

Things New & Old,

A

GOSPEL MAGAZINE,

WITH PAPERS FOR THE FLOCK OF GOD.

—○○○—
“Christ is all.”—Col. iii. 11.
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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
The Great Supper	1
Are you happy?	11
Plain Papers on the Second Coming of Christ	19
Correspondence	27
Meeting Jesus	29
"Not in vain in the Lord"	36
The Coming of the Lord.....	43
He's done it a'.....	46
Fragment	50
Jesus made a Surety	51
Fragments	53
Correspondence	54
Present Forgiveness of Sins	58
Sons of Korah	65
Plain Papers on the Second Coming of Christ (II.) ...	70
"Believing aright"	76
Correspondence	81
Emmaus, or Jesus Himself.....	85
Plain Papers on the Second Coming of Christ (III.) ...	94
Remarks on the Psalms (I.)	102
"I am saved! I am saved!"	108
Correspondence	109
Sin, Death, and Victory.....	113
Plain Papers on the Second Coming of Christ (IV.) ...	122
Remarks on the Psalms (II.).....	129
Correspondence	137
God Revealed in His Word	142
Redemption	150
Singing Praises at Midnight	151
Faith and Infidelity.....	154
The Obedience of Christ.....	155
Remarks on the Psalms (III.)	160
Correspondence	165
Justification by Faith, and Justification by Works.....	169
Plain Papers on the Second Coming of Christ (V.) ...	178
Remarks on the Psalms (IV.)	186

	PAGE
Correspondence	192
Divine Love	197
Sharp Knives of Gilgal	207
The trial of Poverty, and of Riches	215
Remarks on the Psalms (V.)	219
Correspondence	222
Grace and Responsibility	225
Plain Papers on the Second Coming of Christ (VI.) ...	234
The Closet, the Battle Field of Faith	243
Remarks on the Psalms (VI.)	245
Correspondence	249
Divine Love (II.).....	253
Plain Papers on the Second Coming of Christ (VII.)...	260
Remarks on the Psalms (VII.)	269
Correspondence	277
Assurance	281
Divine Love (III.)	289
Plain Papers on the Second Coming of Christ (VIII.)	295
Correspondence	304
Judgment coming upon Scoffers ... 245 291	309
Utterances of an aged Servant of Christ	316
The End of the Year	317
Remarks on the Gospel of John	325
Divine Love (IV.)	326

POETRY.

He healed me	35
Before honour is humility	52
No reputation	121
Him	159
Heaven	276
"Thy comforts delight my soul"	294



Things New and Old.

THE GREAT SUPPER.

Luke xiv. 16-24.

It is difficult for us now to conceive how entirely new this was. So new that none could understand it until redemption was accomplished, and the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

Will you turn to Luke xviii. 17? Here we have from the lips of Jesus the announcement of the new truth, "Verily I say unto you, whoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein." For fifteen centuries men had been on the principle of "Do this and live." A ministration that could only condemn, could not give strength to do or live. Mark the immense change. It is not now, Whosoever shall not *do*, but *receive*; and receive as the helpless, dependent little child. For what is so helpless as a babe? Everything has to be done for it.

In order to see the force of this, we must contrast it with the ministration of the law for fifteen centuries. "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." This was the ground that the tribes of Israel

took at the foot of Sinai. Then "there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people that were in the camp trembled." "And the Lord said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze and many of them perish."

And when the tabernacle was set up, and the divine service ordained, the Holy Ghost there signified that the way into the holiest was not yet manifested. Let us remember then, that even when Jesus uttered this wondrous parable, the veil still shut man out from the presence of God.

When invited to supper there is but one thing you have to do, as it is said in another place, "Make the men sit down."

Who is the Provider here? Is it not God? What a contrast to Sinai! Then priests and people were forbidden to come near; now many are invited, but all make an excuse and refuse to come. When man makes a supper, it takes some time beforehand to arrange and provide. The very guests at this feast were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. The world has indeed rejected Him. They to whom the invitation was first given rejected Him. But grace, free grace, has gone out to gather its own company. And oh, what a company! Bring in hither the poor and the maimed, and the halt and the blind. All this sets forth an entirely new truth; the very

contrast of the law. And it is Jesus that thus sets it forth—"Bring in hither." Surely the veil had to be rent before this could be fulfilled. Is this grace suited to the reader? Do not say, I am too far off to be brought so nigh to God. The Lord says, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in." Here the contrast is complete. Under the law man was shut out. Now he is compelled to come in.

Let us notice over the door as we enter two important texts, John iii. 14, 16. These should never be separated. Yes, before the supper could be announced the Son of man *must* be lifted up. The righteousness of God must be manifested by His propitiation on the cross. Christ must needs suffer.

It is on this ground alone that the love of God could flow out to the guilty, however vile, lame, maimed, or blinded by Satan. First, then, this fact is presented, the absolute need of the death of Christ lifted up. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Yes, the door stands wide open; it is God that gave His Son for this purpose. Now the way a soul is compelled to enter is this. A deep need is created by the Spirit in that soul, that nothing can

satisfy but the supper prepared of God—that is Christ. There are things we can say with certainty of this great supper that cannot be said of anything else. First, it meets the need, whatever that need may be, of every soul compelled to enter and sit down. Secondly, it is inexhaustible and everlasting. To be this, it must be wholly of God. This is exactly what it is. The law was the test of what man could bring to God. The supper is the disclosure of what God has done and provided for man. Old things are passed away, behold all things are new, and all of God. As the waiter takes off the covers when the guests are seated, so the Holy Ghost in the word uncovers, reveals Christ, meeting the sinner's every need.

Twenty thousand readers will probably read these words in a few days. Now could each one take his seat as a little child at this great supper, not one could have a felt need in the soul that would not be met.

Do you say, "I am laden with sins and oppressed with the fear of death and judgment?" "Be it known unto you that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." (Acts xiii. 38.) "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts x. 43.) "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. x. 17.) Would a friend invite you to supper and then, when covers were taken off, tell you he

only intended you to hope you should have a supper? Does God intend to mock you? Does He intend that you shall merely hope for forgiveness of sins? If we confess our sins, is He not faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness? Why should you doubt God? Is not this full love, everlasting forgiveness, exactly what your soul needs? How blessed to sit down believing the words of God!

Well, and what is the need of your soul? I long, says another, for the absolute certainty that I am justified from all things. Sit down then, and read this, "And by him, all that believe ARE justified from all things." Is this certainty or uncertainty? The supper, or the hope of one? Can anything give more certainty than this? "If we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences and was raised for our justification." Of course if we do not believe God, all must be uncertainty, yea, absolute darkness. Anxious soul, sit down. Was Jesus delivered for our offences? Was He raised from the dead! Is there any uncertainty as to these facts? Not the slightest. What, says a debtor, has such a friend paid my debts? And has the Creditor put on the receipt stamp and written 'settled'? How can I doubt then that I am justified from those debts? And has Jesus been bruised for my iniquities, delivered up to the atoning death of the cross for my offences? Has He finished the work

that God gave Him to do? And has God raised Him from the dead for the very purpose of our justification? Has God thus written settled to the dreadful list of my sins? God, who spared not His own Son, but gave Him up for this purpose, shall I doubt Him? "It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Ah, reader, this may be new to you, but not the less true. Believing God, we are thus accounted righteous.

Do you say, I long to sit at this great supper in perfect peace with God? Oh, that the cover may be taken off. Why, see this is the very thing you have on believing God. "Therefore being justified by faith, *we have* peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom v. 1.) Yes, "Jesus having made peace by the blood of his cross." The parable of the supper gives certainty that, believing God, *we have* peace with Him. Oh sit down in rest, in perfect peace with God.

I am so blind, says another, I understand so little. At God's supper all is light. All there are translated from darkness to light. God hath made Christ Jesus to be just what you need, "made unto us wisdom." (1 Cor. i. 30.) Talk of the stones, or the stars, science of things great or small; what is this compared with the knowledge of Him that made them all?

Ah, says another, I want to be clothed with the best robe : I want righteousness. Have you sought it diligently by keeping the law as the Jews of old ? Have you sought to establish your own, and is all failure ? Then sit down, Christ Jesus is also made of God to be unto us righteousness. Yea, all of God. Oh, look up and behold the righteous One raised from the dead, your subsisting, unchanging righteousness.

But must I not make an effort to attain to sanctification ? Is not this most desirable ? The effort is just the mistake. Sit down. Would you turn to the friend who invites you to supper, and say, Must I not make an effort to bring to the supper what I most need ? The great point is this, that Christ Jesus is, of God, made unto us "Sanctification." We say this is the very point of the new truth ; it is not bringing, but receiving, as a little child. Christ Jesus made of God your sanctification ? What a separation to God !

And what are you seeking ? "Long have I been seeking redemption ; I have prayed, fasted, taken the holy communion, hoping to get redemption." Is not this a mistake ? All things are ready, Christ Jesus is made of God to be also unto us "redemption." Hark, what all these are saying who have sat down at the supper. "We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Can you say this ? No ! then you have not sat down. Oh the

untold riches of this feast! Are you despising it all?

Yes, again we repeat, our every need is met at this gospel feast. Do you need life? "The gift of God is eternal life." Do you say, I am too vile, I abhor myself, I have spent all in loathsome sin, it is impossible that I can be welcome to the holy, holy God? Stay, read the parable of the prodigal and the father's welcome. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." "And him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." Now come to Jesus, tell all out to God, and sit down in the joy of the Father's presence.

"But who are you and what is your need? how miserable you look." "Nothing that you have said meets my case, at least I do not feel so. My name is Experience. I delight in the law of God after the inward man. I am born again, I have a new nature that would ever do good, but I find a law, when I would do good, evil is present with me: you may read all about me in Romans vii. 11-23." I am glad to hear all you say, for, wretched as you are, not a soul can be more welcome to sit down at the great supper. It is sin, the root, that troubles you, and the absence of all power in your efforts. Well we say, sit down. Here is double deliverance. "God hath made him to be sin for us." Oh deep wondrous words! (2 Cor. v. 21.) Clearly you can find no help in the law, the more you try it the greater your wretchedness; but mark these words,

“For what the law could not do in that it was weak, through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin [or by a sacrifice for sin] condemned sin in the flesh.” (Rom. viii. 3.) Through faith we have deliverance from all condemnation as to sin in the flesh; sin having been judged in Jesus made sin for us. And secondly, we are delivered from its power by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. (Read Rom. viii. 2-11.) Sin is not eradicated, “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit.” (Gal. v. 17.) “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”

Our space is filled up, we can only ask the need of one or two more. “You seem rather perplexed, what is it?” “I have been looking at the world and at the church, and at myself, and all the jargon of discord around; and I want to have the calm certainty, that when Jesus comes again, I shall be with Him; like the sailor buffeted with the storm, I want to be sure of the haven at last.” Dear soul, sit down and see what is spread before you.

He says, “In my Father’s house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself; that where I am there you may be also.” (John xiv. 1-4.) What can you want more than the sure words of Christ? Yes, let twenty thousand awakened sinners speak, and

all they need they find in Christ? There is no supper like this supper.

All is everlasting. God says, "I will remember their sins no more." "Everlasting righteousness." "Eternal redemption." "Life everlasting." "Perfected for ever." "For ever with the Lord."

Inexhaustible ! Oh this feast, they that eat shall hunger no more ; they that drink shall thirst no more. (John iv. 14 ; vi. 35.) Ah tell us, ye boasting sons of human progress, is there such another feast? Tell us, where it is, and what is its name? Man never conceived such a thought ; a feast infinite and inexhaustible for time and eternity. God is the giver, and man as a little child the receiver.

Stay before we close, will you turn to Matthew where the parable is presented more directly to the Jews? There was a guest who had not on the wedding garment. When the man was questioned on the point, he was speechless. "Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. xxii. 13.) What a question is this? One of eternal moment to all who have professed to have come to Christ. Tell us then, which of the two garments have you on? For there are only two. The Jews went about to establish their own righteousness,—that is one ; and the other is that which is of God, even Christ and His propitiation, by which God is righteous in justifying the believer. (Rom. iii. 19—

26 ; x. 3-4.) Not what man can do for, or bring to God ; but what God has done for us in the gift of His Son. Yes, such is the grace of God displayed in this great supper, that it will not do even to come in our own ragged clothes. “ Put the best robe upon him.” Oh happy, happy child of grace, washed and clothed, and royal sandals, with boldness to enter by the blood of Jesus. As thou sittest down, remember nothing can ever separate thee from the love of Christ. God our Father grant that we may walk in holiness as becomes the children of the feast !



ARE YOU HAPPY?

God's thought at creation was that man should be happy. Not only was he upright, but he was made in the image of God. With the rest of creation, he was pronounced to be “very good.” He was distinguished, however, from other creatures in a way most remarkable, for “The Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.” Thus He, who only hath immortality, gave to man an immortal soul. Besides all this, God *blessed* him. Male and female created He them, and *God blessed them*, and set them in dominion over other creatures. Thus man in the beginning was *happy* and honoured. He was set by his Creator in the position of superiority and enjoyment.

But man soon sinned, and then death came; and judgment too, for God "drove out the man." Then man, when driven out, only proved himself to be evil, and that continually; and, after God's repeated interference in judgment, instead of turning toward God with repentance, he made gods of his own, and honoured and served the creature more than the Creator. In this state of things, God called out one man, Abram, for Himself, saying, "I will *bless* thee;" and, when he believed, God counted his faith for righteousness, and promised that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be *blessed*. Thus we see that God's mind was that man who had to do with Him should be happy.

In process of time, Abram's seed, the children of Israel, were brought out of Egypt in virtue of the blood of the Lamb, and by the mighty power of God. Thus delivered from misery and bondage, they, though a people in the flesh, were brought into a relationship of nearness to Jehovah. Again, God shewed that it was His mind that man should be happy, for not only did He bless them in a marvellous way, but again and again called upon them to rejoice. "Thou shalt *rejoice* before the Lord thy God in all that thou puttest thine hands unto." (See Deut. xii. 7, 12, 18; Lev. xxiii. 40.)

And so now, only in a higher and an eternal sense, it is clearly the Lord's mind that those who are His children should be happy. Not only has

He given us remission of sins, and created us in Christ Jesus, but He has shed abroad His love in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us, and “has *blessed* us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” (See Rom. v. 5 ; Eph. i. 3, 7.) Being thus brought into nearness and relationship to God, and having the Holy Ghost in us, we are brought into “fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ ; and thus our minds, in our measure, can run in the current of God’s thoughts, and our hearts can dwell in the circle of His love. The Lord Himself now becomes the proper object of our affections, and the source of all our blessings. Our eternal life and prospects are all bound up with Him. His personal glory, His infinite worth, His excellences and perfections—His accomplished work on the cross, with the various official glories He sustains, and His coming again, now engage and cheer our souls. We are therefore enjoined to “Rejoice evermore,” to “rejoice in the Lord always,” yea to “joy [or boast] in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the reconciliation.”

Our Lord instructs us as to the joy there is in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. When the shepherd found his lost sheep, he took it home upon his shoulders rejoicing, and called his friends and neighbours to rejoice with him. The father rejoiced because he had received his lost son safe and sound. Thus we are informed that the Father and

the Son in heaven rejoice, when a sinner is really brought to God. After this, our Lord so instructed His own disciples who were clean through the word which He had spoken to them, that He added "These things have I spoken unto you that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." (John xv. 11.) Thus we clearly see that it is the Lord's mind that believers should be happy. Early Christians knew well the precious reality of it. When Jesus, after His resurrection, presented Himself in the midst of His sorrowing disciples, who were shut in for fear of the Jews, and shewed them His hands and His side, and said "Peace be unto you ;" we are told, "Then were the disciples *glad* when they saw the Lord." At the close too of Luke's gospel, when Jesus was parted from them and carried up into heaven, He left them so happy that "they were continually in the temple *praising* and *blessing* God." Happy people because wholly taken up with their crucified and ascended Saviour !

Again, in Pentecostal times, we find believers in such a happy state, that we read "they did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart *praising* God." After this, in a solitary corner of the earth, no sooner was the Ethiopian eunuch brought to a true knowledge of his eternal salvation by Christ alone than he went on his way *rejoicing*. The Philippian jailer, too, who only a little before, amid the distressing circumstances of his position,

would have rashly put an end to his existence, even this man, as soon as he could cast himself on Christ alone for salvation according to the word of His faithful servants, "*rejoiced*, believing in God with all his house."

Elsewhere we are taught in the word that "the kingdom of heaven is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and *joy* in the Holy Ghost ;" and we certainly do well to lay this scripture solemnly to heart, for we read of disciples in a former time who were *filled with joy* and with the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xiv. 17 ; Acts xiii. 22.) Paul prayed that saints might be filled with all joy and peace in believing. John says in his first Epistle, "These things write we unto you that your *joy might be full* ;" and Peter speaks of others whose joy in the Lord was so abundant, that they "*rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory*." How sweet and comforting it is to know then that it is the will of God that believers should even now be unspeakably happy !

Perhaps some one will say, "You would not speak so confidently of the Christian's happiness, if you knew what I have to contend with in myself." But who ever heard of self being the source of true happiness? On the contrary, "In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." Besides, are we not assured by the unerring word of the living God, that our old man is crucified with Christ? so that we are enjoined to "Reckon our-

selves to have died indeed unto sin," which means not to reckon ourselves to be living, but dead, done with at the cross—there seen in Christ our Substitute under the judgment of God, dead upon the cross. Thus are we freed, judicially freed from our old man—our Adam standing, and are enjoined to think of ourselves as "alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Happy those who thus reckon as God would have them, and always know they are seen by God as in Christ Jesus in heavenly places! Such only have done with self.

But others may be ready to say, "If my circumstances were altered, I should indeed be happy;" or "If I were only delivered from this pressing trial, I should then rejoice." Not so, my reader. If your present joy is dependent on your circumstances, it is precisely what much of the worldling's joy consists of, and needs neither grace nor faith. That we should look carefully into all our matters in order that we may honour God in them, is true enough, but circumstances, however prosperous, should never be the *spring* of a Christian's joy: however much they may be the occasion of present thanksgiving to God. On the contrary, it is often in the deepest waters of affliction, that the Christian knows the greatest joy in the Lord. It was so with the saints in 1 Peter i. 8. They were in manifold trials, in heaviness indeed—houseless, homeless, in a foreign clime, with all the sufferings connected with a persecuted and scattered, but

harmless people ; yet how full of joy they were ! Is there anything in scripture that exceeds it ? And so with Paul and Silas. Was it not when their backs were smarting with the lacerating scourge, and their feet made fast in the dungeon's stocks, that they were so truly happy that they sang praises to God ? O my christian reader, let us lay these things to heart, and ask ourselves why we are not more characterised as a happy, praising people ?

Before closing these remarks, we would notice three points of instruction on this subject brought before us in the verse already quoted. " Whom having not seen ye love, in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet, believing, ye rejoice, with joy unspeakable and full of glory." (1 Peter i. 8.) We have here, first, the spring of the Christian's happiness ; secondly, the secret of its realisation ; and thirdly, its measure.

1. *The spring of our happiness* is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself—in whom, though now ye see Him not, ye rejoice." It is the man Christ Jesus in the glory whom we now see by faith. All our resources are in Him. It is vain to look elsewhere. All other streams are dry. He is the Rock which was smitten, and we have only now to speak to the Rock, and He will give forth His waters. He only is the fountain of life. He is before the face of God in glory for us ; and we are complete in Him, in whom all fulness dwells, who is the

Head of all principality and power. Let it then be a settled fact with our souls that Christ Himself—not friends, nor self, nor circumstances, but He Himself—is the alone source of our happiness.

“Earthly friends may fail or leave us,
One day soothe, the next day grieve us,
But this Friend will ne’er deceive us,
O how He loves !”

2. It is by the activity of *faith in Him* that we have present *happiness*. A person may be a true believer, and yet not be exercising faith in Him, not having our thoughts and hearts running in the channel of divine truth concerning Him. It is the soul having now to do with Him whom we have not seen, but who is revealed in the word, that we have present joy ; not thinking of Him according to our poor thoughts, but as God has revealed Him to us in His word. Hence we read, “*In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice.*” Let us not expect to be happy, if we are brooding over our frames, feelings, circumstances or attainments. Soul-occupation with Him alone enables us to rise superior to these things. Then we can exultingly cry out :—

“Oh for ten thousand tongues to praise
My Saviour, and my God !”

3. As to the *measure of our joy*, our Lord said, “That your joy might be full.” John, as we have noticed, so writes that our “joy might be full,” and

here it is recorded of Christians of olden times, that they “rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” To dwell on the infinite fulness and perfections of the person, work, and offices of the Lord Jesus Christ is to dive into a boundless ocean of divine love. Then our thoughts are launched, as it were, into glory. We enter upon the boundlessness of the eternal and unchanging love and glory of God. Thanks for the rich, free, and unmerited love of God, that has “called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus” ! Though now by faith we rejoice in Him, the next moment our Lord may come and take us there ; then faith will be changed to sight, for we shall see His face, be with Him, and be like Him for ever.

“Watching and ready may we be,
As those who long their Lord to see.”



PLAIN PAPERS ON THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

Matthew xxiv. 1–13.

WHAT a sight is this ! Jesus sat on the mount of Olives, three days only before He suffered the death of the cross. The disciples came to Him privately. What a privilege ! Have we not the same privilege now, so near His return ? Yes, wondrous privilege ! Where two or three are gathered together to His name, there He is in the midst of

them. How blessed to sit at His feet! Let us meditate on every word that comes from His precious lips. The Holy Ghost dwelling in us, abiding with us, we thus can understand the words of Jesus.

How solemn the denunciations of the previous chapter! As Jesus went out, and departed from the temple, He told them, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." They had rejected Him as Messiah, and as such shall not see Him henceforth, till they shall say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Oh, Christendom, Christendom, is it not even so also with thee? Judgment was then at the doors of Jerusalem. Is not judgment at the door of Christendom? How desolate was Jerusalem's temple, when Jesus left it, and went up on high! How desolate will Christendom be when the body, the church, is taken to meet Him! The disciples were occupied with the buildings of the temple. And is it not so now? only, with the complete revelation of God in our hands, is it not more sad? But are we not too much occupied with buildings and ritual?

Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Let us listen. The disciples ask three questions, "Tell us when shall these things be?" The judgments denounced against Jerusalem. "And what shall be the sign of

thy coming? and of the end of the world [or age]?" "Jesus answered." Yes, we have the answer of Jesus to these three questions; but not in the order in which they are put, but as they will be fulfilled. *First, the things, the judgments denounced.* (Vers. 4-14.) *Secondly, the time of the end.* (Vers. 15-28.) *Thirdly, the coming of the Son of man.* (Vers. 29-31; chap. xxv. 31-46.) Chapter xxiv. 31 to xxv. 31, form a parenthesis.

Let us remember, at that time, the church had only been announced as a future thing, "Upon this rock I will build My church." (Matt. xvi. 18.) The three questions have no reference to it. They are about the Jews, and Jerusalem; and the return of the Son of man, to set up His kingdom on earth. We must not confound this with His coming for His church, to take her to heavenly glory. The answer then of Jesus in verses 4-14, gives the general history of the Jews, from the rejection of Jesus to the time of the end; also, a particular description of the remnant, immediately previous to "the end." The beginning of sorrows. Behold, oh my soul, the Holy One of God, sitting on the mount of Olives. There lay the city before Him, with all its future history. There, the splendid temple about to be destroyed. There, the multitude about to gnash their teeth and cry, "Crucify him." There, the place of Calvary, where He is about in three days to bear His people's sins. What

a solemnity this gives to the prophetic utterances of the Lord !

During this period, until the time of the end, wars, famines, pestilences, sorrows, persecutions, and desolations. Many deceived by false prophets, and iniquity abounding, and this brings us to the time of the end. This is ushered in, however, by the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom in all the world. We must mark, this is not the gospel of the grace of God, or of the glory, but the gospel of the kingdom. The coming reign of the Son of man. We find this shall be preached after the close of Christianity, and the redeemed church has gone to heaven.

You will notice, beloved reader, in our Lord's teaching, there is no thought of the world's conversion in these verses, which describe the state of things up to the time of "the end." Iniquity abounds to that very time. And only those who shall *endure* to "the end" shall be saved, and blessed on the earth, as Noah and those with him were brought through the flood.

Now we will notice the third question, but the second answer, "The end of the age." Yes, the Lord answers it thus, because He shews it is immediately after this time of the end that the Son of man cometh. It is helpful to see that when the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached to all nations, "Then shall THE END come."

Now He calls attention to the prophet Daniel,

and points to that which marks, with certainty, the commencement of *the time of the end*. This is all-important, and He says, "Whoso readeth, let him understand." Let us turn to Daniel, and read a few verses in dependence on the Holy Ghost. There is evidently a specific time appointed of God to the Jews, called the time of the end. "The time of the end," because it is yet for a time appointed. (Dan. xi. 35.) This time is to be one "of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time," &c. (Chap. xii. 1.) Daniel was to shut up the words and seal the book, "even to the *time of the end*." (Ver. 4.) Then one asks, "How long shall it be to *the end* of these wonders?" (Ver. 6.) Again, "O my Lord, what shall be *the end* of these things?" (Ver. 9.) The words are closed up, and sealed, till *the time of the end*." Then the days of this time of the end are counted. "From the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand, two hundred and ninety days." But to Daniel it is said, "Go thou thy way till *the end* be, for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at *the end* of the days." (Ver. 13.)

Now if we would still further see the importance of understanding this reference of our Lord to Daniel, as to the time of the end, we must read carefully Daniel ix. 24-27. We find seventy weeks determined upon Daniel's people the Jews, and

their city. Those seventy weeks can only mean weeks of years, or 490 years. Their division is very remarkable—seven at the beginning, sixty-two, and one at the end. As Jesus sat and beheld the city, in three days, events of eternal moment in this prophecy were about to be fulfilled. Yes, in three days, the seven, and the sixty and two were about to be fulfilled. And they were fulfilled. There was Calvary where reconciliation for iniquity was made. There the sepulchre from whence He arose from the dead. Everlasting righteousness brought in. And as Messiah, He was cut off, and had nothing. Thus seven, and sixty-two, or sixty-nine of these weeks of years, or 483 years of this prophecy have run their course. The last week, or seven years, has not yet come. Not only was our blessed Lord cut off, and had nothing as Messiah, but the Romans came and destroyed the city. And then followed that sad parenthesis in their history of general desolations, and sufferings; exactly as described by the Lord in our chapter, Matthew xxiv. 4-14. At the close of this unmeasured period, the prince of the people that destroyed Jerusalem is found making a covenant with them for the last one week, or seven years. (Dan. v. 27; xi.) Now mark, it is in the midst of these seven years that he takes away the daily sacrifice, and sets up that very abomination spoken of by our Lord. And from that very day, the days of the time of the end are measured. Thus

nothing could be more distinctly marked in scripture than this time of the end.

How clear and how tender is the Lord's instruction to the remnant of Jews, who believe then! The setting up the abomination is the signal; the days of unparalleled tribulation begin. They are to flee to the mountains. So terrible, that unless those days spoken of in Daniel were shortened, no elect Jews, no flesh, should be saved. They are however shortened to 1260. (Rev. xiii. 6.)

We may listen then to the words of Jesus on Olivet (vers. 15-28), as simply describing the time of the end, the last three years and a half of Daniel's vision, commencing with the setting up of the abomination of desolation.

Now He tells us what will take place immediately after the tribulation of those days. Yes, immediately after, The sun shall be darkened, the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. *And then*, ah listen to these words of Jesus! "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." Fellow Christian, washed in the blood of the Lamb, it is indeed most certain that before this coming of Christ in glory and to judgment, we shall have been caught up to meet Him, as it is written. (1 Thess. iv. ; 2 Thess. ii. 1-11.)

And it is also absolutely certain, "When Christ who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (Col. iii. 4.)

My reader, if still unsaved, here is the most astounding event described by the Lord Jesus. A sight in the heavens that shall make all the tribes of the earth mourn. Your very eyes before you die, just as you are in your sins, and in your body, even you may see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and glory. Ah then there will be no hiding from those eyes as a flame of fire. What will your companions avail you then? You have sacrificed your precious soul, it may be, to them, and the fashion of this world. Can they help you then? If you had all the riches and deceitful pleasures of this world, what would they be in the terrors of that day so near?

We beg, we entreat of you pause, ere it be too late. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, picture that moment, when suddenly, and unexpectedly, the Son of man appears in the sight of a guilty world. Infidelity will turn pale in that moment. And sleeping Christendom (still crying peace and safety!) Oh how sudden, how terrible the destruction! Now the Lord says, "Let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." But then, for ever too late! too late! Yes, these words which describe what will take place both during the time of the end, and immediately after it, are the words of Him who is the truth.

CORRESPONDENCE.

1. "K. P. S.," Hammersmith. Your mention of Christians meeting together to play games quite shocks us. Such entirely mistake what the Christian's vocation and position are. That bodily exercise is good, and even necessary for health is true enough, but there are surely ways of obtaining it without indulging in the world's frivolities and pleasures. Such conduct indicates a very low condition of soul, even if they are partakers of eternal life in Christ. The only remedy is the apprehension in their souls of the infinite glory, fulness, excellencies, and accomplished redemption of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is said of a celebrated man that he was literally blind for some time after looking at the sun, and it is no less true that when the *heart* is really taken up with the Lord Jesus, we become blind to the world's attractions, and also deaf to its charms. After all, we fear it is the company rather than the game which is often the point of attraction, and sometimes forms an easy and certain way of drawing young Christians back into the world they have professed to have been rescued from by the death of Christ. "If any man *love* the world, the love of the Father is not in him," is a very solemn scripture. If a Christian let slip the sense of his relationship to the Father, his walk soon loses its distinctive and separate character. The world under Satan has ten thousand ways of drawing him into its vortex. May the Lord graciously restore such souls! We fear there are many so ensnared.

2. "D. L." Two things, dear friend, are clear from your letter. First, that you have not taken your true place before God as a lost, undone,

guilty sinner; and secondly, that the Lord Jesus Christ is not with you the object of faith—your way to God, your life and righteousness, through whose blood alone you have remission of sins according to the word of God. Be assured, that till these things are known to you as great realities, you can never be truly happy, or have power over sin and Satan. Your being self-occupied only shews that self is before you as an object, and not Christ, because of the misery you speak of; for a self-occupied person, with a conscience about sin, must be most miserable. Self has no power over sin, or to resist Satan. Christ overcame Satan by "It is written."

Our heart's desire and prayer to God is that your mind's eye may be taken off yourself and your sins, and that you may look straight to the Lord Jesus, who "has entered into heaven itself by his own blood," as the alone object of your heart's trust, your only way to God. Thus coming to God by Him, and relying upon His written word, you will not only have peace, but power. We read when one in bitter anguish of soul cried out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" he looked off self, straight to the Lord Jesus, and could then peacefully say, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." May this soon be the happy state of your soul, and many others in a similar condition, is our earnest prayer to God!

3. "Buxton." The paper, *The Sanctuary and the Sea*, has been printed in the form of a little book, and may be had of the publishers, 20, Paternoster Square.

Several answers are unavoidably postponed for want of space.

MEETING JESUS.

LUKE XVII. 11-19.

“AND it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off.”

How many there are in these days who give a general assent to the truths of the gospel, and yet have no certainty as to the state of their souls with God, or whether their sins have been forgiven or not! The eyes of many a reader in this state may rest on these lines.

Here is a sad, but true, picture of sin. “The leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean. All the days wherein the plague shall be in him, he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be.” (Lev. xiii. 45.) The ten lepers that met Jesus took this place. They stood *afar off*. This is assuredly the first effect of meeting Jesus. “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” Such was the effect of the presence of Jesus on Peter. Have you ever thus really met Jesus? *afar off*, guilty, and loathsome. Yes, the loathsome disease of leprosy is a true picture of your

condition. If you have never yet felt this awful moral distance from the holy Son of God, you have never yet met Him. Do not be deceived. Have you ever taken your true place, owning your guilty condition—your very sins before Him—meeting Him? When the Holy Spirit opens the eye to see Jesus meeting us, it is no uncommon thing to be so overwhelmed with shame and guilt, as to cause sincere souls to say, “Depart; I am too vile to be saved.”

In God’s picture-book of these great truths there is a wonderful thing bearing on this very point. When the leper was a leper all over, “and the leprosy cover all the skin of him that hath the plague, from his head even to his foot, then the leper shall be pronounced clean.” (Lev. xiii. 12, 13.) Is not this very wonderful? The sinner that is a sinner all over, yes, that owns all to Jesus, is the very one to meet Him, and be cleansed.

Is this your case? Are you suited to such a Saviour? Is He suited to you?

Perhaps you say, “I thought I had met Jesus, but I feel no better. I see no signs that I am cleansed.” “And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go, shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass that as they went they were cleansed.” Did they wait until they felt better? Did they say, Nay, before we believe that, we must see some sign that we are cleansed? They believed the bare word of Jesus, the Son of God.

“And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.”

Still you say, I do not see how I am to know that my sins are forgiven. Well, we will turn to the picture, or type-book again; for God has been pleased to give you a very simple figure, shewing how you may know that your sins are forgiven. In Leviticus xiv. the leper is brought to the priest for his cleansing. “Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds, alive and clean, and cedar-wood, and scarlet, and hyssop: and the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel, over running water. As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar-wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water: and he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and he shall let the living bird loose into the open field.” (Vers. 4-7.)

Here, then, are two birds, to typify the one Person of Christ in His death and resurrection. One bird could not foreshadow both the necessity of His death, and resurrection. One bird must be killed. Jesus must needs suffer the agony of the atoning death of the cross. He must be forsaken of God—bruised for our iniquities. Let us look closely at this inspired picture. The bird is killed; its blood is shed. Will this give certainty to the

poor leper? Not the least, and if there were not another bird, the type would be incomplete. There is a human and popular picture of a lady clinging to the cross amidst the raging storm—a very true picture of the incomplete gospel of the day. Can a soul in that condition, and remaining there, ever enjoy the certainty that sins are forgiven? Never.

Now see the other bird, dipped in the blood of the bird that was killed, and that blood sprinkled upon the leper; now he is pronounced clean, and, in proof, see the living bird let loose into the open field. Leprosy is a type of sin, and without shedding of blood there is no remission. The blood has been shed, it is sprinkled on the leper, the leper is pronounced clean. The bird is let loose, it is gone.

What can this mean? The leper now is quite sure he is cleansed—he has heard the word, and seen the bird let loose.

These are the shadows; now for the substance; for on this very ground is the believer justified from all things—accounted righteous. “Believing on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences.” This is the first bird that must be killed. Yes, Jesus took our place, He “was delivered for our offences;” but, He “was raised again for our justification.” Here is the living bird let loose. (Rom. iv. 24, 25.) And, just as in the type, if the bird is only killed, the

leper cannot be cleansed, or know it; so, if Jesus has only died, we are not, and cannot know, that we are justified. The scripture declares, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." Thus, if the bird be let loose, the leper is cleansed. If Christ be risen, the believer is justified. Mark, it is God who raised Him from among the dead for this very purpose. Thus, believing God, we are justified, and being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, if we read on further, in Leviticus xiv., there are three things to be noted in the cleansing of the leper: the water (vers. 8, 9); the blood (vers. 10-14); the oil (15-18). These verses set before us in type the three great needs of the sinner brought to God. It is not that the leprosy of sin is eradicated from the flesh, the old man; but this type points to that great lesson spoken eighteen hundred years after by Jesus to Nicodemus; the absolute need of the new birth, wholly new. Water is used as a figure of the application of the word of God by the Spirit. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God," &c. 1 Peter i. 23.

Then, in its place, comes the blood—the atonement. There is a double action here. The man is presented before the Lord with the value of the offering; and the blood is also put upon him—on his ear, his thumb, and his toe, as a figure of

the blood of Christ. How complete the sanctification of the believer to God by the one offering of Christ !

And then, lastly, the oil is put upon the blood, and upon the head of the cleansed leper. The oil was like a seal of witness on the blood. Thus the believer is first quickened by the Spirit, born wholly anew. Then having believed in the all-cleansing value of the blood, he is sealed by the Holy Ghost. What a picture of these foundation-truths !

“And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God ; and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks : and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus, answering, said, Were there not ten cleansed ? But where are the nine ? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.”

Now, if God has shewn you by the Spirit that you are a sinner all over, and as such you have met Jesus, the Saviour of sinners ; if He is revealed to your soul, delivered for your offences, raised again from among the dead for your justification ; God declares you to be, by that death and resurrection, justified in righteousness everlasting. As surely as the leper knew he was cleansed when the bird was let loose, even so do you not know, on the testimony of God, that your sins are forgiven ? for Jesus, the Surety, is risen from the dead.

Where are you going, then ? Will you now

take your place at the feet of Jesus, GIVING THANKS—giving glory to God, worshipping Him? Or, like the nine, will you refuse Him the glory, and, instead of thanks and worship, will you go back to a doubting ritualism, to a wide-spread, unbelieving Judaism, that has taken the place of Christianity? In the latter, you will find cold disappointment; in the former—yes, in Jesus—you find you have all, all you need. Oh, the fulness, the grace upon grace! God hath made Him “unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption.”

Beloved christian reader, one of these places you must have taken; either a thanksgiving worshipper in the presence of Jesus; or a wanderer with the nine, afar from Him, in the darkness and wilderness around.



HE HEALED ME.

“I WAS a stricken deer, that left the herd
Long since. With many an arrow deep infix’d
My panting side was charged, when I withdrew
To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
There I was found by ONE who had Himself
Been hurt by th’ archers. In His side He bore
And in His hands and feet the cruel scars.
With gentle force, soliciting the darts,
He drew them forth, and heal’d, and bade me live.”



“NOT IN VAIN IN THE LORD.”

1 COR. XV. 58.

WE are servants of God because we are sons of God : sons first, then servants. In this there is no bondage, but privilege and comfort. Yoked with the Lord Jesus, the perfect Servant, we find rest and blessing, for His yoke is easy, and His burden light.

True service flows from known relationship and communion. We doubt not the divine order is peace, communion, and service. Every question of conscience as to our eternal blessings must be settled, in order to have peace with God. The conscience must be purged with the blood of Christ to have no more conscience of sins. We must know Christ before we can live Christ. We must be consciously children of God before we can walk as children. Then communion with the Father and the Son can be enjoyed, and from it willing and happy service can flow.

A great deal, however, that in our day is called the service of God, is found, when judged by the light of scripture, to be not true service. How many, for instance, sincerely think they are serving the Lord in begging money from the unsaved, in order to meet the expenses incurred in carrying out missionary and other efforts? Now, scripture not only enjoins us to come out from among unbe-

lievers, and to be separate, but most pointedly commends primitive Christians, because “they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles, for his name’s sake.” (3 John 7.) Other examples of what passes for service among us, equally opposed to the teaching of scripture, might be given, but this instance suffices for our present purpose. The fact is, we need exercise of conscience over the written word of God, in dependence on the Holy Ghost, in order to learn what the Lord’s will is as to our service. It is one thing to be engaged in service, and another to serve acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

We serve the Lord Christ, because He loved us, and gave Himself for us. But if service becomes our object, instead of the Lord, we shall certainly fail, and most likely break down. Who has not seen unhappy examples of this, or sorrowfully proved it in his own experience? If the eye of our heart be on our service, however scriptural, instead of the Lord, we shall be taken off the spring of real strength, and therefore be going on in the energy of nature, instead of in the power of faith. We should “be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.” We have no other strength; therefore it is written, “Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee.” All our resources are in Him. To make service, then, our object, is to be away from the Lord, and then our service will be continued in mere routine and dead formality, or

we shall break down, and it be given up. The perfect Servant could say, "I have set Jehovah always before me," and "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." (Ps. xvi. 8; John iv. 34.)

It is blessedly true, however, that all believers are servants, that we all have our work given to us *till He come*. He gave to every man his work. He called His ten servants, and delivered unto them ten pounds (to each a pound), and said unto them, "Occupy till I come." Each member of the body of Christ has his work. "To everyone of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ;" and the edification of the whole body depends on the faithfulness of each. We have all, then, our work; but what the character and measure of it may be, the Lord who has given it can alone make known, and to those who wait upon Him, He will do it. Having learnt what the service He has appointed us is, we should then give ourselves to it with diligence, for His glory. We read of some who "addicted themselves" to their ministry, and so should we. Such know their entire dependence on the Lord, and, like the apostles, they *give THEMSELVES* to prayer, and to their ministry. They count upon God for blessing, and they cannot be confounded. There is a definiteness of purpose and action, and they look for definite results. They cleave to the Lord, and reckon upon Him.

Perhaps nothing more really shews the stunted and feeble condition of many Christians, than the pointless, objectless character of their activities. An occasional servant, and desultory service, seem to be unknown in the epistles. On the contrary, we are exhorted to be “steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.” (1 Cor. xv. 58.) In the same epistle, the apostle had previously given them much instruction as to the various gifts and operations of the Holy Ghost, and now, when unfolding to them the mystery of the change at the coming of our Lord (which must always remind us of our opportunities for serving the Lord in this evil world, soon drawing to a close), he admonishes us to be “stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.”

Having, then, learnt from the Lord our place in the body, and the line of service with which He has so graciously entrusted us, we should attend to it with all diligence—“be stedfast.” Day by day we should industriously pursue our course. We should pray and work, and work and pray. Looking to the Lord, and cleaving to Him with purpose of heart, He will guide and control us, as He did those who “assayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not.” We may be flattered by some, treated coldly by others, tempted and buffeted by Satan, liable to be despondent at the trials the service involves, or to be puffed up at our success, but withal we should be “unmov-

able." Our service, too, cannot cease while here. Serving the Lord, and fighting the good fight of faith, continue to the end. Nor is it the Lord's mind that our ministrations should be few, but abundant. We should use our opportunities well, redeem the time, bring forth fruit in its season, bear *much* fruit, be "*always abounding* in the work of the Lord."

Perhaps we have been conscious of much that passes among us for the service of the Lord, which will not bear the scrutinising test of the word of God, and we may have also observed how much the work of the Lord has been hindered by human arrangements, systematic plans, and organisations; but have not many who have deeply felt these things fallen into the opposite extreme of mere desultory work, and doing very little in the Lord's service? This calls for much solemn self-examination and self-judgment. The Lord's work has a two-fold aspect—one, in reference to the children of God: the other, toward the unconverted. Every believer is more or less qualified for both; for he has his place of living activity as a member of the body of Christ for the edification of the body, and he has to confess Christ before men. We should not, therefore, fail to deal most unsparingly with ourselves, day by day, as to what may be the character and measure of our service. Have I laboured fervently in prayer for the saints, especially for my neighbours, whose edification and

good I am enjoined to seek? Am I to-day (yes, to-day) practically filling up my place in the body, in stedfast and abounding service to the Lord?

Have I set the gospel before sinners? Have I given tracts to any? Have I used my means, my gifts, my talents in faithfulness to the Lord Jesus *this day*, as occupying till He come? We cannot deal with *ourselves* too severely on these points, or perhaps too tenderly or graciously with others. Each must begin with himself, if we would really see “the work of the Lord” prosper. Not one day should pass without our being a channel of blessing to others. Christianity is the opposite of selfishness. We know that Jesus “pleased not himself.”

No one can be in a healthy state of soul who is not, in some way or other, having fellowship with our Lord Jesus in the gospel; for He loved sinners, preached to sinners, prayed for His sinful murderers, died for the ungodly, shed His blood for sinners, and now sends forth His servants with the message, “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

Many who will read these lines are, we are assured, diligent and earnest servants of our Lord Jesus Christ. But *all* should be; and how can it be brought about? Only by souls entering into the perfect love of God to them in Christ, and, in prayer and faith, going forth as constrained by divine love to do His will, and to glorify Him, in hope of His coming.

But it must be *the Lord's work*, not man's religiousness, not human pretension, nor mere educational activity, but obedience to the Lord's word, thorough subjection to His will, as led by the Spirit of God. These things characterise a true servant, a follower of Him who said, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." (John vii. 38.) May the Lord give us grace thus to serve, remembering His gracious words, "If any man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour." (John xii. 26.)

Moreover, let us ponder the inspired assurance, "Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." How encouraging and full of comfort! We know it is not in vain if "in the Lord." There is not room for a doubt or a misgiving as to the result, if we can assure our hearts that our labour is *in the Lord*. And surely, if it be so, we must have the Lord before us as the One whose glory we seek, whose will we do, whose word we keep! We shall be abiding in the Lord, drawing from Him, leaning upon Him, going forward in His strength, and by His grace led by the Spirit of God. We shall be dependent, prayerful, obedient, and to such it can truly be said, "Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is *not in vain in the Lord*."

THE COMING OF THE LORD.

IN our Lord's last memorable address to His disciples, He touchingly assured them, that, though He was going away to prepare a place for them, He would return. "I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." (John xiv. 3.) This was the bright and blessed hope He set before them. True, the Holy Ghost would be with them, and in them, all through the time of His absence, and for ever; but He would come again. He left the world to go to the Father. He said, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and go to the Father." (John xvi. 28.) He assured them that in His Father's house there were many abodes, that He would go and prepare a place for them, and come again to receive them unto Himself, that they might be with Him. No words could more plainly set forth His personal return from heaven. From other scriptures we learn that the Lord Himself will descend from heaven, that His saints will be raised or changed in a moment, caught up to meet Him in the air, and so be for ever with the Lord. (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52; 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.) His coming again was the alone hope He gave to the sorrowing hearts of His loved ones, who would so soon feel bereaved, and in a world that had hated Him, and cast Him out.

Our Lord left no hope of men getting better. On the contrary, He said, "The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." (John xvi. 2.) Neither were they to hope as to the world; nor did He give the least intimation of its getting better. He had already, in chapter xii., pronounced it under judgment: "Now is the judgment of this world;" and here He prepares His own to receive hatred from it. As to the Holy Ghost, He said, "the world cannot receive him, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him." As to Himself, the world would see Him no more. We know it has not, nor will it, see Him, till He comes in flaming fire to put all enemies under His feet. As to themselves, they were to have tribulation in it, and hatred, and persecution from it. He said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

Withal, they were to know peace in Him, and be of good cheer, not because the world would get better, but because He had overcome the world. Their true hope was that He would come again, and then their sorrow would be turned into joy. It is scarcely possible that anything can be more clearly taught than that the Christian's position here is one of distinct and practical separation from the

world, because he is associated with Christ whom the world has rejected, and still hates. He is here looked at, though in the world, as not of the world, but a sufferer from it, a minister of blessing to it, and, going through it glorifying God. He hopes for Christ to come and take him out of it to the Father's house. (See John xiv .17, 30 ; xv. 18-20 ; xvi. 22, 33.)

Thus we are left in a world where the Lord is not ; not, however, without hope, but that hope is the highest, the best, and the brightest we could have. It is the return of Christ Himself. So it was understood by the early Christians, for by the power of the gospel they were turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven. This is not waiting for the fulfilment of events, but for the Lord Himself. The believer, already in Christ in heavenly places, abiding too in Him, as he surely should, for daily strength for walk and all fruit-bearing, is taught to be looking for his loving Saviour to come again. This also the apostle taught the Philippians. He said, " Our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." (Phil. iii. 20, 21.)

Many now seem sensible that it is not the mere knowledge of the doctrine of the Lord's second coming that has power over hearts and consciences,

but so receiving it from the mouth of God as a divine revelation, as to produce desire and hope. Therefore it does not say in scripture, he that knows the doctrine, but that "every man that hath *this hope* in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John iii. 3.)

It is this which the Spirit teaches, for "the Spirit and the bride say, Come!" Surely, then, those who are instructed and led by the Holy Spirit of God will be taught to say, "Come," while looking and waiting for God's Son from heaven. We have seen also that it is a purifying hope, eminently practical, always associated with ways of separation unto Him, and suffering with Him and for Him, according to His will.

Let scoffers rail, with harden'd brow,
And cries of "Peace" resistless flow,
Or Reason spurn His word ;
By grace divine 'twill be my choice
To wait for the archangel's voice—
To look for Christ my Lord.



HE'S DUNE IT A'.

IN a retired village, near a mountain range, in the north of Scotland, not long since, an aged man was ill, and confined to his bed. His days had been lengthened out to the unusual age of ninety-seven years. His sight had failed him for about

three years, so that he was unable to read, but his mind seemed clear, and he was able to converse on any ordinary subject.

As he was thought to be dying, a christian woman, well known for her piety and love to souls, was asked to visit him. This she gladly did, for she was told that he was anxious about his soul's salvation. She says—

On my entering the room where he lay on his bed of suffering, he asked his daughter to lift him up in a sitting posture. When this was done, he fixed his eyes on me as if he wanted something ; but did not speak.

I said to him, John, Do you love Jesus?

He replied, I am sure I do that.

That's fine, then, for Jesus has loved you "first."

Oh, do you think that? grasping my hand in his.

He says so Himself. The scripture saith, "We love him because he first loved us." (John iv. 19.)

Oh, is that the way o't?

Oh yes, He says so Himself.

But I've been sic a sinner.

Yes, but "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin."

The blood, the blood. I heard mair about the blood fan I was four or five years auld than ever I've dune since.

Did you hear about the blood of Jesus then?

Oh yes, I did that.

Do you think the seed has lain all that time !

Oh yes, I think it has ; but oh me, I've gaen sae far astray.

Do you remember a verse, John, which says, "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way ?" Is that true ?

Oh yes ! oh yes !

Then He also says, "And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all"—that's true too.

Grasping me with both hands tightly, the tears running down His furrowed cheeks, he said, *That's it, that's it, that's it now.*

Some further conversation passed on John iii. 16. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

He was holding me all the time and looking so anxiously, that I added, You are very thirsty to-night, John.

I am awfu' that way.

Hear then, what He says again, "Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters !"

Smiling through his tears, he said, That's the water.

After praying with him I bid him good-bye.

Oh will you come and see me again ?

I said, God willing, I would.

I did so the next evening, and he looked very happy. After speaking of God's love to sinners, I said, Well John, how is it with you now ?

Oh, He can come for me now fan' ever He likes.
He's dune it a'.

A few days after this he went home praising, and saying, I see Him ! I see Him !

Little need be said concerning this touching narrative of one, so far advanced in age, having been brought into such perfect peace, because it speaks for itself. We cannot, however, refrain from saying that one common hindrance to souls having peace with God, is the habit of looking at something in themselves as a reason for it. To persons taught of God, this is always disappointing. No self-occupation, no measure of religiousness, no amount of good desires, or feelings, can possibly give a sinner rest before God. The blood of Christ alone purges the conscience. It is only by the blood of Christ that any have forgiveness of sins, for "without the shedding of blood there is no remission," and "it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." Hence it has been recorded in the infallible word of God that Christ has "made peace through the blood of his cross." (Col. i. 20.) Yes, peace has been made. A just atonement for sins has been made in the death of Jesus the Son of God on the cross.

Does the reader say, "O that I were delivered from this burden of guilt, that I were certain that God had forgiven all my sins?" We reply, What does God say in His word ? Does He not assure

you that the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from all sin? And is not the universal testimony of scripture that "whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins?" If then, you know what it is to have renounced every false refuge, and to look only to the Lord Jesus now in glory as the object of faith, how can you hesitate to give thanks to God for blotting out all your sins? And so completely and for ever has God done this for all who believe on the Lord Jesus, that He has caused to be written for our assurance and comfort, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." It is when, dear reader, you take the eyes of your heart off self in every shape, and even off your sins, and look wholly to Jesus who shed His blood for many for the remission of sins; when you lay aside your own thoughts and rely entirely on what God says in His word concerning Jesus and His accomplished work, you will find access unto God with confidence by the blood of Jesus, and know the present reality of "peace with God." Then you will be able to say, like dear old John in his ninety-seventh year, "He can come for me *now* fan' ever He likes. He's dune it a'."



FRAGMENT.

"To be in a legal state of mind, is to be occupied with what God demands from us, instead of entering into what God has done and is for us in Christ."

JESUS MADE A SURETY.

HEBREWS VII. 22.

"THEN said he, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. He taketh away the first that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Heb. x. 9, 10. "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing." (John vi. 37-40.) There is a striking illustration of suretyship in the words of Judah, to Joseph, concerning his brother Benjamin. "For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my Father for ever." (Gen. xliv. 32.)

What a place was this for the holy One of God to take. The surety of His people. Thus was help laid on One mighty to save. My fellow believer! can you doubt the everlasting love of Jesus your surety? Hark, He speaks to the Father about you: He says, If I bring him not unto thee, I will bear the blame for ever.

Has He died for you, the Just for the unjust? Has He loved you and washed you from your sins in His own blood? And now will He fail, can He fail, to bring you to glory? No! He says, If I bring thee not to glory, I will bear the blame for ever. Oh, how He loves!



BEFORE HONOUR IS HUMILITY.

PROVERBS XV. 33.

THE way to exaltation is the dust,—
 'Tis known to all, who in the Saviour trust.
 The rocky heart, Immanuel's love must melt,
 And beggars' dunghill-misery be felt,
 Before to princely dignity we're raised,
 To sing, "The Lamb is worthy to be praised."
 And though, the *blessed* of the Lord we are,
 Oft trials of our faith we're called to bear,
 (While trav'ling onward to our heavenly rest)
 That we may still be more than ever blest.
 Our choicest comforts, sometimes He requires,
 To empty us of earth, and fond desires;
 And when we find in God a ceaseless store.
 If good, He'll give us more than we'd before.
 Through fierce temptations, stirring up within
 The foul corruptions of indwelling sin,
 We loathe ourselves; and praise and magnify
 The Son of God, who did for sinners die.
 Or should the mighty Tempter's power prevail,
 And all our weapons of resistance fail,
 Thus wounded by the "fiery dart," we cry—
 "Lord help and heal thy child"—so Christ draws nigh!
 Thus exercised, our graces are renew'd,
 With heav'nly wisdom we become endu'd:
 Pride, folly, and self-confidence depart,
 And we advance in lowliness of heart.
 The fetter'd spirit now to earth sits loose,
 A vessel fitted "for the Master's use;"
 Bereft of former gloom, and anxious care,
 We serve "with reverence and godly fear."
 Where all was drought refreshing streams are found,

And inward notes of melody abound;
And being more establish'd in His love,
We live by faith on Him who pleads above.
My soul! "be still" and know that He is God,
Be subject to thy loving Father's rod;
And though at present tears and dust are thine,
He surely will exalt thee "in due time."



FRAGMENTS.

"We tremble to see Israel so soon connecting Mount Sinai and the golden calf; but how much worse is it to connect Mount Calvary and the world!"

"Those who choose disobedience and embrace sin, will be overpowered by sin and embraced with wrath. Happy only those who have confessed sin, and, self-condemned, go through Christ to God's embrace."

One of the devil's snares is so to occupy us with the *past* and *future*, as to weaken us for the *present*.

"The *present* only is thine own,
Then use it well ere it be flown."

The flesh profiteth nothing either morally, intellectually, or religiously.

It is one thing to be an advocate of Christianity, but another to be a disciple of Christ.

CORRESPONDENCE.

4. "W. G.," Kingston. We do not believe that our Lord's words, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto me," mean, that if Christ be lifted up in preaching, sinners must manifestly be then drawn to Him and converted, though, through God's mercy, such is often the case. It is clear that in this statement our Lord referred to His own death on the cross, for it is added, "This he said, signifying what death he should die." (John xii. 32, 33.) We now know that He has been lifted up, and that He is drawing all men—not only Jews, but Gentiles also—all who believe on His name.

With regard to our Lord's "despising the shame," as in Hebrews xii. 2, we can see no difficulty. It simply means what it says. He positively "endured" the suffering of "the cross" in it all; was so entirely set on glorifying God, that the "shame" of being degraded to be numbered with transgressors, and dealt with by men as if He were a wicked person, He bore with meekness—He despised the shame.

5. "E. C. D." Surely it is right in the sight of the Lord to honour and help your parents, as such. (Eph. vi. 1-3.) The opposite is one of the marks of evil in these last days. Then, as your parents are in the Lord, is it not doubly well pleasing to the Lord to help them? 1 Timothy v. 16.

6. "P. S.," London. The question as to whether denying the eternity of punishment undermines the atonement, is of such present importance, that we hope to devote more space in future

numbers than a short reply. The doctrines of the atonement and of eternal punishment rest upon the inspired word of God. If we doubt the one, we may also deny the other. If we explain away the one, we may also the other. The word of God declares that "without shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. ix. 22.) Modern infidelity denies this, and finds some other means of remission, and of punishment declared to be "everlasting," as truly eternal as the life of the righteous, yea, as the existence of God. (See Matt. xxv. 46 ; 2 Cor. iv. 18 ; 1 Tim. i. 17 ; Rev. iv. 9.)

If the rejectors of the atonement can be saved by any other means, then there was no need for the atonement—that "the Son of man *must* be lifted up." Thus the terrible character of sin is set aside, and the doctrine of the atonement undermined ; the absolute need that the holy Son of God, bearing our sins, must be forsaken of God. The two judgments must stand or fall together—Christ forsaken of God on the cross as bearing our sins, and the rejector forsaken of God cast into the place of endless woe, where there never can be remission. Both are clearly revealed, and declared in the word of God, and no one can really hold the one and reject the other.

If we had not needed deliverance from eternal punishment, we should not have needed One who was eternal to die for us on the cross. Thus the true doctrine of the Lord's person, as well as His eternally efficacious work on the cross, are both invalidated by those who deny eternal punishment.

7. "D. M., Jersey. The word "Hades" seems used in scripture for the place of disembodied spirits, of all who have died, until the resurrection of life, when the dead in Christ will be raised, and

the resurrection of damnation or judgment, when all the wicked dead will be raised to be judged at the great white throne. The happy place in hades or the separate state, is where all the blessed are, where it is said of our Lord, that His soul was not left in hades (see Acts ii. 31, Greek), and where He said the penitent thief would be—"This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." (Luke xxiii. 43.) We are quite sure that for the believer "to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." Precious prospect! There is also a sorrowful side in hades, which our Lord alluded to in the case of the rich man and Lazarus. "The rich man also died, and was buried, and in hell [hades] he lifted up his eyes being in torments," yet he was completely separate from the one who was in the place of blessing in Abraham's bosom.

We cannot undertake to explain, much less to justify, some lines of hymns. We have long felt that hymns are largely used for the circulation of false doctrine. May the dear children of God be more exercised about what they sing!

8. "G. R.," Inverness. As to employment, let everyone be fully persuaded that he can abide therein with God. We cannot, however, conceive how any child of God can make the employment of another at the table of the Lord an excuse for his own insubjection to the Lord's word, "Do this in remembrance of me." To say such a brother works in a brewery, or distillery; or a brother grows barley or oats; or another works at an iron factory from which cannon may be cast; therefore I refuse to do the Lord's will. Surely this is something like the Jews, in Mark vii., making the command of the Lord of none effect through men's traditions.

PRESENT FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

PERHAPS no doctrine is more clearly and more repeatedly set forth in scripture, than that God is now forgiving sins, and that those who are forgiven are entitled to know it for present peace and comfort. When consciences are awakened, (and oh, that many more were awakened!) the certain knowledge of having sinned against God, with its indescribable sense of guilt, and the fear of death and judgment, plunges the soul into the bitterest anguish and distress. To such nothing can give peace, but the certain and unquestionable assurance—not from man, but from God Himself—that all their sins have been blotted out, and this so completely, that they will never be remembered again. (Heb. x. 17.) How gracious of God to give such solid assurance!

There is, however, a vague idea in the minds of many on this vitally momentous point. They say, "It is impossible to know that our sins are forgiven till we come to die, or till the day of judgment." But nothing can be more opposed to the truth of scripture. Did Jesus say to the helpless paralytic man, Your sins shall be forgiven you when you are on a death-bed? Certainly not. But He did say, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins *are* forgiven thee." (Luke v. 20.) Did the Saviour say to the sin-convicted woman that fell at His feet in the Pharisee's house, "You cannot know

that your sins are really forgiven till you are near death, or till the day of judgment?" Most certainly not. Quite the contrary. He said to the woman, "Thy sins *are* forgiven. Thy faith hath saved thee. Go in peace." (Luke vii. 48-50.) Again, did the apostles preach present forgiveness and justification, or only to be known in the future? Let us hear what Paul preached at Antioch. "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man [Christ Jesus] *is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins*; and, by him, all that believe ARE justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." (Acts xii. 38, 39.) No further evidence, surely, is needed to shew the scripture doctrine of present forgiveness of sins. It is now, or never. Jesus said, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John viii. 24.) And yet, in the face of these and other scriptures, we hear many saying, "I hope I shall have my sins forgiven;" "I hope I shall have everlasting life." Whereas they have not the smallest ground for hope, and for this reason, because God is proclaiming present forgiveness of sins, through the blood of Jesus, to every one that believeth. Therefore, those who believe not, instead of having the slightest ground for hope of pardon and salvation, are habitual rejecters of it. It is a very solemn thought; but thus God speaks in His word—"He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life [for-

giveness of sins too, Eph. i. 7]; and he that believeth not the Son [or is not subject to the Son], shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John iii. 36.) Instead, then, of such having ground for saying they hope to be forgiven, and hope to have eternal life, they are, day by day, rejecters of these very blessings, and are exposing themselves to the abiding wrath of God. Nothing, then, can be more delusive, more fatal, more opposed to the infallible word of God, than the notion that men may hope for forgiveness at some future time. Were the Lord Jesus to descend from heaven with a shout this day, it would be joyfully found by many that "those who are Christ's at his coming" are "caught up to meet the Lord in the air;" but, with intolerable misery, it would be found by others that they are left behind, and exposed to divine wrath.

"Confession" and "absolution" are words frequently heard in these days; but, alas! with what fatal error. As to confession to men, scripture says, "Confess your faults one to another"—observe, not to an official person, but "one to another, and pray one for another." Now this certainly implies that the most gifted in the church of God may confess his faults to the feeblest in the faith, with the view of securing their prayers for his blessing; besides, the context shews that the emphasis is on prayer. Again, we say, observe, there is nothing official here. It is really unaccountable

how scripture should be so frightfully perverted, that men should be sometimes found who pronounce "absolution" of the sins of their fellow-sinners in an eternally saving sense. Confession of sins to God is an entirely different thing. We read of one who said, "I acknowledged my sins unto *thee*, and mine iniquity have I not hid: I said I will confess my transgressions *unto the Lord*; and *thou* forgavest the iniquity of my sin." And again, "If we confess our sins, *HE* is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." (Ps. xxxii. 5; 1 John i. 9.) It is God who pronounces remission of sins to everyone that believeth in Jesus. It is God that justifieth. It is God who pardons, and restores the souls of His erring children, on confession to Him.

If it be said, "The church teaches these popular doctrines of confession and absolution," the reply is, "We read nothing in scripture of the church teaching, but the very opposite, that the church is taught, that the Lord has given teachers to teach those who form the church, the body of Christ." (Eph. iv. 11, 12.) It is quite true that an apostle, though not even his delegate; and also an assembly of two or three gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus—a company of disciples, not of apostles, received authority from the Lord to bind or loose, to remit or retain sins, but this certainly only in an administrative character, or in the way of discipline, and never in the sense of eternal salvation. (Compare Matt. xvi. 19, xviii. 15–20;

1 Tim. i. 20 ; John xx. 20-23 ; 1 Cor. v. 4-13 ; 2 Cor. ii. 5-8.)

Throughout the scriptures God is revealed as a sin-hating and sinner-forgiving God. All the prophets, evangelists, and apostles, in their writings, testify of this. What was in former times foreshadowed in the sacrifices of bulls and goats, has, in the end of the ages, been fully substantiated by the one offering of Christ Himself. The clothing of our first parents with "coats of skins ;" Abel obtaining witness that he was righteous, by the more excellent sacrifice of the firstling of the flock ; the blessings which followed Noah's offering of the clean beasts and fowls ; the sacrifice, in figure, of Abraham's only-begotten son ; the safety given by the blood of the paschal lamb ; the cleansing of the leper by blood ; the atonement of Israel's sins by the blood of the sacrifice carried within the veil ; and the various daily sacrifices which were continually offered, spoke loudly, yet figuratively, of Him who was in due time to shed His blood on Calvary, for many, for the remission of sins. The harmonious sound, from first to last, was "Without shedding of blood is no remission." (Lev. xvii. 11 ; Heb ix. 22.)

Again, we may notice that all through scripture the blessing given was always on the principle of faith. Adam, in a world of death, brought in by his own sin, so believed God, that he called his wife "the mother of all living." Eve's faith so

counted on God to fulfil His word, in providing a Redeemer through her, that when her first son was born, she said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." Abel, we are told, offered his sacrifice "by faith." Noah became heir of righteousness by faith. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." The pass-over was kept "through faith." The Red Sea was crossed "by faith." David described the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." (Rom. iv. 3-8.) There are many other-scriptures which shew that God's way of blessing to man as a sinner has always been on the principle of faith. Now, however, faith rests on a finished work, an accomplished redemption; we believe in God that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. (Rom. iv. 24, 25.)

In Peter's memorable sermon at Cæsarea, he boldly declared that the universal testimony of the prophets was to remission of sins through faith in our Lord Jesus. After having spoken of the Person, life, death, and resurrection of Christ, and of His being "ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead," he said, "To him give all the prophets witness, that, through his name, whoso-

ever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts x. 43.)

Surely nothing can be more unquestionably established by the truth of God, than the present certainty of remission of sins, in virtue of the blood of Jesus, to every one that believeth in Him. God can thus act in righteousness because Christ has once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. So thoroughly has sin been atoned for, and all God's righteous claims met, in the death of His Son, that He righteously raised Him from the dead, and highly exalted Him; and so perfect is the application of the infinite virtue of His work to us, that God can say, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." It is to this the Holy Spirit bears witness. Nay, more; sin having been righteously judged, the purposes of love are carried out, and divine grace flows forth with such unhindered blessedness, that God freely gives us life, acceptance, and blessing even now in Christ in heavenly places. "He hath made him sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made [or become] the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. v. 21.) Could there possibly be anything more done to assure our hearts, and give certainty as to forgiveness of sins?

And now, dear reader, the solemn and eternally momentous question for you is this—"Are your sins forgiven?" Do not deceive yourself by say-

ing, "I hope they will be," for you have no authority for so hoping. Neither harbour the delusive idea that it is impossible to know that your sins are forgiven in this life, for have we not seen that God plainly declares in His word who have forgiveness of sins, and who are still in their sins. Do not say, "I will try;" for you cannot obtain remission of sins by trying; but do honestly take your place as a guilty and helpless sinner before God. And if your anxious inquiry is, What can I *do* to have my sins forgiven? we reply, Nothing. You can do nothing but sin, absolutely nothing; neither does God, in the gospel, demand anything from you. On the contrary; knowing, as He does, your utterly unclean condition, and that you are "without strength," He preaches forgiveness of sins to you, on the principle of faith, entirely on the ground of peace having been made by the death and blood-shedding of His own Son. Do seriously ponder this. Do consider that "without shedding of blood there is no remission," and that God could not in righteousness forgive you on any other foundation than that Christ hath suffered for your sins in His own body on the tree. What a soul-comforting truth, and what an abiding ground of confidence!

Before you lay this paper down, we beseech you to turn to Jesus, the sinner's Saviour, believe on Him, and have present remission of sins.



SONS OF KORAH.

THERE is something peculiarly sweet in the songs of the sons of Korah, and few more precious than Psalm lxxxiv. If these shadows of heavenly things were so amiable—the earthly tabernacles of Jehovah; if these Levites so longed, yea, even fainted, for those earthly courts of the Lord, which were temporal—a worldly sanctuary, now vanished away; do we so long after the deep realities of the sanctuary of His presence, where two or three are gathered in His name?

But who are these sons of Korah? Many of our readers will say, “Sons of Korah; why, did not the sons of Korah go down alive into the pit, when the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed those wicked men, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and all their wives and children?” Let us turn to the scriptures, and see. Here is the account of their rebellion against the Lord. (Num. xvi.) How terrible is sin in the sight of the Lord! “Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins. So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side.” Now mark, in the next clause Korah is omitted. “And Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children.” (Ver. 27.) Now read that awful description of the earth open-

ing her mouth, and swallowing them up, "and all the *men* that appertained unto Korah," the earth closed upon them. There is no statement that the sons of Korah went down with their father. Nay, the scripture is clear on this point. "And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, together with Korah, when that company died, what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men ; and they became a sign. Notwithstanding the children of Korah died not." (Num. xxvi. 11.)

Yes, in the riches of sovereign grace, they were saved from going down alive into the pit. And this was not all. As part of the family of Kohath, they had given to them the cities of refuge, of which Hebron is named first. (1 Chron. vi. 54-67.) Oh, how our God delights in mercy ! Grace spares them from the pit, and gives them the place of Abraham. For Abraham dwelt in Hebron. (Gen. xiii. 18 ; xviii. 1.)

Have you, beloved readers, been saved from the pit? Children of wrath, even as others, brought, in sovereign grace, to dwell in the heavenlies, not with Abraham, but in Christ. Oh, blest city of eternal refuge, Jerusalem on high ! Can we not adore the riches of His grace ?

Shall we trace this divine favour a little further? Saved from the lowest depths of the pit, these very sons of Korah "were over the work of the service, keepers of the gates of the tabernacle, had the oversight of the gates of the house of the Lord.

And were over the chambers and treasuries of the house of God." What a stewardship! "All the instruments of the sanctuary, and the fine flour, and the wine, and the oil, and the frankincense, spices, and the meat offering; and over the shewbread." (1 Chron. ix. 19-32.) What types of instruction to us! Saved from the lowest depths of hell, and brought to dwell in the eternal refuge of the presence of God by the blood of Jesus. And now what a stewardship, all the riches of the glories of Christ committed to us! Yes, in the frankincense, and the spices, and the things made in the pans—types of the Person of Christ, in all His adorable perfectness—our portion. Once children of the pit. Is Christ thus precious to you? And does not all this tell out the varied ministries of the redeemed children of God? All these precious treasures of Christ committed to us. How great the responsibility! How rich the privilege! Very great was the strength required for all this service, and it was given to these favoured sons of Korah. They were "mighty men of valour," "strong men," "able men for strength for the service," and each had his appointed service. (1 Chron. xxvi. 1-20.)

Would it not be very blessed if we, who have been saved from the pit, each knew from the Lord his appointed work? weakness itself, yet strong for His service in the power of His might.

Grace upon grace shadowed forth in these sons

of Korah. The royal guards of the hidden king—guards of the house, and guards of the foundation. (2 Chron. xxiii. 3, 4, 19.) We are lost in wonder and praise. Saved from the pit, we are called to be the royal guards of the hidden, but coming, King of glory. Guards of the house of God—guards of foundation-truth. Once a child of the pit, now a child of glory, what dignity is this! Oh, for whole-hearted devotedness to Him whom we shall soon meet in the air!

Just one more privilege of these sons of Korah with their brethren; sanctified in holiness, they had the happy service of distributing the oblations of the Lord, and the most holy things. (2 Chron. xxxi. 14-18.)

All this history of sovereign favour gives special sweetness to the psalms of these sons of Korah. But cannot we, now the shadows are past, also say, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord: my soul longeth," &c. Have not we been saved from the pit? Is there any privilege so great as being gathered together to the name of the Lord Jesus? "There am I," He says, "in the midst of them." Now read this psalm, and think of the deep reality to our souls. Each line of this psalm seems connected with this history of distinguishing grace. What a dwelling-place is the presence of the Lord. They will be still praising Thee. Is this our happy place, our sweet employ? Dwelling, praising, strength, these were marks of

divine favour to the sons of Korah: are they not to us?

Once sons of the pit, now sons of God, it is our privilege to leave blessing behind us everywhere in this vale of tears—this valley of Baca. On, beloved, from strength to strength. God beholds our everlasting shield, He looks upon the face of His Anointed. Can we not say, a day in thy courts is better than a thousand? I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than dwell in the tents of wickedness. Is not our God a sun and shield? The Lord will give grace and glory. Sovereign blessing had the sons of Korah. O Lord, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee.

Do we not feel rebuked by this song of the sons of Korah? Do not forget the veil shut them out of the most holy; the way was not yet made manifest during these days of the worldly sanctuary. (Heb. ix. 1-8.) Now the veil is rent. Now we have boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus. And, oh, the joy of God in receiving us. "Let us eat, and be merry." Sins gone for ever, no more to be remembered. How precious to Christ the fellowship of His saints: "There am I in their midst!" Has He not given to us grace and glory? "The glory that thou gavest me, I have given them."

May each of these divine breathings in this precious psalm be applied with power to our souls by the Holy Ghost!

PLAIN PAPERS ON THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

Matthew xxiv.—xxv. 31.

No. II.

THE Lord Jesus now foretells the condition of Christendom during His absence, and at His coming. The kingdom on earth, during the time the King is in heaven. As to the Jews, He had shewn, first, the unmeasured period of their scattering and persecution. Then, what would mark the time of the end—the setting up the abomination of desolation; the last half-week, or three years and a half of Daniel's prophetic period, the time of unparalleled tribulation; immediately after which the Son of man shall come again. And then, before describing the judgment of the living nations at His coming, He now, in these verses, describes the state of Christendom.

The order and divisions of this scripture are very striking. First, the similitude of the days of Noah; secondly, the parable of the ten virgins; and thirdly, the traveller into a far country. In all three there is striking contrast with the former part of the prophecy as to the Jews, whilst the three parts are in harmony with the addresses to Thyatira, Sardis, and Laodicea, in Revelation ii., iii., as to Christendom.

In the illustration of Noah, there is eating and drinking ; in the ten virgins, slumbering and sleeping ; and in the last, lukewarmness and slothfulness.

Let us remember these are the words of Him who cannot be deceived—whose eyes are as a flame of fire. He says, “As the days of Noe were, so shall the coming of the Son of man be.” To them it was not a time of tribulation, but of utter carelessness and unbelief. They were eating and drinking, &c., “and knew not, until the flood came, and took them all away ; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” Then the most solemn warnings : “Therefore, be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.”

Is it not most sad that the whole force and meaning of these plain words of our Lord should be entirely set aside, by misquoting them, as though they referred to death ? Take the death of the unsaved, as described by our Lord in Luke xvi. : “He died, and was buried, and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment.” Is that the coming of the Son of man ? Then take the death, or falling asleep of the believer : it is to “be absent from the body, present with the Lord” ! No, if our readers will carefully examine these words of our Lord, they will not find one thought of death in them. Blessed Lord, thou couldst not have given more solemn, or plainer, warnings of that sudden

destruction, so near ; but men will not believe Thee ! If our readers will turn to 1 Thessalonians v. 1-10, they will find the same delusion foretold : “ For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh,” &c. And see that destruction fully described in 2 Thessalonians i. 7-10.

Now, with the plainest possible teaching in the word of God, both from the lips of Jesus, and the inspired apostles, is it not a fact that, at this moment, the cry of peace and safety, a good time coming, is the delusion of Christendom, exactly as thus foretold ? Is not our Lord’s teaching rejected, just as was Noah’s preaching ? Saying in the heart, “ My Lord delayeth his coming,” was the beginning of declension, and of smiting the fellow-servants. The Lord gives this as the mark of the evil servant, whose portion shall be with the hypocrites. It is exceedingly solemn that thus, not only in our day, the world rejects the warnings of the Lord, just as they did the warnings of Noah ; but also many, who profess to be the very servants of Christ, are saying in their hearts, “ My Lord delayeth his coming.” What a question for the reader : Are you waiting for the Lord ; or saying in your heart, “ My Lord delayeth his coming ? ”

The apostle Peter says, “ Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the pro-

mise of his coming?" Thus the very long-suffering of God is used for unbelief. And the children of God are warned to "beware lest ye also, being led away with the *error of the wicked*, fall from your own steadfastness." (2 Pet. iii.) What is this error of the wicked? Is it not saying, "Where is the promise of his coming?"

Let us now listen to the Lord in the parable of the ten virgins. What a correct description of the history of Christendom. No one who reads the epistles can question but that, in the beginning, the whole professing body of Christians "went forth" to meet Christ. It was the hope and expectation of the church. But now, as to the coming of the Lord, during the dark history of so many centuries, did not the church return, in spirit and ways, to the world? and "while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." Yes, ALL, wise and foolish, the saved and unsaved. All, all slumbered and slept. Fathers, schoolmen, commentators, all, all slumbered and slept. Does not this account for the dreamy writings and confused ideas of the commentators, when they attempt to speak of the Lord's coming?

Dispensational truth, the true order of events, yea, the distinction between the church and the world, and the church and the hopes of Israel, all lost in dreamy confusion. Yes, "all slumbered and slept."

And what has taken place in these last few years?

“And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.” The whole church of God is being awoke; Christ, “the Morning Star,” is being revealed, and about to come, and call His bride away. Can anyone deny that there is a stir among both the wise and foolish—such as have the Holy Ghost, and such as have only the lamp of profession? And is it not found that there is as great need now to *go out* of the camp of a worldly Christendom to meet the Bridegroom, as there was in the beginning to go outside the camp of Judaism to meet the heavenly Bridegroom? And surely this is equally true as to the world at enmity with God.

Does not this word come home to your heart and mine, “Go ye out to meet him?” The Lord apply it, with divine power, to our souls! Many own that their lamps are gone out. They dare not say they have salvation. See them hurrying off to them that sell!—ever buying, never getting. As God’s free gift in grace they will not have it. Well, hurry on, be in earnest—try, buy. But mark, the Bridegroom is coming, and the door will be shut—yes, shut for ever. If not salvation now, then never. “I KNOW YOU NOT” is the everlasting sentence. Oh, be not deceived by them that sell! If you do not believe God in the gift of His Son, then do, we beg, be in earnest—there is no time to lose; go and see if those who sell can give you oil in your vessel. Give

your pence, and give your penance, give all they ask, only be quite sure that you get salvation.

Oh, what words—"While they went to buy, the bridegroom came!" &c. Oh, deluded souls! can folly be more foolish than to refuse the gift of God? Yes, the moment is at hand, they that are saved shall go in, and they that are not shall be shut out. Should it come whilst you read this, where will you be—shut in, or shut out?

Must not a man be asleep to dream of the world's conversion, when the Lord shews in this parable that one half the virgins are foolish—not converted, are not saved, but shut out, having merely the lamp of profession? Oh, no, do not be thus deceived with the error of the wicked! Every scripture wrested to prove such a thought will be found to apply to quite another thing—the millennial kingdom of Christ on earth after His return.

We will not, at this time, notice further the third parable—"A man travelling into a far country," but would earnestly press the plain teachings and warnings of our Lord, in the scriptures above, spoken three days before the foundation of all our hopes, the death of Christ; yet they fully and correctly describe the very scenes before our eyes in this day. "Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."



“BELIEVING ARIGHT.”

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation ; but is passed from death unto life.” (John v. 24.)

A HOT north wind blew as I started across the paddock that lay between me and the dwelling in which lived a woman who was in deep anxiety about her soul. I had been staying at a farmhouse in the bush, and had heard of the deep exercise of soul she appeared to have passed through for some two years. A few days previously she had been overtaken by a neighbour as he was driving in to the meeting house they attended, and which was situate some three miles from where she dwelt, trudging through the heavy rain on her way to the same place to hear the word of God. As he stopped to take her up, he asked her why she ventured out on such a day, when she replied, “Oh, I daren’t stay at home, my soul’s at stake.”

Entering the house, I found her busy cutting potatoes, which the children were carrying out and planting in the furrows made in the land adjoining the house where the father was ploughing.

Seating myself on a form to which I was directed, I inquired, “Well, Mrs. M., how are you to-day?”—I had seen her once before at a meet-

ing. She replied, "Very well in health, thank you, sir."

"But what about the soul?" "Bad enough, sir, as bad as it can be. I get no rest, no peace, yet I see kit. I go to hear the word of God, and feel happy sometimes when listening, but then it all goes and I feel worse than ever, but then I don't deserve it. I lived for five years near Mr. W., yet never went to hear him preach until two years ago. I felt very unhappy, and thought I must go. I went, and the word of God seemed to plough up my very soul, and ever since then, when thinking of my past life, I feel as it were all ground up."

"But how is that; have you not read what Jesus did for such sinners as you?"

"Oh, yes; but how may I know it is for me?"

"Do you believe the Bible is the word of God?"

"Yes, every word of it; I was reading it as you came in" (reaching an old worn Bible from a sack of potatoes behind her).

"Have you ever read the twenty-fourth verse of John v.?"

"I have read it all many times."

"You have your Bible, will you kindly read that verse?"

Turning to it she read, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."

“ Ah ! that’s very beautiful, but it’s not for me : I don’t believe *aright*.”

“ Now will you kindly read that again, and see if it says anything about believing *aright*.”

Again she read it, and now the Spirit of God applied the word to the liberation of a soul so long in bondage. The next few minutes were occupied by her in reading again and again this most precious statement of gospel truth, making her own comments after each reading.

It needed not that I should make further remark. God had given entrance to His word, which gave light and understanding to the simple.

At the second reading, she replied, in answer to my question, “ Well, no ; it says nothing about believing *aright* ; dear me, I never read it so before ; I must read that again :” and turning the leaf down, put the book on the table, but immediately took it up again, and read it a third time, saying, “ Well, that’s wonderful ; ‘ Believeth on him that sent me.’ I *do* believe God sent Him. ‘ HATH everlasting life !’ ”

Sympathetic tears found their way to my eyes, as, on receiving His truth, her long harassed and pent up feelings found vent in tears of joy.

After some few minutes thus alternately reading and commenting aloud, her husband came in, when thrusting the book before him, she said, “ See here what has been shewn me. Read that verse.”

The old man took the book and stood in the door-

way through which the noonday Australian sun was pouring its brilliant light and served to shew to him the words of the book, and to me the furrowed face and scant grisly locks which spoke of many years' hard usage in this scene. But the eyes, suffused with tears as he read, told that God had not permitted his heart to be hardened withal.

After reading, he asked, "How many kinds of faith are there?" which shewed the secret of the expression, believing aright, used by his wife.

(He was afterwards referred to the "One faith," spoken of in Ephesians iv., which has been lost sight of in theological differences and *phases* of faith.)

A little further conversation, and we knelt down to thank God for His mercy in thus delivering a soul from the trammels of sin, and the bondage of Satan.

As I left the cottage, with the sudden changes peculiar to the Australian climate, a cool south wind sprang up, refreshing everything in nature. I could not but reflect how true an emblem these winds were of the state of soul of the one I had just left, and how with as sudden a transition she had passed from that condition which David describes in such words as these, "my moisture is turned into the drought of summer," into that in which he calls upon the righteous with whom is the sense of forgiveness to "be glad in the Lord and rejoice" and to "shout for joy."

Reader, if you are experiencing “soul trouble,” let me direct your attention to that much blessed verse spoken by Him, who is the source of eternal truth. It is prefaced with two words of assurance for your feeble faith, “Verily, verily” (truly, truly), “He [whosoever] that *heareth* my word, and *believeth* on him that sent me”—this is to honour Him, which the unbelieving Jews around the Lord Jesus refused to do.

The first point here is to *hear His word*. You cannot now hear it falling from His gracious lips but, blessed be His name, it is recorded in the book of eternal truth, and there you may *read* and *hear*. The second is to “*believe on God* [the Father] who sent him [the Son].” Of him who does this, He, who never lied, declares three things to be true: 1. He “HATH everlasting life.” 2. “He *shall not* come into condemnation [judgment].” 3. But IS passed from *death* unto LIFE.”

Oh! let His word fall into your soul as it is written without “if” or “but,” and then shall the peace of God that passeth all understanding keep your hearts and minds.

“Oh,” said one, after hearing that verse read to him several times, and the beauty of it pointed out, “Oh, I see it now; it’s that little word ‘HATH.’ What a fool I’ve been! I’ll go home and pray about that little word ‘HATH.’” G. J. S.



CORRESPONDENCE.

9. "F. R.," Bristol. "Them that sin rebuke [or convict] before all." No doubt this holds good to the present time. And though it cannot now, in the divided state of the church of God, be done, as in Timothy's time, before the whole assembly, yet, where there is spiritual-mindedness and grace for it, it may be carried out, where any are really gathered together to the name of the Lord Jesus. Great grace and wisdom are required. "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." It is very sad when persistence in an evil course calls for such rebuke; but it is still more sad when those gathered to the Lord neglect this solemn duty.

10. "A. Y.," Christchurch. The confusion you mention seems to have arisen from mistaken thoughts of the proper action of God's assembly. It is clear from scripture that in most places, there were those, who so cared for souls and the honour of our Lord's name, that many faults were dealt with, and souls restored, without coming under the notice of the assembly. (Gal. vi. 1; Matt. xviii. 15; 2 Tim. ii. 25.) So it is now in well-ordered gatherings of saints.

Again, when there were cases for the solemn discipline of exclusion, previous investigation was made, facts proved, and the case so unquestionably established, that when it came before the assembly, it was not to deliberate about evidence, but to *act* upon it. So should it be now. (1 Cor. v. 4; 2 Cor. ii. 7; 1 Tim. v. 20.) It is a deep dishonour to the Lord, gives Satan great advantage, lowers the spiritual character of the church of God to a court of justice, and stirs up fleshly energy, when a case is submitted to the assembly before it has been fully

substantiated. When this has been done, we may expect there will be unity of judgment. In a case of *supposed* moral delinquency, where is there an idea in scripture of the assembly being gathered together, as you say, "for investigation"?

11. "A. M. G.," Ireland, must remember that the word of God explicitly forbids a man to take his brother's wife (Lev. xx. 21), save where, for the inheritance sake, in the land, a man was enjoined to raise up seed to his childless brother, deceased—a principle which could not apply beyond Israel. (Deut. xxv. 5.) Otherwise the general commandment was in force: a man must not take his brother's wife.

12. "F. J. M." Hereford. The word, ἀπόλλυμι, is, no doubt, as may be seen in Liddell and Scott's lexicon, a strengthened form of ὀλλυμι, and means to *destroy*, or *lose utterly*; as in Homer, speaking of the Achæan, as of one's life; to *demolish* a city, to *waste*, to *bore to death*, to ruin another; and so in the middle voice. Thus it occurs in the tragic and comic poets, in the orators, historians, &c. Not a single occurrence is known to us in the sense of annihilation: a "ruined" person exists all the same. So in the New Testament, when our Lord sends the twelve to the "lost" (ἀπολωλότα) sheep of the house of Israel, it is absurd to suppose they were annihilated. No matter what Dr. Mortimer may say, the word *never* means "annihilation" in scripture. It means spiritual ruin while alive in this world, and sometimes everlasting ruin, never ceasing to exist, as any one may trace in its New Testament usages.

13. "R. G." As to the extent of the value of the death of Christ, we are told that "He tasted death for every man," or for everything (Heb. ii. 9).

Christ died not only for the "nation" of Israel, and loved "the church," and gave Himself for it, but "He died for all," "gave himself a ransom for all;" yea, more, He bought the field (or the world) for the sake of the treasure hid in it; hence creation itself will yet be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God, by Him who was mocked with "a crown of thorns." (See John xi. 51; Eph. v. 25; 2 Cor. v. 15; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Matt. xiii. 44; Rom. viii. 21.) All is simple enough when it is seen how carefully scripture excludes things under the earth, the lost in the infernal regions; and when minds can distinguish between propitiation and substitution, and between purchase and redemption.

With regard to your difficulty about the heavenly things being purified, we must remember that, as yet, Satan and his angels have access into heavenly places; hence we read that "the heavens are not clean in his sight." (Rev. xii. 7-9; Eph. vi. 12, high, or rather heavenly, places.) There are heavenly things which needed purifying. We needed *remission*. But, "*all things in heaven and on earth* are yet to be gathered together in Christ." (Eph. i. 10.)

As to reconciliation, it will be manifested in the new heaven and new earth, when not a trace of sin will be seen, that everything in them has been reconciled to God, entirely on the ground of the accomplished work of Jesus on the cross.

14. "G.," London. Scripture teaches us that "the body is edified by that which every joint supplieth." All is from the Head. By making "increase of the body," we understand increase of growth and edification—growing up into Christ. It is clear that, in order to make "increase of the body," there must be *healthful* activity of the

various members; for not only must the whole body be fitly framed together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, but all must be *according to the effectual working in the measure of every part* (see Eph. iv. 16); a most important line of instruction, shewing how needful it is that each member of the body should be in close communion with Christ, the Head, in order to be effectual in making increase. Does it not shew how much we all lose by the divided condition and low estate of the Lord's people? What a daily question it should be with each of us, "Am I right with the Head?"

15. "J. S. R.," Roxwell, Essex. By the words, "To him the porter openeth," in John x. 3, we understand the Lord refers to His own entrance into the Jewish sheepfold, not like the self-appointed Pharisees, but as bringing with Him all the credentials that were required. He fully answered to the description given by Moses and the prophets, as the Shepherd and Stone of Israel. He was the One that was to be raised up like unto Moses. He was the woman's Seed, the Seed of Abraham and of David, the Child born at Bethlehem, the virgin's Son, yet truly called Immanuel. He was joyfully recognised, and received as God's salvation by the faithful remnant who looked for redemption in Israel. Moreover, in His wondrous ways He manifested other marks of the true Messiah of which prophets had spoken. We may therefore look at this faithful remnant—the Annas, and Simeons, and others—under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, as the porter which opened the door to the Shepherd of the sheep. They knew the Shepherd's voice.

The thieves and robbers were the self-appointed guides of the people, who, in their moral features, were in widest contrast with the Good Shepherd.

EMMAUS, OR JESUS HIMSELF.

WHAT was it that made the two disciples so sad, as they walked to Emmaus? There was One watching those sad hearts, in their seven miles' walk, who drew near to them, "and said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk and are sad?" Yes, there are three very distinct conditions of heart in this scene; the sad heart, the burning heart, and the heart in communion with Christ. And do not these three illustrate some of the different conditions of soul in this day?

Now it was Jesus *Himself* that drew near, and went with them. Jesus Himself! Has Jesus Himself ever drawn near to you? Can He be interested in your sadness? The living Jesus Himself? We do not ask, do you feel an interest in Jesus Himself? that is not the question here. For their eyes were holden, that they should not know Him. You may know Him, whom to know is life eternal. Solemn possibility. Jesus has said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

Now you see these three men walking to Emmaus. One is Jesus Himself, the only true God, the Father revealed in the living person of Jesus Himself. Let our eyes be fastened on Him.

God, Jesus Himself, deeply interested in the sadness of the other two. And is Jesus Himself interested in you? in your sadness? Does He wish to speak to your heart in this little paper? It is not some new doctrine, or merely truth, we want to bring before you, but Jesus Himself. If you find Jesus Himself in this paper, you will find truth, for He is the truth. (See Luke xxiv. 13-35.)

These were two *disciples*, but as yet they neither understood the need of His death or resurrection. That looks peculiar, does it not? But may you not greatly answer to such a condition of soul? Do you not nominally take the name of Christian? perhaps you were baptised unto that very name. Then we ask, Have *you* ever understood the need of the death and resurrection of Christ?

They tell Jesus what made them so sad. Two things made them sad. First, a blank: Jesus had been condemned to a shameful, cruel death, by their very religious guides, the chief priests and rulers. He had been crucified. This had made them sad. The world had become a desolate blank to them, and their hearts were filled with sadness. No doubt the world rejoiced as He had foretold; and they were sad. What sort of a world must this be, when its very chief priests and rulers have put to a cruel, shameful death, the only sinless, holy One of God? Is that nothing to you? Oh how they missed Jesus. Have you ever missed Him? or, are you trying to be satisfied and *joyful* with the

world, with all its religiousness and rule, that has put to death the Sent One of God?

But secondly, there was another thing. The disciples mistake, and yet not a mistake—a mistake in the way they expected. They say, “But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel; and beside all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done.” Were they mistaken? Had they not seen the incarnate Son of God—the Word made flesh—the One foretold in their prophets. “Unto us a child is born.” The Redeemer, that should come to Zion. (Isa. ix. 6; Isa. lix. 20.) The long expected Messiah! Yes, He was all this, and more; but they were mistaken, utterly mistaken, as to how that redemption was to be accomplished. Now this was the point. It may be the very point for our reader’s soul at this moment. You may have even been taught that great modern mistake; to trust in the incarnation of Christ for redemption. Something like this. You may have been baptised, and so far bear the name of Christ; outwardly, if you please, you may have taken the place of a disciple. You may have trusted, that, by His holy incarnation, human nature has been saved or redeemed; the flesh of Christ infusing life into humanity; that this is communicated, and continued by the holy sacrament as men say. And, in addition, you may have trusted in the moral instructions of Christ as a Teacher, especially in what you believe to be ordi-

nances, and ritual, supposed to be instituted by Him for your redemption. Yes, and if all these are seen to be cunningly devised fables of men, yet you may have trusted in Christ *as a help*, to enable *you*, by keeping the law, so perfectly, that at last through His help—for without it you can do nothing of yourself, yes, that at last you may hope to be saved. Now all this is utter mistake. Christ was the Messiah of Israel, their Redeemer. But they were mistaken as to how that redemption was accomplished, or will be completed. Jesus Himself is indeed the Redeemer from sins, but men are utterly mistaken when they teach redemption by incarnation, or salvation by works.

These two disciples were greatly disappointed, and thus they were very sad; and they were also perplexed. They had heard a report of His resurrection—they could not deny it, but they did not understand it. Is not this the exact condition of many? One may have trusted in Christ in this manner, that His flesh by incarnation, and in the sacrament, has been received; continually received, into his body; and in addition, severe observance of the ritual of men, supposed to be the very ritual of the church of God. But, as with those two disciples, is it not sad disappointment? You, that is your flesh, your evil nature, is no better. Sometimes you shudder at the thought of death and judgment; and you are ready to say, I am no more fit for heaven than I was before I began

trusting thus in Christ, or rather in sacraments and the church.

Or take the other case. You say, "I have been trusting in Christ, as my divine Teacher, that, by His help and grace, I should keep the law, my rule of life ; and that He would enable me so to keep the law, that God could thus justify me from all things, and I should then have peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. And thus you trusted in Christ for redemption. And like the two disciples, you also are in great perplexity. All is disappointment. All your efforts end in sad disappointment. You, too, have heard the report of His resurrection. You cannot deny it, but you do not understand what His resurrection has to do with you. The fact is you are no better. Like the Ritualist, not a bit more fit for heaven than if you had never thus struggled to be righteous by keeping the law.

"THEN HE SAID UNTO THEM." Let Jesus Himself speak unto them and unto you, do not think His words severe, they breathe the deep interest of His heart, in them, and in you. "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken ! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory ? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." And are we not fools ! with those scriptures in our hands, to suppose there is salvation in incarnation,

Ritualism, or law keeping? Do not those inspired scriptures set before us One smitten in our stead? in atoning suffering on the cross, of One forsaken of God? (Ps. xxii.) Wounded for our transgressions, not His own. *Bruised*, oh think of the word bruised for our iniquities. Jehovah laid on Him iniquities. "Cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people was he stricken." His soul made an offering for sin. (Isa. lii.) Did not every sacrifice from Abel's offering, point to this one, infinite, atoning, Sacrifice? And now all is accomplished. God so glorified, as He never could have been but by death on the cross. See that third Man speaking so earnestly to them, and to us, is Jesus Himself—Son of God eternal, yet truly the Lamb of God. He opens the scriptures. He has been raised for their justification. He speaks—Jesus Himself—do you hear Him? Do you believe Him? Had He not said He must be lifted up? (John iii. 14.) They had not understood this. Have you really understood this, that Jesus must needs suffer and rise again? That without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins? Did He not say, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit?" Oh, has this solemn truth ever entered into your soul, that Jesus the holy One of God must die the atoning death of the cross, or you must perish everlastingly in the lake of fire? What then becomes

of salvation by even His blessed incarnation?—for He was that corn of wheat. Or what becomes of salvation by ritualistic or any other works? They heard Him speak with burning hearts. They say, “Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and whilst he opened to us the scriptures?” Ah, there is a joy the world knows nothing of, to take the scriptures, and there commune with Jesus! To hear Him speak to us, by the Spirit in His word, as really present to faith, as though we heard those words of never-dying love from His very lips. Sadness and perplexity are now exchanged for burning joy.

There is even more still. They now say, “Abide with us.” Never had the scriptures been so opened to them before, and they cannot bear the parting from this unknown Stranger. Abide with us! They were attracted to this earnest Stranger, like the magnetic needle to the unknown north. The dawn of resurrection was only just breaking in upon them. As yet they had little spiritual intelligence. One hour ago they were like a ship in a storm, battling with billows of perplexity and sorrow, but even there, like the needle, their hearts were fixed, and their thoughts occupied with Christ. But now this wondrous Stranger, with earnest living words, has entirely absorbed every desire of their hearts to know more of Jesus. Abide with us! they cannot part, they constrain Him, saying, Abide with us! “And he went in to tarry with

them." Will you watch Him there as they watched, and hearkened, to catch every word that fell from those earnest, loving lips? "And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them ; and their eyes were opened and they knew him, and he vanished out of their sight." What a moment that was. A similar moment awaits that nation in a few days to come. (See Zech. xiii. 9 ; xii. 10.) "THEY KNEW HIM." Sad hearts, then burning hearts, are now hearts in enjoyed communion with Himself. What is your state, beloved reader? Sad and perplexed, mistaken and disappointed, or have the scriptures been opened to you concerning Himself? Has the Spirit of God revealed to you the greatness of your sins, in God's sight, so great that nothing short of the death of Christ could put those sins away? He must needs suffer. Ought not He, by the whole testimony of scripture, to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? Do you believe God in raising Him from among the dead for your justification? Jesus Himself, now seated at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens, has sent down the Holy Ghost, and He opens the scriptures concerning Christ. Has your heart been turned to Christ in those scriptures, like the needle to the north? At one moment you may have been like the vessel ready to sink in the deep, at another, the waves of trial and temptation may have made you tremble

and shake; but if God, by His Spirit has implanted life in your soul by faith in Him, then, like the needle, however it may tremble, it will always point to Christ. But what calmness and what power this gave! The living, loving, blessed person of Christ, when *they knew Him*, in the breaking of bread. Have you been thus brought to rest in Him? Do you know Him? And all this the revelation of the Father to us. For he that hath seen Him hath seen the Father also. Yes this gave power. They rose up the same hour. They go with the glad tidings of resurrection. They tell how He was known of them, in breaking of bread. But He who had thus been so deeply interested in them, was also interested in the eleven gathered together. JESUS HIMSELF stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you."

Thus He spake to them, and thus He speaks to us. "Why should we distrust or fear Him? oh how He loves." The work is done. He is raised. He shews you His hands and His side. Jesus Himself says, "Peace unto you." When believers are gathered together as the two or the eleven, how little do they know of the deep interest He has in them, even Jesus Himself in the midst of them. We do not speak here of the interest we may have, or feel in Him, but the eternal unchanging interest He has in us, as displayed in this precious chapter.



PLAIN PAPERS ON THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

Matthew xxiv., xxv.

No. III.

AFTER our blessed Lord had foretold the condition and history of the Jews, up to the time of the end (xxiv. 4-14), and that which most distinctly marks the time of the end (v. 15), and then the tribulation, that characterises the time of the end (vers. 16-27), immediately before His coming, in the clouds with power and great glory (ver. 30); He then describes the intervening period—the moral features of Christendom—a period, or dispensation, utterly unknown, even by the disciples who heard Him. And though little understood even now, through the modern mistakes of such teachers as expect the conversion of the world by the preaching of the gospel, yet the more we meditate on this great discourse of the Lord Jesus, the more exact we find the description of Christendom. And especially its present closing scenes.

What a solemn assurance this is, that the close of this dispensation will be like the days of Noah! The very professed servants, too, saying in their hearts: “My Lord delayeth his coming.” Is it not even so? Then chapter xxv. 1-13, tells us that the whole professing church went back into

the world, from which they came out at the beginning. And now the awakening cry goes forth, "Behold, the bridegroom! go ye out to meet him." Can any one deny that all this is being fulfilled before our very eyes?

We will now meditate on those words of Jesus, chapter xxv. 14-30. Do these words, this parable of the traveller into a far country for a long time, describe what has taken place during the absence of our Lord, from the day He was taken up, to the day He will come again? We shall find they do, and especially again in these closing days.

Mark, this parable is concerning His servants. It presents the true and the false principles of service, and their results in time and for eternity.

In another scripture, the Lord announces the principle, "For unto whomsoever much is GIVEN, of him shall be much required." (Luke xii. 48.) So here unto one HE GAVE a large sum, five talents. Then he that had *received* the five talents, went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. The largeness of the gift produced corresponding obedience or service. So with the other servant who had received two talents.

Obedient service then flows from the riches of the grace of Christ, all through this gospel dispensation, and at its end; and this kind of obedience alone receives the reward and welcome, Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." If this be so, then the first question is not how much

are you doing for God; but, evidently, the all-important question is, how much have you received? Now dear reader, how much? Do you know the gift of God? Do you know that whilst we were yet sinners, "Christ died for us?" What grace, what righteousness! "The gift of God is eternal life," but have you received it? Forgiveness of sins is preached to you through Jesus the sent One, the gift of God. But have you received forgiveness of sins? He who is sanctified unto obedience, is assured that he has been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. (1 Pet. i. 2, 18-19.)

There is immense importance in this principle. The spring, the source, the power of all obedience acceptable to God is what the believer has first received. Can you then say you believe the testimony of God to the death and resurrection of Christ, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins?" Have you redemption, have you forgiveness of sins? Remember, it is this very grace of God, that to all men hath appeared. "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (Titus ii. 11-13.) Yes, God first in His grace. Servants of God, on the true principle of obedience, can say, that God hath made Christ Jesus unto them, "wisdom, and right-

eousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Cor. i. 30.) Have you received this great sum of divine grace? Is Christ Jesus your wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption? And more, not only did God so love as to give His beloved Son, but also, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father." (Gal. iv. 6.) May not the question be asked again, "Have you received the Holy Ghost?" If He dwells not in us, there can be no true, holy obedience well-pleasing to God. He that received five talents went and traded. Think of these five things. 1, Christ our wisdom : 2, Righteousness, 3, Sanctification; 4, Redemption, and 5, the Spirit of His Son dwelling in us. Look them over one by one, are they yours? Are you a son? Blessed relationship! Yes, God has separated the believer to true obedience—no longer to seek our own will, but to delight to do His will, according to the measure of the grace of Christ given to each.

You may not enter fully into the whole of these five talents. They are yours if a believer, but you may not possess them in the sense of enjoyment, so to speak, so as to trade with them. We only use these to illustrate. But two there must be, both known and enjoyed, in order to obedient service. You must have redemption through the blood of Christ, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Only mark, the principle is the

same. Receiving, then obeying. The more we know and believe the grace of God, the more will be the fruits abounding. Now have there not been those all through this dispensation, who have first received the grace of God, and then brought forth fruits of righteousness in devoted obedience to God? But also, has there not been among the servants of Christ another class?

Let us, then, now examine the *false* principles of this other class, described by our Lord. Words spoken as we know so long ago, yet how descriptive of the principle of service greatly revived in our own day! Here it is not the ripening wickedness of the last days, like the days of Noah; but principles of the wicked *servant* of the absent Lord. He receives one talent. It may be his educational knowledge of the scriptures of truth. He takes the place of knowledge. He says, "I knew thee." Is there not such a class in our day, who take this place?

Now what is such an one's thought of God? In the parable he says, "I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed. And I was afraid, and went, and hid thy talent in the earth; lo, *there* thou hast *that* is thine." Thus this third class of servants, says, he knows God; but is really in utter darkness as to the true character of grace. He is still on the ground and principle of law. On that principle God had tried man for

fifteen centuries, seeking fruit and finding none. And this pretentious servant does not know the difference between Judaism and Christianity. The gospel is the exact contrast of the law in this very particular. It is "*Behold a sower went forth to sow.*" It is the implantation of a new life, a nature wholly new; and fruit reaped where the new seed has been sown. But this knowing servant knows it not. God to him is a hard master, reaping where He has not sown. And he is afraid of God; "I was afraid." God, he says, justly expects righteousness from me; and I find sins, I am afraid of God. He surely expects me to keep the law in every point; I do not. A soul on this ground if conscience is alive at all, must be afraid of God. And how terrible, if such an one is a professed servant of God, a teacher of Christianity, and does not know it! What must he do to deaden conscience? Bury it, dig in the earth and bury it. True heavenly Christianity must be buried in earthly, worldly, national Judaism, and carnal forms of Ritualism.

God rich in mercy; God not imputing sins—God forgiving iniquities; God righteous in justifying from all things, by the death and resurrection of Christ. Yes, God in righteousness, commending His love to us whilst sinners; all this is utterly unknown. No, he says, "I know thee a hard master." I am afraid. In the gospel God is seen by the atoning death of Christ, now beseeching sinners to be reconciled to Him. This servant

knows it not. He thinks Christ died to reconcile God to us; reconcile the hard master to us. He will not believe the joy that God has in receiving the lost, in kissing the prodigal, in clothing him, and feasting *with him*. No, he says, I cannot believe God. I am afraid of Him. He will not believe that any man can thus know with certainty that God has for Christ's sake forgiven his sins. So hard a master is God to him, that he thinks that even Paul, or Peter, or John, must wait until the day of judgment, at some remote period, before he can know with certainty that his sins are forgiven.

If you would see the proof, how deeply rooted is this unbelief in this servant, read his prayers, repeated through long years. We have had prayers of this servant in our hands that read like the cry of a slave for mercy beneath the lash of a tyrant. The very emblem of the cross in which God revealed His righteousness and love, is used to move the heart of God, as though He were as this servant thinks, a hard master, instead of the God of love. So-called sacrifices that can never take away sins, are continually offered in the sacrament, or mass. And being afraid of God, prayers are offered to, and the intercessions implored of, saints, apostles, angels, and the mother of our Lord. Such is the service of the wicked servant. He goes and digs in the earth, seeks to improve man, or grovels in worldly pleasures—never finding, but always rejecting the grace of our God. What a mistake!

“Thou gatherest where thou hast not sown.” Hence the misery and disappointment in seeking righteousness in the flesh, where there is nothing but sin.

And all this so distinctly foretold. Did He not look right on to this very day? To-day we have the two principles of service at work; the true and the false. The one receiving the salvation of God, and sealed by the Spirit, bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit, and waiting to enter the joy of the Lord at His coming. The other seeking by works of righteousness to find some good in the flesh, but ever disappointed, sinking in earth’s nationalities, digging and burying in the earth. And the end so near, when the Lord shall at His return “Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Thus so far this remarkable prophetic discourse has had, and will have, its fulfilment. These are the words of the Lord Jesus, and they cannot fail.

Have you received the grace of God? then obedience is pleasing to God. “I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the MERCIES of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

“After a long time, the Lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them.” Yes, all this goes on even to the reckoning day, the coming of

Christ. Some servants are described as false teachers, making professional merchandise of the saints of God. A whole chapter is devoted to their description and judgment. (2 Pet. ii.) If these things are surely foretold by the Lord Jesus, and by the Holy Spirit, as marking the whole period of Christianity, even its teachers, and that right up to His coming again is it not then high time to awake out of sleep? and Christ shall give you light. Surely there could not be a more practical subject than the coming of the Lord, and the judgment of the servants. The servants' reckoning day. Do you take that place? We do not ask what is the character of your service, but do you take the place of a servant? then do not forget that at the reckoning day one of two things is before you—"Outer darkness"; or, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Such is the sure teaching of our Lord; and this closes His description of Christendom, up to its very end. We shall find, He then returns to Israel's future history, and the judgment of the living nations.



REMARKS ON THE PSALMS.

I. THEIR AUTHENTICITY.

WE live in a day when almost everything is being shaken. Things social, ecclesiastical, commercial, and political are being so convulsed, that men seem ready to doubt everything, and to have no

certainty about anything. The changes, too, are often so sudden and unexpected, that people are fearing as to what may come next. God's revelation of His own mind in the scriptures is so questioned, and so many attempts made to undermine its eternal beauty and authority, that it behoves every child of God to be acquainted with its real authenticity, to save him from being indifferent, if not carried away in the vortex of the various and insidious attacks of unbelieving people.

To the spiritual reader of the scriptures, they increasingly bear to his mind the stamp of divine inspiration. He sees that every part of it forms a portion of a great whole. Though many instruments were employed in writing them, they carry with them the evidence of being under the direction of One almighty, all-wise, omniscient mind. Like the component parts of a powerful machine, the smallest part seems necessary to the whole. We could not give up any portion of the scriptures without serious loss, and confusion ; for the great testimony of all the inspired writings is Christ. It was a deep scheme of the adversary to suggest misgiving as to the divine authorship of the books of Moses. To many it might appear a very small matter, because we should have so much scripture left that is unquestionable. This, however, is not really the case. Our Lord not only said that Moses wrote of Him, but so vital and fundamental in doctrine were his books, that He further said, " If

ye believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will ye be persuaded though one rose from the dead ;” and again, “ If ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words ?” (John v. 46, 47 ; Luke xvi. 31.) Besides, the books of Moses were so abundantly quoted by ancient prophets, and by the apostles, that the refusal of their authority is really to cast a doubt on almost every other book of scripture, and therefore to undermine the faith of the gospel. It is generally admitted that the ninetieth Psalm was written by Moses.

The Psalms bear abundant testimony to their divine authorship. Our Lord, in His ministry, often quoted from the Psalms. On one occasion He put the Pharisees to silence by pressing on them a part of Psalm cx. Again, when He entered into Jerusalem as king, when all the city was moved, and the children cried out, “ Hosannah to the Son of David !” He met the angry scribes and chief priests, in justification of it, by a quotation from Psalm viii. And, further, when He took farewell of impenitent Jerusalem and its temple, He quoted from Psalm cxviii., to shew that when the people are really in a state to receive Him, they will say, “ Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” (See Matt. xxii. 44 ; xxi. 16 ; xxiii. 39.) His bitter cry, “ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?” when in deepest agony on the cross, is found in Psalm xxii.

It is remarkable, too, that our Lord, after His

resurrection, again authenticated the Psalms as part of the scriptures. When He demonstrated to the affrighted disciples the reality of His being Man, though risen from among the dead, by eating food before them, He referred to the Psalms, and the other divisions of the Old Testament, as authoritative, and as testifying of Himself. "He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in *the Psalms*, concerning me." (Luke xxiv. 44.)

We find the apostles also constantly referring to the Psalms, both in their oral ministry, and in their inspired writings. In Peter's memorable sermon on the day of Pentecost, he quoted largely from the Psalms. He reminded them of the prophecy of David in Psalm xvi., when he insisted on the reality of our Lord's resurrection from among the dead. After quoting from this psalm, he says, "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne (Ps. cxxxii. 11) ; he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell [hades], neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus

hath God raised up," &c. (Acts ii. 25-32.) And more than this ; for when he proceeded to speak of our Lord's exaltation to the right hand of God, he referred to Psalm cx. as having predicted it. He said, "For David is not yet ascended into the heavens, but he saith himself, Jehovah said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." (Acts ii. 34-36.)

Again, when the saints were troubled at the persecuting power of their adversaries, and deeply felt their own helplessness, we find them, with one accord, bowing before the Lord in prayer, telling out to Him what was written in Psalm ii. (Acts iv. 25, 26.)

When Paul also delivered his comprehensive and well-known discourse at Antioch, he referred to the Psalms. And it is important here to observe, that when he quotes from Psalm ii., he mentions it as the second, thus shewing that the psalm which we now know as Psalm ii. was accredited as such in the earliest days of the church. Paul quotes from it to shew that Jesus, the Saviour and Messiah, was the Son of God. He also refers to Psalm xvi. to shew that Christ who died saw no corruption, but was raised again by God from the dead.

Moreover, the inspired epistles abound in quota-

tions from the Psalms. When Paul, the apostle, writes on the thorough ruin of man, as living in sin and rebellion against God, he goes largely to the Psalms for scripture testimony on the point. And, after so doing, he adds, that "we know that whatsoever *the law* saith, it saith to them," &c., shewing that he regarded the Psalms as part of the law. When the question of a sinner's being reckoned righteous was the subject, he appealed to the Psalms as authoritative on this fundamental doctrine. Referring to David—a man who lived under law—as an example of being accounted righteous on the same principle as one before law and after law, he quotes from Psalm xxxii. He says, "Even as David describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." (Rom. iv. 6–8.) In other epistles also the apostle Paul quotes from the Psalms.

We find Peter, too, referring to Psalm cxviii., when writing on the rejection of Christ, as the Stone which the builders refused being made the head stone of the corner; and also from Psalm xxxiv., to shew that the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears open to their prayer.

Enough evidence, we trust, has been adduced, to shew how abundantly the Psalms have been authenticated by our Lord and His apostles.

“I AM SAVED! I AM SAVED!”

DURING the spring of 1876, a steady and respectable young person came to live with us as a domestic servant. We soon found she was under serious impressions, but was without peace; indeed there were times when she was so exercised in soul that she was afraid to lie down at night.

She had heard the sweet story of the gospel, told out in its simplicity, time after time, but still remained without that liberty wherewith Christ has made His people free, until, one Lord's day evening, whilst staying with some friends, in whose house a christian brother and myself had met.

According to her request, we prayed most earnestly that she might be saved, and come into possession of that peace of mind which passeth all understanding.

We cannot describe our feelings whilst bowing before the Lord, when she triumphantly exclaimed, “I am saved! I am saved! It is all through the blood! He has saved me! He has saved me!” That night we spent in praise and thanksgiving.

This young Christian is now bearing a bright testimony for the Lord, by keeping His word, and not denying His name.

Anxious reader, look away from self to Christ, who has made peace through the blood of His cross, and believe the words of Him who says, “He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life.”

CORRESPONDENCE.

16. "A. H. K.," Ipswich. We must remember that the Epistle to the Hebrews has a peculiar character. It does not set forth the truth of the church, like Ephesians, nor the Headship of the Lord Jesus, like Colossians; but it is evidently addressed to Hebrews who had renounced Judaism, and embraced Christianity, and were in danger of giving up Christianity, and going back to Judaism. Unless this be borne in mind, the point and force of many passages in this beautiful epistle will be missed.

In the closing verses of chapter ix., to which you refer, the writer presents Christ as having been once offered, and thereby having met the sentence of death and judgment, to which we were justly exposed; and so completely have those who look to Him been thus delivered from death and judgment, that when He comes again, it will be not to meet any question about sin, but to bring them salvation. "To them that look for him, shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation," is a broad statement, applicable to the Jewish remnant, who will by-and-by look for His appearing, as also to us now who are waiting to be caught up to meet Him in the air. All believers, certainly, in some sense, are looking for Christ. There is not the slightest room for the erroneous doctrine, that only some of the members of the body of Christ will be caught up, and the rest left behind. On the contrary, scripture says, "They that *are Christ's* at his coming." (1 Cor. xv. 23.)

17. "Aberdeen." Thanks for your kind letter. The accompanying lines are scarcely in keeping with the object of our magazine.

18. "Anon." We cannot undertake to notice anonymous communications.

19. "M. S. S.," Dublin. Your piece of poetry has been received with thanks. Our difficulty is to find space for half of the poetry that is sent. The Lord be praised for filling your soul with joy and gladness. May "Rejoice in the Lord always" be your experience, as well as ours!

20. "Charity," Bristol. It is not in our power to give you the information you wish about the meetings.

21. "T. W.," Merthyr Tydvil. In 1 John iii. 9, we understand that the new nature of the believer is characterised. "Whosoever has been begotten of God does not practise sin, because his seed abides in him, and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God." To suppose that the believer, looked at as having two natures (that which is born of the flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit), *cannot* sin, would not be true. Hence we are exhorted to "sin not," and if we "confess our sins," &c. Still, a child of God is never characterised in scripture as practising sin. We read, "He that committeth [or practises] sin, is of the devil." (1 John iii. 8.) In John's first epistle there are three marks given of true believers. 1, They love, because they are born of God who is love. 2, They practise righteousness, for they are in relationship with Him who is righteous. 3, They are subject to God's word—"He that is of God heareth us." The absence of these marks shews that they are not of God. We read, therefore, 1, "He that loveth not, knoweth not God." 2, "He that doeth not righteousness is not of God." 3, "He that is not of God heareth not us." We need scarcely remind you of the all-importance of

such scriptures in these days of wide-spread and easy-going profession and laxity.

22. "L. F.," Ottawa. Your account of the Lord's blessing through "Things New and Old" is very sweet and encouraging. The pamphlet is to hand, and we earnestly pray that God's gracious blessing may attend all your efforts to help saints, and for the conversion of sinners.

23. "L. S.," Bristol. We do not understand your note.

24. "Naomi," Gosport. The person spoken of in Genesis xlix. 24, "From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel," is no doubt the once rejected Stone, but now the Head Stone of the corner, the risen Christ, Lord of heaven and earth. He was born in Bethlehem, of the house of David. Our Lord sprang from Judah, but was rejected, like Joseph, and, like Joseph, separated from His brethren during this dispensation. Yet, like Joseph, in the dispensation to come, or the restitution of all things spoken of by the holy prophets, Jesus will be sent from heaven, and Israel will then (not now) enjoy all these literal blessings. The whole prophetic blessing on Joseph cannot apply to this dispensation; and therefore this person cannot be a person on earth, either in England or elsewhere, during this dispensation. Joseph is a striking type of Christ, in whom God will surely make good all His promises to Israel. But during this period, He, as Messiah, and they, as a nation, are cut off. (See Dan. ix. 26; Rom. xi.)

25. "C. C. G.," Ballymona. A gathering of believers now could never truthfully take the character of being the church of God. The one church of God is scattered abroad, with little sense of the sad dishonour done to the Lord. A few

gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus, in dependence on the care and guidance of the Holy Ghost, should ever acknowledge the sad common ruin. To profess to be gathered thus to the Lord, who is holy and true, and then deny His word by going with the ungodly, joining bands of music, excursions, &c., is most deplorable, and calls for pastoral work and rebuke. We believe it is Satan's special effort to mar the testimony of God by such worldliness. The Lord restore and preserve in paths of holiness any who have thus wandered.

26. "J. L. P.," H.M.S. *Shannon*, Malta. Have you not overlooked those remarkable words in Ephesians ii. 4, 5, "The great love wherewith God loved us, even when we were dead in sins?" Surely this surpasses all human thought. He loved us when we were dead in sins. Again, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John iv. 10.) Not only has thus the *love* of God to sinners been revealed, but also *His righteousness*; and this is the great theme of the gospel. Now God is just, and the Justifier of him that believeth. (Rom. iii.) It is also most true that "he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the WRATH of God abideth on him." To preach the *love* of God to sinners only is a most defective gospel, if any gospel at all. The divine order is, "Even so must the Son of man be lifted up." Then, "For God so loved." We have no doubt the kind of preaching you refer to was not like the Holy Ghost preached through the apostle.

27. "G. G.," Plymouth. We have considered your remarks, and do not doubt that in John xii. 32, it is Christ lifted up on the cross in death as a sacrifice for sin.

SIN, DEATH, AND VICTORY.

“The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”—1 Cor. xv. 56-57.

SIN and death are both intruders in God's fair creation. Both came in by man, whom God had made upright, and created in His own image. “By man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.” “By man came death.” (Rom. v. 12; 1 Cor. xv. 21.) How sorrowful to think what man has done! We are familiar with sin and death. They come before us every day. Sin, in its direful results of crime, sickness, and opposition to the will of God, abounds on every hand; and death in its variety of ghastly forms, and distressing associations, is of constant occurrence. Sin, like a canker, eats out the vital energies of multitudes, and, by its manifold workings, hospitals are crowded, workhouses filled, lunatic asylums thronged, prisons, and other establishments for penal servitude, occupied by thousands. Sin and its consequences abound in sighs and groans, and tears; and are rapidly breaking up all the divinely-ordered activities of social life, as well as corrupting the god-fearing principles of commercial and political institutions. Sin debases as well as ruins; it carries its scars in time, as well as hurries its victims headlong into eternity. What a beauteous

world this must have been before sin entered into it! How unlike the original it is now, after sin has been reigning unto death for well-nigh six thousand years!

Death claims its unbending authority on account of sin. No class of Adam's progeny are exempt. Death accepts no excuse. Nothing excludes its presence. Its cold grasp makes no exception; and it lays so many low, that the world is busy in putting its victims out of sight. Graveyards are filling with incredible rapidity. Cemeteries are multiplying. Vast numbers are being annually swallowed up in the sea. All the living around us are dying. Men know it, and act accordingly. They make their wills, assure their lives, and provide for their successors, because they are mortal; and, though most think all others mortal but themselves, yet no one doubts the fact that death works quietly, but surely, on every hand. No sooner is a babe born into the world than the relatives become anxious as to its living. Hence one of our own poets has written—

“The cradle and the tomb, alas! so nigh,
To live's scarcely distinguished from to die.”

But death shall be utterly put out of the world. “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” Jesus has abolished death, and will destroy the works of the devil, and subdue everything to Himself. *Death* and *hades* will be cast into the

lake of fire. So that in the new heaven and the new earth, "there shall be no more curse, no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." Happy and glorious prospect!

Now we painfully know that sin reigns unto death, and that sin is the master of the sinner. But death keeps in the rereward of sin; it is its wages. "The wages of sin is death." What wages! And as death follows sin, so judgment follows death. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Heb. ix. 27.) Solemn realities! Men cannot keep sin and death out of sight, though many of its writhing victims are so secluded, that a stranger passing through a populous city might well ask if there are any sick and dying there? And, if he had a true answer to his question, he would most likely be told, that, in almost every street, there are those languishing on beds of pain and suffering, and some are passing from time into eternity.

But men try to put judgment from their thoughts, because they cannot see it; though nothing can be plainer than the inspired and irrevocable statement of divine truth—"After this [death] the judgment." The fact is that men excuse "sin," try to nerve themselves for "death," and endeavour to banish "judgment" from their minds; notwithstanding it is said, "Be sure your sin will find you out," and that "every

one of you shall give account of himself to God." (Num. xxxiii. 32 ; Rom. xiv. 12.)

Men deceive themselves as to death. The chief desire of many is that they may have "an easy death." The soldier flatters himself, that if he falls in the battle field, he will have done his duty, and have had an honourable death ; entirely unmindful of the appalling fact that *after death is judgment*. The liberal benefactor, who has bestowed his rapidly accumulating wealth in alleviating present distress, tries to console himself with the false idea that his works are so meritorious that it must be well with him hereafter ; as if God had not again and again declared, that salvation is not of works lest any man should boast. The prudent, self-denying moralist is sometimes so completely deceived that he is bold enough to say, "I do not shrink from death, for I have always been an upright and honest person ; I have done my duty through life to my people, and my Maker ;" notwithstanding the scriptures prove that all are "under sin," and that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." The truth is, that many rush headlong into eternity with as little concern as if they were "sinless," instead of being "sinners" against a holy, sin-hating God.

But death has its sting—"The sting of death is sin." It is indeed a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Men must give an account to God. Sin stings the conscience. They cannot

die as they like. There is that in the human heart which nothing short of what is eternal can meet. "He hath set the world [or eternity] in their heart." (Eccles. iii. 11.) The many appliances by which kindly hands may try to smooth a dying pillow, and sometimes a variety of deceptive influences, combine to surprise souls into eternity. But many a person on a death-bed knows that all is not right, for death has its dreadful sting. The thought of having to appear before God, and giving an account is often terrible to bear. Conscience accuses. The black, dark pleasures of sin stare him in the face, while he shivers under death's chilling grasp. Like another, when he saw the handwriting on the wall, the joints of his loins are loosed, his knees smite one against another, and his anguish becomes intolerable. Death, judgment, heaven, the lake of fire, sin, and guilt, rise up rapidly before the mind's eye of the sinking frame. It is indeed a reality, that death has its sting, and that sting is sin.

Nor does the law of Moses give relief. On the contrary, the more the troubled soul clings to the ten commandments as a remedy, the more intense his misery becomes, for the power of sin is the law. "By the law is the knowledge of sin," and "the law entered that the offence might abound." (Rom. iii. 20; v. 20.) The law then, though most useful in shewing man he is a sinner, instead of removing sin, exposes sin, and condemns the sinner; and,

instead of bringing relief to the troubled conscience, only increases his sense of guilt, and adds to the weight of his heavy burden. Hence we read, not that law-keeping is God's remedy for sinners, but that "the strength of sin is the law." The more determined man is to re-double his efforts, and the more conscience is alive, the more miserable the soul must be. Nay, more, the carnal mind being enmity against God, and insubject to His will, whatever God commands he is inclined at once to disobey. So that sin, that it might appear sin, works death in us by that which is good—for the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. While then "the sting of death is sin," it is also equally true that "the strength of sin is the law."

Though sin, death and judgment are connected with man as a sinner, yet it is most blessed to see that God has, in deepest mercy to us, connected sin, death and judgment with His spotless Son upon the cross. This is not law, but grace. It shews how God hath wrought for the eternal deliverance, blessing, and salvation of him that believeth in Jesus. Sin must be judged, its wages must be paid. Hence Jesus suffered for sins, died for our sins, shed His blood for many for the remission of sins. The unbeliever is going on to the great white throne to be judged for his sins, and therefore to be cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death. There the unsaved, in

that dark eternity, will be for ever connected with sin, death, and judgment. But, blessed be God now, in virtue of the atoning work of His Son on the tree, the believer is cleansed from all sin, shall not come into judgment, because his sins have been already judged on the Saviour in the death of the cross, and he has passed out of death and into life. So that death and judgment are behind the believer, and the hope of glory at the coming of the Lord immediately before him. All is of God, and to be known and enjoyed *now*. Hence, praise, praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, becomes us, for His abundant grace, His marvellous gift of "victory." It is therefore added, "But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Let the reader carefully note, First, That *God* is the source of all our salvation and blessing; God, who is righteous in all His ways and holy in all His works—"thanks be unto *God*." Secondly, That the victory is His free *gift*—"who *giveth* us the victory;" not earned, but given, given now, not by-and-by, but now. The free, unmerited gift of God, because He is love, and has so loved us, even while we were yet sinners, that Christ died for us. Thirdly, What God gives us is *victory*, not help, not religion, not merely pardon, but victory—"Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory." Victory over the guilt and dominion of sin, victory over death, the grave, and Satan who has the

power of death ; a victory, through Him who has borne the judgment due to our sins, and in resurrection triumphed over all our foes. This victory He obtained, and this victory God gives. A victory given, because our sins having been righteously judged for the glory of God ; and because He who went down unto death under the full weight of our sins on the cross, has risen again triumphantly from among the dead, and gone back, as man, into the glory of God. We being connected with Him now in life, and by the Holy Ghost, are, before God, accepted in the Beloved, blessed, complete, and preserved in Him. Fourthly, Observe it is all of God, and all *through Christ*. "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory *through our Lord Jesus Christ*." Oh, the blessedness of finding all our need met as sinners in the death of Christ, and present victory given in, and through, Him who is our life, and is for ever on the other side of death ! A present victory, given to all who receive Christ as their Saviour ! Oh ! the deep, rich grace of God that all our eternal blessings should be thus founded in righteousness on the atoning work of Jesus, and victory given over the guilt, dominion, and penalty of sin ! Victory over death ! victory over the grave ! for if Jesus comes while we are alive we shall neither die, nor enter a grave, but be changed in a moment and translated ; or, if we fall asleep in Jesus before He comes, the sting of death has been removed by the blood of

Christ, so that we do not taste death, and, at His coming, our bodies will be raised and changed, so that it is still victory over death, and the grave, and Satan. Reader! Can you say this?

It is God who gives us who believe this victory. In faith and hope now to sing "Victory." If the Lord comes we can shout, "Victory!" If we fall asleep in Jesus, His grace enables us to say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? . . . Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." What a victory!

NO REPUTATION.

"Who being in the form of God . . . made Himself of ~~no~~ reputation."—Philippians ii. 6, 7.

Most wondrous thought! Thou, oh our Saviour God,
Whom e'en the heaven of heavens cannot contain,
Didst stoop to lowest depths; yet o'er *that* stoop
In all its mighty vastness, its profound
Unfathom'd depths, our souls must fain be mute.
Yet musing o'er Thy pathway, we behold,
Oh matchless Saviour, such stupendous acts
Of grace, and love, and pure humility,
Our hearts o'erflow with praise. Who but Thyself
Would own "*no reputation*"! would accept
No breath of earthly fame, no word of praise
From flattering lips? Who but Thyself alone
Would deign to be by men o'erlook'd, ignored,
Thought nothing of? yet conscious all the while,
That glory, honour, majesty, and power,
By right belonged to Thee! Oh, patient One,
Obedient unto death; we hail with joy
The rapturous thought that henceforth evermore
Thyself shalt be th' exalted One, whose name
Above all other names shall homage bear;
Our thrice victorious Lord.

PLAIN PAPERS ON THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

Matthew xxv. 31-46.

No. IV.

WE now listen to the words of the Lord Jesus, as He sits and describes the judgment of the quick. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."

It is important to remember we have all been greatly mistaken in supposing that our Lord was describing, by this parable, a general resurrection. There is not one word about the resurrection here. It is strange how the judgment of the living nations, called the judgment of the quick, has been forgotten. It is the very solemn ground on which God commandeth all men everywhere to repent. "Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." (Acts xvii. 31.) With all the certainty, then, of His resurrection, let us approach this subject. As surely as He has ascended into

heaven, so surely He shall come again. (Acts i. 11.)
 “Behold, he cometh with clouds ; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him : and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.”

Now mark, His coming in judgment will be IMMEDIATELY after the tribulation of Israel : the time of the end. This connects His coming, in a striking manner, with the purposes of God as to Israel. For that tribulation, such as never was, is ushered in by the setting up of the abomination of desolation in the holy place : marking unmistakably the last three years and a half of Daniel’s prophetic period. (Dan. ix. 27 ; Matt. xxiv. 15.) THEN, immediately after this short period of dreadful sufferings for re-gathered Israel—THEN “shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven : and *then* shall all tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” (Matt. xxiv. 30.) “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left from Assyria,” &c. “And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah *from the four corners of the earth.*” (Isa. xi. 11, 12.)

The Lord will not forget His elect people.
 “He shall send his angels with a great sound of a

trumpet; and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Thus we see how this judgment is connected with Israel. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory." In order to rightly understand this illustration of the sheep and the goats, we must look at an eastern picture.

A modern traveller thus describes a morning scene he witnessed amid the hills of Bashan. "The shepherds led their flocks forth from the gates of the city. Thousands of sheep and goats were there, grouped in dense confused masses; each shepherd took a different path, and uttering as he advanced a shrill peculiar call. The sheep heard them. At first the masses swayed and moved as if shaken by some internal convulsion; then points struck out in the direction taken by the shepherds; these became longer and longer until the confused masses were resolved into long, living streams, flowing after their leaders."*

What a picture then does our Lord give by this illustration of the coming judgment. See the swaying of the masses of the gathered nations. "Before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them ONE FROM ANOTHER, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." Then shall come the fulfilment of those words, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth

* Porter's *Cities of Bashan*, p. 45.

for thy possession." This mark, is not for conversion, but for judgment. "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron." (See Psalm ii. 8.) The prophets also most distinctly foretell this judgment of the living nations, as that which precedes the kingdom of God on earth.

That glorious kingdom is thus introduced; "Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy." Then follows the kingdom of God. (Zeph. iii. 8-20.)

Joel shews the time when this will take place, "That time when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land." Thus the chapter describes the gathered multitudes. And "there," the Lord says, "will I sit to judge all the heathen round about." (Joel iii.) This judgment of the assembled nations is entirely for the Lord's people Israel. Is it not exactly so in our chapter, Matthew xxv.?

During those three years and a half of tribulation the deep hatred of the nations is shewn

against God and the Lamb by the cruel persecution of His ancient people, and this led on by Satan, as the dragon. Those terrible days are described in Revelation xiii. 5. But there are, that help the woman who brought forth the man-child. That is this same Israel, from which nation the Lord was born.

Is it not blessed to learn a little more of Jehovah Jesus in this judgment scene? See the vast multitudes of the nations gathered before him. Not one act of kindness shewn to his brethren, the tribes of Israel, will be forgotten. As in Joel, the nations are judged here, entirely in reference to their conduct towards His brethren, the Jews. What a surprise to those who hear the blessed words of the King: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!" And surely, not less terrible will be those words: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Judgment is committed to the Son of God, Son of man. Men may mock now, and deny Him now, but then the judgment is final, and everlasting. There is no appeal; no superior courts. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." The serpent may whisper, "Yea, hath God said EVERLASTING? He does not mean it. Sin is nothing; its punishment will not be everlasting; believe me, do not believe God, trust me;

God is too kind to punish you everlastingly." Beloved reader, will you thus as Eve, in the garden, believe Satan, rather than God, speaking in the Son? The moment she began to reason with Satan, the poison of sin had entered. The moment we begin to reason the question whether we may believe God, or trust the devil's lie, that moment we are infidels at heart. Thousands are thus ensnared by Satan. Could the Lord have possibly used plainer words? He uses the same word, "EVERLASTING FIRE," "EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT," "EVERLASTING LIFE," or as the translators have put it "life eternal." Now, is it wiser to reason with Satan, like Eve, or say with Jesus when tempted by the devil, "It is written"? Yes, this is the question: the lie of Satan, or the truth of God.

Yes, ponder this solemn fact, that whether it be here the judgment of the quick; or the judgment of the dead in Revelation xx., the sentence is *final*, and the punishment *everlasting*.

But it may be asked, If this parable, or illustration of the sheep and the goats, brings before us the gathered nations on earth, in the presence of the restored Israel, the brethren of the king, where then, in this scene, is the church of God? And if a Christian, where will the reader be? We can only answer these questions very briefly now: but we beg the reader to search, and see if these things are so. We will go to that supreme moment, the appearing of Christ. That moment when

the affrighted tribes of the earth first see Him coming in great glory.

First fact: "When Christ, who is our life shall appear, THEN shall ye also appear with him in glory." (Col. iii. 4.) What a fact: what a sight: the church of God *with* Him! Is this your hope?

Second fact: "But we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him." (1 John iii. 2.) Oh, wonders of redeeming grace. *Like* Him! The same glory, purity, incorruptibility.

Third fact: "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment." (See Jude 14.) When He comes to judgment, we come *with* Him.

Fourth fact: "And I saw thrones, and THEY sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them." (Rev. xx. 4.)

In the prophets, and in Matthew, we see the Lord sitting on the throne of His glory. In Revelation we see the redeemed sitting on thrones in judgment also. Surely this is very wonderful. In that great judgment, we shall be with Him, like Him, shall come with Him, shall sit on judgment-thrones in judgment. It may be asked, How is it that we shall be *with* Him, and come *with* Him when He appears?

Fifth fact: "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are

alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be *with* the Lord." (1 Thess. iv. 16.) This fifth fact comes thus first in order; and explains all the rest. Yes, this revelation to Paul explains how it is that "at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ" He comes "*WITH* all his saints." He first comes to fetch them, as He promised, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John xiv.) We must not confound this with His appearing in glory; and sitting on the throne of His glory, to judge the nations. These are totally different events in scripture: so distinct, that in one, He comes to receive us; in the other, we come with Him to judge the world. And all this so near! Are you, beloved reader, ready to meet Him? We beg you, leave not this an unsettled question. Wondrous as is the grace that gives us such a place in this world's judgment, yet we have something far better. At this we may look at a future time.

REMARKS ON THE PSALMS.

II.—THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK.

THE Psalms were written by various persons, though the chief writer was David. He tells us he was divinely inspired. He says, "The Spirit

of Jehovah spake by me, and His word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spake to me." He is called "The anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel." (2 Sam. xxiii. 1-3.) Asaph also wrote several of the Psalms. The sons of Korah, who were mercifully saved from going down into the pit, and being swallowed up alive with their wicked father, are also thought to have written some of the Psalms. Their names are connected with eleven of them; but their authorship is by no means certain. To Ethan, the Ezrahite, is imputed the authorship of a few of the Psalms; and, as before observed, Psalm xc. is entitled, "A prayer of Moses."

The word "Selah" occurs frequently in this book: it means "pause," and calls special attention to the context. The word "Higgaion" means "meditation," and it seems to be put in to enjoin us to *meditate* on what we are reading. When, for instance, we read, "The wicked is snared in the work of his own hand," we are called to meditate thereon, and "Selah" being added, bids us to pause as well. (See Ps. ix. 16.) The word "Anointed" may be translated "Messiah." Messiah and Christ both mean Anointed. Messiah is Hebrew, and Anointed Greek.

The Psalms are a series of songs divinely inspired, written in Hebrew poetry, by various persons, and at different times. Nearly every Psalm has a title. It is generally admitted that the titles

or headings, such as, "Mitcham of David," over Psalm xvi., meaning "A Golden Psalm of David," are in the original. "Shiggaion," the title of Psalm vii. means "Wandering ode."

The Psalms are not put together in a disorderly or promiscuous manner. The more they are prayerfully studied in the presence of God—the only way of rightly learning the truth of God—the more they will appear to have been arranged under divine direction. It is true they do not come before us as a continuous discourse, like some other books of the Bible, but the way in which they follow each other, is sometimes very striking and instructive.

Nor are the Psalms presented to us in a chronological fashion, for future events are sometimes recorded before what has already passed. For instance, we find a beautiful description of the millennial reign of Christ in Psalm viii., while the details of His atoning sufferings on the cross are not recorded till Psalm xxii. Again, the resurrection and ascension of Christ are clearly brought out in Psalm xvi., but the incarnation, as being of the fruit of David's body, is found well-nigh at the end of the book. (Psalm cxxxii. 11.)

Perhaps no part of scripture is more read than the Psalms. One reason may be that from the brevity of many of them, a portion complete in itself can be quickly read. This may be the case with such as are pressed for time. Others are educated to read portions of them periodically, and

do so as an accustomed duty. Others read them on account of the pious breathings, longings after God, making Him their refuge in trial, and hoping in His mercy. Many, however, we are persuaded, read this book of scripture because of its legal character; for, strange as it may appear, those who are in bondage, and do not know the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, like to associate with persons in a similar state, and read writings of the same stamp. We have heard of one, who, when he was passing through much soul-distress, derived comfort from reading Psalm lxxxviii., which had not one word of comfort in it; his comfort was that there had been a truly godly person who was just as miserable as himself. No doubt many in affliction and trial are in a similar way refreshed and cheered by reading certain portions of the Psalms, and helped, too, in being led to cast themselves upon God.

Like the other scriptures, the Psalms were written for our learning and blessing, and, when spiritually apprehended, give us most profitable and comforting instruction. When we have a right sense of the true meaning of these divine songs, and can approach them as those who enjoy our new creation-standing, blessings, and relationships, into which the grace of God has brought us, and ponder them in dependence on the Holy Ghost, we find the book of Psalms to be an exhaustless source of blessing.

The Psalms consist of five books. They are so divided by the Hebrews. The different lines of instruction which the various books present are very apparent.

The *first* book consists of forty-one Psalms, and ends with, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting. Amen and amen." Psalm xli. 13.

The *second* book begins with Psalm xlii., and ends with Psalm lxxii. The last words are, "Let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and amen. The prayers of David, the son of Jesse are ended." This book consists of thirty-one Psalms.

The *third* book contains only seventeen Psalms. It extends from Psalm lxxiii. to Psalm lxxxix., and concludes with, "Blessed be the Lord God for evermore. Amen and amen."

The *fourth* book commences with Psalm xc., and ends with Psalm cvi. It consists of seventeen Psalms. It ends with, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting, and let all the earth say, Amen, praise ye the Lord."

The remaining Psalms comprise the *fifth* book. It consists of forty-four Psalms, and its last words are, "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord."

THE SUBJECT OF THE PSALMS.

The great subject of which the Psalms treat has often been overlooked. By those who indulge in

what is called spiritualising the Old Testament scriptures, and imagine that every good thing there spoken of must belong to the church of God, have been bold enough to say that the Book of Psalms gives us an embodiment of all the great principles of Christianity ; but if this statement be quietly and patiently tested, it will be found to be a serious mistake. That “ all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable,” is blessedly true ; but that much of the scripture is neither addressed *to*, nor descriptive *of*, us, is also equally true. Though not written directly *to* us, nor *about* us, it is, however, all written *for* us, and reads us very precious lessons as to the patience, grace, and faithfulness of God, while it reveals over and over again man’s thorough ruin, and insubjection to His will. For instance, the prophet Isaiah gives us “ the word that he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem” (Isa. i. 1 ; ii. 1) ; and though his prophecy is about Judah and Jerusalem, and addressed to those who lived in the days of Hezekiah and other kings of Judah, yet who among us has not gathered up sweet instruction concerning the person, path of humiliation, death, glory, and the reign of the true Messiah before His ancients gloriously ; and also of Jehovah’s patient grace and faithfulness to His ancient people ?

With regard to the subject of which the Psalms treat, it is unmistakably clear that we find in them the doctrines of forgiveness of sins, and of right-

eousness reckoned without works, with many utterances of pious souls in trouble making God their refuge, and speaking of the blessedness of trusting in Him ; but no one would say that these are peculiar and essential principles of Christianity, because they have been true, as to every believer, from Abel downwards, long before the precious doctrines of the church of God were revealed.

Now, however, we know that God has been revealed as Father, and that babes in Christ are spoken of as knowing the Father, and having the cry of Abba, Father : but in the Book of Psalms, though God is known as Jehovah, the Lord God, the Almighty, the God of Israel, and the Most High, yet the Father, in the peculiar relationship of Christianity was not then revealed, nor is He once named in the Psalms.

We now are taught that believers are “blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ,” of which there is no mention in the Psalms ; instead of which God’s earthly people are here contemplated, and are taught to look forward to an earthly inheritance—“Those that wait upon Jehovah, they shall inherit *the earth*. . . . He shall exalt thee to inherit *the land*.” (Ps. xxxvii. 9, 29, 34.)

It is since the glorification of Christ Jesus, and not before (see John vii. 39), that the Holy Ghost has come down to seal and indwell us until the redemption of the purchased possession, and also to

unite to Christ in heaven, everyone who knows remission of sins through His blood; whereas, in the Psalms, David Himself is heard to cry out, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me." By this we understand that instead of their being sealed by the Holy Spirit, and indwelt by that other Comforter abiding with them for ever, as we are, holy men, like David and others, were now and then moved by the Holy Ghost to prophesy; and this was so blessed to them, that they wished He might thus continue with them. Though the Holy Ghost has always been the divine Teacher and power of blessing, we judge they had little sense of His operations, except when moved to prophesy. "Holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." It is no marvel, then, that any should say, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me." How different is the writing of an apostle to us, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby *ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*" (Eph. iv. 30.) Again, believers are now addressed as a new creation in Christ Jesus, and members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, a relationship which could not have existed before the death and resurrection of Christ, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. With what confidence the apostle writes to *us*, saying, "We are members of his body," and "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." A wondrous relationship, indeed! (See Eph. ii. 15; iii. 5, 9; v. 30; 1 Cor. vi. 17.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

27. "F. A. F. G.," Roscombe. When the earth had passed through the waters of death, and when all that breathed were destroyed from the earth, Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. Then we read he presented clean sacrifices to God, "and the Lord smelled a sweet savour: and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake," Gen. viii. 20-22. And further, though the full accomplishment of Psalm lxxv. 9, 13 be doubtless millennial, yet, as it is quoted in Hebrews vi., we judge that as the curse and death came by sin, eternal blessing and life came in by the atoning death of Christ; all to be fully accomplished in the new heavens and new earth. And that for the present, though sin is in the world, and many of the circumstances of the curse, with briars and thorns, and Satan himself still here, yet God, through the precious death of Christ, gives us all things richly to enjoy. He is the Saviour of all men in this sense. We therefore judge that the earth is not under the curse in the full sense in which it was before the flood, and the offering of Noah which pointed to the offering of the body of Jesus. Sin is terrible, and let it be remembered, "The earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up." (2 Peter iii. 10.)

28. "P. S.," Wolverhampton. The testimony of scripture as to Cornelius, before he heard the word from the lips of Peter, is, that he was "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway." Again, the saying of the

angel of God, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God," &c. Could such a testimony be given of anyone who was not quickened, or born anew? The words of Old Testament scripture had been applied by the Spirit. Comparing him with the leper in Leviticus xiv., he had received the action of the water. (Vers. 8-9.) He needed the application of the blood. (Vers. 10-14.) And the moment this was done, the oil was put upon the blood. (Vers. 15-18.) As a quickened soul, he now hears the testimony to the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and the Holy Ghost fell on all them that believed. The chapter is very suggestive of God's dealings with His elect from all nations.

29. "A. H.," Croydon. The *faith* of Joseph in giving commandment concerning his bones is very instructive. He said, "God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence." Those bones were buried by the children of Israel in Shechem. (Josh. xxiv. 32.) And there they wait the time, when God shall fulfil the hopes of Israel in that land, according to His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all those various promises to Joseph, type also of the risen Christ. The faith of Joseph went as far as those promises, and will be fulfilled in the kingdom of God in that land. But a Christian could not by faith give commandment that his bones should be carried to Palestine. This would be unbelief. It would be a denial of the heavenly calling and hope. The kingdom of God in Palestine will surely come; but for this to be our hope, as it was with Joseph, would be to deny the sweetest promise of Christ. (John xiv. 1-3.) And if it be His will that we depart to be with Christ a little while before, does

it matter where our bones are laid? Our bodies, now the temples of the Holy Ghost, are in the safe keeping of our God and Father, and shall again be quickened "by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Rom. viii. 11.) Oh, glorious hope! He comes to receive us unto Himself. Soon, soon, we shall be for ever with the Lord—not in Palestine, but in those mansions of glory—the place prepared.

30. "One of the Flock." We judge, Abraham would not have been found in the Mechanics' Hall, or the Reading Room of Sodom. Lot might. What a study! And if Abraham had been there, he would have missed the visit of the Lord in the plains of Mamre. Surely we ought to be greater strangers on earth than Abraham. Has not this world, with all its halls and reading rooms, rejected and murdered the Son of God? Is it His will I should be there; or my will? If my will, then it is not the obedience of Christ, to which we are set apart by the Holy Ghost. (1 Pet. i. 2.) The Lord give spiritual discernment to the children of God, to know and do His will in all these matters.

31. "C.," Peckham. Was it not God, who, by His Spirit, wrought in John the Baptist, Simeon, and others, to discern who Jesus was, and to accredit Him as the true Shepherd of the sheep?

32. "Faith." It is easier to discern the contrast between Old Testament saints and those who now form the church of God, by considering what they had not, than the blessings they had. They certainly had forgiveness of sins, were born again, and were counted righteous. (Gen. xv. 6; Ps. xxxii. 1, 2; Rom. iii. 25.) But they could not know an accomplished redemption, nor liberty of entrance into the holiest by the blood of Jesus; they had not the Holy Ghost, the other Comforter,

indwelling them as we have, and were not delivered from the fear of death. We can only give a brief reply now ; but the subject is most interesting, and we hope to enter into it more fully another time, if the Lord will.

33. "W. C." Your lines are the breathings of true piety, but scarcely suitable for the pages of this magazine. We thank you for your love and interest in our work.

34. "H. R.," Diss. Nothing is more plainly revealed in scripture than that the apostles and prophets were the foundation stones of the church of God, so that we are said to be "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets." There is not the least intimation in scripture that such gifts would be again given in these last days. In the present state of ruin, there is much pretension in various ways ; so that we are only safe, when keeping close to the authority of scripture, the only revelation God has given us of His mind and will.

35. "H. M." Without question, practical fellowship with the Lord Jesus is of the very utmost importance. But it must not be confounded with the great foundation-truth set forth in the communion of the blood of Christ, and the communion of the body of Christ. This is no matter of attainment, but of facts. Every Christian is a member of that one body, and has the same eternal redemption through the blood. One thing is equally true, of all who have been translated from darkness to light ; if there, in the light, the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin. Fellowship, and communion are the same word. This foundation-truth is the basis of real practical separation from evil, and holiness of walk with the Lord.

GOD REVEALED IN HIS WORD.

GENESIS.

GENESIS, as has been said, is the *introduction* to the holy scriptures. And what an introduction! The very first verse is a revelation that contains infinitely more truth than all the writings of unaided human reason. It is the truth, all that God has been pleased to give, as to the original creation of the universe. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Yes, in that past eternity God created the heaven and the earth. How many ages, or myriads of ages, may have passed away since the beginning we are not told. Poor puny man thinks he has found some contradiction to this in his stones and his coals. Is there not space in the past eternity for all the past epochs of time? or, if you please, for all the ages before our time began? This first verse stands alone. To connect it with what follows would be to make God the author of confusion. This cannot be: He is not the author of confusion. "He created it not in vain," or in chaos. (Is. xlv. 18.)

How the earth came to be in such a state of chaos and darkness as is described in verse 2, we are not told, and therefore do not know.

What we would call attention to is this: that this wonderful chapter is occupied with, and reveals, what God made for man. The work of these six days was for man. There is no account in this

chapter, or in Genesis, of the creation of angels, of principalities, and powers in the heavenlies, or of what God created for those heavenly beings. Other scriptures give their creation. (Col. i. 16.) God is revealed as having prepared this globe for man. "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep." This world had thus become a place totally unfit for man. It was all confusion and darkness. "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Yes, the Spirit of God moving to seek and prepare a place for man. "And God said, Let there be light; and there was light." "And God saw the light that it was good." All this for man. How could man have existed without light? Yes, light was good for man. It was good for man that there should be day and night. It was good for man that there should be a firmament, or atmosphere; without it he could neither see, hear, speak, nor move. In it the smallest insect can live and move, or fly. By its wondrous balancings in gravity the dew can rise or fall, or thousands of tons of water can float and rain on the earth. Oh, the wisdom and love of God in each day's work for man!

Was it not good for man that the waters should be gathered together unto one place, and that the dry land should appear? And when God said, Let the earth bring forth, was it not for man, the grass, the herbs, the trees sprang forth? Every flower,

and every blade of grass, tells out God's loving care and thought for man. All was good, yes, good for man.

And, oh, how good for man were those two great lights, now made to shed their light on the earth ! God saw it was good. And God did whatever was good for man.

Do mark, this is not an account of creation; it is only an account how He prepared this world for man, and made the sun and moon serve man's happiness; and therefore little is said of those vast distant suns of the universe. They do shed their distant light on earth; and thus these few words are given, "He made the stars also."

Now the waters are commanded to bring forth abundantly. And the earth must bring forth the living creatures, but all for man; all to be placed under man.

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," &c. What a contrast to, "Let the earth bring forth." The counsel of the Elohim, the work of the Persons of the Godhead—"Let us make man." No other creature could stand in intelligent relation with God; but now man is formed, the relationship-name of God, Jehovah, Lord is used. It is therefore, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." How vast the distance of man thus formed from the creatures brought

forth from water or from earth. Jehovah breathed into him, he became a living soul.

Now see this man, head and centre of creation, placed in the garden planted by Jehovah. Centre and source of blessing. From thence flowed the river that watered in its four streams, not only the garden, but the earth. What a scene of earthly delight, and man formed to receive the visits, and to hearken to the voice, of God.

All put under the man, one tree in the garden alone forbidden, thus to be a test of obedience. But the loving care of the Lord God fixed on the man. A companion is formed, according to counsel, every way fitted for him, yea, part of himself—his bone, his flesh. Thus was he loved, thus was he blest, in the garden of delight. Such is the divine, the perfect revelation of God in this work of placing the man in the world He had prepared for him.

High and heavenly truth is no doubt shadowed forth in all this. Adam was, as we are told, a figure of Him that was to come, and has come. And as Eve, a figure of the church, was formed and presented to him, before the history of sin and sorrow began, so we know the church was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. (Eph. i.)

We now come to the inspired history of the origin of all the sin and misery of the human race. The woman listens to the lying insinuations of the serpent. She distrusts God ; she believes the serpent ; she takes the forbidden fruit ; she trans-

gresses the only commandment, "and gave also to her husband with her, and he did eat." Immediately the sentence of dying begins to take effect. Their eyes are opened. They are naked. They were seized with shame and guilt. They sew fig-leaves together to make aprons, to bind about their bodies. All in vain—the naked, guilty Adam could be seen through the fig-leaves. It is so to this day. How many are seeking to cover themselves with works of righteousness—fig-leaf binders. Ah, let the voice of the Lord God be heard. If our reader is only clothed with fig-leaves—what you have made, what you have done—would you not be afraid of God? Can your religious efforts hide your sin, and shame, and guilt? Impossible!

The Lord God has four questions to ask you—two as to Himself, and two as to your neighbour.

The first he put thus to Adam: "*Where art thou?*" What was the *state* of Adam at that moment? Afraid of God, and hiding himself from His presence. Where art thou, dear reader? What is thy state as to God? Is it as with Adam—guilt, and sin, and shame, afraid of God?

The second question was put to Eve—"What is this that thou hast done?" If God thus enters into judgment with you as to actual sins, what can you say? Could we answer one in a thousand? This, and this; what is this that thou hast done, sin against God? But this is not all.

The third question is put to Cain—"Where is

Abel, thy brother?" He said, "I know not: am I my brother's keeper?" Before we apply this question, let us look at the history for a moment. Who was this Cain, first-born of Adam? What sort of a man was he? "Cain was a tiller of the ground"—as we might say, a decent, hard-working farmer, providing for his own needs, and something to spare for God. He also seems to have been a religious man. "And in process of time," or the marginal reading says, "at the end of the days—"the end of the days; this might have been the seventh day, or some other day; at all events, whether he was a sabbath-day keeper, or not, he came to worship. "Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord." Was he not what many in our day would call a good man? Would you not say, a hard-working farmer, who pays his way—not only owes nobody anything, but has something to spare; and brings what he has, the fruit of his labour, an offering to the Lord. Works hard all the week, and at the end of the days keeps his sabbath. If that is not a good man, where will you find one? Well, such was Cain: and did the Lord accept his offering at the end of the days? No. Whatever we may say of Cain, or all good farmers like him, the scripture says, he "was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? *Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.*" (1 John iii. 12.) What was the root of the evil

in Cain? He completely ignored sin and the curse. Not so Abel, he approached God through the death of another. The great sin-offering was thus recognised by faith. Yes, it is of Satan to seek to come to God in any other way than by the blood of the Lamb. Do not be surprised that Cain's religion was, and is, of the devil. Was it not so with Saul of Tarsus, chief of Pharisees, yet chief of sinners—who was blameless as to the law, yet did he not hale the saints to prison and to death?

This reminds us, that what Adam could not do God did. Adam tried to cover Adam with fig-leaves, but "the Lord God made coats of skins, and clothed them." Not a bit of Adam could be seen through the skins.

Is it not so, whilst man cannot by works of righteousness cover his sin, and guilt, and shame? yet, through the death of the Sin-bearer, does not the righteousness of God upon all that believe cover him; his sin, and sins, and shame, and guilt for ever out of sight? Though there was no promise to Adam, yet, through the woman's Seed, which is Christ, Adam is covered, yea, displaced, and "Christ is all." Oh, dear reader, do you know this blessedness—"the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works"—iniquities forgiven, sins covered, sin not imputed? (Rom. iv. 4-8.)

Yes, this religious Cain slew Abel. And now *this third question*—Where is Jesus? When the

question was put to Cain, he gave the family answer, "I know not." Where is Abel, thy brother? "I know not." Oh, solemn truth, it was the religious Pharisees that gave Jesus to be put to death! Oh, the hatred of the priests to Jesus! Do you say, What have I to do with Jesus, or His death—am I His keeper? So said Cain. Eternity depends on how we stand in regard to Jesus. The Creator of all things become man, our neighbour! And as Cain slew Abel, so this world has put to death Jesus, the Son of God. How, then, do you stand in reference to Jesus? Every child of Cain says, "I know not." Are your sins forgiven through Him? Do you say, "I know not." Do you think you will be saved, or lost, by keeping the law? "I know not."

When you stand on the brink of the grave, may we ask, where will you be, and what have you beyond it? "I know not." When Jesus comes in glory, where will you be? "I know not." Yes, "I know not" is the language of every unbeliever. All is dark uncertainty. Is not this terrible? Is it so with our reader?

Not so the believer. We ask him, Where is Jesus? "Where?" he says, "at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and He is my righteousness ever in the presence of God." "We know" is the language of faith. We know all sins forgiven, for God says so. (Acts xiii. 38, 39.) We know we have everlasting life, for God says so.

(John v. 24.) We can stand at the brink of the grave, and say, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (2 Cor. v. 1.) And when He comes in glory, we know that we shall be with Him.

The fourth question is very solemn. Not only, Where is Jesus? but, "*What hast thou done?*" Have you despised and rejected Jesus, as Cain despised, hated, and slew Abel? Or have you accepted Him, your Sin-bearer and righteousness?

The Holy Ghost has come down from heaven to bear witness that Jesus has been cruelly put to death by men: do you, then, stand with that world guilty of the death of Jesus? Poor Cain, he went out of the presence of the Lord, a vagabond in the land of Nod, or the vagabond. Will you follow him in that land? Away from the presence of the Lord, man is a vagabond. A poor vagabond, or a rich vagabond—rich in cattle, well-tilled land, building a city, with its manufactures and music—such is man, trying to forget that he is a vagabond, out of the presence of God. Is God speaking to you now pardon and peace through the death and resurrection of Jesus from among the dead? For though Abel could not typify the complete gospel, yet Seth—another seed—completes the picture. If we had only the death of Abel, it would be most sad, for Satan would have triumphed

in the family of Cain. In like manner, if Jesus had only died, Satan would have triumphed, and the gospel be false. (1 Cor. xv. 14-20.) But as in Seth, so in Christ, we have the seed promised, and the final overthrow of Satan in the new creation ; Jesus, the first-born from among the dead.

The music, the arts, the world of Cain, await you in the land of the vagabond. Will you reject Christ once more, and go out? Oh, beware, it may be once too often—for ever too late. Cain went out from the presence of the Lord. Oh, ponder the consequences of one more fatal step. Beware lest it be the last.



REDEMPTION.

“REDEMPTION supposes taking us out of one condition, and putting us into another. In Christ’s death we get two questions—God’s glory, and our sins. Redemption is eternal, but not universal. We get the blessings of the new covenant, but there is no covenant with us : the letter of it is for the Jews.

“There is universal purchase, but not universal redemption. The believer is the only one who owns the purchase, and acts upon it. Everyone may come as to the presentation of the gospel ; but this does not interfere with God’s sovereignty. Men will be judged for not believing the gospel, and for sins.”

SINGING PRAISES AT MIDNIGHT.

“And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God.”—ACTS xvi. 25.

It is one thing to know Jesus as a Saviour, and another thing to enjoy Him whom God has glorified as the satisfying Object of our hearts. The difference in the two states of soul is immense. For a sin-burdened conscience to have to do with Him whom God gave to bear our sins in His own body on the tree, gives unutterable relief; but to have to do with Him, after this, at the right hand of God, as our satisfying portion, is most blessed. Not only does it lift our hearts to where He is, but delights us with what He is. We know Him as the One who has attracted us to Himself, won our hearts, and brought us to God. He is to us the Object which outweighs every other; and we find that God in Christ is our *resource* as well as *relief*. Precious discovery indeed! He becomes known as our Brightness in the darkest path, our Strength in weakness, our Joy in adversity, our Consolation in affliction. So long as believers think that Christ is revealed only to give *relief*, they will not be likely to know God in Christ as a *resource*; they will be tossed about by circumstances, instead of rising above them all, and being occupied with Him as He is, who can temper all our joys, sweeten every bitter cup, and reveal Himself to us as the Fountain of eternal and unchanging joy. Such will sing praises at midnight, and find springs

of richest consolation when circumstances are affecting them with pain and sorrow.

It was so with Paul and Silas. They were in the path of obedience. Having been forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word of God in Asia, after being exercised before the Lord as to the way He would have them go, they assuredly gathered that it was His will they should visit Europe. Being at Philippi, they were called to suffer for the gospel's sake. After having been beaten with many stripes, they were sent by the magistrates to the common prison, with the express command that the jailor should keep them safely. He consequently thrust them into the inner prison—no doubt the most loathsome compartment—and made their feet fast in the stocks. But they were men of faith. They were servants and followers of the Lord Jesus. They knew that it was given unto them, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe, but also to suffer for His sake. Though their backs were deeply lacerated with the scourging they had received, and their way-worn feet keenly felt the pressure of the rude stocks, to say nothing of the dark and unwholesome character of the dungeon, yet they were fully assured that all was well. They had not a doubt that God was leading them by the right way, that, however inscrutable to man the path might appear, He could make no mistake. They could confidently pray that all might be turned to account for His own glory, and

for the furtherance of the gospel. They could consider Him who had endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, and had perfectly trodden the path of rejection and suffering for righteousness' sake, but is now crowned with glory and honour. Their surroundings in the house of malefactors were gloomy indeed, and personally they were suffering affliction, but they looked up, and saw by faith the glory of God in the face of their glorified Saviour, an Object that could more than fill their hearts.

Like the bright rising of the sun after a dark and stormy night, they contemplated, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, the glory and perfections of that Man on the throne of God in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily ; who is the Head of all principality and power, and in whom they were accepted and for ever blessed. His moral excellencies and infinitely accomplished work, His various offices, passed before their souls ; what He is to God, what He is in Himself—His past humiliation, His righteous exaltation, the rightful place He now has where angels, authorities, and powers are made subject to Him, and much more—filled their hearts with such joy, that they sang praises to God at midnight. Thus captivated and cheered by being occupied with Him in the glory, they rose superior to their circumstances, and prayed and sang praises to God at midnight. To joy in God, through our

Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation, is the climax of delight. Happy indeed are those who thus know God. While abounding with thanksgivings for blessings by the way, such have done with creatures and circumstances as springs. They know that God in Christ is the alone Fountain of living waters, and that permanent and satisfying blessings flow only from Him, and they can sing with melody of heart—

“My God, the spring of all my joys,
The life of my delights;
The glory of my brightest days,
The comfort of my nights.”



FAITH AND INFIDELITY.

“CHRISTIAN faith, or the faith by which a man becomes a Christian, is the subjection of the soul to the testimony of God. It is believing what God has spoken to us in His word. It is based on confidence in God Himself; and what has been revealed is believed on God’s authority. If a person does not believe what God has spoken, he does not believe God, and is practically an infidel. “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.” Believing on God’s authority, and on it alone, is believing God—nothing else is. True faith is faith in what God has said, because God has said it. If you require the church’s sanction of it, you have not faith in God. You do not bow to *His* word, and that is infidelity.”

THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST.

WE have noticed of late, and facts have come before us, where young converts, and, indeed, older Christians, have been ensnared by the enemy with a spirit of lawlessness. "Oh! we are saved now; we are Christians; we are not under law; can we not in many things do our own will? Why should we be so narrow and strict? Can we not go where we like, and hear what we like?" And if all this is not said and done, yet what a large portion of our time is spent in doing our own will?

Perhaps nothing has been more seriously forgotten than this: that the Christian is sanctified by "the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." We are not set apart, as a nation, from Egypt, unto the obedience of the law of Moses, to stand before that mount, to tremble beneath the sound of the righteous claims of a holy God, ("And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake"); neither are we set apart to be a struggling people, striving in vain to keep the law of Moses. We are not sanctified, or set apart merely to obedience, but to the obedience of Christ. (1 Pet. i. 2.)

What, then, was the obedience of Christ? Was it a mere question of right and wrong with Him? Had He to use His private judgment as to what was right and wrong? Did He avoid stealing because

it was wrong to do so? What was the principle on which He ever acted?

Let us hear Him on the subject: "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I DELIGHT TO THY WILL, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." (Psa. xl. 7, 8.) What a sight is this! A person on this earth, Jesus of Nazareth, set apart from eternity to come and do the will of God; and, in His case, that will to reach to our redemption by His blood. But in every act He could say, "I delight to do thy will, O my God." "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." (John vi. 48.)

And in answer to this unmixed delight to do the Father's will, in every thought and act, a voice was heard from heaven, which said, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased."

To this obedience the believer is set apart by the Spirit; not the trembling, quaking bondage of Sinai, but the obedience of Him, who could thus say, "I delight to do thy will, O my God." In the obedience of Christ, then, we see two things—a *nature* that delighted to do the will of God, and *power* to do that will. He never could possibly have said, "how to perform that which is good I find not." The delight of His heart, and every action of His devoted life were well pleasing to the Father. No leaven within, no spot without. His was obedience perfect before God. Such is, then,

the standard set before us ; such the obedience unto which we are set apart, sanctified. All the rest of mankind doing their own will. Christians separated from them, to delight to do the will of God their Father.

Is it not evident, then, in order to do this, there must also be the same two things in the believer? There must be *a nature* that delights to do the will of the Father. That nature must be holy ; or it cannot delight to do the holy will of God. But man, in his fallen condition, is the very reverse of this ; and circumcision, baptism and religious ceremonies, do not change his evil nature. The blessed Lord teaches he must be born wholly anew. He must have a new nature. And even then the other thing is needed—power. Such a case is supposed and described in Romans vii. He is born again, has a new nature, can truly say, “I delight in the law of God after the inward man,” but he has no power. He says, “for to will is present with me ; but how to perform that which is good I find not.” Does not this shew the need we have, not only of a new nature wholly from above—of God—but also the absolute need of power ; that is, the indwelling of the Holy Ghost ; “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” This we find is the all-important subject of Romans viii. 1–17.

It may be asked, But has not the believer two

natures; and is there not conflict still with an evil nature? And if we are set apart to such a perfect example—the obedience of Christ—can we say that we do always the things that please the Father? Can we say that we have no sin? (1 John i. 8.) He knew no sin! Can we say so? Surely that perfect copy is placed before our eyes; but can we say we have never failed—can we say, even as believers, “We have not sinned”? Should we not “make him a liar, and his word is not in us”? All most true; and hence mark the divine perfection of the word of God: we are not only set apart by the Spirit unto the obedience of Christ, but the sanctification of the Spirit [is] unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” It is impossible to enjoy the power of the Holy Ghost for obedience, unless we receive the seal, the witness of the Spirit to the infinite and immutable value of the blood of Christ. Oh, sweet relief! Oh, lasting victory! The blood of Jesus the answer to all that I am, and all that I have done. Not like the blood of bulls and goats, that needed repetition, and never purged the conscience; but the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth from all sin. Set apart to that, to the sprinkling efficacy of the blood of Christ. What a peace! God says, “and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” Believer, is it not thus written? Is not this your place?

We press, then, this much neglected, blessed

truth—the obedience of Christ. Oh, what need of prayer and searching of the word of God, and what dependence on the Holy Spirit, both to know and power to do, yea, to delight to do the will of God. What have we done this day because it is His will?



HIM.

“My meditation of *him* shall be sweet.”—Psalm civ. 34.

SWEETLY the fragrance of Thy name,
Jesus our Lord ;
Its precious freshness still the same,
Pervades Thy word.
Sweet to *our* souls ; but to Thy God
Who knew the roughness of the road,
Which in obedience was trod,
No tongue can tell *how* sweet.

Name of surpassing excellence,
Jesus our Lord ;
Beyond the range of mortal sense,
This mighty cord.
This sweet uniting name of love
Must ever in its fragrance prove,
The power omnipotent to move
Worship our God to Thee.

Thy Father's heart in Thee has found,
(Jesus our Lord),
Supreme delight ; the blessed ground
Of one accord ;
One heart of love, one mind of peace,
One pattern of pure holiness,
One source of perfect happiness
Jesus our Lord in Thee.

REMARKS ON THE PSALMS.

III.

ANOTHER precious and essential truth of Christianity is that the veil is rent, because redemption has been accomplished; and Jesus is gone into heaven by His own blood. Hence we have purged consciences, with liberty to approach God as our Father, and to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus for worship and communion. Blessings and privileges we *now* therefore have, which were wholly unknown until the finished work of Christ had actually taken place. In the Psalms, we find no idea of these heavenly blessings; on the contrary, their sanctuary is on earth, and worship is spoken of as at Jehovah's footstool; a point of all importance to notice. "Exalt ye Jehovah our God, and worship at his footstool, for he is holy;" and again, "We will go into his tabernacles, we will worship at his footstool." (Ps. xcix. 5; cxxxii. 7.) How great the contrast between these words of the inspired psalmist, and those of an inspired apostle, when he says: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated FOR US, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having

our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." (Heb. x.)

The true hope of the Christian, which is the coming of the Lord at any time, when we shall be caught up to meet Him in the air, and so be "for ever with the Lord," is not found in the Psalms; but His coming to Israel, to reign over the earth, and to judge the world in righteousness are repeatedly set forth, as suited to the people there contemplated. It is clear that our hope was not fully known in its details, till it was revealed to Paul the apostle—"by the word of the Lord"—for us. (See 1 Thess. iv. 15.)

Thus, however much we may have recorded in the Psalms for our instruction, (and, thank God, there is an abundance of it), yet we have seen that the special doctrines of Christianity do not come within their scope. The New Testament epistles set forth the heavenly calling, heavenly standing, heavenly relationships, accomplished redemption, rent veil, worship in Spirit and in truth, the indwelling, sealing, and communion, of the Holy Ghost, and the hope of our Lord's return. For these then we must look to the Epistles. We do find in the Psalms the calling, hope, worship, relationships, and experiences suited to God's earthly people, and (ever to be remembered), all written for our learning, blessed be God! But we may rest assured that those only, who can distinguish between instruction concerning God's ancient

people Israel, and that about the church of God, will be able rightly to divide the word of truth.

The fact is, that David who is the chief writer of the Psalms, informs us himself that he was "the anointed of the God of Jacob, and THE SWEET PSALMIST OF ISRAEL." (2 Sam. xxiii. 1.) This gives us a key to unlock the great subject of the Psalms; and we do press this point, because of its importance, that he is not called the sweet psalmist of the church, but "the sweet psalmist of Israel," God's earthly people. Instead then of the people being described there as partakers of a heavenly calling, they are again and again spoken of as having been called from Egypt to Canaan—brought out of Egypt and led through the wilderness into the land of promise. (Ps. lxxviii. ; cv.)

Their hope, too, is constantly referred to as "the earth" or "the land." We read, "They shall inherit *the earth*." Such as be blessed of him shall inherit *the earth*." "The righteous shall inherit *the land*." "He shall exalt thee to inherit *the land*." (Ps. xxxvii. 9, 11, 22, 29.) Earthly glory seems to be the hope of the faithful in this book. We see the longing of their hearts expressed in such words as, "Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! When Jehovah bringeth back the captivity of his people, Judah shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad." Again, "Thou shalt arise, and have mercy on Zion; for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come. For thy servants take

pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof. So the heathen shall fear the name of Jehovah, and ALL the kings of the earth thy glory. When Jehovah shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory." (Ps. xiv. 7 ; cii. 13-16.) Their hope therefore, is, that Jehovah will come and judge the earth, and establish them in the land of promise. Then they will know that His eyes will be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with Him ; and that He will early destroy all the wicked of the land, and cut off all wicked doers from the city of Jehovah. (Ps. xcvi. 13 ; xcvi. 9 ; ci. 6-8.)

The experiences too of the godly in the Psalms, though they have much in common with pious people at all periods, yet, in some respects, are they peculiarly their own ; for experience and conduct must always be according to known relationships. For instance, their distress is very great because their city Jerusalem has been laid in heaps, and the carved work of their beautiful temple broken. They say, "They break down the carved work thereof with axes and hammers. They have cast fire into thy sanctuary : they have defiled by casting down the dwelling-place of thy name to the ground. (Ps. lxxiv. 6, 7.) Moreover, their prayers are for vengeance upon their enemies. Instead of loving their enemies, praying for them that despitefully use them, and supplicating God to save sinners, they say, "Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen, and render unto our neighbours seven-

fold into their bosom their reproach." And again, "Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones." (Ps. lxxix. 6, 12; cxxxvii. 9.) All this, however, is consistent, with a dispensation of law and righteousness, and a people having an earthly calling, blessings, and hope. But how different from the injunctions of an apostle—"If thine enemy hunger, feed him, if he thirst, give him drink. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." How unlike the perfect One, who prayed for His murderers, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Happy those who can now say, "Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body and fashion it like unto his glorious body." (Rom. xii. 20, 21; Luke xxiii. 34; Phil. iii. 20, 21.)

We cannot be too often reminded that it is the Holy Ghost alone who guides into all truth; so that we need His operation to be taught rightly any portion of God's word. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." It is only by the Holy Ghost, that we discern, receive, know, or give forth to others, spiritual things. (1 Cor. ii.) Thus, though born of God, and for ever blessed in Christ, we are in constant dependence on the Spirit. We need to watch, lest we take up, and traffick in, divine truth, by mere natural intellect.

CORRESPONDENCE.

36. S., "Scarborough." Thanks for your communication. We believe, that in the study of scripture, it is of the utmost importance to have a clear thought of the leading object of the Spirit in each book.

37. "A. L.," Ashwell Thorpe. We scarcely understand how saints can be really gathered together in the Lord's name on the first day of the week to remember Him, and to shew forth His death, and not be found together on other occasions for prayer. We read of the early Christians, immediately after the descent of the Holy Ghost, that "they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and in fellowship, and in *breaking of bread*, and in *prayers*." (Acts ii. 32.) The promise of blessing following united prayer is even to two or three who are gathered in Christ's name. (Matt. xviii. 19, 20.) In these last days, we should certainly seek to strengthen the things which remain. If only two were to come together with purpose of heart, they might expect blessed results from united, earnest, persevering, and believing prayer. It is a most precious privilege to be set by divine grace in the exercise of prayer and supplication for others. It is easy in these days to call a meeting a prayer-meeting, but without watchfulness and spirituality, it may quickly sink into a routine of cold formality and deadness, and thus be repulsive, instead of being attractive to those who really love our Lord Jesus. Simple, child-like pouring out of heart to God our Father in the Spirit, according to His word, in direct and definite supplication, with earnestness and faith, should characterise every meeting for prayer, whether few or many

are present. Where this is the case, we believe there is no lack of encouragement and blessing. On the other hand, nothing, perhaps, is more withering to the soul than a cold, heartless, point-less prayer-meeting.

We believe there is a mistake in the minds of some who regard prayer as a gift. We sometimes hear that "Mr. So-and-so is very *gifted* in prayer." We know what they mean, but do not agree with their use of the word "gift," for among all the various "gifts" mentioned in the Epistles prayer is not named. Some have tried to excuse their silence by supposing they have not the gift of prayer. We judge all this to be a mistake. We hold that a prayer-meeting will never be fervent and real, if personal and family piety are neglected. If a brother seldom prays in secret, and rarely in his family, is it to be wondered at that he never opens his mouth in prayer at a public meeting? But, if he be a man of closet prayer, and honours the Lord in his family by habitually having them together to read the scriptures to them, and pray for them, it seems to such simple enough to pour out their hearts with others in fellowship and prayer in the prayer-meeting. If brethren were more in secret with God, we believe the exception would be that a brother is silent in the meeting for prayer. May God graciously revive souls, and work by His Spirit and truth more personal and family piety, so that the prayer-meetings may be more real and earnest, and therefore much more abundant in answers! Let us never forget the Saviour's words, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." (John xv. 7.)

With regard to the Lord's table, it is very especially the place of thanksgiving and worship. "The cup of blessing which *we bless*." The great object the Holy Spirit has in thus gathering the members of the body of Christ together, is to remember Him, who said, "Do this in remembrance of me." The Lord's death then is the great theme—"we shew the Lord's death." Reading and explaining scripture is not the purpose for which we are gathered on this occasion, though, after the supper is ended, a word of ministry bearing on the character of the meeting may be according to the leading of the Holy Ghost. About this we need to look to the Lord, and wait on Him.

38. "A. G." The account of Mrs. B.'s conversion is most interesting, but scarcely suitable for publication, especially in the form in which it has reached us. Surely God is encouraging you in your labour of love. May He strengthen and bless you!

39. "Seaton Carew." As in every other matter, we need to wait on the Lord for guidance in the distribution of what He may place in our hands. In one case, this word may guide us, "Give to him that asketh thee." In another case, 2 Thessalonians iii. 10, may be used in divine guidance. Let us remember the words of the apostle, yea, of the Lord Jesus, how He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts xx. 35.) It is pleasing to the Lord to give to him that needeth.

40. "S. A. K.," Rochdale. To a believer now, Gilgal is represented in Colossians iii. 1-5. Wilderness experience does not roll away the reproach of Egypt. We must cross the Jordan before we can possibly reach Gilgal. It is quite different even from the song of redemption in Exodus xv.,

though their faith looked right forward into the land. There is no power to mortify the members until we are to faith not only brought *out*, but also brought *in*. Precious indeed is the sprinkled blood shed *for* us. But in the Jordan we go down into death *with* Him: and are risen with Christ, and are in the land; that is in the heavenlies. There the twelve stones of the tribes are placed. We must encamp there. And now if thus dead with Christ: and thus risen with Christ, encamped with Him in the heavenlies, then mortify your members, put death upon your lusts. "And the Lord said . . . This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you." Once we were miserable captives of Satan and of sin: and wilderness experiences did not remove Egypt's reproaches. But now, encamped in the heavenlies, the spots of Egypt, and Meribahs of the wilderness, He, our Jehovah Jesus, has rolled away by His death.

41. "G. M.," Mayfield. A careful examination of 2 Peter iii. will shew that the *falling away* in verse 17 is not the question of the possibility of a child of God being lost. 1 Peter i. 5, John x. 28, and many other scriptures have for ever settled that question. The error of the wicked is this, "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, WHERE IS THE PROMISE OF HIS COMING?" (2 Pet. iii. 4.) This is also the mark of the evil servant in Matthew xxiv. 48. The great danger then in these last days is to fall away from the stedfast hope and expectation of the Lord's return. Is it not sad that many of the children of God have been so led away, as to be saying, Where is the promise of His coming? O Lord, awaken Thy people!



JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH, AND JUSTIFICATION BY WORKS.

“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” (Rom. iii. 18.)

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom. v. 1.)

“Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?” “YE SEE, then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?” (James ii. 21, 24, 25.)

At first sight these verses might seem to some to be contradictory, but there cannot possibly be a shadow of a contradiction in the inspired word of God. God speaking to us in His word is a great reality. Here all is truth. It is evident, however, from the above statements, that it is of all importance rightly to understand the purpose and scope of each part, or book, of holy scripture. We shall find this not only removes all contradiction, but also shews the greatest harmony.

Let us then first take the subject of justification by faith. The blessed declaration of the gospel is this: “Through Jesus is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe

are justified from all things.” This is an absolute fact: that all who believe in Jesus, and believe the forgiveness preached through Him, *are* justified. The Epistle to the Romans also distinctly recognises the believer in this justified state—accounted righteous by faith: and thus having peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Believers *are* justified, and they *have* peace with God. This much is established by the word of God.

Now just as there might be two photographs taken of one house, the front and the back—both equally perfect, yet the contrast, though not contradictory, might be very striking—so there is also in our all-important subject. There is a front view, and a back. There is what God sees, and what man sees—justification by faith, and justification by works. Romans brings out or photographs the former, and James the latter; but both are equally perfect.

What is man when placed in the front, and the full ray of divine light falls upon him as seen of God? Take man in his Gentile condition. What a black negative! (Read Rom. i. 21–32.) What a description: “Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,” &c. This is the true photograph of man in his most polished Gentile

condition. All history bears witness to the terrible truth of every word in this chapter.

Place the Jew in the light. He had had great privileges for fifteen centuries. He had the advantage of the law, the Psalms, and the prophets. Have the full rays of inspired truth and light upon him, will you not get a better negative? No, he says, "In no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable," &c. Examine the photograph in every detail, all proved guilty. This is the truth as to every one—Gentile or Jew, religious or profane—when brought into the powerful light of the presence of God. All are guilty.

Is it not also evident, this being man's condition, that the law cannot possibly mend matters, it can only righteously condemn such wickedness as this: and this is what man is. The law cannot justify wickedness. And yet on this question of righteousness, all that can be said on man's side is, that he is guilty and under judgment. There may be great difference before men. But we are now examining man before God; and the testimony of the word of God is as to this, that "there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Therefore by the deeds of the

law, there shall no flesh be justified in HIS SIGHT : for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

It is not then the righteousness of man, for in HIS SIGHT, in God's sight, he has none. But it is the righteousness of God that is revealed ; and is the great subject of this epistle. "Even the righteousness of God—by faith of Jesus Christ ;" "being justified freely by [not here works of our own but] his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Thus after proving man's guilt, (Jew and Gentile) righteousness is now wholly of God. God hath set forth the propitiation through faith in His blood. Two things God hath done, they are these : He gave His beloved Son to bear our sins, "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification, and believing God, we are accounted righteous," or justified. And this gives perfect peace with God according to all that God is. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

We call attention to the fact that Abraham is cited for proof of both these justifications ; his justification by works is not for a moment denied in its proper place, as we shall see in James. "For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory ; *but not before God.*" "For what saith the scripture ? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Thus it was faith apart from all works that was

counted for righteousness. This is most clear if we turn to the scripture, and examine the passage. "Behold the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir ; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels, shall be thine heir," &c. "And he believed in the Lord ; and he counted it unto him for righteousness." (Gen. xvii.) "He considered not his own body ;" clearly he believed the bare word of the Lord. And this faith : apart from all works here, was counted for righteousness. Is it not exactly so with the believer? If he considers himself, he never can have peace, for there is nothing in sinful self for faith to rest in. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." And then we have David's description of "the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered." Yea, even still more, "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord will not impute sin." Wonderful as this is, it must be so ; God says it. Through the atoning death of Jesus (not by works) God is righteous in forgiving our sins. By that judgment of sin, the root, in the sacrifice of Christ, God is righteous in not imputing it (sin) to us. Nay, having once laid it on Jesus, He would not, could not, be righteous in imputing it to us. What blessed reality all this is : our sins

forgiven : and sin, our very nature, not reckoned. And "it was not written for Abraham's sake alone, that it was imputed to him ; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." There is this difference, however : Abraham believed the promise of God ; we believe the fact. Redemption, His death for us, is an accomplished fact. His resurrection from among the dead for our justification : to be our subsisting righteousness is an accomplished fact. But this matter is entirely of God : not a particle of our works in this case. Justified freely. Justified by faith without the works of the law. This is "to be justified *in his sight*." By the accomplished work of Christ, God is just and the Justifier of him that believeth.

All this love commended to us ; all done for us when enemies, and without strength ; then Christ died for us. Believing God, we are accounted righteous in His sight. Thus justified by faith, we have peace WITH GOD. But this entirely through our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus all works of man are entirely excluded, where it is a question of justification in *His sight*, of peace with God. If this righteousness be of the law, or of works, then Christ died in vain. (Gal. ii. 21.) To turn to the law, or works, for additional righteousness, Christ shall profit you nothing. (Gal. v. 1-4.) Both in

the first eight chapters of the Romans, and the Epistle to the Galatians, these truths are clear, and undeniable.

Equally clear and most important is the truth of justification by works in the Epistle of James. Only mark, the righteousness of God through the accomplished redemption by the blood of Jesus, *forms no part of the subject of James*. The Spirit of God has quite another object here. Christian practice is the theme in James. It is not the question either of being justified *in God's sight*, or having peace with God; though divine sovereignty is fully owned. It is justification by works in man's sight. "*Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.*" "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? *Seest thou* [or thou seest] how faith wrought with his works?" And again, "*Ye see*, then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." Just then, as in Romans, it is the great question of justification in God's sight; and there man has no righteousness, he has black sins against God. Righteousness, then, being wholly of God, through the propitiation of the Lord Jesus Christ. And thus, by faith, without works of law, the believer is accounted righteous in God's sight. So in James, living faith produces fruit in the *sight of men*: and if it does not produce the fruit of obedience to God, and subjection of the will, it is the

mere assent of the mind—such a belief as the devils have. It is simply the quality of the faith proved by the works, in the sight, not of God, but before men.

Suppose we walk over a field in early spring. The farmer says, "This is a field of barley." "Field of barley," you say, "why we do not see a single blade." The farmer may know the quality of the seed sown, but you do not. It may be dead and worthless stuff, or every grain may have the germ of life. You might say to the farmer, "Shew me thy field of barley without a crop!" How could he, if never a blade or ear appeared? Let us come months, and months after—you watch the steady growth. God has watered it with His clouds, and warmed it with His sun: and now *ye see the truth* of what the farmer said before. It is not a field of barley in the complete sense, until the seed sown has fulfilled its growth. Only mark, the farmer never expects the crop without the seed sown first. It is only in spiritual things that man is so blind, as to expect the fruit before the seed.

This is exactly how the Spirit of God, both by Paul and James, refers to Abraham. Where Paul speaks of justification in the sight of God, he takes us to Genesis xv. There Abraham believed the bare word of God; and faith was reckoned to him for righteousness. God spake; Abraham believed. Not a blade of works. But faith is a mighty power in the soul. Years and years passed on.

Ishmael was fourteen years old when Isaac was born. There was blade, and stalk, and the full ripe ear of faith in God, fulfilled in the offering up that very son in whom centred the promises of God. “*Ye see* how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect.” Apart from the obedience of faith, neither the act of Abraham, nor of Rahab, was good works; but nothing could more strikingly demonstrate the power of faith before men.

There is no more contradiction between justification in *the sight of God*, by faith without works; and justification in the sight of man by works of faith, than there would be between the description of a field, when the seed alone was buried in the soil and not a blade to be seen; and a description of that same field, as the fruit of that seed browns in the sun, in the days of harvest. “By their fruits *ye* shall know them.” The inspired Epistle, then, of James, is of immense importance to the child of God who desires not only to be a hearer, but a doer of the word. We are convinced it is especially needed at this time. It was addressed to the twelve tribes scattered abroad. Great numbers professed to be christians, though still attending the synagogue. With many, as in this day, it was a mere dead, empty profession of faith—the lamp without the oil. And hence the importance of pressing practical christian walk.

PLAIN PAPERS ON THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

John xiv. 2, 3.

No. V.

IN this wondrous scripture, we come much nearer the cross. Just about to offer Himself up the sacrifice for our sins, and, knowing that all who heard His parting words of love would soon forsake Him, He said, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." What divine love breathed in these parting words. But what do they mean? It is evident the disciples did not at that time understand them: as even after His resurrection they said, "Lord wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Now every prophecy as to the kingdom of Israel assuredly speaks of it on this earth; the disciples then were in total ignorance of this new announcement. Is it not also a fact, that the real meaning of these precious words of Jesus is not understood by great numbers of professing Christians to this day? Or, if understood once, their meaning was long lost. If disciples then thought they meant

the kingdom of Israel, stranger still, disciples now think they mean death. This is evidently equally a mistake; for the Lord makes the distinction plain enough between death, and His coming again. "Jesus said unto him, he shall not die; but if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" (John xxi. 22, 23.) It is then a great mistake to suppose the Lord meant death in this new announcement.

There are also many now, and those students of prophecy, who still, like the disciples then, understand the coming of the Lord to be the setting up of the kingdom on earth; and it is certain from many scriptures that the kingdom will be set up. (See Dan. vii. 13, 14; Isaiah xi.; lix. 20.) But carefully read these verses in John, for they cannot possibly mean the setting up of the kingdom on earth. Jesus was about to leave the earth. He speaks these words to comfort our hearts during His absence. He presents Himself as the object of faith, even as God is so. Now when He comes to reign He will be the all-glorious object of sight. Let us then sit down before Him. Let us hear Him speak to us in these words. Do we believe Him? Does He not assure us by these words, that however dark and stormy the path of trial may be here below, during His absence, that home with Him is certain. He points to His Father's house, its many mansions. He opens His whole heart to us : and what a heart of love ! "I go to prepare

a place for you." That cannot be Jerusalem below, the future metropolis of the millennial earth. He was there at that moment. And there He died for us. Can the words of Jesus be untrue? He says, "I go to prepare a place for you." After His death, and resurrection, where did He go? "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." (Acts i. 9-11.)

There can be no question where our blessed Lord is gone, to prepare a place for us. It is not the kingdom on earth, but a place in heaven. Is not this quite certain? But then there is something equally certain, for He says it: "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself." What does this mean? Is it not quite new: and altogether unlike every promise that had previously been given? Think of the deep love to us in these words. When speaking of the Jews for the kingdom, He said, "He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds." But to us He says, "I will

come again and receive you unto myself." Why will He come Himself? He tells us "That where I am, there ye may be also." Hear Him speak to the Father about this, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

However little then we may have understood these words of Jesus, they speak of an event of intense interest to His heart. He who has loved us and washed us in His own blood, presents His longing desire to the Father for that moment, when we shall be with Him. That moment when He will come to receive us to Himself. Oh, meditate my soul on this. It is only as we know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that we can possibly enter into the sweetness of this promise. Is it not beyond all human thought; that that blessed Jesus seated at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, should assure our hearts, that He will come and receive us unto Himself? "Surely I come quickly." Shall we doubt Him? Awake, awake, to this blessed hope.

The full blessedness of this hope never seems to have dawned on the church, until the Lord was pleased to give a revelation to His servant to explain it. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend

from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thess. iv.) The reader will notice that this revelation to Paul is in perfect harmony with the precious words of Jesus which we have been considering. But are they not in direct contrast with the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven, with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on the rejecters of the gospel?

The apostle refers to this special event, the coming of the Lord to take His saints, as the very reason why they should not be troubled; as though the day of the Lord were come. "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by *our gathering together unto him*, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand" or was come. These words could have no meaning at all, if it were not for the blessed fact, that before the day of the Lord in fiery judgment He will come, the Lord Himself, and take us away—gathered together unto Him. We are not aware of a single fact in scripture more clearly revealed than this. Yet men will not believe it. We were speaking to a professing Christian the other day—

a man of great influence in a large town—and putting before him this very truth from these scriptures. “I do not believe it,” said he. And though we quoted these plain scriptures still he maintained, as Faber did not say so, he would not believe it. Is not this sad, to reject the sweetest promise of Jesus : the most blessed hope of the word of God ! No doubt many a similar remark was made in the days of Noah, “I will not believe it.”

If a believer in the Lord Jesus, will you, can you say, “I will not believe what He says”?

Mark, it is the word of the Lord to us in this scripture before us. We are distinctly assured that we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent, or go before, them that sleep. Thus the coming of the Lord is a present hope to us. We are taught to expect Him before we die—“We who are alive and remain.” Can those words mean anything else? And, according to the precious promise, “The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven.” And now mark the order, “the dead in Christ shall rise first.” It is a great mistake to confound this with the resurrection of the dead, small and great, for judgment before the great white throne. “The dead in Christ shall rise first.” The rest of the dead will not live again for a thousand years. But, oh, the millions of the redeemed that shall obey the assembling call, shall rise first! “Then we who are alive and remain, shall be caught up together

with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be WITH THE LORD." His prayer, His loving desire, His heart satisfied. With the Lord. Ah then, evermore! In the everlasting bloom of incorruptibility. In the unclouded presence of the glory. "For ever with the Lord." This is everything to Jesus. For this He endured the cross! Is it nothing to us? Shall we say, "I do not believe it"?

Is it not written, "Christ also 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, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing!" Will He not then keep His word? Though all unfaithful prove, yet He is faithful still.

Think not He comes to judge us for our sins then. No, "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation." "We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

Is this the sure hope of our readers? Can you say with certainty that the Father hath made you meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light? Are you delivered from the power of darkness? Are you translated into the kingdom of His dear Son; or the Son of His love? Have

you redemption in Him, through His blood, the forgiveness of sins? Wondrous record of God to every believer. (Col. i. 12-24.) Sure, and only standing of every believer *in* Christ.

Remember the words of Jesus were given to comfort our hearts during His absence until He return to take us to Himself. Suffering is our portion here ; fiery conflict, sore temptation. An evil nature : a powerful though conquered enemy. Winds contrary, billow after billow seems ready to dash the vessel to pieces. But, oh, what a change in that moment, in the twinkling of the eye. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." (1 Cor. xv. 51, 53.) Glory, victory, and He Himself awaits us. Just think, so soon to see that face of radiant love. Oh that tender heart, that could lose sight of His own untold sorrow and agony, close at hand, to comfort us. Rest, rest, my soul on the heart of Jesus, drink in the words of Jesus. Like Rebecca of old, lift up thine eyes, He comes to meet thee. He who sat once weary at Samaria's well, now comes in glory. Yea, He who bowed His soul in atonement, darkness, bruised for thy iniquities—comes to claim thee, ever now His own. Fellow Christians, shall we not wait for the Lord from heaven? "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ." Blessed Lord, may our hearts beat in unison with thine own, waiting for that blessed moment. Amen.

REMARKS ON THE PSALMS.

IV.

QUOTATIONS FROM THE PSALMS.

THE quotations from the Psalms are not without striking significance. The careful way in which the apostles selected parts of Psalms in their inspired epistles, sometimes stopping in the middle of a sentence, because of what followed being suited only to another dispensation, shews how they were guided in distinguishing between that which suited a heavenly people, the church of God, and that which belongs to the earthly people, the Jews. Nor is this mode of treating Old Testament scriptures limited to the Psalms. When our Lord stood up in the synagogue of Nazareth, and read from the prophet Isaiah, He concluded the quotation, and shut the book, in the middle of a sentence. We are told, "When he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor ; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord, and he closed the book and sat down." (Luke iv. 17-20.) Now on turning to Isaiah lxi. 2 it will be found that

our Lord stopped His reading in the middle of a sentence ; and why ? Because He was shewing that the prophet spake of Him, and that he was there setting forth the character of His own present ministry, for he added, " This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." The next words, " and the day of vengeance of our God," stand in contrast with " the acceptable year of the Lord," and depended on the rejection of Messiah. It would, therefore, have been unsuitable to our Lord's object to proceed further with the reading.

We may also refer to the apostle Paul's quotation from Isaiah lii. 7 in Romans x. 15 for another example of a similar dealing with scripture. He says, " As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things !" and here the apostle abruptly ends his quotation. And why ? Because the words that follow, though applicable to the people of Israel when Messiah reigns, are inapplicable to the church on earth during our Lord's absence. When we are received to glory, and Israel is again taken up by God, and restored to their own land, under the blessing of Messiah's rule, then the words of the prophet so carefully omitted will have their full accomplishment, " That saith unto Zion, thy king reigneth." (Isa. lii. 7.)

Nor is such distinction less carefully marked in the Psalms. When Peter, the apostle of the circumcision, is guided by the Spirit to quote from

Psalm xxxiv. to shew how near God is to the righteous, and how much against evil-doers; he writes, "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." Here the apostle stops, before finishing the sentence, because the next words, "to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth" are wholly inapplicable to us, who are called to suffer for Christ's sake, to be rejected with Him, and to lay down our lives for the brethren; whereas a Jew's hope is connected with promised blessing in the earth—long life and prosperity in it; and these are to him the tokens of divine favour. (See Deut. xxviii. 1-13.)

Let us now turn to Psalm cx. Repeatedly in the Epistle to the Hebrews are the words quoted, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek"; but never with the words that follow—"The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath." The reason is obvious. Now Christ is our High Priest, not after the Aaronic order of change, but of the Melchizedek order of unchangeableness; and, though He now carries on for us the Aaronic functions, He is, and ever will be, our blessing Priest. But when Israel shall know Him as their Priest, he will be also reigning in kingly majesty and glory, and putting kings and all enemies under His feet. Then He shall bear "the glory, and

shall sit and rule upon his throne ; and he shall be *a priest upon his throne.*" (Zech. vi. 13.)

Again, we may notice a quotation from Psalm xliv. When, in Romans viii., the apostle writes on the present sufferings of saints, he quotes from the twenty-second verse of that psalm, "As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter," and in using it for *us*, he shews that "in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." But on looking at the context in the psalm xliv. the sufferers there are in deep anxiety calling upon God to save them from their oppressors, and to redeem them out of their hands. They say, "Awake, why sleepest thou, O Jehovah? Arise ! cast us not off for ever. Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction, and our oppression? Arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies' sake." We need not say how unsuitable such language would be for us.

Look at another quotation. In Ephesians iv., speaking of the ascended Christ having given gifts, the apostle quotes from Psalm lxviii., "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive ; thou hast received gifts for men." Here the quotation ends in the middle of a verse. The reason no doubt is, that in Ephesians the Spirit by the apostle speaks of gifts for the edification of the body of Christ coming from the ascended Head, to a people most of whom were Gentiles and not

before in relationship to God. Whereas, when the psalmist speaks of gifts for men from the same triumphant Saviour who "led captivity captive," he adds, "yea, for the rebellious also [though they had been rebellious, they will then be restored Israel], that the Lord God might dwell among them."

WHAT THE PSALMS TEACH.

From the above considerations, is it not plain, whatever may be the instruction to us, that the persons taken up in the Psalms are the people of Israel. And, this being the case, could it be possible that David, as a prophet, could omit to speak of the future godly remnant that will pass through the scene of unparalleled tribulation referred to by other prophets and also by our Lord? And could Israel either in her future sorrow, or subsequent blessing (when it will be said, "Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord,") be contemplated, without Messiah's sufferings and His reign also being set forth? It is not therefore to be wondered at that Messiah is so often brought before us in various ways throughout the Psalms. Some of the lessons then to be gathered from this precious portion of divine truth are,

1. The government of God; for though they be His earthly people, yet His ways in government must always be agreeable to the perfections of His own nature.

2. The sympathy of Christ with His own people.

Even when suffering for their evil ways, His heart could enter into their distress, for “in all their afflictions he was afflicted.” Though personally free, He entered into this in perfect grace.

3. The Psalms present to us also the person of Christ, the Son, Messiah, Son of man; His perfect ways in a life of dependence, communion and faith; His sufferings from man for righteousness’ sake, from God in making atonement for our sins upon the cross, and His deep sorrow of heart on account of His people. His death, resurrection, glorification, priesthood and reign are all brought before us in this marvellous book. Christ must be the subject of the inspired writings, for He said, “The scriptures testify of me.” It is possible to get *truths* apart from Him, but never *the truth*, for He is “the truth.”

4. We find here also deep lessons of practical piety, and the ways of faith, full of instruction to us, and true of the faithful in every dispensation.

5. The way in which God deals with, and restores His people—the path of sorrow, self-judgment, and humiliation into which He leads them, before they are brought into those blessings. His mercy has purposed for them.

No doubt there are many more precious lessons to be gathered from this blessed book, for, like every other part of God’s word, its depth and range cannot but be infinite. May we meditate on it, with unfeigned dependence on the Holy Ghost!

CORRESPONDENCE.

42. "C. T." We are quite at a loss to conceive how the wickedness of the world at the close of the millennium, as described in Revelation xx. 7-9, should be used by any to throw a doubt on other scriptures which so distinctly announce either the coming of the Lord to take His saints, as John xiv. 1-3 ; 1 Thess. iv. 15-17, &c. ; or the saints afterwards coming with Him in judgment to set up His kingdom on earth, as 2 Thess. i. 7-10 ; Col. iii. 4 ; Jude 14, 15 ; Dan. ii. 44 ; vii. 13, 14 ; Zech. xiv. 5 ; and many other scriptures. All shall doubtless be fulfilled but in God's own order. Revelation xx. 7-9 is a sad close of the history of man. But what has been his history from the beginning? In paradise, did he not distrust God, and believe the lie of Satan? And when the Son of God was here, did not even His own nation reject Him? And now when the Holy Ghost is on earth, is He not also rejected? Has not Satan found a dwelling-place in the very professing church of God? And in Revelation xx. we learn that even at the close of the thousand years reign of Christ, the moment the last test is applied to man, when Satan is again let loose, immediately the nations apostatize from God. Oh the infinite grace of God to save any of us. To Him be all praise!

It is exceedingly gracious of our God and Father, after the confusion of so many centuries, to restore the long lost truth of the church: "There is one body." (Eph. iii. 4.) Now, wherever a few saints have been through mercy led to see this, and to own all believers as members of that

one body ; and also, not merely because they are saved, but, as owning that unity, are gathered to the Lord Jesus around *His table* ; if they see, and own this unity, they must see, and own the Lord's table as the place where every subject child of God should be found. It is the Lord's will. We can only know what is wrong by learning what is right.

43. "J. L. P.," Malta. In presenting the Gospel, we shall assuredly go wrong if we depart from the exact truth of scripture. God is wiser than we are. Theology is not the word of God. We are to declare what is written—to "preach the word." It is a snare to try to turn scripture to fit in with a creed ; instead of drawing our thoughts from what God has revealed. We should stand for the divine authority of scripture. We know from the Acts that the early christians went forth "preaching the word." So long as our thoughts are cast in the mould of divine truth, by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, we shall be kept from expressions, which, though something like scripture, are not according to it. In these days, we need to watch lest we take up the Lord's word with mere natural effort, instead of in heartfelt dependence on the Holy Ghost ; and to dread lest we traffic in favourite doctrines, instead of setting forth the infallible testimonies of holy scripture. It is a blessed fact that "God commendeth his love toward *us* [saints], in that, while *we* were yet sinners Christ died for *us*," but it is very different from going up to an ungodly man, and saying, "God loves you." It is, however, blessedly true that "Christ died for all."

44. "V. J.," London. The passover must not be confounded with the Lord's supper. In some

respects, there is a striking similarity, hence we read, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." In other particulars, they are different. After they had been set up, both were observed as commemorative; though the passover was the remembrance of the children of Israel having been sheltered in Egypt from the destroying angel by the blood of the lamb; while in the Lord's supper we remember Him, and shew His death, who shed His blood for many for the remission of sins. Typically the passover was connected with holiness, for they were to put all leaven (type of evil) out of their houses, and afterwards, day by day, feed on pure or unleavened bread. The Lord's supper, too, must be observed with holiness. "Old leaven" must have no place there. It must be kept "with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (1 Cor. v. 6-8.) Both, too, are feasts. The passover is called in scripture one of "the feasts of Jehovah," to be observed by the children of Israel; which we know was done not only in Egypt, but also in the wilderness, and in the land. The Lord's supper is especially the time of thanksgiving and praise; as not only do we feed on Christ as the One who was sacrificed for us, but we give thanks and bless—"the cup of blessing which we bless." We praise for eternal redemption, for title to eternal glory. Hence, referring to the Lord's supper, we are instructed as to how we should "keep the feast."

Our Lord, whom it became to fulfil all righteousness, kept the passover, and, immediately after that, established His own supper. (See Luke xii. 11-20.) Here He Himself gave thanks, and referred to the eternal efficacy of His own blood as giving "*remission of sins.*" It is the place of highest privilege on earth, and should be associated

with practical holiness. A wicked person must not be there. Therefore, when the saints at Corinth had a person taking the supper of the Lord with them, who was guilty of sin, the apostle refers to the typical instruction of the passover and says, "Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person." (1 Cor. v. 8, 13.)

45. "J. W." What God says must be true. He says, "All that believe are justified from all things." (Acts xiii. 39.) I do believe God's testimony concerning His Son, therefore I must be justified from all things. The Lord Jesus says, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (John v. 24.) I do hear His word. I do believe God the Father that sent Him. Therefore I must have everlasting life. He says so.

If you paid a poor neighbour's debts, and shewed him the receipt; and if you declared unto him, those debts could never be reckoned to him again, you would think it strange, if he said, "Ah, that is all very nice, but nobody can ever know in this world whether you speak truth." You would say, "What, after I have done this, do you mean to say J. W. is a liar?" For this is just as men treat God. After He has given His Son to die for our sins, after He proclaims to us forgiveness of all sins through Him, after He has raised up Christ from the dead, who made propitiation for our sins—the everlasting receipt, to all who believe—after God assures all believers that they have redemption through the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness

of sins ; shall we say after this, " Ah, it is all very fine, no doubt God says so ; but nobody in this world knows whether He speaks truth or not ? " This is really so. " He that believeth not God hath made him a liar ; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. " (1 John v. 10-13.) Now were not all these things written that we may KNOW " that we have eternal life ? "

The seed must first be sown in the field before the fruit. Cultivate a briar as we will, it is a briar still, there must be the new nature of the rose engrafted. So man must be born wholly anew. A new nature will bring forth its own fruit, and to us the fruit is the only proof of the new nature. There must be Christ, or all is briar and thorn. Christ first, Christ last, " CHRIST IS ALL. " And where Christ *is* all, then " Christ *in* all. " Christ our righteousness before God *is* all. Christ *in* us, by His Spirit, is all power for righteousness before men. It is the blessed privilege of every Christian to say Colossians i. 12-14. How few know this ! How few believe it !

46. " W. H. R.," Buntingford. The four and twenty elders represent, not only the church, but the redeemed : all that are Christ's at His coming. Thus the type of the four and twenty courses of priesthood, is fulfilled. It is intelligent worship, that specially marks them as redeemed. The church ceases to be seen on earth at the end of Revelation iii. ; and the elders cease to be seen in heaven, when the marriage of the Lamb takes place.

1 Corinthians xv. 23, does not speak of the children of either believers, or unbelievers ; but of the resurrection of those that are Christ's, at His coming. We judge it is wise not to go beyond what is revealed in the word of God.

DIVINE LOVE.

“God is love.” (1 John iv. 16.)

GOD not only loves, but He is *love*—“God is love.” His nature is love. He is also *light*. Nothing can be hid from Him. Everything is made manifest, and detected, in His presence. “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.” He is thus revealed to us as “light” and “love.”

These are truths divinely given for our faith. He is not only love, but He is also light. But while His nature is thus revealed, all His actings are according to the perfection of His nature. God is as far beyond our grasp, as infinite is higher than finite. He is “glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders.” We are taught that He is “righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works,” and that “the righteous Jehovah loveth righteousness.” (Ps. xi. 7.)

Few scriptures have been more used by the enemies of the truth to falsify the attributes of the living and true God, and to deceive souls, than these three precious words “God is love.” The semi-infidel’s boast is that “God so loves his creature man, that he will save everyone, and condemn no one;” a pleasant kind of dream to encourage men in the indulgence of their lusts, and to launch out in the pleasures of sin; a doctrine

which undermines the truth of God's righteousness, and grants a licence for rebellion against Him.

Doubtless, man has always been the object of God's special blessing and care. From the first, Wisdom's delights were with the sons of men. In Eden's brief period of innocence, every created thing seems to have been conducive to man's happiness. That mighty luminary, the sun, brightly shed his cheering rays on all the scene by day, while the silvery moon was ready to chase away the darkness of the night. Everything around was peace and blessing; the starry heavens above, the beauteous stainless earth yielding its varied and abundant fruits, with crystal rivers flowing at his feet, while all living creatures were in subjection to him, and whatever name he gave them that was the name thereof. Thus man was loved, and blessed. Everything in Eden spoke not only of the wisdom and power of God, but also of His love and beneficence toward His creature man. But man fell by disobedience: by his sin, the whole scene became stamped with death. From that time, a terrible blight has rested on it all. If God had not noticed man's sin, where would have been His righteousness? And, if He had justly banished man from His presence for ever for his sin, where would have been His love? But He is, as the prophet declares, "A just God, and a Saviour." Sin then must be judged, and

the sinner must be cleansed, in order to be happy in God's presence, for "grace reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Again, with reference to this scripture "God is love," the proud voice of infidelity is lifted high. With his puny powers, he levels his enmity against the whole truth of the word of inspiration, by flatly asserting that "if there be a God, He is not love." For, says he, "Is not the world abounding with misery, poverty, sickness, tears, anguish, heart-rendings and death? And if there be a God, and He be love, would He not alter the whole course of these things, and make people happy in the world, instead of being miserable?" But stop, O vain man, whose breath is in thy nostrils! You seem not to know that all these sorrows were not when God finished the work of creation, but were brought in by man through sinning against his Maker. "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.) Besides, you appear to forget that much misery has been added by past and present generations, through waste, and abuse of health and strength, so that sorrow, disease, and premature old age and decay are the result. Moreover, when man sinned and God drove out the man, it was not His wise purpose to mend what man had spoiled, but to bring in, by divine power and love, a higher and a

better order of blessing. It was not God's mind merely to bless man temporally, as you vainly imagine God ought to have done ; but He has chosen rather to bring in redemption, to bless man spiritually, and eternally, on new creation ground, and in everlasting relationship with Himself. This will be a never ending testimony to the fact that " God is love."

But further. These blessings, and these new relationships are known now, and enjoyed by God's children ; so that the soul that is born of God, that knows forgiveness of sins, and has received the Holy Ghost, has more enjoyment of God, and more happiness on earth, than even Adam in innocence knew, or the most prosperous citizen of the world ever contemplated as possible. Nor is it to be forgotten, that, though men blaspheme God, refuse the Gospel, will not bow to Jesus His Son the only Saviour, and reject the Holy Ghost's ministry on earth, yet, because " God is love," He bestows in a vast variety of ways ten thousand things to ameliorate their present misery. He makes us prove His faithfulness in the unfailing seed time and harvest, day and night, summer and winter, and His kindness in making His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sending rain on the just and the unjust.

There are others who think themselves quite competent to judge God and to dictate to Him, instead of allowing His word to judge them. They

consider because they have lost their property, lost their health, lost their friends, that it cannot be true that "God is love." But such are ignorant of there being two distinct lines on which God is pleased to act—grace, and government—which are found running all through the scriptures. God's grace is manifested in redemption, and brings the soul, on believing on Jesus the Lord, into peace, and conscious relationship with God. In divine sovereignty, He is now pleased so to permit the power of evil, and so to scatter His blessings, that one person has health and strength, another sickness and weakness, one is rich and another is pinched with poverty, one may have five talents and another two; but each is accountable only for what he has received. Besides, in God's governmental dealings, He is pleased to act in righteous ways, so that "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, and he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (Gal. vi. 8.) With many even of the Lord's most devoted servants it seems best that they should have reverses, and sometimes sorrow upon sorrow, wave after wave, in order to teach them experimentally very precious lessons which could not otherwise be learnt, and for which afterwards they have to praise God.

Besides, whoever had such a path of suffering and reverses as the Son of God Himself? which, at

one time, led His loved and loving forerunner to begin to doubt Him; the cities in which He had preached repented not, the people entirely misunderstood Him; but in this time of sorrow and rejection, He lifted His eyes to heaven and found rest in the Father's sovereignty and love. "At that time, Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." (Matt. xi. 25, 26.) Happy are those who, in time of inexplicable reverse and trial, are able thus to repose on divine sovereignty, in fullest confidence that "God is love!"

One of the commonest abuses of the precious revelation that "God is love" is, that because "God is love," therefore the punishment of the wicked cannot be eternal. This form of infidelity has made considerable progress of late years, and is paving the way for throwing off the authority of divine revelation entirely, and for bringing in the time when men will be given up to what is false. But now they are willingly ignorant that God is "just" in His ways, as well as "love" as to His nature; so that, His love being rejected, He cannot forego His just judgment of sin. If God, in judging sin on the cross, spared not His own Son, but forsook Him until a just atonement had been made, how can He but forsake the sinner

for ever, because he never can atone for his sins? But about "eternal punishment" those have no doubt who believe the scriptures, for God has spoken, and we know that "the scripture cannot be broken." Let us quietly meditate on a few portions of divine truth on this most solemn subject, and may the Holy Spirit graciously teach us.

First, let us not fail to see that it is plainly stated of the wicked, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." (Matt. xxv. 46.) "I know it," says the sceptic, "but everlasting does not mean everlasting." Well, let us see. Do the words of scripture, "everlasting life," "eternal Spirit," "eternal glory," "the King eternal the only wise God," mean eternal, or only for a certain time? If so, then you assert that God is not eternal. And if He is eternal, and glory eternal, then why question the awful realities of "everlasting punishment," "eternal fire," and "eternal damnation?" For are not "everlasting" and "eternal" the same words in the original scripture? Besides, with this all scripture agrees, so that while we are instructed on the one hand, that "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life," we are also told that "he that believeth not the Son, [or is not subject to the Son], shall not see life," [observe, shall not see life] but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John iii. 36.) Think of those two positive declarations of scripture, "shall not see

life," and "the wrath of God abideth on him." Can we conceive a soul to be so hardened, and so dark, as to rush headlong into eternity in the face of such plain statements, vainly imagining that there is no eternal punishment? (See Matt. xxv. 46; John iii. 36; 1 John i. 2; Heb. ix. 14; 1 Pet. v. 10; Rom. xvi. 26; Jude 7; Mark iii. 29; 1 Tim. i. 17.) It is perfectly clear that nothing could righteously satisfy the judgment of God for sin but that which is eternal in its character; and it is nowhere said in scripture that after so much suffering or pain there would be remission of sins, for atonement could only be by the laying down of the life of the Son of God, under the righteous judgment of God for sin. It is therefore said, "Without the shedding of blood is no remission." Blessed be God, that, in infinite love to us, the blood of Jesus Christ His Son, has been shed, and that it cleanseth all who believe in His name from all sin. (Acts x. 43.) But for those who reject His precious blood as their alone ground of peace with God, how is it possible they can escape the abiding wrath of God? Can there be another shedding of blood for them when in the lake of fire? Impossible; for scripture says, "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and of fiery indignation." (Heb. x. 26-27.)

Nor is the eternal and infinite character of the Person of the Son, who offered Himself as our sacrifice for sins of little moment in this matter ;

for if we had only needed salvation from what was **not** eternal, we should not have needed such a **Person** to die for us. But we are assured that no one less than He who was God and Man in one Person could have been either a fit substitute for us, or able to meet righteously God's infinite condemnation of sin, so as to fully satisfy God, and perfectly save us. It is the infinite glory of the Person, and also the eternal efficacy of His finished work, as well as the divine authority of scripture, which are really set aside by those who deny eternal punishment. (See Rom. viii. 3; Heb. ix, 14; x. 12, 14.)

“The cross, its burden, O how great
No *strength* but His *could* bear its weight,
No *love* but His *would* undertake
To bear it for the sinner's sake.”

As to man, one thing is certain that death is not ceasing to exist, for we are told that “after death is judgment.” (Heb. ix. 27.) Nor is being in the lake of fire ceasing to exist, for not only will those be known to be there a thousand years after being put there, but those who have their part in it, are spoken of in the eternal state as contemporaneous with those who are saved and inherit all things. (See Rev. xx. 10; xxi. 1-8.) These are solemn scriptures for creatures to consider, especially when God Himself tells us that an “eternal” state characterises that which we see not—“the things which are not seen are eternal.” (2 Cor. iv. 18.)

The fact is that infidelity is for the most part

negative. It suits man's vanity to think himself competent to judge divine things, and it gives him importance among his fellow men when he can arrive at conclusions by reasoning powers. But rationalism is not faith, any more than ritualism. The refined scepticism of to-day gives you nothing, but takes its pleasure in questioning, opposing and endeavouring to undermine what God has revealed. In life and health it is pleasant enough to vain men to be honoured and flattered by admiring mortals; but *in death*, how is it then? You will find that most free-thinkers are troubled and distressed then. When eternity is found to be stretched out immediately before them, and all their vital energies are rapidly sinking, ah! then they bitterly find out the unsoundness of their views, and sometimes to their amazement and confusion discover that they have no support, no comfort, no peace, no rest. Some have exclaimed, "*it is like taking a leap in the dark*," others have sorrowfully said, "*I have sold my soul for a straw*;" while others in bitter hopelessness have declared with their dying breath, "*lost, lost!*" A rich lady in the grasp of death cried, "*Run for the minister*," and when he came she said, "*I'd give all I'm worth to live until I'm prepared to die*;" but it was too late—ere the preparation was made, the soul had gone. How many have had a similar death-bed; how many more with almost the last gasp have uttered the despondent cry, "*Too late, too late!*"

SHARP KNIVES OF GILGAL.

JOSHUA IV., V.

THERE is a wonderful lesson in Israel's being *out* of Jordan, and encamped *in* Gilgal. "And the people came out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border." (Chap. iv. 19.) In one sense this was redemption completed. The blood of the Lamb had been shed and sprinkled on the door post: and God had brought them through the Red sea *out of* Egypt, had delivered them from the power of the enemy. At the Jordan there was no bloodshedding sacrifice. Taking that river as a type of death, they had gone down into death with the ark; and they were now out of death with the ark. They do not pass the Jordan merely to taste the fruits of Canaan, the type of heaven, but they *encamp* there. This is the lesson we are so slow to learn. "Those stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua PITCH in Gilgal." How calmly the tribes could watch the returning river of death roll on behind them. They were encamped in the land.

Such is the place of the whole church of God. All do not know it, and few enjoy it. The precious blood of the Lamb of God has been shed. The believer has been brought by the Spirit of God to rest on that blood; as Israel did in Egypt. His

sins are all blotted out, to be seen no more, like the Egyptians dead on the sea shore. The whole church can say, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." (Eph. i. 7.) But this is not all. We are not only delivered from the power and guilt of sin and Satan, but reckoned dead *with* Christ, and risen with him. (Rom. vi. ; Col. ii. ; iii.) What a completeness ! "And ye are complete in him." (Col. ii. 10.) Having crossed the Jordan, they were in the inheritance. Canaan was their camping ground.

There are two things true of the believer, of the whole church of God. As the people of Israel were out of the Jordan and encamped in Canaan, so we "who were dead in sins, God hath quickened together with Christ [by grace ye are saved], and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Eph. ii. 5, 6.) We are thus in the heavenlies, and, oh, the riches of divine grace, we are made meet to be there. "Giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." We would ask the reader then, Is heaven your encamping ground? Is heaven now your settled home? Not merely tasting the fruits of it, the grapes of Eshcol ; the ark, that is Christ, is no longer in the Jordan of death. All the redeemed have passed through with Him. Now we can calmly look back at the river of death. Oh how the billows went over His soul.

“Clean passed over.” For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan before you, until ye were passed over. Thus were the children of Israel to be taught by the memorial stones of Gilgal. Cannot we then calmly sit in the heavenlies, as we break the memorial loaf, and thus look back on the river of death and judgment? God has brought us into our heavenly Canaan. Where is your camping ground—Egypt, wilderness, or Canaan? What a place; encamped in the land! “What mean these stones?” Were the fathers to say, By these we hope the Lord will bring us through Jordan into Canaan? This would have been as great folly as to say, What mean ye by this bread and wine? By this we hope to be made fit for heaven: the great folly of the sacramental system. No! what mean this bread and wine? These shew forth that death, yes, the death of Jesus *for* us; that death also through which we have passed clean over. Dead with Christ, and risen with Christ. When Israel encamped in the land, all the kings of the Canaanites trembled. The church has only power over the enemy, as she encamps in the heavenlies. It is so with the individual believer. What grace to be there, and made meet! Israel encamped in Gilgal.

“AT THAT TIME,” yes, “at that time the Lord said unto Joshua, Make thee *sharp knives*.” Those born in the wilderness had not been circumcised. The circumcised generation had died out. Is it so

now, as the fathers are departing, has a generation come in that have not been practically circumcised? Wilderness experience rolls not away the reproach of Egypt. We must first encamp at Gilgal in the land. Dead and risen; the Jordan passed clean over. What grace that has made us one with that risen Man in heavenly glory. Encamped there; the reproach of Egypt is for ever gone. But this is the very time and place for sharp knives. Many like old corn of the land far better than sharp knives. But sharp knives must be first in the land. Only do not mistake, we must *encamp*, before the sore work of sharp knives. Young brethren in Christ, it is giddy work if you go on to the old corn of heavenly truth without the sharp knives. Does not this account for much conceit, and despising of others? Have we really judged the flesh? Have our hearts been sore with self-abhorrence? We do not mean on account of wilderness sorrows; but as risen with Christ, encamped in Him in the heavenlies: has sin, vile self, been seen and hated, as He sees and abhors it? Now you know whether you are seeking to take possession with a heart filled with vain conceit, or accepting this place of wondrous grace, in deep self-circumcising judgment of the flesh! Sharp knives must be used, or there will be a great amount of vain profession, that will be blown to the winds.

Let us not forget the sharp knives of Gilgal:

self-judgment. It is also worthy of note that if we would go forth in service and victory, it must ever be from the place of sharp knives. Joshua is found in the camp at Gilgal. "So Joshua *ascended from Gilgal*" as he went forth to victory. (Chap. x. 7.) And after all those scenes of service he returns "and all Israel with him to Gilgal." (Ver. 43.) Self must be judged. The place of sharp knives is the place of strength. It is a wondrous place this Gilgal, in the land, clean over Jordan, encamped, self utterly judged, rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in the flesh. Now we ask, Is this the place where we encamp? Is this our starting-point in all service? Is it the place to which we return and abide?

We may depart from this place of self-judgment, keeping the passover, and with lowliness, eating of the old corn of the land. When Israel departed from Gilgal they came to Bochim. (Judges ii.) This was the beginning of their departure and apostasy. Thus again we find declension. Joshua died, "and also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel." "And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers." Was it not so when the apostles and that generation had fallen asleep! What utter departure before the close of the first century! Was it not so when the generation of the Reformers departed? Oh, you who are filling

up the places of many ready to depart, if the Lord tarry a little longer, beware of leaving Gilgal. Do not forget the sharp knives of practical circumcision. It may seem a light thing to depart from Gilgal and the Lord, but to depart from Gilgal, the place of self-judgment, is to arrive at Bochim, the place of weeping and shame. Read this chapter (Judges ii.), "And an angel or messenger of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim." Yes, we can only be messengers of the Lord to His children in sorrow and weeping, as we abide at Gilgal; the starting-place of all true service.

If we now turn to the epistles, we shall see how striking is the analogy. In Ephesians i. and ii. we have crossed the Jordan, and are in the heavenlies in Christ. In Colossians, we are circumcised with the circumcision of Christ, dead with Him, buried with Him, risen with Him. (Chaps. ii. 11-13, 20; iii. 1.) But though to faith we are encamped in the heavenlies in Christ: yet as to fact, our bodies are on the earth. And hence the need of the sharp knives. Mortify your members; and put off all these. (Col. iii. 5, 7-17.) Possession of the land, and sharp knives seemed a contradiction: it is so here. Made meet for the inheritance. (Chap. i. 12.) Complete in Him. (Chap. ii. 10.) Dead with Christ. Risen with Christ. Encamped; and certain to come with Him. "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

Yet this is the very place for sharp knives of Gilgal. "Mortify therefore." The old man must have no quarter. He is utterly put off. "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Having put off the old man by the circumcision of Christ; now put off, mortify all that belongs to him. And being risen with Christ, having put on the new man, now put on all that belongs to Him. (Read Col. iii. 12, 13.)

"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful." What words are these to those who have crossed the Jordan! *Fighting they had*, indeed Canaan was the place of conflict: and we also though not wrestling with flesh and blood as they: yet we truly need the whole armour of God, for the heavenlies at present is our fighting ground. (See Eph. vi. 11-18.) But as all Israel in this figure were clean passed over Jordan, so this Epistle to the Colossians describes the whole church of God. It is not that some believers are dead and risen with Christ. No! see the whole church encamped in the heavenlies, death and judgment, as well as sins, sin, guilt and shame all behind. Why are we so slow to take possession?

Oh, those hateful spots, all the reproach of what we are as to the flesh, and all we ever were: all rolled away at the other side of the Jordan. Now seeing the whole church of God thus risen with Christ; let the peace of God rule in your hearts; not merely so, not only my heart is to be the throne of God, all subdued in perfect peace: the peace of God; but we are all called to this very peace in one body. Now look at the nation of Israel on the plains of Gilgal, and then look at all believers dead and risen with Christ, baptised by the Holy Ghost into one body, and in one body called to the rule of the peace of God.

Beloved reader, where are you? In the slavery of Egypt, or brought barely to take shelter from judgment by faith in the blood of the Lamb? Have you passed the Red sea: all your sins gone, to be remembered no more; separated from Egypt by the sea of death? Brought out. Are you quite sure you are *out*; separated from this world by the death of Christ? As the redeemed of the Lord are you traversing the wilderness longing for heaven? or have you passed clean over Jordan, and *now in* the land? Are you dead and risen with Christ, and thus have you entered *in*? Encamped *in the land*. There abide. Possession of the heavenlies in Christ gives power to faith for self-judgment; and self-judgment is the starting-point of all real service. The Lord write these lessons on our hearts.



THE TRIAL OF POVERTY, AND OF RICHES.

PROVERBS xxx. 8, 9.

“GIVE me neither poverty nor riches,” was a wise request, and “Be content with such things as ye have,” is often a needed injunction; for we are not always mindful that He hath said, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” None perhaps know the trials connected with poverty or riches, but those who are actually brought into such circumstances. But many of the Lord’s people have been tried by one or the other. Poverty is easily understood to be a trial. When it really comes, its pinch is keenly felt. To be rich is more congenial to human selfishness, and often gives the owner a place of honour and distinction among men; so that it is only realised to be a trial by those whose consciences are exercised before the Lord.

In *poverty*, if God be not the refuge and strength, if He be not trusted for sustainment and deliverance, the heart soon becomes despondent, or busy to invent contrivances, sometimes not very honourable, to force a way of escape. Efforts of this kind, under such circumstances, are by no means uncommon, and the painful nature of the trial is often pleaded in justification of unbelieving ways. But worldly wisdom is not the wisdom that cometh down from above; nor is carnal stratagem after

the pattern of the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ. The contrivances of unbelief only cripple faith, and, sooner or later, bring dishonour on the name of the Lord ; such actings also spoil the Christian's testimony for the Lord, and embitter his path for the remainder of his wilderness journey. A sense of the grace of God in not having spared His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, often wakes up faith, and puts unbelief to shame. But how many have dishonoured the Lord in time of poverty !

In *earthly prosperity*, if God be not hearkened to and obeyed, some may have painfully to learn that "riches take to themselves wings and fly away ;" or their path may be beset with humblings, disappointment, spiritual leanness, and regrets, with faith weakened, and hope sadly dimmed.

That soul alone is happy who knows he is the Lord's, and can truly say, "He loved me, and gave himself for me." Assured by the word of God that he is accepted in the Beloved, and loved by the Father as He loves the Son, he enters into the truth that he is kept here only to do His will. To such every question resolves itself in this, What is the Lord's will ? and a dependent, obedient heart lives not to itself, but to Him who died and rose again for us. Perhaps there is no greater trial to which a child of God can be exposed than the rapid pouring in of wealth. Few have been able to bear it. Many have fallen grievously by it. Some

have become so intoxicated by it, as to plunge themselves into foolish and pernicious occupations. Others have been drawn back again into the world, who seemed for a while to have run well in ways of separation from it; while some who began this new responsibility as God's stewards, have grown up to be patrons, and even to seek a place of honour among men by it. In fact, whatever be our circumstances, all God's people have painfully to learn that in us, that is in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing, and that we cannot bring forth fruit except we are abiding in our Lord Jesus. Nothing else can possibly preserve us in the path that glorifies God. Whether we have poverty or riches, each believer has alike to cry, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe." To be happy in the Lord day by day, in the lowly path of dependence and obedience, is of the highest importance; for nothing can be ministered by us for His glory without this. We do well to remember His precious words, "Abide in me . . . for without me, ye can do nothing." (John xv. 4, 5.)

How many poor saints have been sweetly sustained and comforted by remembering that Jesus was poor! When He went about from place to place ministering the glad-tidings of the kingdom, are we not told that "certain women ministered unto him of their substance?" (Luke viii. 2, 3.) And, when He died for us on the cross, what earthly possessions did He leave? All we read is,

that they parted His garments among them, and for His vesture they did cast lots.

Some years ago a christian friend was lovingly visiting a cobbler who was very poor, and residing in the West of England. An earnest servant of the Lord accompanied him, who sometimes gave words of hearty counsel in the form of lines of poetry. They both sought to comfort the tried cobbler in his poverty: but, before taking leave of him, one said, "I will give you, dear brother, a couple of lines:"

"When cruse and barrel both are dry,
We then will trust in God most high."

After pausing a moment, the other said, "Finish it; you have not completed your words of counsel." But he replied, "I have nothing more to say," and intimated that he wished to convey to the poor cobbler, that, like Elijah, he should put his trust in God. Then said the other, I would like to add,

"When cruse and barrel both are full,
To God we'll consecrate the whole."

These surely are words in season for rich as well as for poor. To trust in time of need, and to yield ourselves and all He entrusts us with, to Himself, in time of abundance, are alike the path of faith. Happy those who under all circumstances, are so before the Lord, and constrained by His love, as to be whole-hearted for Him at all times, and under all circumstances!

REMARKS ON THE PSALMS.

V.

As a suffering remnant of godly Israelites is frequently brought before us in the Psalms, it may be well now to point out briefly some of the distinctions which scripture makes in dispensations. Without some knowledge of dispensational truth, it cannot be understood what are the characteristics of the remnant, and where, in the order of events, their future history will come in.

DISPENSATIONS.

1. In Adam, before he fell, we behold man in *innocence*. (Gen. ii.)

2. After sin came in, we see men from Adam to Moses, going on as *having a conscience*, and responsible to God for what he saw of His ways in creation. During this period man turned god-maker, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator. (Rom. i. 19-32.)

3. From Moses to Christ, we see men *under law*; and *they* fell into such gross idolatry, that God gave *them* into captivity to *their* enemies. (Ex. xxiv. 3-8; John i. 17.)

4. From the death and resurrection of Christ, and the descent of the Holy Ghost to the Lord's coming, God is calling out and forming *the church*—the body of Christ; and preaching grace to sinners—to every creature under heaven. His ancient people being for the most part in hardness

of heart, scattered because of their sins—Israel outcast, and Judah dispersed. (Eph. ii. 15–22 ; iv. 10–13 ; Matt. xvi. 15 ; Rom. xi. 25.)

5. Between the rapture of the saints at our Lord's coming, and the Lord's appearing with His saints, the Spirit of God will move the hearts and consciences of a *remnant of Jews*; for though many Jews will be cut off in the time of the great tribulation, a remnant will be spared, brought through this time of "Jacob's trouble," and introduced into their promised blessing in the land spoken of by the prophets. It is of these godly ones that the Psalms so often speak. (Matt. xxiv. 21, 22 ; Zech. xiii. 9 ; Dan. xii. 1.)

6. At our Lord's appearing in glory, He will bring in the *millennial period of blessing*, by judging the living, and putting all enemies under His feet; and, at the close of the thousand years, He will execute the judgment of the wicked dead at "the great white throne." (Is. xi. ; Rev. xx.)

7. Everything now having been subdued by Jesus the Son of Man, it will be followed by "a *new heaven, and a new earth*," in which righteousness will dwell—the eternal state. (Rev. xxi. 1–8.)

Man was created in a state of innocence; he was "made upright;" after the fall and before law, he was "filled with *all unrighteousness*;" under law, *righteousness was demanded* from man in the way of works; by the gospel, *righteousness is reckoned* by God to man on the principle of faith;

in millennial times, *righteousness will reign*, and, in the eternal state, *righteousness will dwell*.

In thus taking a hasty glance at the various ways in which God has been pleased to try man and to make Himself known, we cannot fail to see, that it has seemed good to Him to shew what His creature man was in a state of *innocence*; what he was as a fallen creature *having a conscience without law*; what he was in responsibility to God as *under law*; what he is now under the ministry of *the gospel of the grace of God* preached by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, while *the church* is being formed; what man will be after Satan has been bound for a thousand years and the personal reign of Christ, before the eternal state. In all these changes as regards man's responsibility, we must remember that God is the same, and that He always acts agreeably with the perfection of His own nature. These various ways of God with man at different periods, are what are generally known by the name of "Dispensations."

Properly speaking, we cannot say that the time of the deep exercises through which a godly remnant of Jews will pass, so often referred to in the Psalms, is a dispensation; it is more of a transition state which comes in between the rapture of the saints and the Lord's being manifested with us in glory. It is rather a preparatory process of deep sifting and of God's governmental dealing with them, before they are brought into their blessing.

CORRESPONDENCE.

47. "X. A. Z." "There is a sin unto death," are the words of divine truth; by which we understand such a character of moral evil as God can only deal with governmentally by visiting the person with death. Some persons are dealt with by sickness, and weakness, but others are removed by death. Hence we read, "For this cause [improper conduct concerning the Lord's Supper] many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." (1 Cor. xi. 30.) The sin of lying unto God by Ananias and Sapphira, was visited by God with death.

With regard to the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost in Matthew xii. 31, 32, our Lord was there replying to the wicked Pharisees, who had charged Him with casting out devils by Satanic power. It shewed the apostate condition of the people thus to blaspheme against, and refuse the Holy Ghost. They rejected God. They would not be forgiven, neither in that age, nor the coming one.

As to your third question on Matthew xvi. 28, we ask, Did not those who after six days, beheld Jesus transfigured before them as in Matthew xvii. 1-5, see a beautiful sample of the coming kingdom? To this, doubtless, our Lord referred when He said, "There be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."

48. "K. P., Aberdeenshire." It is clear that after Egypt has been smitten by Jehovah, He will heal, and bless, according to the word of the prophet, "Whom Jehovah of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inherit-

ance." No wonder then that it is added that, "In that day there shall be an altar to Jehovah in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar in the border thereof to Jehovah: and it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto Jehovah of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they shall cry unto Jehovah because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a saviour and a great One, and he shall deliver them." (Is. xix.) Who this saviour is we are not told; but it is certain that all blessing in store for the nations, as well as for Israel, will be through Abraham's "seed"—Christ. (See Gen. xii. 2, 3; xxii. 18; Gal. iii. 16.)

As the king of the south (Egypt) has yet to play an important part in reference to the Holy Land, perhaps no circumstance more clearly marks the approach of the day of the Lord than its rapid development during the last twenty years.

"How God was in Christ," is better known to faith and by the power of the Holy Ghost, than can be described by human language.

49. "A CONSTANT READER." A little acquaintance with the inspired epistles will be enough to shew what care was manifested in the apostles' days as to receiving into "fellowship." When a christian woman was going from Cenchrea to Rome, the apostle of the Gentiles was led by the Holy Ghost, to write words both commendatory and descriptive of her, in order that the saints at Rome might freely and lovingly receive her. "I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church at Cenchrea; that ye receive her in the Lord as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you; for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also." (Rom. xvi. 1, 2.) This seems to

have been the practice in those days, for allusion is made elsewhere to letters of commendation. (2 Cor. iii. 1.) Moreover, the many exhortations to saints to "love as brethren," "love not the world," to "come out from among them [unbelievers] and be separate;" to "turn away" from those "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof," to "purge" from vessels to dishonour, and such like scriptures, plainly shew what care was taken to be separate from evil-doers. But for this godly care, and desire for the Lord's glory, dependence and spiritual discernment are necessary, as well as walking obediently to the will of God ourselves, for the Lord will be with those who are thus honouring Him.

It is also clear from scripture that the responsibility of *receiving* at the Lord's table, and also of *putting away*, does not rest with any individual, but with the assembly. It is however plain that those already gathered together to the name of the Lord Jesus, in the membership of the one body, must be informed of those who desire fellowship, and have opportunity of considering each case before the Lord, for how otherwise could they in faithfulness to the Lord act as to their being received? Again, as to excluding, the assembly must have proof of the sin and its character, for how otherwise could they put away from among themselves the wicked person? (Rom. xv. 7; 1 Cor. v.)

It is well when saints are truly exercised, both about receiving and excluding, as to pleasing Him who is "holy and true;" but we are persuaded this will not be so, if personal intercourse and communion with our Lord Jesus are neglected.

GRACE AND RESPONSIBILITY.

THE CALL OF REBEKAH—GENESIS XXIV.

THE resurrection of Christ from the dead is a wonderful key to scripture. In Genesis xxii., then, we must first notice the type of the offering up of the Son of God. There the great lesson is taught in the offering up of Isaac, that God would provide Himself a Lamb for a burnt-offering. Isaac had, in figure, been so offered up, and, in figure, received again from the dead. God spared not His own Son. He must be lifted up. He has been lifted up on the cross ; the atoning work is done ; God has received Him from among the dead. As the living Isaac was now with his father in Canaan, so the living Son of God is now with the Father in heaven. It is at this point our lesson begins in chapter xxiv. Sarah was also dead, as Israel is now for the present set aside. The question, then, is this: What is the present thought and purpose of God, during this peculiar period? Christ has been offered up, the sacrifice for sins. God hath raised Him from the dead. Israel, as a nation, and all God's purposes concerning them, set aside for the present. Their wonderful prophetic history yet to be fulfilled. What, then, is God doing now?

In type, this chapter will answer that question. Three persons are brought before us, which illus-

trate the counsel and work of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: that also in one distinct object. Two persons are in Canaan, and one sent to Syria, for the sole purpose of bringing a bride. Abraham, the father, sends the ruler over all that he had, from Canaan to Mesopotamia, for the alone purpose of taking and bringing a bride for Isaac, the son—the one who had been received in figure from the dead, and who was now in Canaan.

Nothing could more beautifully illustrate the counsels of God. Abraham sent his servant; God has sent the Holy Ghost—as truly a living person on this earth as was Abraham's servant in Syria.

The purpose of Abraham in sending this servant was to take a bride for his son. The purpose of God the Father, in sending the Holy Ghost, was to form that one body, the future bride of the Lamb—His eternal Son. The servant came to find, and lead away the appointed bride. "She that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac." This points to that wondrous soul-sustaining fact, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." Very sweet are those words of Jesus: "All that the Father hath given me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

We will then trace this wondrous way of divine sovereignty. And what is true of the whole church of God, is also true of each individual saint. How little did Rebekah know of these counsels, and her

personal interest in all this, as she came, with her pitcher on her shoulder, to the well. At once she responds to the words of the servant; she takes down her pitcher; she draws for the camels. "And the man, wondering at her, held his peace, to wit whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not." Thus are they whom God hath given to Christ made willing to come to Him.

Now notice the first thing the servant does. "The man took a golden earring, of half a shekel weight; and two bracelets for her hands, of ten shekels weight of gold. Jesus said of the promised Comforter, "He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." "He shall not speak of himself." Not once did this devoted servant name his own name. He takes the jewels of gold sent by the father for the appointed bride of his son. He says, "I put the earring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands." (Verse 47.) Oh, how the Holy Ghost delights to put that bright jewel on the forehead—the righteousness of God, unto all, and upon all, them that believe! What untold grace is this—sin not imputed! righteousness reckoned! Jesus, who was delivered for our offences, raised again for our justification! What a jewel!—Christ made unto us righteousness! God is just, and the Justifier of them that believe. What a gift! righteousness without works! Has He put the jewel on your forehead? Is the risen Christ your subsisting righteousness, as in

Him, before God? Accepted in Christ—yea, in Christ—then no condemnation. And the bracelets on her hands : no change in the brightness of the righteousness of God. The jewel on the forehead : no change in that changeless love. “And the bracelets on her hands”—no separation from the love of God in Christ. This is the way of the Spirit of God in bringing a soul to Christ. Jewels first : everlasting righteousness, everlasting love. Let this be the starting-point ; then there is room in the house for the camels and the men ; yes, there is room in the heart for the Son of God. Not so Laban, her brother ; he did his part first. When he saw the jewels on his sister, he sought to merit the like by his works. He said, “I have prepared the house, and room for the camels.” How many are like him ! Self-preparation knows nothing of the divine principle of grace, which gives the jewels first. We must, however, note that, with Rebekah, it is still more jewels, in the most absolute, unconditional grace.

“And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to her.” Yes, all this first ! Was it not so with the repentant prodigal son ? Sins owned in self-judgment, and that moment the gracious words of the Father were heard, “Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him ; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet.” Thus grace met the idolatrous Syrian, and thus God meets the returning

sinner. Oh, what it cost the Lord of glory that we might thus be clothed with the best robe! "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Are you quite sure God, by His Spirit, has thus met you?—pure, priceless jewels first? Have you received them without money and without price? Rebekah did not buy them. She did not merit them. She made no covenant in receiving them. All was absolute gift in grace. Earrings and bracelets, jewels and raiment—perfect meetness for the inheritance. Can you say that the Father has, by, and in, His Son, thus made you meet for the inheritance of the saints in light?

After this rich display of pure grace, now comes the question of responsibility.

"Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go." How much was involved in this decision! She must leave all that had been dear to her—her father's home, and idolatrous religion. She must commit herself entirely to the guidance of Abraham's servant. She was the only object he sought in Mesopotamia. "And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way." No doubt nature would have hindered all this. "Let the damsel abide with us a few days."

Child of God, what is thy decision? "I will

go," or wouldest thou abide with the world, with nature, for a few days more? With Rebekah, there was the long journey, but Isaac at the end of it. Every hour separated her farther from Mesopotamia, nearer to Isaac. Such is the path of the Christian. As truly as Abraham sent his servant to lead Rebekah to her home with Isaac, in Canaan, so surely has God sent the Holy Ghost to lead the believer across this desert journey, to the home prepared, the home above. Thus she followed the man, until that moment when she lifted up her eyes, and saw the coming Isaac to meet her.

Abraham did not send his servant to improve Syria; neither did Rebekah say, "What harm is there? Can I not remain with my friends, and enjoy their pleasures and pastimes? What harm is there in their innocent amusements?" No; she says, "I will go." Thus was she turned from the dumb idols of Syria. A new power attracted her soul, like a magnet.

This was a beautiful type of the church, as seen in the New Testament. They also were "turned to God from idols, to serve the living and the true God; and to wait for his son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead." (1 Thess. i. 10.) They went forth to meet the Bridegroom. But now how sad the change! how long the sleep! The church has almost forgotten that there is such a Person coming from heaven. The Holy Ghost abiding

still, and to the end. How few know that His purpose is to take the bride to meet her Lord; as Abraham's servant took Rebekah. And as she drew near, "Isaac went out to meditate . . . and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming." However we may forget that moment so near, when we shall meet the Lord, is it not the constant meditation of His heart of love? Strange that we can forget! Look up, by faith, and see that holy, blessed One in the glory, meditating about us! What a scene, when He shall lift up His eyes, and behold the millions of the redeemed, seen by Him, to be coming to meet Him in the air! "And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and . . . she saw Isaac." Oh, blessed, sure hope! and we shall lift up our eyes, and see Jesus, and be for ever with our Lord. As Isaac had prepared a place for his bride in Canaan, so has Jesus prepared a place for us in the Father's house on high. Thus shall the Holy Ghost bring the appointed bride, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world; and as the servant presented Rebekah to Isaac, so shall He, the only Guide of the church, bring the bride to Christ.

Thus, how true the type. Isaac was offered on the altar. Christ was offered, the sacrifice for our sins, on the cross. Isaac was received, in figure, from the dead. Jesus was raised in reality from among the dead, for our justification, and received to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens.

Three persons were engaged in the one object, taking a bride for the risen Isaac. The Father sent the Holy Ghost to take out of this world a bride for Christ; Israel, during such period, being set aside. The golden jewel for the forehead, and bracelets for the hands, were given to, and put upon Rebekah. No condemnation, accounted righteous before God—what a jewel for the forehead!—and no separation from the love of God in Christ. Oh, what bracelets of everlasting love! Still further, jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and raiment, given to Rebekah. Still further, glories of the person of Christ unfolded by the Spirit. Complete in Christ—what raiment! Made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. All ours, and ours for ever! The sure portion of every child of grace! If a believer on the Son of God, all are yours.

And then—but not till then—the test of the responsibility of faith that works by love: “Wilt thou go with this man? I will go.” Yes, there is One whom, not having seen, we love. Rebekah went, in sole dependence on the guidance of the servant. So, in the beginning, did the church. The Holy Ghost is the only Guide that knows the way, and can bring you safely to the home prepared.

Now, if this is the purpose of God the Father, during this period of Christianity, to take out of this world the redeemed bride of Christ, and if His

direct government of the earth, by Messiah, through Israel, be entirely future, as revealed in the word of God, has not almost every feature of this divine picture been perverted, if not corrupted?

Let a sinner be converted to God in these days, and where is the practical sanctification? Is the back turned on the world, and the face to Christ, looking for Him from heaven? Is it not rather, the back turned on the coming of the Lord, and the face toward the world, with a pretence of improving that world, which has rejected, and does reject Christ? The heart lingers in the world, and talks about what harm is there in the world's innocent pastimes? "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

If Rebekah had come to a place where the path was difficult to trace, and if twenty men had pointed twenty different ways, would her course have been to be guided by the tradition of these elders, or, still follow the guidance of the servant and ruler sent by the father Abraham?

Have you come to such a crossing? Shall we follow the bewildering directions of men, or, with the heart drawn to Christ, submit to the only safe leading of the Spirit in the scriptures of truth? If so, like Rebekah, our back will be on the world, and our eyes lifted up to await our change in a moment, and translation, to be for ever with the Lord, at His coming.



PLAIN PAPERS ON THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

THE COMING KINGDOM OF GOD—*preliminary remarks.*

WHEN Jesus was risen from the dead, He shewed Himself alive to His disciples, "being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the KINGDOM OF GOD." One question is recorded which they asked of Him, saying, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" The answer of the Lord has been greatly overlooked. "And He said unto them, It is not for you to know the times, or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." (Acts i. 1-7.)

Jesus had also said, "But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." These words of our Lord, sufficiently expose the folly and rashness of all who attempt to fix the time and season when God will set up His kingdom on earth. Yet would it not be a great mistake to suppose, on this account, that it would be wrong to fully declare the fact of that coming kingdom? The apostle could say two things: "I have received of the Lord Jesus, to *testify the gospel of the grace of God*;" "And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone *preaching the kingdom of God*, shall see my face no more." (Acts xx. 24, 25.)

But it may be asked, Are there not positive and definite prophetic dates in scripture? Are not the days of the great tribulation exactly numbered, starting from the very day that the abomination that maketh desolate is set up? (See Dan. xii. 11.) And does not the Lord Jesus distinctly refer to this, and confirm it, declaring that those days shall be shortened? And does He not also declare that, immediately on the close of those days of the tribulation, He will come in the clouds of heaven? (Matt. xxiv. 29.) Nothing can be clearer in the word of God. The very number of the days of tribulation are given, from the setting up the abomination of desolation to the coming of the Lord to set up the kingdom on earth.

Nay, we may go much further than this, and with equal certainty. We have an exact period of Israel's history revealed to the prophet Daniel—a period of seventy weeks; and, in this case, what has been fulfilled proves these weeks to be weeks of years, or 490 years. This period starts with the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem; which took place in the 20th year of Artaxerxes, and extends unto the blessed period of anointing the Most Holy. A clear, definite period is measured unto the Messiah—seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks, that is, 483 years. This was actually fulfilled. The great reconciliation was made by His death, and everlasting righteousness brought in by His resurrection. But then,

exactly as foretold, He, as Messiah, was cut off; utterly rejected by Israel; and for the present has nothing on earth. "Whom the heaven must receive, until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." If we now read carefully Daniel ix. 26, 27, we notice an unmeasured period. The people of the prince, &c. (that is just what took place), the Romans, came and destroyed the city and the sanctuary. The people were scattered among all nations (Luke xxi.); and desolations are determined on during this unknown period. Then, in verse 27, comes the last week, or seven years; in the midst of which very week, the abomination of desolation is set up. The half of this week, or seven years, is repeatedly referred to, as three years and a half, or forty-two months, or twelve hundred and sixty days. (Compare Rev. xi. 3; xii. 6, 14; xiii. 5.) These must be literal days, months, and years, as they are part of the last week of seven years, the last part of the 490 years, a day for a year. (Dan. ix. 27.)

Let us now return a little. If all these dates are clear, and exactly what they are stated to be, how is it that it is not given to us to know the times and the seasons? or that *we* cannot possibly know the date, or time, when God will set up His kingdom on earth? This is a very important question, and can only be answered by a distinct knowledge of the once hidden purpose of God,

to gather out the church—the body—to be the bride of Christ. And further, as the church of God is distinct from the kingdom of God, it is evident this distinction must be recognised, in order rightly to understand the scriptures of truth.

Now, whilst all dates have reference to the time of the kingdom, *no dates* give the least clue to the length of the time of the church of God on earth. The true attitude of the believer, all through this period, is to be waiting for the Lord from heaven. The first epistle written, or one of the first, proves this. (1 Thess. i. 10; ii. 19; iii. 13; iv. 15–18; v. 23.) It is not given to us to know the date of this blessed event. The Father knows when the last soul shall be gathered out of the world to form the completed bride of Christ.

All this was kept hid, but now revealed. (See Eph. iii.) Wondrous as this may be to some, the church has no place whatever in the Old Testament prophets. Their theme is the sufferings of Christ, and the kingdom to be set up on this earth in glory and power. It is evident, then, that this unmeasured period of grace must run its course, and the church of God taken up to be for ever with the Lord, before the prophetic stream of times and seasons can again flow on. All this must be well considered, or we shall be sure to confound the earthly hopes and promises to Israel, with the heavenly hope and glory of the church.

There is, however, another point of great im-

portance before we proceed to Israel's future literal glory. It is this: the difference between the covenant of works, and the promise of God; and the fact that the New Testament regards all that are of faith as the seed of Abraham. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." And in this sense scripture speaks of Abraham: "As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations." (Rom. iii. 13-17; Gal. iii.) The great difference between these two principles is this: In the covenant made at Sinai, there were two parties engaged in that covenant, with Moses as a mediator. Man supposed himself capable of keeping the law, engaged in covenant to do so. Then, the blessing connected with such a covenant depended on the faithfulness of both parties. One party, Israel, after the fullest trial, utterly failed. Now, the principle of *promise* is in direct contrast with this; that is, whilst the covenant of the law depended on the faithfulness of two parties, the promise depended solely on the faithfulness of One, and that One, God. This is an all-important question: On which principle did God bless Abraham? On which principle does He now deal with every believer? on which principle will He deal with Israel in their future days of glory?

It is written, "The promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the right-

eousness of faith.” “Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end *the promise* might be sure to all the seed.” (Rom. iv. 11-17.) These two principles are seen in Galatians to be in direct contrast. The one was given, and confirmed to Abraham and his seed, which is Christ, four hundred and thirty years before the other. And it is plain that where all depended on the faithfulness of God, nothing could possibly disannul it, that it should make the promise of none effect. The law was added, until Christ, for transgressions, that so the infinite mercy of God might be shewn to all concluded under sin.

The faith of Abraham laid hold of this great principle of promise; and it was reckoned to him for righteousness. This is purely of faith; that is, all depended on God, not on Abraham. On the other hand, 1500 years' experience of man, under the covenant of works, has proved that no man can stand on the ground of his own faithfulness; for all have sinned. Therefore it is evident that “all that are of the works of the law are under the curse.”

The new covenant, then, is really the original *promise* to Abraham, confirmed in Christ: “So that they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.” But does the reader apprehend what an immense principle this is? Read the absolute promise, wholly and unconditionally, of God (Gen. xii. 1-3); then see how this was confirmed when

Abraham had offered up his son, and received him, in figure, from the dead. (Chap. xxii.) Then God confirmed the promise with an oath. And all this applied to us who now believe. (See Heb. vi. 13-20.) The difference, then, is this: On the principle of law, or the covenant of works, the blessing depends on the faithfulness of both parties, as when a master covenants with a servant. On the other, the principle of promise, God engages absolutely my everlasting salvation, and all depends on His faithfulness. It was actually "to shew unto the heirs of *promise* the immutability of His counsel, that He confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation," &c. Think of those two things: The promise of God; and the oath of God. Oh, reader, let this be settled in your soul before you go on to God's faithfulness to Israel. Does your faith rest solely on the faithfulness of God? Does your eternal salvation depend absolutely on the promise and oath of God, in which it is impossible for Him to lie? Nay, more, has not God given His beloved Son to die for our offences? Has He not raised Him from among the dead, for our justification? Is it not absolutely true that, believing God, we are justified by faith, and have peace with God? Do not be deceived, if your salvation depends on your own faithfulness, in the least degree, you have let slip the great principle of THE PROMISE of

God. We might as well try to mingle light and darkness, as to mingle the principle of promise and law. The one was until the other, to Israel. But we are now children of God, heirs according to promise.

There is another point of equal importance, both to the Christian now, and to Israel in days to come. If the administration of the covenant of works be thus set aside, through the utter break-down of man; and if the inheritance—heavenly to us, earthly to Israel—is absolutely of promise, and depends on the immutability of God, what about practical righteousness, and a holy life? Here, again, we find the same distinct contrast. Under the covenant, man engaged to do what he had no power to perform. (Ex. xix. 8; Rom. vii. 18.) Under law, man says, “We will do it.” On the principle of promise, God says, “I will.” “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord; I WILL put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.” (Heb. x. 16.) Two things are absolutely necessary before there can be a holy walk. Man must be born again wholly anew, and the Spirit of God must dwell in him. But both these things are of faith, of promise, of God. “Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” How simple, yet how blessed: God gives a nature that delights to do His will, and power—even the Holy Ghost dwelling in us

—to do that which is holy, and therefore pleasing, in His sight. The indwelling of the Spirit will be shewn by the fruit of the Spirit: “Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law.”

These preliminary thoughts will help us in considering the principles of the coming kingdom of God.

Whether, then, we look at the promise of God to Abraham, as to his spiritual seed, or as it regards his literal descendants, let us note well, that *fulfilment* depends entirely on the faithfulness of God. This will not, however, set aside His governmental dealings, either with the nation of Israel, or with the individual saint.

Is not this surpassing grace? that we Gentiles, who, as to nature, were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world, should now be brought nigh by the blood of Christ; yea, “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

Oh, the riches of His grace! to thus take us up, and make our eternal salvation to depend on His own faithfulness.



It costs us little to *preach* the doctrines of grace, but to *walk* as dead and risen with Christ is another thing.

THE CLOSET, THE BATTLE FIELD OF FAITH.

1 Samuel xvii.

DAVID had been preparing for public service, in the secret school of God. God will always have to do in secret with that soul which he intends to serve Him in public. In the desert he had learnt the resources which faith has in God. He had slain the lion and the bear.

Are not our failures invariably here, that we have not been in secret with the living God? This is the essential and primary matter. Do we esteem communion with God our highest privilege? Our strength is in walking in fellowship with the living God. David had already gone through trial, and had therefore proved the God in whom he trusted. There had been dealing between his soul and God in the wilderness. O beloved, where is it that the saints really learn to get the victory? I believe where no eye sees us save God's. The heartily denying of self, the taking up the cross in secret, the knowing the way in the retirement of our closets, to cast down imaginations, and everything that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God; these are our highest achievements. The closet is the great battle-field of faith. Let the foe be met and conquered there. He who has much to do with God in secret, cannot use carnal weapons; and this should shew us the importance of coming forth from the presence of the living God into all

our service, that we may be thus prepared to detect and mortify all the pretensions of the flesh. It is sad indeed to see a saint trying to fight in the Lord's name, but clothed in the world's armour.

David said moreover, "God hath delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." He knew that one was as easy to God as the other. When we are in communion with God we do not put difficulty by the side of difficulty, for what is difficulty to Him? Faith measures every difficulty by the power of God, and then the mountain becomes as the plain. Too often, we think, that in little things, less than Omnipotence will do, and then it is that we fail. Have we not seen zealous and devoted saints fail in some trifling thing? The cause is, that they have not thought of bringing God by faith into all their ways. Abraham could leave his family and his father's house, and go out at the command of God, not knowing whither he went, but the moment he meets a difficulty in his own wisdom, and gets down into Egypt, what does he do? He constantly fails in comparatively small things.

Faith discerns our own weakness so clearly that it sees nothing less than the power of God can enable us to overcome in anything. So that faith never makes light of the danger, for it knows what we are, just as on the other hand, faith never faints at the danger, because it knows what God is.

REMARKS ON THE PSALMS.

VI.

FROM what we have already noticed in the Psalms, the intelligent christian reader will be prepared to find that this remnant, like all pious Jews, are legal in their thoughts, in spiritual bondage, not knowing redemption, relying upon their own righteousness, longing for God to judge their wicked oppressors, and having no sense of the liberty wherewith Christ has made *us* free. When the chief features of the people so prominently set forth in the Psalms are seen, the proper application of some parts to Messiah, and others to a remnant of Jews in sorrow, and circumstances of distress becomes apparent; and also the impossibility of many portions being now taken up by Christians as suitable to them. Nothing can more clearly shew how far Christians have declined, and merged into principles of Judaism, than the improper application they make of the Psalms. We will try to explain our meaning, by briefly referring to a few examples, which are widely known.

SOME MISTAKES FROM NOT DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN
GOD'S EARTHLY AND HEAVENLY PEOPLE.

It is from not discerning the difference between the earthly calling of the people of Israel, and the heavenly calling of Christians; and, consequently, not distinguishing between those who are associated with a sanctuary on earth and those whose citizen-

ship is heaven, and who worship within the veil, that has been the source of serious mistakes both injurious to souls and dishonouring to God. In a word, this misapplication of truth has lowered the heavenly character of the church of God to a Jewish order of ritual and worship.

If, for instance, you inquire of some professing Christians, why they sanction "congregational worship," or union in worship by a promiscuous assembly of believers and unbelievers, you are at once met with a reply quoted from Psalm lxxvii., "Let the people praise Thee, O God; let *all the people* praise Thee." (Vers. 3, 5.) Whereas, on carefully reading the whole Psalm, it will be seen that it contemplates a people living at a period of *future* blessing on earth, when God will judge the people *righteously* (instead of preach grace to sinners as He does now), when Israel will be peculiarly blessed by God above all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.

The Psalms are also quoted as authority for the use of instrumental music as an adjunct to christian worship. An inquirer is at once referred to such verses as "Praise the Lord with harp: sing unto him with a psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. Sing unto him a new song, play skilfully with a loud noise." Again, "It is a good thing to give thanks unto Jehovah, and to sing praises unto Thy name, O most High . . . upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the

psaltery ; upon the harp with a solemn sound." (Ps. xxxiii. 2 ; xcii. 1-3.) It needs we judge but little spiritual discernment to see that an order of service may be suited to an earthly people connected with a worldly sanctuary, and an earthly order of religious ordinances, and yet be quite unsuited to children of God—"a spiritual house," a people blessed in Christ in heavenly places, and indwelt by the Holy Ghost.

Therefore, we find in the Epistles, not only the entire absence of any idea of such congregational worship, and of instrumental music, but instead of these things, we are admonished to "Sing with the spirit, and with the understanding also," and to sing "with grace in our hearts to the Lord." How definitely too our Lord's teaching on the subject of worship, marked the change that had taken place since Jerusalem had been the place of worship, and how clearly also He set forth the kind of worship which *now* pleases God. Jesus said, "Believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what ; we know what we worship : for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, *and now is*, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth ; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth." (John iv. 21-24.)

It would have been impossible for the children of

God to have adopted the use of the Psalms as hymns of worship, had they stood fast in the Lord, and owned the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth. So long as the contrast between the law and grace had power on the heart and conscience, worshipping the Father in spirit and in truth, would be known as becoming the objects of the Father's love. Such must certainly find that the legal tone of the Psalms, the frequent desire for vengeance on their enemies, the absence of our present standing and relationship, and entire silence as to the Father, whom the happy child of God delights to worship, would render them unsuitable for the expression of his heart's desires. Having known Christ, brought to rejoice in the redemption which He has accomplished, and taught by the Holy Ghost to have Him before the soul, His precious words comfort the heart, and His desire that we should love our enemies, and pray for them that despitefully use us, and persecute us, mark plainly the Christian's path. The doctrines of union with Christ glorified, the rent veil, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, being entirely unknown in the Psalms, are enough to shew how inadequate they are to express that character of worship which is now acceptable to the Father. It is manifest also how the practice of singing such sentiments, though most proper for a godly Jew, tend to keep the heart at a distance from God, and to lower Christianity to Judaism.



CORRESPONDENCE.

50. "W. B.," Bermondsey. We must never forget in reading scripture that it is God's revelation of Himself and His ways, and that it is given to us to believe and not to judge. Among other declarations of Himself, He says, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." "But," says the apostle, "we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth, against them which commit such things." (Rom. ii. 2.) Among other statements of God in His word, the deliberate rejecter of His message is solemnly warned not to expect favour when he wishes it. "*Because I have called and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded, but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof*"—continued and persistent rejection of God's message, "I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh." (Prov. i. 24-31.) Again, when the rejection of Messiah is foretold in Psalm ii., and vain men in their fancied greatness are saying, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us," we are told, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure." (Vers. 1-5.) We must not forget that in both these instances, which speak of God's derision, it is righteous judgment in consequence of the creature's antagonism to God, in the vanity of his fancied wisdom and power.

The other passage you refer to is of a somewhat similar character, "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned [or

judged] who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess. ii. 11, 12.) What cause? Because they were really in hostility to God; whatever their profession might have been. We are told, "They received not the love of the truth that they might be saved;" and again, "They believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." We must never forget that God is just as well as a Saviour, that He is the judge of all, the righteous Judge, and that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?"

51. Cleethorps. We must recognise the distinction between saints being gathered together as the assembly of God, such as is described in 1 Corinthians xiv. 23, and a few believers who meet to search the word. "If the whole church be come together into one place," would alone be the true assembly meeting; but this, alas, can never take place now, because of the scattered condition of the church. There is therefore, as far as we know, no town on earth where all the Christians in it thus obey the Lord. What best answers to it now is, when any number of Christians in a place are gathered together to the name of the Lord Jesus, and on the ground of the one body according to the Spirit's unity. There may be ten reading meetings in a town going on at the same time, but no one of these could be said to be on the ground of God's assembly; so that it would be a mistake to apply the commandments of the Lord in 1 Corinthians xiv. 29-35, as to women keeping silence, which apply to an assembly meeting, as though they were intended to include every meeting. There is, however, another scripture which speaks in a more general way, and which

every godly woman will do well to observe. "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." (1 Tim. ii. 11, 12.) This we judge would give sufficient guidance for the conduct of women at a reading meeting.

52. "Inquirer," Wincanton. In coming together to eat the Lord's supper, it is surely not a question of times, or days, or hours. The apostle did not receive of the Lord what hour of the day, but "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." It is not stated what hour of the first day of the week the disciples came together to break bread. (Acts xx.) Believers must agree as to the time when they come together to break bread. As to the precise hour, there is no commandment of the Lord. Indeed any given hour would not be the same in different parts of the world.

53. "Liversedge." As children being "disobedient to parents," is one of Christendom's prominent sins in these last days, it behoves all children who really love our Lord Jesus to be careful to honour and obey their parents, according to His word. There are, however, points sometimes pressed by unconverted parents, which a converted child could not carry out in faithfulness to the Lord. As examples of this, we might name the command to attend such so-called places of worship where the Lord is dishonoured, either in doctrine or practice, or in both; or to go to places of amusement and revelry, where the presence of a child of God would be for the Lord's dishonour.

In these and similar cases, the claims of the Lord in His word to a walk of separation, must have the first place ; and when pleaded for, with meekness and firmness, the opposing parents will often give way. We have known instances where parents have insisted on their children giving up the life of obedience to the word of the Lord, and returning to their former "pleasures of sin," or to quit their house. The latter of course, though so painful, was preferred, and God was very gracious. Jesus said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me." (2 Tim. iii. 2 ; Matt. x. 37.)

With regard to the question of "dress," the parents' desire should be carried out as far as practicable with a good conscience. As to "marriage," the parents' judgment demands most serious consideration. There are few instances, in which a christian child would be justified in marrying a person to whom the parents objected. The Lord may be seeking to hinder it by the parents so objecting. We strongly advise no one to take such a step, without the counsel and fellowship of godly brethren in the Lord. We should fear lest self-will and a spirit of independency and insubordination, alas ! so rife in our day, should find shelter in the heart, under the apparent plea of faithfulness to the Lord. A person who has a single eye, an exercised conscience, a subject heart to the word of God, without any will of his own, may surely count upon God for guidance. It is clear that a child should always obey the parents, unless when their request is manifestly opposed to the will of God. "Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honour thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with promise." (Eph. vi.)

DIVINE LOVE.

II.

“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” (1 John iv. 9, 10.)

IN the person of Jesus the Son of God, *life* has been manifested—“that eternal life which was with the Father, was manifested unto us.” (1 John i. 2.) The Son, by whom God made the worlds, has been seen, and heard, and handled, in a scene of death on every hand. Wondrous fact, that the Son of God should be found here in fashion as a man, taking a servant’s form, in the likeness of sinful flesh, yet without sin, holy, harmless, and undefiled, separate from sinners. Thus God has been revealed, He has come near, and has been made known. “God was manifested in the flesh.” God came down to earth in the person of the Son, and, in word and deed, declared the Father. “No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” (John i. 18.) Thus *life* has been manifested in the person of Him who could truly say, I am “the life.”

But more wonderful still, *love* has been manifested—love to us, divine love, for “God is love;” but *love* was manifested in the death of the cross. “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” What love! Well has it been said—

“Love that no tongue can teach,
Love that no thought can reach,
No love like His.”

Love then has been manifested in the death of the Son of God for us upon the cross—infinite, eternal, perfect love. Though the world by wisdom knows not God, yet He has been revealed, and is now known, confided in, and loved. If He had come near in manifesting *life* in the person of the Son, He came nearer still in manifesting *love* in His death for our sins. In this way surely He loved us.

No one really knows God by the active reasonings of his own mind. Neither can he know God by what he may see in creation, in the way marked out by those who bid us “look from nature up to nature’s God.” He learns no doubt in this way that there is a God, but he does not know Him, and therefore cannot confide in Him. Nor can he know God by seeking to read His doings in the chequered histories of men’s varied circumstances,

or by considering His providential dealings. Kind and beneficent as He was in creation, and wondrously kind still in daily benefits to the unthankful and the unholy, yet it is in the sufferings and death of Jesus on the cross that divine love is seen, and God really known.

Two things were absolutely necessary in order that man should be happy in God's presence; he must be cleansed from all sin, and he must have life, eternal life—a nature capable of knowing and enjoying the things of God. These wondrous blessings could only come to us by the cross; and both have been provided for us in Christ, and through His death. God sent His only-begotten Son that we might live through Him, and He gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.

It is evident that no one with sin upon him could be in the presence of a holy sin-hating God. Jesus said, If ye “die in your sins, whither I go, ye cannot come.” But Jesus was found here in fashion as a man, that He might die for our sins. “He was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, that he, by the grace of God, might taste death for every man.” Love sent Him, gave Him, and delivered Him up for our offences. Thus divine love was manifested in all its freeness, suitableness, and blessedness; thus God in Christ crucified has met us when in

our sins, and thus He perfects the conscience, and fits us in righteousness for His own presence for ever. Every question of our sin and guilt have thus been fully met in righteousness—sins judged, God not only satisfied but glorified, and all who believe justified from all things. This is love indeed—love that melts the hardest heart, attracts the sinner to the Saviour, draws him away from every unholy influence, justifies the ungodly, and establishes the heart in peace before God. And more, for God is the Justifier, and He declares of such, “Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” All is of God. He is the source of all our blessings. He is indeed the God of all grace, the God of peace. It is grace through righteousness. Love fully brought out, and righteousness fully established. It is His love, not ours—“Not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” How the contemplation of it moves our hearts! What joy and peace it imparts! How conscious we are of its separating power, and how it constrains us to love and serve Him, for there seems no limit to the claims of divine love!

“Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.”

God, then, who is righteous and holy, has that before Him in the blood of His Son, which enables Him to send out a world-wide message of salvation for sinners: to present in the gospel the

finished work of Jesus on the cross, as an available sacrifice for everyone that believeth, to make Himself known in all the perfectness and freeness of divine grace; so that a ground of unhesitating confidence is now laid between God and every one that believeth in Jesus. Thus God has acted in divine love, and done all we needed to make us happy for ever in His presence. Peace has been made, redemption accomplished, and a new and living way opened into the holiest of all through the rent veil; and we have remission of sins, are justified from all things, are brought into the new relationship of sons, all known and enjoyed now on the principle of faith; the Holy Ghost too is given to shed abroad the love of God in our hearts, and to make us know the things that are freely given to us of God. We read, therefore, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." (Ver. 16.)

And life also is given, eternal life, for how could we be suited to eternal glory, or enter into the things of Him who is eternal, without it? As we have seen, this also flows to us from divine love—"God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that *we might live* through him." It is freely given to us of God. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through [or *in*] Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. vi. 23.) And

again, "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." This is what men will not believe. They not only refuse the gift, but they will not believe that God is so good as to bestow such a present blessing as eternal life. God says He has given, and is still the Giver of, eternal life. Man does not believe, and therefore makes God a liar. Though he does not say so in words, yet his heart refuses His testimony. We are told, "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (1 John v. 10-12.) Nothing can possibly be more plainly stated, yet men will not believe. Though it is evident that no one could dwell in eternal glory unless he had eternal life; yet when God declares that He is the Giver of eternal life, and that this life is in His Son, men make God a liar, for they will not believe it. How solemn are the words of scripture, "he that believeth not God hath made him a liar." Oh, say some, "I am sure I have not made God a liar, for I believe the whole Bible." But the searching and often silencing question for such is, "Have you then received this gift of God—eternal life?" The answer of many to this question is, "No, nor do I expect to till death, or after death."

Nothing can more conclusively prove that such persons have made God a liar ; for God says that He gives eternal life and gives it *now*, that “ He that hath the Son *hath* life,” hath it *now*, and yet they say it is not so. Oh, this frightful, yet common sin of making God a liar ! Many we fear are going respectably and religiously on the broad road to destruction, professing to serve God, yet thus making Him a liar, because they believe not the record that God gave of His Son. It is considered very bad in all civilised society to make a man of honour, and of good report, a liar ; but to make God a liar is bad indeed. And yet, we repeat, nothing can be more clearly proved, because God says He gives eternal life, and that He that hath the Son hath life, and yet, alas ! many say it is not true, that no person has eternal life now, and that no one can have it till he comes to die. Such is human reason, such is man’s opinion in direct opposition to God’s revealed will in His word, so that scripture speaks of such as making God “ a liar.” Such is the solemn light in which God views the rejection of the present blessings of divine love. They say on inquiring of them, “ Of course, we believe the gospel,” and yet if asked, “ Have you received eternal life, the gift of God ? ” they at once deny that there is such a present blessing. Nevertheless, the word of the Lord endureth for ever.



PLAIN PAPERS ON THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.—“BEHOLD HE COMETH.”

WE would remind our readers that the covenant God made with Abraham, was on the principle of promise. Fulfilment depending wholly on the faithfulness of God. (See Gen. xii. 2, 3; xiii. 14, 17; xv. 5; xvii. 5, 8.) And further, when Isaac had been offered up, and received in figure from the dead, then was the promise confirmed by an oath. “By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies: and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.” (Gen. xxii. 16–18.) So that whether it be the salvation of the individual believer now, as one of the spiritual children of Abraham, or the future kingdom of Israel in all its earthly glory; in both cases, all depends on the faithfulness of God, who has confirmed the promise by the resurrection of His Son from among the dead.

Let us then take up this subject with the firm conviction that “God is not a man, that he should

lie; neither the Son of man that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" It is all-important to bear this in mind; otherwise we might falsely conclude, because Israel has rejected their Messiah, that they, as a nation, are finally cut off.

We thus speak especially of Israel, the natural seed of Abraham, because the scripture always connects the kingdom on earth with that nation. "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." (Deut. xxxii. 8.) This scripture, written 3340 years ago, is the only true solution of the Eastern question. It is God's question! The present long apostasy, and scattering of that people, was distinctly foretold in scripture.

Daniel was informed, that when Messiah should have made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness He should be cut off, and, instead of then taking the kingdom, He should have nothing; and before the last seven years of the prophecy, there is an unmeasured time of desolations. All this exactly as it has taken place. "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice." (Hosea iii. 4.) Has not this been the case since their Messiah was crucified? Thus their

present condition, as well as their future national glory, is the most exact fulfilment of the word of God. Since it is the word of God, how can it be otherwise? All this is explained in Romans xi. At present an election out of them is saved, and "blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved : as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." (Vers. 25, 26.)

They would not believe the mercy of God to the Gentiles ; and now having forfeited all claim to the promise of God through unbelief, they will themselves at last as a nation, be saved in pure mercy.

The wondrous depths of mercy however do not set aside the governmental dealings of God, with that nation, and with the world. Indeed it is a notable fact, that the kingdom is invariably introduced by judgment.

Thus when the Roman Empire shall have been restored in its last ten-kingdom form (Rev. xvii. 8, 12), we read, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed : and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." (Dan. ii. 44.) Is it not quite clear that this is in contrast with the present period of the grace of God? Indeed those ten

kings have received no kingdom as yet: and when they do, they will be broken in pieces, and destroyed, by the setting up of the kingdom of God. Is it not the same in the Psalms? When God shall set His Son as king upon His holy hill of Zion, He says, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Is this for conversion, or judgment? "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (Ps. ii.) Yes, we should have to set the word of God entirely aside, to entertain such an erroneous thought, as the world's conversion by the preaching of the gospel; and yet men will continue to persist in such error. It would fill a volume to point out, and dwell on all the passages in the Psalms, and the prophets, that describe the judgments introducing the kingdom. We will only look at a few. Take that beautiful scripture describing the millennial kingdom. (Isaiah xi.) What introduces the kingdom when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea? Is it conversion, or judgment? Conversion! nay, "but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked," &c. This judgment which introduces the millennium is explained to the young

converts at Thessalonica, to take place with the brightness of His coming. (2 Thess. ii. 8.) And it is further made known to us we shall take part in this judgment. "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations." Not, now mark, for conversion, "And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father." (Rev. ii. 26, 27.) Further, when He comes to execute this very judgment, "The armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." (Rev. xix. 14, 15.) Mark, this is after the church has been taken up to heaven, yea, after the marriage of the Lamb. Yet clearly, this judgment of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God precedes the millennium of chapter xx.

It is at this very time, as it is written: "Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. FOR THEN will I turn to the people a pure language." (Zeph.

iii. 8.) And then the Lord, the king of Israel takes His glorious place in Zion.

From these, and many other scriptures, is it not evident that the thought of the world's conversion by the gospel is absolutely a delusion? A day of fierce wrath of Almighty God is fast approaching this deceived world. "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." (1 Thess. v. 3.) Oh, think of these last days in which we live: what is God doing? And what is man doing? Has not God by His Holy Spirit been arousing the sleeping church? Are not real Christians now awakening to the heavenly calling, and hopes of the church of God, and that the Lord Jesus is coming to take His loved bride to Himself? And then the period of judgment on the wicked living nations; and what is man doing? We are told there is a wide-spread combination, to use their own words, to stamp out all this! Yes, to stamp out and resist to the utmost the truth of God: and the present action of the Holy Ghost. Is it not written, "because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess. ii. 10-12.) Yes, men may think it a light thing to despise

and scoff, saying, "Where is the promise of his coming?" but the scripture regards this as a serious mistake, and therefore says, "beware lest ye also, being led away with *the error of the wicked*, fall from your own stedfastness." (2 Pet. iii. 4, 17.)

Look where we will in the word of God, the Psalms, the prophets, the Gospels, the Epistles all testify of this time of apostasy and wickedness fast approaching, such as it was in the days of Noah and of Lot. The professing church in the last days is described in similar terms to those used to depict the dreadful iniquity of the heathen world. (Compare Rom. i. with 2 Tim. iii.) And are not all these features coming fast to the surface? Oh God our Father, awake thy whole church to the solemn facts that the translation of thy saints, and the judgment of the living wicked are close at hand! Did Jehovah Jesus come in person to suffer and to die for us? Did He rise from the dead in person to be our righteousness? Did He ascend in person to heaven? In person He will come to judge and to reign. "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass

away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." (Dan. vii. 13.)

Who is this person in human form who receives the glory, and dominion, and kingdom of the whole earth? Is it not "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven"? (Acts i. 11.) "And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." (Acts iii. 20.) "Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." (Rev. i. 7.) Yes, even so, surely all judgment is committed to the person of the Son. "Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." (Acts xvii. 31.) This judgment of the nations is described by the Lord Jesus at His coming, *immediately* after the great tribulation. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the

holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations," &c. (Matt. xxiv. 30; xxv. 31.) Yes, by the resurrection of Jesus from among the dead, are we assured that He will thus come to judge the living inhabitants of this earth. It is quite true that this is not the judgment of the dead; for before that judgment, we are told the saved will have lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." (Rev. xx. 5.)

Thus is the fact established in scripture that the personal coming of Christ in judgment on the living nations shall precede the kingdom of God on earth.

Poor sleeping world! Many who bear the name of Christ help on thy unbelief! Judgment is at hand. A little while and the great winepress of the wrath of God will be trodden.* Soon men will quail before the brightness of that face they have so long despised and rejected. "Every eye shall see him." There will be no escape. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." (Matt. xxv. 46.) The irrevocable sentence is thus made known to us. Can He who is the Truth deceive? What a moment! "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." To-morrow is judgment.



REMARKS ON THE PSALMS.

VII.

PORTIONS of the Psalms are also referred to as authority for the gospel being the instrument designed by God for the conversion of the world. Some readily point to Psalm ii. The words, "Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession," are often wrested from the context as proof of the world's conversion by the gospel. Whereas, the words which immediately follow are, "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces as a potter's vessel," and plainly shew that it is judgment upon the enemies of Christ, and not salvation, of which this scripture speaks; and that He will take possession of the earth by righteous power, for when He comes out of heaven, He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. It is not grace here, but wrath; hence it is added, "Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little." (Ps. ii. 8-12.) Or, part of Psalm lxxvii. may be quoted, "That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. . . . O let the nations be glad and sing for joy." Whereas the next words are, "For thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth,

Selah ;” which shew that the time referred to here is not now, but when the Lord takes to Himself His great power and reigns, and the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ.

There is another matter for which refuge is taken in the Psalms for authority, we mean the practice of naming a building on earth, which may be used for preaching, “the house of God,” or “the house of the Lord.” It is quite true that it is there stated, “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of Jehovah ;” but what house is this ? Do not the next words plainly shew that it is the temple at Jerusalem, and no other house ? “Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together, whither the tribes go up, the tribes of Jehovah, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of Jehovah.” (Ps. cxxii. 1-4.) Can there be a doubt that it is Israel’s future which is here contemplated ? So tenacious are many in regarding a certain character of building as the “house of God,” and so entirely has the spiritual character of worship and service been let slip, that it is not uncommon to find the very words used in reference to the temple of Jerusalem, and the Jewish worship of Jehovah, applied to ecclesiastical buildings on earth now. Sometimes it may be seen in large letters over a building used for preaching and other ecclesiastical

practices, "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise." But we need only to read through the whole Psalm to discover that it points to the time of Israel's period of future blessing on the earth, when the temple with its services, worship, sacrifices and certain feasts will be restored, and celebrated according to the due order for Jehovah's glory. See Psalm li. 18, 19; Ezekiel xl. 18.

However Christendom may have let slip many of the special doctrines of Christianity, and appropriated Jewish things to themselves, because a legal and carnal order of religion always gives man a place of importance, and distinction in the world; we trust enough evidence has been brought forward to shew that the great subject of the Psalms is not the church, but Israel, a godly remnant of suffering ones, and, of course, much of their Messiah is also brought before us. Apostate Jews are every here and there referred to, and the distinction between the righteous remnant, and ungodly people of the land, remarkably kept up.

As before observed, the Psalms are divided into five books. We will now, in concluding our remarks, notice some of the leading characters of each of these books.

Book I. The whole of the first forty-one Psalms are included in this book. From the references to the temple, the utterances of the tried people, and other features, it seems to set forth the ex-

perience of the suffering remnant of faithful Jews while yet in Jerusalem, prior to their flight. More therefore is said of their Messiah, and especially of His personal history, than in any other book of the Psalms. He is set before us as the blessed Man, His Anointed, God's Son, God's King, rejected by the people, yet the Son of man, the last Adam, having all put under His feet. We have also His experiences and ways in life, His sufferings, His death as forsaken of God, His resurrection, and the King of glory remarkably brought out in this book. Messiah's death is surely that on which all their hopes are founded.

We must not forget that the suffering of the faithful in Israel at the close will be from ungodly and apostate Jews, the apostate Gentile power headed up in the beast, with the consciousness too of suffering under the hand of God in His governmental dealings with them on account of their sins. Though being upright in heart, under some teaching of the Spirit, and inspired with Jewish hopes, they do not know deliverance and redemption; hence, as before observed, their legal state, fears, and misery, with only now and then a gleam of hope.

Book II. begins with Psalm xlii. and ends with Psalm lxxii. It is clear from the first few verses in the book that they are no longer keeping holiday, or connected with the temple service in Jerusalem, but far away at Mount Hermon, cast

down, and yet not without hope in God. They feel that the wicked are in power, and speak reproachfully, saying, "Where is thy God?" Having fled from Judea to the distant mountains, according to our Lord's word in Matthew xxiv. 16, they seem not to have now the sense of relationship with Jehovah, so that we find them making God (rather than Jehovah) their refuge, as in the first book.

They are in deepest distress. It is the unparalleled period of the great tribulation. They have fled to escape death; yet they realise that God is their refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. The last Psalm of this book gives us a beautiful prophecy of the millennial reign of Christ, the true David and Solomon.

Book III. We have seen that the first and second books follow each other as to time. Not so this book. It extends from Psalm lxxiii. to the end of Psalm lxxxix. If the first book gives us the experiences of a godly remnant of faithful Jews at the close before the great tribulation, and the second book the experience of faithful Jews who have fled, we have in the third book the experience of faithful ones in all Israel, in both of these periods. No doubt, besides these points we have great general principles.

This book opens with the gracious announcement that "God is good to Israel." Sometimes they call upon Him as God, and at others remem-

ber that He is their Jehovah. The thoughts of the faithful Israelite are not right about the wicked who prosper in the world, till he gets "into the sanctuary of God." At the close of the book, his difficulty is, with all God's promises to David, how to understand His ways in governmental wrath, profaning the king's crown, and casting it down to the ground. In spite of all, they still have some hope in Jehovah, and make Him their refuge.

Book IV., as has been often said, sets forth the bringing in of the First-begotten into the world. (Heb. i. 6.) When He came last it was as the "only-begotten"—God gave His only-begotten Son; when He appears in glory it will be as the First-begotten—the First-born from among the dead. This book extends from Psalm xc. to cvi. It is the reign of Jehovah-Jesus. He is great in Zion. All the earth is called to fear before Him. It is frequently said, Jehovah reigneth. He cometh to judge the earth, reign in righteousness, when He will remember His mercy and His truth to the house of Israel, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God.

Christ, as the rejected Messiah, but as yet to build up Zion, and to appear in His glory, is remarkably presented in this book. (cii.) The blessings too of Messiah's reign, not only in forgiving the sins of His people Israel, but healing all their diseases, as well as His goodness to creation, are also found here. (Ps. ciii., civ.) The book concludes with an

epitome of God's power, goodness, and faithfulness to His people (Ps. cv.), and their rebellion and unfaithfulness to Him. (Ps. cvi.)

Book V. extends from Psalm cvii. to the end. It gives the expression of the various feelings, and experiences of the faithful in the last days, before actually entering into their millennial blessings. They have faith in Jehovah, the name of their God constantly used here, as recognising their true relationship, to be afterwards fully established when Jehovah their King reigns before His ancients gloriously.

The faithful in Israel are looked at as redeemed, though going through various exercises under the government of God (Ps. cvii.); but the One who is now sitting at Jehovah's right hand is coming to reign in Zion, make His foes His footstool, and establish His people in blessing as the true Melchisedec priest; for then, in the day of His power, His ancient people, now outcast, will be willing. (Ps. cx.) The place given by the faithful to the word of God, in all its divine authority, is strikingly set forth (Ps. cxix.); the character of the kingdom (Ps. cxlv.), and the goodness of God in connection with its introduction, full of encouragement to the faithful. The book ends with abundant praise to Jehovah. The last words are, "Let everything that hath breath, praise Jehovah. Praise ye Jehovah."



H E A V E N .

"I go to prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, *there ye may be also.*"—John xiv. 2, 3.

How beautiful, surpassing fair,
 The place prepared above !
 The ceaseless blessings flowing there,
 Flow from a Saviour's love ;
 I long to see that piercéd hand,
 And worship with the happy band.

Temptations are not there ; no chain
 But love ; no cloud ; no word
 To reach the heart with aught of pain,
 While " ever with the Lord :"
 But all enjoy that perfect peace
 Whose blissfulness can never cease.

There is no weeping there ; all tears
 Are wiped from every eye ;
 The memory of *time's short years*
 Awakes no heavy sigh ;
 All faces are with joy more bright
 Than morning in its richest light.

There are no longings there ; desire
 Is satisfied at last ;
 The wish that fanned hope's cheering fire,
 With all its flames is past ;
 Him, whom they loved unseen, they see,
 To love for all eternity.

There are no partings there : the deep,
 Sad, tearful word " Good-bye"
 Wrings not the heart, nor makes it keep
 The watch of tear and sigh,
 For friend meets friend, and heart meets heart
 With purer love, no more to part.

Yea, wondrous fair, surpassing bright
 The promised rest above ;
 Where Thou, Lord Jesus, art its light,
 Its glory, and its love—
 "*All, and in all, O, blessed Lord!*"
 Sufficient for me is Thy word.

CORRESPONDENCE.

54. "A. B." We again remind our readers, that we cannot undertake to reply to any communications unless they carry with them the writer's name and address. Nor is it reasonable that we should be expected to wade through the various books and pamphlets which are sent for our opinion as to their soundness. In fact, with our other engagements, it would be quite out of our power to do so. But we judge that no publication is entitled to be considered sound, unless the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and His accomplished work on the cross, are plainly set forth, as the everlasting and immovable foundation of all our blessings.

55. "O.," Harrogate. Received your kind note, and the accompanying lines with thanks. May the Lord lead on the pious soldier, bless him in his own soul with fuller knowledge of Christ, and use him in spreading the truth for much blessing to souls!

56. "L.," Honiton. Your interesting letter and inclosure have reached us, for which please to accept our thanks. The Lord be praised for the blessing you speak of through our little magazine. May it please Him to use it more and more! Keep consciously close to the Lord, feed daily on His word by meditating on it in dependence on the Holy Ghost, and never forget that the Father loves you as He loves His Son; cultivate the habit of self-judgment, be separate in heart and walk to Him, pray much for others, and you will enjoy more and more of the loving-kindness of the Lord.

57. "A. E. W.," Dublin. We regret that your letter has been mislaid, or it would have

been answered before. You will find a reply to your questions on everlasting punishment in the article on "Divine Love" in our issue for August last. We may be sure that God means what He says.

58. "S. L.," Ryhope. "And unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation." It is evident from many portions of the Epistles, that in the early days of the church of God, all believers "went forth to meet the bridegroom." They had no other hope. The youngest converts were turned "to God from idols, to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven." We also read, "And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom, go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose," &c. We believe God is now sending forth this awakening cry. We see no ground in Hebrews ix. 27, 28 for supposing that any children of God will be left behind at the translation of the church.

The scripture never speaks of Christians living in sin. Many who are called Christians, or who profess to be such, will no doubt be left behind. "For when they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." It is also a fact, that all true Christians do look for Christ: they may hold many mistakes about His coming, but they do believe He will come again.

This passage, occurring in the Hebrews, has doubtless a wider scope than the church, and

would take in the hoping remnant of Israel by-and-by, to whom also He will appear without sin unto salvation.

59. Dawlish. It is well to bear in mind that the responsibility of receiving into, and excluding from, the fellowship of the Lord's table, rests, not with one or two individuals, however godly or gifted, but with the assembly gathered together in the Lord's name who is in the midst, and honouring the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. v. 13; Rom. xv. 7; 1 Cor. iii. 16; Eph. ii. 22.) This is an important landmark, and always helpful in guiding us in reference to disorderly and perplexing cases.

No doubt a state of things may be so bad, and the assembly so powerless because of its carnality, as to be unable to act in discipline according to the Lord's mind. In such a case, we judge, that in waiting patiently on the Lord in prayer and faith, and self-judgment, He will make it plain, that as the assembly will not clear itself of that which dishonours His name who is holy and true, faithful individuals should purge themselves by separation. But, while a case of evil is undergoing consideration, and being dealt with, though not perhaps with the rapidity that some would desire, we confess that it seems to us to savour more of pride than of faithfulness to the Lord when one or two leave. In so doing, they really put themselves out of fellowship because of the failure of others. Individual consciences ought to be respected; but it is always well so to act as to carry the judgment and consciences of others with us. When an individual goes out of a meeting because of something he judges to be wrong, to say the least, he sets up his own judgment as superior to others. There have been instances

however, when one had the Lord's mind, and had to break from all the others, in faithfulness to the Lord ; but such, as far as our experience goes, have always laboured diligently to carry the judgment of the others by the same truth which shewed him the will of the Lord. How else could such be "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?" It is a most solemn matter to have to break from a company of saints with whom we have had fellowship, and would doubtless be so felt by all who have the Lord's guidance for so acting.

We cannot, with the little information before us, express a judgment of the case you mention, but think it better to throw out a few practical points for consideration. The great thing in all such painful matters, and every other, is to be before the Lord, and by secret intercourse with Him, to learn His mind from His own word. Without this, let none expect true guidance. We know when Paul was considering the terrible evils coming into the church, he said, "I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace." (Acts xx. 32.)

60. Rotherham. Your letter with lines inclosed has reached us, and will be used as opportunity offers.

61. "E. G.," Peckham Rye. We have received your little papers, but have not yet had time to read them. We most heartily thank you for the sweet portion of scripture to which you so kindly call our attention.

62. "Naomi," Gosport. We hope, if the Lord will, to reply to your questions shortly.

Other replies are in type, and stand over for want of space



ASSURANCE.

How many professing Christians do we meet who have no real enjoyment of the certainty of their salvation, and peace with God! We were lately told of an old lady, ninety years of age, who had been in this state of uncertainty during her long life. She said to a christian friend, "My age tells me I must go soon; and I am not right; I know I am not right, and I must go; and I do not know what I must do." The friend replied, "Why it is all done, done by the Lord Jesus, long ago." She said, "Why did they not tell me that? they never told me that before." Thus the Lord was pleased to bring this aged one to the knowledge of the truth. She lived four years after this, to enjoy the riches of His grace who had done it all long ago.

Now is not this one case out of thousands? And this uncertainty marks the condition of such widely different classes: the multitude devoted to ritualistic practices; then the great crowd who merely attend this place, or that, for fashion's sake; then others constantly occupied with their feelings; others well read up in dry doctrines. Yet all alike, sadly uncertain as to their personal interest in Christ. How many, if not all, of these classes would say, "I am not right with God: I am not prepared to go, and I do not know what to do"! We would press this question home

to the reader's heart: Are you right with God? Can you say, "Being justified by faith we have peace with God?" Are you quite certain there is nothing between your soul and God? Is it assuredly true that God will remember your sins against you no more? Do not, for a moment, suppose that no one can have this assurance before the day of judgment. We only need to read the epistles, and see at once, that this assurance was the enjoyed privilege of all who believed God.

We will take one striking case. Especially so, as the history in Acts xvii. will shew us, that these believers had only heard the gospel for three weeks, when Paul and Silas were sent away by night to Berea. But mark, the gospel they heard was altogether different from Ritualism, fashionable religion, feelings, or mere doctrines. Not one word does the Holy Spirit record of ritualistic observances, or of anything like them; or of human feelings, or human doings. Their condition was far beyond the reach of all these, and needed a totally different remedy. Such is the condition now of our readers, if still unsaved. Can Ritualism, or human feelings and efforts, justify the guilty? Can these things wash you whiter than snow? Can they make you meet for the inheritance of the saints in light? You know they cannot; and after years of weary struggling, you are still not right—still uncertain as to your eternal future.

No, the gospel of God is not concerning sacraments and ceremonies, or doings and feelings, but concerning His Son. And thus the apostle preached in Thessalonica: "Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ." Thus did he reason with them out of the scriptures, in the synagogue three sabbath days.

Now concerning those who believed, the apostle says: "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." (1 Thess. i. 4, 5.) Was there anything peculiar in the way in which they believed this preaching? There was. The apostle says, "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." (1 Thess. ii. 13.)

We would ask our reader, Have you received the word of God because it is the word of God? The Son of man must be lifted up. Christ must needs have suffered. God's estimate of sin, and of your lost condition, was, that there was no other means by which God could be righteous in forgiving sins, but through the atoning death of Christ. Do what you will, you are still a guilty sinner; and if

God deals with you in righteousness, He can only, and must, condemn you. But here in this gospel, CHRIST is set before you. He must needs suffer. He has suffered. It is finished.

And now more than this : man is so utterly lost and ruined in sin, that there must be a new creation—a last Adam—Christ risen from amongst the dead, the beginning of the creation of God. He must needs have not only made reconciliation for sins by His suffering and death ; but there was the need of His resurrection from the dead. He has been both delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. And, believing God, we are justified, that is, accounted righteous. What gives assurance is this, that this salvation is wholly of God. It is the righteousness of God in justifying us by the death and resurrection of Christ. And it follows, that believing God we are justified by faith, and have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. God who cannot lie says so. It was so with these young believers. They believed God ; that Jesus must needs suffer, must die for their sins, the Just for the unjust. They believed God that man in the flesh was lost, ruined, guilty, and without strength, that Jesus must die and rise again, or remain alone. God had raised Him from the dead. They were thus introduced into the new creation. As elsewhere, they were a new creation ; “ old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new ;

and all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ." This precious Christ in resurrection they had received—"Jesus whom I preach unto you, is Christ."

Is it not evident that, receiving all this as the word of God, not as the word of man, they must have much assurance? Is it not also equally evident that, if you have not the same assurance of your salvation, and that wholly of God, you have not received the truth of the gospel as of God?

You do not yet consider your case so bad that you must lay aside every fond hope of improvement by Ritualism, by your doings or feelings, and accept the testimony of God, to the absolute need of the death of Jesus. "Through Jesus is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things." No, you say, it must not be through Jesus alone. It must be partly through myself, my prayers, my tears, my fastings, my feelings, my doings. Ah, this was not the gospel of God preached at Thessalonica. No, it was Christ; Christ once dead, now alive again. The living Jesus, the Christ. They believed the word of God about Christ, and by the power of the Holy Ghost they had much assurance. And the effect of this was such, as to enable the apostle to say, "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work

of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father.” And further, such was the blessed effect of this much assurance, that the word of the Lord sounded out from them to all the regions around. They were also “turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God ; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”

Now is not the effect of Ritualism, or dependence on our doings and feelings, the exact opposite of all this? Do not these things lead men to hate the gospel of God, and to hinder it, as much as possible, from being spread? And, instead of being turned to God from idols, men are fast turning from God to idols—the wafer worshipped as God ; and the blessed virgin worshipped as God ! And others, trusting in feelings, instead of Christ. Believing God, sins are all forgiven, and we are justified from all things ; waiting for His Son from heaven. (Acts xiii. 38 ; 1 Thess. i. 10.) Believing men, we must deny every word, and disbelieve every statement of God’s gospel. We must say no, no man can know in this world, that his sins are forgiven. No man can have assurance of his everlasting salvation until the day of judgment. Some go so far as to leave the poor departed soul, needing the prayers of other unbelievers here. And others

will ever pray, "In the day of judgment, good Lord, deliver us." Ah, beloved reader, what a fatal mistake! If not washed now in the blood of the Lamb, it will be for ever too late then. "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins."

Yes, the effect is truly wonderful when the heart is opened to receive the word of God, as it is indeed the word of God. Is not the word of God as immutable as Himself? Can He lie? Can He deceive us? Can He be unrighteous to the claims of Christ? Most certain is it, if He imputes our sins to us, we are for ever lost. If he deals with us in righteousness, how can we be justified? Jesus has suffered the Just for the unjust. Jesus is risen. God hath made Christ to be to believers, "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption." What can we want besides? Do not say, then, I do not know what to do to be right with God. All was done long ago. It is finished, Jesus has said it. God has accepted the atoning sacrifice. Jesus says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation [or judgment]; but is passed from death unto life."

Yes, is it not verily, verily? Is it not most certain as you read these words of Jesus, that if you hear His words, if you believe God that sent Him, then *now*, yes *now*, you have everlasting life, and Jesus says you shall not come into condemnation, but

you have passed from death unto life? May God by the Holy Spirit give you much assurance! Oh, remember, a never-ending eternity is a serious matter. How can you escape if you neglect this great salvation? Do you say, "I have not thought seriously about it yet." Then to this moment you are cruelly neglecting your eternal interest. God grant that you may never rest until you have the assurance of your personal interest in Christ. Is there anything so important, or so blessed as to believe God? To know Him, whom to know is life eternal? Oh, we entreat you, think of the atoning death of Jesus; of His resurrection; of forgiveness of sins, preached to you in God's own word, through Him. Will you still reject it? Will you still prefer the inventions of men; or the dreadful paths of sin? Remember, it is all done. He who has said, "It is finished," shews His hands and His side, and says, "Peace unto you." What peace! peace made by His blood, peace with God; rest in God for evermore. May this be your happy portion: and to Him be all praise!

THE rejection of Christ, was rejecting God in goodness and grace, as having come to save the lost.

ALL our blessings are founded on the accomplished work of Christ, but made known to us, and enjoyed by the Holy Ghost.

DIVINE LOVE.

III.

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon, us that we should be called the sons of God.”
(1 John iii. 1.)

MAN’S opinions and opposition to the grace of God do not alter the truth of scripture. What He hath said will stand for ever ! For “ God is not a man that he should lie, neither the Son of man that he should repent ; hath he said, and shall he not do it ? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good ? ” What a marvellous blessing to have a revelation from God in the written word, on which to rest one’s soul as to eternity ; and to know that God not only teaches doctrine, but is the Giver of eternal life to everyone that believeth on His Son ! Oh, the blessedness of the divine authority of the wondrous gospel which endureth for ever ! How assuring are the imperishable words of Him who said, “ Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away ! ”

The fact that those who have the Son of God as their Saviour, have now the gift of eternal life is plainly enough taught in holy scripture. Not only did the Saviour speak of those who have “ passed from death unto life,” and that he that believeth on Him “ hath everlasting life,” but He declared its absolute necessity, when He

said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again [or anew], he cannot see the kingdom of God." In this Epistle we also read, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." The absence of brotherly love is also stated as a proof that such have *not* eternal life, for it is added, "He that loveth not his brother abideth in death;" whatever his profession may have been, he is still dead in trespasses and in sins. How simple, and yet how very solemn! We see then that scripture speaks of some on earth who know that they have life—eternal life. Observe, it does not say who *feel* it, but who *know* it as a divine certainty. And John tells us that one object he had in writing this Epistle was that we should know it, be fully assured of it, without any question or misgiving. He says, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life." (1 John v. 13.) It is evident, then, that the denial of the present gift of eternal life is the virtual denial of Christianity. Thank God, He knew our deep need, our helplessness as well as our sinfulness, and He has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. Thus being in Christ, alive in Him, we are a new creation; and having life, Christ in us, can think, and feel, and act, in our finite measure, according to God, as strengthened by His Spirit and truth. We love what He loves, and hate what

He hates. In this way, the reality of having eternal life is demonstrated in the intelligence, affections, objects and ways of a child of God. Moreover, our Lord said, that God gave His Son that we might have everlasting life. It is also written, that "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son [or is not subject to the Son] shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John iii. 36.)

Divine love then is the source of all our blessings. God loved us when we were yet sinners. Every believer loves Him, but His love is first. "We love him because he *first* loved us." The spring and power of our love to Him is that He loved us first. Thus divine love subdued our wills, melted our cold hearts, attracted and won us for Christ. We saw in Him an object of eternal worth, unfading beauty, imperishable blessedness, and unchanging attractiveness. The cords of love drew us, His eternal excellencies made everything else seem poor. His gracious words, bound up our sin-stricken souls, His precious blood brought us title to glory, His triumphant resurrection gave us confidence; a glimpse by faith of the glorified Son of man banished every doubt, while His presentation of Himself as "the bright and morning star," moved the hearty response within us of "Come." Oh, the exceeding riches of divine grace in His kindness to us-ward! Surely the child of God can say—

“He saw me ruined in the fall,
And loved me notwithstanding all;
He saved me from my lost estate,
His loving-kindness, O how great!”

We are taught in scripture that “love is of God.” He is its source. He loves, for “God is love.” It is His nature. He is “light,” detecting everything, and convicting; and He is “love,” and has manifested it in having redeemed and brought us to Himself. We were not only in the dark, but we were “darkness,” yet have been brought into the light, and are now “light in the Lord.” We are not merely to walk up to our light, as some say, but to “walk in the light, as he is in the light.” We are to let the light—Christ in us—shine, and thus shew forth the characteristics of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. Thus divine love has reached us, and blessed us. Life eternal has been given to us in the Son, and our guilt has been removed by the sin-cleansing power of His precious blood.

The “manner of love” bestowed upon us, has been to bring us into the highest order of relationship with God as His creatures—children; children by birth, for we are born of God. Nothing can be higher than Sonship. He might have been pleased to save us from coming wrath, and to have brought us into heaven in the lowest possible rank of intelligent beings there, but that would not have

suited the deep eternal love of the Father's heart, nor would it have put that honour upon the accomplished work of Christ which it merited. Christ has therefore not only suffered for sins that He might bring us to God, but He has brought us into the same relationship to God as Himself. His first service, after He rose from the dead, was to acquaint His loved ones of this new and dear relationship. He said to Mary, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." (John xx. 17.) And so it is written in this epistle, "Beloved, now are we the sons [or children] of God." Well might the apostle have also so touchingly called our attention to it by saying, "Behold, ~~what~~ manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons [or children] of God." Marvellous relationship! How it attracts us to God, and gives us access with confidence into His holy presence! We learn too, from other scriptures, that the purpose of God is that we shall be "conformed to the image of his Son," that even our bodies of humiliation shall be changed and fashioned like unto His glorious body. With this also the Father's eternal purpose sweetly harmonises, in having "chosen us in him [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself,

according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." (Eph. i. 4-7.) Thus divine love has called us into the endearing relationship of children, into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

"THY COMFORTS DELIGHT MY SOUL."

Psalm xciv. 19.

Life would be sad and drear,
Saviour and Friend;
When gloomy clouds appear,
Saviour and Friend;
Could I not rest in Thee,
Wert Thou not dear to me,
Had I no hope in Thee,
Saviour and Friend.

Life would no solace know,
Saviour and Friend;
Nothing could soothe below,
Saviour and Friend;
Didst Thou not whisper peace,
When raging storms increase,
And bid the tempest cease,
Saviour and Friend.

But Thou art very dear,
Saviour and Friend;
First, Last, and all things here,
Saviour and Friend;
And well I know Thou'lt be,
Through all eternity,
Ever the same to me,
Saviour and Friend.

PLAIN PAPERS ON THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

THE COMING KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH.

HAVING considered the period of Israel's passing through her time of "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be," and the coming of the Lord Jesus in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, we will now look at those scriptures which describe the vast change that will take place on earth, and especially with regard to Israel, the chosen of Jehovah.

His "feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives," "and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." Jerusalem immediately becomes the centre of God's operations in the earth, the metropolis of all its worshipping peoples. "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth." (Zech. xiv.) Then shall the feast of the new moon be fulfilled. Just as the moon is hid for a time in darkness, so has Israel been hid in gross darkness, having refused the Light of the world. But then shall God say to her, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And

the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." (Is. lx.) It is now twenty-three centuries since the Spirit of God uttered this prophecy. Can we deny the truth of one part being fulfilled before our eyes? Not only at this moment does darkness cover the earth, but gross darkness the people—that is, Israel: but, oh, how soon the other part shall be fulfilled, the burst on Israel of heaven's glorious light, the coming of Jehovah Jesus, Messiah! The light of His glory in Jerusalem shall command all nations that are left on earth. "Kings to the brightness of thy rising."

Oh, reader, awake from thy dreamy sleep, lift up thine eyes to survey this coming glory on earth! Look at this marvellous scene at Jerusalem! Watch the ingathering of the long-lost and scattered sons of Abraham. They fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows. "The ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from afar, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee." See the sons of strangers delighting to build up its walls. Read the whole chapter in faith: every word must be fulfilled; it is God that hath spoken. As surely as Zion hath been hated, and her sons scattered amongst all nations; so surely does God say, "I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations." We have already seen that

the Lord Jesus makes it most certain that these words cannot be applied to the church, because, all through the period of Christianity, this very same Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles. (Luke xxi. 24-27.) When the Lord has made it so plain, is it not sad to misapply scripture, which speaks of Jerusalem's future glory, as though it meant the church?

How exceedingly important is a right understanding of the dispensations of God. Mark the Lord Jesus, infinite in wisdom; see Him enter the synagogue of Nazareth. He turns over and unrolls the prophet Isaiah. Why does He stop in the middle of the second verse, and close the book? So far He reads, and so far He could say, "This scripture is fulfilled in your ears." If we examine Isaiah lxi., we find three distinct periods in it—the period of grace, of vengeance, and of millennial blessing. The Lord reads those words which refer to the first, and closes the book. The second, the period of tribulation such as never was, has not yet come, and therefore that which follows it cannot have come. Hence the cities and towns of Palestine are yet in ruins. But when the days of the kingdom are come, then "they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations." How deeply interesting are these words of God, when we believe He really means to do as He says!

Do not mistake one fact—that all these prophecies refer to Zion and Jerusalem in the days of the kingdom. “For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory,” &c. (Is. lxii.) These words cannot possibly refer to the church, for in it there are neither Jews nor Gentiles, but all are one in Christ Jesus. But in the days of the kingdom, in all the prophets, we find the Jews, or Israel, and the Gentiles. Thus, then, there will only be two things on earth, while now, in the days of the church, there are three things—the Jews, the Gentiles, and the church of God. (1 Cor. x. 32.) During these days of the gathering of the church, Israel as a nation is cut off, and Palestine a desolation; but in the days of the kingdom of God on earth, they shall say, “This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste, and desolate, and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited.” (Ezek. xxxvi. 35.)

Oh, how few who read these inspired scriptures believe them! How few of Palestine’s tourists believe that that waste land is soon to be restored—nay, more than restored, to be like the garden of Eden. Yet such is surely the case. “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard

shall lie down with the kid ; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together ; and a little child shall lead them They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my mountain : for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Is. xi.)

How many say, "Thy kingdom come," who have never searched these scriptures to see what that kingdom will be when it comes. The happy peaceful scenes of paradise will then be more than restored.

This brings us to a point that Nicodemus ought to have known as a ruler of the Jews. Let us bear in mind that the words of the Lord Jesus to him refer not distinctively to the church, but to the kingdom. He says, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And again, He says, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." And, further, He tells him how this must be by the sovereign act of the Spirit. These are truths of the greatest importance, whether to the individual believer now, or as regards the coming kingdom of God on earth, of which our Lord spake. Jesus said to him, "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" As these things were so distinctly foretold in scripture, as characterising the coming kingdom, he ought to have known them. One word more, before we turn to those

important prophecies. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Yes, this was equally needed, whether for believers now, or the kingdom of God to come. The adorable Jesus must be lifted up on the cross. What a moment that is when this is first made known to a sinner! And what a day that will be when Israel discovers that He was wounded for their transgressions, and bruised for their iniquities!

We will now turn to some of the prophecies that describe the restoration and blessing of Israel. (Ezek. xxxvi. 22-36.) Mark, their restoration is entirely of God. "The wind bloweth where it listeth." God says, "I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean. . . . from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh. . . . And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them, and ye shall dwell in the land," &c.

Nicodemus, therefore, ought to have known these things. Thus the restoration of all things, in heaven and on earth, as spoken of in the prophets, is entirely of God. God will gather Israel out of

all nations, for His great name's sake. But all who enter the kingdom must be born again, wholly anew, entirely of God. He will sprinkle clean water upon them. That is, He will cleanse them from all their filthiness, and make them a holy people. God will give them a new heart. He will put the Holy Spirit in them. God will cause them to walk in His statutes. Thus they will not only be brought into the kingdom of God on earth, but be made capable of enjoying God. All is in direct contrast with the covenant of the law given at Sinai. (Read Jer. xxxi. 31-34.)

What delight it gives to the heart to contemplate all this, as the result of the faithfulness of God! The covenant engagement is entirely on God's part in every particular. He says, "Behold, I will gather them out of all countries whither I have driven them. . . . I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God; and I will give them one heart. . . . And I will make an everlasting covenant with them. . . . I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good." (Jer. xxxii. 37-43.) And mark, there is no thought of the church blest in the heavens here. It is evidently the kingdom come on earth. (Jer. xxxiii. 7-17.)

In keeping with all this, immediately after the judgment on the nations, the Lord says, "For

THEN will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering."
"Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing."
(Zeph. iii. 9-20.)

Thus we know that when the Lord shall restore Israel, and set up His kingdom on earth, He will cleanse them from all iniquity—He will give them a new heart. They must be born wholly anew; they must be fitted for the presence of the King, the Lord of Hosts. He shall dwell in their midst, rejoicing over them with joy. Still, we must remember the distinction between the church and the kingdom on earth. Both of God. One shall be the display of the glory of God in the heavens, the other the display of His glory on earth.

Oh, view the once desolate mountains of Palestine, now restored to the freshness and beauty of Eden. See her re-built cities filled with holy, happy inhabitants. Harken to the bursts of

praise. High Hallelujahs sound from every vale and every hill. See those happy nations, joyfully they come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts.

Oh, bright contrast to this world's surging scenes of sorrow and of sin! All then is peace: God rests in His love. No tempting adversary—Satan is put into the abyss—the nations learn war no more—Messiah reigns—all iniquity immediately judged. Oh, blessed Father, then shall thy kingdom have come, and thy will be done on earth as in heaven!

How strange that the scriptures, so full of these wondrous promises, should be so neglected, or denied. But bright as is the glory of the kingdom on earth, brighter far the church's glory above—"descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." (Rev. xxi.) Well may the beloved inspired John say, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." Could there be anything, or any glory, beyond this? May the Spirit of God awaken the whole church to the blessed hope of our Lord's return!



THE value of the work of Christ can never be altered, diminished or increased.

CORRESPONDENCE.

63. Ashford. You must not expect to have correct thoughts of many portions of the Epistle to the Hebrews, unless you remember that the persons addressed had been practically and educationally Jews, before they professed Christianity. Their danger was to abandon Christianity, and to return to Judaism. Strictly speaking, therefore, the former part of chapter vi. could not be fully applied to Gentile professors. Observe, their description does not include faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Tasting the good word of God, is not tasting that the Lord is gracious; and being made a partaker of the Holy Ghost as Balaam was, and thus empowered to utter such sublime prophecies, is not being sealed with the Holy Ghost, consequent on believing on our Lord Jesus. A person may have everything short of faith on our Lord Jesus Christ, and not be a child of God. There are many serious warnings in scripture, but we have not yet read of a child of God ever ceasing to be God's child. How could he?

64. "A LEARNER." No doubt Melchisedec was a man, one of Adam's posterity, of like passions with ourselves. But, in the inspired account, there is no mention of his descent, or death. Hence, as the account stands in scripture, he is, by its silence on these and other details, a remarkable type of Christ, the priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. He is therefore described in Hebrews vii. as a type of Christ as priest. Moreover, he was not a priest to offer sacrifice as was Aaron, but a blessing priest, and as such, had no successor. Thus Jesus, the Son of God is, and will be

for ever, a blessing Priest. Thanks be to God for ever for such a High Priest!

65. "H.," Tottenham. It is always painful to find that christian parents neglect to care for the souls of their children; but to hear of parents, who have taken their place with others in the Lord's name, as having gone forth unto Him without the camp to bear His reproach, sending their children to Ritualistic schools where they receive "holy crosses" (so called) on their little brows, really shocks us. We can only sigh and groan before the Lord over such appalling cases. Where can conscience be? We earnestly and affectionately entreat all christian parents who send their children to such places, and to other places where they themselves could not go, to judge themselves before the Lord, and confess their sin to Him, who has said by the Holy Ghost, "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Is it not clear that modern Ritualism undermines the finished work of the cross, subverts the gospel, puts up again the veil which has been rent, deceives the sinner, and places the believer with an earthly order of priesthood at a distance from God?

66. "J. B.," Kingstown. Thanks for your kind suggestion. May the Lord guide for His own glory!

67. "B.," Peckham Rye. Received.

68. Newton Abbot. Worship in spirit and in truth is not a question of expediency, but of obedience to the word of God, and subjection to the Holy Ghost. There will then surely be both reverence and godly fear. It seems to us that those who sit as you describe during united prayer, can have little sense in their souls of what becomes those who are really praying, unless bodily disease,

or infirmity, prevent the reverent posture of kneeling. Above all, God looks for "the prayer of faith," and "praying in the Holy Ghost."

69. "J. W.," Plumstead. We cannot accept your paper. Controversy is not the object of our little serial.

70. "J.," Manchester. Thanks for your encouraging letter. We will consider your kind suggestion.

71. "A.," Market Harbro'. 1 John iii. 7-9 teaches, 1st, that righteous actings, according to Him who is righteous, shew the person to be born of God, and "in Christ" who is made unto him "righteousness." 2nd, That he who practises sin is not of God, but of the devil. 3rdly, That he who is born of God does not practise sin, that his new nature cannot sin. This subject has been more fully gone into in our issue for April last.

James i. 12-15 shews that the path of trial is the path of blessing. (Ver. 12.) God can and does try us in circumstances, bodily health, and the like, in order to bless us; but God cannot tempt to the drawing forth of lust. (Vers. 13-15.)

72. "NAOMI," Gosport. The divine order in scripture is "spirit and soul and body." (1 Thess. v. 23.) It comprises man's whole being. Soul is used often for man as a whole, both in the Old Testament and the New. "The sons of Joseph which were born him in Egypt were *two souls*; all *the souls* of the house of Jacob which came into Egypt were threescore and ten." (Gen. xli. 27.) In the ship with Paul, there were "two hundred, threescore, and sixteen *souls*." (Acts xvii. 37.) The word "spirit" is used of a beast, but only in one place, though not apparently distinguishing it from its soul, which perishes in death. (Eccl. iii. 21.)

Man's soul and spirit are from God's in-breathing, as distinct from the body which He formed from the dust of the ground, and it is therefore immortal, or exists for ever. "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Gen. ii. 7.) We never read of a mortal soul, but we do of a "mortal body." Scripture clearly distinguishes between soul and spirit; the word as the sharp sword of the Spirit, only can separate them. "For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to *the dividing asunder of soul and spirit*, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb. iv. 12.) Spirit and soul in man are alike undying. "The *spirit* shall return unto God that gave it;" and "fear not them which kill the body, and are not able to kill the *soul*." Beasts have life, or souls of an inferior order, but they are part of their organisation. (See Gen. i. 30 marg., vii. 22.) The *soul* is generally spoken of as the seat of the affections, but this faculty is possessed by brutes in measure, and in an inferior character. "The *spirit*," as another has said, "is that which is most excellent in our moral being, that by which we are placed in relationship with God, and distinguished from the brutes." "What man knoweth the things of a man, save *the spirit of man* which is in him?" "The Spirit itself beareth witness with *our spirit*, that we are the children of God." (1 Cor. ii. 11; Rom. viii. 16.)

By "conscience" we understand the inward moral sense of good and evil. To know good and evil, is God's way of describing the acquisition of conscience when man fell. Man naturally

therefore has a conscience, and when merely knowing that he has done what is evil, he has a *defiled conscience*. (Tit. i. 15.) When he judges himself to be guilty in the sight of God, he has an *evil conscience*. (Heb. x. 22.) When, however, through believing God's testimony concerning the blood of His Son, he is assured by God's word that he has remission of sins, he has a *purged conscience* — "How much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience." (Heb. ix. 14.) After this, in walking obediently to the word of God, he has a *good conscience*, he has the intuitive perception that he is doing God's will, has the testimony that he pleases God. Happy are those who exercise themselves in keeping a *conscience void of offence* both toward God and toward men. (Acts xxiv. 16.)

With regard to "thoughts" the Christian needs both watchfulness and decision, lest the dreadful sin of unbelief be allowed, or Satan's fiery darts admitted. The spiritual Christian disallows evil thoughts, judges them in the presence of God, and thus great evils are often nipped in the bud. One of faith's activities is "casting down imaginations [reasonings], and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity *every thought* to the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor. x. 5; Phil. iv. 8.)

73. "K," Kingstown. Your kind letter and pieces of poetry have been received. May the Lord be with you in your daily work of faith, and labour of love, and bless souls greatly, for the glory of our Lord Jesus! It is well when we can precede and follow the spread of the truth, with earnest prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving.

JUDGMENT COMING UPON SCOFFERS.

“And he went up from thence unto Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head. And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them. And he went from thence to mount Carmel, and from thence he returned to Samaria.”—2 KINGS II. 23-25.

MEN will not believe God. They despise His goodness, refuse His grace, and scoff at His declarations of the future. Like Pharaoh, they say, “Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?” Or, if they acknowledge God at all, it is that He is a hard Master, reaping where He has not sown, and demanding from us more than we can possibly render. Such, therefore, dread the future, tremble at the realities of death and judgment, and have no rest for their souls.

Ever since sin came into the world, man’s way has been to despise God. An Old Testament prophet’s testimony was, “Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you.” This, too, was quoted by an apostle in his preaching of the gospel, nearly seven hundred years afterwards. Men in early times so

despised God, that they made gods with their own hands, and worshipped them. Afterwards they despised Moses' law, and despised the testimony of prophets. The Lord Jesus was despised of men. The gospel, too, was so despised, that on one occasion an apostle exclaimed, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish." And now, in reference to the statements of scripture as to the coming of the Lord Jesus from heaven, we are told, "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." (2 Pet. iii. 3, 4.) The truth is, that man's unbelief rejects God's word whatever it may say; while faith receives it, and rests upon it, because it is the word of Him who cannot lie.

One truth which stands most intimately in connection with the doctrine of the Lord's coming, and very precious to the believer's heart, is the change and translation of those that are Christ's at His coming. Nothing is more clearly revealed. The change in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, will at once cause mortal bodies to become immortal, and corruptible to put on incorruption; and not only so, but the dead in Christ having been raised incorruptible, and the living who are Christ's changed, they will then be together caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so be for ever with the Lord.

Wondrous translation ! Let the reader ponder 1 Thessalonians iv. 16, 17. Nothing can be more plainly stated. The language is simple and precise. No doubt can remain on any fair mind, who is subject to the authority of scripture, as to its meaning. There is no trace of judgment in the scene. Not one unbeliever is there. It is Christ descending from heaven, and His saints caught up to meet Him in the air. It is not yet Christ revealed from heaven in flaming fire, or standing on the Mount of Olives, as He surely will when He comes out of heaven *with us*, for then there will be no translation. Then every eye shall see Him coming to judge the world in righteousness. Then He will judge first the living, and, after a thousand years' reign, the wicked dead at the great white throne. When Christ comes *for us* who are His, He will descend from heaven, and we shall be caught up to meet Him in the air, and so be for ever with the Lord. This is our blessed and purifying hope. God says so in His word. He has revealed it for our comfort ; and the Spirit teaches this, for "The Spirit and the bride say, Come !"

It is this translation of the saints at our Lord's coming which so many will not believe. They say it cannot be, because the rising of millions of saints all in a moment from earth to heaven is opposed to scientific principles. They loudly exclaim that it is contrary to the laws of gravitation, and

cannot be reconciled with the best established principles of philosophy. But such persons forget that God is Almighty ! that He can do everything, that Christ Himself, a risen Man, went up to heaven ; that His disciples saw Him go up higher and higher, until a cloud received Him out of their sight. They forget also that Stephen saw Him after this standing at the right hand of God ; and that Saul was struck down to the earth, and was blind for three days, by a sight of the glorified Jesus in the heavens.

Again, men reason instead of believing God, and say, It is not likely that Christ is coming again, and His people translated, because there is no sign of such an event—nothing to indicate such a serious movement, because things continue as they were. Civilization steadily increases, the spread of knowledge is immense, the gospel taken to every quarter of the globe, wisdom in the management of affairs rapidly progresses. They *see* nothing to mark such a solemn event, and therefore will not *believe*. They know not that no sign will be given, no particular alteration in circumstances expected, but that the world will go on with its pursuits of business and pleasure, until the Lord comes. So those who reason from appearances, instead of hearkening to the word of God, only go astray ; and this deluding doctrine, with its despising and scoffing ways, we may expect to continue. “ For when they shall say peace and

safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape." How appalling is the despiser's doom ! The truth is that it shall be so, for God hath said it, and who can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou ? "The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations."

But Enoch was translated. What can men say about that ? He was a man of like passions with ourselves. He believed God. He walked with God. He had sons and daughters, and feared and honoured God ; and he had this testimony, That he pleased God. He knew that men were unbelieving and ungodly, and would be so ; and prophesied that the Lord would come and cut them off in judgment, as He certainly will. In due time God took him bodily up to heaven. But what did men think of this ? They despised the idea of his having been translated, and went hither and thither to look for him, but, of course, they found him not. We are told *he was not found*. "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death ; and was not found, because God had translated him ; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." (Heb. xi. 5.) Thus we see that the scoffers and despisers in Enoch's day would not believe that "God had translated him." But, after patience and long-suffering, God's judgment overtook them. "The flood came, and took them all away."

Elijah also was translated. What do the would-be wise philosophers of the nineteenth century say to that? Elijah knew that he would be taken. Fifty sons of the prophets saw him cross the Jordan on dry ground, and Elisha with him. After this, "a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven," and Elisha saw him go up. And what then? Men would not believe that he had been translated; and fifty strong men went over the country for three days, to see if they could find him. They said, "Lest peradventure the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley." Such was their unbelief. They did not believe that God had really translated him. "They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, *but found him not.*" (Vers. 16, 17.)

Nor was this all. When Elisha, the man of God, came to Bethel, the same despising spirit seems to have been wide-spread there. At Bethel, which name means house of God, it might scarcely have been expected. But so it was. And it is even now among professors of Christianity that there are found those who scoff at the doctrine of the Lord's personal coming, and the translation of the saints to meet Him in the air. It has been held up by some as ridiculous. Parents have indulged in despising these precious truths of scripture, and young children have caught the error; for it is

easy to teach a little child to scoff at the truth of God, but it needs the Holy Ghost to teach aright that which is divine. We read that as this aged man of God "was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head." (Ver. 23.) Go up where? Go up where it is said Elijah is gone. Thus they "mocked." Thus the glorious truth of translation to heaven was despised. But the end here, too, was terrible judgment, for when the man of God cursed them in Jehovah's name, "there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them." (Ver. 24.)

And so now. Are there not scoffers, saying, Where is the promise of His coming? Are there not those who mock and despise the Christian's hope of being translated—caught up to meet the Lord in the air? May such take warning ere it be too late! *Now* repentance and remission of sins are preached in the Saviour's name; *now* He receives, pardons and blesses for ever the greatest sinners that come to Him to save them! Still He says, "Him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out." But, oh, unsaved reader, beware lest the Lord Jesus come before you have really believed in Him to the saving of your soul, when you will be for ever shut out, instead of being shut in for ever with Jesus and His blood-washed saints. Oh, trifling, reasoning, unbelieving reader, beware! "Because

there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke; then a great ransom cannot deliver thee!" Again, we say, Beware, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish!"

UTTERANCES OF AN AGED SERVANT OF CHRIST.

WHEN we have settled we are going home, we have to wait here till *He* call. He may keep us for service, if He does not take us to rest. It is this that dear Bellett would not hear of; I suppose his time was come. We are His, not our own, and it is a privilege to serve, if better to be gone.

I find it a good thing to think of going, and feel my life depends on *Him*, not simply on age. The old Psalm version says, "Tarry thou the Lord's leisure, be strong, and he shall stablish thy heart."

Some have to wait in His hands, and as service is a privilege from Him, so the work is done by Him; but we ought to work from Himself. I have not felt any such call to work this time in London, though I have gone on, more entering into scripture latterly than ever, yet not a bit of it, directly at any rate, for use in speaking. I have been working up a little in case "I go home to be no more seen."

THE END OF THE YEAR.

HAVE WE WALKED WITH GOD?

It is written of Enoch that he walked with God three hundred years. How far have we walked with God during the year that will soon be past? To walk with God is surely to do His will. But in order to do His will, it is evident we must know what that will is: what the present mind of God is. As the apostle says, to all who have been justified by faith, and have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, "that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." Now in order to know the present mind of God, we must have spiritual intelligence to understand the dispensation, or period, in which we are found. Many things which were strictly according to the will of God, His very commands during the dispensation of the law, are now spoken of in the inspired word during the period of the church on earth, as "weak and beggarly elements," and to return to them would be to act exactly contrary to the will of God. (Gal. iv. 9.)

If we read the scriptures, is it not most clear that, for fifteen centuries, Israel, as a nation, occupied the ways of God dispensationally? Now during the period from Pentecost to the coming of the Lord, what is His mind? Is it not "the assembly which is his body"? (Eph. i. 22.) Is it a fact that the present work of God, according

to eternal purpose, is the assembly, the one body of Christ? And is not this stupendous fact greatly forgotten?

Well, in keeping with this fact, in order that we "may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God," in all humility of mind, the Holy Spirit presents the truth of the one body as a formative power of walk, even in the Epistle to the Romans. And we shall find that the spiritual apprehension of this will affect the preceptive instruction that follows. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." (Rom. xii. 4, 5.)

Have we walked with God during the past year according to this foundation truth? Have we regarded all believers on earth as members of the one body of Christ? Have we written, have we spoken and acted as those who believe it? "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. For by one Spirit are we all baptised 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. 12.) Have we then been "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"?

Let it also be observed that the full statement of the truth of the assembly, the one body, is that on

which precept is founded in the Ephesians. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism." And when the ascended Christ gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; was it not for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of THE BODY of Christ?

Yes, this is the present thought of God—the one body. Through the year that is nearly past, yea, for eighteen hundred years, God's thought has been the assembly, "the one body," chosen in Christ before the world began. Oh, think of the love of Christ! "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it . . . 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."

Have our thoughts and ways been in harmony with this blessed fact, That all believers on earth form this one body of Christ? Or have we been forming other bodies, in opposition to the plans and thoughts of God? Take a simple illustration. A certain nobleman gives out an order for the building of a mansion. The architect draws the plans exactly to scale, with its elevations, sections and quantities, &c., as they say. The materials are provided: workmen are employed to carry out the plan of the nobleman, as described and drawn

by the architect. The nobleman expects care and attention, for the mansion is for his son. Now the workmen forget the plans of the one mansion, and behold them hard at work building, ten or a hundred houses of their own, each according to his own taste. One says, This is my house, another says, and this is mine ; another says, it does not matter what house you are building, all that you see are the materials of the nobleman. How would all this appear in the eyes of the nobleman? Would anyone of these be doing the acceptable will of the nobleman? Surely not. If we go back to the beginning, it could be said of all believers, "and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, 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.) The thought here is one building, not many buildings. This was not an invisible building, or an invisible church, or assembly. Oh, let us examine the plans, the eternal design, the drawings of the divine architect, the Holy Ghost, of the one assembly, the one body of Christ. All the material, that is all the redeemed on earth, designed according to the revealed will of God, yea, and baptised into one body! Can we grasp this stupendous fact? It is quite true that every act of man, apart from the guidance of the Spirit, spoils and denies this.

We should expect the architect to inform the builders that it is one mansion which is designed to be built. This fact would be the very base of all his instructions. In like manner we find, both in Ephesians and in Romans, that there is ONE BODY, and this is a foundation statement affecting subsequent instruction and precept. Have we been in fellowship with God in His present special work during the year nearly gone? Have we been remembering that the one assembly, the one body, is to be the bride of the Lamb. It is God's one great thought and purpose in this world at present. It is the taking out of the bride for His beloved Son ! Or, if viewed under the figure of a building, the one temple holy in the Lord ; not many buildings, but an habitation of God.

Now if it were utterly wrong for the builders to lay aside the plans of the one mansion, and each build a house to his own liking ; can it be right for us to lay aside the distinct instructions of God's word as to the ONE BODY, and be occupied in forming a body of Christians, a party, a sect, each one to his liking? Has the evangelist taught every convert that he belongs to the one body of Christ, and now should shew it? Or has he led that convert to one of the bodies of men? Has the pastor's heart taken in the whole of the one assembly, the one body? or, like the builders, has he forgotten the one mansion, and

merely cared for his house, his church as men say? So of the teacher; and so has every act of service been either right or wrong according to God, or contrary to His revealed will. It will be profitable for both writer and reader of this little paper, to examine their course during the past year by the word of God.

To return, and, by the grace of God, to seek to do His will, may involve the giving up of very many cherished plans of our own. No doubt the builders, who had laid aside the nobleman's plans and instructions, would have to cease building their own houses with his materials. And if we learn our mistakes in building different religious bodies, and thus setting aside both the will of God the Holy Ghost, and the instructions of the word of God, we must certainly "cease to do evil," and then "learn to do well."

We can say this has been the desire of our hearts, however feebly accomplished, or however much we may have failed. We have sought to write for the comfort and edification of the whole church of God. We desire in our hearts, in the love of Christ, to embrace every true Christian on earth as a member of the one body of Christ.

It may be said these are difficult times in which to shew out the unity of the Spirit. Can it be otherwise in a world where all is against God? Were there ever more difficulties in the way of righteousness and christian holiness in business?

or even in ordinary life? Is this any reason why we should give up practical righteousness in all our ways? Far be the thought. "But we have so failed in the past." Surely past failure should awaken us to more earnest prayer and watchfulness, and more unfeigned dependence on God. For builders so far to have forgotten their instructions as described above, would meet with instant dismissal: not so with our God and Father. He waits to be gracious. But let every man take heed how he buildeth. Is it not a sad thing for a Christian to be building wood, hay and stubble, though he will be saved so as by fire, and all his works burnt up? (1 Cor. iii.)

Not only is another year almost gone, but "the night is far spent, the day is at hand." Yes, the long dark night of man's self-will, and Satan's rule in this world is far spent; compared with eternity, it is but a moment, and we shall meet the Lord in the air. This is the blessed hope of all the redeemed. It is the next event. As surely as January succeeds the end of the year; so surely the coming of the Lord succeeds this night now far spent. And whilst we hold most sure and dear to our hearts the perfect acceptance of every believer in Christ, for this is wholly of God, yet is it not also true that we should labour, that we may be acceptable to Him? For we must all appear (or be manifested) before the judgment-seat of Christ; and though

accepted in Him, yea, in Him as the One that died for our sins, and rose again, yet, as to reward or approval, it is "that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. v. 9, 11.)

Beloved reader, how will you, how shall we, meet His face? Can He say, "Well done;" if we are walking contrary to His revealed will? Oh, how much that is highly esteemed among men will be utterly disapproved by Him! Is it not high time to awake? Is it not high time to test everything we are doing by the word of God? There, like the architect's plans drawn to a correct scale, so the Holy Ghost has revealed the eternal plan, purpose, thought of God: the predestined assembly of God—the one body. Not a body, but the "one body." Every believer a member of that one body. All the gifts of the ascended Christ for the edification of that one body. (1 Cor. xii.; Eph. iv.) It is the will of Christ, yea, we hear Him pleading with the Father telling out His desire, that the practical unity of those given to Him should be shewn, "That they ALL may be one; as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." (John xvii.) May He grant that all our ways may be moulded by the desires of His own heart. And to Him now, and when we see His face, be all praise! Worthy is the Lamb.

REMARKS ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

Chapters iii.-xvii.

IN John iii. the form and eternal foundation of God's acting in grace to man is laid. God *loves* and *gives*. But this is not enough. God's *compelling* grace must be exercised. He goes forth and *seeks* in chapter iv. The Father seeks "*true*" worshippers, but before there can be this, there must be *life*.

In chapter v. He *quickens*, gives *new life*, and in chapter vi. this "*life*" is fed with the "*true bread from heaven*," which is Christ.

In chapter vii. the heart is filled with Christ—runs over, and flows out like a *river* to others.

In chapter viii. the soul is brought into the "*perfect place of liberty*." "*Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*;" and not only free, but in chapter ix. the *eyes are opened*—fitted to walk through a world that is all in pitch darkness, and while so walking, in chapter x. there is the *Shepherd's* care and love over the sheep, even to the laying down of His life.

But if He dies in chapter x., in chapter xi. He is the "*resurrection and the life*." And on this new resurrection ground there is *union*. "*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.*" (Chap. xii.)

In chapter xiii. we have the present ministry of Christ to, and for the believer. Christ is away in the new place, and the believer is united to Him there, so no uncleanness can be tolerated.

Chapter xiv. is what the believer has got while Christ is away. "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost," the only power for witnessing for an absent Christ. This brings in responsibility, so in chapter xv. it is "*fruit bearing.*" The result of all this brought out in chapter xvi. is, the world and its prince are *judged*. The blessed and eternal result to the believer, hear from Christ's own words: "Father, *I will* that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am." (Chap. xvii.) Reader, is this bright future yours: "with and like Jesus for ever?"



DIVINE LOVE.

IV.

DIVINE love is perfect. Not our love to Him, but His love to us. "Not that we loved God, but that he loved us." Yet we do love, because we are born of God; for "every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love." (1 John iv. 7, 8.) But, as we have before observed, His love is first, not ours; for "we love him because he *first* loved us." Divine love embraced us in our

worst and lowest state, when in our sins, rebellious, and far from Him. "For God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. v. 8.) Let us never forget that His love then was *first*, and the alone source of love in us, for "love is of God."

Thus divine love has come out in all its perfectness, in having most blessedly met us, in the deepest depths of our sinfulness, in the Person and work of His only-begotten Son. He not only came where we were, and loved us as we were, but did, in His atoning work on the cross, all that God's righteousness demanded, and all that such sinners of the Gentiles needed, to make us forever happy in the presence of God. In unspeakable grace, He fully met the just judgment due to us as sinners, perfectly satisfied all the righteous requirements of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, purged our sins, glorified the Father, triumphed over our foes—death, Satan, and the grave—and now gives us the victory. Thus are we set free for ever by divine, perfect love.

The love of God is perfect too in having given us Christ's place in the heavenlies. Not only are we called unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, but He has given us now the highest possible standing, even in Him who is in the very glory of God. We are a new creation in Christ; accepted in Him, blessed in Him, in heavenly places; even in Him, in whom dwells "the fulness of the Godhead

bodily," and who is "the Head of all principality and power."

Thus divine love has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. And in Him we are "complete"—filled to the full in Him. This God has done. It is our present standing as not in the flesh, but in Christ Jesus. Wondrous blessedness! We are in Christ, and Christ is in us, our hope of glory. While consciously standing in the full and changeless favour of God, we wait for His Son from heaven; we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. His perfect love encircles us in Christ. We are always seen by Him in all the acceptability and nearness of Christ Himself—the ascended, glorified man Christ Jesus. Thus we are loved divinely, perfectly, unchangeably. Divine love has given us the same place as Christ.

" So near, so very near to God,
I cannot nearer be ;
For in the person of the Son,
I am as near as He."

Is Christ alive for evermore? Then have we eternal life in Him, for He is our life. Is He near to God? then are we as near to God as He, for we are in Him. "But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." (Eph. ii. 13.) Is He righteous? then is He our righteousness, for we are "made the righteousness of God in him;" "even the right-

eousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe." (2 Cor. v. 21 ; Rom. iii. 22.)

We are also brought into the same relationship with the Father as Christ. We are sons of God, and loved with the same love. Was He loved by the Father perfectly and unchangeably? Then are we ; and this He would have us now enjoy. He said to the Father, " I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." Again, He said, " I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one ; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and *hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*" (John xvii. 23, 26.) Thus we can truly say—

" The love wherewith He loved the Son,
Such is His love to me."

And in sweet and precious harmony with the Father's perfect love to us, we find the Son saying, " As the Father hath *loved me*, so have I loved you ;" and with this all His ways to us-ward agree, both in His life and in His death. There was no selfishness in Him. We never find Him doing anything for Himself. He pleased not Himself. He so loved us that He desired that we should enjoy everything *with* Him, be where He is, reign with Him. Even now He would have us participate in His own peace and joy. He said not only " Peace I leave with you," that is, peace

of conscience as to sins and salvation, peace *with* God ; but He added, " My peace I give unto you." He would have us, while passing through this scene of sorrow and trial, share His own calm, unperturbed, unruffled peace in our hearts and thoughts. And His joy also, for, when commending His own loved ones to the Father, He said, " These things I speak in the world, that they might have my *joy fulfilled* in themselves." (John xvii. 13.) And as to glory, He will share that with us also, for He said to the Father, " The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them ; that they may be one, even as we are one." (John xvii. 22.)

And wonderful as all these actings of divine love are, it is perfect also as to our present endowments. Besides the full revelation of the whole counsel of God in the written word, the Holy Ghost, the other Comforter, has come, and that not as a transient visitor, but to abide with us for ever. The same divine person who came down upon the spotless Son of God, and abode upon Him, because of the perfectness of His person, has, consequent upon an accomplished redemption, indwelt for ever those who have remission of sins, and thus become cleansed vessels in whom He could take up His abode. Thus, the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, is in us as the seal and earnest of the inheritance, to guide us into all truth, to glorify Christ, and testify of Him, to make us know the things which are freely given to us of God ; to

shed abroad His love in our hearts, produce in us thoughts, affections and feelings suited to children of God, and to raise the cry within us of Abba Father, and also of Come, Lord Jesus ! for “ the Spirit and the bride say, Come ! ” It is by the Holy Ghost too that we know that the Lord Jesus is a divine person, and that we are united to Him ; as He said, “ At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” (John xiv. 20.) Having made us perfect as to the conscience, being purged by the blood of Christ, so that we might have no more conscience of sins, we are indwelt by the Holy Ghost, and by Him united to Christ who is at the right hand of God, our life, righteousness and peace.

Nor does that blessed One who loved us and gave Himself for us, love us less because He is gone to the Father, for there He sustains the most important offices, for us which perfect love could. As our High Priest He succours us in temptation, sympathizes with our infirmities, and ever lives to intercede for us according to our need ; so that He may carry us through every difficulty, and save us as saints right on to the end. As the Bishop or Overseer of our souls nothing escapes His eye, and there is no emergency or difficulty for which He is not sufficient. As the great Shepherd of the sheep, each is an object of His constant interest and care. He feeds, He guards, He seeks, He finds, He keeps, He restores, He heals ! The feeble

and burdened He specially cares for, the young and helpless He carries in His bosom. As our Advocate with the Father, He takes up our cause if we sin, so that our communion with the Father may be restored; and that, as His servants, we might have part with Him, He cleanses the defilement we may have contracted, with the washing of water by the word.

Thus "perfect love" has met us in every respect. He could not love us more, and He will not love us less. His love is "perfected *in us*," by the indwelling of God, for nothing could be greater in us than God. "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." His love too is perfected *with us*, in giving us the same place, same relationship, same life, standing, and nearness as Christ Himself, "so that as he is, so are we in this world." "Herein is our love made perfect [or has love been perfected with us] that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us." (1 John iv. 17-19.) Thus the Father loves us as He loved His Son; and when we are consciously in the circle of His love, dwelling in love, we dwell in God and God in us—"He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." (Ver. 16.)