

Things New and Old.

A

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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.

CHRISTIAN LIFE: WHAT IS IT?

THE question which we propose to consider, in the following pages, is one of the most interesting and important that could possibly engage our attention. It is this: What is the life which, as Christians, we possess? what is its *source*? what are its *characteristics*? what is its *issue*? These great questions have only to be named to secure the attention of every thoughtful reader.

The divine word speaks of two distinct heads or sources. It speaks of a *first* man, and it speaks of a *second*. In the opening of the book of Genesis, we read these words, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." (Chap. i. 26, 27.) This statement is repeated in Genesis v. "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him." After this, we read, "And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image."

But between Adam's creation in the image of God, and the birth of a son in his own image, a great change had taken place. Sin had entered. Innocence had fled. Adam had become a fallen, ruined, outcast man. This fact must be seized and pondered by the reader. It is a weighty, influential fact. It lets us into the secret of the source of that life which, as sons of Adam, we possess. That source, be it remembered, was a guilty, ruined, outcast head. It

was not in innocence that Adam became the head of a race. It was not within the bounds of Paradise that Cain was brought forth, but outside, in a ruined and cursed world. It was not in the image of God that Cain was begotten, but in the image of a fallen father.

We fully believe that *personally* Adam was the subject of divine grace, and that he was saved by faith in the promised seed of the woman. But, looking at him *federally*, that is, as the head of a race, he was a fallen, ruined, outcast man; and every one of his posterity is born into the same condition. As is the head, so are the members—all the members together, each member in particular. The son bears the image of his fallen father, and inherits his nature. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and, do what you will with "flesh"—educate, cultivate, sublimiate it as you will, it will never yield "spirit." You may improve flesh, according to human thinking; but improved "flesh" is not "spirit." The two things are totally opposite. The former expresses all that we are as born into this world, as sprung from the first Adam. The latter expresses what we are as born again, as united to the Second Adam.

We frequently hear the expression, "Raising the masses." What does it mean? There are three questions which we should like to ask those who propose to themselves to elevate the masses. First, *What* is it you are going to elevate? Secondly, *How* are you going to elevate them? Thirdly, *Where* are you going to elevate them to? It is impossible that water can ever rise above its level; and so it is impossible that you can ever raise the sons of fallen Adam above the level of their fallen father. Do what you will with them, you cannot possibly elevate them higher than their ruined outcast head. Man cannot grow *out of* the nature in which he was born. He can grow *in it*, but not out of it. Trace the river of fallen humanity up to its source, and you find that source to be a fallen, ruined, outcast man. This simple truth strikes at the root of all

human pride—all pride of birth—all pride of ancestry. We are all, as men, sprung from one common stock—one head—one source. We are all begotten in one image, and that is a ruined man. The head of the race, and the race of which he is head, are all involved in one common ruin. Looked at from a legal or social standpoint, there may be differences; but looked at from a divine standpoint, there is none. If you want a true idea of the condition of each member of the human race, you must look at the condition of the head. You must go back to Genesis iii. and read these words, "*He drove out the man.*" Here is the root of the whole matter. Here is the source of the river the streams whereof have made sad the millions of Adam's posterity for well nigh six thousand years. Sin has entered and snapped the link, defaced the image of God, corrupted the sources of life, brought in death, and given Satan the power of death. Thus it stands in reference to Adam's race—to the race as a whole, and to each member of that race in particular. All are involved in guilt and ruin—all exposed to death and judgment. There is no exception. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon *all* men, for that *all* have sinned." (Rom. v. 12.) "In Adam *all* die." (1 Cor. xv. 22.) Here are the two sad and solemn realities, linked together—"Sin and death."

But, thanks be to God, a Second Man has entered the scene; and this great fact, while it sets forth the marvellous grace of God towards the first man and his posterity, doth also, in the clearest and most unanswerable manner, prove that the first man has been completely set aside. If the first had been found faultless, then should no place have been sought for the Second. If there had been a single ray of hope as to the first Adam, there would have been no occasion for the Second.

But God sent His Son into this world, He was "the seed of the woman." Let this fact be seized and pondered.

Jesus Christ did not come under the federal headship of Adam. He was legally descended from David and Abraham, as we read in Matthew. "He was of the seed of David, according to the flesh." (2 Tim. ii. 8.) Moreover, His genealogy is traced, by the inspired penman, in Luke's gospel, up to Adam. But here is the angelic announcement as to the mystery of His conception: "And the angel answered and said unto Mary, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; *therefore* that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke i. 35.

Here we have a real man, but One without a single taint of sin—a single seed of mortality. He was made of the woman, of the substance of the virgin, a man—in every particular, just such as we are, but wholly without sin, and entirely free from any association which could have given sin or death a claim upon Him. Had our blessed Lord come, as regards His human nature, under the headship of Adam, He could not have been called the Second Man, inasmuch as He would have been a member of the first, like any other man; and further, He would have been obnoxious to death, in His own person, which it were blasphemy to assert or suppose.

But, adored for ever be His peerless name, He was the pure, holy, spotless One of God. He was unique. He stood alone—the only pure untainted grain of human seed that earth had ever seen. He came into this world of sin and death, Himself sinless and life-giving. In Him was life and nowhere else. All beside was death and darkness. There was not a single pulse of spiritual life, not one ray of divine light, apart from Him. The entire race of the first man was involved in sin, under the power of death, and exposed to eternal judgment. He could say, "I am the light of the world." Apart from Him, all was moral darkness and spiritual death. "In Adam all die; in Christ shall all be made alive." But let us see how.

No sooner did the Second Man appear upon the scene, than Satan appeared to dispute every inch of the ground with Him. It was a grand reality. The Man Christ Jesus had undertaken the mighty work of glorifying God on this earth; of destroying the works of the devil; and of redeeming His people. Stupendous work! Work, we may with all possible assurance say, which none but the God-man could accomplish. But, as we have said, it was a real thing. Jesus had to meet all the craft and power of Satan. He had to meet him as the serpent and meet him as the lion. Hence, at the very opening of His blessed career, as the baptized and anointed Man, He stood in the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. See Matt. iv., Luke iv.

And mark, even here, the contrast between the first man and the Second. The first man stood in the midst of a *garden of delights*, with everything that could possibly plead for God against the tempter. The Second Man, on the contrary, stood in the midst of a *wilderness of privations* with everything, apparently, to plead against God and for the tempter. Satan tried with the Second Man precisely the same weapons which he had found so effective with the first, "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." Comp. Gen. iii. 6. Matt. iv. 1—9. Luke iv. 1—12. 1 John ii. 16.

But the Second Man vanquished the tempter—vanquished him with one simple weapon, the written word. "*It is written*" was the one unvarying reply of the dependent and obedient man. No reasoning, no questioning, no looking this way or that way. The word of the living God was commanding authority for the perfect Man. Blessed for ever be His name! The homage of the universe be His throughout everlasting ages! Amen and amen.

But we must not allow ourselves to expatiate, and therefore we hasten on to unfold our special theme. We want the reader to see, in the light of holy scripture, how the Second Adam imparts life to His members.

By the victory in the wilderness, the strong man was "bound," not "destroyed." Hence, we find that, at the close, he is suffered once more to try his hand. Having "*departed for a season,*" he returned again and that in another character, even as the one who had the power of death, by which to terrify the soul of man. Tremendous thought! This power he brought to bear, in all its terrible intensity, on the spirit of Christ, in the garden of Gethsemane. We cannot possibly contemplate the scene in that garden and not feel that the spirit of our blessed Lord was passing through something which He had never experienced before. It is evident that Satan was permitted to come before Him in a very special manner, and to put forth special power, in order, if possible, to deter Him. Thus He says, in John xiv. 30, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." So also, in Luke xxii. 53, we find Him saying to the chief priests, and captains of the temple, "Be ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me; but *this is your hour and the power of darkness.*"

Evidently, therefore, the period from the last supper to the cross was marked by features quite distinct from every previous stage of the marvellous history of our Lord. "This is *your hour.*" And, further, "The *power of darkness.*" The prince of this world came against the Second Man, armed with all the power with which the first man's sin had invested him. He brought to bear upon His spirit all the power and all the terrors of death as the just judgment of God. Jesus met all this in its utmost force and in all its awful intensity. Hence, we hear such accents as these, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." And again, we read that, "Being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

In a word, then, the One who undertook to redeem His people, to give eternal life to His members, to accomplish the will and counsels of God, had to meet all the consequences of man's condition. There was no escaping them. He passed through them all; but He passed through them *alone*, for who but Himself could have done it? He, the true Ark, had to go over alone into the dark and dreadful river of death, in order to make a way for His people to pass over dryshod. He was alone in the horrible pit and the miry clay, that we might be with Him on the rock. He earned the new song alone, that He might sing it in the midst of the Church.

But not only did our Lord meet all the power of Satan as the prince of this world, all the power of death as the just judgment of God, all the violence and bitter enmity of fallen man: there was something far beyond all this. When man and Satan, earth and hell, had done their very utmost, there remained a region of darkness and impenetrable gloom to be traversed by the spirit of the Blessed One, into which it is impossible for human thought to enter. We can only stand upon the confines, and with our heads bowed in the deep hush of unutterable worship, hearken to the loud and bitter cry which issues thence, accompanied by those words, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?"—words which eternity itself will be insufficient to unfold.

Here we must pause, and ascribe, once more, eternal and universal praise, homage, and adoration to the One who went through all this to procure life for us. May our hearts adore Him! May our lips praise Him! May our lives glorify Him! He alone is worthy. May His love constrain us to live not unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again, and gave us life in resurrection.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)



A LETTER TO A FRIEND

ON

THE STUDY OF THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

DEAR FRIEND,

You desire a little light on the Book of Psalms, and especially to know how they are divided. We can do little more, in our brief space, than give you a mere hint or two.

In the first place, then, it is important, in approaching the study of this most precious book, to remember that, in its primary aspect, it is for God's earthly people Israel. This is very clear from Romans iii. 19, where the apostle, after quoting from the Psalms, goes on to say, "Now we know, that what things soever *the law* saith, it saith to *them who are under the law*." This marks the application of the Psalms with great distinctness. It is to them who are under the law. Hence, when you come to study them, you do not find in them the knowledge of full redemption—you do not hear the cry of "Abba"—you do not trace the breathings of the spirit of adoption—the spirit of liberty. Sonship and an indwelling Spirit are unknown to souls under the law.

True it is, you get most precious piety in the Psalms—real confidence in, and looking to, God—an earnest thirsting after Him. All this we may well cultivate and long after. But, on the other hand, you find the soul oftentimes in a state of bondage and fear, dreading the wrath of God, and sighing for deliverance. And, further, you continually listen to the cry for vengeance upon enemies, the calling upon God to judge them—things perfectly consonant with a legal state and an earthly standing, but wholly unsuited to a people in the enjoyment of grace, knowing redemption, and consciously standing in the relationship of children.

Hence, then, dear friend, it would be a great mistake for a Christian—a child of God—a heavenly man, to go back to the position of soul presented in the Psalms, or to make the language of those Psalms the measure of his piety or of his experience. No doubt such an one can richly enjoy the Psalms, and adopt many of the expressions therein. Indeed, it is only when one knows his true standing in a risen and glorified Christ, and also the true dispensational place of the Book of Psalms, that he can truly enjoy them. It is not to be supposed that a child of God in a low and a legal state, who goes to the Psalms in order to find in their language the true vehicle in which to convey his own feelings and experiences—can have proper enjoyment of them. Far from it. If you really want to understand and enjoy the Psalms, you must approach them in the full light of the New Testament—in the clear understanding that they belong to a state out of which you have been taken by the death and resurrection of Christ. Where do you get aught of life in a risen Christ in the Psalms? Nowhere.

But, in order to aid you a little in seizing the true idea of the dispensational place of this profound and wondrous Book, let us call your attention to the mode in which the Holy Ghost quotes from it in the New Testament. Take the following: "The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth." (Ps. xxxiv. 16.) Now part of this verse contains a dispensational truth, and part of it contains an eternal truth, above and beyond all dispensations. It is always true that "The face of the Lord is against them that do evil;" but it is not always true that He is cutting off the remembrance of them from the earth. Accordingly, when the Spirit in the apostle Peter quotes this verse, He leaves out the last clause. (See 1 Peter iii. 12.) Why is this? Because God is now dealing in grace. He is reconciling sinners instead of cutting off. Take another instance, though we do not

refer to it as a quotation. "Trust in the Lord and do good." Here is an eternal principle. But mark what follows. "*So shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.*" Here you have a dispensational promise, applicable to an earthly people. The Christian is not promised any earthly blessings. Paul trusted in the Lord and did good; and in place of dwelling in the land, he was beheaded at Rome; and, even during his lifetime, he often suffered hunger and nakedness.

But enough. We must leave you to think and study for yourself. We merely add a word, at your request, as to the division of this most delightful Book. It is divided into five distinct books, as follows. Book I., containing Psalms i.—xli. Book II., containing xlii.—lxxii. Book III., containing Psalms lxxiii.—lxxxix. Book IV., containing Psalms xc.—cvi. Book V., containing Psalms cvii.—cl. Into the distinct principle running through these divisions, we cannot now enter. We merely add that while we have, scattered up and down, throughout the whole volume of Psalms, some of the most blessed, beautiful, and fervent utterances of praise and thanksgiving to God—expressions of delight in Him and longing after Him—language, in short, which may be adopted by the saint of every age—still we must remember that the Psalms are not the expression of the Church's worship, though they may well be the subject of the Church's prayerful study and adoring contemplation. God forbid we should pen a single line that might even seem to anyone to be a depreciation of a book which has proved an ever gushing fountain of refreshment to the saints of God in all ages. All we desire is to set before you, dear friend, what we consider to be the true dispensational place of the Psalms.

Many, we are aware, consider the Psalms to be the only vehicle of the Church's worship; and the reason they assign is that they are divinely inspired, whereas hymns are merely human compositions, and even paraphrases

more or less so. But this argument will not stand. If we can produce a single expression throughout the entire one hundred and fifty Psalms which a Christian could not intelligently and truthfully use, it entirely breaks down. Now we know that many of the Psalms contain utterances of the Spirit of Christ—utterances given forth when He was making atonement for our sins, when He was enduring the wrath due to us, when He was forsaken of God, when He stood where we, thanks be to God, can never stand. Clearly, then, such utterances are not suited to us, and therefore the whole argument founded upon divine inspiration falls to the ground. We believe in the divine inspiration of every line of the Psalms; but that no more proves them the suited utterance of the Church of God now, than the divine inspiration of Exodus xx. proves that we are under the law. It is not that the Church cannot adopt some of the expressions in the Psalms. Assuredly she can; but what we maintain is that, as a whole, they are not for the Church's worship; and, further, that it would be doing positive violence to dispensational integrity to confine the Church thereto. Only ask yourself this question, What must be the condition of a soul who, in the utterance of its worship, never once breathes the name of Jesus, never gives forth the cry of "Abba?" And yet neither of these precious words is to be found throughout the entire Book of Psalms.

Many other reasons might be adduced in connection with this deeply interesting subject, but we forbear, and rest satisfied with commending what has been said to your prayerful consideration, and you, dear friend, to God's own teaching and blessing.

Affectionately yours,

C. H. M.



MEDITATIONS ON THE CHRISTIAN'S STANDING AND STATE.

(EPHESIANS I. 15—23; III. 14—21.)

THE apostle, as we have said, addresses himself in the third chapter, to "the *Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ;" as in the first, to "the *God* of our Lord Jesus Christ." The different titles indicate different lines of truth and blessing. In the first prayer, it is the Christian in Christ: in the second, it is Christ in the Christian. Hence it is that the apostle prays in the first chapter that the saints may have a true apprehension of their standing in Christ as risen and glorified; and in the third, that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith—that they may be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man. This is evidently *practical*. The one we have called *christian standing*; the other, *christian state*. Would to God that the latter were a fair reflection of the former—that our practical ways truly answered to our place in Christ before the face of God our Father.

"*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.*" The familiar titles of "Father," and "family," awaken thoughts of home and affection. The glory of the *Person* of Christ rose up before us in meditating on the first prayer; but here it is *love*, rather than *glory* that surrounds Him, and surrounds us as one with Him. But wondrous to the eye as that glory will be, sweeter to the heart will be the Father's love.

Doubtless there are many glories which belong to Christ as the Son of the Father which no creature can share. Infinite must the distance necessarily be, between the Creator and the creature—between Jesus as God, and the highest angel that bows before His throne. But we speak

of Him here as *man*, and of the place which is due to Him as such.

God having fully judged sin in the Person of Christ on the cross, and put it away for ever, we are brought into His presence in the dignity of "the sons of God," and loved with a perfect love. As John says, "Beloved, *now* are we the sons of God"—"And if children," as Paul says, "then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." (1 John iii. 2. Rom. viii. 17.) Here dwell for a little, O my soul. Let thy thoughts be fully engaged. Never did more wondrous or more blessed truth engage thy meditations. Can it be, that God's many sons are loved even as His own beloved Son? Yes, Christ Himself has said it, and that is enough, more than wonderful though it be. When He speaks about the coming glory in John xvii. He says, "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them;" this, observe, is His given glory as the Son of man, not His higher glory as the Son of God. We must ever keep in view in all our meditations, His own proper, *Personal* glories. But why does He give to the saints His glory as Son of man? "*That the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.*" Nothing can be plainer, nothing can be more definite than this.

Here concentrate all thy thoughts, O my soul. Words of deeper, richer, fuller, better blessing to thee, never dropped even from the lips of Jesus. God only can love where all is unlovable. The spring of His love is in Himself, not in its object. This thou canst not understand, yet it is the fountain of all thy blessing. Thou mightest be able to form some idea of divine wisdom, or power, or righteousness, or rather, how God can exercise these attributes; but who can understand that He loves the saints as He loves His Son? In virtue of the work of Christ, we might understand something of Him giving us the place in heaven that belongs to Christ, but to *love us* as He loves Him, is incomprehensible.

Love is the spring of action, therefore love is a better thing than action. Love delights to serve, but love is better than service. There might be action and service without love, but there could not be love without both. God loved the world and gave His Son. Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it. Had there been no love, there could have been no cross, no crown, no glory. But love secures all, and all for ever. Glory may fade, or pass away as in Israel of old, but love—never. (1 Cor. xiii.) Even towards the ancient people, God's love is the same, and just because His love and counsels are unchangeable, the glory will yet be restored, and shine a thousandfold brighter than ever. "*Love never faileth.*" Grant, Lord, in thy mercy, that this thy love may be the light of our eyes and the strength of our hearts—that every word of thy mouth, and every dispensation of thy providence may be seen in the light of it. Oh! what will it be, blessed Lord, to dwell in thy love and with thyself for ever! Hasten, O hasten, the ingathering of souls, and the dawn of that happy day, for thine own name's sake.

"Brethren, look up! and view the home,
 The blessed home prepared in heaven,
 Though *here* with faltering steps we roam,
 What sweet assurance *there* is given.
 The Lamb is there upon the throne,
 The rainbow arch of love is o'er Him,
 And He will ne'er forget His own,
 Who bow with lowly hearts before Him.

Brethren, look up! and *now* rejoice,
 Though sorrow's clouds our path bedim.
 The trusting heart and joyful voice,
 Alone can sing heaven's choral hymn;
 The opened heavens e'en *now* reveal
 The glories of our radiant home—
 Oh brethren! join the glad appeal—
 'The Spirit and the bride say, Come!'"

But may I indulge the thought, a timid soul enquires, that *now*, at this present time, the Father loves me, a poor, weak believer, as He loves His own beloved Son? Surely thou mayest when He says it. His object in making known His love to us, is that we may believe it and enjoy it in this world. To doubt it would be to dishonour Him and injure our own souls. The *manifestations* of His love may vary, nay, must vary, according to our subjection to Christ and obedience to Him. (John xiv. 23.) But the love itself can never change. "God is love." Acquaint thyself with the blessed course of His love, as drawn by the apostle in 1 John iv. 8—18. True, the millennium will be the outward display of it, but the cross is the deeper expression of it. And God's love never can be sweeter to the heart than now. Even amidst the higher glories, love will be the better thing, so what must it be now amidst the sorrows and sufferings of this present time? Let His love then, O my soul, be thy refuge in every time of trouble. Nothing will so shield thee from the attacks of the enemy—nothing will so strengthen thy confidence—nothing will so increase thy devotedness—nothing will so fill thee with peace and keep thee humble. The higher the truth we receive, the deeper it humbles us in the presence of God. It was when Paul was unfolding the great mystery—the Church, that he speaks of himself as "less than the least of all saints." Ver. 8.

That the deep sense of the Father's love to His children might be wrought in their hearts, the apostle thus prays: "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." The title "*Father* of the Lord Jesus Christ," is that relationship which brings out the *love* of the Father's heart, and ranges around his Son as a centre, every order of beings, both in the heavens and the earth.

The title "*God* of our Lord Jesus Christ," brings out the *glory*—the given glory of the exalted Son of man; and, enough for the heart to know, *He shares both with us*. Loved as He is loved, and in the same glory with Him; and that not only during the first, or millennial age, but throughout the ages to come"—for ever and for ever! What a future! What an eternity! What is time or earth to thee, my soul, in view of eternal love and glory?

"Every family," is said to be a better translation than "whole family." There will be many families both in the millennial heavens and on the millennial earth. Under the name of *Jehovah*, the Jews only were named or included. As it is written, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." (Amos iii. 2.) But we have in the apostle's prayer the contrast to this. Under the name of *Father*—"Father of the Lord Jesus Christ every family in heaven and earth is named." We read of principalities, powers, angels, Jews, Gentiles, and the Church of God. But "every family" necessarily comes into view under the name of *Father*. When God delivered His ancient people out of the land of Egypt, it was under the title of *Jehovah*, His covenant name. He was not the God of any other nation in the same sense. But when the highly favoured people had sadly failed, and when He chose to place the crown of universal dominion on the head of a Gentile king, He makes Himself known as "the God of heaven." (Dan. ii. 37.) Now He speaks from heaven, not as in covenant relationship with a people on earth. But when He brings forth His Son, the "heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds," He takes the title *Father*, and under this name He takes in the wide circle of creation—of "every family" both in the heavens and the earth. The blessing is no longer limited to the favoured Jew or to the honoured Gentile, but it is extended to every class of beings which He has made. The Father's Son, centre of all His ways,

Creator and Redeemer—He is worthy—worthy that every knee should bow to Him—worthy of universal glory !

“ Kings shall fall down before Him,
 And gold and incense bring ;
 All nations shall adore Him,
 His praise all people sing.
 Outstretched His wide dominion
 O'er river, sea, and shore ;
 Far as the eagle's pinion,
 Or dove's light wing can soar.”

But, pray, may I ask, what place will the Church have in these wide scenes of encircling glories? No question, personal and important though it be, is more easily answered. *She will be in association with Christ before God, as the bride the Lamb's wife.* Need more be said? Can more be said? Every family, or circle, will have its own special, distinctive glory, and the joy and glory of each one will be the common joy and glory of all; but the Bride will have a place of nearness and intimacy which none others can share. Now, the Church is spoken of as the *body of Christ*, which is the figure of her *oneness in life* with Him. “We are members of his body.” Nothing can be so vitally connected with the head as the members of the body. “He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit.” Every true Christian is thus inseparably connected with Christ; and by the Holy Ghost's presence on the earth, all Christians are formed into one body. “There is one body and one Spirit.” This is the all-important truth for the present time. We cannot be in the current of God's thoughts unless we are endeavouring to carry it out practically. “Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” This is like the one—the chief *exhortation* for the Church; the *unity of the body* is the one, great principle. Eph. iv. 3, 4.

In 1 Corinthians x., xi. the same important truth as to the unity of the body is also taught. “The cup of bless-

ing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of *the body of Christ*? For we being many are one bread, and *one body*; for we are all partakers of that one bread." These verses leave no doubt as to what the Church *is*—one body. Chapter xi. is equally plain as to what the Church *does*: "This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." What we *are* and what we *do*, are here plainly taught. May we readily bow to the truth, and willingly obey it.

By and by, in heaven, when the body of Christ is complete, the Church will be known more especially as the *Bride, the Lamb's wife*. Of course, both terms, *body* and *Bride* are figures, but they point out two most blessed relationships — *oneness* in life, and *oneness* in affection. As the wife ranks with the husband, so will the Church rank with Christ for ever and for ever. *Bride* is a temporary title; *wife* is a permanent one. But throughout the endless ages of eternity, the wife will retain the bloom and beauty of her nuptial day. No sign of age shall ever be seen on the fair Bride of the Lamb. "Not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Oh! wondrous, wondrous truth! Oh! blessed, blessed hope! "The Spirit and the bride say, Come Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus." Rev. xxii.

"Bride of the Lamb, rejoice! rejoice!

Thy midnight watch is past;

True to His promise, lo! 'tis He!

The Saviour comes at last.

For thee, His royal Bride—for thee,

His brightest glories shine;

And happier still—His changeless heart,

With all its love, is thine."



NOTHING BETWEEN.

NOTHING between, Lord, nothing between,
 Let me thy glory see,
 Draw my soul close to thee,
 Then speak in love to me,
 Nothing between.

Nothing between, Lord, nothing between,
 Let not earth's din and noise
 Stifle thy still small voice,
 In it let me rejoice,
 Nothing between.

Nothing between, Lord, nothing between,
 Nothing of earthly care,
 Nothing of tear or prayer,
 No robe that self may wear,
 Nothing between.

Nothing between, Lord, nothing between,
 Unbelief disappear,
 Vanish each doubt and fear,
 Fading when thou art near,
 Nothing between.

Nothing between, Lord, nothing between,
 Shine with unclouded ray,
 Chasing each mist away,
 O'er my whole heart bear sway,
 Nothing between.

Nothing between, Lord, nothing between,
 Thus may I walk with thee,
 Thee only may I see,
 Thine only let me be,
 Nothing between.

Nothing between, Lord, nothing between,
 Till thine eternal light,
 Rising on earth's dark night,
 Bursts on my open sight,
 Nothing between.

Nothing between, Lord, nothing between,
 Till, the last conflict o'er,
 I stand on Canaan's shore
 With thee for evermore,
 Nothing between

E. H. H.

CORRESPONDENCE.

1. "H. E.," Ballisodare. You must ever remember that scripture cannot contradict itself. Hence, when you read in John x. such words as these, "My sheep shall never perish," your heart should rest in the full assurance of the eternal security of the very feeblest of Christ's blood-bought sheep. Many other scriptures establish the same precious truth. Evidently, then, 2 Peter ii. 20—22 cannot possibly clash with John x. and kindred passages. But what does it teach? Simply that when professors of religion return to their old habits, they are in a worse condition than if they had never made a profession at all. It is obvious that true Christians are not in question here. A "dog and a sow" cannot be looked upon as "sheep," however they may profess "the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." We desire to render hearty thanks to God for what you say as to the blessing and help received through our pages. To Him be all the praise!

2. "T. C.," Reading. We can see no objection to singing a hymn, or asking a blessing on the word, at a gospel preaching. In Acts xxvii. we find the apostle Paul giving thanks in the midst of a number of unconverted persons. We do not expect such to join either in singing or prayer. On the contrary, we often feel it right to warn them against so doing. There is great danger of persons getting into the religious habit of singing things, which, so far as they are concerned, are not true. It may be asked, Why then give out hymns or pray at all? We should only do so when we are sure of the presence of some of the Lord's people, for only such can rightly sing and pray. Some of our friends feel a difficulty in this matter. We feel none. Let each be fully persuaded in his own mind.

3. "A. S. R.," Saxmundham. Thanks for your kind

and encouraging letter, and the accompanying lines. God bless you!

4. "S.," Limerick. If you will kindly send us your name and address, we shall be happy to communicate with you. Meanwhile we can only ask the Lord to enable you to follow Him fully, cost what it may. To Him we lovingly commend you.

5. "G. S.," Tasmania. We have read your letter with much interest. You will find in our December issue an answer to your question as to Hebrews xii. 22—24. The dear friend for whom you enquire is still working for the Lord. He has been in America, and is now in Demerara. May the Lord bless you and keep you, dear brother. It is such a mercy to be kept following Him.

6. "G. R. D.," New Barnet. The grand point, in dealing with children, is to insist upon obedience. It is of the very last importance. If this be carried out from the very first, it will save a world of trouble to both parents and children. Your question is intensely interesting; but we cannot enter upon it here. If you could lay your hand upon a little work entitled "Thou and thy House," it may help you. You can get it by enclosing seven postage stamps to the publisher, "Mr. Morrish, 24, Warwick Lane, Paternoster Row, London. E.C."

7. "J.," Devonshire. We cannot enter upon your question here; but you might procure a copy of a pamphlet on "The Sufferings of Christ" from Mr. Morrish, by enclosing twelve stamps. A prayerful reading of that work will help you.

8. "A Sister," Bristol. Thanks for your kind note. We trust our letter to a friend on the study of the Psalms will help you.

9. "Daisy," Sheffield. We should know more of the circumstances of the case in question before giving a judgment.

10. "G. S.," Greenwich. We quite believe that the

midnight cry has gone forth, and that within our own memory. May we all be found watching and ready! How terrible to be shut out, when the Bridegroom comes!

11. "H. L.," Stockton. We believe that the woman should always have her head covered at the Lord's Table. Scripture says nothing about "shawls and gloves." 1 Corinthians xi. is very plain and very explicit on this point.

12. "A Confused One," Bayswater. We feel deeply for you. What you want is to get more completely done with self, and rest in Christ's perfect work, and in Himself as the object and portion of your heart. This is the true secret of peace.

13. "A Reader of T. N. & O.," Stroud. We believe that all who believe in Christ as dead and risen are sealed by the Holy Ghost and form part of His body. The body is viewed as on the earth. "There is one body." This is as true now as when the apostle penned the epistle to the Ephesians. This body is indissoluble. Its unity cannot be broken. There is no such thing as "rending the body of Christ" or "cutting off limbs." These are expressions which are used without due attention to scripture. We are bound to recognize, as a great foundation truth, the unity of the body. We are not called to form *a* unity, but to own *the* unity which God the Holy Ghost has formed. It is as contrary to the truth to set about forming a unity as to set about working out righteousness for ourselves. God reveals His righteousness, on the principle of faith; we believe and possess it. So also, God reveals His unity; we believe and walk in the light of it. Alas! men refuse to submit to God's righteousness, and go about to establish their own; and, in like manner, men refuse God's unity and go about to form their own; but both man's righteousness and man's unity must pass away like the vapours of the morning; whereas the righteousness and the unity which are of God shall endure through everlasting ages.

14. "H. H.," Brixton Hill. We have, more than once, had occasion to refer to John xv. 2. The real secret of the difficulty felt by so many in this scripture is that they seek to make it a question of life and security, whereas it is simply a question of fruitbearing. If we do not *abide* in the vine we shall prove fruitless branches, and all such branches the Husbandman removes from the place of fruitbearing. The question of salvation is not touched.

15. "M. M.," Redland. We do not know of any book on the subject you name.

16. "H. T.," Sydenham. Assuredly our Lord meant that we should be baptized in water.

17. "E. S. R.," North Brixton. The ground on which Christians should gather is stated in Ephesians iv. 4: "There is one body." There are three tests by which to try all who profess to be gathered on the ground of the Church of God. 1. Is the absolute authority of the word owned, in all things? 2. Is the free action of God the Holy Ghost fully allowed in worship and ministry? 3. Is the purity of the Lord's Table duly maintained by godly discipline in reference to bad doctrine and evil conduct? Wherever you cannot find these things it is not the Church of God at all—not on that ground. The Lord grant us singleness of heart as unto Himself!

18. "S. C. A. R.," Ventnor. The expressions "Kingdom of God," and "Kingdom of heaven" do not always mean one and the same thing. The former is sometimes used in cases where the latter would not apply. (See Rom. xiv. 17.) "The kingdom of heaven" characterizes the gospel of Matthew. "The kingdom of God" is found in Luke.

19. "W.," Cheltenham. Thanks for your very touching lines. They happen to be exactly suited, at this moment.

20. "E. M. B.," Leamington. The four Editors agree

in giving the following reading of 1 John v. 7, 8, "For there are three that bear record, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one," (or "are unto one" *εἰς τὸ ἓν εἶσιν*.)

21. "F. W. S.," Faversham. The Book of Jonah is, at once, historical, prophetical, and typical. We have the history of the prophet's actings—a prophecy of the overthrow of Nineveh—a type of the death of Christ. It is a most precious compendium of the very finest moral principles.

22. "W. J.," Seacombe. We have so frequently adverted, in former numbers, to the subject of your letter, that we do not deem it wise to bring it forward again. We may, however, say that we rather agree with your view of the point.

23. "F. G. B.," Ryde. We could not sit down at the Lord's Table with one who frequented the theatre. We can hardly understand how any one having a spark of Christianity could be found in such a place.

24. "G. D. P.," P——. We see nothing wrong in a Christian's applying, in a becoming manner, for an advance of wages, provided it be not the fruit of covetousness, but simply for the support of his family. But we cannot attempt to lay down a rule. Very much will depend on the circumstances of the case.

Communications have come to hand from the following, namely, "W. W.," Rochampton; "A. E. B.," Wellington; "C. B.," Wells; "C. J. S.," London; "J. W.," Rutland; "L. C.," Lee; "G. S.," Blackrock; "An Old Christian," Malvern; "M. E. M.," Winchester; "E. W.," Margate; "J. D. M.," Hounslow; "Cestrian," Chester; "J. F.," Reading; "A. B.," without date; "M. R. A.," Norwich; "Ruth M.," without date.



CHRISTIAN LIFE : WHAT IS IT ?

(PART II.)

It is not possible to over-estimate the interest and value of the great truth that the *source* of the life which, as Christians, we possess, is a risen and victorious Christ. It is as risen from the dead that the second Man becomes the Head of a race—Head of His body the Church. The life which the believer now possesses is a life which has been tested and tried in every possible way, and, consequently, can never come into judgment. It is a life which has passed through death and judgment, and therefore it can never die—never come into judgment. Christ, our living Head, has abolished death, and brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel. He met death in all its reality that we might never meet it. He died, that we might never die. He has so wrought for us, in His marvellous love and grace, as to render death part of our property. See 1 Cor. iii. 22.

In the old creation, man belongs to death, and hence it has been truly said that the very moment man begins to live he begins to die. Solemn fact! Man cannot escape death. "*It is appointed unto men, once to die, and after this the judgment.*" There is not so much as a single thing which man possesses, in the old creation, that will not be wrenched from his grasp by the ruthless hand of death. Death takes everything from him and reduces his body to dust, and sends his soul to judgment. Houses, lands, wealth and distinction, fame and influence—all goes when the last grim foe approaches. The wealth of the universe, were it in a man's possession, could not purchase one moment's respite. Death strips man of all and bears him away to judgment. The king and the beggar, the peer and the peasant, the learned philosopher and the ignorant clown, the civilized and the savage, it is all alike. Death

seizes upon all, within the limits of the old creation. The grave is the terminus of man's earthly history, and beyond that the throne of judgment and the lake of fire.

But, on the other hand, in the new creation, death belongs to man. There is not so much as a single thing that the Christian possesses which he does not owe to death. He has life, pardon, righteousness, peace, acceptance, glory, all through death—the death of Christ. In a word, the entire aspect of death is changed. Satan can no longer bring it to bear upon the soul of the believer, as the judgment of God against sin. God can and does use it, in His governmental dealings with His people, in the way of discipline and chastening. (See Acts v.; 1 Cor. xi. 30; 1 John v. 16.) But, as the one who had the power of death, Satan has been destroyed. Our Lord Christ has wrested his power from him, and He now holds in His omnipotent hand the keys of death and the grave. Death has lost its sting—the grave its victory; and, therefore, if death does come to the believer, it comes not as a master, but as a servant. It comes, not like a policeman to drag the soul to its eternal prison house, but as a friendly hand to open the door of the cage and let the spirit fly to its native home in the skies.

All this makes a material difference. It tends, amongst other things, to take away that fear of death which was perfectly consistent with the state of believers under the law, but is wholly incompatible with the standing and privileges of those who are united to Him who is alive from the dead. Nor is this all. The entire life and character of the Christian must take its tone from the source from whence that life emanates. “If ye then be *risen with Christ*, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For *ye are dead*, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When *Christ, our life*, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” (Col. iii. 1–4.) Water always finds its own level, and so the life

of the Christian, strengthened and guided by the Holy Ghost, always springs up toward its source.

Let no one imagine that all this for which we are contending is a mere question of human opinion—an unimportant point—an uninfluential notion. Far from it. It is a great practical truth constantly set forth and insisted upon by the apostle Paul—a truth which he preached as an evangelist, taught and unfolded as a teacher, and watched its effects as a faithful vigilant pastor. So prominent was the place which the great truth of resurrection held in the apostle's preaching, that it was said of him by some of the Athenian philosophers, "He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection." Acts xvii. 18.

Let the reader note this. "Jesus and the *resurrection*." Why was it not Jesus and the incarnation? or Jesus and the crucifixion? Was it that these profound and priceless mysteries held no place in apostolic preaching and teaching? Read 1 Timothy iii. 16 for the answer. "And without controversy, great is the 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." Read also Galatians iv. 4, 5. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law."

These passages settle the question as to the foundation doctrines of incarnation and crucifixion. But, be it ever remembered, that Paul preached and taught and jealously insisted upon resurrection. He himself was converted to a risen and glorified Christ. The very first glimpse he caught of Jesus of Nazareth was as a risen Man in glory. It was only thus he knew Him, as he tells us in 2 Corinthians v. "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." Paul

preached a resurrection gospel. He laboured to present every man perfect in a risen glorified Christ. He did not confine himself to the mere question of forgiveness of sin and salvation from hell—precious, beyond all price, as are these fruits of the atoning death of Christ—he aimed at the glorious end of planting the soul in Christ, and of keeping it there. “*As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.*” “*Ye are complete in him.*”—“*Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him.*”—“*Quickened together with him.*” Col. ii.

Such was Paul's preaching and teaching. This was his gospel. This is true Christianity, in contrast with all the forms of human religiousness and fleshly pietism under the sun. Life in a risen Christ was Paul's grand theme. It was not merely forgiveness and salvation *by* Christ, but union *with* Him. Paul's gospel planted the soul at once in a risen and glorified Christ, redemption and forgiveness of sins being the obvious and necessary consequence. This was the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to Paul's trust. 1 Tim. i. 2.

Most gladly would we dwell at greater length, on the blessed theme of the source of christian life; but we must hasten on to the remaining points of our subject, and shall therefore very briefly call the reader's attention, in the second place, to the *characteristics* or moral features of the life which as Christians we possess. To do anything like justice to this point we should seek to unfold the precious mystery of the life of Christ, as a man, on this earth—to trace His ways—to mark the style and spirit with which He passed through all the scenes and circumstances of His course here below. We should view Him as a child subject to His parents, growing up beneath the eye of God, increasing from day to day in wisdom and stature, exhibiting all that was lovely in the sight of God and man. We

should trace His path as a servant, faithful in all things—a path marked by incessant labour and toil. We should ponder Him as the lowly, humble, and obedient man, subject and dependent in all things, emptying Himself and making Himself of no reputation, surrendering Himself perfectly, for the glory of God and the good of man; never seeking His own interest in anything. We should mark Him as the gracious, loving, sympathizing friend and companion, ever ready with the cup of consolation for every child of sorrow, ever at hand to dry the widow's tear, to hear the cry of the distressed, to feed the hungry, to cleanse the leper, to heal all manner of disease. In a word, we should point out the countless rays of moral glory that shine forth in the precious and perfect life of Him who went about doing good.

But who is sufficient for these things? We can merely say to the christian reader, Go, study your great Exemplar. Gaze upon your Model. If a risen Christ is the source of your life, the Christ who lived down here in this world is your pattern. The features of your life are those selfsame *features that shone in Him as a man here below*. Through death, He has made His life to be your life. He has linked you with Himself by a bond that can never be severed, and now you are privileged to go back and study the gospel narratives in order to see how He walked, that you may, through the grace of the Holy Ghost, walk even as He walked.

It is a very blessed though a very solemn truth, that there is nothing of any value, in God's account, save the outflow of the life of Christ from His members here. All that is not the direct fruit of that life is utterly valueless in God's account. The activities of the old nature are not merely worthless but sinful. There are certain natural relationships in which we stand, and which are sanctioned by God, and in which Christ is our model. For example, "Husbands, love your wives, *as Christ loved the Church.*"

We are recognized as parents and children, masters and servants, and instructed as to our deportment in these holy relationships; but all this is on the new ground of risen life in Christ. (See Col. iii. ; Eph. v. vi.) The old man is not recognized at all. It is viewed as crucified, dead, and buried; and we are called upon to reckon it as dead, and to mortify our members which are on the earth, and to walk even as Christ walked; to live a life of self-surrender, to manifest the life of Christ, to reproduce Him. This is practical Christianity. May we understand it better! May we, at least, remember that nothing is of the smallest value in God's account save the life of Christ shewn out in the believer, from day to day, by the power of the Holy Ghost. The feeblest expression of this life is a sweet odour to God. The mightiest efforts of mere religious flesh—the costliest sacrifices—the most imposing ordinances and ceremonies, are but “dead works,” in the sight of God. Religiousness is one thing; Christianity is quite another.

And, now, one word, as to the *issue* of the life which as Christians we possess. We may truly say “one word,” and what is that? “Glory.” This is the only issue of christian life. “When Christ our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” Jesus is waiting for the moment of His manifestation in glory, and we wait in and with Him. He is seated and expecting, and we are seated and expecting likewise. “As he is so are we in this world.” (1 John iv. 17.) Death and judgment are behind us; nothing but glory before. If we may so express it, our *yesterday* is the cross; our *to-day*, a risen Christ; our *to-morrow*, glory. Thus it stands with all true believers. It is with them as with their living and exalted Head. As is the Head so are the members. They cannot be separated for a single moment, for any object whatsoever. They are inseparably joined together in the power of a union that no influence of earth or hell can ever dissolve. The Head and the members are eternally one. The Head has passed

through death and judgment; so have the members. The Head is seated in the presence of God, so are the members—co-quickenened, co-raised, and co-seated with the Head in glory.

Reader, this is christian life. Think of it. Think deeply. Look at it in the light of the New Testament. Its *source*, a risen Christ. Its *characteristics*, the very features of the life of Christ, as seen in this world. Its *issue*, cloudless and eternal glory. Contrast with this the life which we possess as sons and daughters of Adam. Its source, a ruined, fallen, outcast man. Its characteristics, the ten thousand forms of selfishness in which fallen humanity clothes itself. Its issue, the lake of fire. This is the simple truth of the matter, if we are to be guided by scripture.

And let us just say, in conclusion, in reference to the life which Christians possess, that there is no such thing as "a higher christian life." It may be that persons who use this form of speech mean a right thing; but the form is incorrect. There is but the one life, and that is Christ. No doubt there are varied measures in the enjoyment and exhibition of this life; but however the measure may vary the life is one. There may be higher or lower stages in this life, but the life is but one. The most advanced saint on earth and the feeblest babe possess one and the same life, for Christ is the life of each, the life of both, the life of all.

All this is most blessedly simple, and we desire that the reader should carefully ponder it. We are fully persuaded that there is an urgent need for the clear unfolding and faithful proclamation of this resurrection gospel. Many stop at incarnation; others go on to the crucifixion. We want a gospel that gives all, incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection. This is the gospel which possesses the true moral power—the mighty leverage to lift the soul out of all earthly association, and set it

free to walk with God, in the power of risen life in Christ. May this gospel be sent forth in living energy, far and wide, throughout the length and breadth of the professing Church. There are hundreds and thousands of God's people who need to know it. They are afflicted with doubts and questions which would all be removed by the simple reception of the blessed truth of life in a risen Christ. There are no doubts or fears in Christianity. Christians, alas! have them; but they do not belong to Christianity at all. May the bright light of Paul's gospel stream in upon all the saints of God, and disperse the fogs and mists which surround them, so that they may really enter into that holy liberty wherewith Christ makes His people free!



“WHY DO YE LOOK ONE UPON ANOTHER?”

(GEN. XLII.)

THE attention of the million is always awakened by some pressing emergency, however varied in its character this may be. Sometimes a political question will arise, like “reform;” and at another time a social question, such as “the schoolmaster abroad.” The nations of Christendom have their emergencies too; and a revolution may clear away the obstructions, or a war adjust “the balance of power.” But far more important than all this is the fact, that God also can create and use an emergency, and often does, in order to bring forward the resources of His own grace, by which He may discover Himself to mankind in the deepest of their necessities as creatures; and, better still, in their most distressing wants as sinners: “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.”

Genesis xlii. affords a striking example of this fact. “Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt,

Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another? And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die."

When God exercises the conscience of a sinner by pressing on him the depth of his need, He will not fail to lead him, in due time, to the Person and the place where his resources are provided. The prodigal began to be *in want* when he was in the "far off country," but found abundance and the father's hearty welcome when he said to himself, "I will arise and go to *my father*." When the extreme pinch comes, men will look one upon another, like Jacob's sons, and indeed like the prodigal, who looked outside himself, and "when he had spent all . . . he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country:" but the citizen did not carry the secret of the father's house in his heart, and therefore "he sent him into his fields to feed swine." Man is no resource for his own need, nor can his neighbour provide a remedy.

And Jacob said, "Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die." How truly may we say, "God's thoughts are not our thoughts; nor his ways our ways!" They may go down to Egypt about corn; but God's intentions were that they should find a Joseph and a land of Goshen, although at the same time they are in the right path, and going to the right person about their hunger and the dearth in their land.

"And Joseph's brethren came and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth, and Joseph saw his brethren and he knew them." Grace, whether in God or in Joseph, is always beforehand with us, or grace would be shorn of one of its brightest features. "And Joseph saw his brethren and he knew them" is only a companion picture with "when he [the prodigal] was a great way off his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran

and fell on his neck and kissed him." How both these scenes must give place to the grace of the gospel! "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." If Joseph "made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and said unto them, Whence come ye?" it is but the ingenuity of a love that yearns *after* them, and will not be confined to the narrow limits of their own thoughts, but introduce them in due season into the largeness of his own affection. A greater than Joseph made Himself strange to the outward ear, when He said to the Syrophenician woman, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs;" but only to justify her in the end by saying, "O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Moreover, if Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamt of them, and will say "Ye are spies," it is but in the same grace which will perfect its object in the depths of an awakened conscience, and in the unfoldings of a love suited to the brother and the brethren.

What a foreshadowing of our precious Jesus and ourselves, upon a deeper work between God and our souls! And they said, "Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not." But this superficial style will not suit the mind of Joseph, either when they refer to their father as "one man in the land of Canaan" or when they speak of himself as "one is not." He cannot make himself known to them upon such a footing as this. "One is not" indeed! and is this all they have to say about their treatment of this very Joseph, just as men in our day pass over the betrayal, rejection, and crucifixion of the Lord Himself! Consideration for their own blessing will lead Joseph to behave yet more roughly and strangely, that he may put their own sin and its guilt upon their consciences: and "Joseph said unto them,.....

hereby ye shall *be proved*: by the life of Pharaoh ye shall *not* go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither.....if ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses."

God Himself wounds that He may heal. He kills, to make alive. Righteousness must now come in, and though mingled with grace, will do its own work in a guilty conscience, and put the trouble and terror of judgment on the heart. "And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." Did Joseph utter a word of reproach to call for this self-impeachment? No! but the upbraidings of guilt in the presence of their brother, like our sin when looked at by the side of the cross and in the presence of God, will do what nothing else ever does, and speaks in a language which no tongue can express!

What a way of settling sin is this, by bringing it to light in this present time, and leaving nothing for the future, when mercy shall be hidden from the eyes—how blessed to learn the lessons of the atoning value of the blood of Christ for God, and its cleansing virtue for the polluted sinner. "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool."

And Reuben answered them, "Spake I not unto you saying, Do not sin against the child, and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required." Their brother's blood and their sin have now got into their proper places and are doing the work of putting "the sentence of death" upon themselves; but if their wickedness is thus brought to light and to its fullest enmity too—"when he besought us, and we would not hear"—Joseph will begin to shew the grace and goodness that are in his heart. "And they knew

not that Joseph understood them, for he spake unto them by an interpreter : and he turned himself about from them and wept." Joseph must be Joseph, supreme in love in the midst of a scene like this, even to tears: if his brethren are as bad as they are, he will be as good, and as great in his goodness, as he is—only to be excelled by the grace of God which pursues the sinner and asks, "why will ye die?" and pleads with the backslider, "is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him: I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord." And Joseph "returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes." If Reuben was used to put the sin before his brethren, and to close up all by saying "his blood is required of us," it is Simeon's turn to be bound before their eyes, and take his place as their substitute and surety in "the house of their prison."

What deep searchings of the heart and conscience are here on the one hand; and what reserves for the grace and glory of a future day in Goshen are embodied in this Simeon! But all this has been taken up and exceeded by the love of God in the deeper matter of the blood shedding and crucifixion of Christ by rebellious sinners. How have our sins and transgressions been made the sole business of our Saviour Jesus, when at the cross he was taken from prison to be our substitute and surety! Do we see the love of Joseph in all he was doing from first to last? O turn to a more perfect love which has busied itself about *us*, and taken the place of guilty before God, that He may take His new place, by the death of Christ, as the "Justifier of the *ungodly* that believeth in Jesus."

If man has exceeded himself in wickedness at the cross, God will be greater there than ever by means of the blood that blots it all out. Is the cross the witness of the deepest enmity against God on the part of man? so shall it be from

God to man the brightest expression of a love which nothing could ever turn aside. Triumphant grace!

"Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way; and thus did he unto them." Grace will take the rule of its actings only from itself, "and thus did Joseph unto them," is the manner of his love to the brethren who hated him, and yet the more for his dreams, and for his words. If work is work, and hard work too, grace will be grace, and gives, never demanding nor receiving, and therefore, "sacks filled with corn" for the famine of their households, and the provisions Joseph gave them for the way, and every man's money in his sack besides, reveal the heart of their brother to them, and tell plainly enough that if they have not discovered him, he has found them out, and will not let them rest till all his purposes of blessing are sealed to them in their forgiveness, and in settled peace and confidence in his presence.

"And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his money.....and he said unto his brethren My money is restored, and, lo, it is even in my sack: and their hearts failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us?" Every believer in Christ knows the difference between the exercises of a guilty conscience, and a troubled heart about unconfessed sin, as we have seen with Reuben and his brethren. Joseph is now setting them to learn a very different lesson, that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."—"And they said one to another, What is this that *God* hath done unto us?" God is found out as a giver, and they are learning the difficult lesson of taking the place of receivers on the ground of conscious worthlessness—debtors to grace from first to last! "Not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "Their hearts" are not failing them *now* because

their sin is brought to remembrance, nor are they saying one to another *now*, We saw "the anguish of his soul when he besought us and we would not hear"—heart-breaking recollections these—but sovereign goodness has come in; and unworthiness is felt to be ten thousand times more unworthy, in the presence of grace, which will not open its lips in reproach, but with both hands gives all that it has to give. Oh! it is this that melts the heart, and produces *another* fear—not a guilty one "which hath torment," but one which says, "what is this that God *hath done* to us?" "And they came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befell unto them..... and it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack, and when both they and their father saw the *bundles of money* they were afraid."

The activities of Joseph's love could produce these precious fruits in a past day, but what could the outgoings of a Father's love create in the souls of His redeemed family? who are not only standing in "the grace that bringeth salvation," but looking for the blessed hope of the glorious appearing of Christ, and of being (not in Goshen, but) like Him and with Him *where He is*. What are Joseph's actings (though lord of the land as he was) to these? Grace and glory are united at the cross of Christ, we look from one to the other, and a minute will clear the distance! Bundles of money told their tale in Joseph's days, but "the unsearchable riches of Christ" *now* may well lead every adopted child to say, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." What a portion have we in a risen, exalted, and glorified Lord at the right hand of God. "All things are yours, whether the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

MEDITATIONS ON THE CHRISTIAN'S STANDING AND STATE.

(EPHESIANS I. 15—23; III. 14—21.)

BUT here, before passing on to the next verse, pause a moment, O my soul, and drop a word—a tear, for those who are now rejecting Christ. Oh! what a day of disappointment and sorrow, to all such, will the day of His coming be! To those who now believe in Jesus, it will be a day of light and unmingled blessedness; but to those who now reject Him, it will be a day of darkness and everlasting despair. The awful sentence, “depart from me,” like Ezekiel’s roll, will be “full of mourning, lamentation, and woe.” Oh! thoughtless, careless, worldly one, be warned now. Be turned in thy heart to Jesus now. To come to Jesus, now, is not only to escape the lake of fire—is not only to be admitted into heaven, but it is to be a sharer of the nuptial glories of the Lamb, and to enjoy the intimacies of His love for ever.

The same day and hour that the soul draws near to Jesus by faith, it is graciously met by God with eternal life. Full, immediate salvation is God’s blessed answer to our faith in His Son. Love delights to bless; but what so sensitive of neglect? How indignant must injured love be on that solemn day of final reckoning! With what sore judgment it will visit those who have despised its offers of pardon and salvation! Eternal condemnation must be the awful sentence of God on every soul that despises Jesus. There is not the shadow of a line of middle ground. He who is not justified by faith, must be condemned for unbelief; and condemned for ever. Oh! how one’s soul is thrilled with these words as the pen writes them down! *Eternal condemnation!* What an enemy to grapple with, but how helpless the soul! The very sound of thy name, O thou unpitying, undying foe, is terrible! But, pray, where dwellest thou? In the regions of dark despair. And

what doest thou? I cut off all hope and shut up the soul to self-reproach. How dreadful thou art! But tell me, what is the number of thy years? My years are without number. I know nothing, as men count, of beginning and ending. I am an eternal now. When millions and millions of years are past as men now reckon, I shall be just the same. Countless millions have no effect on me. Eternal means Eternal.

Hearst thou this, O my fellow sinner? Be entreated—be persuaded—think on these things *now*. Why play the fool, and fall into the fearful, the unrelenting grasp of *eternal condemnation*? Why prefer a moment's present gratification, to eternal happiness? "The devils," it is said, "believe and tremble." Is thy heart harder than theirs? Canst thou hear of these things and not tremble? Canst thou believe them with thy natural heart and not tremble? This is to be more insensible than Satan. How dreadful! Esau sold the land of Canaan for a mess of pottage; wilt thou sell heaven for less? Judas sold the Saviour for thirty pieces of silver; and for what art thou now selling Christ, heaven and all? Say, for what? The hope—the barest hope of a worldly pleasure—and be that pleasure in whatever form it may, it will never realize thy hope. The pleasure of the worldling has a rapid wing, and soon passes away, but a sting remains. Thou canst not give wings to it. For a vanity—for a nothing, thou art setting aside all that is good both for time and eternity, and thereby exposing thy precious, immortal soul to *eternal condemnation*. Be wise, O be wise! Pause, think: let not Satan have thee. There is One that loves thee and seeks thy real good; and, comparatively speaking, *only one*; and wilt thou not think of thy *only Friend*? He died for thee. Hast thou ever sought an opportunity to thank Him for it? Thy conscience says No—never. Is this thy love to thy friend—thy only friend? Come to Him now. His love still lingers—He waits for thee. And His way is, to ask no questions, but to bless every new comer according to the love of His own heart.

He will not put thee to shame with perplexing questions, but He will allow thee to hide thy guilty blushes in His own bosom. Were He only to enquire, "Why hast thou been so long in thinking of me?" shame and confusion would cover thy face; but such a thing He never does. He will rebuke Satan, who is at thy right hand ready to resist thee. But to a poor guilty one like Joshua, in Zechariah iii. it is grace without rebuke. He stands up for the sinner that has fled to Him in the face of every foe. The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? The enemy is rebuked, but the penitent is cleansed, clothed, and crowned, and thus brought into the presence of God, to go no more out. And did He not vindicate the poor woman at His feet in the house of Simon? "I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears; and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven." How beautifully He stands up for her, and that in the very face of the nation's pride and self-righteousness! and mark too, how He fills her heart with a plenary pardon, a present salvation, and perfect peace. Luke vii.

As thou art man, O my fellow sinner, come to Jesus. Be encouraged. Come now. Thou seest the manner of thy reception. Thou knowest what He will say to thee. Read carefully, I pray thee, these two portions, and there learn the Lord's ways in grace with every poor, guilty soul that comes to Him. Thou hast but to let go thy hold of the world, or rather get away from the world's hold of thee. Think of Jesus. Learn to know Him. He will fill every aching void, and satisfy thy heart for ever. It is impossible to know Him without the heart being filled with joy, whatever the circumstances may be. "Acquaint thyself with

him and be at peace ; thereby good shall come unto thee." Job xxii. 21.

“ Haste thee on from grace to glory,
Armed by faith and winged by prayer,
Heaven’s eternal day’s before thee,
God’s right hand shall guide thee there ;
Soon shall close thine earthly mission,
Soon shall pass thy pilgrim days,
Hope shall change to glad fruition,
Faith to sight, and prayer to praise.”

We now return to the apostle’s prayer. He has before his mind, not the rejecter of Christ, but those who now believe, and who will have a place of peculiar nearness to Him in the coming glory. He prays,

“ *That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.*” This is an entirely different line of truth from his prayer in the first chapter. There, it is a question of *standing* ; here, it is of *state*. There, he prays that the saints might know more fully their place before God in Christ, and all the privileges of that position ; here, it is a question of practical power by the Holy Spirit—of being “ strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.”

Love is the Christian’s strength ; or, *Christ dwelling in the heart by faith*. This is his strength. The trials of the wilderness now, and the boundless glories of the future day, can only be calmly contemplated or endured in the strength of His love. It is the power of inward affections that strengthens for outward circumstances. When the object of affection *dwells in the heart*—yes, really *dwells* there, what would that heart shrink from to gain its object ? To one, naturally, the most timid and delicate, love gives new courage, new strength, new resolution, a new character. Nothing is seen but the *one object* who is far away. The broad tempestuous sea—the ship’s rough crew—the inhospitable foreign shore, presents no difficulties. All who

are known and loved and dear to the heart by the tenderest ties of kindred and friendship are freely given up, and it may be given up for ever, for the one object who *dwells* in the heart, in truest, tenderest love. We mention not the possibility of all this valour of love being disappointed, it would be too heartless to think of; but there is only One whose love commands unquestioning confidence. And this is the *One* that the apostle so earnestly desires may dwell in our hearts.

What wondrous, blessed truth this is, O my soul! Hast thou well thought it over? It is one of the sweetest thoughts of His love. What is it, pray? It is this, as I understand it. When associated with Him as the centre of a glory which has no circle, what could sustain thy heart? What could strengthen thee as His many glories are displayed before thy wondering eyes? Nothing but His love. And this is the great truth, here revealed to our hearts. "That he would grant you, *according to the riches of his glory*," mark, "to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." It is enough, O my soul: He who fills the vast universe with His glory, fills thy heart with His love.



THE PILGRIM.

"The way is dark, my Father, cloud on cloud
Is gathering o'er my head; and loud
The thunders roar above me. See, I stand
Like one bewildered; Father, take my hand,
And through the gloom lead safely home
Thy child.

The way is long, my Father! and my soul
Longs for the rest and quiet of the goal;
While yet I journey through this land,
Keep me from wandering. Father! take my hand,
Quickly and straight lead to heaven's gate
Thy child.

The path is rough, my Father; many a thorn
 Has pierced me; and my weary feet are torn,
 And, bleeding, mark the way. Yet thy command
 Bids me press forward. Father, take my hand,
 Then, safe and blest, lead up to rest
 Thy child.

The cross is heavy, Father! I have borne
 So long, and still do bear it. Let my worn
 And fainting spirit rise to that blessed land
 Where crowns are given. Father, take my hand,
 And reaching down, lead to thy crown,
 Thy child!

The way is dark, my child! but leads to light;
 I would not have thee always walk by sight.
 My dealings, now, thou canst not understand;
 I meant it so; but I will take thy hand,
 And through the gloom lead safely home
 My child.

The way is long, my child! but it shall be
 Not one step longer than is good for thee:
 And thou shalt know, at last, when thou shalt stand
 Close to the gate, how I did take thy hand,
 And, quick and straight, lead to heaven's gate
 My child.

The path is rough, my child! but oh! how sweet
 Will be the rest, for weary pilgrims meet,
 When thou shalt reach the borders of that land
 To which I lead thee, as I take thy hand,
 And, safe and blest, with me shall rest
 My child.

The cross is heavy, child! yet there is One
 Who bore a heavier for thee: My Son,
 My well-beloved—with *Him* bear thine, and stand
 With *Him*, at last; and from thy Father's hand,
 Thy cross laid down, receive thy crown,
 My child."

CORRESPONDENCE.

25. "A. M.," Cheltenham. We do not know exactly what your difficulty is in Galatians ii. 20. The passage sets forth a most glorious truth, namely, the total setting aside of the old Adam condition and the introduction of the new life in a risen Christ. "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." This is Christianity. The old man crucified; Christ living in the believer, and reproduced in his daily life. The Christian, according to the divine idea of him, is one whose former self is no longer recognized. It has no existence before God. The Christian himself is, alas! painfully conscious that he has his old self to contend with; but it is an immense relief to know that God sees that old self to be dead and buried, and that I can reckon it to be what God tells me it is. The great difficulty felt by souls as to this glorious subject arises from their looking at it from their own standpoint instead of God's. This makes a great difference, indeed it makes all the difference. Christianity starts with the clear assumption that man's fallen nature is not recognized at all. The first Adam is completely ignored, he is not recognized. But the first Adam is—if we may so speak—the old "I," which is said to be crucified. Nevertheless, there is a Second Man, and that is the new "I," which is said to live. There are but the two men in the entire history. The first is dead and gone from the divine platform. The Second lives in the presence of God, and the believer is part of Him. "He that is *joined to the Lord* is one Spirit." Thus the believer lives in Christ, and Christ in the believer. Hence, the apostle says, in another place, "To me to live is Christ." All this is "by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." This, we repeat, is Christianity, and it stands in contrast

with every form of human religiousness and fleshly pietism under the sun. It is not "the old man" turning religious, but the old man crucified, and the new man implanted and expressed by a lively faith. In a word, it is Christ our Life, we *in* Him, and He in us, and reproduced in our daily life by the power of the Holy Ghost.

26. "R. M.," Edinburgh. As to the question of Insurance, it must entirely depend upon a man's faith. We assuredly believe it is much better to trust in the Living God than in an insurance policy. But then it must be a real thing. It is a poor affair for a man to *say* he is trusting in God and therefore he will not insure his life, if he is not really in the truth and power of what he is talking about. It may often happen that a man refrains from insuring his life in order that he may have more to spend on himself, while he deceives himself by the mere profession of faith without one atom of reality. In the case of a mere man of the world, it is very commendable in him to curtail his personal expenses in order to secure something for his wife and family in the event of his death. But in the case of a Christian, he ought to be able to trust God. It is his privilege to do so, and God will assuredly answer faith. Insurance is not faith; but faith gives assurance. God is better than an insurance office; but God must be known in order to be trusted. There is no use talking about faith if one has not got it. Faith is a reality; mere profession is a sham. May God make us real!

27. "One who desires to do God's will," Bayswater. We should suggest to you the immense importance of habitual waiting upon God in the prayerful study of the word. "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." (2 Tim. i.) May the Lord give you solid peace in Himself!

28. "X. N." Scripture never speaks of "reconciling God." The expression is a mistake arising from inattention to the true force of the word "reconcile," as also the distinction between "reconciliation" and "atonement." As

to the word "you," if you will turn to the passage, 2 Corinthians v. 20, you will find it is given in italics, and is not in the original Greek at all. The apostle is not calling upon the Corinthian saints to be reconciled, but simply stating the form of the ministry of reconciliation. Wherever Christ's ambassadors go they are to beseech men to be reconciled to God; but it would be out of place to beseech the children of God, saints in Christ Jesus, to be reconciled, inasmuch as they are already reconciled, and at peace with God through the precious blood of Jesus. We thank you for your kind letter.

29. "A Constant Reader," Somerset. We render hearty thanks to God for the contents of your letter. We esteem it one of our richest privileges to be allowed to minister comfort and consolation to the beloved saints of God. We take it as a great kindness your writing to us. We deeply feel the importance of visiting those of the Lord's people who are laid aside by illness and weakness. We consider it one of the most direct and positive branches of service to Christ—one, we doubt not, peculiarly precious to His heart. Most gladly would we seek to stir up the hearts of our brethren, who may read these lines, to a lively interest in this service, which we feel assured is ever fragrant and precious to our Lord Jesus Christ.

30. "G. F.," Swindon. Thanks for your kind letter. The tract "Glad Tidings" is in the press and will, if God permit, be shortly issued. May He affix the seal of His blessing! We ask your prayers.

31. "F. G.," Lee. We consider that Joel ii. 28 had a partial fulfilment at Pentecost. Its final accomplishment is still to be looked for in the history of God's ancient people. We do not doubt that God can speak to men now by means of a dream or a vision of the night; but we consider that the true and proper way for a child of God to be guided, is by the word and Spirit of God. It is very unsafe ground indeed to be merely guided by dreams or by the impressions of a man's mind. We vastly prefer the solid

imperishable word of God. Accept our warmest thanks for your truly brotherly letter. May the Lord speedily open a way for your friend.

32. "M. E.," Reading. You need to be most careful how you act in the matter to which you refer. It is most solemn. Do not, we beseech you, allow your feelings to warp your judgment. "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" May God, in His mercy, preserve you from the snare of the devil!

33. "E. S.," Chichester. We quite agree with you as to Shem. As to the universality of the deluge, Genesis vi. 11—13; vii. 19—23; 2 Peter iii. 5—7 are quite sufficient for us. We cannot see any object to be gained by questioning the fact of a universal deluge except indeed it be to pick a hole in the Bible, which alas! seems to be a grand object with all sceptics and rationalists. Oh! that men would learn to bow with reverence to the authoritative voice of holy scripture. It is the very highest wisdom so to do. 1 Timothy iv. 10 speaks of *God* as "the Saviour of all men." We understand this to mean that God is the gracious Preserver of all, but especially of those who believe. God takes care of sparrows. (See Matt. x. 29.) It is not a question of salvation as regards the soul. You ask "In what sense is Jesus the Saviour of all men?" and then quote 1 Timothy iv. 1. Now we adoringly own Jesus as God over all, blessed for ever; but the apostle is not speaking of Jesus in His saving work, but of God in His gracious Providence. Scripture is divinely accurate. You never find any distinction without a difference. We must ever remember this.

A REQUEST FOR PRAYER.

A christian father earnestly desires the prayers of the believing readers of "Things New and Old," that his three sons, now unconverted, may be brought to the knowledge of the Lord.

We are very glad to give the above request a place in our pages. We trust it may awaken a spirit of prayer, not only in reference to the present case, but also for the children of christian parents generally.

SELF-SURRENDER.

(PHIL. II.)

IT is perfectly delightful to contemplate the moral triumphs of Christianity—the victories which it gains over self and the world, and the marvellous way in which such victories are obtained. The law said, “Thou shalt do this; and thou shalt not do that.” But Christianity speaks a totally different language. In it, we see life bestowed as a free gift—life flowing down from a risen and glorified Christ. This is something entirely beyond the range of the law. The language of the law was, “The man that doeth these things shall live in them.” Long life in the land was all the law proposed to the man who could keep it. Eternal life in a risen Christ was something utterly unknown and unthought of under the legal system.

But Christianity not only gives eternal life; it gives also an object with which that life can be occupied—a centre round which the affections of that life can circulate—a model on which that life can be formed. Thus it gains its mighty moral triumphs. Thus it gains its conquests over a selfish nature and a selfish world. It gives divine life and a divine centre; and as the life moves round that centre we are taken out of self.

This is the secret of self-surrender. It cannot be reached in any other way. The unconverted man finds his centre in self; and, hence, to tell him not to be selfish is to tell him not to be at all. This holds good even in the matter of mere religiousness. A man will attend to his religion in order, as he thinks, to promote his eternal interest: but this is quite a different thing from finding an object and a centre outside himself. Christianity alone can supply these. The gospel of the grace of God is the only thing that can effectually meet man's need and deliver him from the selfish-

ness which belongs to him. The unrenewed man lives *for himself*. He has no higher object. The life which he possesses is alienated from the life of God. He is away from God. He moves round another centre altogether, and until he is born again, until he is renewed, regenerated, born of the word and Spirit of God, it cannot be otherwise. *Self* is his object, his centre, in all things. He may be moral, amiable, religious, benevolent, but until he is converted, he has not got done with himself, as to the ground of his being, or as to the centre round which that being revolves.

The foregoing train of thought naturally introduces us to the striking and beautiful illustration of our theme afforded in Philippians ii. In it we have a series of examples of self-surrender, commencing with a divinely perfect One, the Lord Himself.

But, ere we proceed to gaze upon this exquisite picture, it may be well to enquire what it was that rendered it needful to present such a picture before the Philippian saints. The attentive reader will, doubtless, observe, in the course of this most charming epistle, certain delicate touches from the inspired pen, leading to the conclusion that the keen and vigilant eye of the apostle detected a certain root of evil in the bosom of the beloved and cherished assembly gathered at Philippi. To this he addresses himself, not with a sledge-hammer or a long whip, but with a refinement and delicacy far more powerful than either the one or the other. The mightiest moral results are reached by those delicate touches from the hand of God the Holy Ghost.

But what was the root to which we have referred? It was not a splitting into sects and parties, as at Corinth. It was not a return to law and ritualism, as at Galatia. It was not a hankering after philosophy and the rudiments of the world, as at Colosse. What was it then? It was a root of envy and strife. The sprouting of this root is seen

very distinctly in the collision between those two sisters, "Euodias and Syntyche" (chap. iv. 2), but it is glanced at in earlier portions of the epistle, and a divine remedy supplied.

It is a great point with a medical man not only to understand what is wrong with his patient, but also to understand the true remedy. Some physicians are clever in discovering the root of disease; but they do not so well know what remedy to apply. Others, again, are skilled in the knowledge of medicine, the powers of various drugs; but they do not know how to apply them to individual cases. The Divine Physician knows both the disease and its remedy. He knows exactly what is the matter with us, and He knows what will do us good. He sees the root of the matter, and He applies a radical cure. He does not treat cases superficially. He is perfect in diagnosis. He does not guess at our disease from mere surface-symptoms. His keen eye penetrates, at once, to the very bottom of the case, and His skilful hand applies the true remedy.

Thus it is in the epistle to the Philippians. These saints held a very large place in the large heart of the apostle. He loved them much, and they loved him. Again and again he speaks, in grateful accents, of their fellowship with him in the gospel from the very first. But all this did not and could not shut his eyes to what was wrong among them. It is said that "*Love is blind.*" In one sense, we look upon this saying as a libel upon love. If it were said that "*Love is superior to faults,*" it would be nearer the truth. What should any one give for blind love? of what use would it be to be loved by one who only loved us because he was ignorant of our blots and blemishes? If it be meant that love *will not see* our blots, it is blessedly true (Numb. xxiii. 21); but no one would care for a love that was not at once aware of, and superior to, our failures and infirmities.

Paul loved the saints at Philippi, and rejoiced in their

love to him, and tasted the fragrant fruit of that love again and again. But then he saw that it was one thing to love and be kind to a distant apostle, and quite another thing to agree among themselves. Doubtless, Euodias and Syntyche both contributed to send a present to Paul, though they were not pulling harmoniously together in the wear and tear of daily life and service. This is, alas! no uncommon case. Many sisters and brothers too are ready to contribute of their substance to help some distant servant of Christ, and yet they do not walk pleasantly together. How is this? There is a lack of self-surrender. This, we may rest assured, is the real secret of much of the "strife and vainglory" so painfully manifest in the very midst of the people of God. It is one thing to walk alone, and it is another thing to walk in company with our brethren, in the practical recognition of that great truth of the unity of the body, and in the remembrance that "we are members one of another." Christians are not to regard themselves as mere individuals, as isolated atoms, as independent persons. This cannot be, seeing that scripture declares "There is one body," and we are members thereof. This is a divine truth—a grand fact—a positive reality. We are not to be like the hairs of an electrified broom, each standing out in lonely individuality. We are living members of a living body, each one having to do with other members, with whom we are connected by a bond which no power of earth or hell can sever. In a word, there is a relationship formed by the presence of the Holy Ghost, who not only dwells in each individual member, but is the power of the unity of the one body. It is the presence of God the Spirit, in the Church, that constitutes that Church, the one living body of the living Head.

Now, it is when we are called to walk in the actual acknowledgment of this great truth that there is a demand for self-surrender. If we were merely solitary individuals, treading each in his own self-chosen path, carrying out

his own peculiar thoughts, walking in the sparks of his own kindling, pursuing his own peculiar line of things, indulging his own will, then indeed a quantity of *self* might be retained. If "Euodias and Syntyche" could have walked alone, there would have been no collision—no strife. But they were called to walk together, and here was the demand for self-surrender.

And, be it ever remembered, that Christians are not members of a *club*, of a *sect*, or of an *association*; they are members of a *body*, each connected with all, and all connected, by the fact of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, with the risen and glorified Head in heaven.

This is an immense truth, and the practical carrying out of it will cost us not only all we have, but all we are. There is no place in all the universe where *self* will be so pulled to pieces, as in the assembly of God. And is it not well? Is it not a powerful proof of the divine ground on which that assembly is gathered? Are we not—should we not be—glad to have our hateful self thus pulled to pieces? Shall we—ought we to—run away from those who do it for us? Are we not glad—do we not often pray, to get rid of self? And shall we quarrel with those who are God's instruments in answering our prayers? True, they may do the work roughly and clumsily; but no matter for that. Whoever helps me to crush and sink self does me a kind turn, however awkwardly he may do it. One thing is certain, no man can ever rob us of that which, after all, is the only thing worth having, namely, Christ. This is a precious consolation. Let self go; we shall have the more of Christ. Euodias might lay the blame on Syntyche, and Syntyche on Euodias; the apostle does not raise the question of which was right or of which was wrong, but he beseeches both to be "of the same mind in *the Lord*."

Here lies the divine secret. It is self-surrender. But this must be a real thing. There is no use in talking about

sinking self, while, at the same time, self is fed and patted on the back. We sometimes pray with marvellous fervour to be enabled to trample self in the dust, and the very next moment, if any one seems to cross our path, self is like a porcupine with all its quills up. This will never do. God will have us real, and surely we can say, with all our weakness and folly, we want to be real—real in everything, and therefore real when we pray for the power of self-surrender. But, most assuredly, there is no place where there is a more urgent demand for this lovely grace than in the bosom of the assembly of God.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)



THE ACTS OF MAN BEFORE THE LORD'S DEATH, AND THE ACTS OF GOD AFTER IT.

(MATT. XXVI., XXVII.)

THE woman's seed "shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," was God's announcement to the serpent in the garden of Eden on the first day of man's disobedience and fall.

Century after century the fearful consequences of sin were only more plainly developed, as the ruin, which that one transgression brought on the world, reached far and wide wherever man was found. The Saviour appeared on earth in the fulness of time, to be rejected and at last killed. Often had the Jews attempted His death whilst He spoke to them in Galilee and Judea, but hitherto without success. He could traverse Samaria, as far as we know, without His life being once endangered. He could go through the regions of Tyre and Sidon, and no man rose up to destroy Him. But from the Jews and the

Galileans, whose King He was and is, and whose blessing on earth depended on His presence among them in life, He was frequently in danger of death. As yet their plans had been frustrated, for "His hour was not yet come." That hour spoken of by God in Eden now approached. The restraint placed on man's action was to be removed; and he, a child of the devil, was to manifest it by his deeds. It was an hour of activity on the part of Satan, and of the instruments of his choice. "This is your hour and the power of darkness" (Luke xxii. 53) was the statement of the Lord as they led Him away from the garden, which threw a lurid light on all that passed on that night, and on all that would take place on the morrow. Satan was to be permitted to do what he would—to bruise His heel. Unrenewed man was to make a full discovery of himself, to see if at the bottom there was anything good in him. God also was to shew what He was.

The scene in the garden of Eden bore witness to the malignity and subtlety of the serpent, who effected man's ruin by means of man himself. That scene also disclosed man's readiness to become Satan's tool. Within that garden God's faithfulness to His word was evidenced, when sentence was pronounced on Adam and Eve; but within that same enclosure were heard words telling of mercy and grace for sinners. In the garden of Gethsemane the devil again attempted man's ruin, and a second time through man himself. Had he been again successful, it was man's ruin effected for ever. The Lord was crucified by the hands of men. From His pierced side the blood had flowed. He had died without establishing the kingdom, or delivering Israel from the hands of their enemies: all seemed in favour of the enemy. But that body broken and blood shed became the ground on which God's mercy and grace to sinners could be displayed, and His faithfulness to His word (this time on man's behalf) be again manifested.

Of the four histories of the Lord's death, we would invite the reader's attention for a few moments to that given us by the inspired apostle Matthew, as far as he recites the events which took place from the arrest in the garden to the death on the cross. It is in his narrative that we have the most complete exhibition of what man is, beginning with the disciples and ending with the thieves; and there also we have detailed how God acted after the Lord had died.

The chief priests and scribes and elders of the people were holding a council in the palace of the high priest. What was the purport of their deliberations? Were they desirous to stir up the populace to demand the just execution of Barabbas? Were they making arrangements for a due observance of the approaching feast, or framing regulations for the more effectual putting away of leaven from the midst of the people? Neither righteousness nor holiness prompted their conference. They were taking counsel together how they might capture and have put to death the Lord Jesus. True children of their father the devil, they hesitated not to commit murder, and, following the example of the serpent, would effect their purpose by subtlety. Whilst their plans were as yet unformed, and uncertainty prevailed in the palace, Satan was preparing an instrument in the company of the disciples. Judas, rebuked by the Lord about the ointment, six days before the passover, became the ready tool for His betrayal. Satan entered his heart, and he repaired to the chief priests. And, to shew the real character of the rulers in Israel, this agent of Satan finds his natural place to be in their midst, volunteering his services, yet bargaining for his price. The betrayal, effected by the defection of one disciple, resulted in the desertion of all, and the subsequent denial of acquaintanceship even with the Lord by Peter, confirmed by curses and oaths. Such is the picture, at this juncture, of that company selected by the Lord to be His attendants on

earth, as drawn by one of themselves. They were weighed and found wanting. For, though John was subsequently found at the cross, he, with the rest, had first forsaken Him.

What of the chief priests and scribes, versed professedly in the law of God? The Lord stood before the council, presided over by the high priest himself. There surely justice would be administered, and the forms of law be duly observed. But the spirit of justice had fled from the hall of judgment, for the judges became advocates to ensure His condemnation. "They sought for false witnesses to put him to death." To have listened to such knowingly would have been a crime. To seek for them was a heinous crime. Failing to find two witnesses that agreed, they condemned Him for speaking the truth; and, professing a zeal for God, they forgot the decency and decorum which judges should exhibit, they spat in His face, and buffeted Him, and allowed the servants to smite Him.

From Caiaphas He was taken to Pilate, who had the power of life and death in his hands: whilst declaring His innocence, to pander to the popular will, he pronounced the sentence of death. He knew He was innocent, he affirmed it again and again, yet set free a notorious robber and murderer, and gave over the Lord to be crucified. Not content with this, he had Him scourged whom he had most solemnly pronounced to be righteous.

From the hall of judgment to the common hall was another step, which the Lord in His condescension was willing to take. Here fresh indignities were offered Him. Stripped of His own clothes, and arrayed in the mock emblems of royalty, the Roman soldiers, the whole band of them, bowed the knee before Him, and hailed Him as King of the Jews. With a reed for a sceptre, thorns for a crown, and a scarlet robe covering Him, they mocked Him, spat on Him, and smote Him on the head. As King, they deridingly hailed Him, yet as King they will one day see Him. With a vesture dipped in blood, a rod of iron where they placed

a reed, and with many crowns on that head they wounded with the crown of thorns, will He appear, followed by the armies of heaven. Will these soldiers accompany Him? some might ask. The more pertinent question is, Will the readers of these lines appear with Him then?

From the common hall to Golgotha was the next change, Simon of Cyrene being compelled to bear His cross. Nailed to the cross, He endured the railings of those who passed by. Who stopped to revile the thieves? The passers by reviled Him. "The chief priests, too, mocked him, with the scribes and elders." Industrious in procuring His condemnation, eager too for His death, their enmity pursued Him even to the cross, where they taunted Him with being forsaken of God. It was true He was for a time forsaken, and we can give thanks for it. But which of those who said "He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God" (Matt. xxvii. 43), knew the value of their words? It was the bitterest taunt that was levelled at Him, and suggested surely by the devil. Matthew alone records it. If any who joined in these words discovered afterwards why He had been forsaken, what must their sorrow have been as they remembered what they had said. He was forsaken that we might know evermore the joy of being in the Father's favour. Low indeed had He come down, but He would go lower; for "the thieves which were crucified with him cast the same in his teeth."

Such was man, as Matthew sets him forth. We read in Luke of the confession of the repentant thief. Matthew tells of the boldness of Joseph; and John of the devotion of Nicodemus; but testified after His death. Of man, before the Lord died, Matthew has nothing good to relate, whether of the disciples, the Jews, the Romans, or the thieves. Till He died God allowed man to act as he would. During the three hours of supernatural darkness man seemed overawed, for we read of nothing done to the Lord, till; at

the close, when He cried out, the sponge full of vinegar was given Him to drink. Before that darkness supervened man's enmity was fully displayed. The vinegar tasted, this the last act of indignity submitted to, the last scripture to be fulfilled whilst He lived received its elucidation and accomplishment, and He died. Beyond this world man could not pursue the Lord.

Jesus yielded up the ghost, and God immediately began to work: but—let it be pondered over, as it deserves—to work in grace. “Behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened.” No house that we read of was destroyed by that earthquake; no one of that guilty company was killed; Jerusalem was not engulfed; not an animal, not a dog, was hurt. All must have felt the earthquake, but in the temple a wonder was to be seen—the veil was rent. Who witnessed it? It took place at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer, when the incense should have been offered up on the golden altar in front of it. Mysterious it must have seemed as the holy of holies was disclosed to one who had never seen it. From the top to the bottom, from heaven downwards, the veil was divided, betokening a divine act, and that *immediately* on the death of Christ.

From the days of the sojourn at Sinai to the hour of the Lord's crucifixion, a veil, dividing the sanctuary into two parts, proclaimed man's inability to enter into the holy presence of his God. Adam in the garden after the fall felt this; God at Sinai confirmed it, though teaching, by the ceremonial He Himself had appointed, that a way might some day be opened. The Lord died, His body was broken, and the veil was rent. God, with His own hand as it were, tore down what He had commanded Moses to put up, and that whilst the Lord was still hanging on the cross, a witness to the universe of man's guilt. This was the *first* act of God after the death of His Son. One sin was enough, had no

sacrifice been found, to shut out man for ever from the presence of God. That one sacrifice, when offered up, was enough to open a way into His presence for the vilest of the vile, and even for the perpetrators of that terrible crime. Had God then come forth from the thick darkness and vindicated His Son by the destruction of His murderers, who could have accused Him of injustice or of haste? Instead of that, He then opened a way for the sinner to enter the holiest. None at that moment (if any witnessed it) could have understood the significance of a rent veil. None in the present day should stand for one moment in ignorance or in doubt about its meaning; for the Holy Ghost has declared it, and Hebrews ix., x., are divine comments and explanations about it.

But further, the rocks were rent. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all speak of the rending of the veil. Matthew alone tells of the earthquake, the riven rocks, and open graves. And this is in keeping; for as we have in this gospel the darkest picture of man's sinfulness, in connexion with the cross, we have also the fullest details of the actings of God in grace after the death of Christ. The rocks were rent, no unnatural accompaniment of an earthquake; but on this occasion there was something unusual, for the graves were opened, and from them, but after His resurrection, as the evangelist is careful to relate, many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and entered the holy city. As first-begotten from the dead He rose first, but the graves were opened before the stone had covered the mouth of that new tomb, and had been sealed with the seal of authority. The rent veil speaks of access to the immediate presence of God; the opened graves attest deliverance from the grasp of death, and the consequent resurrection of the body.* The

* Observe, the graves were opened, but only the bodies of the saints arose. The general result consequent on His death was shewn in the opened graves, the special result for God's saints was manifested when saints arose from the dead.

converse of all this was seen in Eden, where Adam felt himself unfit for God's presence, and heard sentence of death pronounced on himself for his sin.

But why this seeming haste? Why was no interval allowed between the giving up of His Spirit into the hands of His Father, and these manifestations of what His death had effected? Because the work was a finished work, and God would have sinners believe this. It is true if Christ had not risen we should be yet in our sins. Had the grave retained his body, it would have been because He was not spotless, and able to make atonement. We have likewise been quickened with Him, and raised up with Him. But ere the sun sank that day beneath the horizon, some fruits of His death were made apparent. God's own hand, we may say, rent the veil; God's own power opened the graves. The sacrifice of His Son offered up, He waited for nothing more. No prayer of man was needed ere He could act. No supplication arose from earth to heaven praying that the results of a finished work should be announced. Before the Lord was taken down from the cross, before the Roman governor knew He was dead, God by His acts declared some of the blessed consequences of Christ's sacrifice; for what took place inside the city within the temple, and what was seen in the rocky chambers of the tombs outside Jerusalem, spoke clearly and loudly of the finished character of that work.



A SPECIAL APPEAL FOR PRAYER.

We have received a very touching appeal from the Principal of a College in Devonshire, where fifty young ladies are being educated. She earnestly desires the prayers of our christian readers on behalf of the precious souls committed to her charge; and we feel assured her request will meet with a hearty response. We are deeply interested in this case. Our friend is in the habit of addressing her fifty pupils, on the momentous subject of their salvation; she is cheered by their apparent interest; but she longs for their conversion.

In connection with the above case, we ask our christian readers to join us in earnest prayer for all boarding schools, day schools, and Sunday schools, throughout the world.

MEDITATIONS ON THE CHRISTIAN'S STANDING AND STATE.

(EPHESIANS I. 15—23; III. 14—21.)

BUT still higher thoughts of His love are revealed in what the apostle further desires for the saints.

“*That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.*” Herein, O my soul, is a wonderful thing. It falls with the effect of surprise on the mind. It fills the soul with wonder and adoration. But if thou wouldst understand it, thou must dwell upon it with thine eye upwards to Himself. The question is this: What is to enable thee to comprehend that which is measureless? True, it is a paradox; but the answer is: The love of Christ. It is not what may be called *knowledge* merely, or, *intelligence*, generally, or great *capacity of mind*; but *being rooted and grounded in the love of Christ*. Surely a more blessed thing has never occupied thy thoughts. Linger then in thy meditations over this remarkable truth. Being rooted and grounded in love, mark, is thy intelligence and power in the things of Christ. What a thought! Is it new to thee? See and master it, make it thine own. It is thy wisdom and strength for time and eternity.

Yes! the sweetest thing that ever was, or is, or can be, is that which gives strength to thy heart for the contemplation of His glory. It is thy fitness for association with Himself, both now and for ever. But mark another thing, and a blessed thing too. *This is the portion of all the saints.* Christ is the Centre of all the counsels, the ways, and the glory of God; and as the saints are associated with Him, they will form the first or innermost circle of the many concentric circles of His universal glory. Thus strengthened in His love, all the saints will *then* “be able

to comprehend" that which the apostle *now* leaves in its undefined glory—the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, but he does not say of what. He leaves the sentence unfinished.

Many have thought that the apostle is here speaking of the breadth, length, depth, and height, of the love of Christ; and it is often so quoted. But we think this a mistake. The apostle does speak of the love of Christ passing knowledge, but we believe that to be an additional thought. By reading the whole passage closely, it appears quite evident that he introduces a fresh subject, or at least a new thought, in the beginning of verse 19: "AND to know the love of Christ." At the same time, it is blessedly true, that the love of Christ is without limits—it passeth knowledge. The apostle is lost, as it were, amidst the grandeur and the glory of the scenes, into which the Holy Ghost is leading him.

Some who have studied this passage long and closely, have suggested that the "mystery" is before the mind of the Spirit in verse 18. The mystery, or Church, is the grand theme of the epistle. It includes Christ in His heavenly and earthly glory, and the Church associated with Him. She will then be, as His associate, high above all others—above every family in heaven and earth. That which God kept a secret so long in His own mind, may still be left in part so. And there we happily leave it. Who could define the glory that is due unto the Son—the Son whom the Father delights to honour? But that which is the *foundation* of the mystery, as well as its joy and glory, has been fully revealed. "And to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." We can never know His love perfectly, but we shall know it more and more. It has been fully revealed, and yet it must remain for ever unrevealed. The apostle is dealing with infinitudes, which, to us now, are divine paradoxes. It is of His love he speaks. That precious love is the spring of all blessing.

It fills all, "all saints"—characterizes all—strengthens all—perfects all. The sons of God, as morning stars, shall shine for ever, to the delight of His eye and His heart, in the eternal heavens of His love and glory. They will be the unfading lustre of His throne—the immediate companions of His joys, and the perfect delight of His heart.

"Thy glory, Lord, is mine—the light
That beams upon Thy lustrous brow;
For changed into its image bright
I yet shall be, as Thou art now!

Thy rich inheritance is mine;
Joint heir with Thee of worlds above,
Lord, in Thy kingdom I shall shine,
And reign with Thee in endless love.

Thy fulness, Lord, is mine—for oh!
That fulness is a fount as free
As it is inexhaustible!

Jehovah's boundless gift to me!

My Christ! O sing, ye heaven of heavens!

Let every angel lift his voice;
Sound with ten thousand harps His praise;
With *me*, ye heavenly host, rejoice!

With tears, with songs, with holy psalms,
With daily love, with odours sweet,
With broken heart, with outstretched arms,
I'll pour my praises at thy feet."

It is one of the most plausible snares of Satan, to keep us occupied with the good we receive from the work of Christ, in place of being occupied with Christ Himself, and with His delight and interest in us. We enter too little into the divine side of redemption. Hence the great absence of joy and strength. Of Israel His earthly people it was said, "If the Lord *delight* in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it to us; a land which floweth with milk and honey." (Numb. xiv. 8.) Faith could see

that all their blessing rested, not on what they were, but on the Lord *delighting* in them : and this will yet be fully manifested, both in the heavenly and earthly people. We have the same thought in Proverbs viii. 31 : "And my delights were with the sons of men." He rests in His love, and so should we.

There is still another remarkable word in verse 19, "*That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*" Again we are launched on a sea without a shore, but it is a sea of love. More than this the apostle could not ask—further than this he could not go. The Church is Christ's fulness—"the fulness of him that filleth all in all." And He who fills all things, fills our hearts with the fulness of God. "There is one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and IN YOU all." Again, "In that day [the Spirit's day] ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." (John xiv. 20.) It is only by the power of an ungrieved Spirit, that we enter *practically* into these great and blessed truths. If the world or the flesh be allowed, the Spirit is grieved, our minds are darkened, and we become confused, so that *nothing* is seen in its absolute, distinctive character. We must ever remember, that it is not by dint of study or learning that Christ is known or His truths seen ; but by the light and teaching of the Holy Spirit. Hence the importance of the condition of the heart and the practical ways. This is the main object of the apostle's prayer in this chapter. It is for the saints *now* that he prays—that their affections and all their practical ways may answer to their position in Christ as risen and glorified. Now we have an entrance into these things by faith, through the power of the Holy Ghost. By and by we shall be with Him, and like Him, and know even as we are known. But till then, our one desire should be, that we might grow up into Him in all things who is the Head, even Christ. The apostle now closes with a doxology of great fulness and beauty.

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." The great thought, in the first prayer, is the power that wrought for us. Here, it is the power that works in us. There, it was a power that wrought in Christ and raised Him from the dead, and which wrought in us and raised us up with Him. Here, it is the same power, but now it is put forth in a practical way. *"According to the power that worketh in us."* It is also said in the second chapter, that we are "an habitation of God through the Spirit." He would have us to enter now, by the power of the Spirit, into the blessed revelations of the love of Christ and the fulness of God.

Let this further and higher truth, then, greatly encourage thee, O my soul. What mayst thou not count upon, seeing the power of God works in thee? How wonderful, that such an energy should be at work in such poor, weak, good-for-nothing ones! But do I really believe it? I admit it, but do I believe it? or do I count upon it? Should I be so soon cast down? would a little thing so soon discourage me? should I be so subject to the power of circumstances? should I have so little faith, if I really believed that the power of God works in me? or, on the other hand, should I enter so little into my Saviour's love, and the fulness of my God and Father? Ah no! there is nothing I forget so much, or know so little about, as the power that worketh in me: O wondrous, marvellous, blessed word! *"According to the power that worketh in us."* And yet well we know, and surely believe, that Thou art "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Lord, give us to know more of this power, that we may think less of difficulties—less of ourselves—less of circumstances, and more of thee, and of thy power which worketh in us.

Dependence, we own, is our truest position—our highest service—our richest blessing, while here below. And prayer

is its very life-breath. But though everything is now characterized by feebleness and failure, the day is coming when God will be fully glorified in the Church. Blessed, happy thought! Christ, and the Church which is His body, shall be the blessed centre of the manifestation of God Himself, as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in all His glory. What a place this gives the Church; and what a place for ever! "*Throughout all ages, world without end.*" O what a privilege—what an honour—to be the dwelling place of God for ever! What separation from the world—what lifting above it—what strength for service—what nearness in worship, should the knowledge of this truth give! Blessed prospect—blessed future! for the Church of God, the bride of the Lamb. "UNTO HIM BE GLORY IN THE CHURCH BY CHRIST JESUS THROUGHOUT ALL AGES, WORLD WITHOUT END. AMEN."



"HE HATH DONE ALL THINGS WELL."

"They published it; and were beyond measure astonished, saying. He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak." Mark vii. 36, 37.

"HE hath done all things well!"

Man, wondering must tell

His praise, who healed with might divine,

Whose power in lowliest grace did shine,

Who sighed in sympathy.

Before that power, that grace, that love,

Man's stubborn heart and tongue must move

And own His majesty.

"He hath done all things well!"

The heaven-wrung tribute fell

On ears new opened; and the sound

Thrilling the heart, the tongue, unbound,

Would tell His praise abroad.

The unstopped ears could hear His voice
And the loosed tongue, heaven-taught, rejoice
To own the healing word.

“He hath done all things well!”

What voice on earth can tell
The blest perfection of His ways?
What voice so sound His endless praise
As that from Calvary’s hill?
God glorified—the spoiler spoiled—
The sinner freed—the tempter foiled—
All done, the Father’s will.

“He hath done all things well!”

His pilgrim saints can tell
Of quenchless love, unfailing grace;
On every path this record trace—

“He hath done all things well!”

Amen. Each soul adoring bends.
Amen. Each heart in praise ascends
And owns that all is well.

“He hath done all things well!”

Eternity shall tell
More hidden ways with wisdom fraught,
More perfect works His hand hath wrought,
Endless the tale shall swell.
New heavens and earth new songs shall raise,
And countless voices sound His praise
Who hath done all things well.

“He hath done all things well!”

His saints delight to dwell,
With raptured hearts and raptured gaze,
Upon His matchless, heavenly ways.

But God alone can tell
The fulness of that Perfect One;
He only fully knows the Son
Who hath done all things well.



CORRESPONDENCE.

33. "A. A.," Basingstoke. You should follow the light as it streams in upon your soul, and leave results to God. We must obey God, at all cost, but care should be taken to avoid giving needless offence to those who have claims upon us flowing out of natural relationships. Delicacy, tenderness, modesty, and humility will ever mark the actings of the true Christian. Your second communication has come to hand. May the Lord lead you into His own blessed and peaceful path!

34. "C.," Pately Bridge. We are much interested in your case. We can only praise the Lord for His goodness in leading you in His own blessed path. We fully agree with you in the purpose which you have formed. It is of the utmost importance, in our daily path, to have the assurance of divine guidance even in the most minute details. The promise is sure, "I will guide thee with mine eye." But the admonition is solemn, "Be not as the horse or as the mule"—the former, in high spirit, rushing where he ought not—the latter, in obstinacy, refusing to go where he ought. "The meek will he guide in judgment." It is our privilege to be as sure that we are in God's path as that our sins are forgiven; and if we have not that assurance we ought not to take a single step. May God bless you, beloved brother, and make you a blessing!

35. "B. F. J.," Penzance. We should know more of the circumstances of your case before attempting to give you any opinion. As you have put the matter, you seem to be in a false position; and, of course, the sooner you get out of it the better. But then care must be taken to do things in a right way. It is very certain that no worldly advantage should induce you to remain in a position which robs you of communion with God and His people. So far as you have informed us, it would seem to be, very distinctly, an

instance of the "unequal yoke." May the Lord give you grace to do the right thing in a right way.

36. "A. S.," Wolston Green. You have not quite laid hold of the force and meaning of the expression, "quick and dead." There are distinct scenes of judgment spoken of in the New Testament. We have what may be called *warrior* judgment, and *sessional* judgment. Take 2 Thessalonians i. 6—10, as an example of the former; and Matthew xxv. 31—46, as an example of the latter. In the one case, there is no process of trial at all, but rapid execution of judgment. Thus it will be with the beast and false prophet, as in Revelation xix. 20. In the other case, there is arraignment of the parties, the solemn statement of the ground of indictment, the passing of the sentence, and the execution of it. Then as to the "quick and dead," you must remember that there is at least a thousand years between the two. "The quick" are those who shall be actually alive, in the body, when our Lord is revealed, in His judicial character, previous to the millennium. The dead "will not be judged till after the thousand years of millennial reign." Study carefully Revelation xx. 4—15. As to the saints, they will not come into judgment at all. (John v. 24, where the word should be "judgment," not "condemnation.") They belong to "the first resurrection"—"the resurrection of life." They will be associated with Christ when He comes in judgment. They shall be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, where they shall shine in His perfection. They shall see themselves, their ways, their works, in the full blaze of the light of the glory of Christ. They shall see and think and judge as He sees and thinks and judges. The idea of saints standing to be judged as to their persons and title, is flagrantly opposed to the gospel, to Christianity, and to the teaching of the entire New Testament. May God the Spirit lead your precious soul in the full light of all this!

37. "A Constant Reader," Canterbury. Malachi iii.

16, 17 refers primarily to the godly remnant in Israel, at the close of the old dispensation. All was ruin and apostasy around them; but they feared the Lord, thought upon His name, and spake often one to another. They did not attempt to set up anything, or reconstruct a fallen system; they owned the ruin, feared the Lord, and communed one with another. Jude 20—23, gives us a christian remnant in the midst of the ruin of professing Christianity. You will find it interesting and instructive to mark the points of similarity and of contrast in these two passages of scripture.

38. "J. A. H.," Blackrock. We agree with your second view of "the day of the Lord." As to the expression "righteousness of God," Romans iii. 22, and 2 Corinthians v. 21, we take it to mean that righteousness which He has provided for, and revealed to, us. It stands in contrast with man's righteousness. Under the law, God *demand*ed righteousness *from* man. In the gospel, God *reveals* righteousness *to* man. Under the law righteousness was on the principle of works; in the gospel it is on the principle of faith. Blessed contrast!

39. "Kate," Ipswich. We could not think of confining Matthew xi. 28—30 in the way you suggest. We believe it refers to every weary, heavy laden, labouring sinner, Jew or Gentile. All such are made welcome to the "rest" which Jesus *gives* to those who come to Him.

40. "A. O.," Dublin. Psalm xvi. is a breathing of the spirit of Christ, in the place of dependence upon God into which He voluntarily entered. "In thee do I put my trust." He speaks as the dependent man. As to Jehovah, He says, "My goodness extendeth not to thee." As to the saints, He says, "All my delight is in them." It is our privilege, in our little measure, to breathe the same spirit of trust in God, and of delight in His people. In Jesus, we need hardly say, it was perfect. He, though God over all, blessed for ever, yet so perfectly took the place of man that

He could say to God, "in thee do I put my trust"—"my goodness extendeth not to thee"—"my flesh shall rest in hope," &c., &c. Thanks for the lines. They are pervaded by a deep spirit of piety. May God bless you!

41. "A Constant Reader." Scripture is silent on the subject of smoking. Looked at from a moral stand-point, we regard it as a most abominable, idle habit. It may be needful, in some cases, on medical grounds; but we must confess we tremble for a young man's future, when we see him puffing tobacco smoke.

42. "An Enquirer." Your questions must be answered by conscience, in the presence of God.

43. "G. A. Y.," Weymouth. Thanks for the lines from the pen of "St. Patrick." Also for your own.

44. "C. C.," Spring Grove. That to which you call our attention is a holy mystery, to be approached with unshod feet. God did hide His face from our blessed Lord Jesus Christ when He was making His soul an offering for sin; and yet the blessed Sin-bearer was Himself very God as well as very man. To all this faith reverently bows. It is a sacred mystery, lying far beyond reason's ken.

45. "A Sister," Wallingford. It is very plain from Romans xii. 10, Ephesians vi. 12, and other passages, that Satan has access into the heavens. Milton has filled people's minds with the thought that Satan is confined to hell. He will, ere long, be so confined, but it is only too plain that he is not so now. Accept our sincere thanks for your encouraging note. May God bless you!

46. "R. P. S.," United States. It was very kind of you to send us the touching incident on which the poem "Lean hard" is founded. Accept our warmest thanks.

Communications have come to hand from "G. C.," Sheerness; "H. N.," Ipswich; "W.," Cheltenham; "G. F.," Swindon; "A Brother," Salisbury; "S. A. H.," Frome; "C. G. H.," London.

SELF-SURRENDER.

(PART. II.)

WE may range through the wide domain of inspiration and not find a more exquisite model of self-surrender than that which is presented to us in the opening lines of Philipians ii. It is, we may safely say, impossible for any one to breathe the holy atmosphere of such a scripture, and not be cured of the sore evils of envy and jealousy, strife and vain glory. Let us approach the marvellous picture, and, gazing intently upon it, seek to catch its inspiration.

"If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Ver. 1—8.

Here, then, is the divine remedy for envy and jealousy, strife and vain glory—for self-occupation, in short, in all its hideous forms. The inspired penman introduces to our hearts the self-emptied, humble, obedient Man, Christ Jesus. Here was One who possessed all power in heaven and earth. Divine majesty and glory belonged to Him. He was God over all, blessed for ever. By Him all things were made, and by Him they subsist. And yet He appeared in this world as a poor man—a servant—one who had not where to lay His head. The foxes and the fowls,

the creatures of His formation, were better provided for than He, their Maker. They had a place to rest in. He had none. "He made Himself of *no* reputation." He never thought of Himself at all. He thought of others, cared for them, laboured for them, wept with them, ministered to them; but He never did a thing for Himself. We never find Him taking care to supply Himself with aught. His was a life of perfect self-surrender. He who was everything, made Himself nothing. He stood in perfect contrast with the first Adam, who being but a man, thought to make himself like God, and became the serpent's slave. The Lord Jesus, who was the Most High God, took the very lowest place amongst men. It is utterly impossible that any man can ever take so low a place as Jesus. The word is, "He made himself of *no* reputation." He went so low that no one could possibly put Him lower. "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

And, be it observed, that the cross is here viewed as the consummation of a life of obedience—the completion of a work of self-surrender. It is what we may call, to use a Levitical term, the burnt-offering aspect of the death of Christ, rather than the sin offering. True it is, most blessedly true, that the selfsame act which consummated a life of obedience, did also put away sin; but in the passage now before us, sin-bearing is not so much the thought as self-surrender. Jesus gave up all. He laid aside His glory, and came down into this poor world; and when He came, He eschewed all human pomp and grandeur, and became a poor man. His parents were poor. They were only able to procure the lowest grade of sacrifice which the law admitted for the poor; not a bullock, not a lamb, but a pair of turtle doves. (Compare Lev. xv. 29, Luke iii. 24.) He Himself worked, and was known as a carpenter. Nor are we to miss the moral force of this fact, by saying that every Jew was brought up to some trade. Our Lord Jesus Christ did really take a low place. The very town

where He was brought up was a proverb of reproach. He was called "The Nazarene." And it was asked, with a sneer of contempt, "Is not this the carpenter?" He was a root out of a dry ground. He had no form nor comeliness, no beauty in man's eye. He was the despised, neglected, self-emptied, meek, and lowly man, from first to last. He gave up all, even to life itself. In a word, His self-surrender was complete.

And, now, mark the result. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

The blessed Lord Jesus took the very lowest place; but God has given Him the very highest. He made Himself nothing; but God has made Him everything. He said, "I am a worm and no man;" but God has set Him as Head over all. He went into the very dust of death; but God has placed Him on the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.

What does all this teach us? It teaches us that *the way to get up is to go down*. This is a grand lesson, and one which we very much need to learn. It would effectually deliver us from envy and jealousy, from strife and vain glory, from self-importance and self-occupation. God will assuredly exalt those who, in the spirit and mind of Christ, take the low place; and, on the other hand, He will, as assuredly, abase those who seek to be somebody.

Oh! to be nothing! This is true liberty—true happiness—true moral elevation. And then what intense power of attraction in one who makes nothing of himself! And, on the other hand, how repulsive is a pushing, forward, elbowing, self-exalting spirit! How utterly unworthy of one bearing the name of Him who made Himself of no reputation! May we not set it down as a fixed truth that

ambition cannot possibly live in the presence of One who emptied Himself? No doubt. An ambitious Christian is a flagrant contradiction.

But there are other samples of self-surrender presented to us in this exquisite Philippians ii.; inferior no doubt to the divine model at which we have been gazing, for in this as in all things else, Jesus must have the pre-eminence. Still, though inferior and imperfect, they are deeply interesting and valuable to us. Look at Paul. See how deeply he had drunk into his Master's spirit of self-surrender. Hearken to the following accents from one who, naturally, would have allowed none to outstrip him in his career of ambition. "Yea," he says, "and if *I* be *poured forth* [as a drink offering] upon the sacrifice and service of *your* faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all." Verse 17.

This is uncommonly fine. Paul was ready to be nothing—to be spent—to be poured forth as a libation upon the Philippians' sacrifice. It mattered not to him who presented the sacrifice, or who performed the service, provided the thing was done. Does not this put some of us to the blush? How little do we know of this excellent spirit! How prone we are to attach importance to work if we ourselves have aught to do with it! How little able to joy and rejoice with others in their sacrifice and service! *Our* work, *our* preaching, *our* writings, have an interest in our view quite different from those of any one else. In a word, *self*, self, detestable self, creeps in even in that which seems to be the service of Christ. We are drawn to those who think well of us and of our work, and retire from those who think otherwise. All this needs to be judged. It is unlike Christ, and unworthy of those who bear His holy Name. Paul had so learnt Christ as to be able to rejoice in the work and service of others as well as in his own; and even where Christ was preached of contention, he could rejoice.

Then, again, look at Paul's son, Timothy. Hearken to

the glowing testimony borne to him by the pen of inspiration. "But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For *all seek their own*, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. *But ye know the proof of him*, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel." Verse 19—22.

Here was self-surrender. Timothy *naturally* cared for the saints; and that, too, at a moment when *all* sought their own things. And yet, dear as Timothy was to Paul's heart—valuable as such a self-denying servant must have been to him in the work of the gospel, he was willing to part with him for the sake of the Church. Timothy, likewise, was willing to be separated from his invaluable friend and father in the faith, in order to ease his anxious mind in reference to the state of the Philippians. This was indeed giving "*proof*" of real devotedness and self-surrender. Timothy did not talk of these things; he practised them. He did not make a parade of his doings; but Paul, *by the Holy Ghost, engraved them on a tablet from which they can never be erased*. This was infinitely better. Let another praise thee, and not thyself. Timothy made nothing of himself, but Paul made a great deal of him. This is divine. The sure way to get up is to go down. Such is the law of the heavenly road. A man who makes much of himself saves others the trouble of doing so. There is no possible use in two persons doing the same thing. Self-importance is a noxious weed nowhere to be found in the entire range of the new creation. It is, alas! often found in the ways of those who profess to belong to that blessed and holy creation; but it is not of heavenly growth. It is of fallen nature—a weed that grows luxuriantly in the soil of this world. The men of this age think it laudable to push and make way for themselves. A bustling, self-important, pretentious style takes with the children of this

generation. But our heavenly Master was the direct opposite of all this. He who made the worlds, stooped to wash a disciple's feet (John xiii.); and if we are like Him, we shall do the same. There is nothing more foreign to the thoughts of God, the mind of heaven, the spirit of Jesus, than self-importance and self-occupation. And, on the other hand, there is nothing that savours so of God, of heaven, and of Jesus, as self-surrender.

Look, once more, reader, at our picture in Philippians ii. Examine, with special care, that figure which occupies a very prominent place. It is Epaphroditus. Who was he? Was he a great preacher—a very eloquent speaker—a pre-eminently gifted brother? We are not told. But this we are told—and told right powerfully and touchingly; he was one who exhibited a lovely spirit of self-surrender. This is better than all the gifts and eloquence, power and learning, that could possibly be concentrated in any single individual. Epaphroditus was one of that illustrious class who seek to make nothing of themselves; and, as a consequence, the inspired apostle spares no pains to exalt him. Hear how he expatiates upon the actings of this singularly attractive personage. "Yet I supposed it necessary to send unto you Epaphroditus, my brother and companion in labour, and fellow soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants."

What a cluster of dignities! What a brilliant array of titles! How little did this dear and unpretending servant of Christ imagine that he was to have such a monument erected to his memory! But the Lord will never suffer the fruits of self-sacrifice to wither, nor the name of the self-emptying to sink into oblivion. Hence it is that the name of one who, otherwise, might never have been heard of, shines on the page of inspiration, as the brother, companion, and fellow soldier of the great apostle of the Gentiles.

But what did this remarkable man do? Did he spend

a princely fortune in the cause of Christ? We are not told; but we are told what is far better—*he spent himself*. This is the grand point for us to seize and ponder. It was not the surrender of his fortune, merely, but the surrender of himself. Let us hearken to the record concerning one of the true David's mighty men. "He longed after you all, and was full of heaviness." Why? Was it because he was sick? because of his pains, and aches, and privations? Nothing of the sort. Epaphroditus did not belong to the generation of whiners and complainers. He was thinking of others. "He was full of heaviness, because that *ye had heard that he had been sick*." How lovely! He was occupied about the Philippians and their sorrow about him. The only thing that affected him in his illness was the thought of how it would affect them. Perfectly exquisite! This honoured servant of Christ had brought himself to death's door to serve others, and when there, in place of being occupied about himself and his ailments, he was thinking of the sorrow of others. "He was sick and nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow."

Can aught be more morally beautiful than this? It is one of the rarest pictures ever presented to the human eye. There is Epaphroditus, nigh unto death for the sake of others; but he is full of sorrow about the Philippians; and the Philippians are full of sorrow about him; Paul is full of sorrow about both, and God comes and mingles Himself with the scene, and, in mercy to all, raises up the loved one from the bed of death.

And then mark the tender solicitude of the blessed apostle. It is like some tender mother sending her darling son away, and committing him, with fond earnestness, to the care of some friend. "I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. Receive him therefore in

the Lord with all gladness; and *hold such* in reputation." Why? Was it because of his gifts, his rank, or his wealth? No; but because of his self-surrender. "Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, *not regarding his life*, to supply your lack of service toward me." Oh! dear christian reader, let us think on these things. We have introduced you to a picture, and we leave you to gaze upon it. The grouping is divine. There is a moral line running through the entire scene, and linking the figures into one striking group. It is like the anointing of the true Aaron, and the oil flowing down to the skirts of his garments. We have the blessed Lord, perfect in His self-surrender, as in all beside; and then we have Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus, each, in his measure, exhibiting the rare and lovely grace of self-surrender.



MEDITATIONS ON THE CHRISTIAN'S STANDING AND STATE.

(EPHESIANS I. 15—23; III. 14—21.)

HAVING thus followed the Church, in happy association with Christ, into the future ages of her unmingled blessedness, we would now close our meditations on this blessed theme by taking a glance at her position just before she goes up to meet her coming Lord. This we see in Revelation xxii. "*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*" Here her eye is fixed on Himself. But it is the eye of a bride fixed on her bridegroom. She knows Him as "the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." He is the divine Bridegroom of her heart: and with affections suited to that relationship, she longs for His coming. But she also knows, and forgets not, that He who is the one object of her own heart's desire, is still the

fountain of living waters to every thirsty one. And she knows the waters are free—free to the poorest—free to the vilest—free to all. And thus she extends her invitation to "*whosoever will.*" O loveliest of attitudes! Here she shines in the grace of her Lord, and acts in the power of His love. Would that every individual Christian entered heartily into the true spirit of this position! But sure we are, that in the proportion that our hearts long for the coming of the Lord, in the same proportion will they long for the salvation of souls. It would appear from this beautiful description of the Church, that the one is a consequence of the other. And, surely, it is when meditating most deeply on His coming that we turn to those around us with deepened earnestness, and beseech them to come to Him. Never are our appeals so pointed, so tender, so earnest, as when our hearts are burning with love to the Lord, and in the expectation of His return. Indeed we can only appeal when the heart is warm.

Thus it is with the Church as she is presented to us in Revelation xxii. She is, as it were, appealing to the Lord, and appealing to souls. Love fills her heart. And thus may it be with us *individually*, while here in the midst of Christless sinners. There is no motive to evangelization like the thought of His coming. O that our hearts may never cease to burn with desire for the salvation of lost souls! The time is short. The coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Great changes are taking place everywhere, both in the Church and in the world; and many are wondering what they will all lead to.

Thou hast only to look around thee, O my soul, and thou wilt see everything moving rapidly. The slumber of eighteen christian centuries is broken. The nineteenth is the century of invention and of the display of man's power and glory. Only think, that which is discussed to-night in the senate house in New York, will be read the following day in London by tens of thousands. With rapid strides

the world is rising to its manhood. Old age and decrepitude, we believe, will as rapidly follow. The climax will soon be reached, not only in pride and worldly glory, but in the daring wickedness of *the man of sin*. This is what Satan has in view, and what man's energy in the present day is hastening on; but the enemy's one aim is to keep the eye from Christ. The first glimpse of a risen Saviour, by faith, in the light of the Holy Spirit, dims all the world's glory. A risen Christ is the divine witness that the whole world is under the sentence of God's judgment, which may at any moment be executed. Hence the exaltation of man is Satan's object, and everything is now moving in that direction with telegraphic speed.

Now turn thine eye for a moment to *ecclesiastical movements*. The professing church as well as the world has been aroused from the sleep of ages. We forget not the great work of God's Spirit in the sixteenth century; but that in the nineteenth is very different in its character. Then, it became more a question of human governments and religious systems; now, it is more of the Church of God and the conversion of souls. The ten virgins are all awake, the foolish as well as the wise. The midnight cry has gone forth; but, the Lord be praised, as the cry, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh," waxes louder and louder, the cry to prepare for His coming has increased in proportion. Thousands of evangelists have been raised up to proclaim the gospel of the grace of God; and millions who have been startled, as it were, from their long undisturbed repose, are waking up and wondering what all this mighty movement of "lay preachers" can mean.

Long neglected, out-of-the-way places are visited by the evangelists, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them. *Individual responsibility* carries the glad tidings where official status cannot—dare not, and the good work goes on.

The Spirit of God, as the quickener of dead souls, is active too, in connection with the gospel. This is matter of unfeigned joy. He is gathering many souls to Christ, especially within the last ten years. Christendom is unlike what it was before 1858. The bands of office are now found to be a hindrance. The energy of the spirit in the "lay-preacher," hesitates not to cross the marches. All parishes are alike to the preacher. Souls are his object; not boundary lines, or the worn out routine of particular forms. The field is the world. The Lord has given it to him. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," is his high commission. "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it," is his divine privilege. The highways and hedge rows, the streets and the lanes of the city, and the supposed sacred enclosures, are all thrown open to him. Moral compulsion is to be used; his orders are, "Compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." It is the *Master* who carries the key. "These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth." Blessed is that servant who follows Him who has the key, the symbol of authority and power.

Thus everything, as we have said, is moving rapidly, and changing as rapidly as it moves. In the world, notwithstanding its boasted progress, things are really going backwards. The ancient bulwarks of society are breaking up, as if the feebleness of age were accompanying the achievements of manhood. Power is passing into other hands, and hands that will use it. The word of God is being treated with indifference—the sign and forerunner, we believe, of a nation's decline. Man's will—man's reason—man's self, are supreme, and will have their brief display in ten thousand ways, before the appearing in glory of the Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints. Even now, what "distress of nations, with perplexity: the sea and the

waves roaring." The lawless, rebellious despisers of governments, are like the tumultuous sea which cannot be bridled or governed by man. Hence we already see the most plain indications of the Lord's own words being in part fulfilled. "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken, and then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." (Luke xxi. 25—27.) Such, alas, is the present state of the world. The rulers are perplexed, the people are uneasy; this is daily becoming more and more manifest. At the same time there is seeming progress, power, and glory. But it is a vain show. However, we can only look at things in the light of God's word.

We now return to our meditations on the Church, which lies more in our line of things. We have seen her amidst the thickening gloom, in her most beautiful character. Here she is truly heavenly in her affections, yet most devoted to the spiritual and eternal welfare of those around her. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. [The young convert is here exhorted to join in the cry, Come.] And let him that is athirst come [come to the Saviour]: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." This, we need hardly say, is not the position of the professing church at large; but of those who are bearing testimony to the coming of the Lord, and to where the living waters are to be found. This is the most lovely attitude in which we see the bride of the Lamb, as the Church, on the earth. The desire for souls to come to Christ keeps pace with the desire for the Lord to come as the Bridegroom of His Church. This is both beautiful and blessed. Lord, increase this twofold desire. It is clearly the teaching of the Spirit. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." It is no peculiar view of any particular denomination, but the teaching of the Spirit of God. It is the bride that speaks, but she is moved and

energized by the Spirit. And what must be the state of a preacher's heart, if it is not moved to intense earnestness, even to agony, by the near prospect of the Lord's coming?

But what, may I ask, would become of those who are now listening to the gospel, were the Lord to come before the service closes, if they had not believed it? The answer is unspeakably solemn. So far as scripture informs us, their case would be hopeless. Of course this remark would not apply to persons who are too young to be responsible, or to those who have never heard the gospel: but where the gospel has been plainly preached, and deliberately refused; what must the consequences be? "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Escape, in such a case, seems impossible. Look again at 2 Thessalonians i. "The Lord shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." This passage seems to take in as objects of judgment, two classes. Those that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. "The first class may embrace Jews and others, who profess to believe in God, but not in Christ and His gospel. The latter, evidently, are gospel hearers, but not true believers. We cannot see from scripture that there is the smallest hope for such, were the Lord to come. But the second chapter is stronger still on this awfully solemn point, and seems to shut out all hope. Indeed we feel it is too awful and solemn to be transferred to a human page.

How seldom, alas, this soul stirring truth is thought of either by preacher or hearer! But when it has its right place in the heart, it will move to earnestness as none other can—it will agonize the whole soul of the preacher. Who could be occupied with themselves in any way, or even with the details of truth, under such a thought and

feeling? How small a place the mere *style* of address would have in our minds, if we really believed that five out of every ten that we preach to, are in danger of eternal woe! Scripture never exaggerates. Even of those who take the place of *virgins*, five out of ten come too late and perish in their sins. They had lamps in their hands, but no grace in their hearts. Lord, grant that thy servants may think—think only—on the state of those before them, and of the awful consequences to such of thy coming.

But one thing is comforting—most comforting, O my soul. It is this—thou mayest safely reckon, that as the testimony to the coming of the Lord spreads on all hands, so will the testimony to the grace of God in the gospel. May the Lord greatly increase this twofold testimony in these last and closing days! And O, that all whose high privilege it is to bear it, may be faithful, earnest, and devoted, according to the all-commanding importance of the coming of the Lord, and the salvation of those for whom His long-suffering still patiently lingers! May we maintain the beautiful and blessed attitude of the bride before us. “THE SPIRIT AND THE BRIDE SAY, COME. AND LET HIM THAT HEARETH SAY, COME. AND LET HIM THAT IS ATHIRST COME. AND WHOSOEVER WILL LET HIM TAKE THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY.”



WHAT GOD IS DOING.

TAKE two illustrations of what God is now doing by the gospel. One from the higher circles, and one from the lower—or, rather, from the lowest of the low.

1st. Alice was an only child, an heiress. Lovely and accomplished, she lived for this world, and this world offered her no ordinary attractions. Idolized by her parents, and beloved by an accepted suitor, she knew not the meaning of a wish ungratified.

But an unexpected visitor arrived at the mansion. A pale messenger came to Alice. A hectic flush suffused her beautiful face, rendering it, if possible, more lovely still. The eagle eye of affection soon perceived that the seeds of consumption had been laid. The skilled physician pronounced the heart-rending verdict that her days were numbered, and that the career of love and self-indulgence would soon close.

Alice sank by degrees, and as she lay on her couch, surrounded with all the luxuries that wealth could procure, began to think how sad it was to leave her loving friends and all her brilliant prospects, and to go—where? where?

She could not find an answer satisfactory to her soul.

So she sent for the High Church clergyman.

He came. The family were assembled. He produced a missal. They all knelt round the bed. He intoned the service for the sick. Having received her confession, and pronounced absolution, he, with peculiar genuflections, administered the sacrament, and placing his hands on her, blessed her, and pronounced her a good child of the Church. He departed, perfectly satisfied with his own performances, and assuring the parents that all was right.

Was Alice satisfied?

She had submitted to all. She had endeavoured to join in the service, but in her inmost soul she felt a blank.

“Father,” said she, “I am going to die. Where am I going?”

The father gave no reply.

“Mother, darling, can you tell me what I am to do to get to heaven?”

No reply save tears.

“William, you who were to be the guide of my life, can you tell me anything of the future?”

No response.

“I’m lost! lost!” she exclaimed. “Am I not, father? Is there any one who can tell me what I must do to be saved?”

At length the father spoke.

"My child, you have always been a dutiful daughter, and have never grieved your parents. You have regularly attended the Abbey Church, and helped in its services, and the minister has performed the rites of the Church, and expressed himself satisfied with your state."

"Alas! father, I feel that is not enough. It is no rest to my soul. It is hollow—it is not real. Oh! I am going to die, and I know not where I am going. Oh, the blackness of the darkness! Can no one teach me what I can do to be saved?"

Blank despair was pictured on her countenance. Misery overshadowed the circle. They were overtaken by a real danger. Death was in their midst. Eternity was looming before them. They knew not how to answer the agonizing appeal of an immortal soul, awakened to a sense of sin—to a dread of appearing before God—to the terrors of hell.

Alice was attended by a little maid, who was in the habit of frequenting a meeting held in a barn in the village, where prayer and praise were offered up in simplicity, and where they sang the old hymns—

"There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains:"

and

"I lay my sins on Jesus,
The spotless Lamb of God;
He bears them all, and frees us
From the accursed load:"

and where she heard words which reminded her of the good old pastor.

She longed to tell her mistress that she might "wash and be clean," but felt diffident. At last she took courage, and just as the Israelitish captive said unto Naaman's wife, "Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in

Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy," she told her mistress, "There is a preacher in the village who proclaims salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and urges us to accept the forgiveness freely offered in the gospel."

"Oh, that I could see him," exclaimed the dying girl.

Alice besought her father to invite the strange preacher to the house; and, though he thought it extraordinary, her wish was law.

Again the family were assembled, and the man of God entered the room. The dying girl, raising herself, appealed to him. "Can you tell me what I must do to obtain rest for my soul, and die at peace with God?"

"I fear I cannot."

Alice fell back. "Alas!" said she, "and is it so? Is there no hope for me?"

"Stay," said he, "though I cannot tell you what you can do to be saved, I *can* tell you what *has been done* for you."

Jesus Christ, the Saviour God, has completely finished a work by which lost and helpless sinners may be righteously saved. God, who is love, saw us in our lost and ruined state. He pitied us, and in love and compassion sent Jesus to die for us. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He shed His precious blood on the accursed tree in the stead and place of sinners, that they might be pardoned and saved. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

"And have I nothing to do?"

"Nothing, but to believe. No doing, working, praying, giving, or abstaining, can give relief to the conscience burdened with a sense of guilt, or rest to the troubled heart. It is not a work done *in* you by *yourself*, but a work done *for* you by *another*, long, long ago. Jesus has completed the work of our redemption. He has said, 'It is finished.' Through faith in Him you have pardon. It is impossible

for a sinner to do ought to save himself. It is impossible to add anything to the perfect work of Christ. *Doing* is not God's way of salvation, but ceasing from doing, and believing what God in Christ *has already done for you*. 'God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.'

"I do believe that Jesus died on the cross for sinners; but how am I to know that God has accepted *me*?"

"Jesus, the God-man, has ascended into heaven. He has presented His blood before God, and has been accepted for us; and when you believe, you are accepted in Him."

The awakened sinner listened with breathless attention. She received the word of God, which revealed Christ to her soul. The glad tidings of salvation fell as balm upon her wounded spirit. Her face was lit up with heaven's sunlight. Looking upwards, she exclaimed, "Oh, what love! what grace!"

'Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress.'

and in a few days she departed to be with Christ.—*Tract Depot, 9, Paternoster Row.*

C. B.

2nd. About this time the gospel tidings had spread over a large tract of country, and many were the subjects of divine blessing. In visiting the cottages from place to place I heard of a notorious reputed witch, whose evil power was stated to be fearful in the destruction of stock, and in turning all the dairies into utter confusion. The belief prevailed that the losses of persons who have the misfortune to offend these so-called witches, were very serious. A godly woman, near to whom I lived, had experienced some troubles of this kind, and the statements of various individuals, who bore witness to what they had seen of the disasters occurring for many days successively, led me to visit the old woman who bore this dreadful character. The people strongly dissuaded me from it, saying she had sold herself to the devil, and that it was not safe for any one to go to her. Turning a deaf ear to all this, I called and found her ill in bed: surely, if looks betray character, she certainly had a very bad one. After some inquiries as to her health, and what she was suffering from, I asked her if she expected to get better. She replied, "No." "Where will you go if you die?" I asked.

She stared at me fiercely, like a tiger about to spring from his lair. I gently put my hand on her shoulder, and she screamed out, "I's going to hell! I's wicked! I's going to hell! I's wicked!" "But why do you wish to go to hell?" "I don't want to go, but I's forced to go." "But who is it that forces you to go to hell?" "The devil," she said; "I have served him all my life." "But did you never hear of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ, who came down from heaven to save us from going to hell?" "No." "Did you never hear of God?" "No, I can't read; I's wicked." "But do you not know what love is? Had you a child?" "Yes, I had eight." "But don't they love you?" "No, they robbed me." "Did not your husband love you?" "No, he turned me to doors." "And did you never love anyone?" "No, I's wicked, I hate all—everybody." Finding all was of no avail, I asked her if she would like a few nice things to eat. "I can't have it. No one will gee it to I." "Oh yes, I will give it to you, this very night I will send it to you." Her amazement was equal to her horror before. "Will ee sure?" "Yes; so you see somebody loves you. Now I want to tell you that some one else loves you, and He sent me to tell you about His love." "Who is that?" "It is the great God, the King of the world. He lives up there above the sky. This great King made all things. He made you. This great King has one Son, whom he loves very much, because He deserves to be loved; yes, this great King loved you so much that He sent His Son all the way down from heaven to die for those who, like you, have been committing sins all their lives. And He has sent me with this letter to read to you, that you may not go to hell but to heaven. I then read to her some of John iii., and sought to instruct her mind, and tried to make her understand who the great King of the sky was, and how He would not turn away from her. "But will He hear a poor old thing like me?" "Yes," I said, "He will."

"But what shall I say to un?" "Just tell Him what you are afraid of. Tell Him what you have told me, that you are wicked."

She at once looked straight up to the ceiling as if she saw some one there, and said, with all the vehemence of despair, "O Lord, the King of the sky, have mercy on a wicked old ooman like I—I have been a wicked old ooman all my life." She kept saying this till she cried bitterly. I then taught her that beautiful passage—"The blood of

Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." This she repeated after me until she had it in her memory. I then left her; and before I called again, she sent for me. Her first words were, "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." I asked her who Jesus Christ was. She said, "He is the Son of the King of the sky." "Well, what has He done for you?" "O, He has died for me!" I need not say much more, only that she found out that God loved her, and this soon made her love everyone. I saw her many times subsequently, and each time found that the word had taken deeper root in her heart. She confessed to a life of the greatest wickedness, although she said she was not guilty of the crime for which she was forcibly driven from the parish in which I reside, about fourteen months before this time. The last words I heard from her were, "Oh, I be a wicked old ooman, but I's not afraid: 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.'" — *Tract Depot, 9, Paternoster Row.*

G. B.

"The silver trumpet's sounding
The year of jubilee;
And grace is all abounding,
To set the bondmen free.
Return, return, ye captives,
Return unto your home,
The silver trumpet's sounding—
'The jubilee is come.'

Forsake your wretched service,
Your master's claims are o'er,
Avail yourselves of freedom,
Be Satan's slaves no more. Return, &c.

A better Master's calling,
In accents true and kind;
He asks a loving service,
And claims a willing mind. Return, &c.

He offers you salvation,
And points to joys above:
And, longing, waits to make you
The objects of His love. Return, &c.

In living faith accept Him,
Give up all else beside;
While grace is loudly calling,
Look to the Crucified. Return," &c.

CORRESPONDENCE.

47. "M. D.," Devonshire. 1 Thessalonians v. 19 refers mainly to the public assembly, where there should be full liberty, not for men to do what they think proper, but for God the Spirit to act and speak by whom He will. Anything to hinder this would be quenching the Spirit. This interpretation is confirmed by verse 20, "Despise not prophesyings." We thank you, beloved friend, most heartily, for your loving letter and your prayers. May the best blessings of a gracious God ever rest abundantly upon you!

48. "R. P.," Boyle. Ephesians iv. 30 refers to believers, in their individual walk, as well as in the public assembly. We are to shun everything that might grieve that blessed Spirit who dwells in us, and whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption. 1 Thessalonians v. 19 would, we judge, apply specially to the public assembly. We are not to quench the Spirit either in ourselves or in others. May these weighty words tell upon our hearts and consciences!

49. "A. M. R.," Leinster. Hebrews ix. 27, 28 may help you as to your first question. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Sin brought death into the world; and death introduces the sinner to judgment. But mark the force of the two little words "*As*" and "*So*." "*As* it is appointed.....*so* Christ was once offered." He has met the appointment; He has died the death, and borne the judgment. *As* it is appointed, *so* Christ was offered. All is done. And now all those who believe in Jesus are as free from death and judgment as He is. Glorious fact! There is no death, no judgment, for the Christian. He may fall asleep before the Lord comes; but this is not death. The wages of sin can never be received by one for whom Christ died. The whole question of sin is definitively settled for the believer, and therefore nothing remains but to look for the glorious advent of our Lord. "*To them that look for him, shall he appear the second time, apart from sin (χωρίς αμαρτίας), unto salvation.*" At His first appearing, the Lord Jesus had to say to sin, inasmuch as He had to bear it upon the cross. He appeared once, at the end of the ages or dispensations, to put away sin. He will appear again unto salvation, or the full and final deliverance of both the bodies and souls of His people. The soul of the believer is already delivered,

the body is not yet. But, on the other hand, those who reject Christ and die in their sins shall have to meet the judgment, and the issue of that judgment will be the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone FOR EVER and FOR EVER. Awful words! May they ring in the ears and sound in the hearts of careless men, women, and children! As to the expression, "in the Spirit" (Rev. i.), we take it exactly as it stands. The apostle was in the full power, and under the direct guidance of the Holy Ghost, on the Lord's day—the first day of the week. God bless you!

50. "E. S. K.," North Brixton. We recommend you to procure a copy of "Six Lectures on the Church of God," by W. Kelly. You can get it either from W. H. Broom, Paternoster Row, or George Morrish, 24, Warwick Lane. It will help you.

51. "W. X. Y. Z.," Bristol. In Romans xiv. the Lordship of Christ, and the fact of the judgment seat, are presented as the grand reason why we are not to judge one another in matters indifferent. Jesus Christ is Lord of all; and all must come out before His judgment seat. The believer shall never come into judgment, because Christ has borne the judgment instead. But our work and service must all be tried. There is no question as to whether our faults and failures will be seen only by ourselves or by others. What possible difference can it make? We have already gone into this subject. See our papers, in volume x. on "The Ministry of Reconciliation." As to the two nets, Luke v. and John xxi.: in the former we see failure in connection with man's responsibility: in the latter, we have the figure of the millennial kingdom. There will be no sinking of ships, or breaking of nets, or beckoning to partners, by and by. (See Ezekiel lxvii. 9, 10.) In reference to the *apparent* discrepancy to which you call our attention, in Acts ix. compared with Acts xxii. 9, we can only say it seems to us full of instruction. In the former passage, we are told that the men heard *a* voice; but, in the latter, Paul says, "They heard not *the* voice of *him* that spake to *me*." This is simple enough. There was *a* voice which all could hear, and did hear; but there was *the* voice of the Son of God speaking, in living quickening power, to the heart of Saul. How often may we see something, in measure, like this at gospel preachings? All hear *a* voice, but how few, comparatively, hear *the* voice of Jesus. We have not the least thought, dear friend, of your writing in a sceptical spirit; if we had, we should treat your com-

munication very differently. May the Lord lead you, more and more, to search the scriptures diligently, and to seek to know His mind therein. To Him and to His word we commend you.

52. "B. B.," Exeter. You will see, by a reference to our March number, that we have attended to your deeply interesting letter. Indeed your request was mentioned, two or three days after the receipt of your letter, in a public prayer meeting, and earnest prayer was made for your charge. We can only say, with a full heart, May God answer the prayers that went up on that occasion, and thus fulfil the desire of your soul, and glorify the name of Jesus.

53. "Theta," London. If you will kindly refer again to our reply to "X. N.," and also to 2 Corinthians v. 20, you will see there has been no mistake whatever. The word "you" is actually given in italics twice. Now, you know, as well as we do, that all such words are supplied by our pious and excellent translators, and are not in the original. Our reply does not in any wise refer to the last clause of 2 Corinthians v. 20 which is a faithful rendering of the original, and simply sets forth the terms in which the ambassador is to deliver his message. But we must again repeat, and that with emphasis, our statement that the apostle does not, in the above passage, call upon the Corinthians to be reconciled, nor should the saints of God be ever so addressed. It is calculated to weaken in their souls the sense of their position and relationship; and not only so, but it tends to jumble together the people of God and the unconverted, in such a manner as to hinder the action of truth upon the latter, and to throw the former into confusion and perplexity. We must endeavour rightly to divide the word of truth, if we would be workmen needing not to be ashamed.

54. "A Constant Reader," S. E. of London. Your question is entirely one for the conscience of the person to whom you refer.

55. "M. A. W.," Tottenham. 1 Corinthians xv. 29 has been, as you are, no doubt, aware, the subject of much discussion. It would, therefore, ill become us to speak dogmatically about it. We believe the force of the passage to be this. If there be no resurrection, of what use is it to take the place of the dead, as Christians do in baptism? In the early days of the Church, as we know, those who took their places in the ranks of christian profession, did so in full view of others who had been put to

death for Christ's sake. But we merely venture an opinion on a passage about which the best taught saints have differed in judgment.

56. "R. M. C.," Edinburgh. We have long been in the habit of explaining Luke xvi. 9 by 1 Timothy vi. 17—19. We consider it a very fine commentary on the passage. Worldly riches are not what properly belongs to us as Christians. Our riches are heavenly—our blessings spiritual, in the heavenlies, in and with Christ. Worldly riches belong properly to the Jew; but to the Christian they are the mammon of unrighteousness, or the riches which do not rightly appertain to us. But if at our conversion, we happen to possess such riches, we are taught by Luke xvi. 9 to make friends of them by spending them in the Lord's service, and for the poor, and thus lay up in store a good foundation against the time to come. The expression, "that they may receive you" is idiomatic, and may be rendered as follows, "that they may be the means of receiving you," &c. This is the true way to use riches—the very best mode of investing capital. It will yield a hundredfold, and where is the bank or limited liability that can come up to this? Many of God's people have, of late, been called to taste the bitter fruit of seeking after what they considered profitable investments. It is a question if the tremendous crashing of banks and limited companies has not been the result of God's dealing with His children who were connected with them. The very best thing we can do with our money is to spend it for the Lord; and then, instead of being rust on our souls, it will be treasure in heaven. But we must remember that Luke xvi. 9 and 1 Timothy vi. 17—19 are addressed to disciples, not to the unconverted. If this be lost sight of, we shall only cast dust in the eyes of men by leading them to suppose that the *gift* of God can be purchased with money. To one who thought this of old, Peter said, "Thy money perish with thee."

Communications have come to hand from "A Young Christian," Liverpool; "A Reader of 'Things New and Old,'" Wiltshire; "A. B. C.," Woolwich; "A Sister," Ramsgate; "M. A. O.," "G. S.," Ashford; "W. H. W.," Meer End; "P. L.," Birmingham; some Poetry from Cheltenham; "H. S.," H M.S., *Royal Adelaide*.

NOTE. In our "Correspondence" for March (No. 45) for "Romans xii. 10," read "Revelation xii. 9, 10,"

THE CAMP IN THE DESERT.

WHAT a marvellous spectacle was the camp of Israel, in that waste howling wilderness! What a spectacle to angels, to men, and to devils! God's eye ever rested upon it. His presence was there. He dwelt in the midst of His militant people. It was there He found His habitation. He did not—He could not—find His abode amid the splendours of Egypt, of Assyria, or of Babylon. No doubt those nations presented much that was attractive to nature's eye. The arts and sciences were cultivated amongst them. Civilization had reached a far loftier point amongst those ancient nations than we moderns are disposed to admit. Refinement and luxury were, probably, carried to as great an extent there as amongst those who put forth very lofty pretensions.

But, be it remembered, Jehovah was not known among those ancient nations. His name had never been revealed to them. He did not dwell in their midst. True, there were the ten thousand testimonies to His creative power. And, moreover, His superintending Providence was over them. He gave them rain and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness. The blessings and benefits of His liberal hand were showered upon them, from day to day, and year to year. His showers fertilized their fields; His sunbeams gladdened their hearts. But they knew Him not, and cared not for Him. His dwelling was not there. Not one of these nations could say, "Jehovah is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation; he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him." Ex. xv. 2.

Jehovah found His abode in the bosom of His redeemed people, and nowhere else. Redemption was the necessary basis of God's habitation amongst men. Apart from

redemption, the Divine Presence could only prove the destruction of man; but, redemption being known, that presence secures man's highest privilege and brightest glory.

God dwelt in the midst of His people Israel. He came down from heaven, not only to redeem them out of the land of Egypt, but to be their travelling companion through the wilderness. What a thought! The Most High God taking up His abode, on the sand of the desert, and in the very bosom of His redeemed congregation! Truly there was nothing like that throughout the wide, wide world. There was that host of six hundred thousand men, beside women and children, in a sterile desert, where there was not a blade of grass, not a drop of water—no visible source of subsistence. How were they to be fed? God was there. How were they to be kept in order? God was there. How were they to track their way through a howling wilderness where there was no way? God was there.

In a word, God's presence secured everything. Nature might shrug its shoulders, look doubtful and suspicious. Unbelief might say, 'What! are three millions of people to be fed on air? Who has charge of the commissariat? Where are the military stores? Where is the baggage? Who is to attend to the clothing?' Faith alone could answer: and its answer is simple, brief, and conclusive. 'God was there.' And that was quite sufficient. All was comprehended in that one sentence. In faith's arithmetic, God is the only significant figure: and, having Him, you may add as many ciphers as you please. If all your springs are in the living God, it ceases to be a question of your need, and resolves itself into a question of His sufficiency.

What were six hundred thousand footmen to the Almighty God? What the varied necessities of their wives and children? In man's estimation, these things

might seem overwhelming. England has just sent out ten thousand troops to Abyssinia; but only think of the enormous expense and labour; think of the number of transports required to convey provisions and other necessities for that small army. But imagine an army sixty times the size, together with the women and children. Conceive this enormous host entering upon a march that was to extend over the space of forty years, through "a great and terrible wilderness," in which there was no corn, no grass, no waterspring. How were they to be sustained? No supplies with them; no arrangements entered into with friendly nations to forward supplies; no transports despatched to meet them at various points along their route; in short, not a single visible source of supply—nothing that nature would consider available.

All this is something worth pondering. But we must ponder it in the Divine presence. It is of no possible use for human reason to sit down and try to solve this mighty problem by 'the rule of three.' No, reader: it is only faith that can solve it, and that, moreover, by the rule of ONE, the Living God. *Here lies the precious solution.* Bring God in, and you want no other factors to work out your answer. Leave Him out, and the more powerful your reason, and the more profound your arithmetic, the more hopeless must be your perplexity.

Thus it is that faith settles the question. God was in the midst of His people. He was there, in all the fulness of His grace and mercy—there, in all His perfect knowledge of His people's wants and of the difficulties of their path—there, in His almighty power and boundless resources, to meet those difficulties, and supply those wants. And so fully did He enter into all those things, that He was able, at the close of their long wilderness wanderings, to appeal to their hearts in the following touching accents, "For the Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand; he knoweth thy walking through this great

wilderness: these forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee; *thou hast lacked nothing.*" And again, "Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years." Deut. ii. 7; viii. 4.

Now, in all these things, the camp of Israel was a type—a vivid, striking type. A type of what? A type of the Church of God passing through this world. The testimony of scripture is so distinct on this point as to leave no room and no demand for the exercise of imagination. "All these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are met." 1 Cor. x. 11.

Hence, therefore, we can draw near and gaze with intense interest upon that marvellous spectacle, and seek to gather up the precious lessons which it is so eminently calculated to teach. And, oh! what lessons! Who can duly estimate them? Look at that mysterious camp in the desert, composed of warriors, workers, and worshippers! What separation from all the nations of the world! What utter helplessness! What exposure! What absolute dependence upon God! They had nothing—could do nothing—could know nothing. They had not a morsel of food, nor a drop of water, but as they received it, day by day, from the immediate hand of God. When they retired to rest at night, there was not a single atom of provision for the morrow. There was no storehouse, no larder, no visible source of supply: nothing that nature could take any account of.

But God was there, and that, in the judgment of faith, was quite enough. *They were shut up to God.* This is the one grand reality. Faith owns nothing real, nothing solid, nothing true, but the one true, living, eternal God. Nature might cast a longing look at the granaries of Egypt, and see something tangible, something substantial there. Faith looks up to heaven, and finds all its springs there.

Thus it was with the camp in the desert; and thus it

is with the Church in the world. There was not a single exigency, not a single contingency, not a single necessity of any sort whatsoever, for which the Divine presence was not an all-sufficient answer. The nations of the uncircumcised might look and marvel. They might, in the bewilderment of blind unbelief, raise many a question as to how such a host could ever be fed, clothed, and kept in order. Most certainly they had no eyes to *see* how it could be done. They knew not Jehovah, the Lord God of the Hebrews; and therefore to tell them that He was going to undertake for that vast assembly, would indeed seem to them like idle tales.

And so it is now in reference to the spiritual camp—the assembly of God, in this moral wilderness. Looked at from God's standpoint, that assembly is not of the world. It is in complete separation. It is as thoroughly apart from the world, as the camp of Israel was apart from Egypt. The waters of the Red Sea rolled between that camp and Egypt; and the deeper and darker waters of the death of Christ roll between the Church of God and this present evil world. It is impossible to conceive separation more complete. "They," says our Lord Jesus Christ, "are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." John xvii.

Then, as to utter helplessness, what can be more helpless than the Church of God in this world? She has nothing in, or of, herself. She is set down in the midst of a moral desert, a dreary waste, a vast howling wilderness, in which there is literally nothing on which she can live. There is not one drop of water, not one morsel of suited food for the Church of God, throughout the entire compass of this world.

So also as to the matter of exposure to all sorts of hostile influences. Nothing can exceed it. There is not so much as one friendly influence. All is against her. She is in the midst of this world like an exotic—a

plant belonging to a foreign clime, and set down in a sphere where both the atmosphere and the soil are uncongenial.

Such is the Church of God in the world—a separated, helpless, exposed, defenceless thing, wholly dependent upon the living God. It is calculated to give great vividness, force, and clearness to our thoughts about the Church, to view it as the antitype of the camp in the desert. And that it is, in nowise, fanciful or far-fetched to view it thus, 1 Corinthians x. 11 doth most clearly shew. We are fully warranted in saying that what the camp of Israel was literally, that the Church is morally and spiritually. And, further, that what the wilderness was literally to Israel, that the world is morally and spiritually to the Church of God. The wilderness was the sphere of Israel's toil and danger, not of their supplies or their enjoyment; and the world is the sphere of the Church's toil and danger, not of her supplies or her enjoyment.

It is well to seize this fact in all its moral power. The assembly of God in the world, like "the congregation in the wilderness," is wholly cast upon the living God. We speak, be it remembered, from the divine standpoint—of what the Church is in God's sight. Looked at from a human point of view—looked at as she is, in her own actual, practical state, it is alas! another thing. We are now only occupied with the normal, the true, the divine idea of God's assembly in this world.

And let it not be forgotten, for one moment, that, as truly as there was a camp in the desert of old—a congregation in the wilderness, so truly is there the Church of God, the body of Christ, in the world now. Doubtless the nations of the world knew little and cared less about that congregation of old; but that did not touch the great living fact. So now, the men of the world know little and care less about the assembly of God, the body of Christ; but that, in nowise, touches the grand living fact that there

is such a thing actually existing in this world, and *has been* ever since the Holy Ghost descended on the day of Pentecost. True, the congregation of old had its trials, its conflicts, its sorrows, its temptations, its strifes, its controversies, its internal commotions, its numberless and nameless difficulties, calling for the various resources that were in God.

But, in spite of all these things that we have named—spite of the weakness, the failure, the sin, the rebellion, the strife—still, there was the striking fact to be taken cognizance of by angels, men, and devils, namely, a vast congregation, amounting to something like three millions of people (according to the usual mode of computation) journeying through a wilderness, wholly dependent upon an unseen arm, guided and cared for by the Eternal God, whose eye was never, for one moment, withdrawn from that mysterious, typical host; yea, He dwelt in their midst, and never left them, in all their unbelief, their forgetfulness, their ingratitude, and rebellion. God was there to sustain and guide, to guard and keep them, day and night. He fed them with bread from heaven, day by day; and He brought them forth water out of the flinty rock.

This, assuredly, was a stupendous fact—a profound mystery. God had a congregation in the wilderness, apart from the nations around—shut up to Himself. It may be those nations knew nothing, cared nothing, thought nothing about this assembly. It is certain the desert yielded nothing in the way of sustenance or refreshment. There were serpents and scorpions—there were snares and dangers—drought, barrenness, and desolation. But there was that wonderful assembly maintained in a manner that completely baffled and confounded human reason.

And, reader, remember, this was a type. A type of what? A type of something that has been in existence on this earth for over eighteen centuries—is in existence still—and shall be in existence until the moment that our

Lord Christ rises from His present position, and descends into the air. In a word, a type of the Church of God in the world.

How important to recognize this fact! How sadly it has been lost sight of! How little understood even now! And yet every Christian is solemnly responsible to recognize it, and practically to confess it. There is no escaping it. Is it true that there is something on the earth, at this very moment, answering to the camp in the desert? Yes, verily. There is, in very truth, the Church in the wilderness. There is an assembly passing through this world, just as the literal Israel passed through the literal desert. And, moreover, the world is, morally and spiritually, to that Church, what the desert was, literally and practically, to Israel of old. Israel found no springs in the desert, and the Church of God should find no springs in the world. If she does, she proves false to her Lord. Israel was not of the desert, but passing through it; and the Church of God is not of the world, but passing through it.

If this be thoroughly entered into by the reader, it will shew him the place of complete separation which belongs to the Church of God as a whole, and to each individual member thereof. The Church, *in God's view of her*, is as thoroughly marked off from this present world, as the camp of Israel was marked off from the surrounding desert. There is as little in common between the Church and the world, as there was between Israel and the sand of the desert. The most brilliant attractions and bewitching fascinations of the world are to the Church of God what the serpents and scorpions, and the ten thousand dangers of the wilderness, were to Israel.

Such is the divine idea of the Church of God; and it is with this idea we are now occupied.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)



A VOICE FROM THE WORKHOUSE.

THE following notes have been sent to us by a dear christian friend; and we give them to our readers as a very fine illustration of the statement, that a Christian is not a poor man with large expectations, but the present possessor of unsearchable riches in Christ. It is good to be permitted to breathe an atmosphere so intensely real, in this day of shams.

A sick ward in a workhouse makes a good class-room sometimes for learning the all-sufficiency of Christ. When we went in that Thursday afternoon (Feb. 6), old James in his quiet corner did not at first notice us. He was looking up stedfastly into heaven. They say in the night he often breaks out into singing, and that it is always the same full joy and peace in believing, whoever is there to see the shining of the light through the poor old broken pitcher. You know he is quite deaf, and paralyzed down one side. Some fragments of his earlier history we have gathered up. Evidently preaching Christ has long been his delight, and if from a pauper's mattress now, "It don't matter where I am," he tells us; "I can't be worked here. When Christ is with me, He fills my heart with love, overflowing love. It's the fountain of love. I can't fathom it. It's love without a bottom. I don't want to boast of myself, but I *may* boast in the Lord. I often wish I were dead and gone home, but I lie here till my appointed time, till my change come."

One of the old men put two or three of our snowdrops into his left hand: his right hand is clenched and powerless. That drew his attention, and he said so brightly, "'Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.' There is *God* in that. No painter could make one like it. We shall be dressed in white, white robes, and palms of victory in our hands, and we shall have the white stones too, and His name written on our foreheads, and we shall walk the

golden streets." "I wanted to see you," he said, pausing a little, "I wanted to tell you about last Monday night. I could not say, 'Thy will be done.' It seemed impossible for me to say it—I could not say it in truth. My lips could say it, but not my heart. And I thought over the tracts you had given me, I looked at all the apostles, at last I looked at St. Paul. '*Thy will be done.*' I wanted to get up so much. St. Paul had a thorn in the flesh, he prayed three times that it might be taken away. I have prayed. But Jesus says, '*My grace is sufficient for thee;*' and so I lies contented. I can say it was one of the hardest things to me. It was impossible to say, 'Thy will be done.' See how the Lord removed the burden. I could not see anything that comforted me till I looked at Paul. I can see it ever since. It's the same promise now as then. I believe Jesus troubles as much about me as he did about Paul! Paul was a sinner, and I am a sinner. He died for sinners such as I am. '*My grace,*' Jesus said; that's for me as well as Paul. I did not think I could have lain here two and thirty weeks, I did not think I could have lived so long. But '*My grace is sufficient for thee.*'" (And literally the dear disciple's mouth was filled with laughter.)

"He cheers me," he went on, exultingly. "I know He will lay no more upon me than He will enable me to bear. He gives me grace and strength according to my day. I trusts Him! I know He will do all things well. Here I lies; I can't do nought, nor stir. But like Paul says, I can do all things through Christ strengthening me. '*When I am weak, then I am strong.*' When I meditates on the blessed Lord, I seems too *lost* to feel pain."

Then, after a brief silence: "What a blessed thing it is the Lord knows our thoughts. I've been thinking that perhaps the Lord spares my life to give me to see that I ain't fully believed in Him. I didn't believe I had anything on my mind, but could just trust the Lord. But I had, you see. '*Thy will be done*' I could not say; I hadn't given

Him my desire, my will, I wants to live without any will of my own. I wants He to do His own will and not my will. We are blind, narrowsighted creatures till He lets light in upon our hearts."

Presently he continued, "I have been like a running-over well, praising the Lord for His mercies. It puts me in mind of what our Lord said to the woman at the well, '*springing up.*' The passages of scripture and the hymns springs up in my mind one after another as fast as I can say them. I've no temptation to tell of but that one. God says He will make a way for our escape."

When the large-print hymn book was put into his hand open at "Lord, I can see, by faith in thee, a prospect bright, unfailing," and his spectacles reached down from the shelf, he read it down with marked delight, taking up one verse especially:—

"O how I thirst the chains to burst,
That weigh my spirit downward;
And there to flow in love's full glow,
With hearts like thine surrounded."

"Praise the Lord, that I can say from my heart!"

"High in the Father's house above" was next pointed out to him:—

"With Him I love, in spotless white,
In glory I shall shine;
His blissful presence my delight,
His love and glory mine."

"My delight! my delight! it is my delight, through mercy. Bless the Lord, it's all the blood of Jesus. It's redemption through Thy blood, the forgiveness of sins, as fits us to see Thy glory."

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

"I'm very thankful for your kindness," he said, quite

unconscious of having kept himself the "more blessed" place of giving, for we were simply listeners, receivers of the living water as it flowed. "A cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple shall in nowise lose its reward." "When saw we thee sick or in prison? they said. And Jesus answered, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." He knows our thoughts—they come from Him. What good we do, it's for Christ. It's *Christ* in you, the hope of glory. May I be built up in Him!

'Tis all my hope and all my plea,
For me the Saviour died!

"If I live, it's by His grace I live to Him. If I die, I trust through His grace and strength I shall be landed on Canaan's happy shore—I feel happy," he said, with an emphasis that is quite indescribable. "I feels very weak, but I am strong in the Lord, I think stronger than when I was well. I can see more of the goodness of God, I can see more of His grace and strength now I am ill—now I am laid in this form. May the Lord mould me and fashion me in His own righteous image. I can't stir, I can't get up. I'm a monument of pardoning mercy.

"I don't know when I may die, it might be in a moment. I feels *very* weak. But one thing I know, that when Christ appears I shall be like Him, for I shall see Him as He is. When this poor corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality, then shall be fulfilled that saying, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death! where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be unto God that giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

"I shall never see you again perhaps in this world, but I thank you, and shall as long as I live. God for ever bless you. I wish I could hear you speak. Jesus Christ can hear, and He *knows*, that is the best of it. I shall greet

you on the banks of deliverance, where the Saviour will be, and all the apostles and prophets, and all the noble army of martyrs as kept the faith and died for the cause of their Master, Jesus.

"When Elijah was hid in the cave, the Lord went to him and asked 'What doest thou here, Elijah?' 'It's because of thy enemies. They have killed thy prophets with the sword and I am left alone.' 'Why, Elijah!' the Lord says, 'I have seven thousand men who have not bowed to Baal. Why art thou afraid? I am thy God.' Seven thousand men! Glory to God! What a lot! So you see when he was so much frightened, the Lord is strength. The Lord went to him. He knowed his weakness. 'I have seven thousand men that have not bowed the knee to Baal,' to the wicked one. Seven thousand souls as Elijah didn't know of! So, you see, the Lord has hundreds and thousands of precious souls as loves and serves Him, besides we. We don't know 'em. But then we shall in the eternal world of joy."

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

MEDITATIONS ON THE CHRISTIAN'S VOCATION.

(EPHESIANS IV.)

CHAPTER IV. 1, 2. "*I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.*" That which naturally follows our "Meditations on the Christian's Standing and State," is what the apostle here calls his *vocation*. His practice—his whole walk and ways are included in his *vocation*. The word has a broad and deep significance in this verse. The exhortation is founded on,

and flows from, his standing in Christ, and the state of heart becoming that blessed position.

Christian practice ought to be the reflection of christian position: and it will be well to meditate closely, patiently, and honestly, on what lies before us as the divinely marked out path for all Christians. The exhortation comes to us from a risen Christ. It is founded on accomplished redemption and the glory of the Redeemer. *It is final.* We must abide by this last revelation of His will. High thoughts and lofty words about our standing in a risen Christ will only be an offence to others, if our *practice* in all things be not in accordance therewith.

The apostle writes from a prison in Rome. This is significant and characteristic. He was there for the truth's sake, and especially for the testimony he had borne to the blessed truths contained in this epistle. But he was the Lord's prisoner. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you." If we separate ourselves from the world and witness against it, it will be angry with us, it will consider itself insulted, and will revenge the insult. This is the real ground of all persecution, whether it be towards a child in the family, or towards a public witness for Christ and His truth. Paul was taken from the place of public testimony to the prison, and from the prison to the stake, and from the stake to Christ in the glory. And this was but the natural path of one so faithful to Christ.

But is not the world changed for the better since Paul's time? No, my soul, the world is the same, but the Church has changed for the worse. It is now so mixed with the world, that it is difficult to say what is the Church and what is the world. If Christians willingly mix with worldly people, they must expect to be dragged down to where they are. The world can never be raised to where the Church ought to be. But as things now are, what the world does, the professing Church, for the most part, can do. Hence there is no occasion for perse-

cution. But this is sad confusion, and what the scriptures call "Babylon," and against which God's sorest judgments are threatened, and will ere long be executed. It was not so at the first. The apostle and the early Christians stood in marked separation from the world, and testified against all attempts on the part of the enemy, to introduce "another gospel." Hence their trials and imprisonments; but these were their scars of honour. Blessed Lord, increase our faithfulness in these last and perilous times.

Consistently with the heavenly truths the great apostle was teaching, he exhorts the saints to "all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love." Their own individual state was the first thing they were to see to. This is all-important. Those who are introduced into such privileges, and crowned with such blessings, should look well to the spirit of their minds, and to the bearing of all their ways. None on earth can afford to be so humble as those who are the possessors of such heavenly treasure, and none should walk so evenly through this world as those who carry this treasure with them. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is *in you*?" And again, we read, "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*." (1 Cor. vi. 19; Col. i. 27.) Surely nothing can so befit one who is so richly blessed, and so linked with heavenly glory, as the spirit of lowliness and meekness. And after all, these are but the necessary fruits of the spirit, and of the enjoyment of our privileges in the presence of God.

Nothing can make up for the absence of meekness and lowliness in a Christian. Bear thou this well in mind, O my soul! Zeal is good—self-denial is good—devotedness is good; but thy walk would be irreparably damaged, if thou wert not meek and lowly. These qualities are indispensable to true christian character, whatever may be the gifts

possessed. Without them, we would be unlike Him who was meek and lowly in heart.

But we now turn to that which may be more properly called the first part of the Christian's *vocation*:—

THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.

Ver. 3. "*Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*" Surely this exhortation is plainly and distinctly addressed to all Christians. And it stands first in order on this broad platform of truth, which is now the only true ground of service and worship. (Ver. 3—16.) This is the first thing to be examined, understood, and attended to in the Christian's vocation.

But what is "the unity of the Spirit?" some may enquire. It has a deep and blessed meaning, and a very wide application to us, as we may see further on in our meditations. At the same time, the question may be answered in a few words. It is simply the *Holy Spirit uniting all Christians on the earth into one body*. The body, of course, is united to Christ, the glorified head in heaven, by the presence on earth of the Holy Spirit. Hence it is called "the unity of the Spirit;" and in Corinthians, "the baptism of the Spirit." It is the unity of the Spirit's forming. And He is not only the formative, but the sustaining power of this unity. Nothing ever has, ever can, or ever will, disturb this perfect unity. Thank God, it is beyond the reach of man's constant failure. Christians, of course, who have departed to be with Christ, belong to His body, but such are not referred to here. It is on the earth that we are exhorted to *keep* this unity. When Paul fell asleep in Jesus, he ceased to be an eye, an ear, or a hand in the body on earth; still, he belongs to Christ's body. The expression, "For we are members of his body" (chap. v. 30), we understand to embrace all Christians, whether alive on the earth or asleep in Jesus. There the Spirit of God is speaking of the "glorious Church" in heaven, not of

the unity of the Spirit on earth. But we must always bear in mind, that although the body thus formed by the Spirit is on the earth, it is *heavenly* in all its relationships. It belongs to heaven because the Head is there, but necessarily on the earth because the Holy Spirit is here. Paul and all who have fallen asleep in Jesus wait with Him, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Ver. 13.

But here pause for a moment, O my soul, and weigh, as in the balances of the sanctuary, the following plain and obvious results of this great truth—"the unity of the Spirit." If thou art thus a member of the body of Christ, thou hast ceased to be an individual Christian merely. True, most true, thou hast individual responsibilities, and individual blessings too; but thou art also a member of a body, and that, not by faith only, but by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We cannot, of course, be a member of any other body. "For we are members of his body," and that in resurrection life, and by the power of the Holy Spirit. Oh! blessed Lord, what a link—what a bond—what a reality—what nearness—what oneness! But so, in thy grace, it is. It is simple enough to faith, wondrous and mysterious though it be. "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." This is the truth referred to in John xi. 52: "But that he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." It was one of the definite objects of the Lord's death. Up till the day of Pentecost, the children of God were like scattered or individual saints merely. They were prepared for the building, but not yet builded together. This took place at Pentecost. (Acts ii.) Then the Holy Ghost came down from the glorified Head in heaven, and baptized into one body all the saints of God then on the earth. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all

made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Cor. xii.) This was the beginning in fact, though not in purpose, of the Church of God, the body of Christ. And this baptism of the Spirit is our true Church membership, and the only membership that will stand for ever.



THE INFIDEL FATHER OR THE PIOUS MOTHER:—WHICH?

IN the United States of America, infidelity found an active champion in the well-known Colonel —, who made an open profession of his disbelief of revealed religion. It happened that a daughter of the Colonel's, to whom he was much attached, became ill. During the progress of her disorder, Dr. — was one day dining with the Colonel, and after dinner, having adjourned to the Colonel's library, some deistical publications were introduced by the Colonel to the Doctor's notice. While they were occupied in looking at them, a servant came to announce that an alarming change had taken place in his daughter, and that his presence was required in her bedroom. Thither he went, accompanied by Dr. —. As he approached her bedside, she took his hand, and said, "Father, I feel that my end is drawing near; tell me, I entreat you, am I to believe what you have taught me, or what I have learned from my mother?" Her mother was a sincere Christian, and had spared no opportunity of instilling christian truth into the mind of her child. Her father paused a moment, he fixed his eyes on his dying child, his countenance changed, his frame seemed convulsed to its very centre, while his quivering lips could scarce give utterance to the words, "Believe, my child, what your mother has taught you." The struggle was too great, the conflict between the pride of human reason and the swelling of parental affection in the heart was more than he could bear, and even over his stubborn mind the truth prevailed.

VICTORY.

"Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."—1 COR. xv. 57.

CHOOSE for me, Lord ! the time is wearing fast,
And sure I am to be with thee at last :
But, whether as a sleeping one to rise,
Or, living, wait to meet thee in the skies ;
Thou knowest, Lord—my heart can leave with thee
The ordering of my lot, whate'er it be.

If death thy purposed way, e'en death is *mine*,
Since I am "Christ's"—Oh ! power of love divine !
The Lord of life through death destroyed my foe,
That I His full deliverance now might know.
Still as a stone the enemy shall be,
While I pass through the waterfloods to thee.

But, Lord, I'll need thee when the billows swell :
My mortal frame—thou knowest it full well :
Need thee I do in all things—who but thou
Couldst have upheld and succoured me till now ?
Yet, poor and needy howsoever I be,
The Lord my Saviour thinketh upon me.

Thou art *my life*, my everlasting stay,
And canst thou fail when heart and flesh give way ?
Not only peace, but victory, thou dost give
To all who simply on thy name believe.
No more the king of terrors—death shall be
A servant to conduct my soul to thee.

Let but my heart be conscious thou art nigh,
Nor ever let me turn from thee mine eye,
'Till, as the purchase of thy precious blood,
That brought me once, a guilty one, to God,
Th' appointed moment come, upspringing free,
My happy spirit finds its home with thee.

Nor shall thy triumph be imperfect, Lord ;
My sleeping dust shall hear thy quickening word ;
Filled up the deep desire of every heart,
When, like to thee, we see thee as thou art !
Lord Jesus, come ! and take thy saints to be
For ever in the Father's house with thee !

C. G.



THE GLORY OF THE CROSS.

"THE cross of Christ is an object of such transcendent brightness, that it spreads a glory round it to all the nations of the earth, all the corners of the universe, all the generations of time, and all the ages of eternity. The greatest actions or events that ever happened on earth filled with their splendour and influence but a moment of time, and a point of space ; but the splendour of this great object fills immensity and eternity. If we take a right view of its glory, we shall see it spreading influence and attracting regards from times past, present, and to come—heaven, earth, and hell—angels, saints, and devils. We shall see it to be both the object of the deepest admiration of the creature, and the perfect approbation of the infinite Creator. We shall see the best part of mankind for four thousand years looking forward to it before it happened, and new generations yet unborn rising up to admire and honour it in continual succession till time shall be no more. We shall see innumerable multitudes of angels and saints, looking back to it with holy transport to the remotest ages of eternity. Other glories decay by length of time. If the splendour of this object change, it will be only by increasing. The visible sun will spend his beams in process of time, and, as it were, grow dim with age ; this object hath a rich store of beams which eternity cannot exhaust. If saints and angels grow in knowledge, the splendour of this object will be still increasing. 'Tis unbelief that intercepts its beams. Unbelief takes place only on earth. There is no such thing in heaven or in hell. It will be a great part of future blessedness to remember the object that purchased it ; and of future punishment to remember the object that offered deliverance from it. It will add life to the beams of love in heaven, and make the flames of hell burn fiercer. Its rays will not only adorn the regions of light, but pierce the regions of darkness. It will be the desire of the saints in light, and the great eye-sore of the prince of darkness and his subjects."—*Maclaurin*.

CORRESPONDENCE.

57. "Q. R." It is a question between the soul and the Lord. We believe the occupation is a very ensnaring one. May God guide you!

58. "C. N." Your letter has awakened the liveliest interest. Your case has been made the subject of earnest prayer. May God sustain and comfort, guide and keep you! To Him we do very sincerely commend you. Let nothing move you from the path of plain decision for Christ. "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord." We must expect difficulties of all sorts; but our Lord Christ shall make us more than conquerors.

59. "A. E.," Cork. We have repeatedly referred to 1 Corinthians xi. 29—32. It teaches that God will assuredly chasten those who unworthily partake of the Lord's Supper. The passage applies to Christians now as well as in the early days of the Church. We are called to judge ourselves as we approach the Table of the Lord, else God will have to judge us in the way of present discipline, which may take the form of bodily sickness, or even of death itself. But, blessed be His name, He does this *now*, in order that we may not be judged with the world by and by. It is truly blessed to hear the accents, "No condemnation," amid the judicial dealings of 1 Corinthians xi., just as distinctly as amid the evangelic teachings of Romans viii.

60. "S. O.," Hobart Town, Tasmania. Your kind favour of December 22, 1867, is to hand. We do not believe that the saints spoken of in Daniel viii. and Revelation xiii. belong to the Church. They are Jewish saints who shall be on the scene after the Church has been caught up. We quite feel with you the importance of seeking to rouse the consciences of men by the earnest preaching

of the Lord's coming, but we believe it is quite wrong to fix dates or to designate any man now living as "the man of sin." Accept our best thanks for your kind letter. May the Lord bless you very abundantly!

61. "A sad heart," Dublin. When you take your true place before God, confessing your sin and failure, you can count on His grace to meet you in your difficulties. But you must remember there is such a thing as God's government as well as God's grace; and that government has enacted, that "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

62. "X." Accept our warmest thanks for your kind communication. We feel it but right to tell you that you have been most manifestly used as an instrument in the hand of the living God, the Hearer and Answerer of prayer. May He return your love!

63. "J. S.," Greenville, Bond Country, Illinois. We bless the Lord for your truly refreshing and encouraging letter of March 10, and tender you our hearty thanks. We prize the kind considerateness which kept you back so long from writing; and at the same time, we prize the love that prompted you to write at length. Most gladly would we send you a direct reply were it not for peculiar pressure of work, for which we feel assured you will kindly make allowance. May God bless you, and bless His work around you!

64. "R.," Melbourne. Your truly interesting letter of January 23, is to hand. Accept our sincere thanks. We esteem it a real kindness your writing. It will cheer you to know that you are often remembered at our prayer meetings here. As to the question of reception at the Lord's Table, we believe it simply rests on the ground of the "one body." (See 1 Cor. x. 17.) With regard to the rendering of Ephesians v. 4, the word "jesting" hardly brings out the real force of the Greek *ευτραπεία*. This latter takes in all that comes under the head of wit, liveliness, punning, and the like. As to Rev.

xxii. 17, it is very beautiful to note that the moment the Lord Jesus announces Himself as "the bright and morning star," "the Spirit and the bride say, Come:" this is the cry of the Church. Then "let him that heareth say, Come," that is any one who hears the voice of the Spirit in the Church—the saints individually. Thus we have the Church collectively, and the saints individually, saying to the Lord Jesus, "Come." But then mark the other side of the picture. Poor thirsty souls are thought of, and invited to come and drink, and still the circle of love's activity widens and the blessed invitation goes forth "whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." This lovely passage brings out, most sweetly, the two sides of the Christian's character and attitude. He looks up to heaven and says to his Lord, "Come." He looks around and says to every thirsty needy soul, "Come." We long to be found in this twofold attitude. We believe it is what exactly suits the moment through which we are passing. May the Lord greatly bless you, beloved brother, and strengthen you in body and spirit, for Himself!

65. "A Sister," West Kingston. We bless God for the tidings contained in your letter. May He cheer and comfort your heart very abundantly!

66. "J. G. Y.," Gosport. It is perfectly correct to say that "our Lord took human nature, *sin excepted*, when He assumed the form of a man and dwelt among us." To deny this would be to overturn the whole edifice of Christianity. See Hebrews ii. 14; Galatians iv. 4; Philippians ii. 7, 8.

67. "O. H. W.," London. Your question is hardly suitable for our pages.

68. "S.," Lewisham. The statement to which you call our attention does not go beyond the legal system. The law did not propose *eternal* life. It merely said, "The man that doeth these things shall *live* by them." Assuredly all the Old Testament saints possessed eternal life, and looked for immortality. To cite the proofs would fill a volume.

69. "E. C.," London. We cannot see any foundation whatever for the distinction you suggest between the expressions, "*Born of God*," and "*Begotten of God*." (1 John v. 11.) Are you aware that the words rendered "born" and "begotten" are both from the same root, "*γενναω*?"

70. "S. M.," Dublin. In the reply to which you refer, the quotation should be Revelation xii. 10, and not Romans xii. 10.

71. "W. T.," Arlington. Matthew xvi. 19 refers to the opening of the kingdom of heaven, first to the Jew, as in Acts iii. ; and then to the Gentile in Acts x.

72. "A. H.," Godalming. Thanks for your letter. We have repeatedly touched on the subject to which you call our attention.

73. "E. A. C.," Blackheath. The Lord be praised for the blessing you have received. Thanks for your lines. They breathe a very sweet spirit. May God bless you, and confirm your soul in His own eternal truth!

74. "Hannah," Malvern. The word "disciple" simply means a learner or follower. With regard to your difficulty *in the matter of prayer, many, no doubt, are tried in the same way.* It may be that you ask for things which would not be really good for you ; or it may be the Lord sees it right to exercise your heart by keeping you in the attitude of continued waiting upon Him. We have often been struck with the teaching of 1 John iii. 21, 22, and v. 14, 15. If we are in communion with God, we shall ask for those things that are pleasing in His sight; we shall ask in faith; and we shall assuredly get an answer. See also John xv. 7, "*If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you.*" This is very practical. Your letter interests us greatly. May God Himself be your teacher!

Communications have come to hand from "C.," Halstead. "G. S. M.," London. "A. A.," Basingstoke. "E. W.," London. "J. T. C.," Wiltshire.

THE CAMP IN THE DESERT.

(PART II.)

It was stated, at the close of our leading article for May, that we wish to occupy the reader's mind, just now, only with the Divine idea of the Church of God. How different it is from that which calls itself the Church, we need not say; but, for the present, we are occupied with the true thing. We want him to place himself, by faith, at God's standpoint, and view the Church from thence. It is only by so doing that he can have anything like a true idea of what the Church is, or of his own personal responsibility with respect to it. God has a Church in the world. There is a body now on the earth, indwelt by God the Spirit, and united to Christ the Head. This Church—this body—is composed of all those who truly believe in the Son of God, and who are united by the grand fact of the presence of the Holy Ghost.

And, be it observed, this is not a matter of opinion—a certain theory which we may take up or lay down at pleasure. It is a divine fact. It is a grand truth, whether we hear, or whether we will forbear. The Church is an existing thing, and we, if true believers, are lively members thereof. We cannot avoid this, we cannot ignore it. We are actually in the relationship—baptized into it by the Holy Ghost. It is as real and positive a thing as the birth of a child into a family. The birth has taken place, the relationship is formed, and we have only to recognize it, and walk in the sense of it from day to day. The very moment in which a soul is born again—born from above, and sealed by the Holy Ghost, he is incorporated into the body of Christ. He can no longer view himself as a solitary individual—an independent person—an isolated atom; he is a member of a body, just as the hand or foot is a member of the human body. He is a member of *the* Church of God, and cannot, properly or truly, be a member

of anything else. How could my arm be a member of any other body? And, on the same principle, we may ask, how could a member of the body of Christ be a member of any other body?

What a glorious truth is this respecting the Church of God—the antitype of the camp in the desert, the congregation in the wilderness! What a fact to be governed by! There is such a thing as the Church of God, amid all the ruin and the wreck, the strife and the discord, the confusion and division, the sects and parties. This surely is a most precious truth. But not only is it most precious, it is also most practical and formative. We are as much bound to recognize, by faith, this Church in the world, as the Israelite was bound to recognize by sight, the camp in the desert. The Israelite never thought of attaching himself to any other camp—to any other congregation; and the Christian should not think of attaching himself to any other Church—to any other body. There was one camp, one congregation, and the true Israelite belonged to it; there is one Church, one body, and the true Christian belongs to it.

But how is this body organized? By the Holy Ghost; as it is written, “By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” (1 Cor. xii. 13.) How is it maintained? By its living Head, through the Spirit, and by the word, as it is written, “No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church.” (Eph. v. 29.) Is not this enough? Is not the Lord Christ sufficient? Doth not the Holy Ghost suffice? Do we want anything more than the varied virtues that are lodged in the name of Jesus? Are not the gifts of the Eternal Spirit quite sufficient for the growth and maintenance of the Church of God? Doth not the fact of the Divine Presence in the Church secure *all* that the Church can possibly need? Is it not sufficient “for exigence of every hour?” Faith says—and says it with emphasis and decision—

"Yes!" Unbelief—human reason—says "No! we want a great many things as well." What is our brief reply? Simply this, "If God be not sufficient, we know not whither to turn. If the name of Jesus doth not suffice, we know not what to do. If the Holy Ghost cannot meet all our need, in communion, in ministry, and in worship, we know not what to say."

It may, however, be said "that things are not as they were in apostolic times. The Church has failed; Pentecostal gifts have ceased; the palmy days of the Church's first love have passed away, and therefore we must adopt the best means in our power for the organization and maintenance of our churches." To all this we reply, "God has not failed. Christ the Head of the Church has not failed. The Eternal Spirit has not failed. Not one jot or tittle of God's word has failed." This is the true ground of faith. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." He has said, "Lo, I am with you." How long? During the days of first love? During apostolic times? So long as the Church shall continue faithful? No; "I am with you *always*, even unto the end of the age." (Matt. xxviii.) So, also, at an earlier moment, when, for the first time in the whole course of scripture, the Church, properly so called, is named, we have these memorable words written, "On this rock [the Son of the living God] I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matt. xvi.

Now the question is, "Is that Church on the earth at the present moment?" Most assuredly. It is as true that there is a Church now on this earth, as that there was a camp in the desert of old, yes, and as truly as God was in that camp to meet every exigence, so truly is He now in the Church to order and guide everything; as we read, "Ye are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. ii.) This is quite sufficient. All we want is, to lay hold, by a simple faith, of this grand reality.

The name of Jesus is as sufficient for all the exigencies of the Church of God as it is for the soul's salvation. The one is as true as the other. "Where two or three are gathered together in [or unto] my name, there am I in the midst." (Matt. xviii.) Has this ceased to be true? And if not, is not Christ's presence quite enough for His Church? Do we need to set about planning or working for ourselves in church matters? No more than in the matter of the soul's salvation. What do we say to the sinner? Trust Christ. What do we say to the saint? Trust Christ. What do we say to an assembly of saints, few or many? Trust Christ. Is there aught that He cannot manage? Is there anything too hard for Him? Has His treasury of gift and grace become exhausted? Is He not able to supply ministerial gifts? Can He not furnish evangelists, pastors, and teachers? Can He not perfectly meet all the manifold necessities of His Church in the wilderness? If not where are we? What shall we do? Whither shall we turn? What had the congregation of old to do? To look to Jehovah. For everything? Yes, for everything; for food, for water, for clothing, for guidance, for protection, for all. All their springs were in Him. Must *we* turn to some one else? Never; our Lord Christ is amply sufficient, in spite of all our failure and ruin, our sin and unfaithfulness. Only let us trust Him; let us use Him; let us give Him room to act. Let us cast ourselves as absolutely upon Him for all church matters, as we have done for our souls' salvation.

Here, we are persuaded, lies the true secret of power and blessing. Do we deny the ruin? How could we? Alas! alas! it stands forth as a fact too palpable and glaring to admit of denial. Do we seek to deny our share in the ruin—our folly and sin? Would to God we felt it more deeply. But shall we add to our sin by denying our Lord's grace and power to meet us in our folly and ruin? Shall we forsake Him the fountain of living waters, and hew out for

ourselves broken cisterns that can hold no water? Shall we turn from the Rock of Ages and lean upon the broken reeds of our own devising? God forbid! Rather let the language of our hearts be, as we think of the name of Jesus,

“ Salvation in that name is found,
Cure for my grief and care ;
A healing balm for every wound,
All, all I want, is there.”

But let not the reader suppose that we want to lend the smallest countenance to ecclesiastical pretension. We perfectly abhor any such thing. We look upon it as utterly contemptible. We believe we cannot possibly take too low a place. A low place and a lowly spirit are what alone become us in view of our common sin and shame. All we seek to maintain is this, the all-sufficiency of the name of Jesus for all the exigencies of the Church of God, at all times and under all circumstances. There was all power in that name in apostolic times; and why not now? Has any change passed over that glorious name? No, blessed be God. Well, then, it is sufficient for us, at this moment, and all we want is to confide in it fully, and to shew that we so confide by discarding thoroughly every other ground of confidence, and coming out, in bold decision, to that peerless and precious name. He has, blessed be His name, come down to the smallest congregation—the smallest plurality—inasmuch as He has said, “ Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I.” Does this still hold good? Has it lost its power? Does it no longer apply? Where has it been repealed?

Oh! christian reader, we call upon you, by every argument which ought to weigh with your heart, to give your cordial assent and consent to this one eternal truth, namely, *The all-sufficiency of the name of Jesus for the assembly of God, in every possible condition in which it can be found, throughout its entire history.* We call upon you not merely

to hold this as a true theory, but to confess it practically; and then, assuredly, you will taste the deep blessedness of the presence of Jesus in the outside place—a blessedness which must be tasted in order to be known; but when once really tasted, it can never be forgotten or surrendered for aught beside.



MEDITATIONS ON THE CHRISTIAN'S VOCATION.

(EPHESIANS IV.)

A SOLEMN thought here crosses the mind. It is the thought of that human roll of membership with which we have been long familiar. But, alas, how many names may be there that have never experienced the baptism of the Spirit! Were He who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, and who holds the seven stars in His right hand, to examine our Church rolls, would there not be many names blotted out of that so-called book of life? It ought to be a book of life—it professes to be a book of life, for none should be entered there who do not profess to have a new life in Christ. But alas! alas! in many places it has become an empty form. The thought, as thou weighest it, becomes more and more solemn—it is overwhelming—it is heart-breaking! What is to be done? How are they to be reached? How is the fatal slumber to be broken? They deceive and are deceived, yet it may be unintentional. Formalism is the blind and snare. But how is the spell to be broken? They are a thousand times more inaccessible than the openly careless and profane. As of old, publicans and harlots enter the kingdom of heaven before the merely nominal professor. They are garrisoned on all sides by lifeless forms. And they are willing to hope that all will be right in the end, though in the mean time they heartily side with the world. Again,

we are ready to cry out in agony of soul, What is to be done?

If the parable of the ten virgins represents the state of the professing Church as the Lord sees it, how sad and solemn the picture! And we must bow to His judgment, and receive the truth in faith, whether we can see it as He sees it or not. But, alas! where, where does the responsibility rest? Doubtless with professors themselves, but not with them only. Has every true Christian done his utmost to awaken and to warn them? Let us not put in the plea, "I have no gift." That will not do. We have *grace*, and that is the ground of responsibility. "Unto *every one* of us is given *grace* according to the measure of the gift of Christ." (Ver. 7.) And the awful fact as presented by our Lord, is surely enough to move every heart and fire every tongue. Thousands of our most respectable neighbours, who have received the right hand of christian fellowship, and who are dreaming that all is well for the future, are unpardoned and unsaved. They have no oil in their vessels. They have never been born again. The Holy Spirit dwells not in them. They are going down, from every comfort in this life, to that place of endless, speechless woe. Surely the occasion calls for tongues of living fire. The purple robe, the fine linen, and the sumptuous fare, must give place to that scene of unutterable anguish, where worlds could not purchase one drop of cold water to cool the burning tongue. Are they to go down with their arms folded, and at their ease, to the burning lake of fire? Again, once more, in agony we cry—What is to be done?

Oh! blessed Lord! Master of assemblies! *Awake, AWAKE, AWAKE* thy people, that they may put on strength—that they may put on courage, energy, and zeal, in the great and needed work of awakening—of evangelization. Go, my fellow Christian, go to either Church or Chapel: open the door and look in—What seest thou? A fair and beauti-

ful congregation to look upon. All are sitting in the most respectful manner, and listening with devout attention. The sight is imposing and lovely. Thy heart warms towards them—it soon burns. But the solemn question arises, Are they all true Christians—are they all saved? The answer comes unwillingly, but the heart-sinking answer must come: No. The parable affirms, that one half is unreal—having a name to live while they are dead. Does the preacher know it—does he believe it? thy heart anxiously enquires. He ought to know it, and be governed by the awful and melancholy fact. The fire of a holy zeal for God's glory in their salvation should consume every other consideration. Nothing else in such a position is worthy of a thought. Heart and soul, voice and tears, appealing and pleading, must all be employed, if by any means he may save some. Let him but realize the awful thought that one half of his respectable and comely congregation may be shut out of heaven at last, but at present they know it not; and surely, if he has a heart to feel, and a tongue to speak, he will think of nothing but their salvation. A carefully arranged discourse, an intellectual display, or brilliant rhetoric, are all out of place here. Everything must give way to the eloquence of an earnest heart. It must be “pulling them out of the fire.”

The fearful state of things on all hands demands it—loudly and earnestly calls for it. The time is short—the end is near—the thought of eternity connected with misery is awful. My dear reader; pray, where art *thou*? Amongst the wise or the foolish virgins? Or hast thou made no profession at all? Know, I pray thee, that unless thou art born again, thou canst not see the kingdom of God. There must be the possession of a new life in Christ, or heaven would be more intolerable to thee than hell. How awful the thought! “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Come now—come at once—come straight to Him: He died that

thou mayest live—He lives that He may receive thee, and hear thy praise. See that thou hast living connection with Him, all else will prove unavailing before His tribunal. Formalism is most deadening and deceiving. See that the risen Christ is thy one object of desire and delight. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” Lord, grant that those who have the ear and the confidence of professors, may be plain, pointed, and faithful; and may many, through the power of the Holy Spirit, be awakened ere it be too late. “For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” Mark viii. 36, 37.

“What doth the watchman say,
Whose cry the slumberer wakes?
‘The night hath nearly passed away:
The morning breaks.
‘Come, whosoever will,
Ere God’s right hand He leaves:
He waits till He His bosom fill
With all His sheaves.’
‘God speaks, shall we be dumb?
Watch that your lamps may burn:
Come, all ye weary wanderers, come!
Return, return.’
Take up the watchman’s word;
Repeat the midnight cry:
‘Prepare to meet your coming Lord;
The time draws nigh.’”

We must now return in our Meditations to that which is *real*—to our first lesson on the subject of the Christian’s vocation—“the unity of the Spirit.”

But many enquire, What am I to understand by *keeping* this unity? I see it is already *made*, but how am I to *keep* it? This is an important question, and one that concerns

us more than any other. My answer is, *By assembling together for the breaking of bread, prayer, &c., in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the power of the Holy Spirit.* No assembly can express this unity unless the Spirit, who forms it, has His own place of sovereign rule in the assembly. It does not mean *the unity of Christians*, merely, but the unity of the Spirit. To "keep" a thing is to hold it fast, therefore we must hold fast the truth, on this subject, as God has revealed it. Plainly, we are to "keep" to God's plan of the Church, and not to make one of our own. It is supposed there will be difficulty and trial in doing so, as we are exhorted to *endeavour* to keep it.

And this, remember, my soul, thou must do with all diligence, and at all cost. God has formed this unity for the glory of Christ. Let this be thy motive, and the light of a cloudless sky will shine on all thy path. It will be perfect rest, and perfect peace, and untold blessing to my soul. Hence it is called "*the bond of peace.*" A peaceful, restful, happy spirit, should characterize the members of Christ's body. Individually, we have peace with God through the blood of the Lamb, but the peace here spoken of is peace among ourselves.

See then, I pray thee, that thou art honest and earnest in this part of thy vocation. Do thy utmost diligence to maintain, and manifest in thy practice, the Spirit's unity. On no point of thy practice would I charge thee more solemnly than on this. God's glory, the honour of Christ as the exalted Man, the due acknowledgment of the Holy Spirit on the earth, and thine own richest blessing, are all connected with it. Besides, it is the grand characteristic truth of this dispensation. Unless we are clear on this truth there must be confusion as to many others. Therefore it is that all Christians are exhorted to maintain in practice the principle of this unity, which is the body of Christ.

It was no doubt the one great aim of Satan when Christ

was here, to have Him expelled from the earth. But, wonderful to say, though Christ was crucified, Satan has utterly failed in his object. Christ is still here in the members of His body, and they are now in heaven, in Him their Head. This great truth is brought out in the doctrine of the Spirit's unity. It was first made known by the Lord Himself from the opened heavens. When Saul was on his way to Damascus, he was arrested by these words, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? . . . I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Here the Lord speaks of Himself as still identified with His people on the earth. No words could more forcibly or touchingly express the reality of this union. What a real and a blessed thing to faith are these words, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

These words, of tenderest love and sympathy for His poor saints, were words of almighty power to the fiery persecutor. He fell to the ground. He was brought down to his own absolute nothingness. But there he was met in grace, and created anew in Christ Jesus. As he afterwards said of himself, "I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." He is a model man both as to the Lord's mercy to the chief of sinners, and as to the privileges and blessings of the saints. In this remarkable way, Paul became the chosen and fitted vessel for the new revelation. He knew its heavenly character. He had been converted by a word that contains the germ of all that was afterwards revealed. His life was devoted to it. Hence he could say, "For me to live is Christ."

If we have entered into the mind of the Lord, as thus revealed from the excellent glory, we shall see no difficulty in "keeping the unity of the Spirit;" or, in practically maintaining that principle when we come together which expresses and exhibits the "one body." It will, then, be

our deepest joy and highest privilege on earth, though with much trial; but everything must give way to this. The dearest friendships, the oldest associations, the most sacred ties of kindred, will not be allowed to hinder us from "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Affection for friends and kindred may never have been felt more deeply, but that tender word from the Lord Himself in heavenly glory, and the exhortation of the Holy Spirit in the epistle, rise above and prevail over them all. The will of the Lord is now seen and must be followed. That which lies nearest His heart, and is most intimately connected with His glory, is the ground of His appeal to our allegiance. And no sooner is this path taken in faith and love to Him, than His richest blessings flow into our souls. Christ is honoured—the word is obeyed—the Holy Spirit is ungrieved, and who can speak of the blessings that immediately follow? The person and work of Christ will now be ministered to the soul by the Holy Spirit, in a way unknown before, and the word of God will be seen in a new light. We are where Christ is, and where the light shines. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Here we have Christ as the centre, and the Holy Spirit as the gathering power to that centre. It is not said where two or three *meet*, or *gather*; but where two or three "are gathered." The Holy Spirit is the gathering power to Christ as the centre.

What a theme for meditation is now before thee, O my soul. Here rest awhile. Dwell patiently and minutely on all the bearings of this great subject. It is thy *vocation*—it is that which thy Lord claims of thee. Personally, He is in heaven and thou art on the earth: but He would have thee know and own the mysteries of that union which makes the Head and the members "one body"—"one new man." Oh, most marvellous, mysterious, blessed truth! What can be so dear to thy heart! What can be so

pleasing to the heart of thy Lord, as to see thee carrying it out in holy practice, for the glory of His great name!

But this is a deep *moral* question; my soul, be assured of this. It is more, much more than an ecclesiastical one. The love of Christ, the results of His atoning work, and our oneness with Him, are in question. There is a depth and tenderness in His love as here expressed, which the heart loves to linger over. As if He had said, I still dwell on the earth in my members—I cannot leave them—I must return to them, and remain with them in *spirit*, until that happy day when they will all be with Me in *person*. All this He plainly says in John xiv.: “I will not leave you comfortless, *I will come to you.*” It is enough, blessed Lord! O, enable us by thy grace to enter more fully into thy love for us—thy delight in us. It passeth knowledge.



A VOICE FROM THE WORKHOUSE.

FEB. 10. (Notes, verbatim.) “Since I’ve seen you, I’ve had temptations from the devil, but he could not overcome me. He said I was deceiving myself. He said I was a sinner. But I said Christ came into the world on purpose to save sinners. He came again. He said to me, ‘Your faith is no good.’ I said, ‘There’s the cross. There’s the blood of Jesus. Is that any good? I believe in it. Mine is not a dead faith, it’s a living faith. There’s two sorts. Faith without works is dead.’ So he vanished away at that, when I told him about the cross, and the blood of Christ. He thought of doing me, I suppose, because I was weak. But I was under the care of Him that bears the world and all things up. How could I sink? My faith is an unshaken faith. It’s a full grounded faith. I know what the faith of the world is. A faith without works is dead. But when we have the faith of Christ, we be strengthened. It’s like a wall of fire about us. We’re kept from the enemy.

“Christ did not die in vain. I know in Him I have life. And He is able to keep that I have committed to Him. I committed my soul, and my body, and my spirit, and all that I have to Him. I have given up the world, and I’ve given up myself. I lie in His hands as the clay in the hands of the potter.

“We may be deformed now, but the days are coming when we shall be like the Lord. There’s a day coming when we shall have a glorified body, and be filled with that full glory which we can’t enjoy so much till we experience that change. How long! I wish the day was here.

“We poor creatures, wandering through the wilderness, are saved by faith and by hope. The Lord is my strength and my salvation. Let the devil tempt as much as ever he will, I will never give up that faith. I’ve committed my all to the Saviour, and I trusts Him. I trusts when I can’t see.

“So I aint had Satan since. The blood of the cross quite settled him. He said Christ died for some, for some He did not die. But I telled him he were a liar from the beginning, and he continued so still.

“I never shall be lost! I am saved! I have that hope in me, the evidence I am the Lord’s. He has spared my life for some end. It’s for His glory, I hope. I hope to praise Him while I live. It is but a short time I shall have strengtn to speak good of His name. He is not willing that any should perish. Like this tract says (“Words of Truth”), it’s impossible to be saved without being born again, we cannot see God. But there’s a faith as will carry us through this dark vale of tears to that celestial hill—the pilgrim’s home. I feel at this time so firm in Christ. I enjoy sweet communion with my Saviour. I have peace—peace which the world cannot give or take away.

“I don’t deceive myself. I am not out of my mind. I was; but I am in my right mind now. The Lord have removed those doubts and fears; those slavish, unworthy doubts and fears, the Lord have removed them all. I am

full of light. I am full of love, full of joy, full of peace. All through Jesus Christ—not of myself. I know that in my flesh dwells no good thing. I have a hope blooming with immortality. My life is hid with Christ in God—blended with Him—grounded in Him—settled in Him. When I enjoy the Saviour, can I be wrong? When Christ is formed in my heart, can I be wrong? No, devil; it aint me! I didn't use to feel like this; but thou hast changed me from darkness to light, Lord Jesus. Thou savest me from the power of the devil. The devil shall not have dominion over me. The flesh, I know, is weak; but the spirit is strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. I shall rejoice with angels and archangels. I shall have nothing to do with the blackness of darkness. It don't matter where I am now; the Lord is with me—my hope, my strength, my safeguard, and my tower, “whereunto I continually resort.” I can carry all my troubles to Him. He cares for me. Yes, the Lord cares for me! My name is written in heaven; my name is written in the Lamb's book of life. And it's all alone of His mercy; it's all alone of His free gift; it's all alone of His grace. Yes, it's the grace of God that's in my heart. O that I may ever be like a little child! O may I hang on Jesus, may I trust in Him at all times, and pour out my heart before Him—the strength of my heart and my portion for ever—my God!

“Whatever may come, I hope to fight the battles of the Lord, and to be a witness for Christ. O that I may be a true witness. O bless God that, through mercy and through grace, I've the love of Christ that strengthens me and supports me from day to day. Soon this poor lisping tongue will be silent; but I shall behold Him. I shall hang upon thee, Lord Jesus; I shall trust in thee. Thou hast promised never to leave me nor forsake, but to be my strength.”

Speaking of conversion, later on, he said, with deep solemnity—the “unseen” things in view—“It's a great

change. It's as big a change as from day to night! We can't see ourselves till then—like the blind man that came to the Lord. We are wonderfully made."

Some notes, taken down at different times, have not as yet been transcribed.

Feb. 27. His greeting was, "Here I am, but it is the hand of God. I can say at this time, with a true heart, that Christ is precious beyond everything in the world. His names are all so dear, so precious: I would not part with one of His names for the world. I am speaking from experience. He is called a Saviour, and He is able to save me to the very uttermost. It says He is called Jesus, and I could not part with that name. And He is called the Lamb of God. The Lamb of God! How precious, how deep everything is in His name! He is the First-born! Our righteousness; our all in all. He knows every thought, every interest of the heart, glory be to His name! He knows our temptations and our afflictions. He is our great High Priest. I bless God, He is able and willing to forgive us our sins. He is called Wonderful, and 'Counsellor.' I feel Him to be 'Counsellor.'—He puts all the good thoughts into my heart. He is the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. I could not barter one of those names for ten thousand worlds. He is everything.

"He is called the Good Shepherd. He says He is the Door. He is called the Vine. Every branch that beareth fruit, He purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit. My religion would be vain, if I did not love His name. I bless God there is a reality in true religion. There is a love that casts out fear, all slavish fear. I bless God that I feel Him at this time precious to my soul. Christ is formed in me. But I feel sometimes a little tempted of the devil, and I have been a little tried since I saw you. He says I brags too much about religion. I

telled him, I did not think there could be too much about a Good Master, that has done so much for me. I said that I were blind—He opened my eyes. I was in darkness—He gave me light. Can I speak too much in His praise? Can I speak too much about Jesus, who did so much for me? The Lord have forgiven all my sins, and written my name in the Lamb's book of life. I know that when I shall lay this poor weak body down, I have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. And that is not all He has done for me, but He keeps me in perfect peace from day to day. My mind is set on Him. Whether I wake or sleep, I am the Lord's: I am sure I am. The witness is within. I know the outward show, I've known it for years; it's nothing but a shell.—There's no kernel in it, no inside. No, it's all formal; it's all destitute of the Spirit of God, the love of God, the power of God. But I am made a new creature in Christ Jesus. He have such a lot of names, and they're all endeared to me that I can think of. He's my first thoughts and my last thoughts. He makes all my bed in my affliction. I lies here to-day as though I had but just laid down, and I've laid nearly five and thirty weeks on my back. I can't stir, I can't stand of myself. But here I lies, as though it were just now. What a blessing! It must have been the Lord. When I was well, I did not think I could have done it. I'm a monument of His holy mercy. I feel I'm a growing in grace. I am growing in the knowledge of Christ. I never could say what I can say now from my heart. Jesus loves me, and I live in Him. He is in me and I am in Him. We be riveted together, as it were. He is an unchangeable Friend, and I trusts Him. I feel God is my Father through Christ. I am washed. I am being sanctified and made meet for heaven. I feel the pardon of my sins, and I seem to feel the love of Christ, and such a love for heaven! I have no fear of hell. I've no fear of any torment, no fear of any trouble. If I were to die to-day,

I've got assurance—I've a living faith. I seem sometimes a mystery to myself. I never saw God, I never saw Christ, but I have faith. I believe in them as though I had seen them to-day with my bodily eyes. I have never seen heaven; never seen God nor Christ; but my faith is so strong, I can see them as fair as I can see the light. We need not go many miles to see Jesus. If I had to walk to Calvary, to Gethsemane, I never could. But I can go, bless God, in a moment. I have Him in my heart. God is my record, that what I say is truth. I shall have to appear before Him, and give an account of the deeds done in the body; and if I lie before Him on this bed, and don't speak the truth, hell must be before me, and a hot one!

“May I improve my time. God has given me a talent, and if all the devils were in this room, I'm determined to own Christ as my all. If He takes me in a moment away from the world, I will own Him as my Saviour and my God. He is the Son of God: I know it; I believe it. He was the Man of sorrows once, and acquainted with grief. But He is the God of my salvation.”



GETHSEMANE.

'Twas eve in Juda's land!
Slowly the shadows had longer grown,
Till the last faint ray of the setting sun
Had faded and fled from the western sky;
Then on they came, with a sweeping train,
Noiseless, yet sure and swift!
Down from the mountain, and over the plain,
Flinging around their shroud of gloom
And locking in silence deep as the tomb
The daylight hum of man—and clouds arose,
Dark sombre clouds, in strange wild groups,
Now hiding from sight the moonbeam's light,
Then swiftly hurrying—struggling on—
E'en the lights in the city grew pale and dim

As the midnight hour drew near ;
And only the sound of the watchman's round
Fell sharp and clear on the listening ear,
And echoing rose to the silent sky—

When, list, 'twas the voice of music !
A low sweet burst of song,
Coming floating through the midnight,
Borne by the winds along ;
'Twas the sound of many voices,
And the strain was soft and deep,
For it came from hearts of sadness—
Strange mingling of praise and grief.
It ceased—and forth from an upper room
A band of watchers came.
Sadly they wound through the gloomy streets
Towards the city's eastern wall ;
Passed through the gate, and o'er Kedron's brook,
Till they came to Olivet's hillside lone,
And the deep dark shade of Gethsemane.

In their midst there was One whose weary frame
Knew little of earth's repose—a lonely man—
Lone in His heart's deep sympathy,
Lone in His hour of agony ;
Lone—and yet not alone, if human woe
Or human want had need of Him—
Then every wayside sufferer urged his claim,
And none was e'er denied. Then thronging multitudes
In crowds around Him prest—for Jesus
Came to heal, to seek and save the lost.

No crowd was with Him now—but a lowly band
Whom He had chosen out from humble life :
Not earth's nobility, but sons of toil.
They owed Him much—yet little gave
Which met His soul's deep yearning.
On them He lavished all His love,
And in return got lukewarm wavering faith.

One day they knew Him and adored. The next
Would ask again, "Who art thou, Lord?"—
Once, as He told them of His hour of agony,
And spoke of coming shame and death,
They listened—heard—and heeded not; their hearts
Were filled with other thoughts, with envious strife
Disputing—who should be the greatest!
And now they sorrow, scarcely knowing why,
Save that His farewell words are sounding in their ears,
And they see His heart is wrung—
He chooses three among them, who of old
Have known and loved Him best,
And bids the others tarry there, while they move on.
Deeper and deeper yet within the gloomy shade—
All may not see the anguish of His heart,
All in that sorrow may not bear a part—
Then turning unto them He saith,
"Tarry ye here awhile and watch:
My soul is sorrowful exceedingly,
Yea, e'en to death!"—He leaves them there
And passes on.
Ah! earth and sky, what saw ye then?
And you, ye angel hosts before the throne,
In that dread hour what witnessed ye?
Bowed down to earth heaven's highest Majesty,
Fulness of Godhead, the Eternal One,
Firstborn of all creation! He, Jehovah's Son
Arrayed in human garb, and bending low
In untold agony!
Ah! words—poor human words,
Vainly ye seek to tell of grief like this:
Ye may not—One alone has known it,
One whose agony of love no floods could drown,
And He, the One who knows it, tells it not!
But thou, O ransom'd soul, with unvail'd sight
Gaze on that mystery—
Gaze, and, with rapture filled,
Bow down and worship Him, who died for thee! E. C. L.

CORRESPONDENCE.

75. "A. E.," Friern, Barnet. Also "A. L.," and "A Constant Reader." We cannot now lay our hand on the letter containing the account of the incident on which "Lean Hard" is founded; and we are almost afraid to trust memory. As well as we can remember, it was this: A lady attended some meeting; and, feeling herself getting very ill, and fainting, she fell back against the person who sat near her, and who, though a total stranger, said to the poor weakly one, in a loving soothing tone, "Lean hard." But we do not at all vouch for the accuracy of the foregoing.

76. "M. H." Your case is painfully interesting. We consider your mistake to be self-occupation. You are looking for evidences of your conversion as a ground of peace. This will never do. The true ground of peace is, not that you were converted six years ago, but that Christ died for your sins *according to the scriptures*; that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, according to the scripture. We do not think you have ever really laid hold of the true ground of peace in the presence of God. This is not to be found in yourself, or in aught that you can do, or think, or feel, or experience, or pass through. It is wholly and exclusively in Christ. *He has made peace* by the blood of His cross. He is our peace. It is by Him God preaches peace; and being justified by faith we have peace with God. It is when your faith lays hold on God as the One who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead that your peace will flow as a river. Even though you could be sure that you were converted six years ago—though you could see your name written in the book of life, that would not be the proper basis of your peace in the presence of God, but simply that Christ died for you, and that God raised Him from the dead. Ponder this. You will never get any

comfort by looking in at yourself, or back at your past history. We could not think of building upon the most remarkable conversion that ever took place in this world. Even supposing you had all the feelings of which man is capable, and all the feelings which attend upon true spiritual conversion, this would not be the proper ground for your soul to build upon; *you must build upon Christ alone*. You must commit your precious soul, absolutely, to the truth of God; you must believe what He tells you about Christ, and not be looking for evidences in yourself. "Being justified by faith [not merely being sure of our conversion], we have peace with God."

It is not that we question your conversion. It is not that we do not believe in the reality and necessity of conversion; and in the proper feelings attendant thereon. Nay, we most fully believe in all these things. But we do not believe in such things as the ground of a sinner's peace. If you ask us what gives us peace—true, settled peace, we reply, "Believing in Jesus"—"Believing in him that justifieth the ungodly"—"Believing in him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." (Read Rom. iii. and iv.) This takes us clean out of ourselves; and this is just what you want. Why have you fallen away? Why have you gone back? Why have you been drawn into worse sins since your conversion than ever you committed before? Because you have never really laid hold of Christ as your true ground of peace—as the one who is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. If He were a covering for your eyes, and an object for your heart; if you were occupied with Him and not with yourself; you would have victory over your lusts, passions, tempers, and tendencies; over habits, influences, and circumstances. In short, to be occupied with Christ, by the Holy Ghost, is not only the true foundation of peace, but also the secret of strength and victory, and of all real progress in holiness.

Here is precisely where so many go astray. They are occupied with themselves—their conversion and its evidences—their frames and experiences—what they have passed through, and the like. They take comfort from their likings and dislikings, from their loving what they once hated, and hating what they once loved; all of which, though real enough in themselves, are not the ground of peace, the secret of liberty, or the source of true spiritual power. These latter you must seek in Christ alone. The moment you take your eye off Him, you lose peace and power. “Looking off unto Jesus” must be the motto, from the starting-post right onward to the goal. May God’s Spirit make all this most real and precious to your soul!

77. “A Brother,” Penzance. We could not stand in such a position for an hour; but each one must act according to his light. “Come out from among them and be ye separate” would seem to us a word bearing very directly on all such associations. May God guide and help you!

78. “A. M. H.,” Kensington. We consider you are perfectly right in refusing to hold friendly intercourse with any one who denies that our Lord Christ is equal with God. Are blameless morals to be taken as evidences of Christianity when Christ is denied? Can there be true faith in the atonement of Christ where His Person is blasphemed or dishonoured? We do not and cannot believe it?

79. “J. B.,” Paignton. You ask, “In what way may a Christian receive the grace of God in vain”? (2 Cor. vi. 1.) If the heart does not feel, and the life exhibit, the power of the grace which we profess to have received, we should judge it has been received in vain. Thanks for the sweet lines.

80. “G. T. H.,” Brighton. Hebrews ix. 28 sets forth the proper attitude of all true believers whether from among the Jews or the Gentiles; they should be looking out for their Lord’s return. We quite agree with you in thinking

that when Christ appears, the whole Church, and not a part merely, will be with Him. We heartily thank you for your loving note, and add a fervent Amen to your prayer. May we all be found worshipping, working, and waiting.

81. "F. S.," Norwood. The extract, to which you call our attention, confounds two things perfectly distinct, namely, "Priesthood" and "Ministry." The sin of Korah did not consist in his aspiring to minister or to teach; for that he was called to as a Levite. (See Deut. xxxiii. 10.) But, not content with this, he aimed at the Priesthood. This was the sin for which he was judged.

82. "C. A. S.," Clapham. Most assuredly all the Old Testament saints will have part in the first resurrection, and in heavenly glory, though quite distinct from the Church. The Song of Solomon and Psalm xlv. refer to Israel, though surely containing precious instruction for the Church.

83. "S. D.," Chichester. We do not know of any book that would exactly meet your need.

- 84. "A. P.," Ireland. You will find an answer to your question in our Correspondence for April. (No. 55.)

85. "T. G.," Lapford. We are precisely where you are yourself as to your first question, which we do not feel called upon to discuss in our pages. As to John v. 39, we judge it ought to be, "Ye search the scriptures." The folly of the Jews was exhibited in the fact that while professing to search the scriptures which testified of Christ, they, nevertheless, would not come to Him that they might have life.

Communications are acknowledged from "A Tried One," Edinburgh. "Mara;" and "A Young Christian."

We regret to be again obliged to call the attention of our Correspondents to our earnest request that they will not send us stamped envelopes, as we really cannot undertake to send direct replies. We trust we may not have any further occasion to refer to this matter.

THE TWO NATURES: OR, MAN AND THE SON OF MAN.

"YE must be born again," is a statement of the Lord Himself, at once absolute in its character, and of universal application.

As those who have sinned, we need, and in Him we find, a Saviour. His sacrifice has made atonement for all the sins of His people, and is sufficient for the sins of the whole world. But forgiveness of sins is not all that God's word speaks of. It tells us of our corrupt nature, the flesh, which cannot be improved. A nature may be trained and restrained, but it cannot be changed. Man has sinned, and he is also a sinner. His sins must be atoned for, and a new nature he must receive. Hence the necessity of that new birth spoken of in John iii., for by birth, and by birth alone, does any one receive a nature. By natural generation from Adam we receive a fallen nature; by spiritual generation of water and of the Spirit we receive a new nature, unchangeable in its character, sinless, impeccable. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

There are few in this land who will not own they have sinned, however trivial the iniquity may appear in their eyes; but how few have learnt that their nature, derived from Adam, is not only sinful, but incapable of amendment. Yet this lesson the cross of Christ plainly teaches. It was because of this that God sent His own Son into the world in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, that He might condemn sin in the flesh. (Rom. viii. 3.) It was to shew the need of a new nature, that from the pierced side of a dead Christ flowed out water as well as blood. He came to make propitiation for our sins. He came, too, that we might live through Him. (1 John iv. 9, 10.) It was to impress on Nicodemus a truth so important to all, but so generally overlooked, that the Lord addressed him in a seemingly

abrupt way that night: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again (or, *anew*), he cannot see the kingdom of God." And what He then so plainly affirmed, "Ye must be born anew," received a striking illustration from the incidents of His last journey to Jerusalem, recorded in Matthew xx. 17—28, where the fruits of the two natures are respectively brought out.

On the one side we have the fruits of the old man illustrated in the conduct of the Jews, Gentiles, and the two disciples, James and John. On the other side we have the fruits of the new man (new when we speak of ourselves, but not new when we speak of Christ, the woman's seed, conceived of the Holy Ghost), illustrated in the conduct of the Son of man. Hatred and self-seeking characterize the one; love and self-renunciation characterize the other. The locality, the people, the time in which this is manifested, are all worthy of notice.

I. The locality.—"Behold, we go up to Jerusalem." In the city of the great King, where God had manifested His presence, where the ark had found its final resting place in the days of Solomon, where was the temple, and the dwelling-place of the high priest, the Son of man was to be betrayed. No other spot in the whole universe would have done as well for this act of man, for Jerusalem was regarded as the centre of religious knowledge, the metropolis of Judaism. Had He been betrayed elsewhere, it might have been said, at Jerusalem they would have acted differently. But to bring out what man is, as a child of Adam, at Jerusalem He must be crucified.

II. How could that be accomplished?—"He shall be betrayed," is the Lord's announcement. He voluntarily surrendered Himself to do God's will, but He was betrayed to the Jews by one of His disciples. Judas had heard His words, had seen His acts, had received freely with the rest power to cast out devils in His name, yet He should betray Him. Acquaintance with the Lord, close intercourse with

Him he surely had enjoyed, yet he would be found ready for this sin for the paltry price of thirty pieces of silver. Advantages such as none but the twelve apostles possessed may be enjoyed, and the individual turns traitor at last, unless he is born again, becoming partaker of a new, the divine, nature. Nothing short of this is of any avail.

"Betrayed" unto the chief priests and scribes they shall condemn Him to death. To execute they had no power. What they could they did, and only there stopped. They condemned Him to death. Their will was manifested, the power only was wanting. He must die, was their judgment of the case. Their hatred could never be satisfied whilst He lived.

And who were these who took such a prominent part in the matter? Not the unlettered Galileans, not the people, the rabble who knew not the law and were accursed (John vii. 49); but the professed conservators and expounders of God's word. They were not ignorant of the law or the prophets, but they condemned Him to death. The highest authorities in Israel, the chief priests and scribes of Jerusalem, must be specially guilty of this sin. Neither acquaintance with the Lord as Judas enjoyed, nor familiarity with the letter of scripture, as the chief priests and scribes laid claim to, preserved the individuals concerned from imbruing their hands in the blood of their King and Lord.

To execute the Lord was beyond their power, so they were to deliver Him "to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify." Examined by Pilate, He was declared to be innocent. Sent to Herod, He was brought back to Pilate as one who deserved not to die. As the Roman governor, Pilate sat to administer the law. As a rule, the Romans shewed respect to law. An unrighteous governor could be impeached and punished. Paul made the magistrates at Philippi tremble, because they had beaten two Roman citizens previously uncondemned. He

escaped being scourged at Jerusalem, because the chief captain was restrained by Roman law. He could appeal to Cæsar, and that instant he was sheltered by the law from the fury and fanaticism of a Jewish mob. It was to no barbarian power, therefore, that the Lord was delivered. But, to shew up what man is, whilst handed over to the Roman governor to be tried by law, He was mocked and scourged before being crucified. Declared by the judge to be innocent, He was given up to the malice of his soldiers, and to be the sport of Herod and of his men of war. Finding no fault in Him, Pilate yet ordered Him to be scourged, and at last, yielding to the clamour of the Jews, condemned Him to be crucified. Everywhere that man's nature, as a child of Adam, comes out, it is found to be only evil. From the corrupt tree only corrupt fruit must be expected.

III. From the people concerned in it, let us turn to the time when it took place. Had the crucifixion taken place in the world's infancy, some might have excused it. Education had not time to take effect, they might have objected. Intellectual cultivation had not fully developed itself. Moral training had not a suitable sphere in which its influence could be tested. But, surely, to nullify all such excuses, and to bring out what the nature of man really is, the Lord Jesus was crucified in the reign of Tiberius. For fifteen centuries had the Jews been in possession of God's word, read every sabbath-day in the synagogues; yet the chief priests and scribes were found unchanged in heart. For centuries had the Gentiles possessed a literature betokening great intellectual cultivation. Very many of the classical writers read and valued in these days, were well known in those. The golden age of Roman literature was still existing. If secular education could avail a fallen creature to change his nature, or guide him aright, the Gentile had for long the opportunity and the means at command. The time of trial came, and found man just as

ready to act unjustly, just as ready to act after the dictates of his fallen nature as ever. Neither time, nor moral training, nor mental culture, nor the possession of a divine revelation, restrained either Jew or Gentile from shewing their hatred of what was good, and enmity to God in their dealing with His Son. Betrayed to the Jews, the Jews condemned Him to death, and delivered Him to the Gentiles, who, in their turn, tried and then crucified Him. Such is the simple history of man, in connection with the cross of Christ.

How refreshing to turn for one moment from the direct subject before us, the unchangeable character of our fallen nature, to the unchangeableness of God's word. "And the third day He shall rise again." Man shewed what he was, but he could not frustrate in any one thing God's counsel. The death of the Lord exhibited man's nature as utterly bad; incapable of amendment. The resurrection of the Lord demonstrated God's counsels about His Son to be incapable of alteration. And all that man, instigated by Satan, could stoop to attempt, never for one moment diverted God from His purposes of grace.

But not only have we such striking examples of the character of man's fallen nature in those who were unconverted; but here we can advance a step further, and observe the workings of that nature in those who were converted. This is of great importance, because it sets at rest a question which often disturbs godly but uninstructed souls. They see what man is when unconverted, and—expecting that when they are converted their old nature will change—are distressed, and doubt the reality of their new birth, because the old man, when it works, is still the same. A nature, we again repeat, can never change, as the history before us proves.

The mother of Zebedee's children, with her two sons, prostrated herself before the Lord, desiring of Him a favour. *"Grant that these my two sons may sit the one on thy*

right hand, the other on the left in thy kingdom." A place of pre-eminence above others they sought. What place had Peter or Andrew, or any of the others, in their hearts when they asked this? They would provide for themselves, not for others; for, though the mother is introduced as the speaker, they clearly, as the history shews (Matt. xx. 20—24), and Mark relates, joined in the request she made. Converted they were; the special companions of the Lord they had been (Matt. xvii. 1; Mark v. 37); yet that nature derived from Adam still existed, and when it was allowed to act gave no indications of any change. Man by nature is selfish. It may manifest itself in a thousand different forms, but, traced to the root, self-pleasing or self-seeking will be found at the bottom.

If such is man's nature, what of the Son of man? As light is opposed to darkness, so what He displayed was the opposite of that which man here exhibits. James and John cared for themselves; He only cared for others. Men manifested the intensest hatred; He shews the strongest love.

"The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." What an entire abnegation of self is here. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto." Who is the Son of man? Let Psalm viii. furnish the reply. What is His position in the universe? Let Daniel vii. give the answer. The Son of man has dominion given Him by God over all the earth. The Son of man is the Ancient of days Himself. (Dan. vii. 13, 22.) The great ones of the earth exercise authority over their fellows. The Son of man came to minister to His creatures. He could claim the homage of all, and command the service of the heavenly host. But on earth He appeared as a servant to minister to the children of men. The blind men of Jericho, the Syro-Phenician woman, the centurion, the ruler of Capernaum in Galilee, the impotent man at Bethesda, the blind beggar at the temple gate, the widow of Nain, as well as the sisters of Lazarus, tell us how truly

He came to minister. He entered the chamber of Peter's wife's mother, and went to the house of Jairus to raise up his daughter. In the house the multitude followed Him, so that they could not so much as eat bread; but He never sent them away because He could not attend to their wants. The wilderness, and the temple thronged with worshippers, attest His readiness to feed and refresh the multitude; the well of Sychar, and the sycamore tree of Jericho, His willingness to minister to individuals.

He was God, some might say, and so could thus act. He was man also, we must remember. He hungered, He thirsted, He was weary, He lay down to sleep, He was strengthened by an angel in the garden, He was ministered to by women for the supply of bodily wants. Perfect man He was, yet came not to be ministered unto but to minister. He could receive from His creatures, for He needed it; but He came to give them what they wanted. How gently, yet how plainly, He rebuked His disciples.

But further, whilst Jew and Gentile would be shewing their enmity to Him, He would manifest love for them, for He came "to give his life a ransom for many." For His disciples, for the Jews who condemned Him, for the Gentiles who crucified Him, that ransom would avail. He "gave himself a ransom for all," we read in 1 Timothy ii. 6; "a ransom for many," He here says. Why this difference? Was He less inclined to save sinners when on earth than He is now? Would He limit the extent to which the value of His death could be applied? The truth must be told: He would save all; but all will not be saved. When He speaks of many, He speaks not of the extent of His desires, but of what man in his folly would restrict. All are not saved, *because all will not be saved.*

Such, then, are the characteristics of the divine nature as here displayed in the Son of man; for whilst His atonement is spoken of, the motive which prompted it—love—is implied. Are we then simply to study these characteristics

as beautiful subjects for contemplation, with which, however, we have no concern? They are written for our instruction, and for our example. "Even as the Son of man," are words which teach that as He acted so should we. Atonement was His work, and His only; but love which prompted such a sacrifice is to be manifested in His disciples. (1 John iii. 1, 6.) To act as He acted, we must be partakers of the divine nature. Such characteristics and motives are not found in the unconverted children of Adam.

So Matthew xx. 17—26 is a beautiful illustration of the doctrinal statement of John iii. 6, and furnishes ample grounds to all who read it for the absolute statement of the Lord to Nicodemus, "*Ye must be born again.*"



MEDITATIONS ON THE CHRISTIAN'S VOCATION.

(EPHESIANS IV.)

THE two grand features of the unity of the Spirit, or the Church of God, now come before us. And these are, First, That the Church is the body of Christ. Secondly, That it is the habitation of God through the Spirit. These are, doubtless, the highest truths ever revealed to man, and the richest in blessing to his soul. May the Lord enable us here to meditate, in the spirit of implicit faith, and of willing and hearty obedience to the truth. We will look in the first place, at

THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST.

The following passages, besides many others, state this truth in the plainest way. "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. i. 22, 23.) "For as the body is one, and

hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; *so also is Christ.*" Notice here, in passing, the last clause of this verse. "So also is Christ." According to the former part of the verse, it ought to be "So also is the Church." But the Holy Spirit is pleased, remarkable though it may seem, to call the body "Christ." Could anything more forcibly express the perfect identity of Christ and His people? Impossible!

But two things were necessary for the formation of "the Church, which is his body." First, It was absolutely necessary that Christ as man should be in heaven. Secondly, It was also necessary that the Holy Ghost should be on the earth. What a field for meditation do these two New Testament truths open up! The great subjects of Incarnation, Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension rise up before the mind. To know such truths is to know Christianity, and the counsels of God as to His Church. It was easier far for God to make the world than to make the Church. And yet many men have spoken about forming a church, and laying down laws for worship. But one might as well talk of introducing a new way of salvation as a new way of worship. The one is as firmly fixed in scripture as the other, and as clearly defined.

When God made the world, He spake and it was done, He commanded and it stood fast. But before the Church could be formed, His own beloved Son must become a man and die. Sin must be fully judged, and God fully glorified. The ancient barriers which God Himself had raised between Jew and Gentile must be removed, and the long-standing distinctions swept away. The middle wall of partition must be broken down. When the mighty work was done, the risen Jesus ascended up on high, and took His seat as the glorified man at God's right hand in heaven, all things being now put under Him. Consequent on this, the Holy Ghost came down to form the body on earth. And

now, the Head in heaven, and the members on earth, united together by the Holy Ghost, make one body. "There is one body and one Spirit."

This is the great truth of Christianity—the formation of the body of Christ. But thou wilt do well, my soul, to meditate first, and more especially, on the heavenly side of this truth. To know Christ as the *man in glory*, is the right way to know His body on the earth. This will give an elevating power and character to thy vocation. Only think—Christ has carried humanity, in His own Person, to the throne of God in heaven. Surely this is the most stupendous fact in the records of revealed truth! The Son of God, thus seated there, should be the Christian's one object of desire, delight, and holy contemplation. But marvellous as this fact is, it was necessary to the formation of the Church of God. There must be a Head in heaven before there could be a body on earth. And Christ Himself could not take that place until the great work of the cross was finished. He tells us this Himself in John xii. 24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." It is in resurrection that Christ reaps the fruit of His toil. And again, we read in Ephesians i. "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power.....which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body." Thus we see, that it was not until redemption was finished, Christ raised from the dead, and seated at God's right hand in heaven, that He becomes Head of His body the Church, and Head over all things to the Church. Not, observe, Head *over the Church*, but "*Head over all things*

to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

So long as the Jew's religion had the sanction of God, the Church had no existence save in the divine counsels. Israel was carefully walled off from all the other nations, and fenced on every side by rites, ceremonies, and the moral law. It would have been a sin against the God of Israel for a Jew to have had communion with a Gentile. Even in our Lord's time, the distinction was strictly maintained. His disciples were forbidden to go in the way of the Gentiles, or to enter any city of the Samaritans. The centurion and the Syro-Phœnician woman strikingly illustrate this difference. Take the case of the woman. When she addressed the Lord as the "Son of David," He could not answer her plea. She was on false ground. The promises were to Abraham and to his seed. As a Gentile she was without right or title to the privileges of Israel. But the moment she takes her true ground as a Gentile, and addresses Him as "Lord," He rises in the majesty of His grace above all the limits of the Jewish covenant, and blesses the poor unprivileged Gentile, according to the greatness of His mercy. "Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Matthew xv.

It is beautiful beyond description to witness the Lord's love to the poor Gentile, and His faithfulness to God's covenant with Israel. Though treating her with apparent coldness, His love was drawing her nearer to Himself. The disciples wanted to get rid of her—not so their Lord. He waited—patiently waited, till she got down to the low place of the Gentile. It was well for that woman, and it is well for us, that the Lord's patience lingers until we learn and confess what we really are. This is the true ground of immediate and unlimited blessing. The Lord is true, and He will have us to be true; He is real, and He will have us to be real. The question is, not how bad we

are ; but are we true—are we real before God ? How often and how long blessing has been hindered from the anxious one not being real ! Blessed Lord ! give us to be thoroughly honest in thy presence ; without reservations and without exceptions, that thy rich blessings may flow out unhindered into our souls.

The blessed change in the ways of God toward Jew and Gentile was brought about by the cross. There was comparatively little change in God's dealings with man till then. Four thousand years of the world's history had passed away, and God still dwelt in the thick darkness. The vail was unrent. He shewed mercy and grace to Adam, gave promises to Abraham, and the law to Israel ; but all the great changes that were to take place both in heaven and on earth awaited the glorious event of the cross. Ephesians ii. is the great seat of this new truth. "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us ; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances ; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace ; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."

"For verily he took not on him the nature of angels."—Heb. ii. 16.

It may be wrong ; and yet I would not be
An angel, formed in spotless purity ;
It may be strange—with all my sins and cares,
I would not change this lot of mine, for theirs.
They in the light of God have ever shone,
Yet joys are mine which they have never known.
They, since He made them first, have ever been
Viewing His love, no earthly veil between ;
In that from age to age they still abide,
Drink of its fulness, and are satisfied :
Yet even they bend down new depths to see,

New depths of love, the love that rescued me.
 Sweet are their songs, yet not to them is given
 To sing the song of the redeemed in heaven.
 Bright are their crowns, their harps are shining gold,
 Yet in their hands nor victor's palm they hold,
 Nor wreaths they wear, such as shall clasp the brow
 Of those who pass through tribulation now.
 Their robes are white, yet they shall fade beside
 The robes that Jesus' blood hath purified.
 They near Him stand, but for His Bride alone
 Remains the place the nearest to the throne.
 To her alone it shall be given to rest
 Upon His arm and lean upon His breast.
 Blest thought! Each conflict here, each bitter strife,
 Shall then add sweetness to the cup of life.
 Each heavy stroke shall but His child prepare
 To be a pillar in His temple there;
 There where the things which darkly now I see
 Shall be in perfect light revealed to me.
 Then be it so; a sinner though I am,
 Yet will I boast and glory in the Lamb;
 The vilest I; yes, be it so, for such
 Have much forgiven and they have loved much.

F. S. G.



“READY.”

WE want the reader to dwell, for a few moments, on the little word which forms the heading of this paper. If we mistake not, he will find it to be a word of immense depth and suggestive power, as used by the Holy Ghost in scripture. We shall, just now, refer to four passages in which our word occurs, and may the One who penned these passages be pleased to open and apply them, in divine power and freshness, to the heart of both writer and reader.

I. And, first, we shall turn to 1 Peter i. 5, where it is used in connection with the word “*salvation*.” Believers

are said to be "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, *ready* to be revealed in the last time."

Here, then, we are taught that salvation is ready to be revealed at this moment, for we are, as John tells us, in "the last times." And be it noted that salvation, as here used, is not to be confined to the mere matter of the *soul's* deliverance from hell and perdition. It refers rather to the deliverance of the *body* of the believer from the power of death and corruption. In short, it takes in all that stands, in any wise, connected with the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We already possess the salvation of our souls, as we are told in the very context from which our text is taken. "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.....wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you *at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*"

Thus we learn, in the clearest way, that the "salvation ready to be revealed" is linked on to "the revelation of Jesus Christ." This is confirmed, were confirmation needful, by Hebrews ix. 28, where we read, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, apart from sin, unto *salvation.*"

From all this, the reader may learn that the salvation which is *ready* to be revealed is the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. For this we are taught, as Christians, to look, at any moment. There is literally nothing, so far as God is concerned—nothing so far as the work of Christ is concerned—nothing so far as the testimony of the Holy Ghost is concerned, to hinder our hearing "the shout of the archangel and the trump of God" this very night—this very hour. All is done that needed to be done. Sin is put away, redemption is accomplished, God has been glorified by the work of Christ, as is proved by the fact of Christ's present place on the throne of the majesty in

the heavens. • From the moment that our Lord Christ took His seat upon that throne, it could always be said that "salvation is *ready* to be revealed."

But it could not have been said before. Salvation could not be said to be ready until the divine groundwork thereof was laid in the death and resurrection of the Saviour. But, when once that most glorious work of all works was accomplished, it could, at any one moment, be said that "Salvation is ready to be revealed." "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." (Ps. cx. 1.)

II. But the apostle Peter gives us another instance and application of our word, in chapter iv. 5, where he refers to some "who shall give account to him that is *ready to judge* the quick and the dead."

Here the word stands before us in a form of awful solemnity. If, on the one hand, it be true that *salvation* is ready to be revealed for the everlasting joy of God's redeemed; it is equally true, on the other hand, that, *judgment* is ready to take its course, for the everlasting misery of those who neglect God's proffered salvation. The one is as true, and as pointed, and as forcible, as the other. There is nothing to wait for in respect to the judgment, any more than there is in respect to the salvation. The one is as "*ready*" as the other. God has gone to the utmost in demonstrating His grace; and man has gone to the utmost in demonstrating his guilt. Both have reached their climax in the death of Christ; and when we see Him crowned with glory, and seated on the throne, we have the most powerful evidence that could possibly be afforded, that nothing remains but for salvation to be revealed on the one hand, and for judgment to take its course on the other.

Hence it follows that man is no longer under probation. It is a grand mistake for any one to think so. It is a fatal delusion. It falsifies man's entire position and state. If I am under probation—if God is still testing me—if He is,

even now, occupied in testing whether I am good for aught—if I am capable of producing any fruit for Him—if this be indeed the case, then it is not, and cannot be true, that “He is *ready* to judge.” Nature is not ripe for judgment so long as a probationary process is pending—if there is yet something to wait for, ere judgment can take its course.

But no, reader; we feel bound to press upon you the fact that the period of your probation is over for ever, and the period of God’s longsuffering is nearly run out. It is of the utmost importance to seize this truth. It lies at the very foundation of the sinner’s position. Judgment is actually impending. It is “ready,” at this moment, to fall upon the head of the unrepentant reader of these lines. The entire history of human nature—of man, of the world—has been wound up and closed for ever. The cross of Christ has made perfectly manifest the guilt and ruin of the human race. It has put an end to man’s probationary season; and from that solemn hour until now, the true position of the world as a whole, and of each individual sinner, man, woman, and child, has been that of a culprit tried, found guilty, and condemned, but the sentence not executed. This is the present awful position of the unregenerate reader.

Dear friend, wilt thou not think of this? Fellow immortal, wilt thou not, even this very moment, bend the undivided attention of thy soul to this eternal question? We must speak plainly and pointedly. We cannot do otherwise. We feel, in some small degree, the awfulness of the sinner’s state and prospect, in view of these weighty words, “*ready to judge*.” We are convinced that the present is a moment which calls for serious and faithful dealing with the souls of our readers. We do not, as God is our witness, want to write essays or sermons; we want to reach souls. We want the reader to be assured of this, that he is not now reading a dry article on a religious subject, prepared merely for the purpose of filling a monthly number; but a solemn appeal made to his heart and con-

science, in the immediate presence of "Him who is ready to judge the quick and the dead."

III. But this leads us to the third passage of holy scripture in which our weighty motto occurs. The reader will find it in Luke xii. 40. "Be ye therefore *ready* also : for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not."

If salvation is "ready" to be revealed, and if judgment is "ready" to be executed, what becomes us but to be "ready" also ?

And in what does this readiness consist ? How are we to be ready ? It strikes us that there are two things included in the answer.

First, We must be "ready" in *title* ; and, secondly, we must be "ready" in our moral *state*—ready in conscience, and ready in heart. The one is founded upon the work of Christ *for* us ; the other is connected with the work of the Spirit *in* us. If we are simply resting, by faith, on the finished work of Christ, if we are leaning exclusively upon what He has done and what He is, then are we in very truth ready in title, and we may rest assured of being with Him when He comes.

But, on the other hand, if we are leaning upon our fancied goodness ; upon any righteousness which we think we possess ; upon our not having done any harm to any one ; upon our not being worse than some of our neighbours ; upon our Church membership ; upon our attention to the ordinances of religion ; if we are leaning upon any or all of these things, or if we are adding these things to Christ, then we may be assured we are not ready in title—not ready in conscience. God can accept nothing—absolutely nothing, as a title, but Christ. To bring aught else, is to declare that Christ is not needful. To bring aught beside, is to affirm that He is not enough. But God has borne ten thousand testimonies to the fact that we can do with nothing less, and that we want nothing more, than Christ. Hence, therefore, Christ is our all-essential and all-sufficient title,

But, then, there is such a thing as professing to be ready in title, while, at the same time, we are not ready in our moral condition or practical state. This demands our gravest attention. There is a vast amount of easy going evangelical profession abroad, at the present moment. The atmosphere is permeated by the rays of gospel light. The darkness of the middle ages has been chased away by the brightness of a free gospel and an open Bible.

We are thankful for a free gospel and an open Bible. But we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that there is a fearful amount of laxity, unsubduedness, and self-indulgence going hand in hand with the evangelical profession of the day. We notice, with the deepest anxiety, many young professors who have, or seem to have, a very clear insight, so far as the intellect goes, into the truth of the sinner's title, who, if we are to judge from their style, deportment, and habits, are not "ready" in their moral condition—in the real state of their hearts. We are at times, we must confess, sadly cast down when we see our young friends decking their persons in the vain fashions of a vain and sinful world; feeding upon the vile literature that issues in such frightful profusion from the press; and actually singing vain songs, and engaging in light and frivolous conversation. It is impossible to reconcile such things with "Be ye also ready."

We may perhaps be told that these things are externals, and that the grand point is to be occupied with Christ. It may be said—it has been said, "Provided we have Christ in our hearts, it does not matter what we have on our heads, or in our hands." We reply, "If we really have Christ in our hearts, it will regulate what we put on our heads and take into our hands; yea, it will exert a *manifest* influence upon our whole deportment and character."

We should like to ask some of our young friends this question, "Would you like the Lord Christ to come and find you reading a love story, or singing a song?" We feel

assured you would not. Well then let us, in the name of the Lord, see to it that we do not engage in anything which does not comport with our being "*ready*."

We specially urge this upon the young christian reader. Let this question be ever before us, "Am I ready? ready in title, ready in state? ready in conscience, ready in heart?" The times are really very solemn, and it behoves us to think seriously of our true state. We feel persuaded that there is a lack of real godly heart exercise amongst us. There are, we fear, many—God only knows how many, who are not ready—many who would be taken aback and terribly surprised by death or the coming of the Lord. There are things said and done by those who occupy the very highest platform of profession, which we dare not indulge in if we were really *looking* for the Lord.

God grant that the reader may know what it is to be ready in title, and ready in state; that he may have a purged conscience and a truly exercised heart. Then he will be able to enter into the meaning of the fourth and last passage to which we shall call his attention. It occurs in Matthew xxv. 10.

IV. "And while they [the foolish virgins] went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were *ready* went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut."

How solemn! How awfully solemn! Those who were *ready* went in, and those who were not ready were shut out. Those who have life in Christ, and are indwelt by the Holy Ghost, will be ready. But the mere professor—the one who has truth in the head and on the lip, but not in the heart—who has the lamp of profession, but not the spirit of life in Christ—he will be shut out into outer darkness—in everlasting misery and gloom—the eternal monotony of hell.

Oh! beloved reader, let us, as we take a solemn leave of you, put this question home to your very inmost soul, "ART THOU READY?"

PARTING WORDS.

FORTH from the peaceful ark of "Home,"

Forth, o'er the waters wild,

And through a deeper gloom than night,

Thou goest forth, my child.

The bird must leave the parent nest,

However sad it be ;

And now the dreaded hour is come

That we must part with thee.

And thou hast plumed thy wing for flight,

Thy heart with hope beats high ;

Alas ! that earth should look so fair

To an unpractised eye.

That thou must drink at Marah's wells,

Their bitterness to taste,

And prove thyself this world to be

A dreary desert waste.

That thou must tread with weary foot

"The wilderness of Sin," (Exod. xvi. 1)

To learn how true it is thou hast

An evil heart within.

O, look to Jesus! Gaze on Him—

All loveliness is there ;

This, this alone, can save thy soul

From every deadly snare.

O, hide His word within thy heart,

And search it, day by day ;

Thy one desire, thy firm resolve,

To hear and to obey.

Farewell ! my child, our "God is love,"

In Him our trust shall be ;

His presence on thy pathway shine,

His blessing rest on thee.

CORRESPONDENCE.

86. "Anxious." You will find an answer to your question in a tract entitled "Final Perseverance: What is it?" If you will enclose three postage stamps, with your address, to our publisher, Mr. Morrish, he will forward the tract to you.

87. "E. L." requests that, while praying for all boarding schools, day schools, and Sunday schools throughout the world, we forget not the thousands of dear children who are obliged to spend from ten to twelve hours a day in the factory, or the workroom, and are thus unable to attend any day school, and many of them, alas! unwilling to attend a Sunday school. We feel, in some small degree, the power of this appeal, and would earnestly respond to it, and call upon our readers to do the same. Oh! may the good Lord have mercy upon the poor factory children!

88. "C. H. W.," Windsor. We consider the four living creatures—the heads of creation—to be the inseparable adjuncts of God's throne of government. The twenty-four elders represent the redeemed. As to the subject of eternal punishment, we have handled it in a separate paper, in one of our earlier volumes; and we have also touched upon it in our series of articles under the head of "Glad Tidings."

89. "A Constant Reader," Weston-super-Mare. We are not aware of any rule amongst those Christians to whom you refer, as to the use of the form of prayer in question. We have heard it used, and have no objection to its use if souls are only on the ground therein contemplated. It is a great thing to be honest, according to our light, and not to traffic in unfelt truth. We do not feel it to be our province, as the conductors of this serial, to enter any further upon the question.

90. "L. H.," Northampton. You certainly had no need to offer an apology for a letter so full of comfort and encouragement. We beg to tender you our very warmest

thanks. May your heart and mind be kept in perfect peace!

91. "A Blood-washed One," Derry. We have heard, through various sources, of the work of God in Derry. May it prosper abundantly, and the circle of its influence extend far and wide. May God keep His servants humble and dependent! We are increasingly convinced that the quiet, shady, retired path is the best and safest for the christian workman. There is always immense danger when a man or his work becomes *remarkable*. When the fame of Israel was being spread abroad amongst the Canaanites, the Lord commanded Joshua to "make *sharp knives* and circumcise the people." (Josh. v. 2.) Nature must be put in the place of death and *kept there*. With regard to your question about baptism, we assuredly hold that all believers ought to be baptized. It is the great initiatory ordinance of Christianity.

92. "E. S. K.," North Brixton. We are greatly interested in your letter, in your work, and in your case altogether. We entirely agree with your method of teaching the dear children of your class. They should be taught, from their very earliest moments, to look to Jesus, and to trust in the living God. We should not exactly put a form of words into a child's mouth; but we should, in every possible way, seek to unfold the sweet privileges of a life of faith, and the preciousness of drawing near to God in prayer. Do not let your heart be troubled about your not having any original thoughts. In point of fact there is but One Great Original. All comes from Him; and it does not matter whether He sends it directly or makes use of some pen or voice as His channel. Let your eyes be ever and only upon Him, and you may rest assured He will feed you with food convenient for your precious soul, in whatever way seems best to Him. May He bless you most abundantly, and give you many seals from amongst your dear young pupils! We cannot tell you how much we rejoice

in the growing interest of many of our friends in that *most blessed* work of Sunday-school teaching. The Lord be praised !

93. "S. O. N.," Norwich. We cannot, at all, adopt your friend's interpretation of Matthew v. 25, 26. The idea of "*the after punishment of saints*" savours more of purgatory than of Christianity. We believe the passage refers to the nation of Israel, and their attitude with respect to God, during the ministry of Christ. In point of fact, they have been cast into prison, and so far as that generation is concerned, there is no escape. There will, through grace, be a penitent remnant, in the latter day, which shall become the nucleus of the restored nation. We doubt not that, in a secondary sense, the passage contains moral teaching for us; but the bare idea of "*the after punishment of saints*" is, in our judgment, perfectly monstrous.

94. "A. B.," Reading. The Lord alone can give you wisdom and grace to act in the painful circumstances you describe. If you really wait on Him, He will teach you when to speak and when to keep silence. There is danger of speaking in haste of temper rather than in a spirit of love, when replying to the godless remarks of the unconverted. This is to be guarded against. And further, we must remember that there is very often far more powerful testimony in solemn and dignified silence than in talking for talking's sake. But, as we have said, the Lord will guide the lowly dependent heart. He will tell you when to speak and when to be silent; and then, you may rest assured, the speaking and the silence will each be fruitful in its season.

95. "A Young Christian," Bath. Thanks for your kind note, and the accompanying lines. You can hardly form an idea of the amount of poetry sent in to us, from time to time. It would be impossible to insert it all, even if we could adopt it, which we certainly could not. It is one thing to write true and pious sentiments, in a sort of metre, and it is quite another thing to write poetry. We should be sorry

indeed to pen a single line which might cast a damp upon the very weakest of the Lord's little ones; but then we have a duty to discharge in reference to our readers, as well as to our contributors; and we fondly trust that none will take offence at our not adopting articles, whether in poetry or prose, which we do not deem suitable. We have repeatedly had to reject most excellent papers, on the ground of their not exactly falling in with our special line of things.

96. "C. C.," London. We have had a similar application from another correspondent, and we must refer you, as we have referred him, to our publisher. We are deeply thankful for the interest manifested in the papers to which you both call our attention. If the Lord has need of them, in a separate form, He will guide as to their publication. To Him we desire to commit the matter.

97. "An Inquirer," Stonehouse. We do not believe that "the man of sin" can appear upon the scene until after the Church has been taken up. No doubt, there are many antichrists, as the Apostle John tells us. But the man of sin, spoken of in 2 Thessalonians ii., is a distinct personage, who is to make his appearance after the Church has left the earth. It is upon this ground that we object to the application of the term "man of sin" to any individual now living. We cannot attempt to enter upon such a wide and weighty subject in our brief reply to a correspondent; but we must give expression to our clear and long-cherished conviction, that no one can properly interpret prophecy who does not see the distinctive place and portion of the Church of God. The fact is, that Church forms no part of the ways of God with this world; it is quite a parenthesis, as we say. Whereas, on the other hand, the grand theme of prophecy, from beginning to end, is God's government of the world, in connection with the nation of Israel.

"A Subscriber from the first." Your communication is too late for July.

THE CAMP AND THE CLOUD.

(Numb. ix. 15—23.)

"AND on the day that the tabernacle was reared up the cloud covered the tabernacle, namely, the tent of the testimony: and at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning. *So it was alway*: the cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night. And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents. At the commandment of the Lord the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the Lord they pitched: as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they rested in their tents. And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the Lord, and journeyed not. And so it was, when the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle; according to the commandment of the Lord they abode in their tents, and according to the commandment of the Lord they journeyed. And so it was, when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and that the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed; whether it was by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed. Or whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not; but when it was taken up, they journeyed. At the commandment of the Lord they rested in the tents, and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed: they kept the charge of the Lord, at the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses."

A more lovely picture of absolute dependence upon, and subjection to, divine guidance it were impossible to conceive than that presented in the foregoing paragraph. There was not a footprint nor a landmark throughout that

“great and terrible wilderness.” It was therefore useless to look for any guidance from those who had gone before. They were wholly cast upon God for every step of the way. They were in a position of constant waiting upon Him. This, to an unsubdued mind, an unbroken will, would be intolerable; but to a soul knowing, loving, confiding, and delighting in God, nothing could be more deeply blessed.

Here lies the real gist of the whole matter. Is God known, loved, and trusted? If He be, the heart will delight in the most absolute dependence upon Him. If not, such dependence would be perfectly insufferable. The unrenewed man loves to think himself independent—loves to fancy himself free—loves to believe that he may do what he likes, go where he likes, say what he likes. Alas! it is the merest delusion. Man is not free. He is the slave of Satan. It is now well nigh six thousand years since he sold himself into the hands of that great spiritual slaveholder, who has held him ever since, and who holds him still. Yes, Satan holds the natural man—the unconverted, unrepentant man in terrible bondage. He has him bound hand and foot with chains and fetters, which are not seen in their true character, because of the gilding wherewith he has so artfully covered them. Satan rules man by means of his lusts, his passions, and his pleasures. He forms lusts in the heart, and then gratifies them with the things that are in the world, and man vainly imagines himself free because he can gratify his desires. But it is a melancholy delusion; and, sooner or later, it will be found to be such. There is no freedom save that with which Christ makes his people free. He it is who says, “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” And again, “If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” John viii.

Here is true liberty. It is the liberty which the new nature finds in walking in the Spirit, and doing those things that are pleasing in the sight of God. “The service of

the Lord is perfect freedom." But this service, in all its departments, involves the most simple dependence upon the living God. Thus it was with the only true and perfect Servant that ever trod this earth. He was ever dependent. Every movement, every act, every word—all He did, all He left undone, was the fruit of the most absolute dependence upon, and subjection to, God. He moved when God would have Him move, and stood still when God would have Him stand. He spake when God would have Him speak, and was silent when God would have Him silent.

Such was Jesus when He lived in this world ; and we, as partakers of His nature, His life, and having His Spirit dwelling in us, are called to walk in His steps, and live a life of simple dependence upon God from day to day. Of this life of dependence, in one special phase of it, we have a graphic and beautiful type at the close of our chapter. The Israel of God—the camp in the desert—that pilgrim host followed the movement of the cloud. They had to *look up* for guidance. This is man's proper work. He was made to turn his countenance upwards, in contrast with the brute, who is formed to look downward.* Israel could form no plans. They could never say, "To-morrow we shall go to such a place." They were entirely dependent upon the movement of the cloud.

Thus it was with Israel, and thus it should be with us. We are passing through a trackless desert, a moral wilderness. There is absolutely no way. We should not know how to walk, or where to go, were it not for that one most precious, most deep, most comprehensive sentence which fell from the lips of our blessed Lord—"I am the way." Here is divine, infallible guidance. We are to follow Him. "I am the light of the world : he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John viii.) This is living guidance. It is not acting

* The Greek word for man (*ανθρωπος*) signifies to turn the face upwards.

according to the letter of certain rules and regulations: it is following a living Christ; walking as He walked; doing as He did; imitating His example in all things. This is christian movement, christian action. It is keeping the eye fixed upon Jesus, and having the features, traits, and lineaments of His character imprinted on our new nature, and reflected back or reproduced in our daily life and ways.

Now, this will, assuredly, involve the surrender of our own will, our own plans, our own management altogether. We must follow the cloud; we must wait *ever*, wait *only* upon God. We cannot say, "We shall go here or there; do this or that, to-morrow, or next week." All our movements must be placed under the regulating power of that one commanding sentence—often, alas! lightly penned and uttered by us—"If the Lord will."

Oh, that we better understood all this! Would that we knew more perfectly the meaning of divine guidance. How often do we vainly imagine, and confidently assert, that the cloud is moving in that very direction which suits the bent of our own inclination. We want to do a certain thing, or make a certain movement, and we seek to persuade ourselves that our will is the will of God. Thus, instead of being divinely guided, we are self-deceived. Our will is unbroken, and hence we cannot be guided aright; for the real secret of being rightly guided—guided of God—is to have our own will thoroughly subdued. "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way." And again, "I will guide thee by mine eye."

But let us ponder the admonition—"Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee." (Psalm xxxii.) If the countenance be turned upwards to catch the movement of the divine "eye," we shall not need the "bit and bridle." But here is precisely the point in which we so sadly fail. We do not live sufficiently near to God to discern the movement of His eye—

the *will* is at work. We want to have our own way, and hence we are left to reap the bitter fruits thereof. Thus it was with Jonah. He was told to go to Nineveh; but he wanted to go to Tarshish, and circumstances seemed to favour, Providence seemed to point in the direction of his will. But, ah! he had to find his place in the belly of the whale, yea, in "the belly of hell" itself, where "the weeds were wrapped about his head." It was there he learnt the bitterness of following his own will. He had to be taught, in the depths of the ocean, the true meaning of the "bit and bridle," because he would not follow the gentler guidance of the eye.

But our God is so gracious, so tender, so patient! He will teach and He will guide His poor, feeble, erring children. He spares no pains with us. He occupies Himself continually about us, in order that we may be kept from our own ways, which are full of thorns and briars, and walk in His ways which are pleasantness and peace.

There is nothing in all this world more deeply blessed than to live a life of habitual dependence upon God; to hang upon Him moment by moment; to wait on Him and cling to Him for everything; to have all our springs in Him. It is the true secret of peace, and of holy independence of the creature. The soul that can really say, "*All* my springs are in thee," is lifted above all creature confidences, human hopes, and earthly expectations. It is not that God does not use the creature, in a thousand ways, to minister to us. We do not at all mean this. He does use the creature; but if we *lean* upon the creature, instead of leaning upon Him, we shall very speedily get leanness and barrenness into our own souls. There is a vast difference between God's using the creature to bless us, and our leaning on the creature to the exclusion of Him. In the one case, we are blessed and He is glorified; in the other, we are disappointed and He is dishonoured.

It is well that the soul should deeply and seriously pon-

der this distinction. We believe it is constantly overlooked. We imagine, oftentimes, that we are leaning upon and looking to God, when, in reality, if we would only look honestly at the roots of things, and judge ourselves in the immediate presence of God, we should find an appalling amount of the leaven of creature confidence. How often do we speak of living by faith, and of trusting only in God, when at the same time, if we would only look down into the depths of our hearts, we should find there a large measure of dependence upon circumstances, and reference to second causes, and the like.

Christian reader, let us look well to this. Let us see to it that our eye is fixed upon the living God alone, and not upon man, whose breath is in his nostrils. Let us wait on Him—wait patiently—wait constantly. If we are at a loss for anything, let our direct and simple reference be to Him. Are we at a loss to know our way, to know whither we should turn, what step we should take? let us remember that He has said, “I am the way;” let us follow Him. He will make all clear, bright, and certain. There can be no darkness, no perplexity, no uncertainty, if we are following Him; for He has said, and we are bound to believe, “He that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness.” Hence, therefore, if we are in darkness, it is certain we are not following Him. No darkness can ever settle down on that blessed path along which God leads those who, with a single eye, seek to follow Jesus.

But some one whose eye scans these lines may say, or, at least, may feel disposed to say, “Well, after all, I am in perplexity as to my path. I really do not know which way to turn, or what step to take.” If this be the language of the reader, we would simply ask him this one question, “Art thou following Jesus? If so, thou canst not be in perplexity. Art thou following the cloud? If so, the way is as plain as God can make it.” Here lies the root of the whole matter. Perplexity or uncertainty is very often the

fruit of the working of the *will*. We are bent upon doing something which God does not want us to do at all—upon going somewhere that God does not want us to go. We pray about it, and get no answer. We pray again and again, and get no answer. How is this? Why, the simple fact is that God wants us to be quiet—to stand still—to remain just where we are. Wherefore, instead of racking our brain and harassing our souls about what we ought to do, let us do nothing, but simply wait on God.

This is the secret of peace and calm elevation. If an Israelite, in the desert, had taken it into his head to make some movement independent of Jehovah; if he had taken it upon him to move when the cloud was at rest, or to halt while the cloud was moving, we can easily see what the result would have been. And so it will ever be with us. If we move when we ought to rest, or rest when we ought to move, we shall not have the divine presence with us. "At the commandment of the Lord they rested in their tents, and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed." They were kept in constant waiting upon God—the most blessed position that any one can occupy; but it must be occupied ere its blessedness can be tasted. It is a reality to be known, not a mere theory to be talked of. May it be ours to prove it all our journey through!



"IF YOU LOVE ME, LEAN HARD."

[Miss FISKE, who has laboured so long and successfully amongst the Persian women, says that, as she was one Sunday sitting faint and weary on a mat on the ground, during the meeting, and was longing for rest, a woman came and placed herself behind her, so as to support her; and on Miss Fiske's declining to lean upon her, she drew her back, and said, "If you love me, *lean hard*."

Then came the Master's voice, repeating, "If you love me, *lean hard*." Thus body and soul found support and refreshment.]

Softly and gently these words were breathed,
To the loved one thus first addressed,
As she sat on the ground in a far-off land,
Whilst her weary worn frame craved rest.

The Persian offers her firm, strong form
As a living prop and stay,
But the pressure so light shews that she who leans
Fears lest she too heavily weigh.

Love wants the whole burden upon herself cast,
And deems it a deep joy to bear :
"If indeed, then, you love me, lean hard, O ! lean hard :"
Is her tender, importunate prayer.

And the Holy Comforter echoed the words,
In the depths of the fainting one's soul ;
And she felt that her Saviour's love required
All her cares she should on Him roll.

And thus, while the body support and stay
Found by leaning in trustful love,
The soul, in its weakness, was learning to rest
On the unseen but strong Friend above.

My Saviour, these words bring a lesson from Thee ;
For, alas ! I as yet but *half* trust ;
I know not what 'tis to *take hold of strength* ;
Thus often fall prone in the dust.

Yet He who has borne the dread load of my sins
Will surely my weaknesses bear ;
He who takes up the isles as a very small thing
Cannot sink 'neath the load of my care.

He has carried my sorrows, and borne all my griefs,
And still is almighty to save ;
That my weakness should rest on His infinite strength,
Surely well from His child He may crave.

He bids me to lean my soul *wholly* on Him,
 For without Him I tremble and fall;
 And with deep thankful joy I obey, and respond
 To His loving, compassionate call.

In quiet repose, like a babe on the breast,
 Would I rest, gracious Saviour, on Thee:
 I am weakness itself, but Thou, Thou art my strength—
 Thine arms everlasting clasp me.

Oh! teach me at all times on Thee to lean hard,
 And shew thus how truly I love;
 Keep me close to Thyself, ever bound to Thy side,
 Till I lean on Thy bosom above.

F. E. W.



MEDITATIONS ON THE CHRISTIAN'S VOCATION.

(EPHESIANS IV.)

THE cross of Christ introduces an entirely new order of things in the ways of God. His dealings with Israel and the Gentiles are here completely changed. In the death and resurrection of Christ, a sure foundation was laid for the new building—the body of Christ, composed of Jew and Gentile. All our individual and corporate blessings flow from that wondrous cross. Every soul of man is either in the state out of which Christ has risen, or in the state into which He has entered. There is no middle place. The cross determines everything as to man's state. We are either “far off” under the awful judgment of sin, or “made nigh by the blood of Christ.” It must be either the *forsaken* place, or the Holy of holies—the torments of hell, or the happiness of heaven.

But there are some, alas, who think they never have been, nor are, in the “far off” place. They know nothing of the judgment of God on man because of sin. “The

soul that sinneth it shall die;" is God's declared judgment on man. This sounds like the death-knell of all human goodness in God's sight—of all boasted progress in the world: and it is the axe laid at the root of the tree of self-righteousness in the Church. But of this solemn and weighty truth, multitudes, even of professing Christians, are willingly ignorant. They have always been so moral, amiable, and good; and withal, so attentive to their religious duties, that they have no idea of their place of distance from God because of sin. This is a grave and fearful delusion. It is the ruin of millions. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And our sins, if unforgiven, must take us into the very place where Christ's love for us led Him. Can the unpardoned sinner himself fare better under the awful judgment of sin than did the holy, spotless Lamb of God, when He became the substitute of sinners? He was in the "far off" place for us, when He uttered that mournful and pathetic cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Well may we exclaim, If such things were done in the green tree, what must be done in the dry?

Does my reader know anything of the fearful and malignant nature of sin? And does he know anything of the power of the blood of Jesus Christ, which alone can cleanse it all away? If not—rest not, I pray thee, until thou knowest well, both the sweet and the bitter experience of these solemn realities. Nothing short of the death and resurrection of Christ can avail for thee. Human goodness, however great—human religiousness, however complete, can never meet the judgment of God against sin. For without the shedding of blood there is no remission. But, oh! precious truth, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin. That means—*us*—or *all*, who believe in Him. Look to Jesus, my dear reader—look to Him alone. He died for thee. What a truth! Only think of it, and it will create both love and confidence

in thy heart towards Himself. Couldst thou not trust the man—the God-man, who thus loved thee, and died for thee? Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.

“ I rest in Christ, the Son of God,
Who took the servant's form ;
By faith I flee to Jesus' cross,
My covert from the storm.

At peace with God, no ills I dread,
The cup of blessing mine :
The Lord is risen, His precious blood
Is new and living wine.”

In the passage before us, the truth, I am aware, has a dispensational aspect ; that is, the Jew was dispensationally near, and the Gentile dispensationally far off ; but morally and judicially, Christ on the cross as the sin-bearer is the measure of the “ far off ” place. And nothing save the blood that was shed there, can ever bring either Jew or Gentile—the morally good or the openly bad—near to God. No goodness of man can ever blot out sin—quench the flames of hell—open the gates of heaven, or fit the soul to enter there. The blood of Christ alone can do these things. It rent the vail of heaven, and opened up a pathway to the regions of love and glory. It unlocked the portals of the tomb when it was shed ; thereby shewing its power over the vast territories of the dead. Its power is unlimited. It rises to the loftiest heights of heaven ; it penetrates to the deepest depths of the grave. It raises all who put their trust in Jesus, from the lowest point in sin and ruin, to the highest condition in righteousness and glory. It brings back the lost soul from the place of utter distance from God, and sets it in the place of blessed and eternal nearness. Its power to cleanse, purify, ennoble, and beautify, is infinite. In short, it is the solid foundation on which rests the whole of that glorious superstructure which God is now raising for His own glory, the honour of His Son, and

the blessing of His people. All rests on the blood of the cross. "But *now* (meaning the present moment) in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off, *are* (not will be, but *are*) made nigh by the blood of Christ." Precious assurance, and infinite comfort for the heart! The Lord be praised!

He is also the believer's peace. "For he is our peace." The cross has done all. It brings the believer near to God even as Christ is near; and gives him peace with God even as Christ Himself has peace. For Christ, in heaven, is our peace. And here we may notice in passing, that many make a great mistake as to what peace is. They think of it as something which they should have to enjoy in themselves. And because they do not always *feel* peace within, they are troubled, and begin to doubt if they are saved at all. Now we ought ever to bear in mind, that God has given us no good thing to enjoy apart from Christ. All the good things that His love can give us, He has given them to us in Christ. Thus it is that He is said to be, not only our peace, but our life, our righteousness, our joy, our sanctification, our hope, our all in all. In virtue of His cross, and of the Holy Ghost's presence on the earth, we are *one with Christ*. And what more can be said? He Himself is the measure of our nearness, acceptance, and blessing, in the presence of God. And as He can never lose His life or position, we can never lose ours. We are joined to the Lord, and one spirit with Him. His name alone have all the praise and glory!

"I hear the words of love,
I gaze upon the blood,
I see the mighty sacrifice,
And I have peace with God.

'Tis everlasting peace!
Sure as Jehovah's name;
'Tis stable as His steadfast throne,
For evermore the same.

I change: He changes not;
My Christ can never die:
His love, not mine, the resting place;
His truth, not mine, the tie.

The cross still stands unchanged,
Though heaven is now His home;
The mighty stone is rolled away,
But yonder is His tomb!

And yonder is my peace,
The grave of all my woes!
I know the Son of God has come,
I know He *died and rose*."

But it was the cross that wrought this mighty change, and brought in this unheard of blessing for both Jew and Gentile. It removed the wall of separation which God Himself had raised; it abolished the enmity, "even the law of commandments contained in ordinances." It dissolved completely that distinction which separated the one from the other. And thus it brought the privileged Jew, and the far off Gentile together, and made them *one in Christ*. "For to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace. And that he might reconcile both unto God in *one body* by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." This is the Church—the body of Christ—"one new man." The blessing is beyond all thought or expression. It is infinite. Here learn two things, my soul, in leaving this branch of the subject. 1. *That thou art saved*—saved by the blood of Christ, and that thy peace is stable as the throne of God. 2. *Know what thou art saved for*—that thou are saved to be a member of the body of Christ, and to be *one* with its exalted and glorified Head for ever and for ever. The first question must be settled before the second can be thought of. But it will ever be the enemy's aim, to keep up the feeling of uncertainty as to the first, that the second may never be inquired into. Hence it is

that the Christian's *vocation* is a subject but little known, and its need but little felt. The assurance of salvation is made the soul's highest object, and whenever this is the case it is seldom reached. Hence its constant anxiety about salvation. But this should be made the *starting* post, not the *winning* post—the commencement, not the goal, in the christian race. What can be plainer than the verses we have just been looking at, both as to our individual and our corporate blessings? May the Lord enable us by His grace, to enter more fully into these practical and most precious truths, that His own name may be glorified !

Having thus considered, though briefly, the subject of the Church as *the body of Christ*, we will now dwell upon it for a little, as

“AN HABITATION OF GOD THROUGH THE SPIRIT.”

Both aspects of the Church are of the most blessed and practical character—both are abundantly taught in scripture—both are of or through the Spirit, and both are founded on redemption. 1 Corinthians xii., Ephesians i., iv., v., plainly speak of the former ; and 1 Corinthians iii., Ephesians ii., 1 Timothy iii. as plainly speak of the latter.

The great practical truth, both as to the body of Christ and the habitation of God, is the place which the Holy Ghost occupies in each. Until this is seen and owned, no true idea of the Church can ever be entered into. There must be great darkness and confusion, both as to Church truth and practice, so long as the Holy Spirit has not His right place. Human notions, in such a case, must take the place of the word of God.

Let this, then, be thy first lesson, O my soul ; learn it patiently, learn it thoroughly from the holy scriptures. Examine carefully what is taught on this point ; and so learn how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God. Here let thy meditations be in the sanctuary of His

presence. Tradition and the human will should have no place in the temple of God; but, alas, nowhere are they allowed so large a place; indeed they too often *practically* displace the truth of God and the person of the Holy Ghost; but when such things are allowed, God is robbed of His glory even by His own children. Hence the doubts, darkness, and bondage of those who ought to be in the enjoyment of the light and the happy liberty of the gospel.

What can be plainer than the Lord's own words on this subject? "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Being a Spirit, He can only be worshipped *spiritually*, or in the power of the Holy Spirit, and according to His own revealed truth. And such worshippers the Father seeks. He led the woman of Samaria thus to worship. What grace! Who else would have cared for her worship? The living water which the Son gives, represents the Holy Spirit as the power of worship, and communion with God and the Father. "The water that I shall give him shall be *in him* a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The Holy Spirit in the believer is also the seal of a present salvation, and the earnest of future glory. But our present theme is rather the presence of the Holy Spirit in the assembly than in the person of the believer. As this is by far the most important truth connected with the Church of God, let me direct thy attention for a few moments to what the Lord Himself says on the subject. Let us be clear as to the great fact of the Holy Spirit Himself (not merely a spiritual influence or power) being on the earth. This, I believe, is the characteristic truth of Christianity. Christ Himself may be savingly known, but Christianity cannot without the knowledge, in some measure, of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. He is the bond, the everlasting bond, of our union with Christ in resurrection and heavenly glory



SAVED AT LAST!

I WAS desired, a week or two since, by a lady of my congregation, to visit a gentleman, with whom she was slightly acquainted. She knew him to be dying without the knowledge of God.

He had not for thirty years been into a place of worship, and had never looked into a Bible. His life had been spent in field sports, horse racing, and gambling. I knew not how to gain admittance to his house, but I thought the best plan would be to write him a note, saying that I, as a minister of Christ, and a fellow-countryman from Ireland, having heard that he was seriously ill, alone in London, was anxious to be of use to him in any way that I could.

I took the note and waited at the door for an answer. The answer came—"Mr. B. was engaged." The following day I received a note from him. He said, "I am obliged for your offer, but must beg to decline seeing you; a friend of mine, a clergyman, can do anything for me that I require." The door thus appeared to be shut against me, and I felt that I could do no more. A few days afterwards, the lady who knew Mr. B. called at his door to enquire after him. He had with him at that time a friend who had just come over from Ireland to see him. This man had lived as he had done—in utter forgetfulness of God. When Lady —— sent up her message of enquiry, Mr. B. said to his friend, "Go down and tell Lady —— how I am, and thank her for her kindness in coming so often to ask after me." The friend went down. Lady —— asked him to come into her carriage, and then spoke to him of the awful danger of his friend's position—dying and unsaved. The man was startled, and so thoroughly alarmed, not only about Mr. B.'s condition, but also about his own, that he promised Lady —— to go next morning and fetch me, and take me up to Mr. B.'s room. He came accordingly to my house, and, finding me out, he walked up and down the

square for three hours, till I returned. He then implored me to come and see his friend, saying, "He and I are alike going to hell. We never had a thought of God; and I should never have thought of Him now, had not my friend been struck down before my eyes. I entreat you to come to him before it is too late." I was unable to go that day, but promised to go the next day. Next morning, however, I received a note from the friend, saying, "I am just starting to return to Ireland. Do not go to my friend for a day or two, for I have told him how much I wish him to see you, and he is so angry at the bare mention of it. I am sure he would not see you just yet. Wait a day or two and then try." I accordingly waited, and then made the second attempt. To my surprise, I was admitted. As I went in, Mr. B. only remarked, in a surly voice, "I promised my friend I would let you come, and there you are."

To my enquiries and remarks, he made no answer. I read to him the word of God, and spoke to him of Jesus. His only answer was a growl, with his face turned away. I remained with him about ten minutes, and then left him. He would not turn to take leave of me. He had said nothing during the whole of our interview, except the few words I have mentioned.

The next day, I received a letter from the friend in Ireland. He said, "I hope you have seen my poor friend. Unless he is saved, he must shortly be in hell. What an awful thought! Bear with his rude manners — mind nothing, if you can only get at him and tell him how to be saved." I took his note, and went again to Mr. B.'s house. Again I was admitted. I had no warmer welcome than before. I said, "I have received a note from your friend in Ireland; I will read it to you." I did so. "What a precious humbug!" he exclaimed. "Do you suppose that fellow means what he says?" "Yes," I replied. "Had you seen him the other day, when he came to speak to me about you, you would not doubt. He knows too well now

in what road both you and he are going. He told me he had never had a single thought about his soul till he saw you cut down."

"Did he, indeed?" said Mr. B. "I believe you; and I can tell you, that fellow has done more to hinder me from having any religion than anybody I know. I'll tell you for why.—He spent his life just as I did—gambling, horse racing, fox hunting, keeping open house to all who did the same—and yet he would never go to bed without having family prayers! Wouldn't give you your dinner unless you'd engage to stay to prayers! and that did more to convince me that all religion is cant and humbug, than any thing else. Now he tells you he never had any religion all the time, and he was right."

I now felt that it was the time to speak to him directly of his own danger, and to put the gospel before him as simply as I could. He stopped me, saying, "Are you not something different from other clergymen?" "Why do you ask me?" I said. "Because," he replied, "the rest of them always seemed to me only to differ from other people by caring a little more for having a good dinner, and perhaps an extra bottle of wine. However, go on and say what you have got to say." I therefore spoke to him again of the grace of God. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord," &c., and passages about forgiveness and salvation; to which he listened, and this time with a look of interest. He shook hands with me when I left, and said, "You may come again." From this time I saw him almost every day. He continued to listen, and he appeared interested, but said little.

Jan. 30. When I went to him this morning, the house-keeper, who had shewn great anxiety about his soul, said to me, "Oh! sir, I am so glad you are come, we think he is sinking." As I entered the room, he looked at me with joy, and said, "Those beautiful words, 'Come now,' &c. (he repeated it, and all the rest), how beautiful they are!

Just what I want—just suited to me.” “Yes,” I replied ; but the question is, not whether they are beautiful words, but whether *you* believe them. *Do you believe them ?*” He looked at me earnestly and said, “Will you tell me, faithfully, is there any reason why I should not believe them ?” “No, my dear friend, there is *no* reason : one only why I believe them, and why you should believe them too—it is because the living God has spoken them. I ask you again, *Do you believe them ?*” He closed his eyes, and gave no answer for ten minutes or so. He then looked at me, and said solemnly, “I *do* believe them. God has said them—they are true. And now,” he added, “I should like to die at once. I don’t care now for living any longer. Tell my housekeeper, if any of my friends come I will not see them. I wish to be left alone, to think of the wonderful love of God. I will always see *you* whenever you can come, but no one else ; and will you write to that clergyman in Ireland, and tell him *what it is to be saved ?*”

Jan. 31. I went again this morning to see Mr. B. He received me by saying, “It is wonderful, beyond my comprehension altogether, and yet it is true, for He has said it. How *could* He have loved me so much ! Dear friend, I have just been thinking, what a marvellous kind of love it is, that my Creator, against whom I have sinned, should have so loved me that He gave His only Son to die for me ! And not only so, I have been thinking further, if He so loved me as to give me His Son, it stands to reason there is nothing He would not give me.”

This man knew nothing of the Bible. I always found that, in repeating texts to him, I must add, “These are the words of God,” as he would not otherwise have distinguished them from my words. I therefore now repeated to him Romans viii. 32, “*He that spared not his own Son,*” &c. He was astonished to find that he had been led to speak almost in the very words of God. He then continued, as it were, *talking the scriptures* : not a cloud seemed to

pass over his mind. He could not sufficiently express his thankfulness that I had been sent to tell him of Jesus, &c. "You remember, I wrote in my note to you, that I knew a clergyman who would do all I wanted: that was my cousin. He did not come to see me for some time, but a few days ago he came. He stayed some time; he did not, however, speak of religion. I don't know what he believes, perhaps you do."

Feb. 2. I left Mr. B. more than rejoicing. He asked me for some of the promises printed on loose pages, that he might keep them under his pillow. "I can fully trust Him," he said. "You know, it would not be worth His while to disappoint me. Why should He?"

Feb. 4. When I called on my friend last night, I found he had died about an hour before. The housekeeper told me he read the texts sent to him by A. B. from the time he received them (twenty-four hours before) till his eyes were blinded by death; and then he called her, and made her sit beside his bed that she might read them to him, which she did, till he fell asleep on the bosom of Him whose promises he had been listening to. Seeing his great interest in them, the housekeeper said, "Are not these sayings beautiful, sir?" Her dying master answered, "*They are altogether lovely.*"

It was his last effort.

R.

"Where shall my wondering soul begin?

How shall I all to heaven aspire?

A slave redeemed from death and sin,

A brand plucked from eternal fire,

How shall I equal triumphs raise,

Or sing my great Deliverer's praise!

O how shall I the goodness tell,

Father, which thou to me hast shewed?

That I, a child of wrath and hell,

I should be called a child of God,

Should know on earth my sins forgiven,

Blest with this antepast of heaven!"

CORRESPONDENCE.

98. "A Reader," London. You should make your application to the publisher, Mr. Morrish.

99. "G. G. H.," Oldham. You must distinguish between "conversion" and "regeneration." A man can only be regenerated once; he may be converted repeatedly. Hence when our Lord says to Peter, in the passage to which you refer, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren," He simply alludes to his *restoration*, after his terrible fall. What marvellous grace, that one who had so terribly fallen should be called to such high and holy work!

100. "Friede," Cork. We fully sympathize with you in your dread of acting under mere impulse. It is always well to be sure of every step we take—to be able to give a "Thus saith the Lord" for whatever we do, or whatever we refuse to do. Very much damage is done to the cause of truth and vital godliness, by impulsive acting, and by what we may term spasmodic devotedness. We greatly value calm, deep-toned decision for Christ—a decision produced by genuine love to His Person and profound subjection to the authority of His word. These things are most needful, in this day of man's will, man's judgment, and man's reason. As to the matter which seems to exercise your heart, you must simply act before the Lord. It is entirely a question for your own conscience. Do not act on the judgment of another. If you feel free in conscience, before God, it is better to continue as you have done, for the sake of others. But, by all means, keep a good conscience, cost what it may. We entirely agree with your remarks about the Church. The professing body is a ruin. The Body of Christ is one and indissoluble. It is our holy and happy privilege, as it is our bounden duty, to have our feet on God's ground, and our eyes on God Himself—to see and own our failure, but yet to hold fast

the faithfulness of God. It needs a single eye to discern God's ground, and a simple faith to occupy it; but He is always sufficient, and His foundation standeth sure. There is no reason why we should continue one hour in connection with what is wrong. "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." This is perfectly conclusive. Nothing can justify our remaining in connection with what we know to be false. May the Lord Himself greatly bless you, beloved friend, and make you a blessing!

101. "H. T.," Waterford. Matthew x. 23 refers to the testimony sent forth in the days of our Lord. That testimony to the cities of Israel is, of necessity, suspended for the present; but it will be resumed again, just before the coming of our Lord, and ere its completion He will appear. It gives great clearness and simplicity to see the present break in the divine dealings with Israel. It is in this break or interval that the Church, properly so called, comes in. If this be not fully seen, there must be confusion in the mind both as to Israel and the Church of God.

102. "M. C.," Blackfriars Road. If you will turn to the fourth volume of "Things New and Old," page 25, you will find an article on Hebrews vi. which may help you. We have more than once referred to it in our correspondence. See "Nine Years' Answers," &c.

103. "S. G." Accept our best thanks for the copy of Miss Fiske's letter. A friend has sent us some lines on the subject.

104. "W. G." Your questions are not at all in our line. We are fully determined, by the grace of God, to keep our pages free of all such matters. No doubt, they have their interest and importance; but they do not suit us.

105. "E. K.," Reading. You are desirous of light on 1 Corinthians vii. 14: "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but

now are they holy." If you will compare this passage with Ezra x. 11, 12, you will see the contrast between Judaism and Christianity. The former strictly prohibited the union of the circumcised with the stranger; and, where a union had taken place, insisted upon a separation. The latter forbids the union of a believer with an unbeliever; but, where a union has been formed previous to conversion, it does not insist upon a separation; on the contrary, it counsels an abiding together, and pronounces the offspring holy. It is not a question of the conversion of the children. This must be obvious, inasmuch as we should not need to be told that converted children were holy. But it illustrates the grace and largeness of the gospel and of Christianity, to be told that the offspring of mixed marriages is sanctified and need not be put away. There is not a single syllable about baptism in the entire chapter.

106. "W.," Barnstaple. The editor of "The Good News Almanac" will, we feel assured, be happy to answer your query.

107. "A Subscriber from the first," Bristol. We have read your letter with very deep interest, and we can thoroughly enter into your feelings. We believe assuredly that the Christian is bound to provide for his family, day by day—bound to educate his children, and put them in the way of earning an honest livelihood. All this is so plainly enjoined in the New Testament as to admit of no question. But these sacred duties leave wholly untouched the question of hoarding up, on the one hand, and of speculation on the other. We do not believe in these latter at all. We believe that hoarding covers the soul with rust, and speculation fills the heart and mind with care and anxiety. We love and honour industry and honest toil; but scripture tells us that "the love of money is the root of all evil;" and we do not believe that God's blessing rests upon His children when they become share-

holders in worldly companies. You yourself, dear friend, have proved this. We think you would have done better had you purchased a house, either to live in or let, than to invest your money in such a company as you describe. But all these matters must be arranged between the Lord and one's own conscience. We merely add that there is a vast difference between committing actual sin, and falling short of a high toned discipleship and personal devotedness. For ourselves, we long for the latter—long earnestly for it. We believe there is a sad lack of it in this our day. The tide of worldliness is rolling rapidly in upon us, and we know of no more effectual barrier with which to resist it than thorough heart-devotedness and consecration to Christ and His cause. Where the *real bent of the soul* is Christward, one is not troubled with questions as to the right or wrong of this or that; but where it is not, the heart can muster up a thousand and one plausible arguments; and it is labour lost to seek to answer such arguments, inasmuch as there is no spiritual capacity to see the force of the answer. May God bless you, dear friend, and comfort your heart under your heavy loss. May your undivided confidence be in Him, and He will prove Himself better than ten thousand "limited companies."

A dear Christian friend writes as follows: "May I ask one favour of you? Will you remember Russia, specially, in your prayers, and seek to induce some christian friends to do the same? God's word is increasingly circulated there, and some efforts have been made, for some time, by enlightened Christians, to spread the gospel by means of schools, &c. God has His hidden ones in that vast empire; and they are anxious for the sympathy and intercession of those who enjoy many advantages they lack." The foregoing appeal needs not a word from us. We feel sure it will be warmly responded to by our beloved Christian readers.

THE SILVER TRUMPET.

(NUMB. X.)

“AND the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them, that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps. And when they shall blow with them, all the assembly shall assemble themselves to thee at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And if they blow but with one trumpet, then the princes, which are heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee. When ye blow an alarm, then the camps that lie on the east parts shall go forward. When ye blow an alarm the second time, then the camps that lie on the south side shall take their journey: they shall blow an alarm for their journeys. But when the congregation is to be gathered together, ye shall blow, but ye shall not sound an alarm. And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets; and they shall be to you for an ordinance for ever throughout your generations. And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the Lord your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies. Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings, that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I am the Lord your God.” Ver. 1—10.

We have quoted the entire of this interesting passage for the reader, in order that he may have before him, in the veritable language of inspiration, the lovely institution of “the Silver Trumpet.” It comes in, with striking fitness, immediately after the instructions respecting the movement of the cloud, and is bound up, in a very marked way, with the entire history of Israel, not only in the past, but also

in the future. The sound of the trumpet was familiar to every circumcised ear. It was the communication of the mind of God, in a form distinct and simple enough to be heard and understood by every member of the congregation, how distant soever he might be from the source whence the testimony emanated. God took care that each one in that vast assembly, however far away, should hear the silvery tones of the trumpet of testimony.

The *two* trumpets were made of *one* piece, and they fulfilled a double purpose. In other words, the source of the testimony was one, however the object and result might vary. Every movement in the camp was to be the result of the sound of the trumpet. Was the congregation to be gathered in festive joy and worship? It was by a certain sound of the trumpet. Were the tribes to be gathered in hostile array? It was by a blast of the trumpet. In a word, the solemn assembly and the warlike host—the instruments of music and the weapons of war—all—all were regulated by the silver trumpet. Any movement, whether festive, religious, or hostile, that was not the result of that familiar sound, would be but the fruit of a restless and unsubdued will, which Jehovah could by no means sanction. The pilgrim host in the wilderness was as dependent upon the sound of the trumpet as upon the movement of the cloud. The testimony of God, communicated in that particular manner, was to govern every movement throughout the many thousands of Israel.

Moreover, it pertained to the sons of Aaron, the priests, to blow with the trumpets, for the mind of God can only be known and communicated in priestly nearness and communion. It was the high and holy privilege of the priestly family to cluster round the sanctuary of God, there to catch the first movement of the cloud, and communicate the same to the most distant part of the camp. They were responsible to give a certain sound, and every member of the militant host was equally responsible to

yield a ready and an implicit obedience. It would have been at once positive rebellion for any to attempt to move without the word of command, or to refuse to move whenever that word was given. All had to wait upon the divine testimony, and walk in the light thereof, the very moment it was given. To move without the testimony, would be to *move in the dark*; to refuse to move when the testimony was given, would be to *remain in the dark*.

This is most simple, and deeply practical. We can have no difficulty in seeing its force and application in the case of the congregation in the wilderness. But let us remember that all this was a type; and further, that it is written for our learning. We are solemnly bound therefore, to look into it; we are imperatively called upon to seek to gather up, and treasure up, the great practical instruction contained in the singularly beautiful ordinance of the silver trumpet. Nothing could be more seasonable for the present moment. It teaches a lesson to which the christian reader should give his most profound attention. It sets forth, in the most distinct manner possible, that God's people are to be absolutely dependent upon, and wholly subject to, divine testimony in all their movements. A child may read this in the type before us. The congregation in the wilderness dare not assemble for any festive or religious object until they heard the sound of the trumpet; nor could the men of war buckle on their armour till summoned forth by the signal of alarm to meet the uncircumcised foe. They worshipped and they fought; they journeyed and they rested, in simple obedience to the trumpet call. It was not, by any means, a question of their likings or dislikings, their thoughts, their opinions, or their judgment. It was simply and entirely a question of implicit obedience. Their every movement was dependent upon the testimony of God as given by the priests from the sanctuary. The song of the worshipper and the shout of the warrior were each the simple fruit of the testimony of God.

How beautiful ! How striking ! How instructive ! And let us add, How deeply practical ! Why do we dwell upon it ? Because we firmly believe it contains a needed lesson for the day in which our lot is cast. If there is one feature more characteristic than another of the present hour, it is insubjection to divine authority—positive resistance of the truth when it demands unqualified obedience and self-surrender. It is all well enough so long as it is truth setting forth, with divine fulness and clearness, our pardon, our acceptance, our life, our righteousness, our eternal security in Christ. This will be listened to, and delighted in. But the very moment it becomes a question of the claim and authority of that blessed One who gave His life to save us from the flames of hell, and introduce us to the everlasting joys of heaven, all manner of difficulties are started ; all sorts of reasonings and questions are raised ; clouds of prejudice gather round the soul and darken the understanding. The sharp edge of truth is blunted or turned aside in a thousand ways. There is no waiting for the sound of the trumpet ; and when it sounds with a blast as clear as God Himself can give, there is no response to the summons. We move when we ought to be still, and we halt when we ought to be moving.

Reader, what must be the result of this ? Either no progress at all, or progress in a wrong direction, which is worse than none. It is utterly impossible that we can advance in the divine life unless we yield ourselves, without reserve, to the word of the Lord : saved we may be, through the rich aboundings of divine mercy and through the atoning virtues of a Saviour's blood ; but shall we rest satisfied with being saved by Christ, and not seek, in some feeble measure, to walk with Him and live for Him ? Shall we accept of salvation through the work which He has wrought, and not long after deeper intimacy of communion with Himself and complete subjection to His authority in all things ? How would it have been with Israel in the

wilderness, had they refused attention to the sound of the trumpet? We can see it at a glance. If, for example, they had presumed at any time to assemble for a festive or religious object without the divinely-appointed summons, what would have been the result? Or further, had they taken it upon themselves to move forward on their journey, or go forth to war, ere the trumpet had sounded an alarm, how would it have been? Or, finally, had they refused to move when called by the sound of the trumpet, either to the solemn assembly, the onward march, or to the battle, how would they have fared?

The answer is as plain as a sunbeam. Let us ponder it. It has a lesson for us. Let us apply our hearts to it. The silver trumpet settled and ordered every movement for Israel of old. The testimony of God ought to settle and order everything for the Church now. That silver trumpet was blown by the priests of old. That testimony of God is known in priestly communion now. A Christian has no right to move or act apart from divine testimony. He must wait upon the word of his Lord. Till he gets that he must *stand still*. When he has gotten it, he must *go forward*. God can and does communicate His mind to His militant people now, just as distinctly as He did to His people of old. True, it is not now, by the sound of the trumpet, or by the movement of a cloud; but by His word and Spirit. It is not by aught that strikes the senses that our Father guides us, but by that which acts on the heart, the conscience, and the understanding. It is not by that which is natural, but by that which is spiritual, that He communicates His mind.

But let us be well assured of this, that our God can and does give our hearts full certainty, both as to what we should do, and what we should not do; as to where we should go, and where we should not go. It seems strange to be obliged to insist upon this—passing strange that any Christian should doubt, much less deny it. And yet so it

is: we are often in doubt and perplexity; and some there are who are ready to deny that there can be any such thing as certainty as to the details of daily life and action. This surely is wrong. Cannot an earthly father communicate his mind to his child as to the most minute particulars of his conduct? Who will deny this? And cannot our Father communicate His mind to us, as to all our ways, from day to day? Unquestionably He can; and let not the christian reader be robbed of the holy privilege of knowing His Father's mind in reference to any circumstance of his daily life.

Are we to suppose for a moment that the Church of God is worse off, in the matter of guidance, than the camp in the desert? Impossible. How is it then, that one often finds Christians at a loss as to their movements? It must be owing to the lack of a circumcised ear to hear the sound of the silver trumpet, and of a subject will to yield a response to the sound.

It may, however, be said, that we are not to expect to hear a voice from heaven telling us to do this or that, or to go hither or thither; nor yet to find a literal text of scripture to guide us in the minor matters of our everyday history. How, for example, is one to know whether he ought to visit a certain town, and remain there a certain time? We reply, If the ear be circumcised you will assuredly hear the silver trumpet. Till that sounds never stir; when it sounds never tarry. This will make all so clear, so simple, so safe, so certain. It is the grand cure for doubt, hesitancy, and vacillation. It will save us from the necessity of running for advice to this one and that one, as to how we should act, or where we should go. And furthermore, it will teach us that it is none of our business to attempt to control the actions or movements of others. Let each one have his ear open and his heart subject, and then assuredly he will possess all the certainty that God can give him, as to his every act and movement, from day

to day. Our ever gracious God can give clearness and decision as to everything. If He does not give it, no one can. If He does, no one need.

Thus much as to the beautiful institution of the silver trumpet, which we shall not pursue further now, though, as we have noticed above, it is not confined in its application to Israel in the wilderness, but is bound up with their entire history, right onward to the end. Thus we have the feast of trumpets—the trumpet of jubilee, the blowing of trumpets over their sacrifices; upon which we do not now dwell, as our immediate object is to help the reader to seize the grand idea presented in the opening paragraph of our chapter. May the Holy Spirit impress upon our hearts the needed lesson of “the Silver Trumpet.”

“The silver trumpet’s sounding
The year of Jubilee;
And grace is all abounding,
To set the bondmen free.”



MEDITATIONS ON THE CHRISTIAN'S VOCATION.

(EPHESIANS IV.)

MANY have spoken of Christianity as a continuation of Judaism, and of the Holy Spirit in the Church as a continuation of the influence which He exerted in Old Testament times. Both are wrong and lead to endless confusion. Christianity is the contrast, not the continuation of Judaism. The one is heavenly, the other was earthly. Heaven and earth are contrasts. True, the Old Testament saints had eternal life as really as the New, but the *dispensations* are different. And as to the Holy Spirit, in place of that influence which He has exerted from the beginning, we have Himself—His personal presence. Consequent on redemption being finished, and the Son of man glorified, the Holy

Ghost came down. Let us, then, with unprejudiced and subject minds, endeavour to trace for a little the history of this great New Testament truth :

THE PERSONAL PRESENCE OF THE HOLY GHOST.

John vii. is conclusive as to the gift of the Holy Ghost to believers: "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified)." Nothing could possibly be plainer. The Holy Ghost could not be given, as to His presence in Person on the earth, until Jesus, as man, was glorified in heaven. The circumstance in which this truth was revealed, adds greatly to its interest and value to us. It was "the Jews' feast of tabernacles"—the type, not only of their sojourn in the desert, and their rest in the land, but also the title and pledge of their future joy and glory under Messiah as King in Israel. His brethren, in unbelief, evidently thought that the feast was a favourable opportunity for Him to display His power and glory before the eyes of the world. It was the great annual festival at Jerusalem, the most joyous season in the whole year. It was celebrated when the harvest and vintage were ended. But the Lord's time to shew Himself to the world was not yet come. The Passover had its fulfilment at the cross, and Pentecost at the descent of the Holy Ghost (Acts ii.), but the fulfilment of the feast of tabernacles is still future. It awaits the accomplishment of the anti-typical harvest and vintage; or the gathering home of the saints to heaven, and the execution of judgment on the earth. Israel shall then be restored to their own land, and in full possession of every promised blessing under Messiah their King. Then His time shall be fully come to shew Himself to Israel and to the world; as it is written, "Every eye shall see him." Rev. i. 7.

And now, the question for thy meditations, and for every Christian is—what takes place in the meantime, or, between the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost came down, and the yet future feast of tabernacles in the land of Israel? Let me have thy best attention, and I will endeavour to answer the question.

In place of the Lord bringing in the feast of tabernacles then, as His brethren wished, He intimates that He Himself must withdraw from the scene, and that the Holy Ghost must come and take His place, after He leaves the world. Israel is thus left in unbelief—the feast of tabernacles is set aside; and the only spring of blessing for the soul is earth's rejected Man in heaven; the waters of Jerusalem, as it were, are dried up, and the streams of the Spirit must flow in other channels.

All this is plain and simple. The Saviour must die—die for Israel—die for the world. He passes through death and reaches the glory. Redemption is finished—God is glorified—every enemy is overthrown, and sin is blotted out. And now, in place of restoring the kingdom to Israel, He sits down as the Son of man at God's right hand in heaven, *and from the glory He gives the Holy Ghost to every one that believes.* (Ver. 38, 39.) The living waters, observe, so often spoken of in scripture, now take their rise, not from the smitten Rock in the desert—the lowly Jesus; but from the exalted Christ in glory: and believers, the members of His body, become the new channels through which the river of life flows. It may be interesting here, just to notice the difference between the children of Israel drinking of the water from the flinty rock, and the thirsty Christian coming to Christ and drinking the living waters. The Jew drank for himself and *only* for himself; the Christian drinks, first, for his own refreshment and blessing, and then for the refreshment and blessing of others. The Holy Ghost *in us*, revealing Christ and His work to our souls, makes us channels of blessing to others.

Thus it is—thus it has been since the day of Pentecost, and thus it must continue to be during the entire period of the present dispensation—the Christian has to do directly with Christ in the glory. He thirsts—he feels his need—it is an individual thing—Christ in glory, revealed to his soul by the Holy Ghost, is the perfect answer to all his need. Thus, we say, it must be, until the Church is caught up—the judgments executed—the millennial kingdom restored, and all Israel saved. Then shall the living waters have another source and other channels, according to the dispensational ways of God. The river of life shall then flow forth from the sanctuary in Zion for the refreshment of Jerusalem and the whole earth; and then the ancient prophecy shall be fulfilled, “Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.” Isaiah xii. 3, Ezekiel xlvii.

But further, no truth is more practical, or bears more directly on the Christian’s *vocation*, than the one before us. The Holy Ghost in us is the only power of testimony to the Son of man in heaven, until the time comes for Him to shew Himself to the world. Surely this is all important. Mark it well, my soul; it is thy highest—thy holiest—thy happiest vocation. And remember this, meanwhile, amidst all thy trials and difficulties, that when the set time is come, He will not only shew Himself to Israel and the world, but He will shew His glorified saints with Himself at the same time. “When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” (Col. iii. 4.) Blessed thought! glorious prospect! and thou shalt be with Him then! And, though a secondary, yet a happy thought, in looking forward to that day, thou shalt meet so many there, once known here, but who have gone before. What a day! what a feast of tabernacles will then be celebrated! Heaven and earth will be united in one—the vast universe will be filled with His glory. Blessed Lord, hasten it in thine own good time and way, and thy name shall have all the praise!

“ Whom have we, Lord, but thee,
Soul thirst to satisfy ?
Exhaustless spring ! the waters free !
All other streams are dry.”

We now follow the Lord to chapter xiv. Here we have further truth on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. “And I will pray the Father,” He says, “and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever ; even the Spirit of truth ; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him ; but ye know him ; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” The word “Comforter,” or “Paraclete,” means a person who is charged with, and manages our affairs, as dwelling with us. One who comforts us in our trials, guides us in our difficulties, gives us the knowledge of our absent Lord ; indeed, One who looks after all our interests. It is difficult to conceive how any student of scripture could ever have understood our Lord’s words about this divine Person as merely meaning a spiritual influence, gift, or power ; or merely natural talents sanctified by grace. True, the Holy Spirit still works in various ways, as He has always done ; and we should pray that He may work more and more, both in saints and sinners ; but it would be wrong to pray for the Spirit to be poured out, or sent down, when He is here. Surely it would have been wrong, or worse, for the disciples to have prayed the Father to send Christ when He was in their midst.

The world, we know, cannot receive the Holy Ghost, neither can it know Him, because He never became incarnate. He cannot, like Christ, be seen by the world. But faith recognizes His presence, both in the individual Christian, and in the assembly of God. What can be plainer

than the Lord's own words? They need no explanation. Such expressions as—"The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name," cannot be explained as only meaning the influences of the Spirit. They describe a real Person, and One that is to abide with the disciples *for ever*. Not for a short time, like Christ. He is also to dwell *with them*, and be *in them*, teaching them all things, and bringing all things to their remembrance, whatsoever the Lord had said unto them. Hence the weight and importance of that solemn precept—"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Eph. iv. 30.

Again in chapter xv. we read, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." In chapter xiv., the Lord assures the disciples, that the Comforter, whom the Father would send in His name, would not only teach them all things, but bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever He had said unto them. But here, in chapter xv., His mission is of another character: "He shall testify of me." He bears witness to Christ as the glorified Man in heaven. He comes down from the Son, and as sent by Him: "Whom I will send unto you from the Father." In chapter xiv. He is spoken of as being sent by the Father in Christ's name: "Whom the Father will send in my name." The disciples also were to bear witness, because they had been with Him from the beginning. The Holy Ghost thus bearing witness to the heavenly side of Christ's glory, and the disciples to the earthly side, are united in holy and powerful testimony to the matchless glory of the Son of man in heaven.

In chapter xvi., the blessed Lord changes the *ground* of the Holy Ghost's mission completely. The higher blessing of the disciples is now before Him: "Nevertheless, I tell

you the truth; it is expedient for *you* that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I depart, I will send him unto you." In chapter xiv. the Lord speaks as if it would be expedient for *Him* to go away. He says to His disciples, in the most touching and appealing way, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said I go unto the Father:" that is, if ye loved me *enough*. There was no question of their loving Him; but did they love Him *enough* so as to rejoice because He said, I go unto the Father? And what an appeal, and consolation too, these words would be from the lips of a dying friend! If ye loved me *enough*, ye would rejoice because I am departing to be with Christ, which is *far better*. A scene, never to be forgotten, is recalled by these reflections, and worthy to be noted here. "Father—can't you—spare me—to Jesus?—you shall—soon follow," said a beloved daughter to her father, from the very threshold of the unseen world. The family were gathered around the departing one. She had reached her nineteenth year, and was tenderly loved. As the eyelids seemed to close, one of the weeping circle exclaimed, "She is gone now!" The father, sobbing aloud, fell back into his chair. The departing spirit, for a moment, was troubled by the father's distress; but the Lord gave her that word of richest consolation, and yet of gentle reproof, to the sorrowing, tender-hearted father. She then calmly fell asleep in Jesus. But, oh, what victory! What peaceful triumphing over death, the weaknesses of our nature, and the temporary success of the enemy! Surely such an one appeals to us in the very spirit of the Lord Himself: "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father." He was leaving a scene of the deepest humiliation and sorrow. He was about to ascend from the cross, with all its shame and suffering, to the presence of God His Father—the home of love and glory. Could the disciples have thus viewed the Lord's going away, they would indeed have rejoiced, though with

mingled tears of sorrow. And so would it be with us still, could we only rise above the weakness of nature, and contemplate the dear departed "*with Christ, which is far better.*"

But here, the benefit is reversed. It is good for the disciples that the Lord goes away: "It is expedient for *you* that I go away." Troubled and afraid though they were, it would be their gain for Him to go away. How could this be, seeing the disciples were weak and helpless? The Lord Himself explains the difficulty: "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." The coming of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, the "*Paraclete*," in Person, is the explanation. He would lead, guide, direct, correct, sustain, comfort them, and be with them *for ever*. He would take the place of Jesus when He went away; and, because of the work of redemption being finished and Christ glorified, the blessing, communion, and testimony of the disciples would be unspeakably greater. But Christ *must ascend*, in order that the Holy Ghost may *descend*. And so it was: hence we read, that He is "*sent*;" He is "*come*;" He is "*in them*;" He is "*with them*." He reveals to their sorrowing hearts, in the most blessed way, the finished work and the glorified Person of their exalted Lord. He is the gathering power to the name of Christ as their centre; and the uniting bond of their souls to Himself in heavenly glory. And now all men can see that they enjoy a light, experience a power, and manifest a valour, altogether unknown before.

"The *Comforter*, now present, assures us of thy love;
He is the blessed earnest of glory there above:
The *river* of thy pleasure is what sustains us now;
Till thy new Name's imprinted on every sinless brow."

Having thus endeavoured to clear the ground of all misapprehension on the subject of the personal presence of the Holy Ghost as taught by our Lord in these chapters (John vii., xiv., xv., xvi.), we now return to our more immediate

theme, the Church, as "*an habitation of God through the Spirit.*"

It would be impossible to come to any satisfactory understanding of the latter subject, without a knowledge of the former. It is the presence of the Holy Spirit duly owned, that constitutes an assembly of saints the dwelling place of God. No company of Christians, however sound in doctrine, rich in gifts, godly in walk, or sincere in their observances, rises to the character of God's assembly, without the scriptural acknowledgment of His presence through the Spirit. Doubtless they belong to the Church of God, and are living members of the body of Christ; but as an assembly they are not on church ground. Bear this in mind, my soul; it is easily remembered, and it will be easily carried about with thee. There can be no true expression of the Church of God, where the special presence in Person of the Holy Ghost is not owned and submitted to. He is the alone gathering, forming, and sustaining power of the Church. Without His uniting presence, an assembly must remain as so many individual saints, however pure their motives, or sincere their practice. Indeed this is the turning point, as to whether an assembly is a mere society of Christians, or a true expression of the Church of God. But here it may be well to notice, before going farther, that by the words "assembly" and "Church," we mean the same thing. Substitute the word *assembly* for *Church* throughout scripture, and its true meaning will be clearer.

There may be great weakness on the part of those who "are gathered together" in the Name of the Lord Jesus; but if the Holy Spirit's presence, authority, and sovereign rule be owned, there we have the true principle and expression of the Church—the habitation of God—the place where He loves to dwell. Not because of any worthiness in them more than in others, I need hardly say, but because of the value of that Name around which they are gathered.

Now that He Himself is absent, we gather round His Name. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." But mark the fulness of that expression, "MY NAME." Not merely the name of *Jesus*, or *Christ*, or *Lord*, but—*what I am—all that I am*. Blessed Lord! worshipfully we exclaim; what a *resource* in an evil day! What character thy Name gives to the assembly! What blessing to each member! What a centre for such poor feeble ones! And to *know* that we are gathered to that Centre—united to that Centre—eternally one with that Centre, is rest indeed to the soul.

Marvellous truth! Richest in blessing here below! And, happy thought! it is the portion of all thy saints, whether they know it or not. But what of the *attractions* of that Name? What of its *power*? It moves the hearts of those who thus know His Name to gather around it now, just as all the redeemed will cluster around His Person by and by in glory. But it does more. Its power is felt in heaven. Moved by the attractions of that Name, and in sympathy with those on earth who are seeking to honour it, God, as it were, rises from His throne and comes down. He must be where His Son is honoured; yes, and make His habitation there. And need we wonder? Redemption finished—sin gone—God glorified—the Son of man in heaven, and His Name honoured on earth! God is now free to dwell with man. But, remember, *all the attraction is in that Name alone*. The finest building, the most gorgeous services, the most gifted office-bearers, the most intelligent congregation, the most venerated of places, without the Name of Christ as the alone Centre, would present no attraction to God. Such display moves Him not from His throne. It lacks "the one thing needful"—that which would give a value to all the rest. Still, God loves His saints that are there, and ceases not to care for them; but it is no dwelling place for Himself.

But on the other hand, a few Christians, plain and simple they may be, with scarcely a suitable place to meet in, come together. The name of the Lord Jesus is their only centre—they “are gathered together” in His name. Very different to each other in many things they may be, but, drawn by the attractions of that one Name, they are found together on Lord’s day morning. Suppose they number twenty; to faith, twenty-one would be present. The Lord Himself is there in the Person of the Holy Spirit—there is a sweet sense of His presence to the spiritual mind. It is a real and a blessed thing. Not only are we sure from His word that He is with us, but also from the witness of the Spirit. The pledges of a love stronger than death meets the eye. “Remember Me,” is His humble, but touching request: He asks not that we should gather around the remembrance of His Name, this world’s glory; but that we should think of Himself. “Remember Me;” yes, “*remember me in the depths — know me on the heights. Pass with me, in spirit, through the deep waters, where the weeds were wrapt about my head;—I can give you no stronger proof of my love—ascend with me the sunny heights of heaven—my home and yours.*” Thus the Spirit leads—thus the soul feasts on a full Christ. The head is anointed with the most fragrant oil, and the cup overflows with the choicest wine.

But, enquirest thou, my soul, Will God the Father come to the feast? It is the feast above all others in which His soul delighteth. The table is spread in the very scene wherein He was glorified; through the deep humiliation and sufferings of His beloved Son. So fully did He glorify God; so fully did He blot out sin; that in honour of the great work and the workman, God comes down and as it were says, Here will I dwell, this is my rest for ever. “The LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it. I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread.” Psa. cxxxii.

"THE APPLE TREE."

O TREE of beauty ! tree of fragrance rare !
 Surpassing far the forest sons—most fair !
 How deep, how still, thy shade in noontide heat !
 How sweet thy fruit, yea, to my taste most sweet !
 Gladly beneath thy shadow I'll repose,
 Forget awhile the conflict and the foes.

O house of joy ! O house of pure delight,
 Where faith doth gaze with unveiled raptured sight
 On thy deep charms, my Saviour ! Where thy love;
 Jesus, doth find full utterance—and above,
 Waved by each gentle breeze which passeth by,
 The banner love unfurls and floats on high !

O arm of strength—great in thy majesty,
 Yet greater still in love ! I lean on thee !
 Beneath my head thy 'circling clasp I find,
 And rest in peace ! While by the agile hind
 And the fleet roe my Saviour chargeth still,
 Stir not, wake not my Love until she will.

E. C. L.



THE COMFORTER.

(AN EXTRACT.)*

"BUT I apprehend the word 'Comforter' sometimes fails (perhaps to most fails) to give an adequate notion of what it is that our Lord Jesus really meant us to gather from thus speaking of the Holy Ghost. We might very naturally draw from it, that the term was in relation to sorrow, that it intimated a person who would console us in the midst of the distresses of this lower world. And, indeed, the Holy Ghost does console us and comfort us.

* From "Lectures on the New Testament Doctrine of the Holy Spirit," by Mr. W. Kelly. London: W. H. Broom, Paternoster Row.

But this is only a very small part of the functions here conveyed by the word 'Paraclete.' This is the expression, if one would give an English reproduction of that which is in point of fact the very word our Lord employed. But the meaning of that word 'Paraclete' is not merely 'Comforter,' but one who is identified with our interests, one who undertakes all our cause, one who engages to see us through our difficulties, one who in every way becomes both our representative and the great personal agent that transacts all our business for us. This is the meaning of the Advocate or Paraclete or Comforter, whatever equivalent may be preferred. Manifestly, then, it has an incomparably larger bearing than either 'advocate' on the one hand, or 'comforter' on the other: it includes both, but takes in a great deal more than either. In point of fact, it is One who is absolutely and infinitely competent to undertake for us whatever He could do in our favour, whatever was or might be the limit of our need, whatever our want in any difficulty, whatever the exigencies of God's grace for the blessing of our souls. Such the Holy Ghost is now; and how blessed it is to have such an One! But remark here, that it never was known before. I have already hinted, and indeed plainly expressed the conviction, that it will never be known again, fully allowing that there will be, as to extent, a larger outpouring of blessing in the world to come. But the personal presence of the Spirit here below as an answer to the glory of Christ at the right hand of God!—such a state of things never can be repeated. While the High Priest is above, the Spirit sent down gives a heavenly entrance into His glory, as well as redemption; when the High Priest comes out for the earthly throne, the Spirit then poured out will give a testimony suited to the earth over which the Lord will reign."



THE HEAVENLY REST.

THERE is an hour of peaceful rest

To mourning wanderers given :

THERE is a joy for souls distressed—

A balm for every wounded breast ;

'Tis found above—in heaven !

THERE is a soft, a downy bed,

'Tis fair as breath of even—

A couch for weary mortals spread,

Where they may rest the aching head,

And find repose in heaven !

THERE is a home for weary souls,

By sin and sorrow driven—

When tossed on life's tempestuous shoals,

Where storms arise, and ocean rolls,

And all is drear, but heaven !

THERE faith lifts up the tearful eye,

The heart with anguish riven ;

And views the tempest passing by,

The evening shadows quickly fly,

And all serene in heaven !

THERE fragrant flowers immortal bloom,

And joys supreme are given ;

THERE rays divine disperse the gloom :

Beyond the confines of the tomb

Appears the dawn of heaven !

MATTHEW XI. 28:—"Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." This is perfect grace; no restriction; no setting the Jew in the foremost seat of honour. But "Come unto me *all* ye that labour . . . and I will give you rest." It is without condition or qualification, if the needy but go to Him. "Come unto me"—"Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

CORRESPONDENCE.

108. "C. H. W.," Windsor. You ask, "Can there be no acceptable service where there is constraint, or mere sense of duty uppermost in the mind as cause of action?" The apostle, in 2 Corinthians v. says, "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again." Now where service is the result of this sort of constraint, it is, we may rest assured, most acceptable. As to the words "*duty*" and *responsibility*," some persons seem to object strongly to them. We must confess we have no sympathy with any such objection. We have heard it said, "Do not talk to us of duties," and "Do not load life with responsibilities." We reply, The word of God talks to us very largely of duties. A considerable portion of the apostolic epistles is devoted to the unfolding of christian duties; and it is remarkable that the very epistle which gives us the fullest insight into the Church's true place, gives us also the fullest statement of christian duty. (See Eph. iv.—vi.) The fact is, duty and responsibility flow out of life and relationship. I must have christian life ere I can fulfil christian duty; and I must be in a relationship, ere I can know the affections or discharge the responsibilities which belong to it. Nothing can be simpler. There is a vast difference between the "*deadly* doings" of a *sinner* looking for salvation, and the *lively* doings of a saint who knows he has it. It is when the former are cast off that the latter are really taken up. The precious blood of Christ purges our conscience from dead works, that we may, in peace and liberty, serve the living God. It is our bounden duty and our holy responsibility to serve. We really tremble for those people who object to such truly wholesome words as duty and responsibility. We can only

say, May the Lord give us grace to think more deeply and to feel more solemnly as to this great practical question !

109. "Windermere." Why have you not given your name, or even your initials? Perhaps you felt ashamed to own yourself the writer of such an uncharitable note. We could not wonder at this; but then you should either not have written at all, or have boldly and frankly appended your name. The fact is, your supposition is as unfounded as it is uncalled for. As God is our witness, the passage which you have quoted was not "meant as a thrust" at any one. It contains a plain wholesome truth to which we believe every spiritual person will yield a hearty assent. You yourself admit that it is "perfectly true in its general application," and that is precisely the way in which we meant it to be taken. We should like to ask you if you think your letter was dictated by that charity that thinketh no evil?

110. "A Troubled One." It is but a small thing to say we deeply sympathize with you, and pray the Lord to comfort you. If you would put your case a little more plainly we might be able, through the Lord's mercy, to offer you a word of counsel.

111. "Alphonse," Stafford. We do not feel called upon to pronounce a judgment as to the practice to which you refer, or as to those who adopt it. Philippians ii. 10, 11 will have its full accomplishment by and by, when all shall own the One who took the lowly place, and made Himself of no reputation. No doubt those who are taught of God do, even now, anticipate that glorious moment, and yield the homage of their hearts to Him who alone is worthy; but this is in spirit and in truth, and not merely by bodily attitude.

112. "E. S.," Paignton. We judge it would be more becoming for a brother to discharge the duty to which you refer. We merely suggest an opinion. We are not aware of any definite scripture on the point; but we would say, in

the language of the apostle, "Doth not even nature itself teach you?" If however, there is no brother capable of rendering the service, it is a question whether a sister might not, with grace and modesty, render seasonable help in the matter. But let us in all things seek to walk in meekness and forbearance.

113. "Emma," North Brixton. Judging from the tone of your letter, we feel assured the Lord will guide you into the right path of service. We are not told in what specific way "those women laboured with Paul in the gospel," but we know there are a thousand ways in which a woman may serve in the gospel without ever stepping out of that sphere which properly belongs to her. As to the married woman, we feel increasingly persuaded that *home* is pre-eminently her place; there she has a hallowed and elevated sphere in which she can serve in the full consciousness of being exactly where the hand of God has set her, and where His word directs her. May the Lord bless and keep you!

114. "A Learner," Queen's Co. The different grades of sin offering, in Leviticus iv. and v. set forth, as we believe, the varied measure of our apprehension of Christ as the sin-bearer. That measure may be so feeble as to find its illustration in "a handful of flour;" but God's estimate of Christ's atoning work is ever the same, and He acts towards us according to His estimate, and not according to ours. Hence, in the great atonement, in Leviticus xvi. *blood*, not *flour*, was carried in within the veil. It was a question of the claims of God, and He declares that "without shedding of blood is no remission." "A handful of flour" could never shadow forth God's apprehension of the cross. As to John v. 14, we do not exactly see the force of your question. It is very possible that his bodily affliction had been the result of some special sin, and our Lord tells him to sin no more, lest, in the governmental dealings of God, a worse thing should come upon him.

115. "An Inquirer," near Stonehouse. We are most

fully persuaded that the expression "that day" in 2 Thessalonians ii. refers to the Lord's coming in judgment on the world; ~~and~~ that ere it comes the Church will be gathered to her heavenly home. The apostle beseeches the saints, by the Lord's *coming* and by their gathering unto Him, not to be agitated about "the *day*." It seems exceedingly plain if we will only read it with simplicity.

116. "S. B." Thanks for your note and the accompanying lines.

117. "A Believer." It would not comport with the character and object of this Magazine to discuss your question.

118. "E. S." We assuredly judge that Peter's going to fish was a return to that which he had given up for Christ's sake. The expression, "more than these," we believe refers to the disciples and not to the fish. Peter had said "Though all should deny thee, yet will not I;" and the Lord's question was designed to test the heart of His poor servant. May the Lord keep us humble and watchful!

119. "S. J.," N. B. You ask, "In what sense did Moses endure reproach for Christ?" We believe it was by identifying himself with the people of God in all their misery and degradation. He might have kept himself apart, and used his influence on behalf of the people; but this would not have been like Christ, who, in perfect grace, *not of necessity but voluntarily*, threw Himself into all the circumstances of His people. "In all their afflictions he was afflicted." He not merely acted *for* them; but He identified Himself *with* them. This is a great practical truth for the soul. It is one thing to patronize Christianity, and quite another thing to have fellowship with a rejected Christ. Let us remember this. Christ invites us to taste the privilege of having heart-fellowship with Him. He does not want patronage. There may be a quantity of the latter without one atom of the former; indeed it will often be found that persons patronize Christianity merely to exalt self. This is terrible. We have not space for your other queries.

THE THREE APPEARINGS.

(Read Heb. ix. 24—28.)

“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, *now to appear* in the presence of God for us: nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the ages *hath he appeared*, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him *shall he appear* the second time apart from sin, unto salvation.”*

The foregoing passage sets before us three great facts in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. It speaks of what we may venture to call three distinct appearances, namely, an appearing in the past; an appearing in the present; and an appearing in the future. He *hath* appeared, in this world, to do a certain work: He *doth* appear in heaven to carry on a certain ministry; and He *shall* appear in glory. The first is Atonement; the second is Advocacy; the third is the Advent. And first, then, let us dwell for a few moments on

THE ATONEMENT,

which is here presented in its two grand aspects, first, to Godward; and secondly, to usward. The apostle declares that Christ hath appeared “to put away *sin* ;” and also “to

* The English reader should be informed that the three words which are rendered in the above passage, “appear,” are not the same in the original Greek; but our object is to deal with the facts set forth, rather than with the words employed.

bear the sins of many." This is a distinction of the utmost importance, and one not sufficiently understood or attended to. Christ has put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He has glorified God in reference to the question of sin, in its very broadest aspect. This He has done, altogether irrespective of the question of persons, or the forgiveness of the *sins* of individuals. Even though every soul, from the days of Adam down to the very last generation, were to reject the proffered mercy of God, yet would it hold good that the atoning death of Christ had put away sin—had destroyed the power of Satan—had perfectly glorified God, and laid the deep and solid foundation on which all the divine counsels and purposes can rest for ever.

It is to this that the Baptist refers in those memorable words, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the *sin* of the world." (John i. 29.) The Lamb of God has wrought a work in virtue of which every trace of sin shall be obliterated from the creation of God. He has perfectly vindicated God in the very midst of a scene in which He had been so grossly dishonoured, in which His character had been traduced, and His majesty insulted. He came to do this at all cost, even at the sacrifice of Himself. He sacrificed Himself in order to maintain, in view of heaven, earth, and hell, the glory of God. He has wrought a work by the which God is infinitely more glorified than if sin had not entered at all. God shall reap a richer harvest by far in the fields of redemption than ever he could have reaped in the fields of an unfallen creation.

It is well that the reader should deeply ponder this glorious aspect of the atoning death of Christ. We are apt to think that the very highest view we can take of the cross is that which involves the question of our forgiveness and salvation. This is a grave mistake. That question is divinely settled, as we shall seek to shew; for the less is always included in the greater. But let us remember that our side of the atonement is the less; God's side of it the

greater. It was infinitely more important that God should be glorified than that we should be saved. Both ends have been gained, blessed be God, and gained by one and the same work, the precious atonement of Christ; but we must never forget that the glory of God is of incalculably greater moment than the salvation of men, and further, that we never can have so clear a sense of the latter as when we see it flowing from the former. It is when we see that God has been perfectly and for ever glorified in the death of Christ, that we can really enter into the divine perfectness of our salvation. In point of fact, both are so intimately bound up together that they cannot be separated; but still God's part in the cross of Christ must ever get its own proper pre-eminence. The glory of God was ever uppermost in the devoted heart of the Lord Jesus Christ. For this He lived, for this He died. He came into this world for the express purpose of glorifying God, and from this great and holy object He never swerved, the breadth of a hair, from the manger to the cross. True it is—blessedly true, that in carrying out this object, He has perfectly met our case; but the divine glory ruled Him in life and in death.

Now, it is on the ground of atonement, looked at in this its higher aspect, that God has been dealing with the world in patient grace, mercy, and forbearance, for well nigh six thousand years. He sends His rain and His sunbeams upon the evil and upon the good, upon the just and the unjust. It is in virtue of the atonement of Christ—though despised and rejected—that the infidel and the atheist live, move, and have their being; yea, the very breath that they spend in opposing the revelation, and denying the existence of God, they owe to the atoning death of Christ. We speak not here, by any means, of the forgiveness of sins, or of the soul's salvation. This is another question altogether and to it we shall refer presently. But, looking at man in reference to his life in this world, and looking at the world

in which he lives, it is the cross which forms the basis of God's merciful dealing with both the one and the other.

Furthermore, it is on the ground of the atonement of Christ, in this same aspect of it, that the evangelist can go forth "*into all the world*, and preach glad tidings to every creature." He can declare the blessed truth that God has been glorified as to sin—His claims satisfied—His majesty vindicated—His law magnified—His attributes harmonized. He can proclaim the precious message that God can now be just and yet the justifier of any poor ungodly sinner that believes in Jesus. There is no hindrance, no barrier of any kind whatsoever. The preacher of the gospel is not to be cramped by any dogmas of theology. His preaching leaves the domain of sound theology wholly untouched. He has to do with the large, loving heart of God, which, in virtue of atonement, can flow forth to every creature beneath the canopy of heaven. He can say to each and to all—and say it without reserve—"COME!" Nay, more, he is bound to "*beseech*" them to come. "*We pray* you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Such is the proper language of the evangelist, the herald of the cross, the ambassador of Christ. He knows no less a range than the wide, wide world; and he is called to drop his message into the ear of every creature under heaven.

And why? Because "Christ hath put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself." He has, by His most precious death, changed completely the ground of God's dealings with man and with the world, so that instead of having to deal with them on the ground of sin, He can deal on the ground of atonement.

Finally, it is in virtue of the atonement, in this broad and lofty aspect, that every vestige of sin, and every trace of the serpent shall be obliterated from the wide universe of God. Then shall be seen the full force of that passage above referred to, "The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world;" and also another well known clause,

namely, "The propitiation.....for the whole world."*
1 John ii. 2.

Thus much as to what we may call the primary aspect of the atoning death of Christ—an aspect which cannot be too thoughtfully studied. A clear understanding of this weighty point would tend to remove a great deal of difficulty and misunderstanding in reference to the full and free preaching of the gospel. Many of the Lord's honoured servants find themselves hindered in the presentation of the glad tidings of salvation, simply because they do not see this wide aspect of the atonement. They confine the death of Christ merely to its bearing upon the sins of God's elect; and they therefore deem it wrong to preach the gospel to all, or to invite—yea to beseech and entreat—all to come. They judge it to be false and wrong to invite any to come save the elect, inasmuch as they alone were the objects for whom Christ died.

Now, that Christ did die for the elect, scripture distinctly teaches, in manifold places. He died for the elect nation

* The reader cannot be too particular in weighing the full force of this important passage. The introduction of the words "the *sins* of," is peculiarly unhappy. It teaches a doctrine which we feel assured our excellent translators would repudiate as strongly as any one; in short, the doctrine of universalism. If Christ is the propitiation for the actual *sins* of every one in the world, then, most assuredly, every one in the world should be saved. But the passage teaches nothing of the kind. It stands in company with that magnificent declaration of the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the *sin* of the world." Whenever we find the word "*sins*," it is always connected with persons, and the ground on which they are forgiven; and then the question of faith and of the entire work of grace in the soul is involved. People are only forgiven when they repent and believe the gospel. We commend this whole subject to the prayerful consideration of the reader. Let him weigh it thoughtfully in the light of holy scripture, not in the light of the dogmas of any particular school of divinity.

of Israel, and for the elect Church of God—the bride of Christ. But scripture teacheth more than this. It declares that “He died for *all*” (2 Cor. v. 14); that “He tasted death for *every man*.” (Heb. ii. 9.) There is no need whatever for seeking to avoid the plain force and meaning of these and kindred statements of inspiration. And further, we believe it to be quite wrong to add our own words to God’s words in order to reconcile them with any particular system of doctrine. When scripture affirms that Christ died for all, we have no right to add the words “the elect.” And when scripture states that Christ “tasted death for every man,” we have no right to say, “every elect man.” It is our place to take God’s word as it stands, and reverently bow to its authoritative teaching, in all things. We can no more attempt to systematize God’s word than we can systematize God Himself. God’s word, and God’s heart, and God’s nature are quite too deep, broad, and comprehensive to be included within the limits of the very broadest and best constructed human system of theology that was ever framed. We shall, ever and anon, be discovering passages of scripture which will not fall in with our system. We must remember that God is love, and this love will tell itself out to all without limit. True, God has His counsels, His purposes, and His decrees; but it is not these He presents to the poor lost sinner. He will instruct and interest His saints about such things; but to the guilty heavy-laden sinner, He presents His love, His grace, His mercy, His readiness to save, to pardon, and to bless.

And let it be well remembered that the sinner’s responsibility flows out of what is *revealed*, and not out of what is *secret*. God’s decrees are secret; His nature, His character, Himself, is revealed. The sinner will not be judged for rejecting what he had no means of knowing. “This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” John iii. 19.

We are not writing a theological treatise ; but we do feel it to be a matter of the gravest moment to press upon the reader that his responsibility, as a sinner, is based upon the fact that the aspect of the salvation of God, and of the atonement of Christ, is, most distinctly and decidedly, "unto all," and not merely to a certain number of the human family. The glorious message is sent forth into all the world. Everyone who hears it is invited to come. This is grounded upon the fact that Christ has put away sin—that the blood of atonement has been carried into the presence of God—that the barrier which sin presented has been flung down and abolished, and now the mighty tide of divine love can flow freely forth to the very vilest of the sons of men.

Such is the message ; and when any one, through grace, believes it, he can be further told that, not only has Christ put away *sin*, but that also He has borne his *sins*—the actual sins of all His people—of all who believe in His name. The evangelist can stand up in the midst of assembled thousands and declare that Christ has put away sin—that God is satisfied—that the way is open for all ; and he can whisper the same in the ear of each and every sinner under heaven. Then, when any one has bowed down to this testimony—when the repentant, broken-hearted, self-judged sinner receives the blessed record—he can be further taught that his *sins* were all laid on Jesus, all borne and for ever put away by Him when He died on the cross.

This is the plain doctrine of Hebrews ix. 26, 28, and we have a striking type of it in the two goats of Leviticus xvi. If the reader will just turn to the passage, he will find there, first, the *slain* goat ; and, secondly, the *scape* goat. The blood of the slain goat was brought into the sanctuary and sprinkled there. This was a type of Christ putting away *sin*. Then the high priest, on behalf of the congregation, confessed all their *sins* upon the head of the scape goat, and they were borne away into a land not inhabited. This was

a type of Christ bearing the sins of His people. The two goats, taken together, give us a full view of the atonement of Christ, which, like the righteousness of God, in Romans iii. is "unto all, and upon all that believe."

All this is most simple. It removes many difficulties out of the way of the earnest seeker after peace. These difficulties arise, in many cases, from the conflicting dogmas of theological systems, and have no foundation whatever in holy scripture. There all is as plain and as clear as God can make it. Each one who hears the message of God's free love is bound, not to say invited, to receive it; and judgment will, most assuredly, fall upon each and all who refuse or neglect the proffered mercy. It is utterly impossible for any one who has ever heard the gospel, or ever had the New Testament in his hand, to get rid of the awful responsibility that rests upon him to accept God's salvation. Not a single soul will have to say, "I could not believe, because I was not one of the elect, and did not get power to believe." No one will ever dare to say or even to think this. If any could take such ground, then where were the force or the meaning of the following burning words?—"The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with the angels of his power, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. i. 7, 8.) Will any one ever be punished for not obeying the gospel, if he is not responsible to yield that obedience? Most assuredly not. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

But does God send His gospel to people merely to place them under responsibility and increase their guilt? Far be the monstrous thought. He sends His gospel to the lost sinner in order that he may be saved, for God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. All, therefore, who perish shall have none but themselves to blame.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

MEDITATIONS ON THE CHRISTIAN'S VOCATION.

(EPHESIANS IV.)

At this feast, God is present in testimony to the infinite preciousness of the work of Christ, and to His presence at His own right hand in heaven; and we may also add, in blessed testimony to the power of that precious blood which hath cleansed us from all sin. What a scene for the eye and the heart of God! What a scene for faith! The Spirit leads. It may be by a gifted brother, or by one known especially for his spiritual-mindedness. But the Spirit is sovereign. He gives the key-note Himself. "He is the author of peace in all the churches of the saints." He is the power of worship. Praise and thanksgiving characterize the breaking of bread. There is nothing to pray for at the Lord's table. We have not to remind Him of anything. He has forgotten nothing. Everything is provided—everything is prepared by Himself. Blessed, royal feast! We can only admire, adore, and wonder. It is a spiritual feast. When the Spirit thus leads, God is worshipped in spirit and in truth. Heaven's joy is tasted on earth. We sometimes wonder if it will be sweeter in heaven. This, remember, O my soul, is the highest expression of thy worship, and the most sacred act in thy holy vocation.

"The veil is rent;—our souls draw near
Unto a throne of grace;
The merits of the Lord appear,
They fill the holy place."

"'Tis finished'—here our souls have rest,
His work can never fail;
By Him, our Sacrifice and Priest,
We pass within the veil.

Within the holiest of all,
Cleansed by His precious blood,
Before the throne we prostrate fall,
And worship thee, O God."

Thou wilt now see, my soul, and better understand, what the house of God is, and also what we mean by the "breaking of bread." And needest thou wonder at the peculiar solemnity of the apostle's appeal to the Corinthians when they were acting disorderly in the Church? "Know ye not," he says, "that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.) These are plain and solemn words. And mark, they describe not what the Church will be by and by, but what it is now. Oh! how loud do such facts call for holiness of heart and life—for "truth in the inward parts"—for conformity to His will in all things! Could anything be more solemn, and yet could anything be more blessed? To have a place—to be at home with God in His holy temple—to be a dweller where "the Spirit of God dwelleth," is surely our highest dignity and richest blessing on earth. Certainly after conversion there is none to compare with it.

Here call in thy thoughts, O my soul, centre them all on this great truth. For a while, meditate only on the character, privileges, and responsibilities of God's dwelling-place. The thought is wonderful, but it will grow yet more so through thy deeper meditations. Believe the word, however wonderful—obey it, however difficult, and heaven's richest blessings for a soul still in the body are thine. This temple, remember, of which we thus speak, is founded on finished redemption and a glorified Christ. It is a much deeper thing than a mere church question, though the Church is the place in which all this glory shines. It is plainly called "the house of God—the pillar and ground of the truth." (1 Tim. iii. 15.) Let me ask thee not to

look at it in its outward character, as it now appears through man's unfaithfulness, but think of it according to the word of God, the claims of Christ, the work of regeneration, and the sealing of the Holy Ghost.

Watch! judge thyself, then, lest thou shouldest forget whose house it is, and who dwells in it. Watch! I say, lest long familiarity with a place should weaken in thee the deep sense of God's presence there. It is no light matter to enter a place, of which faith can say, "The living God is here." As saith the scriptures, "Ye are the temple of the living God." And, "The Spirit of God dwelleth in you." That means in the Church or temple, as it is here called. I would urge these cautions, knowing that habit is apt to produce formality, and formality would be ruinous here. Human thoughts and human forms should have no place in the temple of God. There the Holy Ghost abides for ever. His stay is not transient as was the blessed Lord's. Knowing this—believing this—what then? Surely our truest wisdom, our highest privilege, our richest blessing, our deepest humility, is in submitting to Him. No one who believes that a divine Person is present would ever think of taking the lead. Neither would any company of Christians, believing this, ever select and appoint a fellow Christian to do so. Both must be the fruit of unbelief. The effect, however, *practically*, is to displace the Holy Spirit; or, rather, to "Quench the Spirit." 1 Thess. v. 19.

Knowest thou, my soul, for thyself, this happy place of thy Lord's presence? "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." Is thy nature judged, root and branch? This is no place for the flesh. Is it thy one desire to discern the Spirit's leading, and to follow His current in the assembly? Wouldest thou not break the silence of that sacred place without being happy in His guidance? This exercise of soul will keep thee closely waiting on thy Lord—will lead thee into

deep self-judgment, and to be occupied only with Himself. But this is the place of blessing; there is none other on earth at all to be compared with it. Gathered around the Person of Christ—governed by the Holy Spirit—God the Father delighting in His children and blessing them—this is the assembly—the habitation of God through the Spirit. It is more than “the gate of heaven,” though actually on the earth; it is, to faith, the Holy of holies. Of course it is a searching place for the soul, and few will care to be long there, who are not happy in the light of His presence.

Wilt thou now look around thee, my soul, and see if thou canst find any company of Christians that will answer to the word of God thus considered? If so, thou hast found His dwelling-place on earth. Enter there in faith. Blessed discovery! It is the place where the Father reveals Himself to His children—where the Holy Ghost reveals the glory of Christ to His waiting people, even according to the full promise of the Lord: “He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.” The numbers may be few, the disciples may be weak, but these circumstances change not the ground on which they are gathered. The Lord is faithful. If they answer to His character the blessing will flow. “These things saith he that is holy, he that is true.” It is thus as the Holy One and the True, that we meet Him. Therefore the one, grand, all-important question with all who break bread, is, “What is due to the presence of Christ?” Not, what is due to this one and that one, however much their praise may be in all the churches; but, *What is due to Christ?*

But now, with respect to the Holy Spirit, tell me, I pray thee, Is not the Holy Spirit in every individual believer, and may He not work, and does He not surely work, by office-bearers duly appointed in the Church? Most truly the Holy Ghost is in every individual Christian, as saith the scriptures, “Know ye not that your body is the temple

of the Holy Ghost, which is in you?" Hence that solemn word, which I regard as one of the most important precepts in the New Testament, "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." The Holy Spirit thus dwells in the believer, and will continue to do so until redemption is completed, even as to the body; so that there is no fear of a true Christian ever being lost, or one particle of his redeemed dust ever perishing; even the hairs of his head are numbered. The Holy Spirit, in short, has taken possession of the body, and will never lose sight of it, dead or alive, until He delivers it up to God, a glorified body, 1 Cor. vi. 19; Eph. iv. 30; Rom. viii. 11; 1 Cor. xv. 42—44.

Thus far we are perfectly agreed, but still it is quite clear that the apostle, in 1 Corinthians iii. and similar portions, is speaking, not of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in individuals, or of His working by one whom a congregation may have chosen and ordained to be over them; but of the Holy Spirit Himself in the assembly, as the one to direct, minister, sustain, and bless the assembly, or the saints, according to the will of God." "Ye are *God's* husbandry, ye are *God's* building, ye are the temple of the living *God*, the Spirit of *God* dwelleth in you." These are *God's* words, not *mine*. And carefully note, I pray thee, how much God has to do with the assembly. It is worthy of all note, both as a guard upon our wills, and as a source of unspeakable blessing to our souls. Thus He works, observe, "Ye are *God's* husbandry, ye are *God's* building. And "we are labourers together with *God*." He works in various ways by means of the living members of the body. But then, it is by whomsoever *He* will, not by whomsoever *we* will. We must not hinder *His* working by any fixed arrangement of *ours*. Always leave room for the Spirit to act as He pleases. Being God, He works for the good of all: we are partial and selfish. But let me endeavour to make the Spirit's place and action yet more plain.

In answer to the confession of Peter in Matthew xvi., "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," the Lord says to him, "Upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Now, observe, the living stones were before Him, Peter was a stone, but they were still separate, individual stones. The building was not begun. It was not till after the death, resurrection, and glorification of Christ that the living stones were builded together. Turn now to the Acts of the Apostles. In chapter i. we find that the Holy Spirit is not yet come. The disciples are instructed to wait for Him; assured that they would be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence; and that they would receive power after that the Holy Ghost was come upon them. (What has been said a few pages back, on the "Comforter being *sent* and *come*," may be consulted here, as forming a link between Matthew xvi. and the opening of the Acts.) In chapter ii. He descends in manifested power: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

This was the gathering "together *in one* the children of God that were scattered abroad," according to the word of the Lord, John xi. 52. The Church of God, we may say, is now formed. The Holy Ghost has come down, forms the unity, takes His place in it, and there to abide for ever! Now the Church has an existence, *in fact*, on the earth. The counsels of God from all eternity are accomplished. The Holy Ghost builds the Church according to the word of the Lord in Matthew xvi., "Upon this rock I will build my Church." The living stones are now brought together.

The house of God is commenced. The hundreds of believers spoken of in the New Testament are incorporated into "*one body*." Then they were chiefly Jews; the Gentiles were afterwards brought in. Acts x.

Peter begins at once to preach Christ as *Lord*, but with mighty power. He was filled with the Holy Ghost. He boldly charges the men of Israel with the guilt of crucifying their own Messiah; but that God had raised Him up—exalted Him to His own right hand in heaven, and made Him "both Lord and Christ." Three thousand were converted and added to the infant Church. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousands souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." This chapter, so wonderful in its records, and so worthy of special note, closes with this statement, "And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." The Church is now fairly formed—the building goes on—its history is begun, whether viewed as the body of Christ, or as the dwelling-place of God.

Thou wilt now see, my soul, from this rapid sketch, that the Holy Ghost first forms the Church, and then dwells in it. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one spirit." He sets the different members in their several places. "But now hath God set the members in the body as it hath pleased him." Having thus formed the body, and set the different members in their several places, He ministers to it of the fulness and glory of Christ, and guides all its movements.

Now thou canst see the two things—the Holy Ghost in the Church, and in the individual Christian. But just because He is in the body, He is in the members. The soul of man, dwelling in his body, guides and uses its different

members, just because it is there. It may use the eye, the ear, the hand, the foot, or the unseen heart; but we should think it strange to hear a person saying, that the soul was in the *individual* members, but not in the body. Just so the Holy Spirit dwells and acts in the body of Christ; only He is perfect in wisdom, love, and power, but the soul is feeble, selfish, and erring. The cause of the blindness of many minds on this subject, is ignorance of the "one body and one Spirit." But scripture is plain, and we who have it are responsible. "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.....the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." This is the Church in its unity, according to the word of God. It is the body—the spouse of Christ, and the habitation of God through the Spirit.

And now let me add, see that thou grasp fully this great truth. So few seem to do so, or care to do so. Nevertheless, it has been the great truth before God on the earth for the last eighteen hundred years. It is the temple of God. True, that temple may be defiled by false doctrine, worldliness, or immorality; but God dwells in that which belongs to Christ. His precious blood has made it an habitation meet for God Himself to dwell in. When we think of the Church as the body of Christ—His bride; and as *one* with Him; we wonder not at God dwelling there.

Through the pride, covetousness, and dreadful wickedness of man, the outward appearance of the Church has completely—sadly changed. But all who are built on the *Rock-foundation* are eternally secure. That Rock never moves. The gates of hell can never prevail against it. Myriads of bodies that belong to Christ now lie under the power of the grave—the gates of hades are closed upon them. But the day is coming when these gates, so long closed, must fly open. Every saint of God, from Adam downwards, shall come forth in glory and victory. The

morning of the first resurrection will be the grand declaration of the Lord's promise to His Church: "And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

"O HAPPY morn! the Lord will come,
And take His waiting people home
Beyond the reach of care;
Where guilt and sin are all unknown:
The Lord will come and claim His own,
And place them with Him on His throne,
The glory bright to share.

The resurrection-morn will break,
And every sleeping saint awake,
Brought forth in light again;
O morn, too bright for mortal eyes!
When all the ransomed Church shall rise,
And wing their way to yonder skies—
Called up with Christ to reign."



"HOW AM I TO COME TO JESUS?"

"BUT how am I to come to Jesus? Here is just the one thing I do not see. If I saw Him before me, I could arise and come to Him; but I do not really know what to do, or what you want me to do. If I knew it, I would do it. I want only to know it."

He said this with unusual earnestness and anxiety.

"I am glad that you have thought about this question. I hope that it can be made clear to you. The best way is to take you to God's book. You remember what took place when the woman came behind Jesus, and touched the hem of His garment. She felt her own sad condition. She believed He could cure her. She struggled to Him through the crowd. She touched His garment, and was made whole. Now this woman was one who did come to Jesus."

"Yes: it is plain."

"But why do you say that it is plain? Tell me this—What was there in that act of hers that leads you at once to perceive that she came to Jesus? It was not her making her way to Him through the multitude. It was not the mere fact of touching Him. Others were touching Him."

"No: there must have been something more."

"Is it not clear that this was no common touch—a touch not by the fingers, but something else? *Did not her heart go out to touch the heart of Jesus?* Did she not put herself in such contact with Him that *the soul* was the instrument, and *not the finger?* Here, then, is my conclusion. To come to Jesus is to do what this woman did. Try to put yourself in her place. Try to enter into her feelings, and to realize what she felt. If you can do this, you will understand what is meant by coming to Jesus."

"Observe three things about her: she felt how utterly diseased and helpless she was, and loathed herself. Is not this your case? She fully believed that there was within her reach a mighty and a loving Saviour, able and willing to save her. This is what I ask you to believe. She did not cease until she touched Him, and sent her soul out to Him in that touch. This is what I am urging upon you. This is coming to Jesus."

"This does make it very plain. It is all plain now."

"I will ask you a question. If Jesus were now here present before our eyes, what would you do? would you go away?"

"Oh, no! I would go to Him, and fall down and touch Him, and cry, *Be merciful to me a sinner.*"

"But is He not here? Why not now? Do go and send out your heart and soul on this errand—to touch Him, and be saved. He is close at hand. He is waiting for this touch from you."

And so the scales fell off those eyes, and he touched

Jesus with as true a touch as did the woman of old. The dead was alive: the lost was found.

And now there was a change obvious to all. That dark, reserved, almost sullen man, was eager to speak and tell the good news to all. Is it not always so?

After a very few days his disease increased with fatal rapidity. He was stretched on a dying bed, and went through much suffering; but to the last there was simple joy and honest faith; and he loved to bear testimony to every one in that shape that was so dear to his own soul: "Only touch Jesus, as the woman did, and as I have done. This is all. Do this, and you shall be saved."

G. S. S.

FRAGMENT.

THE one grand distinction, before God, by which a man's state and destiny are determined, is the *belief* or *rejection* of the truth. To *believe* is to be saved; to live and die in *unbelief* is to be sealed up in hopeless and endless condemnation. True faith and certain salvation; continued unbelief and eternal misery; are inseparably linked together in the word of God. It is not sacramental efficacy or priestly absolutions; it is not by human effort or self-restraint; it is not by our own merit or our own exertions, and surely not by the merits or endeavours of our fellow creatures, that we can be saved: it is by grace through faith. "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. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." Romans x.

POETRY.

"My beloved is mine : and I am his."—Cant. ii. 16.

"I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine."—Cant. vi. 3.

LONG did I toil, and knew no earthly rest ;
Far did I rove, and found no certain home :
At last I sought them in His sheltering breast,
Who opes His arms and bids the weary come.
With Him I found a home, a rest divine ;
And I *since then am His*, and He is mine.

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

The good I have is from His store supplied ;
The ill is only what *He* deems *the best* :
He for my Friend, I'm rich with nought beside ;
And poor without Him, though of all possessed.
Changes may come—I take or I resign—
Content to *know* I'm His, and He is mine.

Whate'er may change, in Him no change is seen ;
A glorious Sun that wanes not nor declines ;
Above the clouds and storms He walks serene,
And sweetly on His people's darkness shines.
All may depart—I fret not nor repine,
I *know* that I am His, that He is mine.

He stays me falling ; lifts me up when down ;
Reclaims me wandering ; guards from every foe ;
Plants on my worthless brow the victor's crown,
Which, in return, before His feet I throw :
Grieved that I cannot better grace His shrine,
Who deigns to own me His, as He is mine.

While here, alas ! I know *but half* His love,
But half discern Him, and *but half* adore ;
But when I meet Him in the realms above,
I then shall love Him better, praise Him more ;
And feel, and tell, amid the choir divine,
How fully I am His, and He is mine !



CORRESPONDENCE.

120. "J. D. G.," Bayswater, London. It seems to us that you confound two things perfectly distinct in Old Testament Scripture, namely, the nation of Israel under the law, and the true saints of God who were quickened by the Holy Ghost, believed in the promised Saviour, and possessed eternal life. Surely you do not mean to teach that Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and the whole cloud of Old Testament witnesses had not eternal life. Had they not something more than "the Jewish knowledge of God"? Our Lord Christ declares, in John viii., that "Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it and was glad." Was that merely "Jewish knowledge"? Moses "esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." Was not that something beyond "the blood of bulls and goats"? Do you really deny that the Old Testament saints possessed eternal life? We can hardly believe it; and yet it would seem so from the fact of your objecting to the statement, in our May number, in reply to our Correspondent "S."—"Assuredly, the Old Testament saints possessed eternal life." We do most surely believe this statement, and we marvel at your objection. We do not believe that the Jews, as such, had eternal life: and here, as we judge, lies the secret of your mistake, for all the scriptures to which you refer, specially Hebrews and Galatians, have respect to Israel under the law, and not to the spiritual people of God whose names are recorded in Hebrews xi. No doubt a mighty change has taken place in the position and privileges of God's people, in consequence of the death and resurrection of Christ, His glorification at the right hand of God, and the descent of the Holy Ghost. Our Lord Himself declares, in John x., "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." And not only this, but in every respect, believers

are placed on advanced ground by the death and resurrection of Christ, but we regard it as a very grave error indeed to deny that Old Testament saints possessed eternal life.

121. "H. M. C.," Tottenham. It is most painfully evident that persons who can take part in such proceedings as those set forth in the advertisement which you enclose, must know but little indeed of Christ as an object for the heart, and a covering for the eyes. It is not only deplorable, but most appalling, to find those who profess to be Christians rushing after such vanity and folly. We must say, and it is the very least we can say, that we should not like our Lord to come and find us at such work.

122. "Why Not," Stroud. We most heartily concur in all you say as to the responsibility of those who speak or pray in public, to do so in an audible voice. We cannot see the use of speaking if it cannot be heard. An *unheard* tongue is, to all intents and purposes, the same as an *unknown* tongue. Now, the apostle, in 1 Cor. xiv., insists upon edification as the result of all speaking, praying, and giving of thanks. A man speaking in an unknown tongue is to be silenced if there be no interpreter. Why? Because he cannot edify. Well, then, how can I be edified by a man whose words I cannot hear? Impossible. It seems to us that instead of edification, in such a case, one gets irritation. If a man rises to speak in an assembly, he owes it to his Lord and to his audience to do his very utmost to speak in such a voice as to be heard by the most distant auditor. It is most deplorable to find some of our young men falling into the insufferable habit of mumbling; and we would earnestly entreat of all such to watch against it, and cultivate diligently a plain audible style of speaking and praying. We do not, by any means, wish to encourage shouting or bawling, which is quite as insufferable in its way as mumbling. We would give the following passage, from the book of Nehemiah, as furnishing an

example which we might all profit by. "So they read in the book in the law of God *distinctly*, and *gave the sense*, and caused them to *understand the reading*. (Chap. viii. 8.) What was the result? "All the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, *because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.*" (v. 12.) If Ezra and his companions had read in a mumbling style, or spoken obscurely, the people could not have understood them.

123. "M. M.," Rearsby. We judge there is still a little confusion in your mind as to "the old husband" in Romans vii. We do not think it is the flesh any more than the law, though, assuredly, the flesh is to be reckoned dead, for such it is in God's account; and faith always takes God's view of matters. The fact is, we are apt to get confused through not distinguishing, in Romans vii. between the illustration of the marriage tie, and the application. In the illustration it is the husband that dies; but in the application it is we who have died. In short, it is death that dissolves the tie—not the death of the law, but our death. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ." And again, "But now we are delivered from the law, being dead to that wherein we were held." (See Margin.) In chapter vi. the question of "the flesh" is handled. In chapter vii. the question of "the law." Death delivers from both the one and the other. We heartily thank you for your letter.

124. "C. K.," Hastings. We entirely agree with your view of ministry. We believe that every member of the body has a ministry; and it is by each one knowing his place and his functions in the body, and working effectually therein, that the growth of all is promoted. On the other hand, it is most disastrous for anyone to mistake his line of things, since he not only fails as to his own work but hinders others in theirs. May the Lord give us grace to know our niche and fill it! And may we learn to be

content with a very little and a very humble niche. Some one has said, "I never was truly happy until I ceased to wish to be great." This is a wholesome saying, and one which some of us would do well to ponder. It is immensely important for each one to know his own proper work. A man's whole life may be one tissue of mistakes, simply owing to his having never really fallen into his divinely appointed line of things. This is very deplorable, in every way. Not only does it involve a loss of time and labour on his own part, but it also, of necessity, interferes with the work of others.

May the Lord guide and keep us! And may our earnest breathing ever be "Lord, what wilt *thou* have *me* to do?"

125. "G. B.," Greensted, Essex. You should apply to our publisher, Mr. Morrish.

126. "S. N." Your question is hardly suitable for our pages.

127. "A Country Reader." We fully enter into your feelings, and those of the Christians to whom you refer. Wait on the Lord. Wait patiently. He will shine on your path, and lead you on in His ways.

128. "J. A. S.," Swindon. 1 Corinthians v. 4, 5 sets forth the course to be pursued in such a case as you adduce.

129. "Friede," Cork. Your kind and interesting letter has come to hand. We should be most happy to reply to your queries were it not that they lead into a line of things rather foreign to the object of this Magazine. May the Lord Himself be your teacher, beloved friend. Be much in His presence. *Enquire in the temple.*

130. "E. W.," London. We read in Mark xiv. 26 of a hymn *after* supper, not of one *during* the supper.

Communications have come to hand from "K. S. S.," Hereford; "H. K.," Dublin; Anonymous, Derby; "E. B.," Uxbridge; "C. A. M.," Kilbany; "W. H. N.," Burwash; "G. S.," Deal.

THE THREE APPEARINGS.

(Read Heb. ix. 24—28.)

(PART II.)

It is of the very last importance that the reader should be established in the knowledge and practical sense of what the Atonement of Christ has accomplished for all who simply trust in Him. It is, we need hardly say, the only basis of peace. He has put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; and He has borne our sins, in His own body, on the tree. It is, therefore, impossible that any question as to sin or guilt can ever arise. All has been 'once and for ever' settled by the atoning death of the Lamb of God. True it is—alas! how true—we have sin in us; and we have, daily and hourly, to judge ourselves and judge our ways. It will ever hold good of us, so long as we are in a body of sin and death, that "in us, that is in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing." But then nothing can ever touch the question of our soul's perfect and eternal acceptance. The conscience of the believer is as completely purged from every soil and stain, as will be the whole creation, by and by. If it were not so, Christ could not be where He now is. He has entered into the presence of God, there to appear for us. This leads us, in the second place, to consider

THE ADVOCACY.

Very many souls are apt to confound two things which, though inseparably connected, are perfectly distinct, namely, Advocacy and Atonement. Not seeing the divine completeness of the Atonement, they are, in a certain way, looking to the Advocacy to do for them what the Atonement has done. We must remember that though, as to our standing, we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit; yet, as to the actual fact of our condition, we are in the body. We are, in spirit and by faith, seated in heavenly places in Christ; but yet we are actually in the wilderness, subject to all sorts of infirmities, liable to fail and err in a thousand ways.

Now it is to meet our present actual state and wants that

the Advocacy or Priesthood of Christ is designed. God be praised for the blessed provision ! As those who are in the body, passing through the wilderness, we need a great High Priest to maintain the link of communion, or to restore it when broken. Such an One we have, ever living to make intercession for us ; nor could we get on for a single moment without Him. The work of Atonement is never repeated ; the work of the Advocate is never interrupted. When once the blood of Christ is applied to the soul, by the power of the Holy Ghost, the application is never repeated. To think of a repetition is to deny its efficacy, and to reduce it to the level of the blood of bulls and goats. No doubt people do not see this ; and, most assuredly, they do not mean it ; but such is the real tendency of the thought of a fresh application of the blood of sprinkling. It may be that persons who speak in this way, really mean to put honour upon the blood of Christ, and to give expression to their own felt unworthiness ; but, in good truth, the best way to put honour upon the blood of Christ is to rejoice in what it has done for our souls ; and the best way to set forth our own unworthiness is to feel and remember that we were so vile, that nothing but the death of Christ could avail to meet our case. So vile were we that nothing but His blood could cleanse us. So precious is His blood that not a trace of our guilt remains. "The blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Thus it stands in reference to the very feeblest child of God whose eye scans these lines. "All sin's forgiven." Not a trace of guilt remains. Jesus is in the presence of God for us. He is there as a High Priest before God—as an Advocate with the Father.* He has, by His atoning death,

* The reader will notice, with interest, that in the epistle to the Hebrews, we have Priesthood ; in the first epistle of John we have Advocacy. There is evidently a distinction on which we do not, now, dwell further than to say that Priesthood is spoken of in reference to God ; Advocacy, in reference to the Father.

rent the vail—put away sin—brought us nigh to God, in all the credit and virtue of His sacrifice ; and now He lives to maintain us by His Advocacy, in the enjoyment of the place and privileges into which His blood has introduced us.

Hence the apostle says, “If any man sin we have”—what? the blood? Nay; but—“an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” The blood has done its work, and is ever before God according to its full value in His sight. Its efficacy is ever the same. But we have sinned; it may be only in thought; but even that thought is quite enough to interrupt our communion. Here is where Advocacy comes in. If it were not that Jesus Christ is ever acting for us in the sanctuary above, our faith would most assuredly fail in moments in the which we have, in any measure, yielded to the voice of our sinful nature. Thus it was with Peter, in that terrible hour of his temptation and fall: “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted [or restored] strengthen thy brethren.” Luke xxii. 31, 32.

Let the reader note this. “I have prayed for thee that”—what? Was it that he might not fail? Nay, but that, having failed, his faith might not give way. Had Christ not prayed for His poor feeble servant, he would have gone from bad to worse, and from worse to worst. But the intercession of Christ procured for Peter the grace of true repentance, self-judgment, and bitter sorrow for his grievous sin; and, finally, complete restoration of his heart and conscience, so that the current of his communion—interrupted by sin, but restored by advocacy—might flow on as before.

Thus it is with us, when, through lack of that holy vigilance which we should ever exercise, we commit sin. Jesus goes to the Father for us. He prays for us; and it is

through the efficacy of His priestly intercession that we are convicted, and brought to self-judgment, confession and restoration. All is founded on the Advocacy; and the Advocacy is founded on the Atonement.

And here it may be well to assert, in the clearest and strongest manner possible, that it is the sweet privilege of every believer not to commit sin. There is no necessity whatever why he should. "My little children," says the apostle, "these things write I unto you that ye sin not." This is a most precious truth for every lover of holiness. *We need not sin.* Let us remember this. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." 1 John iii. 9.

This is the divine idea of a Christian. Alas! we do not always realize it; but that does not, and cannot, touch the precious truth. The divine nature, the new man, the life of Christ in the believer cannot possibly sin; and it is the privilege of every believer so to walk as that nothing but the life of Christ may be seen. The Holy Ghost dwells in the believer, on the ground of redemption, in order to give effect to the desires of the new nature, so that the flesh may be as though it did not exist, and nothing but Christ be seen in the believer's life.

It is of the utmost importance that this divine idea of christian life should be seized and maintained. People sometimes ask the question, "Is it possible for a Christian to live without committing sin?" We reply in the language of the inspired apostle, "My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not." (1 John ii. 1.) And again, quoting the language of another inspired apostle, "How shall we that are dead to sin, *live* any longer therein?" (Rom. vi.) The Christian is viewed by God as "dead to sin;" and hence, if he yields to it, he is practically denying his standing in a risen Christ. Alas! alas! we do sin; and hence the apostle adds, "If any man sin, we have

an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world."

This gives wonderful completeness to the work on which our souls repose. Such is the perfect efficacy of the Atonement of Christ that we have one Advocate with us, in order that we may not sin; and we have another Advocate with the Father if we do sin. The word rendered "Comforter" in John xiv. 16, is the same as is rendered "Advocate" in 1 John ii. 1. We have one divine Person managing for us here; and we have another divine Person managing for us in heaven; and all this on the ground of the atoning death of Christ.

Will it be said that, in writing thus, we furnish a license for committing sin? God forbid! We have already declared, and would insist upon, the blessed possibility of living in such unbroken communion with God—of walking so in the Spirit—of being so filled and occupied with Christ, as that the flesh or the old man may not appear. This we know is not always the case. "In many things we offend all," as James tells us. But no right minded person, no lover of holiness, no spiritual Christian, could have any sympathy with those who say that we *must* commit sin. Thank God it is not so. But what a mercy it is, beloved christian reader, to know that, when we do fail, there is One at the right hand of God, to restore the broken link of communion! This He does by producing in our souls, by His Spirit who dwells in us—that "other Advocate"—the sense of failure, and leading us into self-judgment and true confession of the wrong, whatever it be.

We say "*true* confession," for it must be this if it be the fruit of the Spirit's work in the heart. It is not lightly and flippantly saying we have sinned; and then as lightly and flippantly sinning again. This is most sorrowful, and most dangerous. We know nothing more hardening and demoralizing than this sort of thing. It is sure to lead to

the most disastrous consequences. We have known cases of persons living in sin, and satisfying themselves by a mere lip confession of their sin, and then going and committing the sin again and again ; and this has gone on for months and years ; until God in His faithfulness caused the whole thing to come out openly before others.

All this is most dreadful. It is Satan's way of hardening and deceiving the heart. Oh ! that we may watch against it, and ever keep a tender conscience. We may rest assured that when a true-hearted child of God is betrayed into sin, the Holy Ghost will produce in him such a sense of it—will lead him into such intense self-loathing—such an abhorrence of the evil—such thorough self-judgment in the presence of God, as that he cannot lightly go and commit the sin again. This we may learn from the words of the apostle, when he says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and”—mark this weighty clause—“*to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*” Here we have the precious fruit of the double Advocacy. It is all presented in its fulness, in this part of the first epistle of John. If any man sin, the blessed Paraclete on high intercedes with the Father—pleads the full merits of His atoning work—prays for the erring one, on the ground of His having borne the judgment of that very sin. Then the other Paraclete acts in the conscience, produces repentance and confession, and brings the soul back into the light, in the sweet sense that the sin is forgiven, the unrighteousness cleansed, and the communion perfectly restored. “He restoreth my soul : *he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness* for his name's sake.” Psalm xxiii. 3.

We trust the reader will be enabled to understand this great fundamental truth. Many, we are aware, find it difficult to reconcile the idea of intercession with the truth of a perfect atonement. “If,” say they, “the atonement is perfect, what need is there of intercession ? If the believer is made as white as snow by the blood of Christ

—so white that God the Spirit can dwell in his heart—then what does he want of a priest? If by one offering Christ has perfected for ever all them that are sanctified, then what need have these perfected and sanctified ones of an Advocate? Surely we must either admit the thought of an imperfect Atonement or deny the need of Advocacy.”

Such is the reasoning of the human mind; but such is not the faith of Christians. Scripture does most surely teach us that the believer is washed as white as snow; that he is accepted in the Beloved—complete in Christ—perfectly forgiven and perfectly justified through the death and resurrection of Christ; that he can never come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life; that he is not in the flesh, but in the Spirit—not in the old creation, but in the new—not a member of the first Adam, but of the last; that he is dead to sin, dead to the world, dead to the law, because Christ has died, and the believer died in Him. All this is largely unfolded and constantly insisted upon by the inspired writers. Scores of passages might easily be quoted in proof, were it needful.

But, then, there is another aspect of the Christian which must be taken into account. He is not in the flesh as to the ground of his standing; but he is in the body as to the fact of his condition. He is in Christ as to his standing; but he is also in the world as to the fact of his existence. He is surrounded by all sorts of temptations and difficulties; and he is, in himself, a poor, feeble creature, full of infirmities, not sufficient even to think anything as of himself. Nor is this all. Each true Christian is ever ready to acknowledge that in him, that is in his flesh, there dwelleth no good thing. He is saved, thank God, and all is eternally settled; but then he has, *as a saved one*, to get through the wilderness; he has to labour to enter into God's rest; and here it is that priesthood comes in. The object of priesthood is not to complete the work of atonement, inasmuch as that work is as perfect as the One who

accomplished it. But we have to be carried through the wilderness, and brought into the rest that remains for the people of God, and for this end we have a great High Priest who is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God. His sympathy and succour are ours, and we could not get on, for one moment, without them. He ever liveth to make intercession for us; and by His ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, He sustains us, day by day, in the full credit and value of His atoning work. He lifts us up when we fall; restores us when we wander; repairs the link of communion when snapped by our carelessness. In a word, He appears in the presence of God for us, and there carries on an uninterrupted service on our behalf, in virtue of which we are maintained in the integrity of the relationship into which His atoning death has introduced us.

Thus much as to Atonement and Advocacy. It only remains for us to treat of the Advent; but this we must reserve for our next issue. We deeply feel the meagreness and poverty of all that has been advanced, on both the points which have occupied us; and we wish specially to remind the reader that, in treating of the death of Christ, we have left wholly untouched one grand point therein, namely, our death in Him. This we may, if God permit, go into on another occasion. It is immensely important as the power of deliverance from indwelling sin, as well as from this present evil world, and from the law. There are many who merely look to the death of Christ for pardon and justification, but they do not see the precious and emancipating truth of their having died in Him, and their deliverance, in consequence, from the power of sin in them. This latter is the secret of victory over self and the world, and of deliverance from every form of legality and mere fleshly pietism.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)



MEDITATIONS ON THE CHRISTIAN'S VOCATION.

(EPHESIANS IV.)

Now I see distinctly the difference between the Holy Ghost in the individual, and in the assembly. But there are two or three things still that I would like cleared up before leaving the subject.

I. From what has been said about the Church, I learn that its existence on earth is limited to the period between the day of Pentecost, after the ascension of Christ, and the rapture of the saints before the millennium: thus leaving both the Old Testament saints and the millennial saints out of the Church. Now, are not all believers in every age the children of God? and, being possessed of the same life as such, are they not all of the one family?

True, most true and important, and most delightful to dwell upon. But hast thou not learnt, my soul, the difference between *oneness in life*, and "the unity of the Spirit?" Every quickened soul in every age must possess eternal life. And no quickened soul can ever perish. There never can be a breach in the family of God. We do read of the possibility of one who has *preached* to others being himself a castaway; but we never read of the possibility of a *child of God* being a castaway. The very idea is foreign to all scripture, and impossible in the nature of things. A child born must be the child of its parents, good or bad. The apostle does not say, "Lest I, though a child of God, should be a castaway."

The plain truth is this, I believe—the Corinthians, like many in our own day, were too much occupied with human eloquence. They were in danger of thinking more of fine speaking than of Christ. This greatly troubled the apostle; hence the strength of his language, and the alarming nature of the case supposed. "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any

means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." This is the passage that has made millions to tremble, and which has led many to deny that *eternal life* means *eternal life*; as if the Spirit of truth meant *conditional* life, when He uses the word *eternal life*. Well then, what does this hard passage mean? Simply this: by the apostle thus bringing in himself and supposing the case to be his own, he presents it in the strongest way possible. His object is to press upon the Corinthians, and upon us all, the solemn fact, that though a man may be a preacher, if he is not subject to Christ—if he is not vitally connected with Him, he is not saved—he is not a child of God. Judas was a preacher, and many, alas, since his day, have been preachers who never were born again. But some will say, "Was not the apostle Paul a child of God?" Certainly he was, and he had no fear of being lost. Such a thought, we believe, never entered his mind, and such a thought never ought to have entered the mind of any Christian. But he illustrates the supposed case in his own person, as he usually does, and as public speakers generally do. (See Rom. vii. and Phil. iii.) In the wisdom of the Holy Spirit he is seeking to lower their estimate of mere natural abilities however great. No word can be more awfully solemn to unconverted preachers, but it has no terror to the children of God. But to return.

The common possession of eternal life by every quickened soul, from the beginning to the end of time, is what we may call oneness in life. Besides, the life is from Christ and by the Holy Spirit. But this is not "the unity of the Spirit," spoken of in Ephesians iv. "There is one body and one Spirit." This is something more than all having the same life—though all must have life in order to belong to it. It is a unity in virtue of the Holy Ghost's presence on the earth. And this unity, which He began to form at Pentecost, will be completed when the Lord comes to call His bride away. These are the true limits, and the Lord's

coming is the true hope of the Church. "*We wait for his Son from heaven.*" (1 Thess. i. 9, 10.) The body could have no existence on earth, until Christ its Head was seated in heaven, and the Holy Ghost come down. It is perfectly plain then, from these facts, that none can be included in the Church the body of Christ, but the saints of the present dispensation.

II. What is the difference between the habitation of God in the Old Testament and in the New?

It was *typical* in the one, it is *real* in the other. When redemption was *typically* accomplished by the passover and the Red Sea, an habitation for God is immediately desired by the redeemed people. "The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation; he is my God, and I will prepare him an *habitation*; my father's God, and I will exalt him. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the *sanctuary*, O Lord, which thy hands have established." (Ex. xv.) This is the first place in scripture in which we meet with the words "*habitation*" and "*sanctuary*." Until redemption was accomplished, God could not even speak about dwelling on the earth. Neither is "*salvation*" spoken of until we come to the passage of the Red Sea. Then we hear the word used for the first time. "And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not: stand still, and see the *salvation* of the Lord." We must have the combined types of complete redemption—the blood of the Lamb and the Red Sea, or death and resurrection—before we can have full salvation.

All these revelations from God—so rich in blessing to man, awaited the full accomplishment of redemption, though typically. The passover is never called salvation, though the most remarkable type of redemption that we have in the Old Testament. But it must be viewed in connection with the Red Sea. There must be the full and final deliverance of the people from the land of Egypt, and the

complete destruction of all their enemies, before the congregation of the Lord can know anything of peace, or be the dwelling place of God. Though under the shelter of the blood, and perfectly safe, there was no peace or rest for the people, while they were encamped "between Migdol and the sea." Plenty of doubts and fears there. They felt and cried out as if in the jaws of death. This painful fact is typical of every believer's position who has not entered into the great truth of his death and resurrection in Christ. We must see death, the grave, sin, Satan, the world, the flesh, behind us, before we can have perfect peace with God. And this great sight can only be seen from the wilderness side of the Red Sea—from heaven's side of the grave of Christ. No one ever had a glimpse of such truths while encamped "between Migdol and the sea." But, thank God, their doubts and fears did not sink them in the dark waters of judgment. Doubts or no doubts, fears or no fears, the blood of the Lamb is the same, and all whose doorposts were sprinkled with the blood passed safely and triumphantly through the deep: the feeblest as well as the strongest. "Not a hoof was left behind." The sea stood still—the waters were as ramparts around the Israelites. But the Egyptians, forgetting to put the blood of the lamb on the doorposts of their houses, sank as lead in the mighty waters. Courage, confidence, boldness, without the doorposts of the heart being sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, is of no avail. Nothing save the "token" of the blood can take the soul through the waters of death; but when that "token" is possessed, nothing can hinder its triumphant passage.

How awfully solemn is the voice of these dark waters to every soul not yet sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb. All the chariots and horsemen of Egypt—all the wisdom and power of the world—are of no avail here. Nothing but the blood of the Lamb can take any child of fallen Adam through the waters of death. The Red Sea was the river of life and the way to glory to Israel; not because

they were better in themselves than the Egyptians, but because they were under the shelter of the blood. Suffer, my dear reader, one word of loving warning, ere I turn to another theme. Hast thou faith in this precious blood? It is the only "token" and passport that will take thee through the river of death. Without it thou must sink, unsaved, in the cold, deep, dark waters of death. Oh! what an end for the path of pride in this world! And what a beginning of endless woe! O hear, I beseech thee, the word of faithful affectionate warning and invitation now! Be thou young or old—be thou in health or in sickness—be thou, as men reckon, good or bad, believe in Jesus—depend entirely on the efficacy of His blood, and thy sins, however many, are all forgiven, and thy precious soul is saved; yea, though this word meet thee on the very margin of these waters, or with one foot in the sea, and the other on dry land,—if thou art only this side of hell! believe the word of God about the blood of Jesus—have faith *unwavering* in the power of the blood—honour it with thy fullest confidence, and it will take thee as safely through, and land thee as safely on the shores of eternal glory, as if thou hadst been a saint for a hundred years! Such is the unlimited—unfailing power of the blood of Jesus. "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." And again in the New Testament we read, "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin." These are God's own words; believe them now—trust them now, and all is well—well with thy soul—well for ever.

I now return for a moment to finish my answer. In the Old Testament, the habitation of God was founded on *typical redemption*; in the New, it is established for ever on *eternal redemption*. This is enough to account for the difference between them. "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets [New Testament prophets, associated with the apostles in this work. See chap. iii. 5], Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.

In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God *through the Spirit.*" (Eph. ii. 20—22.) But this theme is inexhaustible. So I must recommend for thy meditation, the whole line of truth on this blessed subject, from Exodus xv. to Revelation xxi.—from the banks of the Red Sea to the eternal state. It is from the new heavens and the new earth that we have the final testimony, as to God's chosen, loved, and eternal dwelling place. "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." Revelation xxi. 3.

III. In what sense can we say that the Holy Spirit dwells in the Church now, seeing it is so defiled, corrupted, and contrary to God?

When we speak of the Church of God, and of the Holy Spirit dwelling in the Church, we are thinking of it in its *redeemed character*; as one with Christ, and as cleansed by His precious blood. Thou must learn to distinguish between the "great house," or that outward corrupt thing here on the earth, and "the body of Christ"—that which is united to Christ in heaven, by the Holy Ghost on the earth. Then thy thoughts will dwell on that which is infinitely precious to Him. "He loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Ephesians v. 25—27.

This is the Church—the body of Christ; and this is the habitation of God. This is Christ's building, built with living stones; and which partakes of His life and preciousness. (1 Pet. ii. 2—9.) One with Him in position, privilege, and glory—the fair and spotless bride of the Lamb—the beloved spouse of the last Adam. He loves her

as His own flesh. And now, my soul, dost thou wonder that the Holy Ghost dwells here? Nay, verily, rather would I say, This is where the Holy Ghost ought to dwell

“ ‘ One spirit with the Lord ;’
O blessed, wondrous word !
What heavenly light, what power divine,
Doth that sweet word afford !

‘ One spirit with the Lord ;’
The Father’s smile of love
Rests ever on the members here
As on the Head above.

‘ One spirit with the Lord ;’
Jesus, the glorified,
Esteems the Church for which He bled,
His body and His bride.”



DEEP WATERS.

“ When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.”—ISA. xliii. 2.

ROLL on, ye waves of trouble, roll !
Cold waters, onward move :
For ‘mid the tempest’s wildest roar,
Soft sounds the voice of love.

“ I will be with thee, tremble not,
That dark cold flood can’t harm ;
For I, thy God, will guard thee with
Mine ‘ everlasting arm !’

“ These surging waves obey my voice,
They move but by my will :
When foaming in their fiercest rage,
I speak—and they are still.”

Roll then, ye waves of trouble, roll !
Dash high your raging foam !
The Mighty One will bear me through
In safety to my home.

Roll on—I know thy chilling power,
 Thy dark and dangerous tide ;
 But I am safe—no flood I fear,
 With Jesus by my side.

My Lord, when I can feel thee near,
 The deep has charms for me :
 Earth's brightest paths were dark and drear,
 If lighted not by thee.

For I can smile while billows roar,
 If, Lord, thy light I see ;
 I will not look upon their rage,
 But fix my eyes on thee !

They can but drive me nearer still
 To that long wished for shore ;
 Where, done with sin, with pain, and grief,
 Earth's storms are heard no more.

Since thou art with me, welcome all,
 The bitter and the sweet ;
 I'm safe, whatever may befall,
 Lord Jesus, at thy feet.

And should the dark cold flood of death
 Be opening to my view,
 Thy love, thy light, my Saviour God,
 Shall bear me safely through.

C. H. I.



G O D ' S W O R K M E N .

(NUMBERS III. & IV.)

WE want the reader to turn with us, for a moment, to Numbers iii. and iv., where he will find a most instructive and interesting picture of God's workmen in the wilderness. It is a suggestive picture, and one well worthy of our deepest attention at a moment like the present in the which we are all so sadly prone to do that which is right in our own eyes.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him. And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation, before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle. And they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle. And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons: they are wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel." Chap. iii. 5—9.

The Levites represented the whole congregation of Israel, and acted on their behalf. This appears from the fact that the children of Israel laid their hands on the heads of the Levites, just as the Levites laid their hands on the heads of the sacrifices. (See chap. viii. 10.) The act of imposition expressed identification, so that, according to this, the Levites furnish a distinct view of the people of God in the wilderness. They present them to us as a company of earnest workers, and that too, be it noted, not as mere desultory labourers, running to and fro, and doing each one what seemed right in his own eyes. Nothing of the sort. If the men of war had their pedigree to shew, and their standard to adhere to, so had the Levites their centre to gather round, and their work to do. All was as clear, distinct, and defined as God could make it; and, moreover, all was under the immediate authority and direction of the high priest.

It is most needful for all who would be true Levites, proper workmen, intelligent servants, to weigh with all seriousness this point. Levite service was to be regulated by the appointment of the priest. There was no more room for the exercise of self-will in the service of the Levites, than there was in the position of the men of war. All was divinely settled, and this was a signal mercy to all whose hearts were in a right condition. To one whose will

was unbroken it might seem a hardship and a most irksome task to be obliged to occupy the same position, or to be engaged in precisely the same line of work. But, on the contrary, where the will was subdued, and the heart adjusted, each one would say, "I bless God I have not got to think ; I have merely to do as I am bid." This is ever the business of the true servant. It was pre-eminently so with Him who was the only perfect servant that ever trod this earth. He could say, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." And again : "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and finish his work."

But there is another fact which claims our attention in reference to the Levites, and that is, their service had exclusively to do with the tabernacle and its belongings. They had nothing else to do. For a Levite to think of putting his hand to aught beside would have been to deny his calling, to abandon his divinely appointed work, and to fly in the face of God's commandments.

Just so is it with Christians now. Their exclusive business—their one grand work, their absorbing service—is Christ and His belongings. They have nothing else to do. For a Christian to think of putting his hand to aught beside, is to deny his calling, to abandon his divinely appointed work, and fly in the face of divine commandments. A true Levite of old could say, "To me to live is the tabernacle ;" and a true Christian, now, can say, "To me to live is Christ." The grand question, in every matter which may present itself before the Christian, is this, "Can I connect Christ with it?" If not, I have nothing whatever to do with it.

This is the true way to look at things. It is not a question as to the right or wrong of this or that. No ; it is simply a question as to how far it concerns the name and glory of Christ. This simplifies everything amazingly. It answers a thousand questions, solves a thousand diffi-

culties, and makes the path of the true and earnest Christian as clear as a sun-beam. A Levite had no difficulty as to his work. It was all settled for him with divine precision. The burden that each had to carry, and the work that each had to do, was laid down with a clearness which left no room for the questionings of the heart. Each man could know his job and stick to it; and, let us add, the work was done by each one discharging his own specific functions. It was not by running hither and thither, and doing this or that; but by each man sedulously adhering to his own particular calling, that the service of the tabernacle was duly discharged.

It is well to bear this in mind. We, as Christians, are very apt to jostle one another; indeed we are sure to do so if we do not each one pursue his own divinely appointed line of work. We say, "*divinely* appointed," and would press the word. We have no right to choose our own work. If the Lord has made one man an evangelist, another a teacher, another a pastor, and another an exhorter, how is the work to go on? Surely it is not by the evangelist trying to teach, and the teacher to exhort, or the one who is not fitted for either, trying to do both. No; it is by each one exercising his own divinely-imparted gift. No doubt it may please the Lord to endow one individual with a variety of gifts; but this does not, in the smallest degree, touch the principle on which we are dwelling, which is simply this: Every one of us is responsible to know his own special line and pursue it. If this be lost sight of we shall get into hopeless confusion. God has His quarry-men, His stone-squarers, and His masons. The work progresses by each man attending diligently to his own work. If all were quarry-men, where were the stone-squarers? if all were stone-squarers, where were the masons? The greatest possible damage is done to the cause of Christ, and to God's work in the world, by one man aiming at another's line of things, or seeking to imitate another's gift. It is

a miserable mistake, against which we would solemnly warn the reader. Nothing can be more senseless. God never repeats Himself. There are no two faces alike; not two leaves in the forest alike; not two blades of grass alike. Why, then, should any one aim at another's line of work, or affect to possess another's gift? Let each one be satisfied to be just what his Master has made him. This is the secret of real peace and progress.

All this finds a very vivid illustration in the inspired record concerning the service of the three distinct classes of the Levites, which we shall now proceed to quote at length for the reader. There is nothing after all, to be compared with the veritable language of holy scripture.

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



"I SHALL BE SATISFIED."

OH! thou art fair, Lord Jesus,
 Fairer than all beside;
 Fairer than earth's fair sunshine,
 Or ocean's glittering tide—
 Fair in thy shadeless glory,
 Fair in thy changeless love,
 Fair in redemption's story,
 Fair on the throne above.

But oh! to my soul thou'rt fairest,
 As I muse on the bridal morn,
 When the home which thou preparest
 Thy blood-bought shall adorn;
Then, then, shall she rise to greet thee,
 Thine own, thy chosen Bride,
Then, then, shall mine eye behold thee,
 And *I shall be satisfied*.

E. C. L.



CORRESPONDENCE.

131. "Gamma," Wallingford. Scripture says, "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" Is not this a pointed reply to your question? There are two things necessary to make a marriage union what it ought to be; in the first place, the parties ought to be equally yoked; and, in the second place, they ought to be properly matched. The first involves the authority of Christ and the glory of God; the second involves the comfort and happiness of the married pair. There are hundreds who, though they are not unequally yoked, inasmuch as they are both in the Lord; are, nevertheless, very badly matched; there is no congeniality of taste; no suitability of temper; no harmony of mind. Hence it is that one so often sees, in the homes of Christians, so much that is dishonouring to the Lord, and wholly unworthy of those who bear His Name. The husband and wife should be, emphatically, *one*. They are, according to the divine institution of marriage—that holy and honourable ordinance—"one flesh;" and they ought to be one in heart, one in sympathy, one in purpose. Nothing can be more sad than to witness a continual jarring and bickering between man and wife. Such a state of things must exert a most baneful influence upon the whole domestic circle. No doubt there may be faults on both sides. This is not the question. What we feel is this, that a great deal of what is so deplorable in domestic life might be avoided if there were more serious and earnest waiting upon God, in singleness of heart, that He might guide in the matter. Surely God would not bring people together who are unsuited in every way. True, He may and does overrule such things, and use them, as wholesome discipline, for the breaking down of what is of self in both husband and wife. But this is another thing altogether. We believe it is a total mistake for persons to come together who are not thoroughly

suiting in tastes, in temper, in sentiment, and in moral tone. It is a terrible thing to discover, when it is too late, that one is tied for life to a person with whom one has not a particle of real sympathy. But can this be the case with true Christians? Most assuredly. We see it, alas! too often. It is not enough that a marriage is *in* the Lord, it should also be *of* the Lord. And we have no hesitation in saying that it cannot be of the Lord to have the husband going one way, and the wife going another. *God would have them going together in everything.*

We did not mean to give such a long answer to your question; but we do not regret it, inasmuch as we are most anxious to raise a warning voice in the ears of all our young friends, and to exhort them very earnestly to set the Lord before them in this matter, and to be governed by the fear and love of His Name, and not by the mere impulse of natural affection.

132. "M. A. W.," Radstock. Thanks for your precious lines.

133. "A Troubled Sister in the Lord," Brixton. Ponder Psalm xxxii. 8. We have found it unspeakably precious: "I will guide thee with mine eye." Is not that enough? Need we look to a human guide? Do we want Hobab's eyes when we have the eyes of the living God? Again, look at James i. 5, 6. Let your troubled spirit stay itself upon these two precious portions. Wait on the Lord. He will hear and answer. Do not move till He gives you light. Stand still till He opens the way; and the moment He opens it, do you move forward. May He comfort you!

134. "T. F.," Aylesbury. Your interesting note came duly to hand, and your request was attended to in our feeble way.

135. "J. D.," Yateshead. We have repeatedly gone into the subject of your note. See "Nine Years' Answers to Correspondents," to be had either from Mr. Morrish, 24, Warwick Lane; or Mr. Broom, Paternoster Row.

136. "E. P.," Stafford. Your letter and manuscript have come to hand.

137. "M. H.," Brixton. Your case is painfully interesting. We are thoroughly persuaded that if there be simple faith in waiting upon God, He will heal and restore. He is the Hearer and Answerer of prayer. We should recommend you to retire from all creature confidences and cast yourself simply upon the Living God. You have been looking to human cisterns, and we judge, too, you have been over anxious to get well. Seek grace to lie passive in your Father's hands, and know no will but His. When once your *heart* can say, "Thy will be done," the great moral end of the discipline is reached. We pray that you may reap a rich harvest of blessing from all the painful exercise through which you are now passing. May God comfort you, dear friend.

138. "I. K.," Belfast. We understand Galatians ii. 20 to mean simply that Paul lived by faith in the Son of God. That blessed servant so reckoned the old man as dead, and so lived in the power of the Spirit, that he could say, "To me to live is Christ." And let us remember that this was not merely the language of an apostle, as though it were peculiar to him; it is the proper language of a christian man. "I am crucified with Christ"—that is the old "I"—"nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me"—that is the new "I." Again, he says, "I through law am dead to law that I might live to God." In short, it is the complete setting aside of the old, fallen, guilty "I," and the introduction of the new man. This is Christianity. It is not patching up the old thing by ordinances, ceremonies, or moral reform. It is not putting a new piece upon an old garment, which can only make the rent worse. It is a new creation. Oh! that this were better understood by the people of God. It is, we verily believe, one of the special truths for this day in which we hear so much about man and his boasted powers and progress. A Second

Man has come :—why? Because the first man sinned and was driven out of paradise. But the Second Man is the last Adam, and therefore there can be nothing beyond Him. "In Adam all die; in Christ shall all be made alive." May the Lord lead all His people into the knowledge and power of this great truth!

139. "W, B.," Canterbury. Children are called to yield implicit obedience to their parents. This is the divine rule. Parents, on the other hand, are to beware of provoking their children to wrath by arbitrary conduct, by exhibiting partiality towards one more than another, and by needless crossing of the will of the child merely to make a display of parental authority. The child should ever see that the parent has his real interest at heart, and that true love is the motive spring of every act. But we must insist on the obedience of children, and that in the face of this age of independence—an age specially marked by disobedience to parents, and not only disobedience, but, in many cases, by gross disrespect. Many of the young people of the present day seem to regard their parents as belonging to the old school, and as being deficient in education. Hence, the readiness to contradict their parents and set up their own opinion. All this is at once unnatural and ungodly. It ought not to be tolerated. And we may also add a hint as to the very objectionable habit adopted by many young people of calling their father by that heartless name, "Governor;" and calling their mother by some equally objectionable epithet. We would entreat all our young friends to watch against these things, and against the spirit from which they proceed, and to cultivate a reverential spirit, which will surely lead to a respectful manner towards their parents. It is a very fine proof of a really good education when children respect their parents. Need we add that in all matters where God's authority is concerned, it must rise above all other claims? Oh! for the adjusting power of grace and truth!

THE THREE APPEARINGS.

(Read Heb. ix. 24—28.)

(PART III.)

WE have already glanced at two of the weighty subjects presented to us in the closing verses of Hebrews ix., namely, first, the precious atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ, in its two aspects; and, secondly, His all-prevailing advocacy at God's right hand for us. It only remains for us to consider, in the third place,

HIS ADVENT,

which is here presented to us in immediate connection with those great foundation truths which have already engaged our attention; and which, moreover, are held and prized by all true Christians. Is it true that Christ hath appeared in this world, to put away *sin* by the sacrifice of Himself, and to bear the *sins* of the many who, through grace, put their trust in Him? Is it true that He has passed into the heavens and taken His seat on the throne of God, there to appear for us? Yes, blessed be God, these are grand, vital, and fundamental verities of the christian faith. Well, then, it is equally true that He shall appear again, apart from the question of sin, unto salvation. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, apart from sin, unto salvation."

Here, then, we have the matter most definitely stated. As truly as Christ hath appeared on this earth—as truly as He lay in the manger of Bethlehem—was baptized in the waters of Jordan—was anointed with the Holy Ghost—was tempted of the devil in the wilderness—went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil—groaned and wept and prayed in Gethsemane—hung upon Calvary's cursed tree, and died the Just for the unjust—was laid in the dark, silent tomb—rose victorious on

the third day—ascended into the heavens, there to appear in the presence of God for His people—so truly shall He appear, ere long, in the clouds of heaven, to receive His people to Himself. If we refuse one, we must refuse all. If we question one, we must question all. If we are unsettled as to one, we must be unsettled as to all, inasmuch as all rest upon precisely the same basis, namely, the holy scriptures. How do I know that Jesus *hath* appeared? Because scripture tells me so. How do I know that He *doth* appear? Because scripture tells me so. How do I know that He *shall* appear? Because scripture tells me so.

In a word, then, the doctrine of the Atonement, the doctrine of the Advocacy, and the doctrine of the Advent all rest on one and the same irrefragable foundation, namely, the simple declaration of the word of God, so that if we receive one we must receive all.

How is it then that, while the Church of God, in all ages, has held and prized the doctrines of Atonement and Advocacy, she has practically lost sight of the doctrine of the Advent? How comes it to pass that while the first two are regarded as essential, the last is deemed non-essential? Nay, we may go further, and say, How is it that while a man who does not hold the first two is regarded as a heretic, and justly so, yet the man who holds the last is by many regarded as hardly sound in the faith or sane in intellect?

What answer can we give to these questions? Alas alas! the Church has ceased to look for her Lord. Atonement and Advocacy are held because they concern us; but the Advent has been virtually let slip although it so deeply concerns Him. It is due to the One who suffered and died on this earth, that He should reign—to the One who wore a crown of thorns, that He should wear a crown of glory—to the One who humbled Himself to the very dust of death that He should be exalted, and that every knee should yet bow before Him.

Most surely this is so; and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ will see to it, and bring it to pass in His own appointed time. "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool." (Ps. cx.; Heb. x.) The moment is rapidly approaching when that blessed One who is now hidden from the eyes of men shall appear in glory. Every eye shall see Him. As surely as He hung on the cross, and is now seated on the throne, so surely shall He appear in glory.

Reader, seeing these things are so, art thou among the number of "those who look for him?" This is a solemn question. There are those who look for Him, and there are those who do not. Now, it is to the former that He shall appear unto salvation. He will come and receive His people unto Himself, that where He is, there they may be also. (John xiv.) These are His own loving words spoken at the moment of His departure, for the solace and comfort of His sorrowing disciples. He counted on their being troubled at the thought of His leaving them, and He seeks to comfort them by the assurance of His coming back. He does not say, "Let not your hearts be troubled, for you shall soon follow me." No; but "I will come again."

This is the proper hope of the Christian. Christ is coming. Are we ready? Are we looking for Him? Do we miss Him? Do we mourn His absence? It is impossible that we can be in the true attitude of waiting for Him if we do not feel His absence. He is coming. He may be here to-night. Ere another sun rises, the voice of the archangel and the blast of the trumpet may be heard in the air. And what then? Why then the sleeping saints—all who have departed in the faith of Christ—all the redeemed of the Lord, whose ashes repose in the graveyards and cemeteries around us, or in the mighty depths of the ocean—all these shall rise. The living saints shall be changed in a moment; and all shall

ascend up to meet the Lord in the air. 1 Cor. xv. 51—54; 1 Thess. iv. 13—v. 11.

But what of the unconverted—the unbelieving—the unrepentant—the unprepared? What of all such? Ah! this is a question of awful solemnity. It makes the heart sink to reflect upon the case of those who are still in their sins—of those who have turned a deaf ear to all the entreaties and all the warnings which God, in His long-suffering mercy, has sent to them, from week to week, and year to year—of those who have sat under the sound of the gospel from their earliest days, and who have become, as we say, gospel-hardened. How dreadful will be the condition of all such when the Lord comes to receive His own! They shall be left behind, to fall under the deep and dark delusion which God will assuredly send upon all who have heard and rejected the gospel. And what then? What is to follow this deep and dark delusion? The deeper and darker damnation of the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.

Oh! shall we not sound a note of alarm in the ears of our fellow sinners? Shall we not, a little more earnestly and solemnly, warn them to flee from the wrath to come? Shall we not seek by word and deed—by the double testimony of the lips and the life—to set before them the weighty fact that, “the Lord is at hand?” May we feel it more deeply, and then we shall exhibit it more faithfully. There is immense moral power in the truth of the Lord’s coming if it be really held in the heart and not merely in the head. If Christians only lived in the habitual expectation of the Advent, it would tell amazingly upon the unconverted around them.

May the Holy Ghost revive in the hearts of all God’s people, the blessed hope of their Lord’s return, that they may be as men that wait for their Lord, that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open unto Him immediately!

G O D ' S W O R K M E N .

(NUMBERS III. & IV.)

"AND the Lord spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, saying, Number the children of Levi after the house of their fathers, by their families; every male from a month old and upward shalt thou number them. And Moses numbered them, *according to the word of the Lord, as he was commanded*. And these were the sons of Levi by their names; Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari. And these are the names of the sons of Gershon, by their families; Libni, and Shimei. And the sons of Kohath, by their families; Amram, and Izehar, Hebron, and Uzziel. And the sons of Merari, by their families; Mahli, and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites according to the house of their fathers. Of Gershon was the family of the Libnites, and the family of the Shimites; these are the families of the Gershonites. Those that were numbered of them, according to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, even those that were numbered of them, were seven thousand and five hundred. The families of the Gershonites shall pitch behind the tabernacle westward. And the chief of the house of the father of the Gershonites shall be Eliasaph the son of Lael. And the charge of the sons of Gershon, in the tabernacle of the congregation, shall be the tabernacle, and the tent, the covering thereof, and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And the hangings of the court, and the curtain for the door of the court, which is by the tabernacle, and by the altar round about, and the cords of it, for all the service thereof." (Chap. iii. 14—26.) And again, we read, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take also the sum of the sons of Gershon, throughout the houses of their fathers, by their families, from thirty years old and upward, until fifty years old, shalt

thou number them; all that enter in to perform the service, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation. This is the service of the families of the Gershonites, to serve and for burdens. And they shall bear the curtains of the tabernacle, and the tabernacle of the congregation, his covering, and the covering of the badgers' skins that is above upon it, and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the hangings of the court, and the hanging for the door of the gate of the court, which is by the tabernacle, and by the altar round about, and their cords, and all the instruments of their service, and all that is made for them: so shall they serve. At the appointment of Aaron and his sons shall be all the service of the sons of the Gershonites, in all their burdens, and in all their service, and ye shall appoint unto them in charge all their burdens. This is the service of the families of the sons of Gershon, in the tabernacle of the congregation: and their charge shall be under the hand of Ithamar, the son of Aaron the priest." (Chap. iv. 21—28.)

Thus much as to Gershon and his work. He, with his brother Merari, had to carry "the tabernacle;" whereas Kohath was called to bear "the sanctuary," as we read in chapter x. "And the tabernacle was taken down, and the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari set forward, bearing *the tabernacle*.....And the Kohathites set forward, bearing the sanctuary: and the other [i.e., the Gershonites and the Merarites] did set up the tabernacle against they came." (Ver. 17—21.) There was a strong moral link connecting Gershon and Merari in their service, although their work was perfectly distinct, as we shall see from the following passage.

"As for the sons of Merari, thou shalt number them after their families, by the house of their fathers; from thirty years old and upward, even unto fifty years old, shalt thou number them, every one that entereth into the service, to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation. And

this is the charge of their burden, according to all their service in the tabernacle of the congregation; the boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and sockets thereof, and the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords, with all their instruments and with all their service: and by name ye shall reckon the instruments of the charge of their burden. This is the service of the families of the sons of Merari, according to all their service, in the tabernacle of the congregation, under the hand of Ithamar, the son of Aaron the priest." (Chap. iv. 29—33.)

All this was clear and distinct. Gershon had nothing to do with the boards and the pins; and Merari had nothing to do with the curtains or the coverings. And yet they were very intimately connected, as they were mutually dependent. "The boards and the sockets" would not do without "the curtains," and "the curtains" would not do without "the boards and sockets." And as to "the pins," though apparently so insignificant, who could estimate their importance in keeping things together, and maintaining the visible unity of the whole. Thus all worked together to one common end, and that end was gained by each attending to his own special line. If a Gershonite had taken it into his head to abandon "the curtains" and address himself to "the pins," he would have left his own work undone and interfered with the work of the Merarite. This would never do. It would have thrown everything into hopeless confusion; whereas by adhering to the divine rule, all was maintained in the most exquisite order.

It must have been perfectly beautiful to mark God's workers in the wilderness. Each one was at his post, and each moved in his divinely appointed sphere. Hence, the moment the cloud was lifted up, and the order given to strike, every man knew what he had to do, and he addressed himself to that and to nothing else. No man had any right to think for himself. Jehovah thought for all.

The Levites had declared themselves "on the Lord's side;" they had yielded themselves to His authority; and this fact lay at the very base of all their wilderness work and service. Looked at in this light, it would be deemed a matter of total indifference whether a man had to carry a pin, a curtain, or a golden candlestick. The grand question for each and for all was simply, "Is this my work? Is this what the Lord has given me to do?"

This settled everything. Had it been left to human thinking or human choosing, one man might like this; another might like that; and a third might like something else. How then could the tabernacle ever be borne along through the wilderness, or set up in its place? Impossible. There could be but one supreme authority, namely Jehovah Himself. He arranged for all, and all had to submit to Him. There was no room at all for the exercise of the human will. This was a signal mercy. It prevented a world of strife and confusion. There must be subjection—there must be a broken will—there must be a cordial yielding to divine authority, otherwise it will turn out to be like the book of Judges: "every man doing that which is right in his own eyes." A Merarite might say, or think if he did not say it, "What! am I to spend the very best portion of my life upon earth—the days of my prime and vigour, in looking after a few pins? Was this the end for which I was born? Am I to have nothing higher before me as an object in life? Is this to be my occupation from thirty to fifty?"

To such questions there was a twofold reply. In the first place, it was enough for the Merarite to know that Jehovah had assigned him his work. This was sufficient to impart dignity to what nature might esteem the smallest and meanest matter. It does not matter what we are doing, provided always we are doing our divinely appointed work. A man may pursue what his fellows would deem a most brilliant career; he may spend his energies, his time,

his talents, his fortune, in pursuits which the men of this world esteem grand and glorious, and all the while his life may prove to be but a splendid bubble. But, on the other hand, the man that simply does the will of God, whatever that may be—the man who executes his Lord's commands, whatever such commands may enjoin—that is the man whose path is illuminated by the beams of divine approbation, and whose work shall be remembered when the most splendid schemes of the children of this world have sunk into eternal oblivion.

But, besides the moral worth attaching always to the act of doing what we are told to do, there was also a special dignity belonging to the work of a Merarite, even though that work was merely attending to a few “pins” or “sockets.” Everything connected with the tabernacle was of the very deepest interest and highest value. There was not, in the whole world, anything to be compared with that boarded tent with all its mystic belongings. It was a holy dignity and privilege to be allowed to touch the smallest pin that formed a part of that wonderful tabernacle in the wilderness. It was more glorious, by far, to be a Merarite looking after the pins of the tabernacle, than to wield the sceptre of Egypt or Assyria. True, the Merarite, according to the import of his name, might seem a poor “sorrowful” labouring man; but oh! his labour stood connected with the dwelling place of the Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth. His hands handled the things which were the patterns of things in the heavens. Every pin, every socket, every curtain, and every covering was a shadow of good things to come—a foreshadowing of Christ.

“Henceforth let each beloved child,
With quickened step proceed,
To walk with garments undefiled
Where'er thine eye may lead.”

MEDITATIONS ON THE CHRISTIAN'S VOCATION.

(EPHESIANS IV.)

THERE are other portions of the word which might be profitably studied under the general head of "*The Christian's Vocation*;" but the most important have been touched upon; and if these are well weighed and carried out, they will lead into many lines of happy service for the Lord—for His saints, and for a Christless world. But, as we are drawing near the end of another year, we think it well to close the present series of "*Meditations*," and commence, the Lord willing, the approaching New Year with an entirely fresh theme of study.

And now in conclusion, may the good Lord lead us by His Spirit, to study yet more diligently these great and fundamental truths of our holy Christianity! What can be more worthy of our deepest study than our *standing, state, and vocation as Christians*? How can we walk, worship, or serve, so as to please Christ, without this knowledge? Besides, it necessarily leads to habitual meditation on the Person and work of Christ, and on the many applications of God's grace in our own blessing, as flowing from Christ's finished work. It is really the study of God's thoughts, affections, and ways towards us in the blessed Lord, in place of being occupied with our own thoughts, feelings, and ways towards God. And how marvellous the blessed effect on our own souls of such a habit of thought and contemplation! May the Lord lead us more and more to meditate on these things, for His own name's sake.

In place of feeling dissatisfied, discontented, unhappy, uneasy, restless, and looking with desire after the things of the world, we shall feel perfectly satisfied, at rest, happy, content. Every desire is met in Christ. He Himself is enough. We know Him, and are at home with Him. We know none other so well. He gave Himself for

us. And *now* we have this blessed Christ, glorified in heaven, to count upon in every step of our journey. We have Him to look to as our one object, and to lean upon, as we go up through the wilderness. He will never fail us nor forsake us. The one business of life is to follow Him — wait for Him, go to Him, and be with Him for ever.

It is, and has been, our one wish and fervent prayer, that our many readers, and especially our beloved young friends, might be led into the apprehension and enjoyment of these blessed, precious truths. Many, of late years, very many, thank the Lord, have been brought to the knowledge of Himself in early life. With such before our minds we generally write. We desire that they may know, not only their pardon and salvation, but their full deliverance from the world, the devil, and the flesh; and also their full establishment in Christ as risen, exalted, and glorified.

These glorious truths are plainly revealed in the holy scriptures, and especially in these blessed portions, over which, in our meditations, we have been travelling. And let us remember, that they are ours *now*. They are as really and as surely ours, as if we were in heaven. The word of God cannot either be truer or plainer there. Let us then claim these privileges and hold them as our own, on the authority of God's word, and in the integrity of faith.

But let all our readers remember, that, in order to the present and full enjoyment of this blessedness, the heart must be separated from the world in its ten thousand aspects, and Christ Himself must be the one real object of the soul. This is the path of faith. Though the world continues to be the lawful sphere of our many duties, Christ in heaven is the all-governing object of the heart. The affections must be right with Him—He must be the standard of our judgment and the test of all our ways. In short, it must come to this, "For me to live is Christ." The Lord grant it in His rich mercy.

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (Col. iii. 1—4.) Here we have the true object and the true hope of the Christian, and that which characterizes his life here below, and also that which will characterize his eternal and glorious future. But, meanwhile, the Lord would have us to know, and heartily to enter into, all that He has revealed of the Christian's **STANDING, STATE, and VOCATION.**

May we ever be found truly subject to **CHRIST**, obedient to His word, devoted to His service, faithful to the light and teaching of His **SPIRIT**, and consistent in all things, that God may be glorified.

"A little while," and we no more

A feeble few shall meet ;

But there a mighty army stand

Before His throne complete.

Sweeter, beyond the "little while,"

The dawn of morn to view ;

The morning of a brighter day

Than ever Eden knew.

How sweet the song of victory

That ends the battle's roar ;

And sweet the weary warrior's rest

When all his toil is o'er."



A WARNING VOICE.

WITH almost every one there is a measure of thoughtful, solemn feeling connected with the passing away of the *old* year, and the coming in of the *new*. It is a moment when we are disposed to look back, and take in at a glance, the whole twelve months. Scenes are recalled, both of joy and sorrow—of warning and encouragement. Many things crowd into the mind and plead for utterance. One we will

relate, though not uncommon, as a warning voice to privileged, but careless, young men.

A young man, who had been often warned of his sin and danger by a kind friend, was taken ill. His friend, knowing that his constitution had been much impaired by late hours—"night work"—feared the worst. He at once communicated the painful circumstances of his case to a christian friend who lived near to where the young man was lying ill. This friend went at once to see him. He found him in great bodily suffering. He had caught cold; inflammation had set in; his throat and chest very bad; his breathing oppressed; his voice feeble; and altogether very ill: indeed, a complete wreck, though with the features of a once fine young man. Treatment could do little for him. But, what was worst of all, his mind wandered.

When conscious, he would own, so far, the wrongness of his past life. When pressed as to the awful nature of sin, and the fearfulness of eternal judgment, he seemed to give a shudder, and fixed his eyes on the one that stood at his bedside; but when a hopeful answer was anxiously looked for, his reply was the feeble wanderings of a mind evidently unhinged. This was terrible to witness. The body gone, the mind gone—for the moment—all seemed utterly gone. Imagine the agony of the mind that stood by that pitiful bedside, and saw, by faith, the future as clearly as the present; but painfully realizing its utter helplessness. To see an immortal soul quivering on the brink of eternity, and to feel one's utter feebleness to help that soul, is agony indeed, and a peculiar kind of agony.

A moment's consciousness returns. The tender, compassionate love of Jesus, the power of His blood, His willingness to save, were plainly set before him. A few broken sentences were uttered—he hoped he would find mercy—he remembered the advice of the good young man, as he called him—but again he is incoherent. His voice, his words, and a kind look to his mother, who stood at the end of his bed,

stirred up the deep feelings of a mother's heart, who was crying wildly that he might be saved, and that she might meet her dear son in heaven.

Prayer now seemed the only resource. After prayer—during which he seemed sensible of what was going on—a few tracts were left, so that if the mind became calmer, he might read of the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus.

He lived about a week, but repeated visits found him worse and worse, both as to body and mind. His mother thought he had managed to read one of the tracts. The last visit was a melancholy one. He was death-stricken. His voice was nearly gone, he could only speak in a low whisper. But he was anxious, and struggling, to flee from that bed of death. "Bring my clothes, mother," he said; which she did, and spread his coat on the bed cover. He wanted his socks drawn on, which she did to soothe him. And then it was, "Send for a cab to take me away from this." It was heart-rending. One who stood at the foot of his bed, by way of kindness, said, "You be quiet a little,—I will fetch a cab and take you for a drive." A drive! thought the visitor, a fearful *drive* it must soon be, if mercy prevent not. Why deceive a soul, even to soothe it, in such circumstances? Speak plainly. Trust God: He only can clog the wheels of the chariot in its downward course, and save the soul, even on the deep descent to woe unutterable. There is nothing too hard for the Lord. We have known a soul converted after the feet were dead cold; and the thief on the cross was saved in the agonies of death.

As all hope of being in any way useful to the poor dying young man was now gone, the visitor prayed and left. He struggled on much the same way for twenty-four hours, and then—and then—the righteous tribunal of God—thither we dare not venture. God is merciful and gracious; adored be His name!

What a solemn lesson for those who are faithfully warned

but remain careless about their souls! O! that they might listen to its warning voice. Never did it enter that young man's mind, that when his last illness came, he would be so totally unable to think about divine things. How dangerous to delay till such a moment! He was more or less delirious the whole time of his illness. He was incapable of doing anything for himself, and every one else was incapable, excepting God only.

Why, O why, young man, young woman, shouldst thou hazard thy eternal happiness for the veriest trifles—the merest vanities of a fleeting hour? Is it not folly and madness the most inexcusable—the most unaccountable! Hear, O hear the voice of loving, tender, earnest warning *now!* And hear, too, the sweet voice of kindest invitation—“COME!” It is a voice from the lips of Jesus, “*Come unto me.*” And mark His gracious promise, “Him that cometh unto me, I will in nowise cast out.” On no consideration—on no account, cast out. All who come are received. Why not then compel thyself to stand still in thy mad career—to turn round—thy face to Christ and heaven, thy back to the world?

And what so noble—what so blessed—what such pure faith as to come when He bids thee, in place of being dragged by the fear of death, and the dread of approaching judgment? *Now* lay down thy weapons of rebellion—throw off thy garb of careless indifference—give up entirely thy worldly ways—break with thy worldly associations: the wrench may seem great, but not so great, be assured, as to be wrenched at last from God, and Christ, and heaven, and from many thou lovest there, and be cast into the burning lake of hell. Oh! what a wrench; but a wrench that can never be healed. Friendless, forlorn, forsaken, desolate, and miserable, but with all thy faculties to brood over thy hopeless condition! this must be the terrible end of a Christless soul; but it is to save thee from this end that we thus plead with thee. Oh! that we could speak to thee in

words that burn, that thy heart might be moved to *immediate* repentance and true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Count not on the opportunities of a death-bed. Be warned by the solemn example before thee. Some have thought that most men die as they live. Be this as it may, it is certainly a fearful provoking of God, to sin against light and knowledge—against daily warnings—against the living example of godly people in the same house. Thus to slight Christ, salvation, the word of God, thy precious soul, the joys of heaven, the torments of hell, the tears and prayers of thy father and mother, is surely a character of guilt of the deepest dye. And all this may be done with a show of amiability and good conduct; but with an icy, sullen indifference towards the blessed Jesus, that could only be endured by the longsuffering of God Himself.

Bow, then, my beloved young friend—O bow now at the feet of Jesus; bathe them with thy tears, anoint them with thy most fragrant ointment. Let thy love and gratitude flow out to Him. Have unwavering confidence in His love, and in the power of His blood. And, oh! wonderful to say—glory to His name—the past will be forgiven and forgotten as if it had **never** been—thy sins all forgiven—thy soul saved—thy peace made with God—thy home and rest, with all the ransomed of the Lord, in thy Father's house—thy happy portion, Christ Himself, with all His love and glory.

Happy, oh! happy the people that are in such a state as this. Happy with the declining *old year*, and happy with the dawn of the *new year*, and happy when years shall be numbered amongst the things that were.

“The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.” Romans xiii. 12.



LINES.*

Suggested by one of the last sayings of M. C. O., "It is most important to redeem the time: to work while it is called to-day..... I think I've finished, done all, have I not? Now let me go."

" WORK, while 'tis called to-day ; redeem the time!"

Press toward the goal :

Sister beloved, those dying words of thine

Ring through my soul !

" Work while 'tis called to-day—my work is done ;

Now let me go !"

Finished life's task ; come, Saviour, quickly come ;

Oh ! why so slow ?

The strong brave loving heart lies still at last ;

Its throbbings o'er !

Folded the busy hands ; the willing feet

Can serve no more !

All finished, sister ; yes ! thy glowing sun

Went down at noon !

Thine earthly hopes, thy purposes and joys,

Over, how soon !

The ceaseless round, the daily household care,

For ever done ;

Ended the conflict, weariness, and toil ;

The victory won.

And can we wish thee back, for whom all grief

Is over now ?

Dawns the eternal day ; the peace of God

Rests on thy brow.

The royal messenger arrived at noon,

In heat of day ;

" A summons from the King. He bids thee haste ;

Make no delay."

* By permission, from "Fragmentary Notes of the last hours of M. C. O." Crocker & Cooper, Penton Street, N.

He found thee busy at thine appointed task
In heart and hand,
Thronged with life's cares ; engirdled with the love
Of household band.

Child voices lisped thy name, a husband's heart
Leaned upon thine ;
Couldst thou leave all, and joyfully obey
The call divine ?

Yes ; not a tear-drop fell, as love's sweet bands
Were all untied ;
No vain regrets, as life's unfinished tasks
Were laid aside.

Calmly resigning all, she turned away
And laid her down,
By the dark river which divides earth's cross
From heaven's bright crown.

Swiftly, without a cloud, her sun went down,
Gilding the wave ;
And Christ's own hands were stretched across the flood,
Mighty to save.

A sigh, no more ! the prisoned soul is free ;
Away ! away !
And angel squadrons heralded thy flight
To realms of day.

The veil is dropped, sister beloved : Adieu !
Vainly we stand,
Striving to paint the glories of thy home,
At His right hand.

Thou art WITH HIM ! Enough ! Thy joy is ours.
Here we can rest ;
Leaving thee till the bright eternal morrow,
On Jesu's breast.

M. FITZ G.



CORRESPONDENCE.

140. "A Reader of 'Things New and Old,'" Ryde. Get down before God, in true self-judgment, and pour out your whole heart to Him. Do not rest until your soul is fully restored to fellowship with your Lord. Be assured, there is no change in Him. He waits to fill you with the joy of His salvation. May His Spirit work mightily in you to will and to do of His good pleasure.

141. "An Humble Follower of Christ," Londonderry. It is a wonderful thing to be able to affix such a signature. We have repeatedly gone into your questions in former volumes. (See "Nine Years' Answers to Correspondents.")

142. "A. M.," Wellington, Salop. We should not object to the "typical connection" of Genesis vii. 16 and Colossians iii. 3. In the former, we see persons "shut in," by God's hand, in the ark; in the latter, we have persons viewed as in Christ. As to "the apparent inconsistency between Acts xv. 24 and Acts xvi. 3," you must remember that, in the one case, there was a great principle involved; hence the apostle would be as bold as a lion. In the other, there was no principle involved; and hence he could be yielding and accommodating to the weakness of his Jewish brethren. Circumcision, in itself, was nothing to one who stood on Paul's lofty platform. He was perfectly free to adopt it or omit it. But the moment he found men making a principle of it, he would not yield the breadth of a hair. There is therefore no discrepancy or inconsistency whatever. You may consider, in connection with the above, Gal. ii. 3—5.

143. "A. J.," Bristol. The foregoing answer to "A. M." meets your difficulty.

144. "H. H. B.," Bradford. We feel the deepest interest in your case. We trust the Lord will yet lead you into the enjoyment of perfect peace in Himself, and into the true secret of power over indwelling sin. To Him and to His perfect ministry we do most sincerely commend you.

145. "E. M.," Clifton. Your question, though most important and interesting in its way, is not at all in our line.

146. "A Brother," Exeter. We do not see any warrant in scripture for fixing any particular hour of the day for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. No doubt it was first instituted in the evening. Acts xx. 8 would also seem to favour the thought of evening. But we judge it is left, in the wisdom of the Holy Ghost, an open question.

147. "E. N. K.," Manchester. Your letter interests us exceedingly. We should recommend you to procure a copy of a work entitled "Lectures introductory to the Gospels," by W. Kelly, published by W. H. Broom, Paternoster Row, London. It will, we trust, help you greatly. May the Lord Himself be with you!

148. "E. L. H.," Jersey. (1), The word is, "In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." The Holy Ghost quickens a dead sinner; He seals a living saint. (2), We believe there are many quickened souls who do not know they have eternal life; but God always perfects His work and leads on those whose hearts are true to Him. (3), We do not know what you mean by such a question. (4), "*Holy Father*" is the term used when the saints are in question; "*Righteous Father*" is used in reference to the world. "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me." But, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee."

Communications have come to hand from "C. R. L.," London; "G. H.," Newport.; "W. B.," Balsall.; "An Inquirer," near Stonehouse; "J. S.," Farnland; "Unita," Narbeth; "H. A. K. D.," London; "F. E. B.," London.

