND STATE.

(EPHESIANS I. 15—23; III. 14—21.)

THE whole question of sin, both as to the soul of the believer and the claims of God, being thus settled, the apostle is free to unfold the counsels of God concerning His Son. The saints are now in a fit condition to hear and enter into the truth. The one grand object of these counsels, is the honour and glory of His beloved Son. He hath purposed to glorify Him in the very scenes of His former humiliation. In due time it shall be brought to pass, and that in a way worthy of the Father's love. Amen! so let it be, exclaim all heaven and the hearts of all the faithful. Thou, Lord Jesus—thou art worthy!

At the same time, O my soul, bear in mind, that as the Church is one with Christ, she will be glorified *together* with Him. True, most true—scripture affirms it—we must maintain it. So we read in this very epistle: "This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church." Christ by Himself is not the mystery, neither is the Church by herself; but Christ and the Church *together*. She will share the honour and glory along with Christ, not because of anything which she has done, but because she belongs to Him. This explains everything as to her privileges and blessings—she belongs to Him.

Blessed Lord! what love! Who would not seek to form a part of thy Church—thy bride? Many, alas! are setting at nought these eternal honours, for the passing trifles of a moment. Deliver such, O Lord, in thy mercy, from the blinding power of Satan, and truly bring them to thyself. May they *now* hear *thy voice* and follow thee. The door still stands wide open, blessed be thy name—the door that leads to thy home, thy heart, thy bridal glories!

The word "mystery," let the reader understand, affords no excuse for ignorance on this subject. In scripture, the word does not mean something that we cannot understand, or that is even difficult to understand, but something that has not been revealed before—something that God kept secret in His own mind until He was pleased to reveal it. A great deal is said, for example, in the Old Testament about the millennium, and about the blessings of Israel in a land flowing with milk and honey; but nothing is said about the position of the Church as one with Christ in heavenly places during that period. Neither is there anything said in the Old Testament about the Church's present position in suffering and rejection, or her future position as reigning and glorified with Christ. It was a secret—a hidden mystery, until the days of the apostle Paul; but when revealed, it is plain enough. But there is more, much more, in the mystery revealed to the apostle. God has not only made known to us the *secret* of His heart concerning the Church, but also, we may say, that which lay *deepest* in His heart—even the glory of His dear Son. He has thus committed to our trust that which lay long a secret in His own mind. Surely this is treating us as friends. This, O most gracious God, is like thy love, but most unlike what we deserve. The grace and the glory are thine alone.

This then is the mystery of His will—His good pleasure concerning Christ and the Church, which He hath purposed in Himself: "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance." Clearly then, it is God's purpose to unite all things in heaven and on earth, under Christ as Head. All things will be under His hand and dominion; the heavens and the earth, which are now so far apart, will be united together as by Jacob's ladder; or, according to our

Lord's own words to Nathanael, "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." The heavens and the earth will form one united scene of glory under the headship of Christ, during the millennium.

But here pause for a moment, my soul, and enquire, how this vast scene of universal glory can be the *inheritance* of the saints. This is well, the inheritance of the saints is our present theme, still it is well to understand the whole counsel of God: it gives breadth of truth to the soul. Observe, then, that it is as "the Son of man," that Christ is thus glorified. It is as such that we are associated with Him in the glory: "*In whom we have also obtained an inheritance.*" Nothing can be plainer than this. And this will be the peculiar glory of the millennium. All things are put under His authority as man. And the Church, as now risen *in Him*, will then be associated *with Him* in the glory. Dwell on this wondrous truth for a moment, O my soul. Think where humanity has been carried to in the Person of Christ, and in what state it will appear on that day of full millennial glory! What a thought!—the vast, boundless scene of heavenly and earthly glory under the headship of man. As man—as the Second Man—the Last Adam, He unites all things under His own hand, in peace, glory, and blessing. Then the Church will be seen, known, and acknowledged, as the second Eve of the heavenly man, the Last Adam. As the risen man He is heir of all things, and we are joint-heirs with Him. This is *the inheritance of the saints*; or, "the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints." The heavens and the earth, thus filled with glory, belong to God; but He holds them in His heavenly saints. At the close of the millennium, when Christ shall have put down all rule and all authority and power, He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, that God may be all in all. But still there is a sense in which we shall reign for ever—

"reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. xv. 24—28; Rom. v. 17.

Before passing on to the third part of the apostle's prayer—"The exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe;" we will look at an expression in verse 10, which is of immense importance in the economical ways of God, and closely connected with our present subject—"The dispensation of the fulness of times." The word "dispensation," or rather "administration," refers to the time when all things will be under the administration of Christ. This will be the *millennium*. *Now* Satan is permitted to reign as the god and prince of this world. *Then* he will be shut up in the bottomless pit. (Rev. xx. 1—3.) Christ reigning as the Prince of peace, and Satan bound in the bottomless pit, must produce a mighty change in the world. Then will be earth's jubilee. But she can hold no jubilee till then. Satan must be entirely off the scene, and Christ must take the reins of government into His own hands, before this earth's inhabitants can enjoy peace and quietness. But the promise is sure. "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." (Isa. xxxii.) This will be the state of things on the earth; and of the heavenly saints it is said, "And they shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years." (Rev. xx. 4.) The millennium, or administration of Christ, comes in between the rapture of the saints and the eternal state. No change on earth for the better need be looked for until after the Church is gone, and the scene swept of its corrupters, and the reign of Christ fairly begun. But what a comfort for our hearts to know, that He may come at any moment, and take us out of it all, and up to be with Himself in the house of many mansions. He puts no event, no circum-

stance, not even a moment of time, between our hearts and His coming for us. We are not looking for a second advent merely, but for the Son from heaven : these were His last words, "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly." Would that they had their own place in our hearts ! Then could we say in true affection, "Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus."

"A little while"—Come, Saviour, come !

For thee thy bride has tarried long :

Take thy poor waiting pilgrims home,

To sing the new eternal song,

To see thy glory, and to be

In everything conformed to thee."

Some have thought that the expression, "the fulness of times," refers to the *present* time, and means the same thing as "the fulness of the time." (Gal. iv.) This is evidently a mistake. "The fulness of the time," and "the fulness of *times*," are widely different in their meaning. The one refers to the past, the incarnation ; the other to the future, the administration. In Galatians the apostle is speaking of the time appointed in the divine counsels having fully come, when "God sent forth his Son." In Ephesians he speaks of a time yet future, when all *times* or periods will meet and terminate in the reign of Christ. Many things now running their course must end then, and end for ever. Hence it is called "the fulness of *times*." For example—

Creation's long subjection to decay and death will then be brought to an end. "For the earnest expectation of the creature (or creation) waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." (Rom. viii.) Not, observe, for the manifestation of the *Son* of God, but the *sons* of God. *He* has been manifested ; *they*, not yet. It is when the *sons* of God are manifested in the glory, that the groaning creation will be relieved : that will be the signal for its complete deliverance. Its time of bondage runs on till then. "The whole

creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now:" and, alas, must continue to groan and travail until Christ, and God's "many sons," appear in glory. But then, O happy day, the whole creation will be delivered from the bondage of corruption—the winding sheet of death in which it has been swathed since the days of Adam shall then be removed—the trail of the serpent shall disappear before the rising beams of the Sun of Righteousness—the wild beasts of the field shall be shorn of their ferocity—the earth shall yield her increase, the wilderness shall rejoice and blossom as the rose—and men shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. Thus shall end the long period of creation's subjection to vanity. Hasten it, in thy good time, O most gracious Lord! Oh, how many voices from the depths of oppression are daily and hourly crying, Come, Lord Jesus, O come quickly!

“ Then comes the final kingdom,
No bound, nor end possessing,
When heaven, and earth,
Entranced shall lie
In universal blessing;
No mourning tongue to sadden,
No breath of sin to wither,
In earth—on high—
Be nought but joy,
And blissful peace for ever.”

But as it would be out of place here to enlarge on the many *times* or *periods*, which are now running their sorrowful course, we will merely name some of them, and leave them for the reader's own meditation.

The time of God's long-suffering with evil, which still goes on, will end at the appearing of Christ; and so will the *time* of Israel's judicial blindness—the *time* of Gentile dominion—the *time* of universal misrule—the *time* of the

enemy's power to deceive—the *time* of the Church's weakness and suffering—the *time* of Christ's sitting at the right hand of God. *These times*, and more that might be named, are limited in their duration—limited to the time of the Lord's coming—"The times of restitution (or restoring) of all things." The times of evil, of distress, of sorrow, and of open wickedness, will end, run out—cease to be, in "the dispensation of the fulness of times." Christ will then take up that which has failed in the hands of men from Adam downwards, and reign as the Lord's Anointed for a thousand years. All things will be put under Him as Head. The Church, His bride, will then be with Him, as the joint-heir of the inheritance of glory. Then God will be perfectly glorified in the world's government—His will done on earth as it is in heaven, and all His ways completely vindicated.

" Head of the Church, thy body,
 Jesus, our great salvation !
 Sweet to thy saints
 It is to think
 Of all thine exaltation !
 All power to thee's committed,
 All power in earth, and heaven ;
 To thee a name
 Above all fame,
 Above all glory's given."



J E S U S .

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." Heb. ii. 9—11.

In these verses we have our Lord Jesus presented to us in three distinct aspects; namely, first, as tasting death; secondly, as perfected through sufferings; thirdly, as the firstborn among many brethren.

I. And, first, as tasting death for every man. In this character we see Jesus crowned with glory; and, in the crown which He wears, we behold the glorious proof that sin is put away and the sting of death gone. There never was such a thing seen as a man crowned in heaven, until the Man Jesus took His place on high, after having tasted death for every man. It is not an innocent man in Eden. It is not man in a restored earth. It is not man on the throne of Israel. No; it is a man on the throne of God in heaven, and crowned with glory in respect to a work which He accomplished on the earth. He *tasted* death for every man.

Now, if Jesus is crowned with glory in respect to my sins, what remains for me? Simply to walk in the holy and happy consciousness that all is settled. The One who was crucified for my sins is crowned without them. A single doubt or question on my part would be calling in question His right to wear the crown. A person may not see this; or he may imagine it is putting it in too strong a light; but the fact is, the two things go together. If the Sin-bearer is crowned, sin is put away; if the Taster of death is crowned, the sting of death is gone. Thus it is in God's view; and thus it is also in the view of faith. The crowned Man in glory settles the whole question as to sin and death.

II. But we see Jesus in another aspect, and that is as the Captain of our salvation, made perfect through "sufferings." This, necessarily, presents God's people in another aspect also. As *sinner*s, to be saved from sin and its consequences, we needed One who could taste death for us; but as *sons* to be brought to glory, we needed a Captain of salvation, perfected through sufferings. The reader will

carefully note the difference between "*suffering*" and "*sufferings*." The former had respect to His office and work as a Sin-bearer; the latter, to His office and work as the Captain of our salvation. When, with the eye of faith, we look up into heaven, we see Jesus crowned in respect to the complete putting away of sin; but we see more; we see in Him a perfect Captain—One who has gone through every possible form of suffering, and that in order that He might bring many sons to glory. Jesus has passed through this sin-stricken world, Himself all pure and spotless. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. It is thus He can sympathize with and succour His people in all their afflictions and temptations.

What an unspeakable consolation for the "many sons" to know that there is a Man in glory, who, when down here, passed through every kind of sorrow and pressure, sin excepted, in order that He might, as a perfect Captain, take each son by the hand and conduct him home to glory! How sweet to remember, as we pursue our appointed path across the desert, that our Captain has gone before us, and that His footprints can be discerned by the eye of faith all the way through. He knows all our trials and difficulties. He has felt them all. An angel knows nothing about such things; but our blessed Lord came down into all our circumstances, so that we might taste His perfect sympathy. There is a heart now beating on the throne of God, in heaven, that has felt everything that a perfect human heart could feel.

"Touched with a sympathy within,
He knows our feeble frame;
He knows what sore temptations mean,
For He has felt the same.
He, in the days of feeble flesh,
Poured out His cries and tears,
And, though ascended, feels afresh
What every member bears."

III. And, now, one word as to the third aspect in which our Lord is seen in this profound passage. He is here seen as the Firstborn among many brethren. This, clearly, could only be in resurrection. Union with Christ could only be on this ground. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and *die*, it abideth *alone*." He was a pure untainted grain, and could not coalesce with that which was impure. He had to die in order to link us with Him and call us "brethren."

The reader cannot be too distinct as to this vital point. Union with Christ could only be through His death. It is a cardinal error to suppose that Christ took fallen human nature into union with Himself at His incarnation. Impossible. Between Him and us there could be no union save on the ground of death. How could there be union, and sin not put away? If souls could be united to Christ in incarnation, then what need was there of His sacrificial death? Assuredly, we could want nothing more than union with Christ; but, be it carefully noted by the reader, this union could only be on the ground of death. Indeed we see how that the atoning death of Christ is the foundation of everything, so that, if that be touched, we have really nothing left. It is well to be very clear and very firm as to this grand mystery. Christendom is setting it aside, in various ways; but the Church of God must hold it fast, and confess it in the face of everything. We owe everything to the death of Christ—union, life, righteousness, peace, glory. We have all through death—nothing without it. If our Lord had not died, He should have remained eternally alone, and we should have been eternally damned. Incarnation could not save us. Indeed the effect of the life of Christ in this world was to make manifest how utterly lost we were. It put man perfectly to the test, and proved him to be utterly corrupt and gone.

But He died for our sins, according to the scriptures; He was buried, and He rose the third day according to the

scriptures. And here lies the foundation of all God's counsels; whether it be with respect to the Church, to Israel, or "the vast universe of bliss," of which a dead and risen Christ is the centre. All is founded on death. Jesus met all the power of the enemy—He met it alone. He was alone in the pit—alone in the miry clay—alone on the cursed tree. But having done all, He rose from the grave; and, now, as the Firstborn among many brethren—the Firstbegotten from the dead, He associates His people with Himself, and calls them brethren. "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto *my* Father, and *your* Father; and to my God, and your God." (John xx.) This was after His resurrection. Such words could not have been used until the corn of wheat had fallen into the ground and died. Matthew xii. 49, 50, may present a difficulty to the mind of the reader; but it is not there a question of relationship at all, as is evident from verse 50, "The same is my brother, and sister, and mother." In fact, our Lord, in this passage, is setting aside the idea of anything like relationship after the flesh, and proving that those who did the will of His Father were morally nearer to Him than His brethren after the flesh. The contrast between John xx. 17 and Matthew xii. 49, 50, must be evident to the intelligent reader.



WE WILL BE GLAD AND REJOICE IN THEE.

АH, Jesus, Lord, thou art near to me,
Great peace flows into my heart from thee,
And thy smile of love fills me so with gladness,
This weary body forgets its sadness,
For thankful joy.

We see thy countenance beaming bright,
Thy grace, thy beauty—by faith, not sight;
But thou art thyself to our souls revealing:
We love thee, thy presence and favour feeling,
Although unseen.

Oh ! who would only, by night and day,
 Be set on joying in thee alway,
 He could but tell of delight abounding,
 Through body and soul one song resounding,
 " Who is like thee ? "

To be compassionate, patient, kind,
 Thy pardon leaving our sins behind—
 To heal us, calm us, our faint hearts cheering,
 Thyself to us as a friend endearing,
 Is thy delight.

Ah ! give us to find our all of joy
 In thee, thy service our sweet employ,
 And let our souls with a constant yearning,
 In need and love to thyself be turning,
 Without a pause.

And when we are weeping, console us soon,
 Thy grace and power for thy peace make room ;
 Thy mirror'd likeness thy praises telling,
 Thine own true life in our bosoms dwelling,
 In love be seen.

Truthful in childlike simplicity,
 Guileless, arrayed in humility,
 Be the holy wounds of thy tribulation
 The fount of our peace and our consolation
 In joy and woe.

Thus happy in thee till we enter heaven,
 The children's gladness to us be given ;
 And if, peradventure, our eyes are weeping,
 Our hearts on thy bosom shall hush their beating
 In full repose.

Thou reachest us, Jesus, thy pierced hand ;
 Thy faithfulness, gazing, we understand ;
 And, shamed into tears by thy love so tender,
 Our eyes flow over, our hearts surrender,
 And give thee praise !

CORRESPONDENCE.

45. "J. D.," Bordeaux. You wish to know why the emblem of the serpent is used in John iii. 14. Numbers xxi. furnishes the answer. Israel's murmurs were answered by the serpents' bite; but when they owned their sin, grace provided a remedy. Moses was commanded to make a serpent of brass—the figure of that which had done the mischief—and set it upon a pole, and every bitten one that looked to the serpent of brass lived. God did not remove the serpents. He suffered them to go on doing their terrible work; but He provided a remedy, to which each one had to look for himself. It was an individual matter. One man could not look for another; but the moment he looked he lived, and could then calmly look at the fiery serpents, knowing they could no longer hurt him. Now Christ is the great Antitype of the brazen serpent. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Precious words!

46. "A Reader of 'Things New and Old,'" Malvern. We cannot conceive how anyone, the least acquainted with the letter of the New Testament, could suppose that the shepherds of Bethlehem were the same as the wise men from the East. A Sunday school child even ought to know better.

47. "J. B.," Manchester. We consider that Acts xix. 1–7 does most clearly shew that persons may be "disciples," and "believers," and yet not be sealed with the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost had come down—was actually on the earth, and yet here were twelve persons called "disciples" who had believed, and yet they had not received the Holy Ghost.

48. "E. S. K.," North Brixton. The case to which you refer in 1 Cor. v. illustrates the nature and object of church discipline. The man was put away from the as-

sembly, where the Holy Ghost ruled, and delivered over to Satan, not that he might be lost, but, on the contrary, "that his spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." In the Second Epistle he is restored to the fellowship of the church. We believe, most assuredly, that every assembly of Christians is solemnly bound to exercise discipline, and put away evil from their midst. If they refuse to do so, they are not on the ground of the Church of God at all. We are most thankful for the blessing you have received through our pages. To God alone be all the praise! Continue to pray for us.

49. "E. L.," Belfast. Your question is not intelligently put. The apostle declares that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth *us* from all sin." The divine nature does not want cleansing, because it cannot sin; but *we* want cleansing, and healing, and restoration, because we carry about an evil nature, and have to pass through a defiling scene. When the apostle speaks of "*us*," he speaks of a complex thing; but when he speaks of "that which is born of God," he speaks of an abstract and a perfect thing.

50. "F. G.," Essex. John vi. 35 teaches very plainly that the soul that feeds upon Christ and His precious death does not want anything else. He shall never hunger and never thirst. May our souls ever be satisfied with Christ!

51. "P. N.," Bristol. We believe it is the Christian's duty to pay whatever taxes are demanded of him without any question as to how such taxes are applied. For this latter the government is responsible.

52. "D. J.," Darley. There is a tract entitled "Sanctification: what is it?" which may help you. If you send three postage stamps to Mr. Morrish, 24, Warwick Lane, Paternoster Row, you will get a copy by return of post.

53. "J. B.," Aberford. We take Romans xiii. 8 in its plain, broad sense. We believe it teaches us to owe no man anything. Would to God it were more fully carried

out! It is painful beyond expression to see the sad lack of conscience among professors, as to the question of debt. We would solemnly call upon all our readers, who are in the habit of going in debt, to judge themselves in this matter, and to get out of a false position at once. It is better far to sit down to a dry crust, and to wear a shabby coat, than live well and dress well at our neighbour's expense. We regard it as positive unrighteousness. Oh! for an upright mind!

54. "G. D.," Bristol. "A christian man" can never perish. This is an answer to your question. We have never heard of such a thing as a child of God committing suicide. God keeps His own.

55. "J. M. J.," Co. Antrim. The assembly is bound to put away a drunkard. If the excommunicated person is truly repentant, the assembly should receive him back. Both the putting out, and the receiving back, must be the act of the whole assembly, and not of a part merely. It is of the utmost importance that none should attempt to interfere with the action of the assembly.

56. "F. B." We should insist upon obedience both from servants and children. If a servant refuse to obey, he dissolves the relationship by his own act. As to giving credit, it must be a matter between yourself and the Lord. If you cannot afford to lie out of your money, we should recommend you to cultivate a cash trade. This, however, is difficult to do in all cases, and you have only to cast yourself upon God who is ever gracious and compassionate, and He will take care of you. May He comfort and bless you very abundantly!

57. "J. R. A.," Scarboro'. You ask, "Whether will Paul's or Matthias's name be with the other eleven apostles, in the foundation of the wall, mentioned in Revelation xxi." We believe the latter. Paul's ministry was quite distinct from that of the twelve.

Several Communications stand over.

THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION.

(PART V.)

VERY many minds are perplexed by the statement contained in 2 Corinthians v. 10, which we shall here quote at length, in order that the reader may have the subject fully before him in the veritable language of inspiration. "For we must all appear [or rather "be manifested"] before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done whether it be good or bad."

Now, there is, in reality, no difficulty or ground of perplexity here. All we need is to look at the matter from a divine stand-point, and with a simple mind, in order to see it clearly. This is true in reference to every subject treated of in the word of God, and specially so as to the point now before us. We have no doubt whatever that the real secret of the difficulty felt by so many in respect to the question of the judgment-seat of Christ is self-occupation. Hence it is we so often hear such questions as the following, "Can it be possible that all our sins, all our failures, all our infirmities, all our naughty and foolish ways, shall be published, in the presence of assembled myriads, before the judgment-seat of Christ?"

Well, then, in the first place, we have to remark that scripture says nothing of the kind. The passage before us, which contains the great, broad statement of the truth on this weighty subject, simply declares that "we must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ." But how shall we be manifested? Assuredly, *as we are*. But how is that? As God's workmanship—as perfectly righteous, and perfectly holy, and perfectly accepted in the Person of that very One who shall sit on the judgment-seat, and who Himself bore in His own body on the tree all the judgment

due to us, and made a full end of the entire system in which we stood. All that which, as sinners, we had to meet, Christ met in our stead. Our *sins* He bore; our *sin* He condemned. He stood in our stead and answered all responsibilities which rested upon us as men alive in the flesh, as members of the first man, as standing on the old creation ground. The Judge Himself is our righteousness. We are in Him. All that we are and all that we have, we owe it to Him and to His perfect work. If we, as sinners, had to meet Christ as a Judge, escape were utterly impossible; but, inasmuch as He is our righteousness, condemnation is utterly impossible. In short, the matter is reversed. The atoning death and triumphant resurrection of our Divine Substitute have completely changed everything, so that the effect of the judgment-seat of Christ will be to make manifest that there is not, and cannot be, a single stain or spot on that workmanship of God which the saint is declared to be.

But, then, let us ask, Whence this dread of having all our naughtiness exposed at the judgment-seat of Christ? Does not He know all about us? Are we more afraid of being manifested to the gaze of men and angels than to the gaze of our blessed and adorable Lord? If we are manifested to Him, what matters it to whom beside we are known? How far are Peter and David and many others affected by the fact that untold millions have read the record of their sins, and that the record thereof has been stereotyped on the page of inspiration? Will it prevent their sweeping the strings of the golden harp, or casting their crowns before the feet of Him whose precious blood has obliterated for ever all their sins, and brought them, without spot, into the full blaze of the throne of God? Assuredly not. Why then need any be troubled by the thought of their being thoroughly manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ? Will not the Judge of all the earth do right? May we not safely leave all in the hands

of Him who has loved us and washed us in His own blood? Cannot we trust ourselves implicitly to the One who loved us with such a love? Will He expose us? Will He—can He, do aught inconsistent with the love that led Him to give His precious life for us? Will the Head expose the body, or any member thereof? Will the Bridegroom expose the bride? Yes, He will, in one sense. But how? He will publicly set forth, in view of all created intelligences, that there is not a speck or a flaw, a spot or a wrinkle, or any such thing, to be seen upon that Church which He loved with a love that many waters could not quench.

Ah! christian reader, dost thou not see how that nearness to the heart of Christ, as well as the knowledge of His perfect work, would completely roll away the mists which enwrap the subject of the judgment-seat? If thou art washed from thy sins in the blood of Jesus, and loved by God as Jesus is loved, what reason hast thou to fear that judgment-seat or to shrink from the thought of being manifested before it? None whatever. Nothing can possibly come up there to alter thy standing, to touch thy relationship, to blot thy title, or cloud thy prospect. Indeed we are fully persuaded that the light of *the judgment-seat* will chase away many of the clouds that have obscured *the mercy-seat*. Many when they come to stand before that judgment-seat will wonder why they ever feared it for themselves. They will see their mistake and adore the grace that has been so much better than all their legal fears. Many who have hardly ever been able to read their title here, will read it there, and rejoice and wonder, they will love and worship. They will then see, in broad daylight, what poor, feeble, shallow, unworthy thoughts they had once entertained of the love of Christ, and of the true character of His work. They will perceive how sadly prone they ever were to measure Him by themselves, and to think and feel as if His thoughts and ways were like their own. All this will be

seen in the light of that day, and then the burst of praise—the rapturous hallelujah will come forth from many a heart that, when down here, had been robbed of its peace and joy by legal and unworthy thoughts of God and His Christ.

But, while it is divinely true that nothing can come out before the judgment-seat of Christ to disturb, in any way, the standing or relationship of the very feeblest member of the body of Christ, or of any member of the family of God; yet is the thought of that judgment most solemn and weighty. Yes, truly, and none will more feel its weight and solemnity than those who can look forward to it with perfect calmness. And be it well remembered, that there are two things indispensably needful in order to enjoy this calmness of spirit. First, we must have a title without a blot, and, secondly, our moral and practical state must be sound. No amount of mere evangelical clearness as to our title will avail unless we are walking in moral integrity before God. It will not do for a man to *say* that he is not afraid of the judgment-seat of Christ because Christ died for him, while, at the same time, he is walking in a loose, careless, self-indulgent way. This is a most dreadful delusion. It is alarming in the extreme to find persons drawing a plea from evangelic clearness to shirk the holy responsibility resting upon them as the servants of Christ. Are we to speak idle words because we know we shall never come into judgment? The bare thought is horrible; and yet we may shrink from such a thing when clothed in plain language before us, while, at the same time, we allow ourselves to be drawn, through a false application of the doctrines of grace, into most culpable laxity and carelessness as to the claims of holiness.

All this must be sedulously avoided. The grace that has delivered us from judgment should exert a more powerful influence upon our ways than the fear of that judgment. And not only so, but we must remember that, while we, as

*sinner*s, are delivered from judgment and wrath, yet, *as servants*, we must give account of ourselves and our ways. It is not a question of our being exposed here or there to men, angels, or devils. No; we must give account to God." (Rom. xiv. 11, 12.) This is far more serious, far more weighty, far more influential, than our being exposed in the view of any creature. "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, *as to the Lord*, and not unto men; knowing that of *the Lord* ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve *the Lord* Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons." (Col. iii. 23—25.)

This is most serious and salutary. It may be asked, "When shall we have to give account to God? When shall we receive for the wrong?" We are not told, because that is not the question. The grand object of the Holy Ghost in the passages just quoted is to lead the conscience into holy exercise in the presence of God and of the Lord Christ. This is good and most needful in a day of easy profession, like the present, when there is much said about grace, free salvation, justification without works, our standing in Christ. Is it that we want to weaken the sense of these things? Far be the thought. Yea, we would, in every possible way, seek to lead souls into the divine knowledge and enjoyment of these most precious privileges. But then we must remember the adjusting power of *truth*. There are always two sides to a question; and we find in the pages of the New Testament, the clearest and fullest statements of grace, lying side by side with the most solemn and searching statements as to our responsibility. Do the latter obscure the former? Assuredly not. But neither should the former weaken the latter. Both should have their due place, and be allowed to exert their moulding influence upon our character and ways.

Some professors seem to have a great dislike to the words, "duty" and "responsibility;" but we invariably

find that those who have the deepest sense of grace, have also, and as a necessary consequence, the truest sense of duty and responsibility. We know of no exception. A heart that is duly influenced by divine grace is sure to welcome every reference to the claims of holiness. It is only empty talkers about grace and standing that raise an outcry about duty and responsibility. God deals in moral realities. He is real with us, and He wants us to be real with Him. He is real in His love, and real in His faithfulness; and He would have us real in our dealings with Him, and in our response to His holy claims. It is of little use to say, "Lord, Lord," if we live in the neglect of His commandments. It is the merest sham to say, "I go, sir," if we do not go. God looks for obedience in His children. "He is a rewarder of them that *diligently* seek Him."

May we bear these things in mind, and remember that all must come out before the judgment-seat of Christ. "We must all be manifested" there. This is unmingled joy to a really upright mind. If we do not unfeignedly rejoice at the thought of the judgment-seat of Christ, there must be something wrong—some screw loose. Either we are not established in grace, or we are walking in some false way. If we know that we are justified and accepted before God in Christ, and if we are walking in moral integrity, as in His presence, the thought of the judgment-seat of Christ will not disturb our hearts. The apostle could say, "We are made manifest to God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences." Was Paul afraid of the judgment-seat? Not he. But why? Because he knew that he was accepted *as to his person*, in a risen Christ; and, *as to his ways*, he "laboured that whether present or absent he might be accepted of him." Thus it was with this holy man of God and devoted servant of Christ. "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men." (Acts xxiv. 16.)

Paul knew that he was accepted *in* Christ, and therefore he laboured to be accepted *of* Him.

These two things should never be separated, and they never will be in any divinely taught mind or divinely regulated conscience. They will be perfectly joined together, and, in holy harmony, exert their formative power over the soul. It should be our aim to walk, even now, in the light of the judgment-seat. This would prove a wholesome regulator in many ways. It will not, in any wise, lead to legality of spirit. Impossible. Shall we have any legality when we stand before the judgment-seat of Christ? Assuredly not. Well, then, why should the thought of that judgment-seat exert a legal influence now? In point of fact, we feel assured there is, and can be, no greater joy to an honest heart than to know that everything shall come clearly and fully out, in the perfect light of that solemn day that is approaching. We shall see all then as Christ sees it—judge of it as He judges. We shall look back from amid the blaze of divine light shining from the judgment-seat, and see our whole course in this world. We shall see what blunders we have made—how badly we did this, that, and the other work—mixed motives here—an undercurrent there—a false object in something else. All will be seen then in divine truth and light. Is it a question of our being exposed to the whole universe? By no means. Should we be concerned whether or no? Certainly not. Will it, can it, touch our acceptance? Nay, we shall shine there in all the perfectness of our risen and glorified Head. The Judge Himself is our righteousness. We stand in Him. He is our all. What can touch us? We shall appear there as the fruit of His perfect work. We shall be associated with Him in the judgment which He executes.

Is not this enough to settle every question? No doubt. But still we have to think of our individual walk and service. We have to look to it that we bring no wood, hay, and stubble into the light of the coming day, for as surely

as we do, we shall suffer loss, though we ourselves shall be saved through the fire. We should seek to carry ourselves now, as those who are already in the light, and whose one desire is to do what is well pleasing to our adorable Lord, not because of the fear of judgment, but under "the vast constraining influence" of His love. "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again." This is the true motive spring in all christian service. It is not the fear of judgment impelling, but the love of Christ constraining us; and we may say, with fullest assurance, that never shall we have so deep a sense of that love as when we stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.

"When this passing world is done,
When has sunk yon radiant sun,
When I stand with Christ on high,
Looking o'er life's history,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know,
Not till then, how much I owe."



A PLAIN QUESTION.

(AN EXTRACT.)

It is said that a celebrated minister prepared and preached a course of sermons against infidelity for the purpose specially of convincing and bringing over to Christianity an intelligent infidel neighbour who was a regular attendant at his church. Just after the close of the said series of sermons, the infidel professed to be awakened, and the preacher was anxious to know which of his sermons did the execution.

Soon after, the new convert in relating his experience said, "The instrument God was pleased to use for my awakening and conversion was not the preaching of those sermons against infidelity, but the simple remark of a poor old coloured woman. In going down the steps of the church one night, seeing that the poor old woman was lame, I gave her my hand, and assisted her. She looked up at me with a peculiar expression of grateful pleasure, saying, 'Thank you, sir. Do you love Jesus, my blessed Saviour?'

"I was dumb. I could not answer that question.

"She said, 'Jesus, my blessed Saviour,' with so much earnest confidence, that I could not deny that she had a blessed Saviour, and felt ashamed to confess that I did not love Him. I could not dismiss this subject from my mind, and the more I thought of it the clearer my convictions became that the old coloured sister had a Jesus, a blessed Saviour; and I thought of how kind a Saviour He must be to impart such joy and comfort to such poor, neglected creatures as she was; and I soon began to weep over my base ingratitude in denying and rejecting such a Saviour. I earnestly sought that Saviour, and found Him; and now I can say, 'I do love Jesus, my blessed Saviour.'"

In the simple remark of the old coloured woman there was clearness of faith, a joyous confidence that shook the foundation of the infidel's refuge of lies. It had earnestness in it. The old sister was very grateful for a small favour, and very solicitous about the soul of the kind stranger. The Holy Spirit gave the whole an appropriateness of application which knocked the underpinning out of his infidel fort, and the walls that withstood the "great guns" of the preacher, tumbled down as suddenly as the walls of Jericho at the blast of the rams' horns.



MEDITATIONS ON THE CHRISTIAN'S STANDING AND STATE.

(EPHESIANS I. 15—23; III. 14—21.)

HAVING thus briefly glanced at the inheritance of the saints, or the place of the Church as one with Christ in the coming glory, we now turn in our Meditations to dwell for a little on the third part of the apostle's prayer—the power which puts us in possession of the inheritance.

Verses 19, 20. *"And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places."* We speak of the cross of Christ as the strongest expression of love; and of His resurrection as the brightest display of power. Love alone, we may say, is seen in the cross. There He submitted to suffering and death for our sakes and His Father's glory. It was not the display of wisdom, though doubtless it was the wisdom of God. To the wise of this world the cross is foolishness, and to the self-righteous it is a stumbling block. Neither was it the display of power. "He was crucified through weakness"—but it was the manifestation of love. If to the worldly-wise it is the display of weakness and foolishness, to admiring faith it is the highest expression of the endurance of love. All must own this. If they cannot see wisdom or power in the cross, they can see love enduring, and enduring willingly for its object. When love can do nothing else, it can endure. Such is its nature. It may be called weak and foolish by those who know nothing of its reality or power, but it bears all. It loves on—loves on. Many waters cannot quench it, the floods cannot drown it. It will master every circumstance, and still love on; for such love *hopeth* all things, as well as *endureth* all things.

But in the full sense of the word, this could be true only of divine love—of the Saviour's perfect love. And of His love only can we say—*it never faileth*. The truest and strongest of earthly loves must fail, but He ever lives and changeth not. Now we know, blessed be His name, what His love is. We need no sign, save the sign of the cross. No other sign can ever now be given. All doubting hearts must be referred to the cross. It is the highest and strongest expression of His love. Even from the sunniest heights of heaven our love must ever look back to the cross, and be nourished by His, as seen and known there. The cross will be owned for ever as heaven's moral centre, and the foundation of all its glory and blessedness. It was there that the depths and power of His love were revealed, and yet, we may say. *unrevealed*. It is in the day of adversity that the true character and the full strength of love are known. What a day of adversity was His! All refuge failed Him, comforters there were none. What grief, what sorrow, what forsaking were His! But He resisted not—He endured—"Who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews xii. 2.

But, sweet as the love of the cross is, and needful for the heart of both God and man, it is not power; that we have in resurrection—there it is triumphant. Weakness is seen no more for ever. Redemption is accomplished; and the might of God's power is put forth in raising up Christ from the dead, and setting Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. But here, my soul, let me remind thee, that it is faith only that can pass through these wondrous scenes. They embrace the depths of the grave and the heights of the throne. Many stop short at the threshold, because, as they say, "We cannot *realize* these truths." But how can the mansion be seen if we stop at the gate? It is not a question of *realizing*, but of *believing*. Faith follows the truth. It passes through the

portals, and descends to the depths, or, as truth leads, it ascends the highest heights. The empty tomb and the occupied throne are alike easy of access to faith. *Realizing* has no place here, save as the *effect* of faith. We must *believe* the truth before we can *feel* it: we must *walk* over our estate before we can *know* it. If we really want to know the nature of the soil and the capabilities of each field, we must walk over them. So it was of old in type. "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses." (Joshua i. 3.) Art thou prepared, then, to believe the wonderful truth before us, understanding or not understanding it, realizing or not realizing it? This is the question. We pay but a poor compliment to the word of God when we fail to receive it because we do not understand it or realize it.

But, pray, what is the special truth that demands such absolute faith? It is simply this: that the same mighty power of God which wrought in Christ when He raised Him from among the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in heaven, above every name that is named, has *already* wrought in us, and raised us to have part in the same position and glory. Observe what the word says, "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ." Personally it has been manifested in Him, but the same power has wrought in us who believe. It is not said that the exceeding greatness of His power was towards Christ only, but "*to us-ward who believe.*"

But, in what way can this be true, thou mayest enquire, seeing we are so weak, and so easily overcome with difficulties? Did we more firmly believe God's word, we should make less of difficulties. A great many would be carrying their beds who are clinging to them. We fail to own and honour the power with which we are associated. The Man Christ Jesus is on the throne, and we, being in Christ, are associated with the throne that rules over all.

Many, alas! fail in their testimony for Christ through fear of the way. The heart of the Apostle Paul was not only fixed on Christ Himself in heaven, but it was fixed on His ways on earth. He loved to trace His every footstep, whether in the depths, or on the heights. There is a striking resemblance in this respect between the Eighty-fourth Psalm, and the Third of Philipians. "Blessed is the man whose *strength* is in thee, *in whose heart are the ways* of them." The Lord give us to know more of this strength in us, that we may be true witnesses for Him. But now for the answer:—

The same power that wrought in Christ and raised Him from the dead, has also wrought in us, and raised us from a state of death in trespasses and sins—it has delivered us clean out of the hands of Satan, and placed us as redeemed ones in the presence of God with every enemy beneath our feet. The second chapter is the explanation and development of this great truth. The very same power has wrought in the Christian, that has been displayed in Christ. We see it accomplished in Him. We know it will be fully accomplished in us in due time. The power abides with us. "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Nothing can be plainer to faith than these words—nothing can be more difficult to reason. Christ is faith's object. All truth is connected with Him. We can only gain a knowledge of truth by an ever deepening knowledge of Christ. Blessed Lord, the eye, the heart, the thoughts, must all be fixed on thee, and all our delight must be in thee. Then, learning thy word is easy. We need not that any one teach us. The light shines—the Holy Ghost is our teacher.

Let thine eye then, O my soul, with all the tender sympathies of thy heart, be fixed on Him. Beneath the awful weight of our sins on Calvary, our Jesus died and was laid in the grave. For the moment the enemy prevailed: the Prince of life lay sealed in death. Death

reigned over all. The first Adam was dead *in sin*, the last Adam dead *for sin*. But the mighty work was done, and the mighty triumph at hand. By the shedding of His precious blood, He had rolled away for ever the heavy load of our sins, and glorified God about them. Heaven was satisfied, hell was vanquished, and man, through faith in that blood, eternally saved. "The God of peace"—"the Father of glory"—raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places; and He raised us up in Him to the same place of privilege and blessing. The Head and the members were raised together. Here God began a new thing—a new creation, of which the risen Man, Christ Jesus, is the head and centre. "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new: and all things are of God." The world, sin, Satan, death, and the grave, are thus left behind. To faith, they are as far removed from the believer as from Christ Himself. All who love that blessed name are in Him and where He is. God hath exalted Him, "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world [or, age], but in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

Clearly, then—seeing every believer is in Christ, and every enemy is beneath His feet—every enemy is beneath the believer's feet. And this is nothing more than faith looks for and reckons upon. One word explains to the heart that loves Jesus this wondrous mystery—*Christ is worthy!* He who glorified God on earth is worthy to be glorified by God in heaven. And any poor sinner that glorifies Christ on earth, God will glorify with Him in heaven.

This is the will of God—*Honour my Son*. Know Himself, esteem Himself, love Himself, trust Himself, think of

Himself, commune with Himself, see Himself in the blood which He shed—in His lowly path of rejection and suffering; see Himself in all His invitations and promises. Ever look for Himself; know nothing apart from Him. Love is personal. A little bit, or a great deal of religiousness, is worth nothing. Most people have plenty of religion, but how few are more at home with Christ than with anyone else in the universe. Many are more at home in speaking of a kind Providence than of the heart of Christ, though the one has been fully revealed, and the other is wrapped in mystery. How long, O Lord, shall it thus be? Would that the Holy Spirit were less grieved by our worldliness, that He might be free to reveal to our souls more of thy glory, that our hearts might be ravished with thy beauty!

Know then, in conclusion, O my soul, and bear this in mind, that it is as *man* that Christ is exalted and glorified. As *God*, we know, He could be neither—the glory of God changes not. But being God He could descend. He became a man and died; and as man He is exalted to all honour at God's right hand in heaven. The Church is united with Him there. He is the *Head over all things* to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. It is not said, observe, that He is *Head over the Church*; but, "Head over all things to the Church." She is one with Him who is supreme over all. His members, His fulness, His completeness, His glory as the Man Christ Jesus. As it was with the first man, Adam, and his beloved Eve; so shall it be with the Second Man, the last Adam, and the Church, His beloved Eve. Though the dominion was given directly to Adam, Eve shared it with him, according to the good pleasure of God. Christ alone is personally worthy; and God has set Him as Head over all things, and united the Church with Him as His body and His bride.

Wondrous, marvellous, blessed place and portion for the Church! But God will have it so. It has been in His mind from all eternity. He pictured it to Himself in the

first pair before sin entered. It is no afterthought. Christ speaks to His Father in John xvii. about the long looked for day, when He would share all His glory as the risen Man with those He had given Him. "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, *and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.*"

Before closing this paper, and our Meditations on the apostle's first prayer, may I ask my dear reader, if he is one of this happy company? Art thou a believer in Christ Jesus? Is He precious to thy heart? Couldst thou not live without Him even in this world? Is He necessary to thy daily peace and happiness? Is everything worthless to thee that has not His stamp upon it? And is everything empty to thee which He does not fill? A Christian is united to Christ now, and one with Him. His sins are all forgiven, he has eternal life, and is accepted in the beloved. The Holy Spirit dwells within him as the spirit of adoption, and communicates to his soul a fuller knowledge of Christ and His finished work. Thus he is enabled to live above the world, though diligently attending to his duties in it. The Lord looks for separation from the world in all who are associated by faith with Him in heaven. This is true Christianity and fills the soul with heavenly peace and joy. Is it thine, O my dear reader? Think not that the picture is drawn too high; it is within the plain statements of scripture; and we have no other standard. Nothing less will suit God, and nothing less will serve thy soul. True, Christ may be possessed and not enjoyed; pardon may be possessed and not enjoyed; and so may other blessings of Christianity; but the heart of a true believer, even amidst all its darkness and unbelief, will turn instinctively to Christ Himself, under a sense of need, and cleave to Him alone. This is the surest evidence of the work of God's Spirit in the soul.

Doubts and fears are lamentable, and dishonouring to Christ; but the grace of God will outlive them all. Is this then, my friend, more like the picture of thy state? Or!—What?—no Christ at all? God forbid! This would be awful indeed! It is bad enough to see Christ only through the errors and darkness of man's theology, but to have no interest in Christ at all, is to be forlorn and desolate beyond all conception. No language could picture *this* state—no figures could sum up its misery. It is to be Christless and Godless; a hopeless wreck on the shores of the lake of fire.

Dost thou own to this state? Is it really thine? Be honest about it—if so, confess it. And think not that a little human religion can meet thy need. The work of Christ alone can meet it. He died on Calvary for sinners the chief. Blessed be His name. All praise be to Him. But, oh! do thou believe it; and be thankful for it. Love the Lord that died for thee on Calvary. Surely He deserves thy love, and the deepest devotion of thy heart. A seat, a throne, beside Himself, is ready for thee, if thou but truly turn to Him. What grace—what love! To die for us on the cross; and share His throne and glory with us for ever! But, oh! what must hell be to those who reject such love and glory? The very remembrance of a Christ rejected, and a salvation despised, in that place of hopeless woe, must be the worm that never dies and the fire that shall never be quenched.

“The tick of the clock of hell,” as one has said, “sounds, ever—never—ever—never—everlasting woe—never-ending misery.” How awful—how overwhelming the thought! Imagine its dreary, monotonous sound falling on the wearied ear of lost souls. As they lie in dark despair, its pendulum swinging from side to side and muttering unceasingly the doleful, heart-sinking sound, “ever—never—ever—never.” It would be like a mockery of their agonies, which is too dreadful to think of.

Once more, my friend, look at the bright side. Jesus

died for lost sinners. God gave His Son for lost sinners. The Holy Ghost pleads with lost sinners. Resist not His pleadings, I pray thee; despise not the grace of God, I pray thee; despise not the blood of Jesus, I pray thee; there is pardon for thy sins nowhere else. But hear, O hear, the blessed truth, "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin." Have faith in that precious blood, and thy sins, however many, shall, the same moment, be forgiven. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Bow at His blessed feet—confess thy sins, and receive from His own lips of grace, a plenary pardon, salvation, and peace. Read carefully Luke vii. 36—50.

" ETERNITY.—Count the gold and silver blossoms

Spring has scattered o'er the lea ;

Count the softly-sounding ripples

Sparkling on the summer sea ;

Count the lightly flickering shadows

In the autumn forest glade ;

Count pale nature's scattered tear-drops

Icy gems by winter made ;

Count the tiny blades that glisten

Early in the morning dew ;

Count the desert sand that stretches

Under noon-tide's dome of blue ;

Count the notes that wood-birds warble

In the evening's fading light ;

Count the stars that gleam and twinkle

O'er the firmament by night—

* * * *

When thy counting all is done—

Scarce ETERNITY's begun ;

Reader ! pause ! *where wilt thou be—*

During thine ETERNITY ?"



THE EVENING AND THE MORNING.

"And when he was come near, he beheld the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes." Luke xix. 41, 42.

"IF THOU HADST KNOWN!" O thrilling cry of love!

The Saviour's groan o'er mercies past away!

The mournful grieving of the Holy Dove

That hovered still where peace still sought to stay.

"*If thou hadst known!*" But guilty Zion slept

Her dark death-slumber: Jesus watched and wept!

"*If thou hadst known!*" O agony of grief!

Love's patient labour, vainly, vainly spent!

Impending woe foreseen—divine relief

Refused, despised in Him Jehovah sent.

"*If thou hadst known!*" But Zion would not hear;

'Twas nought to her that JESUS lingered near.

"*Hid from thine eyes!*" Alas, alas for thee!

Thy visitation's hour thou didst not know!

Messiah thou hast nailed to the tree;

Nought save the cross awarding Him below;

If thou hadst known what Jesus came to bring,

Thou hadst not, Israel, crucified thy King!

"*Hid from thine eyes!*" O wilt thou never learn

His quenchless love who came the lost to save?

Wilt thou reject Him still at His return,

Or, sleeping, dream that Christ is in the grave?

Ah! no, the voice that triumphed o'er the tomb,

Shall wake the dead, Death's driest tree shall bloom!

"IF THOU HADST KNOWN!" Ye weep but we rejoice,

Lord Jesus! as thy lowly path we trace.

Thy scattered sheep shall hear the Shepherd's voice,

And Israel's guilt shall magnify thy grace.

For, oh! the cross, that tells abroad our shame,

High over all, reveals thy saving Name!

CORRESPONDENCE.

58. "C. D.," London. Accept our hearty thanks for your interesting and cheering letter, and the accompanying lines.

59. "E. G.," Barnet. We most fully believe in the doctrine of the Lord's coming to receive His saints to Himself, previous to His coming to judge the world; but we should not have thought of building upon such passages as you adduce. It is too weighty a subject to be dismissed with a few lines of correspondence; but we shall just refer you to the scriptures which form the basis of our hearty belief in this precious truth. 1 Corinthians xv. 51—58, 1 Thessalonians iv. 13—18 contrasted with chapter v. 1—4. 2 Thessalonians ii. 1, 2, where the apostle beseeches the saints "by the *coming*," not to be troubled as to "the *day*." The former will be "our gathering together unto him;" the latter, His revelation in consuming judgment upon the wicked. Revelation xix. where we see Christ coming in judgment, accompanied by His saints. These latter must surely have previously gone to be with their Lord.

60. "P. E. J.," Bury St. Edmunds. We have been deeply interested in your case, and we do most heartily bless the Lord for His goodness to you, and for the use He has so graciously made of our pages. As to your question respecting music and reading the newspapers, we should prefer casting you entirely upon divine guidance and teaching. We believe the practice of reading newspapers is most injurious to the soul; and the same remark holds good as to a vast mass of light and abominable literature now issuing from the press. It is most serious and sorrowful to mark the way in which our young people are being ensnared by these vile productions. They not only displace the word of God, but actually destroy all taste for useful and solid reading. It makes us weep to think of it; and we earnestly beseech christian parents, teachers, and guardians, to have a care in this matter. No doubt,

caution is necessary not to draw the rein too tight ; but we should feel unfeignedly thankful if those who have ability and means would bring out a series of works combining those two things, namely, harmless entertainment and solid information. As it is, you may take up many of the publications of the day, and find, on one page, a little bit of religion, and a little bit of morality ; and, on another page some absurd love story, or a piece of nonsensical romance, calculated to falsify a child's idea of human life and character. This is really a very serious matter and lies heavily on the heart.

61. "Helen," London. You are reasoning on what you *feel* in yourself, instead of *believing* what God says about Christ. This is the true secret of your perplexity and unhappiness. "Abraham believed God." May you be led to do the same, and then you will have settled peace. You are arguing against God, instead of believing Him.

62. "H. M. B.," Uxbridge. We thoroughly enter into your difficulty and sympathise with you. It would be to us a most serious question, were we engaged in printing or bookselling, as to what we printed or sold ; but, dear friend, it is one of the many things as to which you must walk before God with a pure conscience. We certainly should not do anything that leaves a soil on the mind or a sting in the conscience ; but no one can be a guide for another in such matters. The Lord is so good ! He will guide and keep you.

63. "Ego." We do not exactly enter into your objection to the lines to which you refer. We must not expect to find in a poet the cool accuracy of a theological professor ; while, at the same time, we fully admit that a poet ought not to write bad doctrine.

64. "R.," Bradford. We believe Hebrews xi. 27 refers to Moses' first departure from Egypt. We cannot see any discrepancy whatever between this passage and the history given in Exodus ii. You must remember that when, in the Old Testament, the Holy Ghost writes the history of a man, He gives you the man as he was, with all his weakness and all his mistakes and failure ; but, on the other

hand, when, in the New Testament, He comments on the history, He gives you the principle on which, in the main, the man acted. Thus we read of Abraham, in Romans iv. that "*He staggered not at the promise of God, through unbelief;*" and yet, when we go back to his history, we find that he went down into Egypt—that he denied his wife—that he had recourse to Hagar, in order to reach the promised seed. Is this discrepancy? By no means. It only illustrates the faithfulness and grace of God—faithfulness that can only present man as he is—grace, that can overlook all his failures. You truly remark, beloved brother, that Hebrews xi. is a history of *faith*, not a history of *failure*. May God bless you and those with you.

65. "E. N.," Barford, near Warwick. (A) You are quite right, dear friend, in looking at these sublime and precious passages of scripture, Isaiah lx. and lxxv. as millennial; but they shall have their fulfilment *after* the saints have been caught up to meet the Lord in the air. The first thing we have to look for is the appearing of the bright and morning star. (2 Pet. i. 19. Rev. ii. 28.) This is the Church's special hope. In Malachi iv. 2, the pious remnant of Israel is cheered by the blessed hope of the rising of the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings. There is a great difference, in every way, between the appearing of the morning star, and the shining forth, in mid-day splendour, of the Sun of Righteousness. (B) We do not see why we should not recognize our friends amid the glories of heaven. The disciples, on the mount, were able to distinguish Moses and Elias whom they had never seen in the flesh. The rich man, in Luke xvi. is represented as knowing Lazarus in Abraham's bosom. We fully believe that the saints will eternally retain their personal identity, though all shall be fully conformed to the image of our blessed Lord. Precious hope! May we cherish it!

66. "F. E. B.," Dalkey. (A) If you will procure a copy of "Nine Years' Answers to Correspondents," you will find, page 8, of the second part, a full answer to your question respecting Judas. You can get the book by send-

ing twenty-four postage stamps to Mr. Morrish, 24, Warwick Lane, or to Mr. Broom, Paternoster Row, London, E.C. The second part can be had, separately, for twelve stamps. (B) You are right in your view of 1 Thessalonians v. 10. At least, so we now judge.

67. "W. M.," Shrewsbury. It will assist you in your study of the parable of the tares, in Matthew xiii. to bear in mind that our Lord is speaking, not of the Church, but of the kingdom of heaven. The tares are false professors who shall be bound up in bundles for judgment, at the close; while the wheat—the true and genuine people of God, shall be gathered into the heavenly garner. It is very important to see what you have, and what you have not, in Matthew xiii. The rejection of the King has thrown the kingdom into mystery. His reception will be the kingdom in manifestation; but you must remember that the mystery of the Church forms no part of the ways of God on this earth. It is a distinct thing consequent upon Israel's rejection of the Messiah. The period during which the Church is being formed is a parenthesis (—). You will never understand Matthew xiii. nor indeed any of the prophetic scriptures either of the Old or New Testament, unless you bear this clearly in mind.

68. "T. S.," Manchester. If you refer to our correspondence for September (No. 47) you will find an answer to your question.

69. "G. S. M.," Southampton. Your lines have come to hand. They are sound and good.

70. "D. W.," Derby. Scripture declares that our Lord Jesus Christ was tempted in all points, sin excepted. (Heb. ii. 17, 18; iv. 15.) This is quite sufficient for us. When scripture speaks, *we bow*; when man speaks, *we judge*. In neither case is it a question of *reason*.

71. "C. K.," Canada. We judge you have made a mistake in leaving the assembly because some of the members found fault with you. The discipline and surveillance of the assembly are very wholesome, though they may prove irksome to our proud and restless nature. We do not mean to say that the persons who found fault with

you, were right, inasmuch as we do not know the facts of your case. But speaking generally, it is a bad sign to see a person grow restive under the exercise involved in walking in company with his brethren. You may rest assured it is far better to be rapped over the knuckles than to have our personal vanity fed by a flattering tongue. It may be that those who give the rap are wrong in their mode of doing it; and further, it may be that, as in the case you refer to, they need a rap themselves just as much as you do. Be this as it may, we are thoroughly persuaded that the fellowship of the assembly is a safe and wholesome thing, and woe be to them who seek, in pride or wilfulness, to get rid of it! We should strongly recommend you to humble yourself and seek to be re-admitted into the bosom of the assembly. "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time." 1 Pet. v. 6. James iv. 10.

72. "T. A. L.," Bedous, Basse Pyrenees. We have recently referred to the book of Esther. As to the special point which you find puzzling, namely, the severity of the Jews towards their enemies, you must bear in mind that, in a dispensational point of view, it was as consistent for a Jew to act in stern righteousness, as it is for a Christian to act in pure grace. We desire to render hearty thanks to God for the blessing which you and others around you have received through the pages of "Things New and Old." To God be all the praise!

73. "W. C.," Bristol. 1 John v. 16, 17 refers to God's governmental dealing on account of sin, which dealing might go even so far as the death of the body.

74. "S. O.," Hobart Town, Tasmania. Your kind and interesting letter of June 25 is to hand. We cannot at all agree with Mr. Baxter's view of the Man of Sin. We believe 2 Thessalonians ii. teaches us distinctly that the lawless one or Man of Sin will not be revealed until the saints have been caught up to meet the Lord. (Compare 1 Thess. iv. 13—18 with v. 1—11.) We regret the oversight with regard to your letter of August, 1866. Pray excuse us.

THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION.

(PART VI.)

THERE are many other points of interest and value in this marvellous chapter (2 Cor. v.) on which we should greatly like to dwell; but, as we are drawing near the close of our volume for this year, we must bring this series of articles to a conclusion; and, most assuredly, we could not do this more suitably than by unfolding, as God's Spirit may enable us, that theme which has been before us, all along, but from which we have been detained by the weighty subjects which have been occupying us for some months past. No doubt, each one of those subjects might have been handled separately, and thus each paper in the series have been given as an independent article: but this we conceive to be a matter of comparative indifference. If the articles possess any value, when viewed separately, we trust they will lose none of that value when taken together. And, further, we think it will be found on calm reflection, that each one of the subjects handled in the foregoing series is intimately connected with "The Ministry of Reconciliation" to which we shall now direct the reader's attention as briefly as we can.

In handling this great subject, it may be well to view it under three distinct heads, namely, first, the *foundation* on which this ministry rests; secondly, the *objects* toward whom it is exercised; thirdly, the *features* by which it is characterized. May God the Holy Ghost control our thoughts!

I. And, first, then, as to the foundation on which the ministry of reconciliation rests. This is set before us in the closing verse of our chapter—a passage of surpassing weight, fulness and power. "For he [God] hath made him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

We have here three parties, namely, God; Christ; sin. This latter is simply the expression of what we are by nature. There is in "*us*" nought but "*sin*," from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot—from the centre of our hearts to the circumference thereof—the whole man is sin. The principle of sin pervades the entire system of fallen humanity. The root, trunk, branches, leaves, blossom, fruit—all is sin. It is not only that we have committed sins; we are actually nothing but sin. True, we have, all of us, our characteristic sins. We have not only, all of us, "gone astray," but "we have turned every one to his own way." Each has pursued his own specific path of evil and folly; and all this is the fruit of that thing called "*sin*." The outward life of each is but a stream from the fountain—a branch from the stem. That stem—that fountain, is sin.

And what, let us ask, is sin? It is the acting of the will in opposition to God. It is doing our own pleasure—doing what we like ourselves. This is the root—this the source of sin. Let it take what shape, or clothe itself in what forms it may; be it gross or be it most refined in its actings, the great root-principle, the parent stem, is self-will, and this is sin. There is no necessity for entering into any detail; all we desire is that the reader should have a clear and thorough sense of what sin is, and, not only so, but that he, by nature, is sinful. Where this great and solemn fact takes full possession of the soul, by the power of the Holy Ghost, there can be no settled rest until the soul is brought to lay hold on the truth set forth in 2 Corinthians v. 21. The question of sin had to be disposed of ere there could be so much as a single thought of reconciliation. God could never be reconciled to sin. But fallen man was a sinner by practice and sinful in nature. The very sources of his being were corrupt and defiled, and God was holy, just, and true. He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity. Hence, then, between God and

sinful humanity there could be no such thing as reconciliation. True it is—most blessedly true, that God is good, and merciful, and gracious. But He is also holy; and holiness and sin could never coalesce.

What was to be done? Hear the answer: "God hath made Christ to be sin." But where? Reader, look well to this. Where was Christ made sin? Was it in the virgin's womb? Nay. Was it in the manger of Bethlehem? Nay. Was it in Jordan's flood? Nay. Was it in the garden of Gethsemane? Nay; though most assuredly, in that garden the shadows were lengthening, the darkness was thickening, the gloom was deepening. But where and when was the holy, spotless, precious Lamb of God made sin? *On the cross, and only there!* This is a grand cardinal truth—a truth of vital importance—a truth which the enemy of God and His word is seeking to darken and set aside in every possible way. The devil is seeking, in the most specious manner, to displace the cross. He cares not how he compasses this end. He will make use of anything and everything in order to detract from the glory of the cross, that great central truth of Christianity round which every other truth circulates, and on which the whole fabric of divine revelation rests as upon an eternal foundation.

"He hath made him to be sin." Here lies the root of the whole matter. Christ, on the cross, was made sin for us. He died and was buried. Sin was condemned. It met the just judgment of a holy God who could not pass over a single jot or tittle of sin; nay, He poured out His unmingled wrath upon it in the Person of His Son, when that Son was "made sin." It is a serious error to believe that Christ was bearing the judgment of God during His lifetime, or that aught save the death of Christ could meet the question of sin. He might have become incarnate—He might have lived and laboured on this earth—He might have wrought His countless miracles—He might have healed, and cleansed, and quickened—He might have prayed

and wept and groaned; but not any of these things, nor yet all of them put together, could blot out a single stain of that dreadful thing "*sin*." God the Holy Ghost declares that, "without shedding of blood, there is no remission." Heb. ix. 22.

Now, then, reader, if the holy life and labours of the Son of God—if His prayers, tears, and groans, could not put away sin, how do you think that your life and labours, your prayers, tears, and groans, your good works, your rites, ordinances, and ceremonies could ever put away sin? The fact is that the life of our blessed Lord only proved man more and more guilty. It laid the topstone upon the superstructure of his guilt, and therefore left the question of sin wholly unsettled.

Nor was this all. Our blessed Lord Himself declares, over and over again, the absolute and indispensable necessity of His death. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and *die*, it abideth *alone*; but if it *die* it bringeth forth much fruit." (John xii.) "Thus it is written, and thus it *behoved* [or was necessary for] Christ to suffer." (Luke xxiv. 46.) "How then shall the scriptures be fulfilled that thus it *must* be." (Matt. xxvi.) In a word, death was the only pathway of life, the only basis of union, the only ground of reconciliation. We cannot be too distinct and firm as to this—distinct in apprehending it—firm in maintaining and confessing it. Satan has reared up a vast edifice of error on the opposite of all this. He has led millions of professing Christians to believe that incarnation and not death is the ground of the ministry of reconciliation—to believe that, in incarnation, Christ took fallen, sinful, corrupt humanity into union with Himself—that He was not that pure and precious "corn of wheat" standing alone—abiding in absolute and necessary solitude, inasmuch as it was utterly impossible that that which was essentially pure, holy, and spotless could link itself with that which is essentially impure, unholy, and defiled—to believe that we

get eternal life from an incarnate, not a dead and risen Christ, and that this life is fed, nourished, and maintained by the offices and ordinances of religion, and by the sacraments of the Church. In this way is he actually, at this moment, sapping the very foundations of Christianity, blinding the minds of professing Christians, and leading them, thus blindfold, down to the pit of hell.

We speak plainly. We must do so if we are to speak at all. We are not controversialists, but we must maintain and set forth the truth of a dead and risen Christ. It may be asked, "Who denies it?" All those who speak of incarnation as being the basis of our union with Christ, deny, in the plainest way, the whole range of truth connected with a dead and risen Christ. Many may not see this; but Satan sees it, and he sees too how it will work. He knows what he is about, and surely the servants of Christ ought to know what is involved in the error against which we are warning our readers.

The fact is, the enemy does not want souls to see that, in the death of Christ, sentence was passed on fallen human nature and upon the whole world. This was not the case in incarnation at all. An incarnate Christ put man to the test—a dead Christ put man to death—a risen Christ takes the believer into union with Himself. When Christ came in the flesh, fallen man was still under probation. When Christ died on the cross, fallen man was wholly condemned. When Christ rose from the dead, He became the Head of a new race, each member of which, being quickened by the Holy Ghost, is viewed by God as united to Christ, in life, righteousness, and favour—he is viewed as having been dead, as having passed through judgment, and as being now as free from all condemnation as Christ Himself. "He hath made him to be sin for us [he] who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Now, it must be plain to the reader who bows to scripture, that incarnation did not, and could not, accomplish all

this. Incarnation did not put away sin. Need we stop here to dwell upon the glories of the mystery of incarnation? Will any one imagine that we take away from the value, or mar the integrity of that priceless fundamental truth, because we deny that it puts away sin, or forms the basis of our union with Christ? We trust not. That incarnation was essentially necessary for the accomplishment of redemption is plain to all. Christ had to become a man in order to die. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." He had to give His flesh for the life of the world. But this only goes to prove the absolute necessity of death. It was the *giving* of His flesh, not the *taking* of it, that laid the foundation of the whole fabric—life, pardon, peace, righteousness, union, glory, all. Apart from death, there is, and could be, absolutely nothing. Through death, we have all. It is not an incarnate Christ giving life and that life conveyed through the sacraments of the Church; but it is a crucified and risen Christ, the source and foundation of everything. The former is, in plain language, Satan's specious lie; the latter is God's most precious truth. That lies at the bottom of the whole system of false Christianity now prevailing around us, under various names; this is the foundation of true Christianity, and of all the counsels and purposes of the eternal Trinity.

But we cannot pursue this profound subject any further now. Enough has been said to set forth its connection with our special thesis, the ministry of reconciliation. When we read that "God hath made Christ to be sin for us," we must see that this involved nothing less than the death of the cross. "THOU," says that blessed One, "hast brought ME into the dust of death." (Ps. xxii.) What an utterance! Who can fathom the mighty depths of those words, "Thou"—"Me"—and "Death?" Who can enter into the question, "My God, my God, why hast *thou* forsaken *me*?" Why did a holy, righteous God forsake His only-begotten, well-

beloved, eternal Son? The answer contains the solid basis of that marvellous ministry whereof we speak. Christ was made sin. He not only bore our *sins* in His own body on the tree; but He was made *sin*. He stood charged with the entire question of sin. He was "the Lamb of God bearing away the sin of the world." As such He gloriously vindicated God, in the very scene where He had been dishonoured. He glorified Him in respect to that very thing by which His majesty had been insulted. He took upon Himself the whole matter—placed Himself beneath the weight of the whole burden, and completely cleared the ground on which God could lay the foundations of the new creation. He opened those eternal floodgates which sin had closed, so that the full tide of divine love might roll down along that channel which His atoning death alone could furnish; so long as sin was *in* question, reconciliation must have been *out* of the question. But Christ, being made sin, died and put it away for ever, and thus changed entirely the ground and character of God's dealing with man and with the world.

(To be concluded in our next, if the Lord will.)



THE KING IN HIS BEAUTY.

Oh! to be over yonder,
 In that land of wonder,
 Where the angel voices mingle, and the angel harpers ring.
 To be free from pain and sorrow,
 And the anxious dread to-morrow,
 To rest in light and sunshine in the presence of the King.

Oh! to be over yonder,
 My yearning heart grows fonder
 Of looking to the east, to see the day-star bring
 Some tidings of the waking,
 The cloudless, pure day-breaking.

My heart is yearning—yearning for the coming of the King

Oh ! to be over yonder.

Alas ! I sigh and wonder,

Why clings my poor weak heart to any earthly thing.

Each tie on earth must sever,

And pass away for ever ;

But there's no more separation in the presence of the King.

Oh ! to be over yonder.

The longing groweth stronger.

When I see the wild doves cleave the air on rapid wing,

I long for their fleet pinions,

To reach my Lord's dominions,

And rest my weary spirit in the presence of the King.

Oh ! to be over yonder,

In that land of wonder,

Where life, and light, and sunshine, beam fair on everything.

Where the day beam is unshaded,

As pure as He who made it—

The land of cloudless sunshine, where Jesus is the King.

Oh ! when shall I be dwelling,

Where the angel voices, swelling

In triumphant hallelujahs, make the vaulted heavens ring ;

Where the pearly gates are gleaming,

And the morning star is beaming ;

Oh ! when shall I be yonder in the presence of the King ?

Oh ! when shall I be yonder ?

The longing groweth stronger,

To join in all the praises the redeemed ones do sing,

Within these heavenly places,

Where the angels veil their faces,

In awe and adoration in the presence of the King.

Oh ! soon, soon I'll be yonder,

All lonely as I wander,

[wing.

Yearning for the welcome summer—longing for the bird's fleet

The midnight may be dreary,

And the heart be worn and weary,

But there's no more shadow yonder in the presence of the King.

F. C. A.

PETER'S TWO LESSONS.

(LUKE V. 1—11; JOHN XXI. 1—14.)

THERE WAS a day in the Lord's life on earth when people seemed in earnest to hear Him. They pressed upon Him, not to hear from idle curiosity, as the Athenians, we may surely believe, for they pressed on Him to hear the word of God. Of the heads of that discourse, or even of a word He uttered, we have no record—not a syllable of all He said on that occasion has the Spirit thought fit to preserve. What impression it made on the multitude we shall never know till the light of eternity reveals it. We learn they were desirous to hear, and He as ready, nay more ready, to teach so He entered into Simon's ship, and taught the people from thence. Whether, like the sea on which he was, the hearts of the multitude were stirred for a time, and then regained their wonted composure, leaving no trace of any emotion, we cannot say; but we learn of one, and only one, who received something that day, yet he did not receive it from that discourse. He heard the words of the Lord, for he sat in his ship, but the discourse terminated without Peter having learnt what He was, and who it was that taught the multitude. It was from his ship the Lord taught the people, it was in his ship Peter learnt his lesson. But he has to be brought into other circumstances ere he apprehends it. He had seen Jesus before. Andrew had first introduced Him in Judea to the Jews as the Messiah. From Him he received a new name—Cephas. He had not however, on that occasion, discovered that He was God. This he now learns. To forsake all and follow Christ, and to labour for Him, was the future before Peter; and the Lord, to give him confidence, works the miracle, which shews how He could provide for His own, having all resources at His command, and how He could make them useful to Him. Having toiled all night and taken nothing,

the Lord, the discourse ended, tells Peter to launch out into the deep, and to let down the nets for a draught. The nets, washed and mended, were again put into requisition, and they enclosed a great multitude of fishes too great for the strength of the nets and the capacity of the ships, for the "nets brake and the ship began to sink."

Whence this draught of fishes? Where had they been all night? How came they to be ready to hand at the overhaul, a draught beyond their expectation, for the nets fitted for their ordinary work were insufficient for this? He who directed the casting of the nets, must be more than a teacher. He who filled them, must be more than Messiah. Peter finds this out, and now a sense of His divinity dawns on him, and he has to make the expression of unfitness for His presence: "Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

"A sinful man." That discourse so lately heard had not produced this expression. It let no such light into his heart, yet He, who could speak as never man spake, must have adapted His teaching to the capacity of all who heard Him. He, who could find the fish deep in the waters of the lake, could fathom each heart before Him, and discover the thought of all though concealed from the cognizance of their fellows. To reach Peter's heart and reveal to him what he was, it needed the sense of God's presence, and consciousness of who was the director in the fishing.

Some of our readers will understand this. There is a wide difference between hearing, and hearing gladly the gospel of the grace of God which tells of a Saviour just suited to the sinner, and the knowledge of oneself as learnt in God's presence. How often may souls go away from the preaching of the gospel delighted, cheered, edified, nay rejoicing, and rightly so, because hearing and receiving the proclamation of forgiveness of sins through the precious blood of Christ, who have yet to learn that they are sinful

creatures. It is a glorious thing to learn about God's grace, but it is a needful thing to learn about oneself, and to make the humiliating discoveries Peter did, of utter unfitness for the presence of God. Does he stand alone in this? Isaiah surely was in a similar school, when he cried out at the glory of the Lord, "Woe is me! for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts." Job also got some insight into this, when, after reading of God's estimate of him, as His servant, of whom there was "none like in all the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil," we find him saying, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee." He had heard of God, he served God, yet he would not let go his own righteousness. (Chap. xxvii. 6.) He saw God, he learnt himself, and found he had no righteousness to retain. "I abhor myself," was his estimate now, "and repent in dust and ashes," was what he felt befitted him. So Peter, finding out before whom it was he stood, found he could not stand before Him. "Depart from me" is the ready utterance of his mouth, "for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Had Peter lived an outwardly immoral life? He does not say so. Had he in a spirit of rebellion refused compliance with the precepts of the law? He does not charge himself with any such conduct. Had he never offered up a sin-offering? Probably he often had, and was able to leave the altar assured of God's forgiveness of his sin. But all that would not avail him now, nor reach him where he consciously was. It was his state that troubled him now, not his acts. It is his nature, and not merely the workings of his nature, that he here confesses, "a sinful man." Had the remembrance of past sins only troubled him he might have hoped by a more careful attention to the law, and a more strict surveillance over himself, to have kept from them in future; but nothing that he could

do. could change his nature. His state it was that he saw, so far as it depended on him, was a hopeless one. He could not free himself from it. Hope of amendment there could be none. By the light of revelation we can add there can be none, for "that which is born of the flesh is flesh;" all therefore that he can do is to say, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

But if he judged himself, he judged himself before one, and the only one, who could act in grace. Had he made this discovery and confessed it to the High Priest, it could only have driven him to despair. But he made it to one who could set his heart at rest even in the presence of God. When Peter confessed what he was in himself, the Lord could tell what he should be for Him. A sinful man he was in his own eyes; a future fisher of men he was in the eyes of the Lord. Wonderful grace in all this. "Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men." The Lord could use the sinful man, and this comes out after Peter's judgment of himself. How suited was the time of this announcement on the part of the Lord. When the soul is thoroughly broken down, seeing itself to be thoroughly bad, beyond the reach of amendment of its evil nature, then to be told of service it can perform for God, this is grace indeed. And here we find the same one was in Simon's ship, who before was ever seated on the throne, and at a still earlier period answered Job out of the whirlwind. Job, brought down at the sense of his vileness, is the interceder for his friends whom God chose and would accept. Isaiah, overwhelmed at the sense of his uncleanness, receives a commission direct from the Lord Jehovah. If the heart is made thoroughly sensible of itself, if God's judgment of it has been wrought unto it by the Holy Ghost, it is the vessel He will use; for, emptied of self, it can be filled with His Spirit. "Fear not," says the Lord, "from henceforth thou shalt catch men."

This lesson learnt, it may, nevertheless, be at times for-

gotten. This, too, Peter shews us, and then we see another lesson that he learns.

Three years afterwards, on the same lake, the disciples are found in their boats in the early morning, having toiled all night as before, and as unsuccessfully as on the first occasion. But whilst the sea is the same, and their occupation the same, the attendant circumstances vary. This time the Lord is on the shore. In Luke v. He was with Simon on the sea, for He had not died; now in John xxi. He is seen, not with them, but on the shore, and they on the sea. John, too, who in Luke v., was in the partnership, is now in the same ship with Peter. At the word of the Lord, on the shore, they cast on the right side of the ship, and were not able to draw for the multitude of the fishes. John now discerns who it is, and tells Peter, "It is the Lord." Peter, between these epochs, that of Luke v. and this of John xxi. had forgotten the lesson then learnt. He went in his own strength, and though forewarned by the Lord, had grievously fallen, for he denied Him. When all the disciples had forsaken Jesus and fled, Peter and John entered the hall of the high priest. John did not deny Him, Peter did; and John is found afterwards where none of the others ventured to shew themselves, at the cross, and there received the distinguished proof of the Lord's confidence, by having consigned to him the guardianship of His mother. Of these two, which of them should we have expected to have gone to meet the Lord? Peter might have busied himself about the affairs of the fishing, done anything not to meet his Master—yet he it is who is in haste to get to Him. Hearing who it is, he girt his fisher's coat about him and jumped into the sea to go to Christ. Why this haste after he had openly denied Him? In Luke he asked Him to depart, in John he goes forward in haste to meet Him. The secret is this, he had learnt the grace of the Lord. If he thought of himself, he was unfit for His presence; if he thought of Jesus, he could

not reach Him soon enough. Grace attracts. Peter felt this, and that after he had denied Christ.

But when did he learn about that grace? We read of the occasion in Luke xxiv. The two disciples, who had met with the Lord on the road to Emmaus, returned to Jerusalem to find He had appeared to Simon before He shewed Himself to any others except the women. This was grace to Peter, the Lord desires to shew him he was forgiven, and that on the earliest opportunity that could present itself. What passed at the interview we are not told; the effect of it on Peter we plainly see. Conscious now, not only of his nature, but of the act of that nature, he rushes forward to meet Christ, and can be so at home before Him, so divested of all fear with reference to his sin, that he alone drew the net to shore. He could give his whole energies now to that service. He has to be restored openly to his position among his colleagues. This the Lord proceeds to do, to shew He can still use him, and will make him shepherd His sheep and lambs. But before that, grace had reached him, and he conscious of it can meet his Master. So Luke v. shews what he could be for the Lord, John xxi. what the Lord was to him.

And what Peter learnt, he would teach others, and now that the Holy Ghost has come to make all things clear, and to guide into all the truth, he can set forth the reason of all this. He learnt that the Lord had forgiven him his sin, so he can meet Him. He tells us how this could be: "Christ has borne our sins in his own body on the tree." (1 Peter ii. 23.) He learnt, too, that he, a sinner, could stand before God, and he tells us how this is accomplished: "Christ has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." (1 Peter iii. 18.) Two precious lessons for souls to learn: the judgment of self, and the grace of God.



MEDITATIONS ON THE CHRISTIAN'S STANDING AND STATE.

(EPHESIANS I. 15—23; III. 14—21.)

CHAPTER iii. 14—16. "*For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.*" We are now come in our meditations to the apostle's second prayer. The object and character of this prayer are very different to the first, though their moral connection is easily seen. Christ is the centre of both, and the Christian is associated with Him as such. The first refers to the kingdom of Christ and our association with Him in the dominion and glory. The second, to the house of many mansions, where we are loved of the Father even as Christ Himself is loved. We are thus, O wondrous thought, *one with Him* as the exalted man, in love and glory—in all the intimacies of the family, and in all the outward glories of the kingdom.

But tell me, O my soul, how far hast thou entered into these blessed realities? Hast thou the enjoyment of them *now*? The special work of the Holy Spirit that dwells within thee, is to take of the things of Christ and shew them unto thee. Grieve Him not, I pray thee. Unbelief in thy heart, or worldliness in thy life, would hinder His gracious operations. He is both the *Holy Spirit* and the *Spirit of truth*. Whatever is not according to truth and holiness in us must grieve Him. This is the main reason, let me assure thee, why so many have such a dim apprehension of Christ, and such a feeble grasp of heavenly truth. The Holy Spirit, who only can reveal Christ and His work to the soul, is grieved. Yes, grieved and hindered in His gracious operations by many things, but especially by our unbelief as to His dwelling in us and abiding with us. Many Christians—if we may judge from what they

say—are more occupied with the law than with the Holy Spirit; this is a serious mistake and greatly hinders their souls' prosperity. No soul thus occupied can ever be in a state of happy liberty. The law genders to bondage. It was given to govern human nature; the Holy Spirit is given to govern our divine nature. Faith knows that the old nature is dead, and that the law cannot apply to that which it has killed. "Knowing this that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. (Rom. vi. 6.) Hence we are warned and exhorted not to grieve the Holy Ghost whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption. "Know ye not," says the apostle, "that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" But alas, alas, the religion of many is much the same as in Old Testament times—it is the law and human nature, in place of the Holy Ghost and eternal life in a risen Christ. Not that Christ is left out, or His cross either; but there is such a mixture of law and grace—of the old creation and the new, that the Holy Spirit is grieved, and sad confusion the result. Hence the many doubts and fears in place of conscious, happy association with Christ risen, exalted, and glorified.

But in what sense, many enquire, can it be said that we are associated with Christ while here in the world? As, for example, it is said, that we are seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Does not this refer to the future when we shall be actually with Christ in heaven, or to the purpose of God's everlasting love? No, my friend, it refers to the present, and neither to the decrees of God nor to the future. The apostle is speaking of those who *were* quickened by the Spirit, through faith in Christ. True, by and by we shall be *with* Christ in heaven; now we are said to be *in* Him. It is equally true that the love of God is from everlasting to everlasting; but our relationship to Him as His children begins with faith. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

(Gal. iii. 26.) Until we had faith in Christ, and were quickened by the Holy Spirit, we were "by nature the children of wrath, even as others." But let me endeavour to explain your difficulty. And here scripture must be our only guide, and the only ground of our path, even though we may not fully understand it. Association with Christ is the great truth of Christianity, and worthy of our most patient meditation.

In Ephesians ii. we find it stated in plainest terms, that when we were dead in sins, *God quickened us together with Christ*. We must begin, in our meditations on this subject, in the region of death. We start from the tomb—we land in glory. God quickens out of the grave. We were dead in our trespasses and sins. That is, we were *without spiritual life*. Mark this carefully, we were without the least movement of spiritual life. "We were dead in sins." But when *we* were thus dead *in* sins, the blessed Lord lay dead *for* sins. At that solemn moment all were dead. The first Adam dead *in* sin, the last Adam dead *for* sin. Not a breath stirred to disturb the deep silence of death. It was as if the vessel had sunk and the wave closed over it. But now, when man could contribute nothing towards the great work, God enters the scene; but He enters it as the God of resurrection. He only can plant the pulse of life in a dead soul. "But God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." But to know our blessing we must see it in Christ, so we turn to Him, and meditate on what He is in God's sight.

He died for us—for ever blessed be His name. The Holy One—the spotless Lamb of God died for us. The awful question of sin which stood against us, He answered on the cross and settled for ever. God was thus glorified and the way opened for Him to shew His love to us according to all that was in His heart. But He who had gone down under death as the judgment of God on our sins,

was raised up again, and we were raised with Him. Here, God alone as the great Workman fills the scene. He is free to act, and acts towards the objects of His love in richest grace. He works, not only to meet their wants but to glorify His own name. Sin has been blotted out by the shed blood of His dear Son, all His past ways have been vindicated, and His name glorified. His *rich mercy* and His *great love* characterize the great work. Christ is brought forth from under the power of death, and we are brought forth with Him. "But God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." Thus we are associated with the risen Christ by the quickening power of God, in the most real, intimate, and blessed way. We have life in union with Him who is before God as His supreme delight, and we are associated with Him in all the blessed realities of His life. And what more, tell me, can be said or thought of? This is the great truth of Christianity—Christ's own life is ours. The place and privileges that belong to this life as now seen in Christ before God, are ours. Hence it is said that we are not only quickened together—raised up together, but seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

But this most marvellous and blessed truth is also one of great practical power. It is the true ground of peace. Our sins must be all forgiven before we can be thus *one* with Christ. All that belonged to the old man was judged on the cross, and put away for ever. Blessed be His name. And now we are brought into the presence of God without our sins, and in the condition of divine righteousness. Christ is thus our righteousness as well as our life. In a word, He is our full salvation. "By grace ye are saved." Salvation, according to this epistle, is a present reality. We are as really saved now as ever we can be. "By grace ye *are* saved." Though salvation is spoken of in some of the other epistles as future, it is not less certain, but viewed as the end of our journey, when we shall stand before

Christ in glory, when all the trials, difficulties, and dangers of the way shall be left behind.

This, then, dear friend, is my rather lengthy answer to your question, but it needed some explanation. It is what we have called the *Christian's standing*, or his association with Christ risen, in the full value of eternal life and divine righteousness. In virtue of this union it can be said of him in truth, even while he is here in this world, that he is seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

The theology of some, I know, would bring a dark cloud over this bright scene, by saying, that the Christian may lose his eternal life. But what does scripture say? Plainly, that we are one with Christ, from the moment that we are quickened through faith in Him; and that His life is ours, not on the ground of our goodness, but His grace; adored be His name. From the time that we believe we have eternal life, right on, without the possibility of a break, throughout the endless ages of eternity. God has said it—God has formed the union—it is in resurrection where no enemy can ever come—the death of Christ has closed the door on every foe, even as the Lord shut Noah and his family inside the ark. Quickening, raising, sitting, are immediately followed by the statement of the very motive and purpose of God in our blessing. “That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.” Here, faith can breathe freely, rest quietly, wait patiently, and without the smallest misgiving. Faith never asks for more than the word of God. Though, alas, in many things *we* fail and come short, yet He is faithful. The life which He gives is like Himself—Eternal; “His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus” is also like Himself—Eternal; here called, “*the ages to come.*” See the entire chain of grace, verses 4—10.

Think, O think, my soul, on what grace has brought thee into—on what grace does for every one who believes in Christ Jesus. Quickened, raised, seated, in happy association with the blessed Lord; and the bright, bright open-

ing of the rolling ages of a happy eternity before thee, with the unknown extent of the glory of God, which shall for ever surround thy Well-beloved, and all who are associated with Him in the power of His endless life.

O that God's richest blessing may rest on every soul that glances over these pages. Dear reader—my heart goes out to thee—Art thou saved? Is this eternal life thine? O what a prize to win, but, alas, what a prize to lose! It can only be won by faith in Christ. Bow, I pray thee, at His blessed feet—listen to His voice—hear that sweetest of all gospel notes—Come! come unto me! Melting words! They come from a heart that only loves—from lips that drop the sweetest accents of grace. O listen and obey—may they melt thy heart. How awful it would be for thee to hear at last from those lips, words of burning wrath. But God forbid! Hear now—believe now, and turn to Him now in unquestioning confidence. All is plain and simple, only give heed to the one thing needful. To hear the voice of Christ is to be one of His sheep. And this is what He says about every sheep of His without exception: "I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." (John x. 28, 29.) Better far, my dear reader, to be in the hand of Christ than in the hand of Satan. May the Lord enable thee to decide at once for Christ, and to give thy whole heart to Him, and to faithfully serve and follow Him. Blessed Lord! He alone is worthy.

" Oh, dearest Saviour! take my heart:

Where can such sweetness be

As I have tasted in thy love,

As I have found in thee?

Let every fervour of my soul,

By thy sweet sacrifice,

For ever be at thy control,

And but to serve thee rise."

CORRESPONDENCE.

75. "E.," Somerset. We do not see how you could sit in the presence of God and write fiction. "Speak every man *truth* with his neighbour." (Eph. iv. 25.) Now, fiction is not truth, and hence we judge that a Christian should neither speak it nor write it. True, you might be able to earn money by writing works of fiction, and to spend that money for the Lord; but does the Lord want money earned by writing what is not true? Are we to do evil that good may come? It is very evident, dear friend, that you have misgivings in your own mind, and we do not wonder. We fully enter into your remark as to the numbers who are neglecting their Bibles for worthless and worse than worthless fiction. Indeed not only is the Bible neglected, but even works of solid information are laid aside for light and corrupting literature which is only fit to be thrown into the fire. We deeply feel the need of vigilance, on the part of christian parents, guardians, and teachers, in order to guard our young people from the demoralizing influence of much of the literature of the present day. We should feel bound to preserve our children's bodies from poisonous drugs; ought we not to preserve their minds from poisonous books?

76. "An Aged One," Underhill Cottage. In 1 Corinthians xiii. the apostle sets forth the great motive spring of all true and effectual ministry—that motive spring is love. In chapter xii. you have the *ground* of ministry; in chapter xiii. *the motive spring*; and in chapter xiv. the object. 1st, membership in the body; 2ndly, love; 3rdly, edification. We cannot, of course, attempt to enter upon a detailed exposition of such a portion.

77. "J. H. S., Swindon. 1 Thessalonians iii. 8 furnishes a most vivid and touching proof of the way in which the apostle felt himself identified with those who were his

children in the faith. "Now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord." We need hardly say it was no question of his eternal life in Christ; but where is the true servant of Christ that does not know something of the spirit breathed in this exquisite passage? Accept our warmest thanks, dear friend, for your loving note.

78. "T. F. G.," Swindon. Your MS. has come to hand. We do not know that we have any remark to offer.

79. "A Seeker after Truth," Bridport. John xv. 2 refers to the Father's work as the husbandman looking after the vine, removing some branches and purifying others. The whole scene is laid on the earth. We do not think of a vine in heaven. It is no question of eternal life or of the believer's security, but simply of fruitbearing. As to the expression, in Romans viii. "Who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit," it should be omitted in the first verse. It occurs properly in the fourth, and refers of course to believers. Alas! dear friend, it is too true that Christians are liable, if not vigilant, to walk after the flesh. It ought not so to be. It is our high and holy privilege to walk ever and only in the Spirit. This is the proper path of a Christian.

80. "G. H.," Stoke Pogis. 1 Timothy ii. 15 sets forth the efficacy of faith, in the moment of nature's anguish. That anguish is the fruit of sin, but grace has come in, and wrought redemption, and faith takes hold of this and triumphs.

81. "A Feeble One," Wakefield. Would it not be better to speak a loving word to those persons to whom you refer? We utterly condemn the practice of Christians travelling on business on the Lord's day; we think it *very wrong indeed*. But we have already had occasion to protest against the habit of writing to the editor of a Magazine in order to get him to denounce errors and evils which ought to be made a matter of loving brotherly admonition in private. It does seem to us a cowardly

mode of acting, quite unworthy of a Christian man. We ought to be more faithful with one another.

82. "W. B.," Aberford. We are of opinion that you would be happier as a Christian, and safer as a man of business, to work your present trade on sound principles, than to get into a large thing such as you describe which can only be carried on by a system of credit. We are fully convinced of the possibility of carrying on trade without going in debt, and we strongly urge all our friends to do so. Why cannot a man in trade pay for what he buys as well as a private individual? True, he might not cover so large a surface, but he would have a more solid foundation. His trade might be small, but it would be safe, and his mind would be in peace. "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand." (Phil. iv. 5.) This is a seasonable word for Christians in this day of busy speculation, and restless ambition. There is urgent need, dear friend, for watchfulness lest we be ensnared by the money-loving spirit of the day. The devil is seeking to blind the eyes of professing Christians, in various ways. He furnishes them with a thousand plausible reasons why they should push, and grasp, and scrape together. He will even misquote and misapply the word of God, in order to furnish a plea for money-making to those whose hearts are secretly set upon that object. But oh! the wretchedness of having before the heart such an object as to "*make money.*" Surely, surely as is the *object* so is the *character*. Only think of a saint of God, an heir of glory, hoarding up this world's miserable riches! Think of this, too, in the face of hundreds of God's people in want, and in the knowledge of the claims of the Lord's work, at home and abroad! How can we suppose the existence of the life of Christ or the love of God in a soul that can lay by his hundreds and see his brother in need? Impossible. Oh! for a large heart!

83. "A. J. G.," Exmouth. Thanks for your note and

the accompanying lines. You will find in our next, an answer to your question as to Hebrew xii. 23.

84. "F. W.," Evesham. You ask, "May not the action of the Holy Ghost in giving trouble be often known for a long time previous to the *belief* of the gospel of God's salvation through Christ? And is it not to the reception of the latter the Spirit gives His seal and presence?" We fully believe there is a material difference between being quickened and sealed by the Holy Ghost. The latter stands connected with believing in a risen and glorified Christ. (See John vii. 39 compared with Acts xix. 1—6.) The Holy Ghost is Himself the seal—God's seal put upon the soul that believes in a dead, risen, and glorified Christ. But there are many of the children of God who do not know themselves sealed, who have not peace, who do not enter into the truth that God, as the Justifier, raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. They are little if at all beyond the condition of Old Testament saints, looking forward to the time when they shall be saved, but not knowing that they are saved—they are, in a certain way, looking to Christ to do something for them with God, but they do not see what God has done for them with Christ—they think of Christ as befriending them (and surely so he does), but they have a secret dread of God—they are looking to the cross for deliverance, but they do not know the power of the resurrection—they are *safe*, but they do not know themselves *saved*. In a word, they do not know "the gospel of God"—they do not know their union with Christ—they do not enjoy the indwelling of the Holy Ghost—they do not enter into the power of the relationship as sons of God. May God send out His light and His truth!

85. "E. S. Y.," Sudbury. It will entirely remove your difficulty if you will notice that in 1 Corinthians xi. the apostle does not speak of the public assembly until the 17th verse.

Twelve Communications stand over.

THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION.

(PART VII.)

THE death of Christ, then, as we have seen, is the alone basis of reconciliation. That divine work has opened the way for placing men and things in their right relationship to God, and on their proper footing before Him. And this, be it remembered, is the true sense and meaning of reconciliation. Sin had alienated "*men*" from God, and set "*things*" entirely astray; and hence both men and things needed to be reconciled, or set straight; and the death of Christ has cleared the way for this.

It is well that the reader should see clearly the true distinction between "atonement" and "reconciliation." They are often confounded, through inattention to the language of holy scripture; and even the pious and honoured translators of our most excellent Authorized Version have not, with sufficient accuracy, marked this distinction. For example, in Romans v. 11, they have given us the word "atonement," where it ought to be rendered "reconciliation." And, on the other hand, in Hebrews ii. 17 we have the word "reconciliation" where it ought to be "atonement."

Nor is the distinction by any means unimportant. The word "atonement" or "propitiation" occurs, in some one or other of its forms, six times in the Greek New Testament. (See carefully Luke xviii. 13; Rom. iii. 25; Heb. ii. 17; ix. 5; 1 John ii. 2; iv. 10.) The word "reconciliation" occurs, in one or other of its forms, thirteen times in the New Testament. (See Rom. v. 10; 11; xi. 15; 1 Cor. vii. 11; 2 Cor. v. 18; 19; 20: Eph. ii. 16; Col. i. 20; 21.) If the reader will take the trouble of examining and comparing these passages, he will see that atonement and reconciliation are not the same thing, but that the former is the foundation of the latter. Sin had made man an enemy and thrown things into confusion; and in Colossians i. 20, 21 we read, "And, having made peace through the

blood of his cross [here is the foundation], by him to reconcile all *things* unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And *you*, that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now *hath he reconciled*, in the body of his flesh, *through death*, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in his sight." Here we have the death of Christ set forth as the ground of the reconciliation of both men and things.*

Now this leads to another point of immense importance. We often hear it said that "the death of Christ was necessary in order to *reconcile God to man*." This is a pious mistake, arising from inattention to the language of the Holy Ghost, and indeed to the plain meaning of the word "reconcile." God never changed—never stepped out of His normal and true position. He abideth faithful. There was, and could be, no derangement, no confusion, no alienation, so far as He was concerned; and hence there could be no need of reconciling Him to us. In fact, it was exactly the contrary. Man had gone astray; he was the enemy, and needed to be reconciled. But this was wholly impossible if *sin* were not righteously disposed of; and sin could only be disposed of by *death*—even the death of One who, as being a man, could die, and being God, could impart all the dignity, value, and glory of His divine Person to the atoning sacrifice which He offered.

Wherefore, then, as might be expected, scripture never

* If the reader will turn, for a moment, to 1 Corinthians vii. 11, he will see the use of the word reconciliation. "But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be *reconciled* to her husband." In classical Greek the word is applied to the *changing* money; the *exchanging* one thing for another; *exchanging* prisoners; the changing a person from *enmity* to *friendship*. In short, everywhere the distinction is maintained between "atonement" or "propitiation" and "reconciliation." The former is *ιλασμος*, the latter *καταλλαγη*.

speaks of reconciling God to man. There is no such expression to be found within the covers of the New Testament. "God was in Christ reconciling *the world* [in its broad aspect—men and things] unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." And again, "All things are of God, who hath reconciled *us* to himself by Jesus Christ." In a word, it is God, in His infinite mercy and grace, through the atoning death of Christ, bringing us back to Himself, and placing us not merely in the original place, or on the original footing, or in the original relationship; but, as was due to the work of Christ, giving us back far more than we had lost, and introducing us into the marvellous relationship of sons, and setting us in His presence, in divine and eternal righteousness, and in the infinite favour and acceptableness of His own Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amazing grace! Stupendous and glorious plan! What a ministry! And yet need we wonder when we think of the death of Christ as the foundation of it all? When we remember that "Christ was made sin for us," it seems but the necessary counterpart that "we should be made the righteousness of God in him." It would have been no adequate result of such a work as Christ accomplished, to have brought men and things back to the Adamic or old creation ground. This would never have satisfied the heart of God in any way, whether as respects Christ's glory or our blessing. It would not have furnished an answer to that omnipotent appeal of John xvii. "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And *now*, O Father, glorify thou me, with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." (Ver. 4, 5.) Who can gauge the depth and power of those accents as they fell upon the ear of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?

But we must not enlarge, much as we should like to do so. We are compelled, through lack of space, to close these remarks rather abruptly. However, little remains to

be said as to the *objects* of the ministry of reconciliation, inasmuch as we have, in a measure, anticipated them by speaking of "men and things," for these are, in very deed, the objects, and they are included in that comprehensive word "world." "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." We would merely add here, that it is utterly impossible for any creature under heaven to exclude himself from the range of this most precious ministry. Before the reader can shut himself out from the application of all this grace to himself, he must prove that he does not belong to the world. This he cannot do, and hence he must see that God is beseeching him to be reconciled.

But this leads us to look, for a moment, at the *features* which characterize this glorious ministry.

I. And, first, let us mark God's attitude. He is beseeching sinners. What a thought! It seems too much for the heart to conceive. Only think, reader, of the Most High and Mighty God, the Creator of the ends of the earth—the One who has power to destroy both soul and body in hell—think of Him as beseeching and praying you to be friends with Him! it is not a question of your praying to Him and His hearing you. No: but the very reverse—He is praying you. And for what does He ask you? Is it to do anything or to give anything? Nay; He simply asks you to be friends with Him because He has befriended you at the cost of His own Son. Think of this. He spared not His only begotten and well-beloved Son, but bruised Him in your stead. He made Him to be sin for you. He judged your sin in the Person of His Son, in the cross, in order that He might be able to reconcile you. And now He stretches forth His arms and opens His heart to you, and prays you to be reconciled—to be friends with Him. Surpassing grace! It really seems to us as though human language can only tend to weaken and impoverish this grand reality.

We would only further suggest that the force of verse 20

is greatly weakened by the word "you," which, as the reader will observe, ought not to be inserted. It makes it appear as though the apostle were beseeching the Corinthian saints to be reconciled, whereas he is only setting forth the terms and the style adopted by all "ambassadors" for Christ wherever they went through the wide world—the language in which they were to address "every creature" under heaven. It was not "Do this or that"—"Give this or that." It was not command or prohibition; but simply, "Be reconciled."

II. And, then, what encouragement to the poor trembling heart that feels the burden of sin and guilt to be assured that God will not impute, will not reckon, one of his sins! This is another precious feature of the ministry of reconciliation. "*Not imputing their trespasses unto them.*" This must set the heart at rest. If God tells me that He will not count one of my trespasses to me, because He has already counted them to Jesus on the cross, this may well tranquillize my spirit and emancipate my heart. If I believe that God means what He says, perfect peace must be my portion. True, it is only by the Holy Ghost that I can enter into the power of this glorious truth; but what the Holy Ghost leads me to believe and rest in is that God does not and will not, blessed be His name, impute a single sin to me, because He has already imputed *all* to Christ.

But this leads us to the third feature of the ministry of reconciliation.

III. If God will not impute my trespasses to me, then, what will He impute? Righteousness—even the righteousness of God. We cannot attempt to unfold the nature and character of this righteousness. We may do so on another occasion if the Lord permit; but here we confine ourselves to the statement contained in the passage before us, which declares that God hath made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us who were all sin, that we might become the righteousness of God IN HIM. Most glorious truth! Sin is

made an end of, as regards the believer. Christ lives as our subsisting righteousness, before God, and we live in Him. There is not so much as one single entry to our debit, in the book of divine justice; but there is a risen and glorified Christ to our credit. Nor is this all. Not only are our sins gone, our guilt cancelled—our old self completely ignored—not only are we made the righteousness of God in Jesus; but we are loved by God as Jesus is loved—accepted in Him—one with Him in all that He is and has, as a risen, victorious, ascended, and glorified Man at God's right hand. Higher than this, it is impossible to go.

And now we must close, and we do it reluctantly. We do it with a certain painful consciousness of the feebleness and poverty of our handling of this lofty and comprehensive theme. But all this we must leave in the Master's hand. He knows all about the subject and the treatment thereof—all about the reader and the writer of these lines. To Him we commit all, while we make one solemn closing appeal to the unconverted, unawakened reader.

Dear friend, let us remind you that this glorious ministry will very soon close. The acceptable year, the day of salvation, shall ere long come to an end. The ambassadors shall soon be all called home and their embassy be closed for ever. The door shall soon be shut, and the day of vengeance set in in terror and wrath upon a Christ-rejecting world. Let us entreat of you to flee from the wrath to come. Remember that the One who is now praying and beseeching you to be reconciled, has uttered the following awful words, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded. But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh." (Prov. i. 24—26.) May the reader escape the unutterable horrors of the day of wrath and judgment!

A SOLEMN WARNING.

A few years ago, the writer was informed, by one who professed to know the circumstances, of the following solemn and sudden event. A lady, who moved in the higher circles of society, was induced to attend one evening, what was called "revival preaching." She was convinced of sin by the preaching of the word, and became much alarmed about her state. Deep convictions followed. She struggled against them, but could not get rid of them. She thought of her many engagements, and the difficulties of her position in life. Conscience said, "Decide at once for Christ." The world said, "Not now, but by and by—such a step should not be taken hastily." In this state of perplexity and distress, she retired to her bedroom. But here the curtain drops—the scene closes to mortal view. As she did not appear the following morning, or answer to any call, her room was entered. But oh! what a sight to the family! The struggle was over—the stillness of death reigned. There the body lay, cold and lifeless; but—the soul—where now? It was gone—gone to its eternal place. All was changed—changed suddenly—changed for ever.

Her diary lay open on her table. Two entries had been made the previous evening. They were to this effect.

1. "I am determined, this day *six months*, to give up the world and become a Christian." But, as if the conflict in her soul had deepened, and conscience crying still louder, "Be decided *now* for Christ;" she made a second entry.
2. "*This day month* I am determined to be done with the world and follow Christ." Beyond this last entry we cannot follow her. God took the matter out of her hands. All her intentions, however good, were vain. The present moment only is ours. It is daring work to treat God as if our days and months were in our own hands in place of His. He will sometimes visit such rashness with marked judgment. It is always dangerous to trifle with convic-

tions, and delay decision for Christ. It is really to trifle with the strivings of the Spirit, the truth of God, the claims of Christ, the salvation of the soul, the glories of heaven, and the torments of hell. But no one on earth can tell what may have passed between her soul and God during that solemn night. It is but fair to infer from these two entries that she passed through deep exercise, if not real agony of soul. Oh! what a night!—it was the dark shadow of a night of endless woe, or the breaking morn of eternal day. What a night for heaven—what a night for hell—what a night for her! Who is to gain the victory?—Christ or Satan—the truth or a lie? Solemn thought! Eternal happiness or eternal misery quiver in the balance. But it is comforting to know, that one look of faith to the blessed Saviour would settle all for heaven and the blessedness of her soul for ever.

But is the case before us an uncommon one? Alas! no. Convictions, struggles, resolutions, and re-resolutions are what go on for a length of time in many awakened souls. Comparatively few, we fear, yield at once and entirely to the Saviour's call—"Come unto me;" and to His fair demand—"Give me thine heart." But this is always a *personal question*. Dear reader, how is it with thee? Thou knowest the gospel—Jesus died for sinners—He died for thee—His precious blood cleanseth from all sin. Pray tell me, art thou decided for Christ?—I mean fully decided *now*—just *now*. Or art thou saying in practice, though not daring to write in thy diary—"This day six months"—or, to ease the pangs of conscience, art thou reducing the period of thy purposed connection with the world, and of thy surrender to Christ, to—"This day month?" God forbid! Beware, my dear reader. I tremble for thee if this be thy state. Dare not, I pray thee, trifle another moment with the convictions of thy conscience. God speaks; bow, obey, or He may arise and vindicate the claims of His beloved Son. In His holy

and righteous government He may solemnly judge such daringness, even though in *grace* He may save the soul. He ever cares for His Son. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear him;" is His sweet testimony to thee. Let thy happy response from earth be, through these opened heavens, "This is my beloved Saviour, in whom I am well pleased; adored for ever be His blessed, saving name!"

Then, O then, thou art one with heaven. Thy sins, which were many, *are forgiven*; thy faith *hath saved* thee, *go in peace*. The Lord hath left these comforting words for thee, and for all who believe in Him. Receive them as spoken directly to thyself. Look to Jesus only. Let thine eye be fixed on Him, and let His word be the only rule of thy faith and practice. He who loved thee and died for thee will never leave thee nor forsake thee. Trials, difficulties, disappointments, and sorrows, as to this life, may come—are sure to come; but trust all to Him, and wait His time of deliverance, and never, never, never doubt His love, or His care for thee.

Child of my love, "LEAN HARD,"
 And let me feel the pressure of thy care.
 I know thy burden, child—I shaped it,
 Poised it in my own hand, made no proportion
 In its weight to thine unaided strength.
 Before I ever laid it on, I said,
 "I shall be ever near, and while she leans on me
 "This burden shall be mine, not hers :
 "So shall I keep my child within the circling arms
 "Of mine own love."—Here lay it down, nor fear
 To impose it on a shoulder which upholds
 The government of worlds—yet closer come,
 Thou art not near enough; I would embrace thy care,
 So I might feel my child reposing on my heart :
 Thou lovest me ? I doubt it not,
 Then, loving me, "LEAN HARD."

CORRESPONDENCE.

January.

86. "J. B.," Kingstown. The subject to which you advert is one which we do not feel led to discuss in our pages. Christians differ so widely about it, that we could hardly expect to promote the edification of our readers by its discussion. What we should say to any enquirer is this, Take the New Testament, and study it prayerfully, in the divine presence: seek to get your mind entirely free from preconceived thoughts and feelings; try and forget the thoughts and opinions of men, and seek to ascertain the will of your Lord, in this matter; and then arise, forthwith, and do it, looking neither to the right hand nor to the left. If this simple plan be adopted, we have no fears as to the result. But if any seek to be guided, as to this or any other point, by the commandments and doctrines of men, darkness, confusion, and vacillation must be the melancholy consequence. Oh! dear friend, when shall we learn to take our place at the feet of Jesus, and looking up into His face, say, from our very hearts, "*Lord*, what wilt thou have me to do?"

87. "S. G." We do not know of any scripture to prove that "unclothed spirits" can recognize one another.

88. "G. H. E." Your communication has come to hand, and we beg to assure you of our sympathy and interest. May the Lord Himself go before you as the Breaker-up of your way, and go with you, as your Companion therein!

89. "R. J. J.," Rotherham. We have already gone into the question of your letter, and do not mean to discuss it again. We believe it to be contrary to the word of God to forbid the use of any creature of God.

90. "G. H." Romans v. 14 refers to the death of the body. Thousands were quickened and saved from Adam to Moses; but, with the exception of Enoch, they died; of course, all who died without faith perished eternally, then, as now, and at all times.

91. "R. F.," Co. Antrim. We feel deeply for you. You are evidently in a false and very trying position; but it is one thing to see this, and another thing to know how to get out of it. It is clearly wrong for a Christian to be yoked with an unbeliever, for any object. The fact of your having entered into this partnership, in ignorance, may account for your entrance, but it cannot justify your continuance therein. You have only to bow down before your Lord, and confess your failure, and look to Him to deliver you out of your false position. Beware how you act. Do nothing rashly. You must seek to act honourably toward your partner and toward all to whom you owe anything. God honours the bent of the heart and conscience in a right direction; and we must not do wrong

things in seeking to get into a right position. We cannot enter farther into your case, here ; but you might order through our publisher, Mr. Morrish, a copy of a pamphlet, entitled, "The Unequal Yoke." If you enclose him four postage stamps, he will send you the book.

92. "M. G." Your kind communication did not reach us in time for our December issue. The difficulty of your friend arises, very much, we should say, from not seeing that the Church, as such, is not before the apostle's mind in Galatians or Romans. He is speaking of believers, and the ground on which they are individually justified before God. They are justified by faith, as Abraham was, and hence are morally the children of Abraham. And, further, though Abraham did not and could not belong to a body which had no existence, save in the purpose of God, until the Head ascended into the heavens, still most assuredly Abraham and all the Old Testament saints will share in the heavenly glory. Very many, we doubt not, are perplexed, as to this point, because they make it a question of comparing individuals one with another. If it be a question of personal worthiness, holiness, or devotedness, Abraham might stand above the most holy and devoted amongst us. But it is not so at all, but simply a question of God's dispensational arrangements ; and if any be disposed to find fault with these, we are not at all disposed to argue with them. Some, now-a-days, have a way of turning the subject into ridicule which savours far more of wit than of spirituality or acquaintance with the word of God. But we trust that we shall never surrender the truth of God in order to escape the shafts of human ridicule.

93. "W. F.," Peckham. Accept our hearty thanks for your kind communication. We cannot quite coincide with the criticism which you have so kindly sent us. We believe the apostle Paul received his instructions directly from the risen and glorified Christ, and not from the twelve. His apostleship and ministry were quite peculiar. Study Galatians i. 12, and the opening of 1 Corinthians xv.

94. "F. T.," Berks. You have to judge yourself in these things to which you refer, and wait, perseveringly, upon God for spiritual power. It is important to be able to get back to the point at which decline first shewed itself, so that we may humble ourselves before God, and taste of divine restoration. The Lord is gracious and ever ready to help ; but He loves reality.

95. "F. A." That the application of Matthew vii. 1 to what you refer is incorrect will be evident to you if you refer to verse 15 of this chapter. How can we "beware of false prophets" if we are not to judge at all? We must not judge motives ; but we are bound to judge conduct and doctrine.

Look at 1 Corinthians v. 12, 13. What does this mean? Clearly, that Christians are called upon to judge evil conduct, and put away the impenitent offender. If the Corinthians had not done so, God would have judged them. Again, look at 1 John iv. 1. What does this mean? Clearly, that Christians are called upon to judge the doctrine of any coming to them, and reject the false. Matthew xvi. 28 refers to the transfiguration, which was a sample of the coming glory of the kingdom. Compare 2 Peter i. 16.

96. "E. C. T.," near Denbigh. Your MS. has come to hand; but we have not yet had time to read it. It shall, the Lord willing, have our best attention. Absence from home prevented our giving as early attention as usual to the communications of our friends.

97. "L. D." Your MS. has come to hand.

98. "M. C. S.," Sheffield. Thanks for your interesting letter. We hope to profit by your kind suggestions. We believe the Jews will, many of them, be gathered back to Palestine in unbelief.

99. "S. S.," London. It was certainly *very wrong* of you to take a false oath; and still more wrong of those who compelled you to take it for their gain. We do not believe it to be "the unpardonable sin;" but you are bound to confess the sin, and get out of a false position. Do not trifle with conscience, else you may get into a state which can only be compared to hell upon earth. No human power should have induced you to tell a lie, much less to swear one!

February.

100. "W. S.," Bournemouth. It may be you have been looking for an answer to your note of December 5; but as it was placed with all the other Communications to the Magazine, we have only this moment opened it. Perhaps you are not aware that we cannot undertake to send direct replies. We have repeatedly informed our Correspondents of this, and we would take it as a favour if they would not send us stamps, or stamped envelopes. As to the subject of your note, we have to remind you that you have not given us the title of the paper which you wish reprinted.

101. "J. A. H.," Blackrock. We quite agree with your view of Abraham. Hebrews xi. 16 is conclusive as to all those Old Testament saints having their place in heavenly glory. Genesis xiii. 15 in nowise touches this fact. Abraham's seed shall assuredly inherit the land of Canaan; but Abraham himself will enjoy that which he desired and looked for, namely, "a heavenly country." With regard to your second question, we do not see what authority there is for predicating positively on the subject. Certainly Psalm xxiii. 3 is no proof. We most fully believe that if a child of God wanders, he will be restored;

but for any one to assert that the Lord "*could not* take him away by death, whilst in a condition of distance and worldliness," seems to us quite unwarrantable. As to the formulary to be used in baptism, we have already given our judgment. We always adopt Matthew xxviii. 19; but we do not dogmatize about it. May the Lord bless you, and make you deeply happy in His unchanging love!

102. "Baptista." Luke xxiii. 43; Acts vii. 59; 2 Corinthians v. 8; Philippians i. 23 prove, very clearly, that the moment the spirit of a saint leaves the body it is with Christ in Paradise. The "leading man" to whom you applied for information must be deplorably ignorant of the New Testament. The whole of your letter shews that your mind has been sadly darkened by the cloud of scepticism which seems, just now, to be overshadowing so many thousands. In a very recent number we referred to the question of "everlasting punishment." We believe it so connects itself with the truth of the immortality of the soul, and the infinite nature of Christ's atonement, that you cannot touch it without disturbing the entire arch of Divine Revelation. The word "everlasting" occurs about seventy times in the New Testament, and is applied to the life of the believer, to the Spirit of God, to the inheritance of the saints, and the punishment of the wicked. On what authority, therefore, can the word be said to mean eternal in one case and not eternal in another? Be assured of it, that all this reasoning is the fruit of positive infidelity, from which may God, in His mercy, deliver the children of His people! We believe that "hell-fire" is an awful and an eternal reality; nor should we be shaken in our belief by the absurd reasonings of ten thousand "leading men." "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." Dear friend, do you ask God to guide you by His word and Spirit; and place no confidence whatever in "leading men."

103. "M. C." You do not give us your address, or even your name; and yet the nature of your communication is such as to demand some sort of guarantee. We have, for some time, been feeling strongly as to the practice of some of our Correspondents in writing to us about the condition of assemblies, and the walk and conversation of individuals. We consider it quite wrong, and we do not mean to take notice of any such communications in future. We do not believe it to be according to the mind of Christ to make the failings of our brethren the subject of anonymous letters to the conductors of a Magazine. If it be a question of individual failure, the proper course is to go and speak tenderly and faithfully to the person himself. But this needs much grace and self-subjugation. Serious mischief may be done by approaching a failing or erring brother in a harsh, legal, knock-me-down spirit; and if there be not moral power

friend's objection, as also his charge of Antinomianism against the tracts you name. It is entirely owing to the standpoint from which he looks at these things. We believe the doctrine of the tracts to be the direct opposite of what your friend states. 110. "W. A. G.," House of Commons. We do not believe that Hebrews x. 26—31, or Colossians i. 23, or, in short, any passage in the New Testament, rightly interpreted, implies that a true believer can ever be lost. If you would procure from our publisher, Mr. Morrish, 24, Warwick Lane, a copy of a tract entitled, "Final Perseverance: What is it?" it may help you. If you enclose three stamps, he will forward the tract to your address.

111. "J. C.," Stonehouse. We do not agree with the view of the 144,000.

March.

112. "J. F.," Sheerness. We can only praise the Lord for His grace bestowed on your young friend, in enabling her to resist such a temptation, and to yield obedience to that solemn word, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." It is most painful and humbling to think of the numbers that break down and dishonour and deny their Lord in the matter of marriage. As to the flimsy arguments used and the excuses urged in such cases, they could only have weight with persons blinded by self-will and inordinate affection. But we know of nothing more miserable, in this world, than for a child of God to be linked with an unconverted person; and, then, the dishonour done to Christ in this matter, who can calculate? As to the expression in 2 Corinthians v. 1, we believe it refers to the body of the believer. The lines you have sent us, though interesting, from the occasion which suggested them, would hardly do for insertion.

113. "D. W. S.," Kent. Your verses breathe a sweet spirit of piety and devotion; but the poetry is very poor.

114. "J. A. K.," Rochdale. The term, "House of God," in 1 Peter iv. 17, refers to the Church in its place of responsibility in this world. God judges His house now. He will judge the world by and by. Holiness becometh the house of God, and He must judge everything contrary thereto. A father rules and orders his house, because it is his house, and because he will have everything in his house agreeable to his tastes and suited to his dignity. Thus our God deals with us. It is not a question of the salvation of the soul, or of the eternal security of the believer; all that is settled. But God disciplines His children and judges His house. It is a most precious privilege to stand connected with God, in this world; but it is a most solemn responsibility also.

115. "J. L.," Sydenham. You seem to confound two things quite distinct, namely, the evangelist and the elder. The

to act graciously, in such a case, it is better to go and tell the Lord about it. So also as to what transpires in the assembly, if half the time spent in murmuring and complaining about this, that, and the other, were spent in earnest prayer and loving intercession, how very different we should find it! We doubt not but that in very many cases, the deadness and want of power complained of are caused by the wrong state of soul of the persons who complain. There are two sides to every question; and we must say, that, in our experience and observation, for over a quarter of a century, we have always found that those persons who *talked* about the weakness and deadness of meetings, had really need to look to themselves; whereas the really spiritual and godly members, instead of gossiping about such things, went to the Lord in prayer about them, and thus brought down blessing on their own souls, and on the assembly. We are not ignorant of the fact that there is, everywhere, more or less to mourn over, much need of revival and bracing up; nay, we are fully alive to it, but we do not believe that the remedy lies in anonymous communications to the editor of a periodical. Lord is speaking of "the law" as contained in the Old Testament scriptures; of course, the same authority and the same eternal perpetuity belong to all scripture.

105. "Rev. R. S. L." We do not know who has sent you the copy of "Things New and Old." You do not say if you wish it forwarded to your present address.

106. "J. M., Worcester. We are deeply interested in your letter. The Lord be praised for the Sunday School! May He pour down His rich blessing upon it and upon you, beloved brother! As to the question of insurance, it must rest between the soul and the Lord. "According to your faith," must be the rule.

107. "A. B., Southsea. In 1 Corinthians ix. 21, the expression "under the law" represents one word (*evnomos*) which simply means under the rule or authority of Christ. Paul was not under the law, nor are we either, thanks be to God.

108. "H. P. A." We can only praise our Lord with an overflowing heart, for what you are able to tell us of the Lord's gracious ministry to your soul, through the paper on "Arise, go up to Bethel." Your letter is most cheering, and we thank you heartily for it. As to the terrible error into which your friend has fallen, 1 Peter iii. 18; iv. 1, is perfectly conclusive. May God bless you, beloved friend, and make you a blessing!

109. "R. S., Manchester. We can see no objection to the expression "eternal word," as applied to the scriptures. It is true there was a time when the book which we call the Bible was not extant, but the contents of the Bible are eternal, and this is all that is meant. But we can quite understand your

former would necessarily be called to move about from place to place, and hence could not so well follow a settled occupation. The elder, on the contrary, is one who exercises a local charge, and remains stationary. The apostle, in 1 Corinthians ix. is speaking of those that preach the gospel; but even in that case, he shewed, by his own example, that the highest thing was to work with one's hands. As to the elders, he tells them how they should act, in Acts xx. 35.

116. "W. H. H.," Weymouth. We most fully agree with you in saying that our motto should ever be, "*Truth*, first; unity if you can, but truth." If unity be attained by the sacrifice of truth, it cannot be "the unity of the Spirit." Many, however, fall into the mistake of thinking that unity is something which they themselves have to set up; whereas the unity of the body is a grand reality, a substantial truth, in the light of which we are called to walk, and judge ourselves and all around us. We are no more competent to form that unity than we are to atone for our sins or to work out a righteousness for ourselves. It is God's work from first to last. He has revealed His righteousness; we receive it by faith. He has revealed His unity; we receive it by faith; and as it would assuredly be a grave error for us to attempt to work out our own righteousness, so it is a grave error to attempt to work out our own unity. Christ is the centre of God's unity; the Holy Ghost is the power, and truth the basis. As to man's unity, you will find all manner of centres, a man, an ordinance, a doctrine, something short of Christ. This unity may be maintained by the energy of the human will, and it is based upon tradition, expediency, or reason. In a word, it is not Christ, or the Spirit, or the truth—it is not of God; and if we do not gather with God, we must scatter.

117. "S. B.," Tunbridge Wells. We have no recollection whatever of your communication; but we must remind you that we have repeatedly requested our friends not to send us stamped envelopes, as we cannot undertake to send direct replies. If they will persist in doing so, it must be at their own risk; but they will really confer a favour upon us by not doing so. If friends wish to write to us on any subject, they are welcome to do so; but we must be allowed to use our own discretion in answering or not.

118. "E. S. K.," North Brixton. Revelation xxii. 20 may help you. In reference to the second part of your letter, you might order from our publisher, Mr. Morrish, a little book entitled, "*A Brief Outline of the Books of the Bible*," which will help you. We bless the Lord for what you are able to tell us of help received through our pages. To His precious Name be all the praise! May He bless you abundantly!

119. "George," Swindon. We are surprised at your saying

that you find yourself alone in the practice of kneeling to ask God's blessing, on entering the assembly. We see numbers adopting the practice, and we greatly like it. You will excuse our saying that it was scarcely necessary to seek an opinion on such a point.

120. "A Young Brother," Ryde. The question of going to law has been frequently discussed. If it be a matter between brethren, 1 Corinthians vi. is conclusive. If it be a matter between a Christian and a man of the world, we can only say that if the former go to law, he is doing the very reverse of what God has done with him. He professes to have been forgiven ten thousand talents, and yet he takes his fellow by the throat for a paltry hundred pence. Is this right? Is it pleasing to God? Is it yielding a true testimony to our heavenly Father—is it representing Him—is it imitating Him? God is not imputing trespasses. He is a pardoning God, delighting in mercy. Now, if we go to law, we are not like Him; we are misrepresenting Him. Why was the man in Matthew xviii. called "a wicked servant?" Because that having been forgiven ten thousand talents, he took his fellow by the throat for a hundred pence. No doubt there are many questions raised on this subject; persons may say, "What are we to do? How can we get on? we should be cheated on all hands if we did not avail ourselves of the law." To all this we have to say, "Is it right—is it consistent—is it like God, for a Christian to bring a poor fellow sinner to the judgment seat on any ground whatever?" If not, why seek to defend it? We have nothing to do with results; we have only to do right, and leave results with God. But even were we to look at results, we question if people make much, in the long run, by going to law. They very often find it to be throwing good money after bad. We know many christian men in business who do not go to law, and they are none the worse for it, even in a pecuniary point of view. But it is our business to judge the question in the light of the New Testament, and if so judged, we believe the answer will be easily had.

121. "T. S.," Manchester. Your paper has come to hand.

April.

122. "Mira.," London. The testimony of holy scripture is clear, explicit, and abundant as to the grand cardinal truth that atonement is by the shedding of blood. In one of our earliest volumes you will find a series of papers entitled "Life through death" in which we have sought to adduce scripture proof on the very point to which your letter refers. The coats of skin which the Lord God made for Adam and Eve were procured from *dead* victims. The "more excellent sacrifice" of Abel consisted of *blood* and fat. So also in the history of Noah, in Genesis viii. And the history of Abraham, Genesis xv. Israel was screened from judgment, in the land of Egypt, by the *blood* of the

paschal lamb, as we read, "when I see *the blood*, I will pass over you." (Exodus xii.) The whole book of Leviticus is one great tributary stream tending to swell the tide of evidence on this vital question. The burnt offering, peace offering, sin offering, and trespass offering were all based on blood-shedding. See also that famous passage in Leviticus xvii. "The life of the flesh is in *the blood*: and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls, *for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.*" (ver. 11.) But time would fail us to bring forward the thousandth part of the scripture proofs on this subject. We shall merely give two most pointed passages from the New Testament, and then leave you to follow out the chain of evidence for yourself. "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood: and without shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. ix. 22.) "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood." (Rev. i. 5; v. 9; comp. Acts xx. 28.) These passages speak for themselves. We desire to bow, in reverent submission, in all things, to the authority of holy scripture. We do not want to reason or argue. "Thus saith the Lord" is amply sufficient for us.

123. "An Inquirer," London. The passage to which you call our attention is designed to set forth the absolute completeness of the putting away of sin, and the introduction of divine righteousness by the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The death of Christ is presented in various aspects; thus, for example, we read in Isaiah liii. "His life is taken from the earth." And again, "Ye killed the Prince of life." And yet we read in John x. "I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." We see in the death of Christ, the expression of His perfect devotedness to God. We see in it the perfect putting away of sin. We see in it the perfect eumity of man to God, and the perfect love of God to man. We see in it the Divine Son laying down His life that He might take it again. We see Him as the Victim, bearing the judgment of sin. We see Him as the Martyr, suffering for righteousness. We must take all these things into account, if we would have a full view of the profound mystery of the death of Christ.

124. "W. B. F.," Gosport. It is very plain that John i. 47 refers not to Jesus but Nathanael. See also Psalm xxxii. 2. Every one who takes his true place as a sinner—every truly repentant soul, is counted as a guileless one, and is freely and fully pardoned and counted righteous in Christ. Marvellous grace!

125. "D. J.," London. Matthew xxv. 31—46 refers to the judgment of "the quick" previous to the millennium. Revelation xx. 11—15 refers to the judgment of the "dead" who have died

in their sins. This is after the millennium. 2 Corinthians v. 10 states the great broad truth that all must be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ—all must come out in their true character, in the light of that great day. The believer shall never come into judgment, as regards his person. See John v. 24. His work, as a servant, must be tested. See 1 Corinthians iii. 13. But he himself is God's workmanship, and Christ is not going to judge God's work. We thank God for the blessing which you say you and many others have received through the pages of "Things New and Old."

126. "Pater," Warrington. Your question is deeply and touchingly interesting. It is lovely for a father and son to work together in business; but if your son is not fully under your control, if he has taken a distinct and independent stand as a man of the world, if, as you suggest, he would do things that you could not, and thus involve your name as a Christian and dishonour your Lord, then, clearly, a partnership with him would be as thoroughly "an unequal yoke" as though he were in no wise related to you. From the tone of your letter, beloved brother, we feel assured the Lord will guide you. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." God bless you, and give you the unspeakable joy of seeing your son brought to the feet of Jesus. This would indeed be a blessed settlement of the question.

127. "G. M. S.," Bordeaux. We believe that Luke xvii. 26—37 refers to the coming of Christ in judgment on the world. So also 2 Thessalonians i. 7, 8 and ii. 8. Accept our warmest thanks for your kind and interesting letter. The Lord bless you, and make you a blessing.

128. "B. B.," Swindon. We most fully believe that Bazaars are of the world, and hence for Christians to have recourse to such means of raising money for the Lord's work is doing evil that good may come. Surely the Lord does not want money raised in such a manner.

129. "Lillie," Melcombe. You have our hearty sympathy and prayers. Wait on the Lord. Do nothing hastily. Be much in prayer. God will surely open your way for you. We do not at present know of a suitable opening; but the Lord will provide. Give Him the undivided confidence of your heart. We do, most earnestly, commend you to Him.

130. "J. B.," Aberford. You will find an answer to your question in our March number. Remember that circumstances cannot alter the truth of God.

131. "An Enquirer," Ryde. It is quite true that the special object in the Lord's Supper is to remember Him, and shew forth His death; but, at the same time, John xiv.—xvi. very clearly proves that, after the Supper, our Lord discoursed on various subjects; and, if He did so, surely His servants may do the

same. It would be a serious mistake, therefore, to shut out all teaching and exhortation save such as had for its subject the fact of the death of Christ or the circumstances attendant thereon. We believe in this, as in everything else, the Holy Ghost must lead and order. There is always great danger in taking up a certain idea and running it to seed. We most fully enter into the thought of the true nature and object of the Supper itself; but we also believe that when the feast has been duly celebrated; there is a wide field for the action of the Holy Ghost in teaching and exhortation. "Let all things be done to edifying."

132. "H. H. B.," Bradford. We fear you have never yet really looked the great and awful question of eternity and your soul's salvation straight in the face. If you had, you would be in a condition of soul to receive consolation from these words, "His name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins."

133. "M. A.," Melksham. We do not undertake to expound the views of any particular body of Christians. We can only answer for ourselves that we cordially embrace the doctrine of election, as you may see in our leading article for March.

134. "A Stranger," near Dublin. In Heb. xii. 24, you have the whole millennial scene presented. It is not yet come, but we belong to it, and we can say, "*We are come*" to it, in spirit, and by faith. The believer has his back to Mount Sinai, and his face to Mount Zion. These are the two great contrasted systems of *law* and *grace*. "The Church of the firstborn" (ones—*πρωτοτόκων*) is a unique thing, occupying its own distinct position. It is, and ever will be, distinct—distinct from the Old Testament saints and from the nation of Israel. "The spirits of just men made perfect" are the saints of the Old Testament. "The general assembly" may be viewed as setting forth the countless inhabitants of the invisible and eternal world. The whole scene is most glorious, and eminently calculated to bow the soul in holy worship and adoration.

As to John xvi. 23—26, the expression "that day" refers to their seeing their Lord in resurrection, and applies to the whole of this present time. When we see Him in glory, there will be no question of asking for anything. May God bless you, beloved friend, and comfort your heart by His own direct and perfect ministry, so that you may be able to say, by sweet experience, "In vain the creature streams are dry, I have a fountain still."

