

Things New & Old,

A

GOSPEL MAGAZINE,

WITH PAPERS FOR THE FLOCK OF GOD.



“Christ is all.”—Col. iii. 11.



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Things New and Old.

HEAVEN OR HELL?

It is an appalling thought that every one of us must be either eternally saved or eternally lost. There is no middle place. It is impossible to be in a neutral position. The Judge is quickly coming to execute His awful work. None can escape His flaming eye, none can flee beyond His reach. Some will go into everlasting punishment, and others into eternal glory. How vastly momentous is the subject! How intensely solemn! Can anything be compared to its weighty importance? Is anything so worthy of consideration? What a difference between one lifting up his eyes being in torments, and another lifting up his eyes on the Saviour's face in perpetual joy and glory! Well might the blessed Lord say, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

The scriptures give the fullest warrant for our having *now* the assurance of eternal salvation; and most blessed it is to know that we have passed from death unto life, from condemnation to justification, from enmity and rebellion to reconciliation

and peace. It seems strange that persons who read the Bible should have a moment's rest till they can say with the patriarch "*I know that my Redeemer liveth;*" or, with the apostle, "*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.*" Many, however, with the Bible in their hands, appear to live as if the present time-state would last for ever; as if there were no eternal torment to fear and flee from, no eternal glory to be enjoyed. So dull is the human mind as to a right contemplation of these everlasting realities, that, except the Spirit of God arrest and enlighten the conscience, men perseveringly pursue the broad road that leadeth to destruction, deaf to the gospel call, unmoved by the Saviour's grace; and in vain work hard to find happiness without having salvation.

Our Lord, however, often raised in the clearest and most unmistakable way the warning voice. On one occasion He spoke of some going away into everlasting punishment, and of others into life eternal. Again, He declared that some would be cast into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. He spake of some who would be rejoicing at the marriage supper, while others are bound hand and foot and taken away. He referred to some who go into the marriage when the Bridegroom comes, while others are for ever shut out. The apostle,

too, plainly declares that some will be "for ever with the Lord," and others "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." Seeing then what eternal consequences are involved, doth it not behove men to obtain a solid, scriptural assurance, that they are delivered from the wrath to come, and at peace with God?

But WHO ARE THE LOST? for scripture speaks of living men as lost; that Jesus came to seek and to save that which was *lost*. In a word, they are without Christ. Whatever else they may have, they have not Christ as their Saviour. This is the vital and decisive point. The sure mark of a lost soul is that he has not embraced Christ as his only Saviour; he has not received Him whom God has sent. He is therefore in his sins, unforgiven, unsaved, lost.

There may be the greatest possible variety of natural character, educational attainment, or of surrounding circumstances; still men are lost, because they have not Christ. "He that hath not the Son of God, hath not life." Some may be moral, others immoral; some chaste, others rude; some professors of religion, others scoffers; some nominal protestants, others professed infidels; some clever and argumentative on religious topics, others profoundly ignorant; still they have not life, they are dead in sins, lost, because they have not received the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour. Nothing can be clearer, or

more plainly set forth in scripture; and the consideration of it is very solemn. Their hearts have not been melted by the Saviour's love, they see no beauty in Him, they discern nothing charming in His gracious voice; they have been deaf to His groans and cries; His agony, and death, and blood-shedding for sinners are nothing to them. Their souls have not been affected by eternal realities; their comforts and expectations are limited to the narrow bounds of time and sense. They believe only what they see, or what they can prove. They believe not on Him whom having not seen *we* love. Benevolent and generous to their fellow-creatures they may be, but they know nothing of the sweetness of ministering to Christ's needy ones for His sake. Such are the *lost* round about us; and the gospel of the grace of God is preached that dead souls may live, and the lost be found. Blessed are those of whom it can be said, "He was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found."

Now let us look at THE DOOM OF THE LOST. Having lived in rejection of the Saviour, they die unsaved. How solemn is the thought, that some, with whose faces we are so familiar, may possibly fall under God's everlasting punishment! Yea, we are certain that it must be so, if they continue to refuse to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. "If ye *believe not* that I am he, ye shall die in your sins . . . whither I go ye can-

not come ;” thus they are excluded for ever from the glorious presence of God and the Lamb, eternally separated from the fountain of love, life, light and joy, and for ever in outer darkness. As body and soul have been engaged in sinning against God, so body and soul must be under the inflictions of divine wrath, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. When men die, they vainly imagine they have done with their bodies for ever ; but it is not so. They may be laid in the grave, and worms may feed upon them, or the corruptible frame moulder into dust, but the body must rise again. “All that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth.” “There shall be a resurrection both of the just and the *unjust*.” The dead, small and great, must stand before God. Body and soul must be banished from His presence. Body and soul must be cast into outer darkness. They will be bound hand and foot and taken away, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. “Fear him,” said Jesus, “who is able to destroy both *body* and *soul* in hell.” Independently of the mental anguish, the bodily suffering must be dreadful beyond conception. We experience pain now connected with what may be called natural sickness, and we realise the comfort of the tear of sympathy, and relieving remedies ; but the pain then will be deserved infliction for transgressions and sins ; it will be unmitigated wrath poured out by divine

justice, without sympathising friends to comfort, or possible means of affording one moment's relief; but ceaseless and everlasting punishment in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone. The interminable weeping, the constant shrieks of bitterest remorse, the thickest, blackest darkness, the intolerable anguish, the ceaseless frown of God, the pit filled with vilest companions, give us but a faint idea of what God has revealed concerning the eternal misery of the lost. No tongue can possibly describe their wretchedness. The power of mental reflection, the ability to bring past scenes to remembrance, the knowledge of having rejected the only Saviour, the certain sense that some they once knew here are for ever blessed in glory, while they feel tormented in the flame, with vain and ceaseless longings for one drop of water to cool their parched tongues, while they so bitterly experience that they are separated for ever from all relief; the deepest remorse too connected with the thought that had they in their time-state bowed to the Saviour's name, hearkened to His voice, wept at His wounded feet, believed in the efficacy of His blood, how unutterably different their state would be; all this and much more will combine to fill up the torments of those who die in their sins. O the inconceivable blackness of eternal despair! What artist could delineate it? What words can describe it! What finite mind can grasp it! Surely it needed

a gracious, mighty Saviour to redeem from such destruction. The blood of Jesus, and nothing less, was necessary to be shed in order that divine justice could exclaim, "Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom." Yes, Jesus is mighty to save; and still He says of all who come to Him, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues! O grave, I will be thy destruction;" so that the coming sinner can now triumphantly respond, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

How awful, then, is the instruction conveyed by such words of scripture as "everlasting destruction," "eternal fire," "everlasting punishment"! Surely men do well to inquire like the prophet, "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" Should not every one who reads these lines honestly put the question to his own conscience, "Shall I be there?" Some may hesitate, but we earnestly entreat them to make this pointed and personal inquiry. Others may reply, that it is impossible to give a decided answer to such a question. No, dear reader, bear with us when we still press for a reply, for the scripture saith, "He that believeth on him [the

Lord Jesus Christ] is *not condemned*; but he that believeth not is *condemned already*, because he hath not believed on the name of the only-begotten Son of God." (John iii. 18.) Can any language, dear reader, be plainer, to shew you, that at this moment, the Searcher of hearts beholds you either *not condemned*, or *condemned already*? Let your own conscience then respond.

There may be others who say, It is very harsh to speak so plainly of the dreadful horrors of the lost; but our answer to such is, Did not our Lord warn people against coming where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched? Did He not speak of the greater damnation? Did not He also say, "Preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned"? Did not the Apostle Paul say, "Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men"? and also, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" O, dear reader, our desire is that you may flee from the wrath to come, and be saved; for God is still rich in mercy. The door of eternal salvation is still wide open. The gospel is still the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. The blood of the crucified Saviour still cleanses from all sin. It is indeed a *great* salvation. The foulest sinner now has liberty to come to the Lord Jesus without money, and without price. He delivers from eternal condemnation, blots out

all sin and transgression by His blood, freely gives everlasting life and righteousness, and introduces the far-off, self-destroying, guilty sinner, at once to perfect peace in the Father's bosom. Is not this a *great* salvation? If the reader has neglected it to the present moment, let him now inquire how he can escape the wrath to come. You may not have neglected chapel-going, church-going, almsgiving, or the outward ordinances of religion, and yet you have neglected this great salvation. O unsaved soul! How can you be happy? How can you give sleep to your eyes again, without receiving this great salvation? Oh, that the Holy Spirit may so awaken you to a sense of your real danger, that you may flee to the Saviour now, agonise to enter in at the strait gate, make the precious blood of Christ your only refuge, and find that it purges your conscience, and puts you on the ground of eternal salvation, and therefore of perfect peace with God. The Lord delights to save.

Let us now consider WHO ARE THE SAVED? That must be me (says the Pharisee), for I give alms, make long prayers, pay my dues, injure no one, and live a good life. But in this he is sadly deceived, for he knows not the only Saviour, refuses His gospel, and all his righteousness is only filthy rags before God. God has declared, "There is none righteous, no, not one . . . none that doeth good, no, not one." And, notwithstanding all the boasted religiousness of many, it

is further declared that "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." Who then can be saved? Is there any way by which a crimson sinner can be made whiter than snow? Yes, in Christ and through His blood—even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe. A believer, then, is cleansed from all sin by the blood of Christ, and made the righteousness of God in Christ who is risen and ascended; and all on the principle of faith. And there never has been any other way of a sinner's being accounted righteous before God but in the way of faith. Abel and Noah were accounted righteous by faith. Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. David also spoke of the doctrine of righteousness without works. Paul often brings it before us in his epistles, and shews that it shall be imputed to them now who *believe* on Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. To the sin-stricken soul then, who has taken refuge in the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour, He still says, "Thy sins are forgiven thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." (Luke vii. 48, 50.) He has eternal life, and God wishes him to know that he has it for his present comfort and blessing. The language of the beloved apostle John is "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,*” and elsewhere he says, “ We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” (1 John v. 13; iii. 14.) Such also have remission of sins, and are justified from all things ; this also God wishes them to know for present assurance. “ *Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man [Christ] is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins : and by him, all that believe are justified from all things ;*” and again, “ *To him [Christ] give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.*” (Acts xiii. 38, 39 ; x. 43.) Moreover, to such as have remission of sins, the Holy Ghost is given as the seal and earnest of the inheritance ; and because they are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, the Holy Ghost is given as the Spirit of adoption. “ *Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*” (See Acts x. 43-47 ; Gal. iii. 26 ; iv. 6.)

Can anything more clearly shew the present and eternal salvation, those are brought into, by divine grace, who know the Son of God now in glory, who was crucified but is risen and ascended, as the Object of their faith ? Well might the apostle say, that the preaching of the cross is, “ *unto us which are saved,*” the power of God.

E L I J A H .

2 KINGS II.

THIS chapter is complete in itself. In it, we have the translation, or ascension, of the witness of God. Elijah: a name very significant — “*My God is the Lord.*” We shall find in this deeply interesting portion of the word, that Elijah is a type of Him whom Thomas would call “*my Lord and my God.*”

The starting-point of this moral picture of Jesus has been greatly overlooked. A little careful examination of the word will shew that this Gilgal, from which Elisha went with Elijah, was not the Gilgal on the low banks of the Jordan near to Jericho. From that Gilgal, it was not possible for them to have gone *down* to Beth-el. Indeed it is said of Elisha, when he had re-crossed the Jordan and was therefore in the neighbourhood of the Jordan-Gilgal, that “he went up from thence unto Beth-el.” (Ver. 23.)

In chapter i. Elijah had been sent to meet the messengers of the king Ahaziah, who was sick; and who had wickedly sent them from Samaria to Ekron. (Ver. 3.) Elijah is found sitting on the top of the hill, and from thence he went down to Samaria. The king was surprised that the messengers had turned back. All this could not be, if we supposed Elijah on the low plains of the

Jordan far away. But if we look at the Gilgal placed on the map about ten miles from Samaria, near to Shechem, over against the West or Mediterranean Sea, then this Gilgal would be straight in the way to Ekron, where the messengers would pass. And this agrees exactly with its position viewed from the standpoint of Moses, in the land of Moab, when he wrote these words: "Put the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal; are they not on the other side Jordan, by the way where the sun goeth down, in the land of the Canaanites, which dwell in the champaign over against Gilgal, beside the plains of Moreh?" (Deut. xi. 29, 30.) Thus Gilgal must have been on the heights of Canaan, between the plains of Moreh and the coast of the sea, where the sun goeth down; as placed on the map. To this also agrees the account of Joshua, of the kings he smote, beginning with Jericho, and going further up the country, until we reach this very district. "The king of Dor in the coast of Dor, one; the king of *the nations of Gilgal*, one." (Josh. xii. 23.) This Gilgal then was a royal city on the heights of the mountains of Canaan.

The descent of Elijah was from the heights of Canaan to the depths of the Jordan. Do we not then see here a picture of the path of the Lord Jesus? "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also

that ascended up far above all heavens." (Eph. iv. 9.) There was a solemnity gathered around the scene "when the Lord would take up Elijah into heaven." You will find it nearly a straight line from the Gilgal of the heights of Canaan, to Beth-el, Jericho, and the Jordan. In figure, he must pass through the very Jordan of death. Surely this points us to that one hour in His history who made the heavens and the earth. Oh that hour! when He must needs suffer, must needs die.

Let us then commence with Elijah at the royal city on the heights of Canaan. From this height he is sent one down to Beth-el, "the house of God." What a figure of the true starting-point of the Son of God, the sent One. If Canaan be a figure of the heavenlies, then the heights of the royal Gilgal remind us of those heights of glory He had with the Father before the world was. (John xvii. 5.) What a descent! The first step in Elijah's descent was from Gilgal to Beth-el. "Tarry, I pray thee, for the Lord hath sent me to Beth-el." Yes, let us tarry awhile, and dwell on the first step downwards from those heights of glory, when He who is the image of the invisible God, became man. "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." (Phil. ii. 6.) "In the beginning was the

WORD, and the WORD was with God, and the WORD was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him ; and without him was not anything made that was made." He is the self-existent eternal God. "In him was life." The glory of His person is the true starting-point in the sinner's redemption. "The WORD was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth."

Now as Elijah was sent to Beth-el, the house of God, so the incarnate Son, God manifest in the flesh, was sent to His own, and His own received Him not. He could say, "It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer : but ye have made it a den of thieves." What a sentence on His own, to whom He was first sent ! As the incarnate Son, He was sent to Beth-el, the house of God, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And just as Elisha, the called one, clave to Elijah, whilst the sons of the prophets, at Beth-el had mere knowledge and talk ; so in the midst of rejecting Israel could Jesus say, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me ; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." (John vi. 37.) As Elijah had the called one with him who clave to Him with purpose of heart ; so the called ones could say of the Son sent down from heaven,

“Lord to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.” Very beautiful were the words of Elisha: “As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.” Has the Holy Spirit put these words into your heart as to Jesus?

What a step this was in the descent from God to man! The Creator and Upholder of the universe humbled Himself. Not only did He empty Himself to become truly man; but *as man* He humbled Himself. “And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Phil. ii. 8.)

This leads us to the further descent of Elijah. “And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Jericho.” If Beth-el was the house of God, Jericho was the place of the curse. Even so it is written, “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.” Not only did Jesus descend to Israel, as man, Messiah: but He descended to man in his lost guilty estate. Blessed for us poor guilty Gentiles that it was so. Oh how wonderful, that God should have so loved a world under the blighting curse of sin. What a Jericho! But the holy One must descend lower still; so in the figure.

“And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the Lord hath sent me to Jordan.” To

Jordan the well-known type of death. Thus Elijah, "My God is the Lord," descends from Gilgal on the heights of Canaan, to Beth-el, to Jericho, to Jordan. In figure, he must pass through death, before he is the ascended man. How strikingly this illustrates the downward path of the true "My God is the Lord"! Not only did He become the incarnate man, and as such present Himself to Israel, and to man under the curse; but He must descend to the depths of death. Before He could ascend to glory, and be Head of a new race, He must go down into death. Elijah said, "Tarry, I pray thee, here." And when the hour was come that Jesus must pass through death for us, He said, as He entered dark Gethsemane, "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder." (Matt. xxvi. 36.) If Elijah was sent to Jordan, the figure of death: Jesus was sent to the deep untold realities of atoning death for us. Yes, "sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder."

"Here we rest, in wonder viewing
All our sins on Jesus laid."

Elijah was sent alone; yet Elisha went with him. There are also two distinct aspects of the death of Jesus. In the one, as the atoning substitute of God, He was absolutely alone. Alone in that darkness, forsaken of God. Wounded for our transgressions; bruised for our iniquities. In another aspect, as Head of the new creation, we are reckoned to have died with Him. This is also the

meaning of christian baptism, as every believer understood it in the beginning; "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptised into [or unto] Jesus Christ were baptised into His death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death," &c. (Rom. vi. 3-11.)

We doubt not there is important instruction in this aspect of the death of Christ, in the contrast betwixt the fifty sons of the prophets who went, and stood to view afar off; and Elisha who went down and passed over with Elijah. Is it not one thing to believe that Jesus died for our sins according to the scriptures, and quite another thing to accept that place of death with Him? How many have been baptised, who have never understood in the least the meaning of the figure of baptism! How many stand afar off to view, like the fifty sons of the prophets! How few accept the place of death with Christ! This is not a matter of attainment, but of understanding and of faith. We are to reckon ourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord. All believers were thus to reckon themselves dead with Christ; and, if dead, also risen with Christ.

As Elijah took his mantle and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground; so the Lord Jesus the righteous One could pass through death. He, in divine righteousness, could endure the righteous judgment of God for us: and thus, in right-

eousness, we pass in Him from the old creation to the new. "And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said to Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me."

Jesus said, "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." "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." All these precious words were spoken by Jesus "when he knew that the hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father."

Elijah did not so speak to the fifty men, sons of the prophets that were standing to view afar off, but to the one who had gone down to Jordan and passed over with him. It was when they two had passed over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do unto thee, before I be taken from thee. Which is our reader's position? Standing afar off to view, having some knowledge and able to talk about it? or, as baptism shews it in figure, have you taken the place of death with Jesus?

Do you know that you have died with Christ? If we have passed through death with Jesus, we cannot ask too great a request. Elisha asked a hard thing. "And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing." This reminds us of the words of Jesus, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." This was an amazing promise. Elijah felt Elisha's request a hard thing, and at once names an important condition. He says, "If thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so." He does not say, if thou hast seen me in my past life: or if thou hast seen me descend from the heights of Canaan down to Beth-el: then to Jericho: then to the depths of Jordan. All this he had seen. And surely, most important for us to see the path of the Lord Jesus down from the highest throne of glory down to Beth-el—the house and people of God—yea, down to Jericho to reach lost man: yea, to do this, down, down to Jordan's lowest depths of death. "Obedient unto death." Yet if this be all, faith is vain—"If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." (1 Cor. xv. 12-20.) To Elisha the answer to faith's request depended on this one thing: seeing the ascended man who had passed through the Jordan.

THE RECORD OF GOD.

“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. 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. 10-12.

How much is said in these inspired words, and how few believe them! Let us examine them, and ask, Do we believe them? For it is also written, “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. 13.)

It is said in another place, “the GIFT of God is eternal life.” This power has the Father given to the Son, “that he should GIVE eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.” (John xvii. 2.) It is important to consider this *gift* of God. Now if a man makes a gift he does not think of taking it back. How much rather then the gift of Him who saith, “Not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” Is it not a mistake to suppose that you have something to do to earn eternal life? How could it then be a *gift*? On what ground could you suppose that God would take from you

this stupendous gift when once possessed? Do you say, If we should prove unworthy of it, will He not then take it away? Then it would not be eternal life, but temporal. But did not God give His Son, and in Him eternal life, for the most unworthy, for us, while we were yet sinners? When the word of God was first preached, we do read of those who rejected it, and judged themselves unworthy of eternal life. (Acts xiii. 46.)

How did these Jews prove themselves unworthy of eternal life? Was it not by rejecting it as a *gift*, and seeking to work out a righteousness of their own by which they might obtain life? Is not that exactly what you have been doing? Have you not been trying, or hoping to try, to keep the law, and so work out a righteousness of your own, so that at last you might obtain eternal life? Now what is this but refusing eternal life as the gift of God: yea, seeking to make Him a liar? Is not this terrible, but true? It may be you have not been even trying to do this by keeping the law of Moses, but by trying to keep the laws and ritualism of men. Are you trying by sacraments, and fastings, and penance, and prayers, and intercessions of saints, &c., at last to obtain eternal life? All this is plainly rejecting the record of God: and "he that believeth not God hath made him a liar." Most assuredly if eternal life is obtained by these things, then it is not *the gift* of God. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life,

and this life is in his Son." You may never have seen the meaning of these two words "hath given."

But there is another thing, even in these two words, it is the *present possession* of eternal life. One thing must follow the other. If eternal life is given to us, we must *have* it, for it is the gift of God. Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me HATH everlasting life." And God says to us by the Spirit, "he that hath the Son *hath* life." Observe the record of God is the very opposite of the thoughts of men, it is not he that believeth may perhaps obtain eternal life at last, but *hath* it. The Lord Jesus presses the present possession of everlasting life repeatedly with a verily, verily; He says again, "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." Oh, what joy it gives to believe Jesus, to believe the record of God—the record that He hath given of His Son.

Often do we hear the exclamation, "I never saw that before, and never could be sure how I should get eternal life. I thought I had to keep the law to get it, or some way to lead a holy life to get it: I never saw it was a free gift, and now believing God, I have it—I have eternal life!" Oh, how blessed! Is this your joy? Have you eternal life? Do you believe the words of Jesus?

“Stay,” says some one assuming authority, “you can never *know* in this world before you die that you have eternal life. It is most dangerous doctrine.” What, my friend, dangerous to believe Jesus, who says, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life”? Is it dangerous to believe “the record that God gave of his Son? And this is the record, that God *hath given* to us eternal life.” Is it dangerous to believe the inspired words of the Holy Ghost? “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.) Which is the most dangerous, to believe God, and thus know that we have eternal life, or believe that human teaching which makes God a liar?

Thus we have in these verses the three blessed facts. First, eternal life is the *gift* of God; secondly, that he that believeth God *hath* eternal life; and thirdly, that it is the will of God that we should *know it*. This is the truth and record of God. The false teaching of men is the opposite of each of these blessed facts: that eternal life is not a gift, but has to be earned by a religious life; that we have not got eternal life but may humbly hope to obtain it at last; that we are not to know by the word of God that we have eternal life, but must wait until the judgment day before we can know. This is the teaching which believeth not the record of God.

CORRESPONDENCE.

1. "H.," near Wigan. We believe that the glory of God should be the governing motive of our hearts. If this be not so, self in some form or other will take its place. We are enjoined in scripture to "do all to the glory of God." Even in the case you name, how could a christian servant be acting for the glory of God if only seeking an "easy and comfortable situation," to the neglect of the Lord's Table, and fellowship with the Lord's people? Is it surprising, under such circumstances, that any should get into a "low condition of soul"? Your letter has interested us much; and while we thank God for the exercise of soul you are brought into before Him, we beseech you to wait *on* and *for* Him to deliver you, and lead you into a plain path. This He will assuredly do according to His own word, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." With God there are no difficulties. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. vi. 33.)

2. "L.," Port Glasgow. We do not at present think of pursuing the subject further.

3. "J. C.," Gloucestershire. There is no difficulty in the use of the word translated "church" in Acts vii. 38, when we remember the simple meaning of the word is "assembly," as may be seen in Acts xix. 32, 39, 41. It is the same word in each case. But "the assembly which is his body" could not have existed, before Christ, as man, ascended up on high, was given to be Head. (Eph. i. 22, 23.) There was an assembly truly in the

wilderness, the nation of Israel. But Jesus had not yet died to gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. And when Jesus was on earth, He distinctly spoke of His assembly as a future thing. (Matt. xvi. 18.) The assembly, His body, had not then been revealed. (Eph. iii.)

The 144,000 do not appear to be Christians at all. The christian period closes at the end of Revelation iii.—“The things which are.” (Chap. i. 19.) In chapter iv. we come to the things which shall be after these things; after therefore the translation of the saints as revealed to Paul. (1 Thess. iv.) The opening of the seals then in chapter vi. must be after the translation of the saints; and also the sealing of the 144,000, not Christians, but from the tribes of Israel; sealed for future blessing on the earth, but no intimation that either they, or the innumerable company, will form part of the assembly, His body.

The 144,000 in Revelation xiv. contrast with those who worship the beast. (Chap. xiii.) They hear and learn the heavenly song which is sung before the throne, and before the four beasts, *and the elders*. This proves the present period of Christianity had closed; for the elders take their seats after the present things have closed. (Rev. iv. 1, 4.) It is a most precious scripture, and shews how God will have this blessed and holy remnant, even when the earth seems entirely given up for a short moment to the dragon, to the beast, and to Antichrist. Oh, the riches of His grace!

Instead then of the 144,000 being caught up, there is no evidence that they form part of the translation at all, but are a blessed first-fruit remnant during the days of tribulation and unparalleled evil.

4. “N,” Truro. It is unaccountable that any

one who is born again should assert, as you say, that "we are *only adopted* into the family, children by *adoption only*, and then, if we did not behave ourselves, cut off from the family, and have lost all benefits—meaning have lost eternal life." It shews how little persons gather their thoughts from scripture. We know nothing like it in the word of God. The truth is exactly the contrary. It is that we are born again—children of God—but are *not yet* adopted; that we have received the Spirit of adoption, but wait for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. Being born again, born of God, we have a new nature—that which is born of the Spirit is spirit—a new and everlasting relationship is formed by birth, and, because of this, the Holy Ghost is given to in-dwell us, and to abide with us for ever. Thus we have the consciousness of this new relationship, and have feelings suited to it, "crying, Abba, Father." (Read prayerfully John i. 12, 13; Rom. viii. 15, 16; Gal. iv. 6.)

5. "R. B.," Wreningham. Your difficulty arises from not observing the distinction between propitiation and substitution. The two goats on the day of atonement illustrate this distinction. They both doubtless point to the one sacrifice of Christ. The one as the propitiation for the world; the other as the substitute of those whose sins He bore. These distinct aspects of His death should never be confounded. In scripture they are always distinct. The death of the Lord Jesus glorified God, and maintained His throne in righteousness in proclaiming mercy to all. (Rom. iii. 22.) But those spoken of who believe God—"on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered *for our offences*, and was raised again *for our justification*," they (not the world) are

declared to be accounted righteous before God. "Therefore, being justified by faith, *we have* peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." All this is strictly limited to those who believe God. The scripture never speaks of Jesus as the substitute of the world. It does not say He died for *their* sins, or that He was raised again for *their* justification. He is the substitute of His people. (Isa. liii. 5, 11, 12; Rom. iv. 24, 25; Heb. ix. 28.) "Once offered to bear the sins of *many*," not *all*. Otherwise all must be saved. He is the propitiation or mercy-seat for the world. (1 John ii. 2.) Notice in this text the words "*the sins of*" are in italics, and have been added. (Compare John iii. 16; Acts x. 43; xiii. 38, and many other passages.) Both things are equally true. Mercy in righteousness to all; and the substitute of God's people.

To speak of universal redemption is simply to forget what redemption is. Can an unconverted man say, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace?" Universal redemption would give unbounded license to sin. Just think, an unconverted man living in sin, having redemption, and the sins he is living in all forgiven! Surely men go on without thinking of the errors they hold and propagate. We are thankful to hear you are inquiring what is truth. A few days ago we met an intelligent man, who had been, after many years preaching to others, awakened to diligently search the scriptures. We were greatly struck with his remark, "I have found ninety-nine things out of the hundred I have held, to be contrary to the word of God." May our blessed Lord by His Spirit guide us into all truth.

E L I J A H.

2 KINGS II.

No. II.

“IF thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee ; but if not, it shall not be so.” Elisha did see him ascend in a chariot of fire. “And Elisha saw it, and cried, My father, my father ! the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof.” He saw the ascended man who had passed over Jordan. And note how much depended on seeing Him. His whole request depended on this. What then was the effect of this wondrous sight ? “He took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces. He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him.” No longer would he be found in his own clothes, but in the mantle of Elijah the ascended man.

This is precisely the effect of the revelation of the ascended Christ to an anxious soul. It was so with Saul of Tarsus. One sight of the ascended Jesus ! and his own covering, his own righteousness of works, was for ever torn in pieces. He could not endure to be found in his own righteousness of law ; “but that which is through faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” Oh, what a sight to see the one who was wounded for our transgression, and bruised for our iniquities ; now the ascended Man in glory above the brightness of the sun. Can there now

be a single question to the believer, since He who has accomplished our eternal redemption is the ascended Man in the glory of God? No, as Elisha took "the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, where is the Lord God of Elijah? And when he had also smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither, and Elisha went over;" so the waters of death have lost their power, the believer can pass over, yea, is reckoned dead and risen with Christ. The believer is thus on new ground. As to the flesh he is crucified with Christ. He has passed from death, and sin, and law, to newness of life in Christ. Elisha was so identified with Elijah, that he had as truly passed through Jordan as Elijah had. This is a striking picture of a Christian identified with Christ. As a new creature in Christ Jesus, he is reckoned as truly having passed through death as Christ has—in Him. How different the position of the sons of the prophets who were to view at Jericho! Just as great is the difference betwixt the mere professor whose home is in Jericho, the place of the curse, and the believer identified with Christ in the Jordan of death, and now alive to God in Him. It is a searching question, Do we live in Jericho? Is this world our home, or have we really accepted the death of Christ? If we are of the world, we may view, and talk, but all will be confusion and mistake. These sons who went to view had known Elijah in

the flesh, they had not seen him the ascended man; they did not know him in heaven. They were conscious there was a great difference betwixt themselves and Elisha. They perceived that the spirit of Elijah rested on him. It was so after Jesus ascended to heaven. The Holy Ghost was sent to dwell in all who had passed from death unto life. It was so from the day of Pentecost forwards. The Holy Ghost is witness to the eternal value of the one sacrifice of Christ. The spirit of Elijah resting on Elisha distinguished him from those that were of Jericho, though they went to view. The Holy Ghost dwelling in the believer is the seal of God that marks him off from this world, Jericho, the people of the curse; and from all who make a mere profession.

Oh, how many are still under the curse of sin, and have not the Spirit of Christ, though they can view, criticise, and talk! Are you of Jericho? Is this world your home? or have you passed through death with Christ? Have you really received the Holy Ghost? Not having the spirit of Elijah, they would go seek him on earth. They were strong in nature for this. There were fifty strong men ready to seek him in the mountains. But they found him not. "They sent therefore fifty men: and they sought three days, but found him not." Now there are many strong men in this day, natural men, men of the college of Jericho sent to view. These men have not passed

from death to life, they still live in Jericho, not having the Spirit of Christ, but who are very strong by natural education; not knowing the risen and ascended Christ, nor knowing the eternal redemption accomplished by Him. Just as the fifty men shewed their strength in vainly seeking for Elijah on earth when he was in heaven, so have these men shewn their strength in vainly seeking Christ on earth on the cross, or in the wafer, when He is in heaven at the right hand of the Majesty on High.

Most blessedly the breaking of bread is to commemorate His death. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

There is no Christ on the cross now, there is not a dead Christ now; if there is, the gospel is vain, and faith also is vain. The enemy knows this well, that if he can get you to think Christ is on the cross, or dead *only*, you cannot be saved. "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." (1 Cor. xv. 16.)

It is a notable fact, that all the strong theologians, who are seeking Christ in ritualism, or still on the cross, or in sacraments, are still in their sins; neither can you find one of the multitudes they mislead that knows he has eternal life, or that his sins are put away, to be remembered no more. No, the ascended Jesus is at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having finished the

work that the Father gave Him to do. If Elisha was ashamed of the folly and ignorance of the strong men of Jericho, surely we may well be ashamed of the learned men of this day seeking Christ where He is not, in ritualism and sacraments. To such the apostle said in his day, and to such in this day, "how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." (Gal. iv. 8-11.)

Thus two things marked the difference between the sons of the prophets and Elisha. He saw Elijah when he was parted from him, and the spirit of Elijah rested upon him. They saw him not, knew him not, as the ascended man—they had not his spirit, and therefore sought him by natural strength where he was not. Two things also mark the difference betwixt the children of God identified with Christ dead and risen, and such as are still of this world—the strong men of Jericho. The one see Christ risen; they know Him as having died for their sins, (and they dead with him, and risen again), now ascended to heaven, the blessed certain evidence that their sins are all forgiven, and they justified from all things; and, consequent on His ascension to glory, they now have the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. The other only views the cross afar off, gets

no further, nay, do not know that eternal redemption has been accomplished. They do not see Christ raised from the dead for our justification, they therefore have no evidence that they are justified; and not seeing it for themselves, they stoutly deny such evidence and certainty to others. And not having the witness of the Holy Spirit, they continue in folly and ignorance to seek Christ and salvation in sacraments and ordinances. Thus the parallel is complete.

But why does Elisha tarry at Jericho? And if believers are dead and risen with Christ, why are they left to tarry awhile in this world where sin and the curse abide? We now pass from these foolish sons of the prophets to others. "The men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the ground is barren." It is well to turn from false teachers to this poor barren world. Has not our God in His kindness shewn not a few men of the city, men of this world who make no pretensions, that all is barrenness and death in the place of the curse? Its water is nought, its ground is barren. Oh, blessed work of the Spirit of God when this felt need brings souls to the word of God, and to healing and life. Well for the men of the city he tarried at Jericho! "And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein." Yes, God's principle of blessing to this poor world is "a new

cruse and salt therein." A cruse is a little flask commonly used to put oil in. Why a new one? Would not an old one do, mended up? What simple things illustrate the greatest and most important principles! If man is to be saved, why must he be born wholly anew? why must he be a new creation in Christ Jesus? why not mend him up with sacraments, and religiousness, and law keeping? What a question! on it hangs the whole truth of God or error of man. In the word of God (woe be to him that rejects it) the old man is entirely laid aside, no mending or improvement possible. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." It is wholly a new man, and that new man is Christ. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new: and all things are of God," &c.

The old cruse is of no manner of use. For eighteen hundred years men have returned to the old cruse, and have been trying to mend it up with Judaism and laws, seeking to perfect the old cruse—that is the flesh. What a contrast we have in "Bring me a new cruse!" The new nature born of God. The new creation in Christ. Oh, the savour of Christ in it will prove a blessing even in Jericho. As Elisha cast the salt in the waters of Jericho, so may we, as new creatures in Christ Jesus, cast the gospel of Christ in the waters of

this poor world. "And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and (with the salt) he said, Thus saith the Lord." And the waters were healed. Let us remember the mighty power of "thus saith the Lord." God will bless His own word. Jesus says, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life." (John iv. 14.) No more death nor barren land. What a privilege to tarry a little down here in this world as a new cruse, containing the healing and preserving salt of the grace of God in Christ!

And now, as Elijah had descended from the heights of Canaan to the depths of Jordan, so Elisha now ascends from Jordan to Jericho, and then the time came for him to *go up* to Bethel. So Jesus descended from the highest glory He had with the Father, down to death, and then ascended. And the time will soon come when we shall no longer tarry at Jericho, this world sunk in sin, for as surely as Jesus has gone up, so surely will He come and take us up to be with Him. This is our present position, waiting to be taken up—waiting for His Son from heaven.

Now was it not remarkable that it was not the children of Jericho that mocked Elisha as he was going up by the way. No; it was the children of Bethel (the house of God). "They said unto

him, Go up thou bald head; go up thou bald head." Is it not so now? Is not professing Christendom a great house now—the professed house of God? And it is not the world as such, but the children of professing Christendom that mock at the thought of the church of God going up to be for ever with the Lord. And if we were more practically *going up by the way*, we should have more mocking. Judgment came upon these mockers. And will it not be so again? Yes, "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them . . . and they shall not escape." (1 Thess. v. 3.) Read also 2 Thessalonians i. 7-10; ii. 10-12. These words will as certainly be fulfilled, as ever the she-bears tare the children of Bethel. It is however blessed to look beyond the bears, and the judgments, or the rejecters of the truth. "And he went from thence to mount Carmel." Carmel, the mount of beauty, the garden of the Lord. Yes, after the taking up of the church, and the judgments that should follow, millennial days of Carmel beauty and blessing shall follow. Thus is this chapter complete in itself.

And how soon will that which it illustrates be fully accomplished! He who was equal with the Father, has descended, He has come in the flesh, He has humbled Himself unto death; He is risen from among the dead, He has ascended up on high. We see Jesus crowned with glory. He is

the ascended Man in heaven. Oh, how soon we shall be caught up to be for ever with and like Him! And how soon the long-foretold judgments will be poured on this Christ-rejecting world! Some who read these lines may be caught up to meet the Lord. And some may be alive at the judgment of the nations, when the awful words shall be uttered, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. xxv. 41.)

What eternal issues may be close at hand!



FRAGMENTS.

The Son of God came down from heaven in *grace*; He is gone up in *righteousness*; He is coming in *glory*.

The *Father* sent the Son, the *Son* gave Himself for us, and it was by the *eternal Spirit* that He offered Himself. Now God is for us, Christ in us, and the Spirit's seal on us. We are children of God, members of the body of Christ, and temples of the Holy Ghost.

We have righteousness, and we wait for its hope. We have the earnest, and wait for possession of the inheritance. We have redemption as to our souls, and wait for the redemption of our bodies. We have the salvation of our souls, and look to the Saviour to change our vile bodies. We have received the Holy Ghost, and wait for the Bridegroom. What amazing grace that could thus set us in such blessing!

HEAVEN OR HELL?

No. II.

WHILE God has revealed in scripture some of the miseries of the lost, He has not left us in entire ignorance of the everlasting happiness of those who are now justified by the blood of Jesus. Being already partakers of the heavenly calling, and blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, we await the coming of our Lord from heaven, when we shall meet Him in the air, and be taken to the Father's house, until the heaven opens and we come out with Him in manifested glory. "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear *with him* in glory."

But who can describe the blessedness of being "for ever with the Lord"! What tongue can utter the bliss of being joint-heirs with Him who is Heir of all things! What pen could depict the joy of the Father's house, the blessedness of sharing the honour and glory of the glorified Son of man! What mortal mind could comprehend such infinite heights and depths! What words could portray the beauty and brightness of these cloudless regions of peerless purity and perfection! At our very approach to the subject, we seem to hear a voice within us, saying, "Take thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

We are clearly taught that the "inheritance" will be "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away;" that it is reserved in heaven for us, and that we are kept by the power of God for it through faith. All our blessing being founded on the blood of Christ, He will there be the absorbing object of delight, the untiring subject of praise, the source of uninterrupted joy and thanksgiving.

How widely all this contrasts with the present state! Now is the time for "evil things," then to be for ever comforted and blessed; now to sow in tears, then to reap in joy; now to endure suffering, then to enjoy pleasures for evermore; now to live in a Christ-rejecting world, then to dwell for ever amid Christ-exulting crowds; now to know Christ only by faith, then to see Him with unclouded vision, and so be *for ever with the Lord*. No Satan to tempt us then, no deceitful world to allure, no false friends to betray, no wicked to trouble, no vile body to clog, no infirmities to hinder, no sin to distress, no bereavement to cause weeping, no perplexities to harass, no separations to call for mourning, no failure to give sorrow. In the eternal state there will be no pining sickness, no aching brow, no breaking up of happy associations no heaviness of spirit, no disappointment, no unkindness; but Satan bruised under our feet, heaven and earth passed away, the wicked cast into everlasting punishment, our present body of humiliation changed and fashioned like unto the

glorious body of the Saviour, and everlasting songs of joy in every heart. Distress will not be known, for "God shall be with them, and be their God; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things have passed away." Well may one who joyfully anticipates the coming glory sing,

"There shall I bathe my weary soul
In seas of heavenly rest;
And not a wave of sorrow roll
Across my peaceful breast."

It is declared to be the purpose of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ "that, in the ages to come, he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." (Eph. ii. 7.) In the millennial age, when nations are still occupying this earth, and the bride, the Lamb's wife, has descended from God out of heaven, and taken her appointed place over the earth, then God and the Lamb are everything. Then too the world, when it looks up and sees the glorified saints, will know that the Father loves us as He loved Jesus. (John xvii. 23.) What wondrous grace to us!

Heaven will be the region of unsullied holiness. We are told that the living creatures rest not day and night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

God is of purer eyes than to behold evil, therefore "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie ; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

It will be the abode of unchanging light and glory, for God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all, hence we are twice told, "There shall be no night there." How can there be darkness in the presence of God and the Lamb? There will be no need even of created light, neither of the sun nor of the moon to shine in it; "for the glory of God did lighten it and the Lamb is the light thereof." "They need no candle, neither light of the sun ; for the Lord God giveth them light ; and they shall reign for ever and ever." How wonderful the thought that such as are now saved by the grace of God through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ will then have the glory of God, and be where the eternal and uncreated light of divine glory will be their light, and for ever shine through the Lamb. So bright then will be the glory reflected by the bride the Lamb's wife, when she takes her place as having descended out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, and her light like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone clear as crystal, that the nations on earth will walk in the light of it. (See Rev. xxi. 9-27.) Surely it is the precious blood of Christ that gives us title to this glory.

The Lord having come for us ere this, given us glorified bodies, taken us to our prepared abode in the Father's house; the marriage of the Lamb having taken place, and the bride presented to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, and, as we have seen, being then in manifested glory with Himself, we shall ever realise nearness to God. It was the Father's eternal purpose to have us before Him in love, without blemish, in the endearing relationship of children; therefore, as redeemed and a new creation in Christ Jesus, nearness, unspeakable nearness to God, must be known. Did not Christ once suffer for sins that He might bring us to God? And here we find its true fulfilment. We are told, "I saw no temple therein." A temple was ordered for God's chosen, loved, and redeemed Israel, and a mark also of distinguishing privilege, but it always implied distance. And it could not be otherwise; for why the magnificent building with its many sacrifices, successional priesthood, veil unrent, and the only house on earth where Jehovah had recorded His name? but to shew that His people, though in covenant relationship with Himself, were still at a distance from Himself; shut out from His presence, and not yet brought in conscious nearness to God. It is well to observe, then, in this heavenly vision, that the reason assigned for there being no temple in it is, "for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it;" for

the Lamb will be the everlasting Witness that all our blessings are founded on the claims of divine righteousness having been met for us in His accomplished work, and that the rending of the veil removed all thought of distance. For the same reason it is said, "There shall be no more curse ; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it." Grace too will be flowing like a river, pure, abundant, widening and deepening as it flows on ; for what else than *living* blessing could flow from the throne of God and the Lamb? What refreshment, what satisfaction, what delight, this pure river of water of life tells us of, "which is clear as crystal, and proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb." "The tree of life" also in the midst, not of the earthly paradise, but of the paradise of God, will be ever feeding and gladdening us with its varied and soul-satisfying fruits, while the healing virtues of the leaves of the tree are given to the nations on earth. But the best of all will be to see His face—to see the Lord Himself, the One who loved us and gave Himself for us ; for nothing less could ever satisfy one who is born of God. "They shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads." What heavenly, what eternal, and perfect bliss ! Yes,

" There we shall see His face,
And never, never sin.
There from the rivers of His grace
Drink endless pleasures in."

Besides all this, there will be willing and happy service—"His servants shall serve him;" and it need not be added that the deepest reverence and profoundest humility will also be manifested. If the sinless seraphims which are ever ascribing holiness to the Lord of hosts, were seen by the prophet with covered faces and covered feet, how much more will it become us in unfeigned lowliness and holy reverence, to rise from off our thrones of glory, and, while prostrating ourselves, cast our crowns before Him who sits on the throne, and say, "Thou art worthy"! Yes, so conscious shall we then be that we owe all our happiness, all our blessings, all our eternal salvation to the rich, unmerited grace of God, that our becoming utterance will be, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name be all the praise, all the honour, all the glory."

Moreover, it will be the dwelling place of perfect love, for God is love. The eternal love of the Father, the self-sacrificing love of the Son, the love and fellowship of the Spirit will then be fully known, calling for ceaseless and grateful response from the innumerable hosts of the blood-washed dwellers in heaven. There the Father will be rejoicing over His returned and welcomed prodigals with exceeding joy, the Shepherd rejoicing over His lost sheep safely folded, the Spirit filling each vessel with fruit in season, and the praises of countless ransomed ones causing heaven to resound

with joyful hallelujahs, and the untiring anthem of "Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood;" while myriads of bright angelic hosts add their ascriptions of "Worthy is the Lamb."

It need scarcely be said there will be rest there, even the rest which now remaineth, as it is written, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."

What will it be to be "for ever with the Lord"? To be for ever gazing upon His face, to see His name written on every forehead; to behold Him in His rightful place as Lord of all; to hear Him honoured and extolled by every creature; to find all there harmoniously employed in serving Him; every mind in heaven according to His thought; every heart responding to His desire; every soul delighting unceasingly in Him—His fulness, His perfection, His worth, His glory; all feeding on His joy, filled with His love, and waiting in His presence; every knee bowing to Him; every tongue praising Him. His name how fragrant, His love how perfect, His voice how sweet, His glory how unutterable, His word how blessed, His will how just; and, above all, His blood, how precious! He Himself our Life, our Peace, our Righteousness, and not ashamed to call us brethren, but still saying, "My Father and your Father, my God and your God." He Himself satisfied at seeing the travail of His soul, and we for ever

satisfied at being for ever with the Lord. Well may we exclaim, "What must it be to be there!"

But we must stop. Our thoughts are too poor, our conceptions too meagre, to attempt further description of the unspeakable glories of that bright and hallowed region. It is most happy to know that the blood of Jesus has secured it for us, that Christ is made unto us righteousness, that He has accomplished eternal redemption for us, and that He ever lives to make intercession for us, so as to save us through all this chequered path right on to the end. A little while, and then the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, and His saints, living or dead, shall be caught up to meet Him in the air; then this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, this mortal shall have put on immortality, and death shall be swallowed up in victory. Then shall we see His face, and be with Him and like Him for ever.

"For ever on His face to gaze,
And meet the full assembled rays,
While all His beauty He displays
To all the saints in glory!"

Reader! Will you be there?



MAN has a living soul. No doubt other creatures have living souls, but it is bound up with their organization. "Man became a living soul" by the in-breathing of God, and the difference is immense, and of all-importance. (Compare Gen. i. 20, 30, margin, with Gen. ii. 7.)

WHAT IS SWEETER THAN HONEY?

JUDGES XIV. 5-9.

WE find, all through the Old Testament scriptures, Christ and His death, and triumphs, every now and then, in some way or other, brought before us; and we also sometimes find the results which necessarily flow from acquaintance with His work.

The great comfort to us is that it is a *finished* work. Nothing more is to be done for the remission of sins, or to give us title to glory. We have to do with a Person who has suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. We have to do with a victorious Saviour, and, through faith, we can now triumph in His triumphs; we can say, "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" What a victory!

In the verses before us, we find that Samson was pursuing his journey, and when he came to the vineyards of Timnath, that "behold a young lion roared against him." So it was when Jesus came into the world, He found Satan going about as a roaring lion, and he roared too against Him. How crafty was his device to put the young child to death, through the proclamation of Herod the king to slay "all the young children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under"! How the roaring of the lion is heard in this! Again, how he tried to

overcome the Saviour by direct temptation, as well as by the hatred of men, their scorn, rejection, and snares to catch something out of His mouth that they might accuse Him! In how many ways the lion roared against Him! But the tongues of the despising Pharisees, as well as of the infidel Sadducees and Herodians were silenced by Him, and all Satan's temptations resisted.

“But spotless, undefiled, and pure,
The great Redeemer stood;
While Satan's fiery darts He bore,
And did resist to blood.”

And more. We are told in this typical narrative that “the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him [Samson], and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand.” (Ver. 6.) So the Lord Jesus not only resisted Satan, but destroyed him that hath the power of death, that is the devil. This he did, not by taking human weapons, for instead of taking anything in His hand, He was crucified through weakness, His hands and feet were pierced; but it was through death that He triumphed over Satan. He went into death for us, even the death of the cross, to pay the penalty due to our sins, and by going through death, rising out of it triumphantly, He destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil. Had Jesus remained in death, Satan would have gained the victory; but Christ rising out of death thus set aside victoriously

Satan's power, and gave us deliverance from the fear of death. Thus death is abolished, and Satan vanquished for all who believe on the Son of God. Though Satan is still the deceiver of the world, and the accuser of the brethren, and his messengers are allowed of the Lord to buffet the Lord's servants, yet nothing of the kind is permitted unless for our benefit, so that "all things work together for good to them that love God." What a triumph did Christ accomplish, when He did by Himself purge our sins, and sat down on the right hand of God!

We are further told that "after a time," Samson "turned aside to see the carcase of the lion," and "behold there was honey in the carcase of the lion." And do not those who look back and contemplate the finished work of Jesus on the cross, and His triumphant work in resurrection, find sweetness and comfort to their souls? Surely we triumph in His triumphs. We there see that God is for us, and "if God be for us who can be against us?" We are reminded of peace made, righteousness established, justice satisfied, sins judged and put away, God glorified, and Satan vanquished; thus we are forgiven, delivered, redeemed, and for ever objects of divine favour and blessing. This gives us comfort beyond all else. It is sweetness indeed; so that with such thoughts we can truly exclaim, "What is sweeter than honey?"

When the soul is thus happy, it cannot but wish others to participate in the same blessings. Samson,

having found and enjoyed the honey, is at once prompted to communicate the blessing to others. We are told that "he went on eating;" he fed as he walked, and the honey out of the carcase of the vanquished lion strengthened him as well as comforted him; and when he "came to his father and mother, he gave them and they did eat." How significant is all this! How it reminds us that the very essence of practical Christianity is caring for the blessing of others. This is like Christ. It has often been said, that in the gospels you never find Christ doing anything for Himself. He loved His enemies, prayed for His murderers, went about doing good, and died for the ungodly. To the man named "Legion," out of whom He had cast many devils, He said, "Return unto thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee." And we are told that "he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him." (Luke viii. 30, 39.) And are we not also instructed by an apostle to "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others"? But we must taste and know the goodness of the Lord in our own souls, before we can communicate sweetness and comfort to others. The principle is surely not less true in us than it was in apostolic days that we comfort others "with the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." (2 Cor. i. 4.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

6. "J. H.," Ferniehirst. The Passover, Red Sea, and the Jordan, present the death of Christ in three distinct and deeply important aspects. The passover shews the death of Christ as the Lamb whose blood shelters us from the divine judgment due to us. They were still in Egypt, but safely sheltered by the blood. "When I see the blood, I will pass over you."

The Red Sea was deliverance *out of* Egypt: they came *out* through the water, figure of death, *from* the whole power of Pharaoh. Thus through death we are brought *out* from this world, and delivered from the power of him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. (See Heb. ii. 14.)

The passage of the Jordan brought them *into* the land. Thus in the Passover we see how Christ died *for us*, to shelter us from righteous judgment. At the Red Sea how we are dead and buried *with Him*, and thus have a new life, are delivered from the old master, no longer his slaves, though in the wilderness. Read Romans vi. 1-11. The Jordan not only shews in type our deliverance *from* sin, and Satan by death, but also our death and resurrection in Christ. As we get in Colossians ii. 12, and Ephesians i., ii., when the ark came up out of Jordan, all Israel were then raised out of Jordan, and in the land. Christ was that ark in death. God "hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in him." Briefly then, the Passover is Christ's death for us; the Red

Sea, our death *with* Him; the Jordan, our death and resurrection *in* Him.

The Lord be praised for all you tell us of His grace in using this little magazine, and other tracts.

7. "H.," Southend. We judge it would not be for profit to our readers generally to pursue farther the points of your letter.

8. "A. B.," Dublin. The world will adopt the mixture of "religious subjects," as you say, with their carnal amusements, because they find the association of the name of Christ with them not only promotes success, but accredits before men much that is evil. The child of God is called not to improve the world, which is under judgment, but to a path of separation; "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord." (2 Cor. vi. 17.)

9. "G.," Kingston-on-Thames. We are called unto holiness, and to do all to the glory of God, as well as to "provide things honest in the sight of all men." We could not express a judgment on the case to which you refer; but certainly a Christian should not connive at wickedness in another, and in this way be "partaker of other men's sins." Does such conduct suit Him who is "holy" and "true"?

10. Saline. We have in scripture, 1st, "The same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world;" under this head may be included temptations of Satan, and also what you term the natural decay of the body, &c. 2nd, We find bodily sufferings for Christ's sake. Paul called the chains about his legs his "bonds in Christ;" his stripes from cruel scourgings, "the marks of the Lord Jesus;" and he writes of Epaphroditus as being for "the work of

Christ" "sick nigh unto death." 3rd. We read of direct chastisements from the Lord. "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." An exercised state of soul before the Lord, in the consciousness of all things being naked and open before Him, alone will enable us to learn His mind, and rightly to hear His voice in all our afflictions.

11. "R.," Southampton. We understand the scripture "Children, obey your parents" to be the words of the Holy Ghost to all saints who have living parents, whether they are converted or not. It is important to observe that it is added "in the Lord," and then "Honour thy father and mother." Thus the christian child is not only to obey his parents in everything they desire, but to honour them, except when parents wish the child to do what would be displeasing to the Lord; then the Lord's superior claims must be owned. In so doing they could not obey their parents "*in the Lord.*" We deeply sympathise with christian children who have such wicked parents as you state; but, looking much to the Lord, they will prove the sufficiency of His grace, find His delivering power come in, and gather up deeply profitable lessons which could not otherwise be learned. Let such, however, not expect to be able to stand true to the Lord, and to act for His glory in such a trying path, without constantly leaning on the Lord for strength, and wisdom, and grace. In this and similar trials, many a child of God has been comforted in owning the necessity for such a trial in the Father's government of His children, and in hearing Him say, "*If need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.*"

12. "W." The responsibility for gospel ministry is with those who have received the gift of "evangelists" from the ascended Christ. The Holy Ghost (not the assembly) guides and controls such individually in their labours, as we find in Acts xiii. 2; xvi. 5-10. It is the privilege of saints around to comfort and sustain such by their prayers and faith, and, if need be, to minister to their temporal support; saints will also judge any unsound doctrine propounded, or unspiritual ways practised by them. But in this, and everything else, we must be before the Lord, exercised before Him, and drawing grace and strength from Him, for He truly said "without me ye can do nothing." If this be wanting, Christ will not have His rightful place given Him, and then nothing can go on profitably or happily. We judge that no servant of Christ will press himself among those, who, from any cause, are not willing to receive his ministry, but will own the government of the Lord, and look to Him to open a door elsewhere; and such, we believe, will generally find that He leads into a path of blessing.

13. "A Constant Reader," Westminster Bridge Road. Who are the saints that will be caught up? This is a very solemn question, but we think one clearly answered in the word. As to those who sleep, "They that are Christ's at his coming." All that are Christ's then will be raised from among the dead. (1 Cor. xv. 23; 1 Thess. iv. 15, 16.) "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." Momentous question! Will the reader and writer be caught up? It is clear from the parable of the ten virgins that such as have

merely the lamp of profession, will be shut out, or left behind. Yes, it is even possible that some who read these lines may be shut out and cry, Lord, Lord! when, alas, it will be for ever too late! Every one who has passed from death unto life, from his lost state in Adam to his eternally saved position and standing in Christ Jesus, all, all such will surely be caught up. Old Testament saints too will be raised and caught up, but will not form part of the body. When they sit around the throne, it will not be as the body, but as four and twenty elders. This seems to imply the Old Testament saints are there. (Rev. iv.) There will be many in heaven besides the wife of the Lamb who hath made herself ready. (Rev. xix. 6.)

14. "A. E. L." The fact of the church on earth having been unfaithful to the Lord as His corporate witness, and now in ruins, is no reason for any child of God disallowing the absolute authority of the written word. The path of a godly woman is clearly laid down in scripture, and that her general deportment should be modest, retiring, and subject, having the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which, in the sight of God, is of great price. "Let the woman," said the apostle Paul, "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.) We are further instructed on this point, "Let your women keep silence in the churches [assemblies]; for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church [assembly.]" (1 Cor. xiv. 34-35.)

WHO WILL BE TAKEN TO MEET THE LORD, AND WHO WILL BE LEFT?

THESE are important questions as we hourly draw nearer the coming of our Lord. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which 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. 15-17.) In contrast with these words of comfort, we read further on of others, "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." (Chap. v. 3.) Who are these respective companies? Will the first company comprise all true believers, all the saints of God? or, will some believers be taken to meet the Lord, and others be left to pass through the tribulation? This question is important, as it affects the value of the atoning death of Christ, and the eternal redemption which every believer has through that death.

When the Lord Jesus appears in glory, and

comes in judgment and to reign, we find from scripture:—

1st, “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” Surely this marvellous statement is true of all believers now as then; for all can give thanks to the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. (Col. i. 12.)

2nd, “We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” (1 John iii. 2.)

3rd, when He comes, *all* His saints come with Him—“At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ **WITH ALL** his saints.” (1 Thess. iii. 13.) “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring *with him*.” (Chap. iv. 14.) “Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all,” &c. (Jude 14, 15.) This also includes Old Testament saints. “And 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*.” It is, then, certain that when the Lord Jesus appears in glory, all the saints will appear with Him, and be like Him. Oh, blessed hope! And also it is certain that all His saints will come with Him to judgment. It follows, then, that if all come with Him, then all must have first been taken up to meet Him in the air; and to this agree

other scriptures, whether as to those who are asleep, or those who are alive and remain unto His coming.

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order ; Christ the firstfruits, afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.” (1 Cor. xv. 22, 23.) Just as all who are in Adam are involved in death, so *all* that are in Christ shall be made alive at His coming. Christ has been raised from among the dead : we are now waiting the next event—they that are Christ’s at His coming. Equally certain is the word as to all who are alive and shall be changed. “Behold I shew you a mystery ; we shall not all sleep, but *we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,*” &c. And mark, the address of this epistle evidently includes all Christians. “Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with ALL that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.” (1 Cor. i. 2.) To all these the apostle could say, “So that ye come behind in no gift ; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall confirm you unto the end blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” This epistle further teaches that *all* believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, now compose the one body of 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." Part of the one body cannot be taken, and a part left behind.

It may be asked, Then is there no difference between those persons who are waiting for the Lord from heaven, and those who are not looking for Him? There is ; and we will look at those scriptures that speak of it, that we may see how great that contrast is.

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many ; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin unto salvation." (Heb. ix. 27.) It is not appointed unto *all* men once to die ; neither did He bear the sins of all men ; but those who know that He bore their sins at His first coming, instead of looking for death and judgment, may look for Christ who shall come without a question of sin or judgment to them. "Without sin." If we are not clear as to His having put away our sins, we cannot look for Him the second time, we should rather dread Him as a judge. Which is it, reader? Do you look for Him as Saviour, sin and sins for ever settled, or, is judgment for sins still before you? Again, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in

this present world ; LOOKING for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (Tit. ii. 11-13.)

Thus in the scriptures we find that all, not some few believers, are taught to *look* for the Lord Jesus. It is the effect of the grace of God. When Paul preached the gospel, those who believed were turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven. (1 Thess. i. 9, 10.) To Timothy Paul said, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day ; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." To the Philippians he says, "For our conversation is in heaven ; from whence also *we look* for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body," &c. (Phil. iii. 20.) Yes, it is evident, when the church was in the freshness of its first love, that love to the Lord Jesus was pre-eminently seen in their looking for Him from heaven. Could it be otherwise? Is it possible for a wife to love her absent husband and not look for his return? And is it possible to hear the Bridegroom's tender words, and not wait for His dear return? He says to us, "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." (John xiv. 1-3.) How is it possible, then, to love the Lord Jesus, and not love His appearing and wait for His return?

But are there not many who even profess to be ministers or servants of the Lord Jesus who do not look for His return? There are, and we will now turn to the words of the Lord to such. "If that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he *looketh not* for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. xxiv. 48-51.) Thus, to say even in the heart, My Lord delayeth his coming, and not to look for the Lord Jesus, is given by the Lord as a mark of the evil servant—that he is not a Christian at all—and when Jesus comes in the air, he will not be taken, but left behind for judgment. This brings us to the striking parable of the ten virgins, which parable brings our subject to such an issue.

In the beginning all go out to meet the bridegroom, wise and foolish. Those who have oil, and those who have none; those who were saved, and those who were not. For the oil is a figure of the Spirit; and if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. Such was Christianity

in the beginning. All took that profession, whether true or false, to look for, and wait for, the Bridegroom from heaven—not Christ as Judge to them, but as Bridegroom. We have seen this everywhere in the epistles. While Christ tarried, they all slumbered and slept. Now, in these days, the very midnight of forgetfulness of Him, the cry has gone forth, “Behold the Bridegroom, go ye out to meet Him.” These words are being fulfilled at this very moment. The Holy Ghost is presenting the Person of Christ, the loving Bridegroom; and the Spirit is moving Christians to go out and meet Christ. Sad indeed that we should have to go out again from that world which crucified and still hates our Lord. Are you being thus moved to meet the Lord? or do you say, Nay, I am not sure that I have oil in the vessel? Take care how you delay. Mark how suddenly and unexpectedly to those who have no oil He comes, and the door is shut. “And they that were ready went in with him and the door was shut.” Then how sad the cry, “Lord, Lord, open unto us.” And, oh, those words from Him, “Verily, I say unto you, I know you not.” Do you notice that these very persons were not only professors, but those who got mixed up with the movement, they, in a half sleepy way, arose and trimmed their lamps. Is this your condition? Are you ready to meet the Lord? Have you believed God? Have you come to Him, owning your sins in self-judgment?

Have you the Holy Spirit dwelling in you? Oh, think of half those professors being shut out at last!

Neither will it do to rest on religious activities; you may be doing great things according to human thoughts—greatly praised by your fellow-men; you may be said to have done great good in your day; and yet lost for ever—left behind for judgment. Oh, how *many* will find themselves deceived when it is for ever too late! Jesus says, “*Many* will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity.” (Matt. vii. 22, 23.) How few think of these words of Jesus! Yet it will surely be so. Not a few, but many, will thus be rejected. We have just seen a most attractive memoir of a christian lady. Works in abundance, sacraments, and holy communions, but not one thought of that only foundation on which a soul can rest in peace—eternal redemption through the blood of Jesus. We hope this is the writer’s fault. We are assured all will be left, and given to strong delusion, who do not receive the truth of the Person and work of Christ.

We will now, in conclusion, just point out those scriptures which prove this. When He comes “in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of

our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired IN ALL THEM THAT BELIEVE." Read 2 Thessalonians i. 6-10. Thus all believers have been taken to be with the Lord; and when He appears in glory and for judgment, He shall be seen and admired in *all them* that believe. This is very blessed, and takes in every one on earth who has received the truth.

But in the next chapter (ii.), the doom of every soul who has heard the gospel, and rejected it, is equally certain. "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 believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Thus it is most certain that all, without a single exception, who have been chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, will be caught up to meet the Lord; and that the "they" who say "peace and safety," when sudden destruction cometh, will be *all those* who have not received the truth. How solemn this is; and we know not the moment when He shall come to take us to be with Himself. Beloved reader, are you ready? Can you say, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood"? If so, you will be glad to hear His words, "Surely I come quickly."

THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

“WHAT think ye of Christ?” is still the all-important question; the question on which eternal consequences hang. Many say, “Of course He *was* the Saviour, everybody knows that.” But we do not ask who He *was*, but who He *is*? “Whose Son is he?” for though hated and put to death by man, He is alive again, and that for evermore. He is in heaven; and angels, principalities, and powers are made subject unto Him. *There* God has set Him. *There* faith now knows Him. *There* seeking souls find Him; and all those who have to do with Him for salvation are assured that He did make atonement for their sins by His death and blood-shedding on the cross, and they know Him as glorified at the right hand of God. They are sure that He *is* the Son of God. The believer rejoices in this; and scripture says that “whosoever believeth that Jesus *is* the Christ [not *was* the Christ] is born of God.” “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus *is* [not *was*, but *is*] the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.” (1 John v. 1; iv. 15.) Though He shed His blood for sinners on the cross, He is now in heaven, and is the true Object of faith; He *is* the Christ, He *is* the Son of God. An ever living glorified Man now in heaven He is, and there is no other Saviour. He was the Son by whom the worlds were made, He was the Son

whom God sent to make propitiation for our sins, He was the Son in resurrection and ascension, and He is the Son now seated on the Father's throne, whom the gospel declares to be the only Saviour of sinners. Does the reader of these pages know Him there as the One on whom he believes to the saving of his soul? Oh how blessed to be able to look back upon the cross, and see at what a cost the Son of God made a just atonement for all our sins! What suffering, what sorrow, what desertion that perfect One passed through to deliver us from coming wrath, when it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him and to put Him to grief, so that by His stripes we might be healed! But He is not there now. No. "It is finished." He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Peace has been thus made; and all our blessings are founded on righteousness, though all flowing from divine grace, so that God is just and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. He is not on the cross now. Neither is He in the sepulchre. No. Jesus is risen. He was a risen Man on the earth teaching His disciples out of the scriptures, leading them, and eating before them; seen of them forty days, shewing Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs; but He is not here now. He has ascended to the right hand of God. He is glorified. There we see Him now. Oh what wonders of divine love have come to us in the death of Jesus; even when we were enemies,

sinner, and ungodly, Christ died for us! What unutterable grace! and yet what never-failing ground of peace and confidence!

There are two ways in which we may look at the death of Christ—the God-ward side, what it was to Him who sent Him; and the man-ward side, what it brought to us. Our necessities have compelled us to look to Him in the latter aspect, but it is for our rich blessing to consider what that marvellous death was before God.

In the immediate prospect of the cross, a wonderful expression fell from the Saviour's lips. It was this: "Now is the Son of man glorified." Had He said, "Now is the Son of man humbled and abased," it might easily have been understood; but how this spotless One should have been able, when betrayed, hated, scourged, spit upon, and nailed to a cross between two malefactors, to speak of Himself as "glorified," is beyond all human conception. But so it was; for on the cross He arrived at the climax of that path through this world of sin and death which was the perfection of moral glory. In an evil world, for one to be crowned with its honours could have no moral glory, could not possibly be for the glory of God; rejection therefore, and being hated without a cause, while treading the path of obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, surely brought Him to the highest point of moral glory, the end of that path which was wholly for the glory of God. And this

too as Man, for though being in the form of God, and thinking it not robbery to be equal with God, yet it was as Man He pursued on earth that course which was continually for the glory of God. When Israel repents as a nation, and every knee bows to Him according to the will of God, then it will be for the divine glory that He should occupy a very different place on earth, for He will then have His rightful place as "King of Israel," as well as "King over all the earth." He will reign before His ancients gloriously, and be "the Governor among the nations."

Thus He was on the cross for the glory of God, and as Man He there reached that place concerning which He could say, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." Every step of His path, every word He uttered, everything He did, or did not, glorified God on the earth. Once and again had the heaven opened over this blessed One, and a voice from the glory had declared, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," not merely pleased, but "well pleased;" and now, when almost underneath the shadow of the cross, He could truly say to the Father, "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do."

The death of the cross then was for the glory of God. The first man Adam in a world of blessing had dishonoured God; the last Adam, the Son

of man, in a world of sin and death with Satan as its prince, glorified God. How wide the contrast! How blessed is the contemplation of this most precious reality of the work of Christ, and how infinitely acceptable to God it all was! The throne of the Majesty in the heavens is the witness of how truly the Son of man glorified God on the earth, and finished the work which He gave Him to do. Hence we find He added, "If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself;" as we find Him also when in prayer, saying, "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." This He was righteously entitled to, and this glory He now has, for "we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." (Heb. ii. 9.) Thus Man is in the very glory of God. Thus One has been found on this earth who so perfectly glorified God, that nothing could justly answer to the infinite worth of what He did, but placing Him as Man in the glory of God. He is there then not merely as having His true place as the eternal Son, but as righteously entitled to it as Man. Adam because of sin against God was righteously entitled to be thrust out of the place of honour and blessing, and all his posterity too, as in him; but Christ was justly

entitled to the right hand of the throne of God, to be there crowned with glory and honour; and all in Him will share His glory with Him. Precious truth! In Philippians we are taught that though Christ Jesus was equal with God, yet being found here in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. "Wherefore" (let the reader ponder carefully this word "wherefore") "God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name," &c. (Phil. ii. 6-10.) And, as Jesus said, "He shall straightway glorify him," it was so done; for He ascended into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God—"after he had purged our sins [He] sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." As has often been said, He did not wait for the kingdom in order to enter into that glory to which He was in righteousness entitled, but He went into heaven itself, according as He had said when Judas had gone out, "God shall glorify him in himself, and shall *straightway* glorify him." He was therefore glorified "straightway."

Let us think then what must have been before the eye of God in the death of Christ as a sacrifice offered upon the cross. What love, infinite, perfect love to the Father came out there! It was, as we know, a motive for the Father's love; as He said, "Therefore doth my Father love me, *because I lay down my life that I might take it again.*" (John x. 17.) What perfect obedience! Obedience under

the most adverse circumstances, obedience in a path the end of which was being deserted of God, and yet He went obediently straight on to death, even the death of the cross! What entire self-surrender also, "Not my will, but thine be done;" no reserve, no wish for anything for Himself, but entire giving up of Himself in perfect surrender to the will of God, and that when all had forsaken and there was no comforter or friend near Him. What faith too! When in deepest bodily agony, His whole weight suspended on the nails which pierced His hands and feet, when reproach had broken His heart, and darkness covered the land from the sixth to the ninth hour, then that bitter cry of anguish, and yet of faith, was wrung from Him, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" All was perfect. He poured out His soul unto death, and it was a sweet savour unto God.

In life, God saw One in whose heart, and mind, and ways, He found a continual meat-offering of sweet savour. In death too, as we have seen, the perfections which there clustered in the cross were a sweet savour to Him. In Him Jehovah saw and accepted perfect surrender and obedience to His will, and it came up to Him as a sweet savour. Though as a sin-offering there could be no sweet savour, and God must forsake Him because of His infinite holiness; yet in the basis laid in His death for peace and communion with the Father and with the Son, and with one another, God also

found a sweet savour, that which was infinitely acceptable and well-pleasing to Him. May we learn from scripture more of the Godward side of the death of Christ, as well as the eternal blessings it brought to us in the exceeding riches of the grace of God! How soon He may come again! “A little while,” and then—

“All tears shall have passed from our eyes,
When Him we behold in the cloud,
We taste the full joy of the skies,
The joy of our Father and God.”



“LOVEST THOU ME?”

JOHN XXI.

SOMETIMES the Lord speaks to us unexpectedly by circumstances. Peter had heard the words, “It is the Lord;” and with a bound he sprang into the sea, and swam to shore. But what must he have felt when he saw a fire of coals there? Would not his heart beat as he looked back to that other fire of coals at which he stood to warm himself? Yes, at the fire of coals where he had thrice denied his Lord. Let us look at that fire of coals, and then at this. It is a fire of coals in the high priest’s house. Terrible things have been done in high priests’ houses and bishops’ palaces. But there stands bound the Lord of glory, humbling

Himself to the lowest place of degradation, in infinite love to us. It is written of Him in the Psalms, "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul." (Ps. cxlii. 4.) What, not Peter the bold—he who had said a few hours before, "Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death"—"I will lay down my life for thy sake"—"Though all men should be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended"? Well did the Lord know both the power of temptation, and Peter's weakness. "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

Now mark the different steps in Peter's fall. "And Peter followed afar off." Are we following Jesus afar off? Then, like Peter, we are on the way to a fall. Mark this warning. And when they had kindled a fire of coals, did Peter stand with the despised and rejected Jesus? No; "Peter sat down with them." Are we standing with the rejected and despised Jesus? or, have we sat down to find our rest and comfort with that wicked world which hates our Lord? If this be so, we are already fallen. What a picture; Jesus mocked with cruel hatred by the religious world, and Peter sat down to warm himself with them! Is it not so in this day? How many Peters! Surely, if we sit down with this world, we may then and

there deny our Lord. Thrice did Peter deny Him then and there. How often have we?

Now look at Jesus. See that look of tender love! This is the first step in Peter's restoration, or conversion—that is, in turning him from self-confident Peter to dependence on Christ. That look of infinite, unchangeable love went right to the heart of Peter, and sent him straight from the fire of coals to go out and weep bitterly. Take another look at Jesus. “And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him. And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face.” Such is the hatred of man, and such the love and patience of Him who came to lay down His life for us. “Oh, patient, spotless one.”

We will now pass on to the shore of Tiberias. You see that little boat out there, a little way from the shore. In it there are a few of those very disciples who all forsook Jesus and fled. The captain of that little bark is the bold, self-confident Peter, whom we lately saw so sadly humbled when sitting by the fire of coals. They have not caught a single fish all that weary night. As the morning began to break, they saw some one watching them, standing on the shore. He cares for them. He even asks if they have any food. He bids them cast the net on the right side of the ship. They obeyed, and a multitude of fishes were taken in the net. It was now plain to one of them whom Jesus loved that it was the Lord. The captain—

Peter—heard that word: it was enough. There is still a little of the old natural boldness—he must *be first* to reach his Lord, and he sprang into the sea. No doubt there was also deep, ardent love to Jesus.

But that fire of coals: ah, and that other fire of coals a few nights before. How often the Lord humbles our hearts in this way. Have we not been thus humbled often, when taking a shade of pre-eminence over our brethren? Ah, a moment's remembrance often bows our hearts in deep confession before Him. Nobody knows what did take place between the Lord and Peter, when He first appeared to Peter. (1 Cor. xv. 5.) The Lord graciously kept that private between Himself and His fallen servant. Is it not so with us and the Lord? Well, by this time they have all pulled to shore. And let us not forget this is the last scene with the Lord Jesus narrated in the word of God—the very last, the closing words of revelation. The Gospel of John was written last. They had all forsaken Him. Yes, He was alone before God when eternal redemption was accomplished. “As soon, then, as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.” Cold and hungry, and having toiled all night—but we do not read that they had thought of Him. He could not cease to care for them; He could not cease to love them; He could not cease to provide for them. They had not to wait until

He kindled the fire, or baked the bread, or cooked the fish; there was plenty ready, and they might also bring of what they had taken at His word. Is not this Jesus, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever? Oh, how sweet those words that fell from His lips—“Come and dine.” What infinite resources we have in our precious Jesus—God manifest in the flesh. And though Jesus is now in resurrection, and ascension glory, He delights as ever to serve us. “Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.”

Oh, look at this scene: He who, as God, created all things, cometh and taketh, and giveth them! Do you thus know God in Christ? He, who had loved them, and died for their sins, could not cease to love them. Can He cease to love us? But do you think that fire of coals made poor Peter feel uncomfortable? I should not wonder but it did. Does the remembrance of your sins, though you have repented, still make you feel uncomfortable, even in the presence of such infinite love? I should not wonder but it does. Oh, it is terrible to have sat with the world that hates Jesus—to have denied Him thrice.

Do not forget, however, to notice, Jesus did not impute their sin unto them; no, He had borne it on the cross. He had put away all that hindered God meeting them in perfect grace. It was so for them; it is so for us who believe through their word. But still, Jesus knew Peter far better

than he knew himself ; did He not? No doubt Peter had had this thought ; “ I belong to Jesus, I believe on Him the Christ of God. These Pharisees and priests, yea, and even these my brethren, may deny Him, but I will never ;” and immediately Satan suggested thoughts of superiority. Now, brethren, be honest, has there not been something like this, nay, the very thing itself, amongst the children of God? Have we not said in the secret of our hearts, though all sects and denominations and churches of men deny Christ as Lord, yet will not we? Can anything be more offensive to our blessed Lord than, Peter-like, such airs of superiority? Well, He who knew the state of Peter’s heart, also knows our state ; and the same question is equally applicable to him and to us. “ So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, LOVEST THOU ME MORE THAN THESE?” He said, “ Yea, Lord ; thou knowest that I love thee ” (or, I am attached to thee). This was indeed true, whilst, in humility and truth, he could not fully respond to the Lord’s question. Yet he was attached to Christ. Can we even say so? Are we detached from all that is of man? Can we say we are attached to the Lord Jesus only? We may be even so ; and, if so, the Lord’s word is “ Feed my lambs.” Thrice had Peter denied his Lord, and now thrice, beside this fire of coals, with the proofs of Jesus’ everlasting love, the question is put to him, to fit him to be

the shepherd and feeder of Christ's lambs and sheep. A second time Peter says, “Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I am attached to thee.” “He said unto him, Shepherd my sheep.” And now Jesus alters the form of question, “Art thou attached to me?” Peter was grieved at this. What a searching question! Does it grieve us? Poor feeble, failing things as we are. Yet, is it not true that He has separated us to Himself? Can we say, “Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I am attached to thee”? “Jesus says to him, Feed my sheep.”

Thus was Peter fitted to feed the sheep of Christ by the deep sense of his own failure. He was turned from dependence on himself and his own resolutions. All thoughts of self-superiority must be levelled, before he or we can be fitted to serve the Lord, and to feed His sheep.

Now, though this wondrous display of the Lord took place a few days after His resurrection, yet it was recorded by the Holy Ghost after all the failure had come in. Men had arisen of themselves, speaking perverse things, to lead away disciples after them. In short, all had come in that grieves our hearts at this moment. Yet Jesus thus **SHOWED HIMSELF**. Some may be persuaded to get into their own boat, and, whilst toiling all night, and catching nothing, may be tempted to say it is all over, we have all failed, and there can be no more testimony. Come away, beloved brethren, from

such gloomy thoughts; cast the net on the right side of the ship. Is not Jesus still the same? It is not enough to take the place of attachment to Him. He says, "*Lovest thou me?*" "Feed my sheep." Some of us have seen a great draught of souls taken of late, and the net is not broken. And if we love the Lord, let that love be shewn in feeding, as we have opportunity, *the whole flock of God*. Did He not love the church, and give Himself for it? Then surely He cannot cease to love it. He says, "Come and dine." Let us, then, gather to Him on the shore. He wants our heart's love; and He wants us to be in the current of His love to the lambs and sheep of His flock. And when proud thoughts of superiority would intrude, may we remember the words of Jesus, "*Lovest thou me more than these?*"

There were just two things more. A Peter might be called to glorify Christ in death, and a John might remain until He comes. It is exactly so now. One may be called away to be with the Lord; another may remain until He comes. One thing is certain—He changes not. All things may change, He changes not. We may toil in Peter's boat, and get discouraged. His eye is on us all the night. And to think the morning breaketh. Soon we shall see His face. For ever with the Lord.



CORRESPONDENCE.

15. "L.," Whitby. "There is a sin unto death" implies more the depth of moral evil of a sin than any particular class of evil. Thus when Ananias and Sapphira agreed to tell a lie about the disposal of their property, to make it appear to others in God's assembly where the Holy Ghost dwelt, they were people of superior devotedness to the Lord, that lie was "a sin unto death." It was lying to God the Holy Ghost. "A sin not unto death" may be the doing of any evil thing not having this very grave character. It needs spiritual mindedness to perceive the difference. Peter being full of the Holy Ghost detected the quality of the sin immediately, and, instead of praying for the perpetrators of it, he saw at once that it could only be dealt with by "death" according to the mind of God. We read also in 1 Corinthians xi. of some who, because of misconduct in relation to the supper of the Lord, were cut off with death. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." When a person sins short of this kind of delinquency, we are to pray for such; but the apostle also says "There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he shall pray for it." (1 John v. 16, 17.) How needful that we should be kept continually in the presence of God! There was One who could say, "I have set Jehovah always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." And again, "Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." (Ps. xvi. 8, xvii. 4.)

16. "R.," Southampton. When we speak of "gifts" we have something definite before our

minds. The ascended Jesus "gave *gifts* unto men." And they are defined. We read also that "there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. . . . To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom ; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit." But besides "gifts" we have persons fitted for office by the Holy Ghost, such as "over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers." Again, it is clear that some brethren in Christ are qualified (no doubt by the Spirit) to give audible utterance for such desires in united prayer as the others can happily say Amen to. Prayer certainly is not a "gift," nor is it an "office," and yet who has fitted the member of the body for its use at such particular times but the Holy Ghost? When we speak of ability or talents for certain work, we have a large variety and range of service opened up to us. We have long thought even in the distribution of tracts, to which you allude, that some Christians are by their kind, respectful, and modest demeanour peculiarly fitted for such important service ; while the bold and uncourteous manner of others in giving tracts, and speaking to individuals about their souls, has sometimes made us question whether such are not taking up the holy, precious service of Christ in fleshly energy, instead of the leading of the Spirit of God. When truly led of the Lord, and fitted by the Spirit for such precious service, we believe there will not only be love to souls, but love to the Lord in lively exercise, and prayerful dependence on Him, so that what we do may be, both in quantity and quality, acceptable to Him! May the Lord graciously work in and by us in all our service to Him!

17. "P. H.," Newburgh. The Lord's prayer.

If the Holy Spirit had intended these words of Jesus to be said as a form of prayer by Christians, would they not have been in the name of the Lord Jesus? And if His Jewish disciples used it (of which there is no evidence), yet, when He was about to depart He said, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask and ye shall receive that your joy may be full." (John xvi. 23-26.) What a change this is as to prayer. All prayer now must be in His blessed name, in contrast with all previous prayers which were not in His name. What is called the Lord's prayer was not in His name; therefore it also, as suited to Jewish disciples, is in contrast with prayer now suited to the Christian. It related to the kingdom, that for which they looked. There is no thought of the church of God in it; or of a finished redemption: the time had not come. But now the kingdom is set aside or postponed—the very nation cut off through unbelief for a time, which will be the earthly centre of the kingdom yet to come. This being the case, and a new thing revealed, which had been hid, the purpose of God to take out of this world the church, the bride of Christ, for heavenly glory—the Holy Spirit will now, not lead us back to a Jewish form of prayer, however perfect for them, but will lead our prayers in keeping with the present revelation of the purposes of God. See the prayers of the apostle Paul. (Eph. i. 17, 23; iii. 14-21.) It will be most suitable for them (the Jews), after the church is taken up to meet the Lord, and the kingdom on earth has come. We think it is well to do as you say, "seek to be guided by the Spirit, in making requests unto God."

The persons you name must be sadly ignorant

of the difference betwixt Judaism and Christianity. It would be well if we all understood the difference better.

18. "S.," Hoyland. When a man as a sinner receives the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour, he is entitled to *reckon* himself to have died with Christ, and to know that he has eternal life in Him risen. (See Rom. vi. 6, 11; 1 John v. 13.) It is most blessed to have the certainty from the unerring word of God that we have eternal life, and that we are always seen by God in all the acceptability and nearness of Christ Jesus. These things every true believer should know, and we may be assured that such only are standing in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. With regard to the four laws to which you refer in Romans vii. and viii. ; we consider, 1st, "The law of God" in which a quickened soul delights in chapter vii. 22, is God's truth as revealed to us in His word. 2ndly, "The law of my mind" in chapter vii. 23, is the principle of activity in the quickened soul which is according to God, but has not strength, on account of not yet having received the Holy Ghost to resist the principle of evil working in the members, so that the person is brought into captivity to the law or principle of sin which is in his members. 3rdly, "The law of sin" is the principle of evil active in us that is in our flesh. 4thly, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," is the principle of life in Christ given to us by the Holy Ghost. We speak of the law of gravitation ; so law is sometimes used as setting forth a principle. It is this principle of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus alone, which sets free from the principle of sin and death. (Rom. viii. 2.) Such know what it is to be "free indeed!"

“GO YE OUT TO MEET HIM.”

MATTHEW XXV. 6.

THE early Christians not only accepted the doctrine of the Lord's coming as truth, but it was to them such a reality, that they “went forth to meet the Bridegroom.” The Lord's coming again was their hope. It produced desires after the Lord Himself. They looked for the Saviour. It was to them the “blessed hope.” They felt it to be an eminently practical doctrine. They waited for God's Son from heaven. This was manifesting the truth to every man's conscience in the sight of God: and will not this always be the case when the truth is held in the love of it?

But one of the most flagrant sins in Christendom which scripture has marked out, is the “evil servant,” saying “in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming.” It is not openly denying the doctrine, and joining the infidel in scoffing, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? but, while professedly holding the doctrine, to so let slip the hope as to indulge in fleshly lusts and worldly associations, because in *heart* such believe He is not coming for some time yet. It must then be a deeply important matter that we make no mistake as to the true state of our hearts, that we are day by day so taken up by faith with Christ Himself in heaven, as to desire to see His face;

that His coming again is such a hope to our souls that we are practically acting like those, who, having heard the midnight cry, are going out to meet Him.

There are at least three points which appear to us to be involved in going forth to meet the Bridegroom ; desire, purpose, and activity.

1. DESIRE.—The heart must be going up to Him whom having not seen we love. There must be the longing to see His face. This is something more than being in a sinless and happy place, more than having a crown of life and a harp of gold ; it is even more than bridal attire, or the consciousness of being where there is no more sorrow nor death ; yes, it is seeing Him as He is—being for ever with the Lord, like the Lord, and near the Lord. Being now taken up with the Lord Himself as the commanding and satisfying object of our souls, and hope of our hearts, it becomes easy to abstract our minds from other objects, and to detach ourselves from other associations in order to go forth to meet the Bridegroom. This desire after Him, it seems to us, is more or less in every one who is born of God ; though in some persons stifled, or hindered, by worldliness, carnality, and bad teaching. But there the desire is ; for “we love him, because he first loved us.” Until we see His face, how can we be satisfied ? How can the heart be perfectly at rest until we are before the object of its love ? Then the climax of our souls’

longing will be reached. The consummation of our desire will be realised. We shall wish for nothing more. Then we shall fully know the truth of our Saviour's words which we now in part enjoy, "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." (John vi. 35.) Unutterable blessedness! When we see His face it will be perfect satisfaction and fulness of joy. This will be when He comes. We shall be caught up to meet Him in the air. What a meeting! What glory we shall then enjoy! What love encircling us we shall then know! What perfect delight to the longing waiting soul!

2. PURPOSE.—Nothing is more to be dreaded among Christians than a pointless, purposeless kind of life. We may be sure it is not an occasional desire, a spasmodic impulse, or a desultory activity, but the steady pursuit of purpose, that will mark those who go forth to meet the Bridegroom. It will stamp the springs and motives of our ways. It will give a heavenly complexion to all we do. When a man goes to meet a bosom friend, he steadily pursues his journey till they meet. He looks out on the way for his friend, but nothing stops his course; through rough and smooth, hill and dale, he perseveringly pursues his way. The fixed purpose of his heart is that nothing shall stop him till he meets the one he has gone forth to meet. And so with us; when the

Lord is before us, as the bright and blessed Object, which, by grace, has made everything else seem poor, how can we but pursue our heavenward course, seek to please Him, to honour Him, to suffer for His sake, and go forth to meet Him? In pursuing such a course there will be the denying of ungodliness and worldly lust; there may be the loss of friends, and things of this life; the tongue of slander may be used against us, or the finger of scorn pointed at us; but when there is true purpose of heart cleaving to the Lord, we shall be unmoved by these things, we shall lay aside every impediment, and overcome every obstacle which may stand in the way to our going forth to meet Him. When the Lord Himself has His rightful place in our hearts, we cannot but willingly pursue our purpose at all costs.

3.—ACTIVITY.—The *hope* of our Lord's return is eminently practical. "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." It cannot be otherwise. The moment it ceases to be practical, we have let slip the hope. It is the awakening, comforting, purifying, and separating hope which scripture sets before us. The announcement, "Behold the Bridegroom!" is God's power for *awakening* slumbering souls. "Then all these virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps." Those who have heard the cry have been aroused. Few comparatively, perhaps, as yet have heard it, and even most of those are scarcely more than half

awake. But those who are deaf to the midnight cry, are slumbering still. How simple, and yet how very solemn! Who then are truly awake? Those who have been roused by the hope of the Bridegroom's coming, and have gone forth with trimmed lamps to meet Him. Be assured, dear christian reader, we cannot sleep as do others when going forth to meet the Bridegroom. The gladdening cry draws forth the energies and springs of divine life in us into real earnestness and activity. We then so stretch out in the ways of faith and hope, and loving attachment to our precious Lord Jesus, that those who are not really the Lord's cannot keep pace with us. This is strikingly solemn. The eyes of truly awakened souls are on the Lord Himself, for it is Him such are going forth to meet. The feet run toward Him. The hands are stretched out to Him. The heart cries "Come," for it is the Lord from heaven whom such expect. They feel the ruggedness of the path, and sometimes taste the bitterness of outward circumstances, but they still go forward and onward to meet the Bridegroom. On the other hand, those who merely hold the letter of scripture, who have never bowed to the Son of God, whose hearts have not been touched with divine grace, have not known remission of sins, and therefore have not received the Holy Spirit—foolish virgins who have "no oil"—cannot walk in the path of faith and hope; and, alas! not

only find that the faithful are detached from them, but discover when too late the fatal mistake of their lamps having gone out. Thus when the Lord's coming has real effect on souls it must practically separate them from heartless and powerless professors, and must also throw them into close and happy fellowship with others who are truly going forth to meet the Bridegroom. Thus this "blessed hope" will necessarily even now be connected with rendings and separations, as well as close and spiritual fellowship with those who are really hoping for His coming.

How *comforting* too is this blessed hope! When the Thessalonian believers were sorrowful because they saw their brethren in Christ die [fall asleep], instead of the Lord coming for them as they thought would be the case, the apostle was inspired to instruct them that those who had died in Christ would come out of heaven with Christ when He comes to reign. He also tells them how they, as well as those who are alive when He comes, will get to heaven, in order to all come out together in the reign with Christ. He says, "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, 17.) How this must have com-

forted the bereaved! What solid consolation it must have given them to know that, when the Lord comes, the departed saints and living ones will be all together, and everlastingly happy, without another cloud or sorrow, in the Lord's most blessed presence. How many a mother has had her sorrow turned into joy by this blessed truth, when called to follow to the grave the remains of her precious offspring; and what multitudes of widows have wiped the tear of bitter anguish from off their sorrowing faces, at the thought of how soon, how very soon it may be, before they and their departed will meet the Lord in the air, and be for ever with the Lord. Is it any marvel then that the apostle is instructed to enjoin those bereaved ones at Thessalonica not to sorrow as those who have no hope, but to be comforted; yea, to “comfort one another with these words”? We cannot conceive anything that could more sweetly and powerfully comfort the bereaved heart, than this special revelation of the Lord through Paul, to assure such of His intense desire that they should have this comfort in their sorrow and bereavement, during His absence. Can we find anywhere in the entire range of holy scripture, that which more touchingly brings home the Lord's warm desire for our consolation, and sustainment during this time of tribulation, and death? If the hope be bright in our souls, shall we not according to His loving desire be able to

“comfort one another”? We gravely doubt whether any who have not the comfort of the Lord’s coming themselves, will be able to “comfort one another with these words.” We need to look plainly and unflinchingly into this very solemn matter, lest we be found trafficking in mere knowledge of doctrine, instead of comforting others “by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” Clearly then it is a *comforting* hope.

The hope too is *purifying*. “Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” (1 John iii. 3.) As the Son from heaven is our bright and blessed hope, so is He the example for our walk. He is the standard of the daily purifying of those who go forth to meet Him. It needs but a moment’s reflection to see what separation, what entire consecration, this involves; nay more, it shews what the practical walk *will* be of those who really have this hope. It does not say, he ought to purify himself, but he does it, “he purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” How intensely solemn this is! How decisive, how searching, how sweeping! How it admonishes us to quicken our steps in going forth to *meet Him*; to be alive, awake, in earnest, to run with patience looking off unto Jesus; and while looking for Him, find out the narrow path on earth of going forth *unto Him* without the camp, bearing His reproach. It is clear enough that those who step

out in these divinely-ordered ways of faith, and love, and hope, at all costs, must, however unwillingly, leave those far behind who linger in the world's excitement and advantages, instead of openly warning souls against its impending and appalling doom. Loss in the worldling's account there must be, as well as suffering *with* a rejected Saviour if not *for* Him, if we really go forth to meet Him; but

“How will recompense His smile
The sufferings of this little while.”

No doctrine can be more eminently practical. If *service* is the subject, Jesus said, “Occupy till I come.” If caring for the *need of others*, “Whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.” Is it the consciousness of being in an evil world where the Lord is not that disturbs us? “I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also.” Are any of us caring for the Lord's household? “Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods.” Is it a groaning mortal body which hinders us from carrying out all the service we desire? “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.” Are we growing drowsy and

lukewarm? Then we are warned that it was an "evil servant" who said "in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming." Are we not pondering over the scriptures, and delighting in them as we ought? He saith, "Behold I come quickly; blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." Are we losing freshness and fervency in His holy service? Then He encourages us by saying, "Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me to give to every man according as his work shall be." Is it death that any dear child of God dreads? It is by no means certain that we shall die; for "we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," &c. We ask, then, Can we imagine any truth to have a more practical bearing than the blessed hope of our Lord's coming?

The weighty and searching question, dear christian reader, is, How far has the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ produced practical results in us? May the Lord enable us to deal honestly with ourselves as in His presence about this weighty matter! Has its purifying effect been so real in our consciences that we are separated from worldly companionships, and desire for worldly advancement, worldly possessions, worldly honours? Have the interests of Christ, and the hope of seeing Him, detached us from other interests, other objects, and other hopes? Are we caring for our Lord's

household? How vast the contrast between the worldling's doom of darkness and judgment, and the Christian's hope of unfading light and glory! Oh, that these thoughts may produce deep and solemn exercise in souls, lest any be found in the dreadful wile of Satan of talking about the Lord's coming, when, like Judas, the “pieces of silver” have really more charm than the “Lord himself;” and Pilate's place of worldly honour and power is esteemed more highly than the rejected Son of God. Oh, how can any be going forth to meet the Bridegroom, if, like Lot's wife, they are *looking behind?*



PEACE MADE.

“THE moment a poor sinner looks to Jesus by faith as his divine Sin-bearer, his sins are all gone—they are put out of God's sight for ever. And Christ is in heaven. Could He take the sin there? No; His being in heaven proves it all left behind. The poor sinner gets the fruit of all that He has done, and all that He is—pardoned through His blood, brought nigh to God Himself. Peace has been made through the blood of the cross. And the glorified Man is in heaven, appearing in the presence of God for us—of His Father and our Father, of His God and our God.”—*An Extract.*

ELECTION.

It is not for the sake of controversy, or to examine or defend human opinions on this deeply interesting subject, that we take it up ; but with a sincere desire to help perplexed souls. A few days ago we received a letter from such an one, and as it is a fair sample of the effect of mere doctrinal teaching, we will give extracts. The writer says, "I have been greatly distressed about '*election*.' I know I am a sinner, and as such quite undone and lost, and that there is *nothing* in me to recommend me to God. . . . I want to be saved. I am often in great fear lest the Lord should come for His people, and leave me behind. I know that the Bible says, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved, but I have heard it said, that it is not scriptural to say that Christ died for the sins of all men; and if He did not die for all, how can I believe He died for me? Because it is no use to believe—I could not believe without a firm foundation for faith to rest upon ; I mean, if He did not die for me, how could I believe it? If you knew how very anxious I am, I think you would feel for me, and try to answer me. . . . What I want to know is this—how can persons know that the Lord Jesus Christ died for them personally, when there is *nothing* in them to make it likely? . . . As I write, I feel how hopeless it is to try any more. I cannot help feeling in despair about it, because I

have gone on so long, and have years ago professed to be a Christian. . . . I fear I am like the ground spoken of in Hebrews vi., that only bears 'thorns and briars.' If you think there is any hope for me, do try and help me."

Is it not most sad for a person to go on in this state of perplexity year after year? It is not often we meet with the same depth of anxiety, but this letter truly expresses the perplexity of great numbers. We are convinced that the root of all this confusion of mind and distress of soul, is occupancy *with self*. Here is evidently a quickened soul, finding nothing but thorns and briars in the flesh, or old self. Not one bit of good in self that could have been a motive for Christ to die for. However painful it may be, this lesson must be learnt; sooner or later the quickened soul must be brought to say, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not." And there is no *help* found for the flesh in scripture; so we cannot help the writer of the letter; it is not, Who shall help me? but, "O wretched man that I am! WHO SHALL DELIVER ME from the body of this death?" The Lord Jesus is not revealed as the helper of the flesh, but as the complete Deliverer, bringing us into a new creation, giving us eternal life, a new nature, and the Holy Ghost. (Compare Rom. vii. 18-24 with chapter viii. 1-4.)

Before we look at the important subject of "Election," we feel it would be well to examine the difficulties of the writer. We believe it is a sure mark of the work of the Holy Spirit to be able truly to say, "I am a sinner, undone and lost." Can the reader say this, whether of sinful self or religious self? Have you tried, until you are undone, lost? This is a fearful word, yet it was for such alone that Jesus died. He "came to seek and to save that which was lost." "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." The joy of Jesus is this, "I have found my sheep which was lost." If, then, the writer of the letter, or the reader of this paper, has discovered that he is lost, ungodly, without strength, then it is clear from scripture that Jesus died for you; He came to seek and to save you.

We will pass over for the moment "other things, such as strong Calvinists hold," which had always been such a hindrance. More of this by-and-by. Most assuredly the Lord Jesus is coming to take His people, and no pen can describe how terrible it will be to be left behind. With such a certainty, believing the scriptures which announce the coming of the Lord, we do not wonder at those words "I want to be saved." These are not the words of the self-righteous, or of the careless professor, or the language of the infidel; clearly not. But, reader, can you say they are your words? The Lord is

certainly coming quickly to take His people—He says so. Can you say, with the writer of the letter, “I want to be saved. I am often in great fear lest the Lord should come for His people, and leave me behind”? If you know you are saved, you cannot say so: your privilege is to wait for Him from heaven. Do you say, I do not know I am saved, and I do not want to be, and I am not afraid to be left behind? Then really you are self-righteous, careless, or an infidel. But to return to the letter.

The writer says, “I know that the Bible says, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved.’” The scripture says this, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” (Acts xvi. 37.) It is not enough to know that the Bible says so; the devils know that well enough, and the infidel knows that. But does the writer know that God says so—that it is God speaking to us in the Bible? Now, if God says so, is it not true? Then if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as a lost sinner, God speaks to you; He says *you* shall be saved. Do you doubt Him? The jailer understood it to mean just what God said, and he was baptized at once. He raised no questions; “he rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.” If he believed and rejoiced, why should you doubt?

“But,” says the writer, “I have heard it said that it is not scriptural to say that Christ died for

the sins of all men, and if He did not die for all, how can I believe He died for me?" &c. It is perfectly true the scriptures never speak of the death of Christ as the substitute, or for the sins of all men. Yet this was no hindrance to the apostles proclaiming the gospel of forgiveness of sins unto all, with the assurance of God that all who believe are justified from all things. There can be no question that this was the character of the gospel Paul preached. He so preached to the multitude at Antioch. "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things." (Acts xiii. 38.) Here, then, is a distinct message, direct from God, of forgiveness of sins to all men, through the death and resurrection of Jesus. And the question is simply this—Do you believe God? If so, it is most certain that *you* are justified from all things—*you* are accounted righteous before God. And *you* know it is so, for God says it.

But you say, "How am I to know personally that Christ was the Substitute for my sins? If He were not the Substitute of all men, how am I to know that He was so for my sins?" We will tell you shortly; only mark first, if the scriptures did teach that He was the Substitute of all men, you would be far more uncertain; for it is evident many are not saved, and therefore, if He had been the Substitute of all, and yet many of these

were for ever lost, then His dying for your sins would have been no security of your salvation, for after all you might be lost. Surely the scripture truth is better, that "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of MANY"—"having obtained eternal redemption for us." And that "by one offering he hath perfected for ever THEM that are sanctified." God says, "And THEIR sins and iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. ix., x.) Thus the scripture doctrine of the one sacrifice of Christ for the sins of many has secured for them eternal redemption, whilst the human doctrine that Christ was the substitute [or sacrifice] for the sins of all, secures nothing! And hence all the make-weights of sacramental and ritualistic religion of men.

Much of this doctrinal confusion arises from not seeing the order and distinction of propitiation and substitution. On the day of atonement the order was this; first, the blood sprinkled on the golden mercy-seat; then, afterwards, the sins of the people put upon the substitute. Propitiation first, then substitution; both, doubtless, pointing to the one sacrifice of Christ. But the first thing to be secured was the righteousness of God in shewing mercy. How could He be a just God and a Saviour? Now, as the victim must be killed, and its blood brought into the most holy, and sprinkled on the mercy-seat before God, so Jesus glorified God by His death. His blood was thus brought before God — sprinkled before Him.

“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation [or mercy-seat], through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (Rom. iii. 25, 26.) Now in this aspect Christ died for all; so that mercy and forgiveness is proclaimed to all. It is of immense importance to see this, “even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, UNTO ALL, and upon all, them that believe, for there is no difference.” (Rom. iii. 22.) This is important foundation truth. Such is the value of the atoning death of the Lord Jesus, that the mercy-seat is open to all, without any difference; and God is just, and the Justifier of all that believe. The efficacy of that atonement, even the righteousness of God, is upon all who believe. God is righteous, is just, is glorified in meeting all, for there is no difference, at that propitiatory mercy-seat. There is no uncertainty about this as to the propitiation. “He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.” (1 John ii. 2.)

Before, then, we go on to the death of the Lord Jesus as our Substitute, do we own the deep need of that atoning death, to maintain the glory and righteousness of God, in proclaiming mercy to all? And, further, this mercy-seat is open to all, without any difference—the propitiation for the

whole world. These are the very words of Jesus : “ Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day ; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” So far, then, all is clear : the righteousness of God is revealed in the glad tidings of God to every sinner on earth, for also as to them there is no difference, for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Is the writer of the letter a sinner ? Then clearly the righteousness of God proclaims forgiveness of sins to you. Do you believe God ? Has this amazing love of God in the gift of His Son, that death on the cross as the propitiation for the whole world, and pardon through that precious blood—oh, has this goodness of God led you to repentance ? Have you come, as a lost, undone sinner, to that mercy-seat open to all ? Do you believe God ? Then God says *you* are “ justified from all things.” How simple ! Are you a sinner ? Then forgiveness is proclaimed to you. Do you believe it ? If you believe God, you may now go on to the second aspect of the death of Christ, and there see Him, the Substitute of His people, bearing their sins in His body on the cross.

This was typified by the people’s goat, the people’s substitute. Read Leviticus xvi. 20–22. The sins of the people are transferred to the goat—all the iniquities of the children of Israel are

laid on him—and the goat bears them away, to be remembered no more. Now it is clear that if the Lord Jesus thus bore the sins of all men; or, if all the sins of all men were laid upon Him, and borne away, to be remembered no more, then all men would be saved. But the scripture never says so. As in the type the substitute bearing away sins was limited to the children of Israel, so the true substitution of Jesus is limited to those who believe and are saved. “He was wounded for *our* transgressions, he was bruised for *our* iniquities.” His “blood was shed for *many*.” “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of *many*.” Thus, whilst the death of Christ, as the propitiation, is for the whole world, and God is infinitely glorified in proclaiming mercy to all, and there are no bounds to His love in the gift of His Son, that whosoever believeth should be saved; yet, as Substitute, the sins of all men were not laid on Him, and therefore it does not follow that all will be saved. In our next we hope to take up the writer’s inquiry, “If Christ did not die for the sins of all men, how am I to know He died for me—that He was my Substitute? And how am I to know that my very sins are forgiven, to be remembered no more?” This being settled, the way will be clear for the full consideration of the important subject of Election.



CORRESPONDENCE.

19. "J.," Seaton Deleval. The Lord Jesus said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me." Now it is certain, if saints act as you say—if, whilst visiting their friends, they neglect the Lord's table, preferring the company of their friends—then surely this is loving their father, or mother, or friends more than the Lord Jesus. It will not surprise us to find such ultimately neglecting the Lord's table altogether, and prove that they are strangers to Him. We have known a case of a similar character, but it ended in self-will, dishonouring the Lord by schism. If those you name are children of God, we trust they will awake from such a course of indifference.

20. Demerara. The thoughts are excellent. How watchful we need to be, lest, as you say, with the truth of the Lord's coming on our lips, "we fall back to sleep again." O Lord, do Thou awaken Thy saints with the cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." While the truth embodied in the paper is good, as warning against Laodicean self-sufficiency and indifferentism, so rapidly setting in, yet we judge it is written by one not accustomed to do so for publication.

21. "R.," Southampton. The reply was in the printer's hands before your last reached us. We thank the Lord for the use He deigns to make of the paper you speak of. The Lord be praised for all His goodness and mercy! May we encourage ourselves in Him, go forth in His blessed service,

in the way that pleases Him, and reckon on His presence and blessing being with us!

22. "N.," Truro. If it be an assembly meeting, it should be clearly understood that it is such, and then every woman instructed in the truth would know that God has set her in the place of learning in silence, and that it would be a shame for her to speak. But if it be a social meeting of a few Christians to search the word together, we can see nothing contrary to the word in a woman modestly, and in a subject spirit, asking questions; but the moment she begins to teach, or to usurp authority over the man, she dishonours the Lord. We recommend such meetings to be held in private houses. The Lord be praised for all the help given, you speak of, through our little magazine!

23. "D.," Dumfries. There is little said in the Old Testament about eternal life. We only remember its being twice mentioned. In Psalm cxxxiii. it is spoken of as Jehovah's blessing—"there the Lord commanded his blessing, even *life for evermore.*" Daniel xii. describes the state of those of Daniel's "people" [Israel] who will be blessed by-and-by, in contrast with others who will be judged and cut off—"some to everlasting life." It is remarkable that both these texts refer to millennial times, when we know the nation of Israel will be all righteous. Indirectly it came out here and there that God's Old Testament saints had eternal life, though it is not plainly said so. We cannot, however, doubt it, for our Lord said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" and that Nicodemus, being a master in Israel, ought to have known it. Our Lord also spoke of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as

still living, though dead and buried, and that they would yet be in the kingdom. Moses and Elias were seen with Christ on the mount of transfiguration. Abraham and others were accounted righteous on the principle of faith. David spoke of transgressions being forgiven, sin covered, and the man blessed — righteousness imputed without works. And, further, “they that are Christ’s at his coming” are to be raised from among the dead, and caught up to meet the Lord in the air. We ask, then, How could all these blessings be theirs without having eternal life? With regard to Old Testament saints not having the Holy Ghost to indwell them as we have, let us not forget being born of the Spirit is one act, and His being given unto us, *because we are sons*, is another. By the latter we know an accomplished redemption, that we are sons, that we are in Christ, and Christ in us. Till Christ was risen, how could any know sonship? Till Christ was glorified, how could any receive the Holy Ghost to abide in them for ever, and cry, *Abba, Father?* (John xx. 17; Gal. iv. 1–6.) We are plainly told that “the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” (John vii. 39.)

24. “S. E.,” London. We cannot undertake to express an opinion on the case you have so briefly described. As a rule, we rarely find any one refused fellowship, without some grave reason for it; we believe that receiving too freely is too often the case. When we are careless as to our state and walk, we become careless as to others. It seems to us an unseemly thing for any one to go to the Lord’s table who is at enmity with any one, and not gracious and forgiving. Are we not told even to love our enemies? And also, “So

likewise shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you from your hearts forgive not every one his brother." (Matt. v. 44, xviii. 35.)

25. "D.," Hereford. We are afraid of dwelling too minutely on the meanings of the names and numbers of holy scripture. Some are plain enough. We are afraid of the mind being amused, instead of the soul fed and heart warmed by being occupied with Christ, and the great facts, principles, and ministry of divine truth. We believe the way of the Holy Ghost is to keep us in constant communion with the Lord, and learning more and more of Him; we also believe that one of Satan's devices for God's children is to keep them occupied with anything he can, to divert them from "rejoicing in the Lord always." We hope to reply to your other question another time, if the Lord will.

26. Fernihirst. We have received the following correction of our remarks in reply to J. H.'s question which appeared in our February issue, for which we are unfeignedly thankful; and now insert the letter for the benefit of our readers.

"I do not doubt that your whole desire is to put things scripturally, and that you will bear with me in stating that I think what you say in the article of Correspondence entitled J. H., Fernihirst, is not scriptural. It is possible that you might find a similar statement in some of my former writings where the points were not so clear to my mind. Yet I think I ever held the Red Sea to be Christ dead and risen for us, and Jordan we dead and risen with Christ. I took this ground in the Archer street conference and it was resisted on ground like your article, and I examined it afresh.

Only, in my case, if it were so, it was merely want of being clear, while a whole system is now made to hang upon what is not correct. The theory is that the passover was Christ's dying for us, the Red Sea our death with Christ, and Jordan our death and resurrection in Him. All this, except the first, is wrong. First, there is no dying in Christ, nor such a distinction as with Him and in Him. If a person long exercised said, 'O, I see I died in Christ,' I should be delighted. He has seen his deliverance, though he expresses it wrongly. But the difference is real and practical. When we die with Christ, it is we, 'I am crucified,' a real experimental thing, not judicial, though we get liberty by seeing it accomplished in Christ. So we are always dead to something, dead to sin, to the rudiments of the world, dead to the law. Scripture does say that we are *alive* in Christ because that is an actual, subsisting thing; He is our life, we *are* in Christ. In the passover there was one simple truth, God was passing through as a judge, and passed over, was shut out as such. The Red Sea is Christ's death and resurrection, more than mere non-imputation. (Ex. xv. 13.) It is redemption absolute and accomplished. God is a Saviour and deliverer. (Ex. xiv. 13.) The Egyptians were to be seen no more. It was nothing done in us, but for us, the command was, 'Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.' Death and judgment were for God's people's deliverance, and the result was, 'Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation;' and afterwards, 'Ye have seen how I bare you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto myself.' As a type, all was closed for

Egyptians and Israel. The latter were not in glory (Canaan), not in the wilderness, not in Egypt, but brought to God, not their subjective state, in any respect. That was experimental; this, judicial and final. This was returned to at the end, whatever the exercises and 'ifs' of the wilderness. Concerning Jacob and Israel it shall be said as at this time, 'What hath God wrought;' whatever Moses, that is the Spirit of God, might give the conscience of among them. But from the mountain where they came to meet God, their journey was an experimental state, to humble them and to prove them and know what was in their hearts. And so was the crossing of Jordan, though in another way. The priests' feet must touch the water, the ark is with them, they with it in the passage. There was association. Moses did the work of authority at the Red Sea. The people stood still and saw the salvation, and when the work was done passed over dryshod. Death had lost its power in Jordan, but in the ark's going through it with them. It is Christ's death, but not redemption; it was going in to what was promised, not going out to God. Hence the stones of death are set up in Canaan, Gilgal comes in, it is experimental though of faith. At any rate we have no dying in Christ, but with Him. The nearest to it is Colossians ii. where we have the true circumcision in Him, but this is in nowise the same, not even saying how, save by His circumcision. We have the true thing in Him, not the mere Jewish figure. There is a connection between the Red Sea and Jordan. Both are Christ's death and resurrection, but one is for us, where we stand still and see; the other, our having part in it, we have died with Him and risen with Him.

The passages (Col. ii. 12; Eph. i., ii.) are entirely misapplied. There is no dying at all there, but sovereign power comes in, and, when we are *dead in sins* takes us and puts us into Christ, as it raised up Christ when He *was* dead, and put Him into glory. Many other truths connect themselves with these points, as the character of the wilderness, with which the conditional 'ifs' of the New Testament connect themselves; and the confounding Ephesians ii. and Colossians ii. 12, with Romans vi., two totally different systems of doctrine, has given rise to wild wanderings of fanaticism; but this would lead me too far. I crave the forbearance of my brethren, my excuse for criticising their explanation being the immense practical importance for souls. For mark the effect, you have God shut out by the blood on the door posts, and that is all as to Him, and *no redemption in the scheme at all*; for if the Red Sea be our resurrection with Christ, that clearly is not redemption, that which is designated by 'our' as the ones engaged in it. By redemption I do not mean here the forgiveness of sins by blood, but as used for the operation of God's power in freeing Israel from Egypt. That involves the blood shedding and the forgiveness, but went much further. It was the accomplishment of the statement to Moses, Exodus vi. 6, 7, when the power and title of Pharaoh were destroyed by judgment, as Satan's for us. So Exodus iii. 8. So Christ (Gal. i.) gave Himself for our sins, to deliver us from this present evil world. 1 Peter i. 18, 20; Psalm cvi. 10. That sin in the flesh was condemned when Christ was a sacrifice for sin is blessedly true for us, but that was between Him and God; God sending His own Son did it, our coming into it is

another thing. Its being perfectly done there when it was God's work alone, and hence perfect, is our comfort now. One is God for us, the other our death and resurrection is wrought in us, in receiving Christ, that we may be rightly before God." J. N. D.

27. "H.," Egham. To be gathered together in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to remember Him, and shew His death till He come, is the desire of Him who said, "Do this in remembrance of me." The object of such a meeting is thus clearly defined. When spiritually entered into the Lord will be known "in the midst;" His death will engage every heart, His body be discerned, and communion of saints realised as members of "one body." In Acts xx. 7 we find that the early Christians "came together to break bread" on the first day of the week—the Lord's day. It was the one object for which they came together. Meetings for united prayer are also according to scripture, as in Matthew xviii. 19, Acts xii.

With regard to meetings for the study of scripture, we have repeatedly referred to this of late in our answers to correspondents.

As to a woman having her head covered when in prayer with others, it is plainly taught in scripture, because of the angels, who thus behold the woman taking her rightful place of subjection to the man, according to the Lord's mind. (1 Cor. xi. 6-10.)

As to being "spiritual," does not the scripture, "He which is spiritual judgeth (discerneth) all things," mean that such have a discernment which unspiritual persons have not?



“I HAVE SINNED.”

It is a serious moment when a soul realises what it is to be a sinner against God. The question of conscience then is not what *men* see, but what *God* sees; not what I think of God, but what *He* thinks of me. The mind constantly recurs to the thought that “Thou God seest me,” and to the painful consciousness that “my sin is ever before me;” and, not knowing forgiveness, such thoughts are very distressing. He perhaps, feels himself singled out, as if alone with God. He struggles to throw off such trying thoughts, but he cannot, for he knows he is God’s creature, and that he is accountable to Him by whom actions are weighed; for it is written, that “every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” (Rom. xiv. 12.) He dreads death, is afraid of judgment, and trembles at the thought of the lake of fire. So guilty is he, that he knows that if death should overtake him he has no hope of salvation. It is a profoundly serious moment; for his accusing conscience continually says, “I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight,” “I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not.” He trembles on the very edge of an eternal abyss, and all he can truthfully say is, “I have sinned.” What deep anxiety thrills through his soul; but how can it be otherwise when he is convicted of having sinned against God?

The more he ponders the reality of his condition as exposing him to "the wrath of God," the greater his distress, so that he becomes deeply anxious as to what he should do. He resolves, therefore, to try to do better, to be better, and to bring himself into a better state, little thinking that such efforts are only like building on a sandy foundation. Encouraged, however, for a moment, by this false hope, and flattering himself in his own eyes, he is ere long grievously disappointed at his progress, and is forced to a worse opinion of himself than he had before; for he finds that he does not keep the resolutions that he wished, and he does and says what he knows to be evil in the sight of God. His conclusion at length then is not merely that he has sinned against God, but that he is a sinner "without strength," and "under sin," which only increases his misery, and adds to the burden of his guilt.

Still he has not yet relinquished all creature confidence and self-righteous thoughts, so that he now makes up his mind to be "religious" as it is called, and having made his selection from the vast variety of religious activities around, he ardently pursues his so-called "religion." This he vainly hopes will bring the needed comfort to his distressed and burdened soul. He is therefore not backward in "giving and doing," he is diligent in duty work, in keeping days, and observing ordinances; he is determined not to leave a single

pious work undone that falls within his capability, so that he may have a well-spent life, die happily, and get to heaven at last. In this wrong road he is encouraged by many whose piety he reverences, because he does not know that much which passes for piety is little more than a compound of superstition and Judaism, and not Christianity at all. However, he diligently toils on in the ways of religiousness, deluded by the false expectation, that by such efforts, an Ethiopian might succeed in changing his skin, and the leopard his spots. Alas! how many are ensnared in this wile of hoping-to-be! May God mercifully come in, and deliver multitudes of them by the gospel of His grace!

But those who are taught of the Spirit of God find no rest in this course of hoping to get to heaven by their religion. Such learn, sooner or later, that

“No works or duties of their own,
Can for the smallest sin atone.”

However much others may flatter them as to their progress, and encourage them to trust in their own fancied goodness, and imaginary attainments, they are taught *by the word of God* that “By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.” (Rom. iii. 20.) And, at length, they are further taught *by scripture*, that “the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, *neither indeed can*

be. So then, they that are in the flesh *cannot please God.*" (Rom. viii. 7, 8.) Thus the soul taught of God is *by His truth* completely knocked down, and the religious snare into which he had fallen plainly exposed; he is therefore more distressed than ever, his burden has become heavier than before, for he now learns *from the word of God*, not only that he is a sinner without strength, but one who is hopelessly and incurably bad. This he receives as God's verdict. Having had to do with the law of ten commandments has given him the knowledge of sin, and proved him to be under its curse. Sacraments and ordinances he now finds cannot purge his conscience, and never were intended to be a means of salvation to any one. He learns too, that all his "giving and doing" could not blot out one of his many sins from the eye of God. He feels painfully that neither resolutions nor religion have met the need of his guilty conscience, so that he now sees that if God does not save him he is lost, and lost for ever. He thinks that God is able to save, but fears he is too bad to be saved, so that like the prodigal he says, "I perish with hunger." What a serious reality this is to the soul that is taught of God!

But his case is urgent. He seriously feels that with him it must be eternal salvation, or eternal damnation. Like another he cries out, "What must I do to be saved?" It is an unspeakably anxious time. He thinks within himself, How

can such a sinner as I approach God? Will He not frown, and spurn me from His sight? The answer from *the word of God* is, No; He will not do that, for He gave His only-begotten Son to die for sinners. But how can a just God receive one who **has** hated the Saviour, despised the gospel, and who is otherwise such a hell-deserving sinner? Because He is the God of all grace, and loves sinners though He hates their sins, as has been manifested in the death of His own Son on the cross. But is He not a just God? Yes, and His justice has been shewn in forsaking Jesus when on the cross because He was bearing our sins; so that He can now receive, pardon, and bless you for ever in virtue of the shed blood of Christ. Yea, more, for in the gospel message His ambassadors are commissioned to say, "Be reconciled to God;" thus shewing how gracious God is, how He delights to save, and how He can in righteousness blot out all our sins on believing in Jesus; because He "once suffered for sins the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." THEN he says, "I will arise, and go." In all my rags, and filthiness, and hunger and wretchedness, I will approach God, just as I am. He believes God. He comes as a self-judged, self-condemned sinner to God, and bows before Him. It is indeed a solemn moment. Alone with God, he says, "I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight," and he pleads the Saviour's name—the Saviour whom

God sent into the world to save sinners. He takes his true place before God through Jesus and His blood. The goodness of God in giving His only-begotten Son to die for sinners has led him to repentance; and this is repentance indeed. He is before God as a lost, helpless sinner, looking only to the Lord Jesus at His right hand, whose blood was shed for many for the remission of sins. No pen can describe the peculiar and holy solemnity of such a time, when in God's presence, consciously deserving judgment, but looking wholly to Jesus as his Saviour, whose blood ever speaks before God.

But he who had said, "I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord" was soon enabled truthfully to add, "and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." And so in the case before us when thus in his right place before God; for by the Holy Spirit's teaching he learns *from the word*, and receives, as *from the mouth of God*, the truth of the sin-cleansing virtue of the blood of Jesus, and that God is *for* him and *not against* him. He is assured that though he had been *guilty* before God, he is now cleansed from all sin. He receives God's testimony. He sets to his seal that God is true. He believes, though God is righteous in all His ways and holy in all His works, yet having set forth Christ as a propitiation — mercy seat — through faith in His blood, he learns, to the joy of his poor sin-stricken soul, that God is now the

sinner's Friend, a just God and a Saviour. Instead then of being for ever under "the wrath of God" because of his sins, his comfort now is that God laid our iniquity on Jesus, that He bare our sins in His own body on the tree, suffered, and died for our sins under the judgment of God. He looks back therefore on Calvary, and knows that He was "delivered for our offences," he looks up, and believes the divine testimony, that He "was raised again for our justification." Wondrous grace! He perceives that God raised Christ up from among the dead for our justification, because our sins had been righteously judged, and in it God had been satisfied, yea, glorified. Thus by Christ all that believe are justified from all things, and so perfectly cleansed from sin that God says, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Nay more, such are accounted righteous before Him, for the risen and ascended Saviour is of God made unto us "righteousness." Everything is now cleared up between his soul and God, and he stands consciously as an object of divine favour and blessing, in righteousness before Him. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." The blood of Christ is now realised between his soul and God, his conscience purged, his burden gone, the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto him, so that he loves God, thanks and praises

Him for the gift of His only-begotten Son, and desires to serve and honour Him. Praise and worship spring up from his heart to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and he gives all the glory to Him. It was He, he exclaims, who awakened me to the solemn sense of having sinned, who shewed me *that trying to do better would not do, that resolutions would not do, that religion would not do.* It was He who revealed His Son to me as the only and all-sufficient Saviour, it was He who drew me to Him with the cords of divine love, it was He who brought me to Himself through the precious blood of Jesus, gave me peace, and enabled me to rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Hallelujah! all praise, and honour, and glory to God and the Lamb! "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." What a deep reality it is to have passed from death unto life, to receive the Holy Ghost, to find peace and liberty even now in the presence of God. What unspeakable goodness! Now he thinks of the Lord's coming as his brightest and most blessed hope. He loves, he obeys, he serves, he worships, he walks in the truth, and waits for God's Son from heaven.

"And when I in Thy likeness shine,
The glory and the praise be Thine,
That everlasting joy is mine,
O Lamb of God, *in Thee!*"

ELECTION.

No. II.

WE have seen that on the day of atonement one goat typified the death of Christ, meeting all the righteousness of God, and glorifying Him in shewing mercy to the whole world; and the other goat, Jesus, the Substitute of His people's sins. The glory of God has surely the first place, and then the sinner's need is fully and for ever met. The scriptures speak of Jesus as the propitiation for the whole world, and also the bearer of the sins of many; the righteousness of God set forth in that propitiation in Romans iii. 21-26; the substitution of Jesus for His people's sins in Romans iv. 24, 25; and the effect of knowing and believing this in Romans v. 1-3. We have also seen that the mere human tradition that Jesus died for the sins of all men gives no comfort, for all men are not saved. Then the solemn inquiry is this—How am I to know that Jesus died for my sins?

The answer is in these words, "But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed (righteousness), 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." (Rom. iv. 24, 25.)

Righteousness is declared to be imputed unto us if we believe God, or, believing God, who raised

up Jesus our Lord from the dead. We observe, even here, it is God revealed to our souls to faith, God who raised up Jesus. We can never know that our sins are forgiven by looking at Jesus on the cross *now*: He is not now on the cross. If He be on the cross now, there is no forgiveness. Satan knows this, and therefore multiplies pictures and images of Jesus on the cross. He has died once on the cross, or there could be no salvation. But if He is not risen from the dead, your faith is vain, and ye are yet in your sins. With a Christ on the cross there could be no salvation. Now, who gave His Son? God. Who provided the Lamb, the atoning propitiation? God. Who so loved the world? God. Who has accepted the one sacrifice? God. Who raised the Holy, Righteous One from the dead? God. Who proclaims forgiveness of sins through that glorified Christ? God. Who declares all that believe are justified? God. Who is the Justifier, that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead? God. If you believe God, then it is most certain that you are one whose sins Jesus bore on the cross once, but who can die and suffer for them no more. God has declared them put away as to any charge on you again, or on Him who bore them in His own body on the tree. If you believe God, then, you say, looking up at that Man in the glory, "Who was delivered FOR OUR offences, and was raised again FOR OUR justification." Jesus, the Substitute;

Jesus risen, the Representative. As a believer you can now see your sins were transferred to Jesus when He was delivered for our offences, and as the goat bare them away, no more to be brought back, so Jesus was raised from the dead, and our sins can no more be laid to our charge; thus accounted righteous on the principle of faith, we have peace with God. The believer knows this is true of him individually, because it is true of all who believe God, and therefore must be true of him.

Some of our readers may say, This is hardly what we expected, it seems to us like setting aside Election. Indeed it is not. If, instead of reasoning, we simply bow to scripture, we shall find these two things run on together—man's responsibility and God's sovereignty.

On God's part infinite wrath against sin, and infinite love to the sinner, have been revealed in the death of Jesus. "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. . . . The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." (1 John iv. 9-14. Read also John iii. 14-16.) Is not God's love toward the world fully declared by the Lord Jesus? He must be lifted up, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." These are the words of Him who cannot

lie—who is the truth. This, then, was God's distinct purpose in the propitiation of the Lord Jesus. The bitten Israelite had not to inquire, How am I to know that Moses lifted up the serpent personally for me? No; for it came to pass that whosoever looked, lived. Is it not even so of Jesus, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life?

Now, would it not be most monstrous to say that man is not responsible to believe God? What, not to believe such revealed love, and forgiveness of sins preached through Jesus?

But can the grace of God toward all men, and Election, both be true? Certainly, and equally true, because both are revealed in the word of God. The supper was a great supper, and many were bidden; all refused, and made their excuse—not one accepted; but all were not compelled to come in. Here is the whole question in this well-known parable. (Luke xiv. 16.)

The fact is, man is so desperately wicked, that left to his own free choice, he will not believe God; he will not come to the great supper of God's salvation; he will not receive Christ as his Saviour. God did not make him so. Man's condition is the result of his own sin. He believed Satan, and disbelieved God. However light man may make of sin, his own condition of hatred to God is the proof of the terribleness of sin. It would enlarge our subject beyond our limits, or we might

see how, when the world had become utterly corrupt before God, when left to itself, that but one family was saved in the ark. We might then see how man's free choice built its tower of Babel, and, though they were dispersed, they soon sank into idolatry and wickedness. Then, how God took out one man, and said, I will bless this man Abram. Neither would it be possible to deny that God made him the father of the elect nation of Israel. Strange to say, no one seems to deny this, or that there are elect angels. What men do so hate is the election of the predestined children of God.

We will come, then, to the teaching of the New Testament on this subject. As we said, man left to his own free, natural choice, will not have Christ. He must be born again. This was found to be so, even of Israel, in the most favourable circumstances. God sent His Son to His own elect nation, to those whose prophets had foretold Him; and what do we read? "He came unto his own, and his own received him not; but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John i. 11-13.) Man has thus been tested. God was in Christ, inviting man, reconciling, not imputing trespasses unto them, but they received Him not. Nay, from the manger

to the cross, man's hatred and rejection grew worse and worse. And the new birth by the Spirit explains how any believed on Him, and were saved. By man's free, natural choice, not one received Him, though, on God's part, all was infinite love and grace.

Jesus, in the midst of rejection, had perfect rest of heart in the Father's will. What words are these?—"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in nowise cast out." (John vi. 37.) Again, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day. . . . Every man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." "My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." What calm repose in the midst of such billows of human hatred and rejection. He knew the righteous Father, and He knew that not one of those the Father had given Him would be lost.

Are not both things, then, equally true—that all that the Father gives to Him shall come to Him, and also, he that cometh to Jesus shall in nowise be cast out? The gospel is thus freely

preached to all—"That through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things," &c. ; then we read, "and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." (Acts xiii. 38, 39, 48.) Why should we take one of these truths, and not the other? or, why should we seek to alter either? Some would say, do not preach the gospel to all, only to the elect. Paul preached it to all alike, and declared that all who believe are justified. Others would alter the latter, and say, As many as believe are then ordained to eternal life. But it is not so; "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Surely we have no right to alter God's word to suit human opinions. And yet there is nothing to hinder a truly anxious soul, for forgiveness is preached to all, and all who believe are justified; and further, they have clearly been ordained to eternal life, for none else will believe—none else will come to Him that they might have life.

God NOW commands all men everywhere to repent. (Acts xvii. 30.) Men will not either believe what God says, or repent. If God had therefore left the matter in uncertainty, so to speak, to man's free choice only, and man so desperately wicked that he will not have the salvation of God, then evidently none would have been saved. If we turn, however, to some verses expressly concerning God's elect, we shall find that this is not, and cannot be, the case.

Let us carefully note that it is not a question of persons merely, but that God had a most wonderful purpose. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren." Is not this wondrous, that out of a world which has killed the Holy One, and rejected the very mercy of God, and when He might justly have left all to perish everlastingly, that God has taken out of them those whom He foreknew, and predestinated them to such glory as to be conformed to the image of His Son? Surely this must astonish angels. Thus, after man's rejection, we have salvation absolutely of God. The source entirely of God. "Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called : and whom he called, them he also justified : and whom he justified, them he also glorified." (Rom. viii. 29, 30.) To accomplish this purpose of infinite grace He spared not His own Son. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." This amazing truth bows the heart in profound worship. What a golden chain—predestinated, called, justified, glorified! All of God—accomplished by the death and resurrection of His own Son. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again," &c. What a joy to know that God is thus for us, and that He cannot change!

Nothing can separate us from His eternal love

in Christ Jesus. But does not this imply that God has predestinated some to be lost? Certainly not. There is no such thought in scripture. The reason why some perish is their own deliberate rejection of the truth. Scripture is quite plain and clear on both these points.

First, as to them that perish, it is, "*because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.*" (2 Thess. ii. 10, and read carefully the context.) Could words be plainer than these? If the reader shall perish everlastingly, then remember, it is BECAUSE you received not the love of the truth. Yes, God is love, and you would not believe Him. You may ask, But if I am saved, is the reason as distinctly stated? Indeed it is; these are the words, "*Because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.*" (2 Thess. ii. 13.) Thus all supposed merit is taken from man. If left to his own free choice he deliberately rejects and despises the gospel of God; and the reason why any are saved, is the sovereign choice of God. Such is the distinct teaching of the word of God, whether we believe it or not.

We are very sorry that such dreadful things have been said as those the writer of the letter refers to. There is no such thought in scripture as that God had created some that He might be glorified in their destruction. As to such cases as, "*Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated,*" and

the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, we will look at these in our next, if the Lord will. No doubt very erroneous things are said about such scriptures. In the mean time we fail to see how the truth of God's abounding, sovereign, electing grace can, for a moment, discourage an anxious, thirsty soul, for to such the gospel of God's free, present, and eternal forgiveness is preached. And God declares all that believe are justified from all things. The whole world still rejects Jesus, as they did at the Jews' feast in John vii. ; but did He not, on the last day, that great day of the feast, stand up in the midst of the rejecters, and cry? Yes, Jesus "cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." Yes, in the midst of the rejection of this day also, if there be only one man that thirsteth, there is the evidence; yes, if this is the reader's case, there is the evidence of the Spirit's work in your soul. It is the work of the Holy Ghost to create this thirst for Jesus. Come, then, to His bosom; oh, yes, Come to me, He says, and drink. And this is not all: "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (John vii. 3.8)

Jesus said, "The Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God." (John xvi. 27.)

ISRAEL'S FUTURE.

It is proposed in these short papers to examine what the scriptures teach as to the future history of the children of Israel. And we would approach this subject with the firm conviction that whatever God has spoken must come to pass. God said to Abram, "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. xii. 2-4.) Though this unconditional promise has not been fulfilled in its full extent, yet it is obvious it must be, as it is absolutely God's engagement with Abram.

After this, God gives an express promise as to the *land* of Canaan. He said to Abram, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all *the land* which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever," &c. (Gen. xiii. 14-17.) This promise of God to Abram is repeated: "I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee *this land*." (Chap. xv. 7.) "And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, *the land* wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." (Gen. xvii. 8.)

Then, further, after the offering up of Isaac, we have both the oath and promise of God: "That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of 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." (Gen. xxii. 16, 17.)

Truly this is that promise of God which was confirmed in Christ four hundred and thirty years after the law. Read carefully Galatians iii. 16-18. Now then, if we Gentiles, who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world; if we, in the rich mercy of God, have been made to share the great consolation of the oath and promise of God, confirmed in Christ; is it not a strange thing to turn round after this, and deny the promise to the natural seed of Abraham?

Certainly it is of the utmost moment that we believe not only the promise and oath of God, in contrast with the covenant of works as given at Sinai: but more, the promise is fulfilled, or confirmed, in the death and resurrection of Jesus, the true Isaac. The law cannot disannul what has been confirmed in Christ. But then, are not both of these two things equally sure by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead? Our inheritance, our eternal salvation depends solely on the

oath and promise of God, not on our engagement, as Israel, at Sinai. And also the future kingdom and blessing of Israel, as the nation to whom the promise is thus confirmed by the same resurrection of Christ, the Seed, from the dead.

Let it be granted that for the present Israel is set aside, and also that Abraham has never yet enjoyed the promised inheritance of *the land*—no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet He promised that He would give it to him for a possession. (See Acts vii. 5.) Is it possible that the Gentile professing church has concluded for centuries that God never intends to keep His word and promise to Abraham? The Spirit of God, foreseeing this, spake by the apostle: “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that 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 Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” (Rom. xi.)

There are these two thoughts or purposes of God in scripture. The church for the heavens, and Israel for the earth. Let us not forget that during this unmeasured period of grace, God is, by the Holy Ghost, gathering out the joint-heirs of Christ, the one body, destined to be the heavenly bride of the Lamb. But then let us not, in vain

conceit, suppose that God has forgotten His promise of *the land* to Abraham and *his seed*.

In being guided by scripture on this subject, no doubt we shall have to give up a vast amount of modern error, if we believe what God teaches in His word. Take that grave error of a general resurrection at the coming of Christ at the end of the world, as tradition says. Of course, if that were true, then Abraham would not be raised until the end of the world, and therefore the promise of God to him never could be fulfilled. It is clear he never has had so much as a foot of it yet. But did not God tell him he should have it? And how distinctly this is repeated to Isaac and Jacob! God said to Isaac, "Sojourn in *this land*, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee: for unto thee and unto thy seed I will give all these countries. . . . And will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations be blessed." (Gen. xxvi. 3, 4.) The same promise is repeated to Jacob. (Chap. xxviii. 13.) Oh, tell us, Is God a man that He should lie? Again, "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.) Yes, as to this earth, Israel is the centre of God's thoughts.

Is not the history of the Old Testament, from the call of Abram, for the most part, the history of that people? Was not David their inspired psalmist? Is

it not of their Messiah he speaks and sings, reigning in mount Zion? He speaks, indeed, of His sufferings and death, but it is for that nation. The church is never his theme; it was not then revealed.

The hatred and rejection of men is foretold: "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." Then the heathen will be given unto Him, and the uttermost parts of the earth for possession. And mark, this not in the way of grace, or during this time of grace, but for judgment. "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (Ps. ii.) The least attention to these statements in the Psalms and the prophets, will prove the grossness of the error of applying them to the gospel or the church. You notice the above is in direct contrast with the present work of unbounded grace. And when the death of Messiah is foretold in the Psalms, whilst we have been brought into much higher blessing through that death, yet the direct application of blessing from that death is not in the Psalms to the church of God now, but to the future kingdom of God on earth. "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the governor among the nations." (Ps. xxii.)

Now read the psalm of Messiah's reign (lxxii.). Is not every verse in contrast with this present state of confusion and rejection of Christ? During

these times of the Gentiles Messiah is cut off, and has nothing; but then God will give Him His judgment—He will judge the people, He will break in pieces the oppressor. In His days shall the righteous flourish: now they are slandered, hated, persecuted, and sometimes killed. Now Satan rules over the darkness of this world, then Christ shall have dominion from the river unto the ends of the earth. As a rule now all kings and nations reject Him, then all shall serve Him. Is it not sad to pervert the psalms which describe the future glory of the kingdom promised to Israel on earth, as though they described the church?

And now we come to the prophets. Did they prophesy concerning the church, or the future kingdom and glory of Israel? The Spirit of God anticipates and answers the question. There is the greatest care to shew that the future time of blessing to Israel, and to all nations, will not be brought about by the gospel, but by judgment. "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness: and the destruction of the transgressors and of sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed." (Is. i. 27, 28.)

"The word that Isaiah, the son of Amoz, saw concerning (not the church, but) Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall

be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it," &c. (Chap. ii. 1-4.) Has this been fulfilled, or can it be during the times of the Gentiles; during which Jerusalem is trodden down of the Gentiles, and the Jews scattered among all nations? Modern traditions make of none effect the word of God. God gives a prophecy concerning Jerusalem. Tradition says, No, it is concerning the church. Now read Isaiah ix. 6, 7. The child has been born unto them; but is the government yet upon His shoulder? Does He yet sit on the throne of David?

It is remarkable how the church was hidden. Think of these words—"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given," and, between that word and the next, eighteen hundred years at least have taken place; for the remaining words have not yet been fulfilled: "And the government shall be upon his shoulder," &c. Has that great mystery, the incarnation of the Son of God, taken place? and shall not He also sit on the throne of David? Yes, and "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." The same thing may be observed in chapter xi. The Spirit of the Lord did rest upon the holy Jesus, the Messiah. Verses 1-3 have been fulfilled, but 4 to 12 have not. Between 3 and 4 the period of the church has taken place, but not a word concerning it in the chapter. Not a line, from verse 4 to 12, has yet been fulfilled. "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." How very important to see the order of the word of God. First, there is the Spirit of the Lord on Messiah; then, the present interval being omitted, His judgment of the wicked (one); then, the blessing of His kingdom on earth, when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. He stands as the ensign of the people: "To it shall the Gentiles seek; and his rest shall be glorious." Then the Lord Himself gathers the remnant of His people, the outcasts of Israel, and the dispersed of Judah, from the four corners of the earth. Do not you see, then, how God will thus fulfil His promise to Abraham, though blindness in part has happened unto Israel during this gospel interval?

There is the same order everywhere: we will, however, turn to one instance where the Lord Jesus marked the present interval in prophecy. In Isaiah lxi., the first verse describes His living ministry in incarnation, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me," &c. If you turn to Luke iv. 17, you will find the book of the prophet Esaias was delivered to Him in the synagogue. He read these words, until He came to the sentence, "to preach the acceptable year of the Lord," and, at that point, "He closed the book, and gave it to the

minister, and sat down; and the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Now turn back to Isaiah lxi. In this (ver. 2) the first clause only was then fulfilled, Jesus announcing the acceptable year of the Lord to Judah. Then, before the next sentence, He has been rejected, and has nothing; Israel as a nation is cut off for more than eighteen hundred years, at the close of which unnoticed period of the church, the day of vengeance comes—the time of the great tribulation. Then read the description of the kingdom on earth. Surely it is the violation of all sense and scripture to apply this to the church. "And 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." Can there be a question that this is in the land of Israel, as promised to Abraham? "Therefore in their land they shall possess the double; everlasting joy shall be unto them." Thus we have the same order—the living ministry of Messiah, then the book is shut, and an interval before the day of vengeance: then follows the kingdom of Messiah on earth. What a description of the kingdom is chapter lx.! Oh, what brightness and glory shall burst upon that nation at the coming of the Lord! But more in our next paper.

CORRESPONDENCE.

28. "C.," Penkridge. The sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost was ascribing to the power of Satan the miracles which Jesus wrought by the Holy Ghost. This was blasphemy indeed. The Pharisees said, "This fellow does not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils." To which Jesus said, "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God," &c. The statement "Neither in this world, neither in the world to come" was well known to the Jews as referring to the age of the law, and the age of Messiah's reign, in neither of which would speaking against the Holy Ghost be forgiven. Such blasphemers are always rejecters of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Saviour of sinners.

29. "S.," Cheltenham. The paper is, we judge, scarcely suitable for publication in its present form.

30. "T.," Seaton Deleval. In 1 Corinthians x. 8, we are merely told that *in one day* three and twenty thousand fell of the plague; but in the book of Numbers the total number of those who died in the plague is said to be twenty-four thousand.

31. "D.," Hereford. The prayer at the end of Ephesians i. is for knowledge; in Ephesians iii. it is for power—the experimental enjoyment of Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith, &c.

32. "P.," New Cross. The dates to which you refer are interesting, and have been the subject of much controversy; we do not, however, think it would be profitable to our readers generally to occupy the pages of our little magazine with such questions.

ELECTION.

No. III.

WE will now examine some scriptures concerning which strange mistakes have been made. (Rom. ix.—xi.) These chapters are given to explain what appears like a contradiction. The present dispensation of the grace of God, which makes no difference between Jews and Gentiles, would seem to those ignorant of dispensational truth as a contradiction to the abounding national promises to Israel, in the books of Moses, the Psalms, and the prophets. All are now found guilty, both Jews and Gentiles; and the righteousness of God is revealed to all alike in the gospel. These chapters explain that this is only for a time. And more, that God is now acting in sovereign, electing grace; and not only so, but that He has done so from the beginning.

No one can deny that it was an act of sovereign choice when God called Abram, and said unto him, I will bless thee. So again, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." God did choose Isaac; He did not choose Ishmael. These are undeniable facts. This is still more distinctly stated as to Jacob and Esau. Let us read the verses carefully. It is sometimes said that it was written before they were born, that God hated Esau, and loved Jacob; but this is not so. "But when Rebekah

also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth); it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger; as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." It was said unto *her*—unto Rebekah—The elder shall serve the younger. (See Gen. xxv. 23.) But it was more than thirteen hundred years after this that it was *written*, even in the very last prophet, Malachi, "as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Surely God's love to Jacob did not lessen the wickedness of Esau in despising his birthright. Now what is there for man to carp at here, except his own ignorance? How often has this scripture ignorantly (it may be) been misquoted as though it was written before Esau was born, that God hated him, but, when examined, it is found to be altogether different. This does not deny, or alter the fact, that all the natural seed of Abraham were not called to inherit the blessing. Ishmael was not chosen, Isaac was: "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." So Jacob, being unborn, was elected to the blessing. These are simple facts, and to deny the sovereign right of choice to God, would be to set aside God altogether. Equally true is it that the Spirit of God, writing about these two men as men, and their posterity, hundreds of years after,

one of whom greatly valued the blessing, and the other most shamefully despised it, says distinctly that God did not approve of or love these two men both alike.

“Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” Can anything be more blessed than this? Man will have no mercy on himself. Man goes marching to everlasting woe. Thousands around us may be seen doing this—old and young. It is a dreadful fact. What, that tottering old man, just about to pass for ever from this scene, with eternity before him, has he no compassion on himself? No, none. He spurns and rejects the love of God. He will have the world; he will have sin. His whole will is against God. “So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.” This is grace, the free favour of God. He sheweth mercy to the man that has no mercy for himself. It is not man, the sinner, that chooses God, but God that chooses the sinner. There can be no question as to this, even as Jesus said to His disciples, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.” (John xv. 16.) What a spring of everlasting joy to our souls then! “It is God that sheweth mercy.” Dear christian reader, ponder this well. Thus in every way it is not what we are to God; neither is it

our willing, or running, for our running is only to do evil. (Rom. iii. 10-19.) It is God that sheweth mercy to whom He will shew mercy, or all must perish. No man is found that has mercy on his own soul. God hath chosen those who never would have chosen Him. Oh, the riches of His grace! He hath chosen us when obstinate, ignorant, hell-deserving sinners; and as objects of His mercy, has brought us into His everlasting favour.

Yes, the objector may say, but this scripture not only says, "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy," but it also says, "and whom he will he hardeneth." What about Pharaoh? As this is a butt against which the infidel knocks his poor head, let us carefully examine what is written concerning Pharaoh. "For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." Who was this Pharaoh that was raised up to such world-wide notoriety, and on whom fell so heavily the judgment of God? For it is indeed written of him that God hardened his heart; and whom He will He hardeneth. One verse of scripture will bring this man in his true character before us. "And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go." (Ex. v. 2.) Here, then, we have a bold infidel king, who defies the living God, who

lifts up his voice and puny arm to resist God in the deliverance of His chosen people. Was God unrighteous in punishing this daring rebel against His government and authority? Would it even be consistent for any earthly government to tolerate such a daring rebel? Now, what sheer ignorance it is to make a difficulty about the punishment of this blasphemer against God! And, mark, the Pharaohs were the most cruel despots the world ever saw. One was the wholesale murderer of babes. Oh, those cruel words of his! "If it be a son, then ye shall kill him." (Ex. i. 16.) Was it not in righteousness that God destroyed such human monsters? "God heard their groaning." "And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows, and I am come down to deliver them," &c. (Chap. iii. 7.) What a record of the kindness of God in delivering from the cruel oppressor; and yet the natural man sees nothing in God to admire!

We are ashamed to give an illustration, the thing is so plain; but suppose an infidel blasphemer were to get such power in any country, that he openly defied the government of that country, and he and his followers went about slaying every male infant in the land; would there be loud complaint if that government destroyed such a monster? Not only did one murder the infants of

Israel, *but the other rejected the message of God.* It is not a little remarkable that these are the exact sins also of the Jews at this day. They too have given up the Lord Jesus to be crucified ; and more, have rejected the message of God. They, too, are given up for the present to hardness of heart. It was not for that awful murder : for that cross which manifested man's deepest wickedness, brought out God's richest grace—free, full, everlasting forgiveness to those who had put to death the Lord Jesus. They would not believe the message of mercy. No, after such wickedness, they went about to establish their own righteousness !!

But what is the meaning of God hardening the heart of Pharaoh? We shall understand this better by turning to another Pharaoh that is about to appear in this world, and to the certain doom of the many Pharaohs of that day ; nay, do not such Pharaohs already abound? The daring wickedness of this coming wicked one will be terrible, "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God." (Read 2 Thess. ii. 4-12.) Oh, how many shall be deceived by him ! and just as Pharaoh rejected the message of God, so do these ; and "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 believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Thus God hardens the heart,

gives it up to strong delusion ; and why? Because His message of love has been rejected. This is a solemn question for the times in which we live. Are there not many would-be Pharaohs? Plainly this whole world is as guilty of the murder of Jesus as Pharaoh was guilty of the murder of the infants. Are there not many who are saying, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice? . . . I know not the Lord." Is not this the very sin that marks these last days? Disputing the authority of the word of God ; and this is equally true of the infidel and the professedly religious. The infidel so hates the truth, that he would destroy it if he could. And, oh, how many secretly say, Who is the Lord that I should obey His word?—we will not hear Him, but we will hear what we call the church! We will not believe the free forgiveness of our sins through the blood of Jesus. We will not believe that His *one* sacrifice for ever perfects those that are sanctified by His one offering; but we will have priests of our own, who shall again continually offer sacrifices that can never take away sins. Yes, all this terrible wickedness is after Pharaoh. Who is the Lord that we should hear His words? This religious rejection of the truth is growing stronger and will end, as foretold, in everlasting destruction.

Thus not a sentence of God's word shall fail. It is most blessedly true that He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy; and it is also solemnly

true that whom He will He hardeneth. Ah, should a careless despiser of His grace read this, beware lest He take you away with His stroke! Remember, it is not God electing you to be lost, but your own wilful, wicked determination to reject His truth. And before you lay down this paper, the church of God may be taken away, and you may be left to be given up to strong delusion to believe a lie. Nay, take care that you are not even now believing a lie. Oh, how long has God borne with the wilful wickedness of man in mercy! as it is written, "What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory." Thus the despising, defiant Pharaohs prepare themselves for everlasting woe, and God deals with them as they deserve in righteousness. If He dealt with all personally in righteousness, all must be lost. But He can, yes, does, exercise His blessed prerogative, "He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy."

And mark, it is not written that He makes one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour. It is an ignorant mistake to say so, if not worse. What is written is this, that He is sovereign, that is, that He hath power to do so—hath right to do so. Now is it not evident, as we are all by nature

rebels, sinners, rejecters of God, and despisers of His grace, that if God left us all to our own free will, and dealt with us as we deserve in absolute righteousness, we should all have perished, and thus Christ would have died in vain? Surely, then, it should bow every believer's heart in worship, that "*He hath mercy on whom he will.*" Oh, how blessed! when we should never have chosen God, God hath chosen us in Christ before the world began.



GRACE.*

By "The grace of God," we understand the free, unmerited favour of God to man when in his unclean, undone state; hence we read of "The grace of God which bringeth salvation." "By grace are ye saved;" "being justified freely by his grace;" and other similar statements. It is this free and eternal love of God in and through Christ Jesus, which could find no motive in man for its acting, but sprang wholly from the heart of God, who loved us when we were yet sinners, loves us as His children, and will never cease to love us; but will keep us, and save us bodily at the coming of our Lord. It is all of grace; and grace brings salvation in its fullest and eternal sense. Blessed are those who "have tasted that the Lord is gracious."

* Written in answer to a question from F. S., Nottingham.

When the antediluvians were to be cut off in their sins by the judgment of the flood, we are told that "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord;" and Paul tells us with regard to his own salvation, "The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. i. 14.) Again, we read of believers not only having "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," but it is added, "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand;" that is, we are always standing before God as objects of His favour, and this to be enjoyed, like peace, on the principle of faith.

Law is presented to us in scripture in widest contrast with grace, for law demands everything from the creature on penalty of curse; whereas grace brings every blessing, both present and eternal, from God to man as gifts, to be received and enjoyed by faith. If the law said, Do and live, the grace of God says, Believe and live; "the gift of God is eternal life;" "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." If the law says, Thou shalt love God with all thy heart, or be cursed; grace says, "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that *whosoever believeth* on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." If the law demanded righteousness from man to God in the way of works, the grace of God declares that "the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ [is] unto all and *upon all*

them that believe." We read also of "the gift of righteousness," and that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Rom. iii. 22 ; v. 17 ; x. 4.) It is then most happy to find the apostle instructing us by the Holy Ghost, that "we are not under the law, but *under grace.*" Precious rest and comfort for our souls !

The *objects* of the grace of God are those who believe on Him whom God has sent ; and such are children of God. "As many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name ; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John i. 12, 13.) Grace then has reached us by the death of Jesus. Hence, says the apostle, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." (2 Cor. viii. 9.) Thus the *depth* of grace came to us in our worst and lowest condition ; for Jesus not only came into a sin-stricken world where we were, but bore our sins in His own body on the tree, died for our sins, shed His blood for many for remission of sins, so that by His accomplished work He might for ever deliver us from the guilt and dominion of sin, and take us up as objects of eternal love and blessing. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet

sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. v. 8.) The *height* of divine grace has been reached in giving us the highest standing, the most endearing relationships, and nearness to God which we could possibly have; so that we are now spoken of as "accepted in the beloved," "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ," "complete in him," and "made nigh" in Him and through His blood. Now children of God, loved by the Father as He loved Jesus, and "as he is, so are we in this world." This is "abundance of grace" indeed; but this is not all. Of its *length and breadth* we know but little; only we do know that now, in this present time, the Holy Ghost has been given to us, as the "seal," "anointing," and "earnest of the inheritance;" and thus we are called to have fellowship with the Father and with His Son, to share Christ's place, to have the mind of Christ, to taste His joy, and patiently wait for His coming. Then we shall share His glory, be ever with Him, and like Him, and enter upon the inheritance with glorified bodies as His "joint-heirs." Such are some of the wonders of "the grace of God which bringeth salvation" as revealed in holy scripture. They are the sovereign actings of God, according to His own counsels and purpose, without any motive in us whatever. Therefore we shall be "to the praise of the glory of his grace." (Eph. ii. 7-9.) Happy indeed are those who thus consciously stand in the true grace of God! It is

wholly of God, and enjoyed only on the principle of faith.

When, however, a soul begins to look within for reasons for being loved and blessed by God, he ceases to be in the exercise of faith ; for faith looks always to God as the source of blessing, and relies only on His infallible word as authority. But when a believer redoubles his efforts, or endeavours to add something to what has been already done in the accomplished work of Jesus to make his salvation more secure, he has then got away from the source of divine grace, and become so legal, that he has "fallen from grace," and will soon find that his comfort in Christ, if not peace, is all gone. The true ground of blessing for every one that believeth in Jesus is that peace has been made, that eternal redemption has been accomplished, and that God now always sees us in Christ, as "complete in him," who is made unto us "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." But it is not only that a child of God loses the enjoyment of peace when he has fallen from grace, but having got away from the true source of all fruit-bearing he manifests the works of the flesh instead of "the fruit of the Spirit." We know it was so with the Galatian believers, and we are told what agony the apostle passed through about them. He said, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." (Gal. iv. 9 ; v. 4, 15.)

How vastly important it is then that we are holding fast the true grace of God which we have received, and wherein we stand! Such we may be certain are thinking of God's goodness, the way in which His abundant grace has flowed out to us in Christ crucified, risen, and glorified: they know Christ to be their strength as well as righteousness and know something of the blessedness of being "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." Such abide in His love, and know that "we love him, because he first loved us." On the other hand, a soul in bondage always looks from himself to God; he looks within for reasons for God's blessing him, and becomes self-occupied, and therefore increasingly miserable. If any who read these pages are in such a state, let them know that "grace" which saves is divine grace to us in and through Christ Jesus, who freely loves, blesses, and brings salvation to every one that believeth. This was surely the gospel which Paul so delighted in and preached. He said, "Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the *gospel of the grace of God.*"

But when the grace of God *to us* is brought home to our hearts, by the power of the Holy Ghost, it produces grace *in us*; and grace *to us*, and grace wrought *in us* must not be confounded;

for when we are taken up with the workings of divine grace in us, we have got away from the enjoyment of the grace wherein we stand. The humble Christian is sensible that all he is and has is by the rich and unmerited favour of God. "By the grace of God I am what I am." He knows not only that God has wrought *for* him, but has also wrought *in* him, or he never would have been brought to Jesus as his Saviour. He knows not only that the Son of God has been revealed *to* him but *in* him. We read of one saying, "When it pleased God who called me by his grace, and revealed his Son *in* me." Not only is the love of God revealed *to* us in the cross, but it is shed abroad *in our hearts* by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. This is what we mean by grace wrought *in* us. Others too can perceive the working of grace *in* us (would indeed that it were more manifest), hence we read, "When James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived *the grace* that was *given me of God*," &c. (Gal. i. 16 ; ii. 9.) Also when Barnabas "had seen the *grace* of God" *in* the Gentile believers he was glad. (Acts xi. 23.) The common apostolic salutation was "Grace unto you and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." We are encouraged also to "grow in grace," and are assured that "He giveth grace to the humble," and that "He giveth more grace." There is progress, therefore, in the work of grace *in* us ;

but the grace of God to us has come out in all its fulness and blessedness in Christ, though we may grow in the knowledge of it. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." (Eph. i. 7.) Perhaps there is nothing of such importance to the child of God, and nothing more difficult, than to abide in the bright sunshine and perfectness of divine love to us in Christ. Paul and Barnabas evidently felt this when addressing Christians, for "they persuaded them to continue in the grace of God" (Acts xi. 43); or, as we read elsewhere, to "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free," and to "cleave unto the Lord with full purpose of heart."

Let no one, however, suppose that he will be in the enjoyment of standing in the favour of God in Christ if walking carelessly, and in the path of disobedience; for, in such a course, the Spirit will be grieved, and the Lord will not be able to give the consciousness of His own presence. He said, "If ye keep my commandments, *ye shall abide in my love*; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." (John xv. 10, 11.) Neither will there be power for service or worship when fleshly and worldly ways are pursued and unjudged before the Lord, because such will not be in the strength and

comfort of the grace of God. We are enjoined therefore to hold fast grace, or to "have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. xii. 28, 29.) It is not difficult then to perceive why the apostle was so careful in his ministrations, so zealous lest the doctrines of grace should be subverted by the addition of something legal, like the Galatian error; or to warn most solemnly, as he did the Hebrews, against any giving up Christianity and going back to a legal ritual, which was enough to shew those that were under it, at what a distance they were from God as outside the veil without a purged conscience. Weighty indeed are the words of inspiration on this point, "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that *the heart be established with grace*; not with meats which have not profited them that have been occupied therein." (Heb. xiii. 9.) We do well then to ask ourselves, Are our hearts established as in God's presence in the depth, and height, and length, and breadth of His own unspeakable grace to us in Christ Jesus? This, be it observed, is not merely a question of intelligence, or what we have received into our heads, but how far the abundant grace of God has affected our hearts? how far it has comforted, filled, and settled us as in Christ before God? When this is really the case shall we have a fear?

for does not His "perfect love" cast out fear? And shall we in the consciousness of His grace hesitate to cast all our care on Him, who invites us so to do? Then verily, "it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace."

It need scarcely be added that another effect of our receiving the grace of God is to walk in grace toward others. To be exacting from others is a practical contradiction of Christianity. Saints of old were enjoined to look well after each other regarding this—"Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God." (Heb. xii. 15.) Nor can even a child of God who demands from others with unforgiving exaction expect to have in the consciousness of his soul happy communion with the Father; for Jesus said, when speaking of delivering an unforgiving one to the tormentors, "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother." Let the reader lay to heart this weighty and searching scripture. (Matt. xviii. 23-25.)

But there is a very solemn point yet to be noticed. Like everything else, with which man has been entrusted has been corrupted by him and sinned against, so hath he corrupted grace, by associating all manner of evil conduct with the confession of the letter of the gospel. In this way "certain men" have been occupied in "turning the grace of God into lasciviousness." To confess Christ as Saviour in word, and the heart

at the same time set upon fleshly indulgence and worldly pleasure, is that corrupting influence exposed by scripture which will soon end in apostasy and judgment. How different is the effect when the truth is received and held in the love of it! How wonderfully the grace of God works, when it reaches the heart; for “the grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 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; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” (Titus ii. 11–14.)



THE BLOOD ON US.

THAT the precious blood of Christ was shed *for us* is the grand foundation truth of Christianity. It speaks aloud of the amazing love of God toward us even when we were yet sinners. It tells us of sins judged, peace made, and the sinner on believing cleansed; it assures the sin-burdened heart that God is for him, and not against him; and bids the trembling soul to rest in His love. To such the words of Jesus come with unspeakable comfort, “This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the re-

mission of sins." What love! Yes, in richest grace, He died for the ungodly!

It is also most blessed to know that Jesus who was dead is alive again, and that for evermore, and gone into heaven itself by His own blood, so that now we have boldness to enter into the holiest by His blood. Yes, the veil having been rent, it is our sweet privilege to draw near. How marvellous that such sinners of the Gentiles as we were should now, by the precious blood of Christ, always, before the eye of God, be cleansed from all sin, and able to come by faith, through the Spirit, into His very presence where Jesus is. It is His own word which assures us that we have remission of sins, and by that new and living way which Jesus has consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh, can draw nigh to God. What peace and comfort to be thus in the presence of God where Jesus has gone by His own blood, and where we are privileged to come with boldness! It may be, however, that many dear children of God stop short at the first of these great truths of scripture—of having remission of sins through the blood of Jesus which was shed for many; and they are, perhaps, entire strangers to this second truth, of liberty to draw near to God by His blood. Yet there are some who have traced the Lord in resurrection, and ascension, and know the unspeakable comfort and blessedness of entering with boldness into the

holiest of all by His blood, and, when there, have had their hearts drawn out in worship and thanksgiving.

But there is another truth of great practical value concerning the blood. It is this; that it has been sprinkled on us; that is, not only the cleansing power, but the sanctifying or consecrating value of the blood of Jesus has been brought home to our hearts by the Holy Ghost. We read of "having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience," and of being "sanctified" with the blood of Jesus.

In the consecration of the priests, who were in some respects remarkably typical of us, certain parts of their bodies had the blood put upon them. This is not the blood merely made known for relief of conscience, most blessed as that is, but to shew that the person is practically as well as personally set apart for God. We are not our own. We are henceforth to live, not to ourselves, but to Him who died and rose again for us.

When the priests were consecrated, the blood was put upon the tip of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and the great toe of the right foot; for they were wholly set apart for the service of the sanctuary according to the will of God. And, surely, when we have the consciousness that we are set apart for God in His own sovereign grace by the blood of Jesus and gift of the Holy Ghost, it draws us into those paths and occupations which

we know are pleasing to Him. We cannot go far wrong, if the Lord witnesses to our consciences of remission of sins, if we are inside the veil in virtue of that blood, and also have the consciousness of its personal value as setting us apart for God.

The tip of the right ear was marked with blood because by the ear we receive communications; it is an avenue to our hearts and minds. Our judgments are formed according as we hear. "As I hear, I judge." We receive instruction through the ear, and there is a remarkable connection between the mouth and the ear. As to ministry of the word, the true servant hears first and then speaks. So it was with the perfect Servant. "The Lord God hath given me the *tongue* of the learned, that I should know how to *speak* a word in season to him that is weary. He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine *ear* to *hear* as the learned. The Lord God hath opened mine *ear*, and I was not rebellious." (Is. 1.) If evil men and seducers get our ear, there is scarcely any limit to the damage we may receive. Satan first got Eve's ear, and then her heart transgressed against God. Oh to have the constant sense in our souls, that our ears are wholly for God, so that day by day, and hour by hour, like a little child, we may be able to look up and say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

The thumb of the right hand being marked with blood shews that we are set apart to minister to

others according to the will of God; and as He has given ability and opportunity. We therefore read, "let us wait on our ministering;" whatever be the line of things God has appointed us to be engaged in let us wait on Him about it, and wait for opportunities for carrying it out. In this we shall prove the truth of scripture, "He that waiteth on his master shall be honoured."

The great toe of the right foot was also marked with blood, because we are consecrated by the blood of Jesus to walk in obedience to the will of God as not our own, but, set apart for Him. We are therefore to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, and for the glory of God. Oh to have the constant remembrance in our souls of being set apart for God by the blood of Jesus!

As a matter of fact, however, our spiritual energy sometimes flags, we grow weary in well doing, and faint in our souls. What then? For our encouragement God says, "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." We must learn the insufficiency and weakness of the strongest and fairest of natural resources; "even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail." And what then? Again we are encouraged, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint." (Is. xl.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

33. "G.," Bournemouth. We are thankful to hear of your having been helped by the Paper on "Election." We hope you may have the Lord Jesus Christ increasingly before the eyes of your heart. When you lay aside doctrinal questions, and have to do with the Son of God, the risen and ascended One, who "made peace through the blood of his cross," according to the will of Him that sent Him, you will find comfort flow into your soul. The true ground of assurance is not what you feel, but what God says. Taking your place at the feet of Jesus, as a helpless, guilty sinner, hearkening to God's word, and believing it because He says it, you will have "joy and peace in believing." By Him (Christ) all that believe *are* justified from all things. You will then have liberty to live unto God.

34. "F." There can be no question that every sinner that comes to God by Christ will be saved (Heb. vii. 25); it is also quite true that every one that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life (John iii. 36); and yet how few believers (perhaps from bad teaching) boldly confess that they are saved, and have everlasting life! Such are safe, and have life, but have not peace, and do not therefore enjoy communion, or the conscious favour of God. John tells us that he wrote his first epistle that believers might *know* that they have eternal life. (1 John v. 13.) When a believer is assured from scripture that he has remission of sins, that his old man has been crucified with Christ, that he is a child of God, accepted in the Beloved who is his life and right-

ousness, and that he has received the Holy Ghost the earnest of the inheritance, then he is, as you say, in the "conscious favour of God," and, in his measure, enjoys "fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." This is communion.

The unpardonable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and "a sin unto death" are, in our judgment, not the same. The former can only be by a rejecter of Christ, the latter gives the idea of an intervention of the Lord in His governmental dealings in removing one from the earth by death. Of the Corinthians it was said, "for this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." These subjects have been repeatedly taken up in our "Answers to Correspondents." We shall hope (D.V.) to reply to your other questions in our next issue.

35. "B.," Ryde, I. W. We have heard of others lately who have had confused thoughts about "the bride," through reasoning on the subject instead of simply receiving God's testimony in the written word. We have heard also of some who have been bold enough to assert that "the bride" in scripture always refers to the Jews. It is not a new idea, for we remember its coming up about twenty years ago. But let us turn to scripture, and may God's voice be heard by us!

(1.) In the last chapter of Revelation, when Jesus presents Himself as "the Bright and Morning Star," we are told that "the bride" says "Come;" she also entreats those who hear to say to the Lord "Come," and, turning to the unsaved with the message of the grace of the gospel, says, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Now, where in Jewish scriptures is Israel's hope said to be "the Bright and Morning

Star"? Instead of this, Is not Christ as "Sun of Righteousness," which comes after the "Morning Star," the nation's hope? (Mal. iv. 2.) Again, is not Christ as the Morning Star remarkably associated with Christians as their hope? (See Rev. ii. 28; 2 Pet. i. 19; Rev. xxii. 16.) Besides, where in any part of Jewish prophecy is the nation, or the remnant found waiting for Christ and "holding forth the word of life" to perishing sinners around? Is not the remnant of Israel always seen crying to Jehovah to come down, and deliver them from their enemies by executing judgment upon them? We know that "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness;" but where is there an idea of judgment when the Lord Jesus Christ comes to take *us* to Himself?

(2.) Does not "the marriage of the Lamb" take place in heaven? (Rev. xix. 1-11.)

(3.) In Revelation xxi. the apostle has a vision of "the bride, the Lamb's wife;" and observe the relationship is not with Jehovah, but with the Lamb. It is "*the* bride." Her characteristics are heavenly; she descends from God out of heaven. Can this be Israel? Further, we are told that the bride, under the symbol of a city, has in the foundation of its wall, what? the Patriarchs? No, but "the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." Are we not plainly told elsewhere that those saints who form the church "are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets"? (Eph. ii. 20.)

(4.) In the Epistle to the Ephesians we have three figures of the church, "one body," "a holy temple," and that church which Christ *loved*. In "the church which is his body," of which Christ is "Head," we have clearly the union of members

on earth with the Head in heaven—one body; the most beautiful idea of oneness, so that Christ could even speak to Saul of those on earth whom he was persecuting as “Me.” In this figure, however, there is no room for others being united; but, in the building of a temple, we have growth as new stones are being added; there is room for increase, and for its being God’s habitation through the Spirit. But in chapter v. Christ’s *affections* are brought out. He “*loved* the church, and gave himself for it.” We have also His present loving care of it, and that He is soon to “*present it to himself* a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” It is that which occupies His heart’s affections. He is a model for the christian husband to copy: he is to love his wife, and nourish and cherish her, “even as the Lord the church.” Precious truth! Yes, Christ loves the church as Himself. It is part of Himself; and “no man ever yet hated his own flesh.” Again, when speaking of the union of husband and wife, it is added, “This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”

It is strange that a Christian should be found bold enough to assert that Adam and Eve were not types of Christ and the church; for we are not only plainly told that Adam “is the figure of him that was to come,” but, when the tenderest bridal affections are brought out, for our heart’s comfort, in Ephesians v., the very words are quoted which were used in Genesis ii., and applied to Christ. “Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. . . . Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh;” and in

Ephesians it is added, "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church." (Rom. v. 14; Eph. v. 31, 32; Gen. ii. 22-24.)

With regard to Rebekah being a figure of the church (to which another directs our attention), it requires a little more study of scripture to perceive. No one, perhaps, who reads these pages would deny that Isaac on the altar, and Isaac coming to meet his bride, remarkably foreshadow Christ on the cross, and Christ coming to meet His saints in the air. It is striking also to observe that between these two events Isaac is testified of, but not seen; Abraham's natural seed are not now on the scene, but come in after, though their future blessing is declared to be secured through Isaac's death, and Jehovah's promise and oath. We have also bereavement, burying the dead, buying and selling, money and merchants, answering pretty much to what the world is now. Besides these things, the great work done during this interval is a bride called out for him who in figure was dead and is alive again, and heir of all things. She hears of him, and her heart is taken up with one whom she has not seen. She is blessed, separated from country and from her kindred, and goes out to meet the bridegroom. She is kept and cared for every step of the way, and her hope is only realised when she actually sees Isaac, who meets her, and takes her to himself. (See Gen. xxii.-xxiv.) Whether this is typical of what is now going on between the death of Christ and His coming, the christian reader will judge.

36. "C." Berkhamsted. The article has not been printed separately, but you are at liberty to do so.

“MORE BRUTISH THAN ANY MAN.”

PROVERBS XXX. 2-14.

THIS was Agur's judgment of himself. He might have had a very different opinion of his state in former years, but now he says, "Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy." He does not say, I am *become* more brutish, but I *am* so. It was what he was in himself—his state. It is clear from what follows that he is one who is having to do with God, who is thinking of himself as in the searching light of His presence; and there he learns, not that he is good, and better than others, but that he is bad, and worse than others. And what else can be the estimate we form of ourselves when consciously before Him who is of purer eyes than to behold evil? An honoured prophet, who was used to communicate much from God to man of the sufferings and glory of Messiah, was known to say when he saw His glory, "Woe is me, for *I am undone*, because I am a man of unclean lips." (Is. vi. 5.) Another, of whom God had said, "there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil"—when he was brought face to face, as it were, with God, was brought, not merely to know he was "vile," but

to abhor himself. He said, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I *abhor myself*, and repent in dust and ashes." (Job xlii. 5, 6.) Again, we have an inspired psalmist saying, when in the sanctuary of God, "So foolish was I, and ignorant; I was as *a beast* before thee." (Ps. lxxiii. 22.) And when another prophet was seriously recounting the ways of Jehovah, we hear him saying, "Thou didst walk through the sea with thine horses, through the heap of great waters. When I heard, *my belly trembled; my lips quivered* at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble," &c. (Hab. iii. 15, 16.) But in Agur we find a man loathing himself indeed, estimating no one so unclean, unwise, and ignorant as himself. It is not so much what he has done that so bows him down, but what he is, what his true character is as a man; having powers and affections, but so running in the current of mere nature, that he sees no one so morally resembling the brute creation as himself. If he eats, and drinks, and sleeps, to satisfy the necessities of nature, so do brutes; only he might, perhaps, make personal application of the prophet's words: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." (Is. i. 3.) So low and grovelling, so unclean and earthly-minded did he feel himself to be, so little

did he find his thoughts and ways according to God, that he was loathsome in his own eyes, and could only say, “Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have I the understanding of the holy.”

The words which immediately follow these utterances of self-judgment are, “Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the winds in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son’s name, if thou canst tell? Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.” (Vers. 4, 5.) Thus the speaker is evidently having to do with God. For “who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended?” Is it not He whom God sent into the world to save sinners, who was delivered for our offences, and whom God raised again for our justification? Is it not He who was “the Word made flesh, and dwelt among us,” who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, according to the will of God? Is it not He whom God hath highly exalted, and crowned with glory and honour, because He finished the work of atonement, and had been obedient unto death, even the death of the cross? Is it not He of whom God says that “the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”? Of whom but God

could it be said, He "hath gathered the wind in his fists, and bound the waters in a garment"? And did not Jesus command the raging winds and tumultuous sea to cease, and immediately there was a great calm? Well, then, may he challenge his hearers, and say, "What is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou canst tell?" All this is the secret which the gospel makes known, for "this is life eternal, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

A further proof that this self-judged, self-abased man is in the presence of God, is, that he received His word into his heart as divine truth, the word which effectually worketh in them that believe. God has spoken, and Agur has heard, and received the word from His mouth; so that he now not only boasts of the purity of the word, and the faithfulness and goodness of God to them that trust Him, but he becomes the guardian of the divine revelation, and is zealous for its preservation without human corruption. This was faith indeed, and faithfulness too, which is always the fruit of faith. He says, "Every word of God is pure; he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." (Vers. 5, 6.) Precious testimony to a divinely-wrought faith!

And does not self-abasement always accompany great faith? Let us hearken to our Lord's own

words concerning it. A Gentile centurion applies to Him for His healing power to be put forth in a valued servant, who was at home, sick of the palsy, and grievously tormented. Jesus said, “I will come and heal him;” but the centurion’s reply elicited from the Saviour one of the most remarkable commendations of the greatness of faith recorded in scripture. Nor can we fail to notice that his unfeigned humility, his self-abasement, was one of its marked features. “The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” Thus we see great humility of mind and self-unworthiness connected with “great faith.” (Matt. viii. 5-10.)

Look at another instance. A Syrophœnician woman applies to Jesus about her daughter, who was grievously vexed with a devil. At first she was wrong, because she applied to the Lord to do this for her as “Son of David,” but afterward she learned that, being a Gentile, she was outside the covenanted blessings of Israel, and had no connection with “the sure mercies of David.” She

at length took her place before Him as a dog, an unclean creature, having no claim whatever to His goodness, and, as a cur dog, she waited for a crumb of bread to fall from the Master's table; thus she, as unworthy as a Gentile dog, would wait for a crumb, that might be cast unto a hungry, needy one, in the lowest place of self-abasement and need. She said, "Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. *Then* Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, *great is thy faith*; be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." (Matt. xv. 21-28.) Thus we have another example of great faith being associated with self-abasement. And is it not always the case?

Observe, then, that this God-fearing Agur, this man of faith, learned in the presence of God, where we believe it can only be really taught—first, to loathe himself, and to own himself to be worse than any man; secondly, to know something of God, not only as Almighty, but of His Son, the One who both descended and ascended; thirdly, he found a divinely-laid foundation for his soul's confidence in the "word of God," and unquestionable assurance of safety too, for "He is a shield to them that put their trust in him;" fourthly, he contends for the revelation which God has given in His own word, and for that alone, as the true ground of faith. "Add thou not to his

words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.” What rest this gives the soul!

He now is exercised as to his walk and conduct, both spiritually and temporally. The consciousness of entire dependence on God makes him a man of prayer. He earnestly entreats God to remove far from him vanity and lies, and to give him neither poverty nor riches. As to the first, nothing so hinders spiritual perception and growth as the empty pride and vanity of the natural heart being allowed, and false doctrine—lying statements about the truth, which look something like it, but when tested by holy scripture are found to be not the truth. We are told “no lie is of the truth.” We can well understand this, and see how repugnant to the taste of a meek and lowly Christian must be the puffed up vanity of the fleshly mind, which Satan and flatterers are often seeking to do. Nothing so cripples faith, so hinders our testimony, so retards growth and spiritual edification, as proud, vain, self-confident, self-righteous thoughts! O Lord, remove them far from *us*! And if man’s traditions, the philosophy of rationalists, the infidelity of ritualists, the popery of protestantism, the unreasonable and unscriptural dogmas of others, occupy our minds, instead of the pure simple word of the living God, how can we be happy Christians, or really fruitful branches of the true vine? Well, then, may *we* cry earnestly to God in these last days and perilous

times, "Remove *far*—yes *far*—from *me* vanity and lies."

But we are not yet in heaven. We have mortal bodies, needing food and raiment, and this our God is far from being unmindful of; and, concerning this, we may profitably ponder the prayer of this God-fearing man—"Give me neither poverty nor riches." And why? Why pray against being rich? Why not pray rather to be rich? Because he knew something of himself. He has been before God, and in His holy presence has learnt to say, "I am more brutish than any man." Why, then, did he dread riches, and pray against being wealthy? Is it not a good thing for this life? Does not wealth give a man power, influence, usefulness? Ah, but this man is *before God*. He thinks how it might affect God's honour. He is afraid that if he were rich he might forget that he was a weak, unworthy man, more brutish than any man. He gives us the reason, and, oh, how clear and pointed it is! "Lest I be full, and *deny thee*, and say, Who is the Lord?" He feared, if he had riches, that he might dishonour God, and be lifted up with pride, instead of pursuing that path of unfeigned dependence and lowliness which brings glory to God.

Then, is it well to be poor? Certainly not; he prays, therefore, that poverty might not be his portion; for few things, perhaps, are more distressing to a God-fearing man than to be pinched

with poverty. He knows something of his own proclivities ; he is taught to have no confidence in the flesh, and he fears, that if he were poor, he might fall into temptation, and defraud, over-reach, or steal, and bring dishonour on the name of his God. We can easily understand this. We may, then, profitably ponder his prayer, “Feed me with food convenient for me ; lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.”

Before closing these remarks, another interesting point remains to be noticed. It is this. Having seen what he is himself in God’s presence, having also tasted the sweetness of the word of His grace, and diligently gone forward in the path of doing all to the glory of God, he is now able to see clearly the true condition of the people among whom he dwells. It was so with the prophet Isaiah ; for when he found out that he was undone, and a man of unclean lips, he then saw that he dwelt among a people of unclean lips. We see in the case of Job also, that it was after he had so thoroughly judged and abhorred himself, that he saw the true state of his friends, and prayed for them ; and we may be sure that no one has a correct estimate of those around who is not right before God as to himself and his ways.

The God-fearing Agur describes four classes of people. 1. “There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother.” (Ver. 11.) These are the bad people of the world,

those who are disorderly, self-willed, and unnatural in their ways. It is a generation that may be seen in almost every place. They are rude and insolent, and walk on the muddy side of the broad road which leadeth to destruction. Having grown up insubject to their parents, and to despise rule, they have made such progress in this sad course as to defy authority and despise dominion. How different from the obedient Son of God, whose delight it was to do the Father's will !

2. "There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness." (Ver. 12.) These are the good men of the world—the reformed, the moral, the virtuous, and benevolent. They boast of their good intentions, good heart, the extent of their benevolent undertakings, and the prosperity of all their doings ; but with all this self-gratulation, they know not forgiveness of sins. These walk on the clean side of the broad way which leadeth to destruction. It is a well-known generation. It is the way of Cain, who so ignored the fall of man that he dared to approach God without blood. Such self-made purity is the total denial of Christianity, which recognises no purity of conscience, no cleansing of sin but by the precious blood of Christ.

3. "There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes ! and their eyelids are lifted up." (Ver. 13.) Such clearly are Pharisees, so lofty are their eyes that they esteem themselves righteous,

and despise others ; so lifted up are their eyelids that they presume to thank God that they are not as other men are, or even as these wicked publicans, who can only cry, God be merciful to me, a sinner. It is a frightful delusion, and yet, alas ! a common snare of Satan's. “O how lofty are their eyes, and their eyelids are lifted up.” This is a generation not easily to be mistaken.

4. “There is a generation whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw-teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.” (Ver. 14.) These are the mockers, scoffers, sceptics, and infidels, who hate God's people, because they know not God, and despise His truth. They are an increasing generation, and especially to be noted in these last days. “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.) Rationalists and philosophers they may be, but they see no beauty in Christ, they deny the need of redemption, proudly use their tongues to undermine the authority of scripture as a divine revelation ; they gnash with their teeth on those who stand up for the Godhead glory of the Son, and His accomplished work of redemption, and hate and persecute the children of God.

It is perfectly clear that when the Holy Spirit

works in souls, He shews them that they are sinners—guilty and lost sinners—in the sight of God, and, instead of mending and reforming such, or helping men to do it, He brings them to know that by the blood of Christ alone they can have a purged conscience, and be made fit for God's presence.

“ He never leads a man to say,
 Thank God I'm made so good;
 But turns his eye another way,
 To Jesus and His blood.”



ELECTION.

No. IV.

WE now turn to the word of God, and our inquiry is this: To what hath the Father in eternity chosen us in Christ? To what is the church elected? That the election of the church was in the beginning in eternity is most certain from scripture. “ But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Thess. ii. 13, 14.)

Thus the ultimate purpose of God was, that these chosen ones should obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. What a salvation! What a purpose!

Chosen from the beginning. The Holy Ghost, the blessed One by which they were sanctified, as to the new birth, separation to God, and growth in grace—"Through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth."

It may be asked, How could the apostle thus give thanks for these Thessalonian believers? How did he know their election of God? He tells us, "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. . . . And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost." (1 Thess. i. 5, 6.) Further marks of their election of God were found in that *the word of the Lord was spread abroad by them*, and they were turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven. Here were the proofs of their election of God. Beloved reader, can you say it is so with you? Has the gospel that Paul preached ever come with power to your soul? You will find the gospel that he preached to them in Acts xvii. 2-4. Has the Holy Ghost ever made known to you the deep need of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus? the blessed news that through Him is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins—that all who believe God are justified from all things? Have you received the word with joy of

the Holy Ghost? Have you cast in your lot with the Lord's people, following the Lord as they did? Is that word of the Lord so precious to you, that it is your delight to be making it known all around? Have you been turned to God from all the idols to which your heart once clung, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven? If you can say, through the amazing grace of God, and by the power of the Holy Ghost, all this is true of you, then these are the same marks as those by which Paul knew their election of God.

All this is so entirely contrary to the natural man, that it must be of God. You would, like the world around, have refused to have received the love of the truth, that you might be saved, if God had not from the beginning chosen you to salvation. To God be all the praise; to you rest and peace. Before we look at the purpose of God expressly as to the church, we will turn to another scripture that may give strength and comfort to the individual believer.

We will take a scripture in that epistle which describes man's utterly lost and guilty condition before God, and also treats especially of the righteousness of God in the sinner's redemption through the blood of Jesus, and His complete justification by His resurrection from the dead.

Here it is found that man is saved and justified on the ground of the free favour of God. Now,

from such a company, where all were alike guilty, what a revelation of infinite grace is this! "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren." This was the predestined thought of God—I will have a company out of that world of vile sinners, who shall be like my Son. He shall be the first-born among them; yes, they shall be conformed to the image of my Son! (See Rom. viii. 29–39.) And let it not be surmised that this means that God predestined them after they believed the call, or because they believed it. No, that would be no predestination, as is further shewn in the next verse, that the predestination surely was before the call. "Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Now bear in mind, that if God had dealt in righteousness personally with every one of these, they must, as enemies, ungodly, and despisers of God, have perished everlastingly. All, therefore, was pure grace to these. "He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy." "What shall we say to these things; if God be for us, who can be against us?" Yes, if such a God as this be for us—"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all . . . who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?"

It is Christ that died," &c. Let us pause, and contemplate God predestinating poor ungodly sinners to be conformed to the image of His Son—even now accounted righteous before Him without condemnation. To accomplish this in righteousness, He spared not His own Son. Nothing can separate us from such love as this. Shall we say it is dangerous for the believer to be acquainted with all this?

We will now turn to another epistle, where the church of God is especially revealed; and that, not only what it will be, but what it is even now, seen in its heavenly character. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, WHO HATH blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." (Eph. i. 3.) What a rebuke to unbelief is this statement! How clear, present, and certain! What a bright contrast with the dark human thought that we shall only get to know at the day of judgment whether we shall obtain such heavenly blessings! Yes, it is all ours now. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ *hath* blessed us thus in the heavenlies in Him. And mark, all this is according to plan and purpose. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." Have you ever thought of these words? How far do they take us back? Are we chosen in Christ because of something in our own history or circumstances? No, farther back. Were we chosen in Him before the forma-

tion of this world in its present state, and before the introduction of sin? Farther back still. When were the foundations of the world laid? We read, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." What vast ages this may have been before the six days' formation of this earth for man, we know not. Men, with all their learning, can only measure time; they have no language to explain eternity: that laying of the foundations—that creation of the heaven and the earth—in that vast unknown, "in the beginning." Yet the heavenly blessing of the church is, "according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." Men love to speculate about past ages, but here is no room for speculation, but the distinct revelation, that the church, that we who have redemption in Christ through His blood, were chosen in Him before those ages began.

Further, notice, this is not so much a question of the election of persons, though it surely is that, for what would the church, the body of Christ, be, without persons, individual members of that one body? But this wondrous epistle reveals what God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in eternity chose us to and for.

"That we should be holy, and without blame before him in love," none but God could have conceived such a thought, yet was it His pleasure in eternity! How soon will it be realised in all

its fulness by us, even as we are seen by Him now in the Beloved! "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself." Surely every sentence is full of infinite love. What a contrast to the blessing of Israel as a nation on earth! We were thus predestinated to the higher relationship "of children." Do our souls enter into this, that God would have us in the blessed relationship of children, and "according to the good pleasure of his will." How sweet it was to Jesus to reveal the Father's joy in receiving His long-lost son, in that precious parable of the prodigal son! Oh, that this short paper may be used to lead the "children" to meditate on every sentence of this chapter. Think that the place given us is "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."

Yes, when God is known, then we see how suited to Him is the infinite extent of His grace. The free favour of God, in every sense, is altogether beyond all human thought. We can only understand it by seeing where Christ is, and what is His future glory; and then the overwhelming thought that we are in Him, and all is ours. Yes, all is so suited, so worthy of God. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own

purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." (2 Tim. i. 9.) Oh, do we believe these weighty, soul-sustaining words? Let not Satan be listened to for a moment, that if we believe these plain statements of God's blessed word that we have been predestinated to such unspeakable blessings in Christ before the world began, then it implies that others have been predestinated to be damned. No, no, there is not such a thought in the holy word of God: we have seen that their everlasting judgment is "because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." This is as clear as that our salvation, vast and wonderful as it is, is "because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation." (2 Thess. ii. 10-13.)

Oh, how sad that so many should deny the grace of God, the free unmerited favour of God, in thus choosing us in Christ from eternity! Be it remembered, that if He had left us to our own free choice, all must have been lost, since all in their natural state reject the grace of God. Man in his natural unbelief will seek to be saved by his own works, will gladly accept any false religion of ritualism and ceremonies. He will seek and go about to establish his own righteousness when he has none. But if the writer of the letter, or the reader of this paper, has been led, as a lost and guilty sinner, to accept Christ, and to believe God, who raised Him from among the dead, then rest

assured that you were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy, and without blame before Him in love. Thus may our hearts rest in the eternal love of God in Christ, from which nothing can separate us.



ISRAEL'S FUTURE.

No. II.

How strange that we have not more clearly understood the words of God in the prophets. He cannot forget or break His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. "For the Lord shall comfort Zion : he will comfort all her waste places : and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord. (Is. li. 3.) Thus, when we believe God means just what He says, every chapter and every verse beams with light.

That will be a wonderful moment when His earthly people shall see the wounds in His hands, and discover, to their utter amazement, that He whom they rejected is indeed their Messiah. They will say, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows : yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities : the chastisement of our peace was upon him ; and with his stripes we are healed." (Is. liii. 4.) Yea, the whole chapter describes the astonishment of Israel, when they see their once

crucified Jesus—Saviour-Messiah. And this shall be “When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And the *Redeemer* shall come to Zion.” (Chap. lix. 20.) What a day for Israel will that be; and what a day it is to a sin-burdened soul, when the enemy comes in like a flood, and our sins seem as if they would overwhelm the soul in everlasting despair. To us by faith the Spirit reveals the amazing fact, that He who made the heavens and the earth has been bruised for our iniquities, and raised again for our justification; and this gives peace and rest to our souls by faith. To Israel it will be by sight; they will see the One who bare their sins, the *Redeemer* come to Zion. What a discovery that will be! You may see what a spirit of grace and supplication God will pour upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced. (See Zech. xii. 10.) Do we believe this? The Jews will not believe it, may be, until the very moment they see Him. But is not this as true as that He was crucified for that nation?

If we understand the heavenly calling and hope of the church of God, we shall see that these Old Testament promises must refer to Israel, as they plainly say, and not to the church; and also that they must be yet future. “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a

righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." The following verses also prove this is literal Israel; for the Lord shall bring them "out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land." (Jer. xxiii. 5-8.)

Surely the future reign of Messiah is as certain as His past death, though Jerusalem shall, as foretold by the Lord, be trodden under foot, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. "Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid." (Jer. xxx. 10.) Yea, the Holy Spirit has been pleased to give chapter after chapter of promises to Israel of unconditional, sovereign blessing. Their very obedience flowed from the sovereign will of God, just as the first covenant was the test of their obedience, and therefore became proof of their guilt.

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the

day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord; but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. . . . For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more." (Jer. xxxi. 31-34.) "Behold, I will gather them out of all countries whither I have driven them . . . and 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 one way," &c. (Chap. xxxii. 37-42.) Thus their future blessing and obedience depends on the faithfulness of God. Precious thought! He can never fail. What marvellous grace, after centuries of unbelief and rejection of Messiah! Do notice the repeated assurances of Jehovah. "I will." "And I will cause the captivity of Judah, and the captivity of Israel, to return. . . . And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities," &c. (Chap. xxxiii. 7-11.) "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. . . . In those days shall Judah be

saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely." (Chap. xxx. 14-17.) The Lord, then, enters into the most solemn engagements to fulfil all these promises to Israel. Yet modern tradition—really unbelief—denies it all.

Now read Ezekiel xxxvi. 22-36. How entirely, in every particular, is Israel's future restoration and blessing of God! Almost every sentence expresses the unconditional purpose and assurance of God. "For 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. . . . A new heart also will I give 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," &c., &c.

What a revelation of God! What absolute security and assurance of Israel's future blessing; with a new nature, born of God, cleansed by God, and the Holy Spirit given unto them. What a contrast is all this with man under law!

In chapter xxxvii. all seems to be lost, and the nation is described under the figure of a valley full of dry bones. But when God shall put His Holy Spirit in them, they shall live. Just as God now quickens a sinner dead in trespasses and sins, and he lives; so then will God quicken Israel nationally. The explanation of this vision of dry bones is this: "Behold, I will take the children of Israel

from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms, any more at all." And repeated assurances are given to the end of the chapter. Does it not become us to believe every word that God hath spoken thus by His prophets? If we allow Satan to suggest that God will not faithfully fulfil every word to Israel, how, then, can we be sure of our eternal redemption? Does it not rest solely on what God hath spoken? Often we find this very effect of unbelief—those who deny the certainty of God's promises to Israel, seldom, if ever, enjoy the certainty of their own eternal redemption. We assure you, beloved reader, the word of God becomes another book when we implicitly believe it, because it is God speaking to us. We shall find a very striking subject revealed to us in Ezekiel xxxviii.—xxxix.; the coming up and the destruction of the last great enemy of Israel. There can be no question, also, that this enemy brings up the nations now covered by the Russian empire, and indicates others where that empire is spreading. It is also to be remarked that when this prophecy was given, and for many centuries after, there was no empire covering these countries. It has been pointed out by Hebrew

scholars that the ancient translation of the Septuagint is correct. "Son of man, set thy face against Gog, and the land of Magog, Rhos, prince of Mesock and Thobel," &c. Thus Rhos, or Russia, in modern language, the prince of Moscow and Tobolsk, with Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya, and all the northern nations under that empire, will come against Israel. They come like a storm, a cloud to cover the land. These vast armies, such as the world probably never saw gathered together before, shall fall, and be destroyed by mutual slaughter on the mountains of Israel. God says, "I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood: and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hail-stones, fire and brimstone." The implements of war will serve seven years for fuel, and seven months will it take Israel to bury the dead. For a full description of the destruction and burial of the vast host, we should have to quote both these entire chapters. Thus the Eastern Question will never be ended until God has gathered Israel from all nations, and destroyed the power of their great enemy—Russia—on the mountains of the land of Israel. All this, however, must not be confounded with the great tribulation during the days foretold of this time of the end, the short period when the terrible Roman empire is restored, as described in the books of Daniel and the Revelation.

There is no thought, in a single text of scripture, that Israel as a nation will be blest and restored by the belief of the gospel. We shall find, in our next paper, that the glorious kingdom of God on earth will be assuredly introduced by terrible judgments. God will save them, not because they have believed, but when altogether shut up in unbelief, in the riches of His grace He will save them as objects of mercy alone. (Rom. xi. 32.) "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God."

Is it not even so to you, beloved reader, if saved? Has not God taken you up as an object of mercy, even when you were in ignorance and unbelief? Has He not given you the higher—yea, the highest *glory*, in pure, unspeakable grace? Oh, think of the glory of that Holy One at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. Does He not say, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory"? Nay, even more, He says, "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." (John xvii.) Beloved fellow-believer, is not this unspeakable grace?



CORRESPONDENCE.

37. "K.," Dumbarton. An evangelist is sent out by the Lord as His servant to declare His message, and is dependent on Him as to where and when he should preach. Saints should be his helpers in prayer and other ways, and a godly brother may seek to set him right as to doctrine or practice, if he requires it ; but he is the Lord's servant. We know of no society recognised in scripture but the church of God. Any system which associates saints and sinners together in a common membership is contrary to the truth, and cannot be of God. The believer is set apart by the Father's choice, the blood of Jesus, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

38. "G.," Bristol. We are informed that another hymn-book will shortly be published, and that it will have an Appendix.

39. Springfield. The paper has safely reached us.

40. "H. S.," Somerset. Looking to the Lord, and waiting on Him in prayer and faith, He will assuredly guide you. We do not see why a christian man might not pursue certain parts of such professional duties to the Lord, but watchfulness is needed in almost every kind of employment in these days of practical unrighteousness.

41. Portsmouth. We are unable to express a judgment of the cases referred to, without further testimony. The Lord will make all plain, if He be really sought. It is well to remember that we have in scripture beside the judgment of the assembly, self-judgment, and the judgment of the Lord. Without self-judgment how can we discern clearly the state of others? There are cases which specially come within the sphere of the Lord's judgment. (1 Cor. xi. 30-32 ; v. 13.)

PLAIN PAPERS ON THE CHURCH.

WE do not propose, in these short papers on the church, to speak so much on what the church is not, as on what the church is as revealed in the scriptures.

We have seen in our papers on Election, that those who form the church were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. What was it, then, that was so chosen, that so occupied the thoughts of God in eternity? And what was the thought of God in raising Christ from the dead, and in giving Him, as Man, a place above all principality and power in the heavens—nay, far above all heavens? Surely these words give the answer—“And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” (Eph. i. 22, 23.)

Now, whilst the word church, or assembly, may be applied to any assembly, as it is to Israel in the wilderness (Acts vii. 38), or to a heathen crowd as in Acts xix. 32, 39, 41, yet it is evident that the Spirit uses it here in a very peculiar sense—“the church which is his body;” the assembly, which is His body. What, then, do those words mean? His body. And how is it formed? These are evidently points on which we need to be quite clear and assured. We are thankful that scripture leaves no uncertainty as to these things. “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 baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Cor. xii. 12, 13.)

In these words we have the formation of the church which is His body, the only means by which it is formed. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." We must not confound this with water baptism. The apostle, elsewhere speaking of Israel, says, "All our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;" but there is no such thought in scripture as that they formed part of this "one body." So also the disciples of John were baptized with water, but they remained Jews, and did not, and could not, receive the Holy Ghost, as He was not yet given. (John i. 31-33; vii. 39; Acts xix. 1-6.) They were baptized with water, but they had not received the Holy Ghost, and therefore they were not members of the one body. So, in this place, the Spirit does not say, By water are we all baptized into the one body of Christ. Let us, then, neither pervert nor misunderstand scripture on this important point. We would not undervalue or set aside baptism in water—it is the Lord's own institution, and a type of doctrine, and

introduces into the outward profession of Christianity ; but it is by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.

How important, then, the question, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" If not, you have no part whatever in the church which is His body. It is no use pleading something else. It will not do to say, I was baptized, when a child, with water, or since I was grown up, or, I am a member of such a body ; all this has nothing to do with the "one body" according to scripture. The all-important question is this—Have ye received the Holy Ghost?

Nothing can be more simple, if we bow to scripture. When Christ had accomplished redemption, and as Man had ascended up to heaven, then the Holy Ghost came down, and formed the church which is His body. On the very morn when He arose from among the dead, He was revealed first-born from the dead to His brethren. But the Holy Ghost must come down on the day of Pentecost, to baptize them into the one body—to join them to Christ, the Head in heaven. What a striking figure of this great truth is the human body ! the several distinct members of the body forming one person, guided by one head : so is Christ. A finger is not a toe, nor a hand a foot ; yet all these members forming one body, joined to one head, guided by one spirit ; such is the human body. And so, every individual Christian on earth

who has received the Holy Ghost, is by that one Spirit baptized into the one body—even the church, which is His body.

Thus in every place, whether it be Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, or Rome, there was the church, the body of Christ. “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” Not into different churches, or into various religious bodies or communities. No, in scripture “there is one body and one Spirit”—no doubt composed of individual members, and as gathered together in different places they were local gatherings, or assemblies, as, for instance, the assemblies in Galatia. But as truly as there was one Spirit, so truly there was only one church—one body. We need only to read the epistles to see this. Yes, “there is one body and one Spirit.”

Thus, then, we get in scripture the one church, His body, “according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Does it not, then, follow that schism, or dissent from it, the church, must be grievous sin? There can be no question that it is the will of God “that there should be no schism in the body.” For “God hath set the members, every one of them, in the body as it hath pleased him.” (Read 1 Cor. xii. 12-28.)

The church, which is His body then, is wholly of God, according to His eternal purpose, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and formed

by God the Holy Ghost come down from heaven. It is also joined to the Head, Christ, in heaven. It is not baptized Christendom ; for you may be baptized in water, and not have been baptized by the Spirit. (See Acts viii. 12-17.) It is by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body. Thus the church of God is formed by the Spirit in union with its Head, Christ. "All the members of that one body, being many, are one body ; so also is Christ."

This, then, is what God purposed in Christ ; and this is what He accomplished by the Spirit, as revealed to us in the Acts and the Epistles. What a wondrous mystery, that we poor sinners should be taken and baptized into perfect and everlasting union with the risen Christ, at God's right hand. This is true of all who have the Holy Ghost, and of none else. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

Now this great truth of the one body, the one and only church, characterises all ministry in the New Testament. Take the evangelist. We shall see this more distinctly if we look at another figure of the same truth, a building, or temple : as it is written of all the saints, the household of God. "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.)

Thus, when the evangelist went forth into the stone-quarry—so to speak—he expected every stone got out there was to be built into this one building—this one temple—for an habitation of God through the Spirit. Thus every soul that passed from death unto life was built by the Spirit into the one temple, the church of God. Was it not so? Did the evangelist go forth to get stones to be left in the quarry, or thrown anywhere, or built into any man’s building? Surely not. Spiritual intelligence would lead the evangelist to build according to the eternal purpose of God. We cannot over-estimate the vast importance to the evangelist of a right knowledge of the church, which is His body, or the one holy temple in the Lord. Is it not equally true, that, as there is but one foundation on which to build, Christ Jesus, so also the builder is to take care how he labours for the Lord. “Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.” (1 Cor. iii.) Surely there will be no building by guess, if guided by and subject to the Spirit of God. It is a notable fact that God has been pleased, during the last fifty years, to restore much long-lost church truth; and connected with the truth of the church, His body, a fuller gospel truth has also been recovered. About that time—fifty years ago—none preached the full gospel but those to whom the Spirit had restored the truth of the

church. Now a host of evangelists are preaching the gospel which they have learnt and borrowed, entirely disconnected from church truth—yea, rather encouraging converts to remain in what is opposed to the mind of God. We could easily give a long list of names. We earnestly entreat these, and all evangelists, prayerfully to examine the scriptures on this subject. We cannot find a single instance in apostolic days in which converts were not gathered into the one church of God, baptized into the body of Christ. Can it be right then, can it be pleasing to God, to preach the gospel at random, and leave souls the prey of every human party? Clearly, then, the most important truth of the church which is His body should characterise the labours of the evangelist. Shall we be careless about that which is according to the eternal purpose of God in Christ? If we examine each of these figures—the holy temple in the Lord; the church, or assembly; the one body of Christ, or the bride, unity is the distinct mark.

In Ephesians ii. 20-22 there is only one temple, one building, fitly framed together—only one habitation of God through the Spirit. Every living stone on earth built into that one holy temple of the Lord. And all “through the Spirit.”

Does it not, then, follow that whatever is not after this model is not of the Spirit, but of the will of man? He may call it liberty of conscience to build what and as he likes, but plainly, every-

thing that is not on the ground that all Christians form the one holy temple of the Lord, cannot be of the Spirit, and therefore not pleasing to God. Independency here would clearly be sin. To dissent from what is the revealed mind of God cannot be faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin. To dissent from what is of man may be the direct path of faith; and the man of faith can, in dependence on God, be wholly independent of all that is of man. How important, then, to know what is really of God. This will enable us to distinguish the wood, hay, and stubble, which is the work and building of man, about to be destroyed by fire. (1 Cor. iii. 9-14.)

Oh, what grace, that God should take such vile sinners, and build us together, the one holy temple in the Lord! Do we take in this divine thought, that all believers on earth are built by the Spirit into, not many, but one habitation of God? Surely, if we believe this, it would make us embrace all the children of God in the love of Christ. Only, mark, the reception of this truth would not lead us to approve, or be identified with, what contradicts it. Was it not the knowledge of how dear that holy temple, the church, was to God that made the apostle grieve so much over the first buddings of sectarianism at Corinth? Surely the more the labourer with God knows the mind of God, the more will he be grieved with those who, whilst holding foundation truth, are yet building

other and contrary to that which is the eternal purpose of God. No doubt the very idea of the one building, one temple, composed of every saved soul on earth, has been almost forgotten, but not forgotten of God. Can He forget His own eternal purpose? Men and Satan have done their utmost to mar and spoil the one temple in the Lord; but we can thus go back to the word, and contemplate it as what God hath wrought.

In our next we hope to look at the unity of the "church which is His body" under the four aspects given in scripture.



ISRAEL'S FUTURE.

No. III.

WE will now look at a few scriptures which tell us *how* God will restore the kingdom, dominion, and glory to Israel by judgment, and not by the preaching of the gospel. We shall also find all this closely connected with the personal coming of Jesus, the Messiah, Son of God. However He has been, and still is, rejected, Jehovah says, "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree; the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." Then mark what He saith to the only-begotten One: God says to His Son, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for

thy possession." This has certainly not taken place yet. The dark places of the earth are still the habitations of cruelty. God, in sovereign mercy, is taking out the church, but this does not alter the fact that Satan is still the god of this world, and the nations are not yet the inheritance of Christ. How, then, does God tell Christ that He shall take possession? Let us hear: "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (Ps. ii. 6-9.)

We shall find this manner of taking possession referred to repeatedly in scripture. The restoration of Israel is very distinctly stated in Isaiah xi. This is often misquoted, or misapplied, as though the world was to be converted. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." How does Messiah introduce, or bring about, this kingdom blessing? "He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." Then follows the description of the blessedness of the kingdom on earth, when the Lord shall gather Israel from the four corners of the earth. It would be impossible to describe more distinctly how the kingdom will be set up. Not a thought of the world being converted, but smitten in judgment. And do not suppose Christendom will escape this judgment of the iron rod.

Paul says to the young converts at Thessalonica, "Remember ye not that, when I was with you, I told you these things? . . . For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth, will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked [one] be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." (1 Thess. ii. 5-8.)

How strange that men should dream of the world's conversion by the gospel with such distinct teaching as this! To say nothing of Pagan nations, here we are distinctly taught beforehand what we know has been going on for eighteen centuries. What is the history of the so-called church but the history of the mystery of iniquity? And how fast is it ripening in readiness to accept the wicked one, the Antichrist! Who would have thought, fifty years ago, that professing Christians would now deliberately choose a blaspheming atheist to be their representative? All this daring wickedness shews how near is the coming judgment of this world. We are not writing of things which may, or may not, be, but of things that must be, and must shortly come to pass.

It is quite true that the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, but is it not equally true that it must be first smitten in judgment? It is quite true that the Lord Jesus shall come to set up His kingdom in person, "KING OF KINGS, AND

LORD OF LORDS," but when He comes, "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. 11-16.)

After the history of Christendom in Revelation ii., iii., then we have the judgments that will be poured upon the earth—seals of judgment, trumpets of woe, and bowls of wrath. All these will surely come to pass, when the church of God is gone to be with the Lord. It is impossible to shut the eye to the fact that these things are preparing, just held in check until the church is complete, and for ever with the Lord. What elements of destruction are really waiting the dread and awful disruption like an earthquake! (Rev. vi. 12.) Men feel that society cannot hold together much longer. What perplexity! What deep and increasing distress! In the midst of plenty, yet all classes hastening to ruin. Are we really near the end of this period of abounding grace? Is judgment at the door, and yet men deceiving and being deceived? Is it not a cruel deception to be telling the nations that they will all be converted, and a spiritual millennium come to pass, when the nations are surely about to be judged? We have seen in the Psalms, when the time comes, that the King shall be set upon the holy hill of Zion, and the heathen given unto Him, it will be for judgment, as

with a rod of iron. We have seen in Isaiah the same judgment smites the earth before Messiah's kingdom is set up. We have seen in Revelation the same judgment when He comes to reign. We only need to compare these scriptures with the whole testimony of the prophets, and the teaching of Christ, and we shall find the whole word of God in every part in perfect harmony. We will now point out a few scriptures which shew that these judgments introduce Israel's future blessing and glory.

In Isaiah lxi. the day of vengeance precedes the comfort and blessing of Israel, and the rebuilding of all their waste cities. Jerusalem shall then be "a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God." No more to be forsaken or desolate. (Chap. lxii.)

As has often been noticed, the exact order in these prophecies is very striking. In chapter lxi., first, the living ministry of the Lord Jesus, as pointed out by Himself in Luke iv. Then, when He closes the book the parenthesis of the present period of grace is omitted. (Ver. 2.) Then the day of vengeance, introducing the kingdom and glory of Israel, to the end of chapter lxii. In chapter lxv. we have the most blessed description of Israel's future. "Be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people :

and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying," &c.

Do we believe these words of God? Read the full description of Israel's millennial glory, to the end of the chapter. It may be said, Certainly we must believe what God says; but may not all this be brought about by the Jews being converted, through the preaching of the gospel of the grace of God? If such should be our reader's thoughts, we would ask, Have you never noticed that the Spirit of God has explained most fully how all this will be brought about? "For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many." Now, is this grace, or judgment? Surely it is the public interference of the Lord in judgment. He says, "I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory." Then, after these judgments, we learn how those Jews who escape will be sent as missionaries to the nations. "And they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles." Then all Israel are gathered from all nations "to my holy mountain, Jerusalem." Then, from that time, during the days of the kingdom of God on earth, "shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord." (Chap. lxvi. 15-24.) What light these words throw on Is-

rael's future, and how that future will be brought about.

In Ezekiel xxxvi. 23-38 is a wondrous prophecy of God's unchangeable purpose to bless Israel. Mark, every verse is a statement what God will do for them. God will take them from among the heathen, gather them out of all nations, bring them to their own land, sprinkle clean water upon them, put a new spirit within them. They shall dwell in the land. The fruit of the tree and the increase of the field shall be multiplied. They shall then repent, and be converted—shall dwell in the desolate cities, rebuilt. Palestine shall become like the garden of Eden. Surely no Christian can suppose that God will not perform His word to the very letter. Read to the end of chapter xxxvii. "My tabernacle also shall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I, the Lord, do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore."

But is this brought about by the gospel? Far otherwise. Chapters xxxviii., xxxix. bring before us, as we have seen, the full particulars of the overthrow, in terrible judgment, of the modern vast empire of Russia, in connection with the final establishment of the kingdom of Israel. Surely the hesitancy of Christians to believe what God hath spoken helps the sceptic to reject the truth of God altogether. "Son of man, set thy face

against Gog, the land of Magog: Rhos, prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him," &c. (See Septuagint translation.) Thus has God more than two thousand years ago, foretold the final solution of the Eastern Question. The vast empire of Rhos, which covers the countries under the influence and power of Russia, prince of Moscow and Tobolsk; Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them. The immense multitude shall come up against the mountains of Israel. They shall come like a storm, and be like a cloud to cover the land. The powers of the West shall be aroused by this terrible and wicked invasion of Palestine after the return of Israel. "Sheba and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? Hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? To carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?" Then God is against Rhos, and destroys this vast northern multitude. The implements of war will serve Israel for fuel. And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying them, that they may cleanse the land, as we saw in our last paper. Thus will God be glorified *in judgment* on the wicked, when He has mercy on the whole house of Israel. Then shall they dwell safely in their land, and none shall make them afraid. What an end of human politics! This was foretold long before there was any empire of Rhos, or Russia. Is it

not evident that, instead of the world being converted when God sets up His kingdom on earth, these vast multitudes of Russia must have sunk into downright infidelity and defiance of God?

Here we must close, for the present. If our readers are interested in these stupendous events so near at hand, they only need study in a reverent spirit, in dependence on the Holy Ghost, the scriptures pointed out. God will surely gather His people Israel to their own land. It is impossible for Him to break His word. Indeed the promises to them occupy a large portion of the Old Testament prophets, as well as having a distinct place in the teaching of the Lord, the Epistle to the Romans, and the Book of Revelation.

Blessed as will be the place of Israel on earth, yet, let our hearts be bowed in worship and thanksgiving because our calling and glory are heavenly, even as He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. If they will be as a nation separated to God from all peoples on the earth, how ought we even now to be separated to Him, not of this world, even as He is not of this world. Thus may He sanctify us by His truth; His word is truth.



THE HOPE OF THE LORD'S COMING.

MANY now accept the doctrine of the Lord's coming, but the important question is, With how many of us is it the *purifying hope of our hearts*?

In the beginning of Christianity, those who loved the Lord Jesus as their Saviour looked for His return from heaven. They knew that He would so come in like manner as they had seen Him go into heaven. They expected that He would come again personally—that the Lord Himself would descend from heaven. Hence they were drawn after Him; they detached themselves from the worldly influence of their surroundings, and separated from what they judged to be unsuited to Him, and “went forth”—they “took their lamps, and went forth to meet the Bridegroom.” This shewed the activity of truth in souls. It was not, at first, merely the acceptance of a doctrine of Christianity, but the reception of God's truth into the heart, as “the word of God which effectually worketh in them that believe.” Thus the early Christians not only enjoyed the comfort of the finished work of Christ, as delivering them from coming wrath, and giving present peace with God; but they had this distinct hope, that the Lord might come from heaven at any time to receive them unto Himself, and that it was His will that they should be watching and waiting

for Him, and thus purifying themselves from all that was contrary to His mind.

But it is clear that the hope soon lost its brightness and power; and even among those who had accepted the truth, the power of worldliness tarnished the hope, while the knowledge of the doctrine was for some little time retained. We read of one of Paul's companions, of whom he had painfully to say, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." (2 Tim. iv. 10.) Are we to suppose from this that he abandoned the doctrine of the Lord's coming? By no means, any more than all they which were in Asia, who turned away from the apostle, had done so. Surely, to retain the knowledge of a true doctrine of holy scripture is one thing, but to have the reality of it bright and powerful in our souls is another. And our Lord led His own to expect, from the teaching of the parable of the ten virgins, that the blessed hope of His coming, through the unfaithfulness of His people, would be lost—"While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." Does it not, therefore, become a serious question for each of our consciences as to how far it is true of us that we are actually going forth to meet the Bridegroom?

That this hope is connected with activity and earnestness we are again reminded by our Lord in this same parable, where He prophetically announced the midnight cry; which again we find to

be not merely announcing the Bridegroom, but enjoining the virgins to go out to meet Him. The words, "go ye out to meet him," are certainly most significant and practical, implying the laying aside of everything which hinders the soul's activity and earnestness in stretching out toward the culmination and enjoyment of its highest desires, and longing to see His face whom, having not seen, we love, and to be with Him, and near Him, and like Him for ever. Well hath it been said by an inspired apostle, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and 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: and every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John iii. 2, 3.)

This blessed hope is frequently brought before us in the New Testament scriptures, both by our Lord Himself and His apostles, in an eminently practical sense. In the striking parable of the good Samaritan, He not only poured healing into the wounds of the half-dead helpless one, and abundantly cheered his fainting spirit, and set him in His own place upon His own beast, but He also charged Himself with all the cost of caring for him for the future, and assured the host that whatsoever more he spent, when *He came again* He would repay him.

On another occasion, when speaking of ministering to poor and helpless people, Jesus said,

“They cannot recompense thee, but thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just,” which we know cannot be till He comes again.

Again, in the parable of the pounds, when He gave a pound to each of His ten servants, to trade with during His absence, His emphatic word to all of them was, “Occupy till I come.” Can any teaching more forcibly shew what practical bearing the truth of the Lord’s coming must have when it is really known as the hope of our hearts? How important, then, it is that we should unsparingly judge ourselves as to this; and how watchful we need to be, lest in any of us the hope degenerate into the mere acceptance of a doctrine! Would it be possible that we should be found in worldly associations, linked with the unconverted in worldly pursuits, and be careless as to the condition of the saints of God, if we were really waiting for God’s Son from heaven? Are we not solemnly warned by one who, though not denying the doctrine of our Lord’s coming, but, possibly, with the letter of the doctrine on his lips, and saying in *his heart*, “My Lord delayeth his coming,” who was found captivated with worldly things and associations, and opposing and grieving the faithful—eating and drinking with the drunken, and smiting his fellow-servants? Such our Lord plainly declares will be judged with hypocrites and unbelievers. How appalling, then, is the thought of the possibility of some accepting the Lord’s coming

as a doctrine, and yet, may be, without love to the Lord, or desire for His coming. In the parable of the ten virgins the Lord also reveals the astounding fact that some would make the outward profession of Christ, and even presume to go forth to meet Him whom they knew not, and yet had no oil, who never had the Spirit of Christ, and were really unconverted. How very solemn this is!

It is when the soul enters upon and enjoys the blessedness of being not only justified from all things, and blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, that the hope of our Lord's coming has its proper hold upon our hearts. As long as there is any question as to our standing and nearness to God in Christ, and through His blood, we become so occupied with ourselves, that we cannot be looking for that blessed hope; but when in perfect peace before God we accept the precious truth that "as he is, so are we in this world," the Lord's coming becomes the rejoicing hope of our hearts. It was so with saints in the apostles' days, for Paul says, "Our conversation (citizenship, or commonwealth) is in heaven"—heaven known as our present abode, as to fait and standing in Christ—then it is added, "from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body," &c. Take another example. As long as a man is not free as to his own salvation, he must be occupied about it, because of its all-importance; and if he

harbours the false idea that his salvation depends on his own feelings, experience, or doings, he will not welcome the truth of the Lord's coming as full of interest to himself; on the contrary, he will rather avoid hearing anything about it, because of fearing he is not ready for Christ. But when he learns from scripture that God says He brings salvation to sinners, that salvation is wholly His work from first to last until the redemption of the body, and we are actually brought to God in the glory, then he sees he has nothing to wait for but the coming of God's Son from heaven. We are told that salvation is wholly of God, and that in rich and abundant grace. "By grace ye are saved." It is the unmerited favour of God to sinful man to save him, soul and body, and take him to glory. It is the grace of God that brings it. Hence we read, "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men;" and when this grace is received into the heart by faith, it teaches "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, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us," &c. Happy those who so stand in the true grace of God as to be able to look up with joy, and see Jesus, crowned with glory and honour, and walk and act as those who wait for His coming.

We may still further shew what we mean by the practical effects of the hope of our Lord's coming, by turning to some incidents in the Old Testament, as illustrating the subject.

In 2 Samuel xix. we are brought to the time when David, the man after God's heart, was in rejection, and away from his rightful place. But there was one who loved David, who was conscious that he owed all his blessings to David the rightful king, who had shewed him, when utterly unworthy, helpless, and uncomely, "the kindness of God." This man, Mephibosheth, waited for David's coming again, and during the whole time of the king's absence shewed how truly he loved him, by his true sympathy and devotion to his interests. The king was the absorbing object of his heart. He went forth to meet David. We read that "Mephibosheth, the son of Saul, came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed, until the day he came again in peace." (Ver. 24.) And are we, beloved brethren, so truly waiting for God's Son from heaven, while deeply conscious He has been cruelly hated and rejected by this world, that we feel that He is the absorbing object of our hearts; that His interests are our interests; and that our sympathies are so truly with Him, that we can forego our own present comforts because of the desire and hope of soon seeing His face? Is it

our Lord in the glory, our life, our righteousness, and peace, that our hearts are taken up with, and in the activity of faith and hope, yet with patience, going forth to meet?

Now let us turn to Exodus xii. There we find that when the children of Israel were in the place of safety from the judgment of God by being under the shelter of the blood of the Lamb, they were also set in the attitude of looking for deliverance from Egypt. In the certain consciousness of the sheltering power of the blood, and enjoying the blessedness of feeding on the lamb roast with fire, still they did so with loins girded, shoes on their feet, and staves in their hands, as ready to go whenever the moment might come. And surely the knowledge of our perfect *safety*, through the precious blood of Christ, the enjoyment of *communion* with Him, according to His thoughts, His ways, and His affections, who loved us and gave Himself for us, as the "head," "legs," and "purtenance" of the lamb set forth, truly fit us for maintaining the attitude of waiting for God's Son from heaven. How practical all this is! What activity is implied in girding the loins, putting on the shoes, and taking in hand the staves! How clearly is set forth the true character of their hope! How strikingly it shews that if we enjoy our safety through the blood, and personal communion with the Lord, the hope of His coming falls into its proper place!

CORRESPONDENCE.

42. "B.," Milton. We have received your interesting questions as to the indwelling, sealing, anointing, and baptism of the Holy Ghost.

No doubt all these took place on the day of Pentecost, and like those at Ephesus, having heard and believed the gospel of their salvation, they were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, the earnest of our inheritance; so, in every case now, where that same gospel is heard and believed, the same Holy Spirit is given as the seal and earnest of our inheritance. And, if sealed, we are indwelt; that is, our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost. Amazing truth! And anointed for service, as you say. And all who are sealed, indwelt, and anointed, are also baptized by one Spirit into the body of Christ. And in scripture all this is distinct from the new birth and eternal life, though, no doubt, the operation of the same Spirit. But before the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, souls were born again, and Jesus also breathed His own life into them after His resurrection from the dead. See a valuable tract on the Sealing of the Holy Spirit, by J. N. D., just published. (G. Morrish, London.)

43. Needham Market. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves judgment." (Rom. xiii. 1, 2.) And again, "Submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake" (1 Pet. ii. 13.) These scriptures mark with the utmost clearness the Christian's path in reference

to the laws of his country. And by them we are also clearly warned against shewing any resistance to them. If the point were one which commanded us to do what was plainly against some clearly defined principle of the word of God, the case would be very different, for then the Lord's authority must be yielded to as superior to every other obligation. If under such circumstances, also, "the powers that be" gave us the choice of paying a fine, if we elected to obey the Lord instead of submitting to the law's demands, we should thankfully pay the fine. But when a law is enacted for sanitary purposes, and in the rulers' view, and that of an overwhelming majority, who, from observation and experience, are capable of judging of its beneficial results, it does not seem to us to be walking worthy of the Lord to make the least resistance. That suffering may have resulted in certain cases should in nowise deter us, for we are in a world where sin reigns unto death. Should it not rather cast us on the Lord, that His gracious care, and blessing may be with us in thus, for His sake, submitting to the ordinance of man? And may we not then count upon His goodness and mercy?

44. "A.," Walsall. We rejoice to hear of the work of restoration by the grace of God. What cause for gratitude and praise! What an encouraging word for a poor broken-hearted soul is, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." It surely becomes such—yea, all of us—to avoid contention, and walk with all lowliness and meekness, and in every matter seek to keep a conscience void of offence both toward God and toward man.

45. "R. D.," London. Let no child of God

expect to be happy in the Lord who is careless as to his walk. Failure is the experience of all of us. But when we are conscious of not having obeyed the word which enjoins us to "Abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul," the Holy Spirit within us is grieved, our communion with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ interrupted, and we cannot but feel unhappy. Communion then will only be restored through self-judgment and confession to Him who is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Our souls are sometimes happier after this than they were before. But where, in such cases, there is the absence of self-judgment, souls must be unhappy. How can it be otherwise, when the Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts is grieved? It is well to ponder these things seriously in the very presence of Him who has said, "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." The importance of the subject can scarcely be overrated. Why are so many now unhappy, and apart from the fellowship of saints, but from the absence of watchfulness and self-judgment? Why have the faithful the pain of putting away from among themselves, on some occasions, on account of evil, but because of the absence of self-judgment? If self-judgment were habitually practised, there would not be the need of the Lord's chastisement, nor of the discipline of the assembly. We believe that open dishonour to the Lord's name among saints can usually be traced to a careless walk, with the absence of self-judgment. Of such, too, it may be said, there was the lack of reading the word for food, and of prayer and supplication to God. (Read prayerfully 2 Pet. i. 5-9; 1 Cor. xi. 31, 32; John xiv. 21-24.)

CONSCIENCE AND THE BLOOD.

EVERY man has a conscience. He has knowledge of good and evil. Many are not troubled in conscience; not a few are. Some will not allow themselves to dwell on such solemn subjects as sin, guilt, death, judgment, and eternity. There are others who have been distressed about their sins, who have trembled at the thought of death, and after death the judgment; but they are not so now, and perhaps can scarcely tell us why, further than they are *quieter* in mind now. But a *quiet* conscience is not a *purged* conscience. The great deceiver of souls knows how to sear the conscience as with a hot iron. He can use the habit of even hearing the truth to harden the heart. One chief use Satan makes of idolatry, and all the false and soul-destroying doctrines circulated in Christendom at this time, is to *quiet* conscience, give tranquility of mind, and, if possible, keep it from being again disturbed. That wicked one, who blinds the eye, lulls the conscience, and deceives the world, has manifold ways of alluring souls, so as to keep them from knowing the blessedness of a *purged* conscience. If the iron chains of the slavery of the grosser lusts of the flesh are unsuitable, because the mind is more refined than others, he may secure them in his fatal grasp by the golden chains of earthly prosperity. Or, if such seem inadequate, he can hold them with the silken

cord of elegance and fashion; or rock them to drowsiness, if not to sleep, in the cradle of pleasurable associations. There are many who aim at nothing more than quietness of mind, as they call it, by a little religious occupation, because they know not the sweetness and power of present and eternal peace which God proclaims in His testimony to the sin-cleansing power of the blood of Jesus. When such have attended to their accustomed routine of religious exercises, they are so self-satisfied as to flatter themselves it will be all right in the end. But peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, a conscience purged by the blood of Christ, and God's assurance in His written word, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more," is a very different state.

Those who are holding such a definition of sin, as greatly to exclude themselves from its guilt, or are excusing sin, or covering up, or trying to forget, their sins; or, when they cannot forget their sins, putting them off mainly to the blame of others; such are trying to procure a quiet conscience, and are often decoyed into some respectable-looking religious system, because they are promised by it that their consciences shall be quieted; which, alas, is too often true! We can understand how eagerly such will value priestly mediatorship, the keeping of days and ordinances, benevolent habits of giving and doing, when men promise them by these very things a *quiet* state of mind, and

perhaps heaven at last. How many are caught in this net! But a "heart sprinkled from an evil conscience" is something widely different. Not a few are found in Christendom who hold that, provided unforgiven, unsaved, men, act conscientiously, and do their best, they will be saved at last; than which nothing can be more opposed to the truth of God. Those who have some misgivings about it may add Christ as a make-weight for their deficiencies. Was not Saul of Tarsus a conscientious man? Has he not told us that he verily thought within himself that he ought to do many things contrary to Jesus of Nazareth? Did he not conscientiously hate and persecute the saints because they were not of the Jews' religion? And was there any one on earth who could be more truly styled the chief of sinners? Blameless in his walk before men, an estimable member of a religious sect, of pious ancestry and education, and yet the chief of sinners. Let the reader think seriously on these things.

How did man acquire a conscience? Was it not by disobedience? When man fell under the temptation of the serpent, did not the Lord God say, "Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil"? (Gen. iii. 22.) However forcibly conscience may sometimes speak as a monitor of evil—which no doubt it does—yet, to set up the conscience of fallen, sinful man as the standard of what is true touching eternity, is to

reject the word of God, and entirely to deny the divine verdict, that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. viii. 8); and, more than this, it refuses the redemption-work of Christ as the only way of salvation, and Christ in glory "for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Rom. x. 4.) Such persons may arrange themselves in religious ranks, and call themselves by fine names, but such names go for nothing, when such are dead against the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, with their backs turned upon the only hope of salvation.

For those who are born of God, who have a conscience purged by the blood of Christ, the state of conscience, as to their practice, is most important; and Paul felt this deeply after he was saved, and became an apostle, for he said, "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a *conscience* void of offence toward God, and toward men." When the written word convicts the conscience of sin and guilt in the sight of God, brings it by grace to the blood of Christ for purging, and to Christ in glory for righteousness, then it is he knows what it is to be reconciled to God, to have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. His heart is now sprinkled from an evil conscience, he draws near with confidence and thanksgiving, and he seeks to so walk and act as to have a good conscience.

Again, there are many in the ranks of Christen-

dom who contend that the natural man is competent to serve and worship God when he likes and how he judges best. This is, perhaps, one of the most soul-destroying doctrines of modern infidelity. Hence people who know themselves to be unconverted are pressed to become ecclesiastical office-bearers, to be partakers of the so-called sacrament, and even to preach. Others, being taught that they can come to God when they wish, deliberately postpone it, in order to have their fling in the world's lusts and the pleasures of sin, intending to turn to God when laid on a death-bed. But, alas! their death-bed may never be, for how many have been suddenly called from time into eternity, when least expected! Again, there are multitudes who are thus so misled, that, because they say certain prayers on different times of the day, or week, or month, they vainly imagine that they are thus serving God, when they do not even approach God at all in the way He has appointed in His word, consistently with His own nature and our state. Such may say prayers, but to really approach God is another thing. Many have been taught from childhood that to do their best, say their prayers, and be good, are enough to be a good Christian. But all this is but the activity of Adam's sinful stock, and not Christianity at all. It ignores our fall in Adam, refuses the cleansing blood of Christ, denies the need of being born again by the word and Spirit, and rejects the fun-

damental truth of the gospel, that God can only be approached by the blood of Christ. About this, scripture is most solemn and decided. We read, "Woe unto them, for they have gone in the way of Cain!" Now what, in one word, is the way of Cain? Certainly it was daring to approach God without the blood of the sacrifice for sin. He ignored the fall, and so denied that the earth was cursed for man's sake, that he boldly brought as an offering to God what his unclean hands had gathered of the fruits of a sin-blighted earth. But God is not mocked. "Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect." And was Cain a happy man, with all his religiousness? How could he be? Let us trace his course. 1. He was wroth, and his countenance fell. 2. He hated Abel, the man of God—"Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him." 3. He was a fugitive and vagabond in the earth. 4. He went out from the presence of the Lord, and then he and his posterity became prosperous citizens, useful manufacturers, and diligently cultivated the fine arts, when, be it observed, they were away from the presence of God. What a dark picture of infidelity and its accompaniments does this narrative of the way of Cain strikingly set before us in the closing days of the nineteenth century!

It would have been death to Aaron to approach

God, except by blood. Jesus said, "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." Again, we read, "It is the blood which maketh an atonement for the soul." "Without the shedding of blood is no remission." "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." "It was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God," &c. &c. In the Old Testament, the way of approach to God, from Abel downward, was by the sacrifice of a life, typical of the sacrifice of Christ; and, in the New Testament, the way of approach to God is by the blood of Christ. What a fatal mistake, then, it is for sinful men to judge themselves competent to draw near to God apart from the blood of Christ! Is it any wonder that it is said of such, "Woe unto them! they have gone in the way of Cain!" Thanks be to God for the new and living way which Christ has "consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh," and that we have liberty at all times to draw near, to "enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus!"



PLAIN PAPERS ON THE CHURCH.

No. II.

HAVING made some general remarks on the church, we will now notice, that as there are four distinct aspects of the Person of Christ in the four Gospels; so, in the Epistles there are four figures, or aspects, of "the mystery which hath been hid from ages."

In Matthew the Lord is revealed to us as Son of Abraham, fulfilling all righteousness.

In Mark, as the perfect Servant.

In Luke, as the perfect Man, Son of man.

In John, as Son of God.

In the Epistles the mystery is revealed under four aspects. **THE TEMPLE:** "In whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." **"THE CHURCH"** (or assembly): **"THE BODY"** and **"THE BRIDE."** And as the four Gospels reveal and describe the one Lord; so these four figures—the temple, the church, the body, the bride—bring before us the assembly in its unity, as seen in each figure. We must, however, be most careful not to confound this, which is of God—His workmanship by the Spirit—with what is of man, man's building, man's churches, and all the sects and bodies of men. We shall find what is of God, and what is of man, kept very distinct in scripture. God only builds living stones into the temple, and in His building are all the living stones. Men build

wood, hay, and stubble. Surely such is man's Christendom.

We have seen that unity marked the work of the Spirit in the building of the one temple in the Lord. (Eph. ii. 20-22.) The same unity marks THE CHURCH, which is His body. (Eph. i. 21-23.) There is only one Head, raised up from among the dead, in the heavenlies, far above all principality and power, &c. And He is Head over all to *the church*. This is a wondrous thought, that all that Christ is, now set in the heavens, He is to the church. It is also written in another place, "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, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." This is blessed and definite language. What is *the church* for which Christ died, which He so loved? What is "it," that is so dear to Christ? That which He is so occupied with, washing it by the water of the word—the purpose of His heart to present it glorious to Himself. Is that which is of such immense interest to Him, of no moment to us? Is it this baptised Christendom—will it be presented to Him glorious? Nay, He will spue the mere boasting, professing mass out of His mouth. (Rev. iii.) What, then, is *the church*, the object so dear to the heart of Christ? We thus press the ques-

tion; but we must bear in mind that the natural man can neither answer it, nor can he understand it. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (Read 1 Cor. ii. 12-16.)

If, then, what we write is really about the church of God, the natural man cannot understand it: if we described any of the churches of men, that the natural man would understand. But then the apostle immediately goes on to explain that the very beginning of such a thing is carnality. "For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" Is not the application of this scripture to the present day very distinct? Is it of the Spirit of God, or is it carnality, to say, I am of the Roman, I of the Greek, I of the Anglican, or I of Wesley? The natural man can understand all about these churches; but let us remember that it is only by the Spirit of God that we can understand the church of God. Have you ever sought the guidance of the Spirit on this most important subject? The Lord give us much real dependence and reverence of soul whilst considering the church of God.

It is very important to have a right starting-point. When did the church, as an existing thing, begin on earth? It is clear it had not begun when the Lord Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will

build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." It is further clear that the church, which is His body, could not exist before His death, for He said, "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." (John xii. 24.) Thus He could not be one with His body, the church, until He died and rose again. Until He died He must remain alone. And, further, one object of that death was, that "he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." (John xi. 52.) Yes, in *one*, not in many different churches.

Then also we find that it is the Holy Ghost come down from heaven that so gathers them, and baptises them all into one body. But the Holy Ghost could not be sent to do this until Christ was glorified at God's right hand. "For the Holy Ghost was not yet [given], because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Jesus says, "I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." And fifty days had the disciples to wait after the resurrection of Jesus from the dead—until the day of Pentecost was fully come. Then took place that wondrous descent of the Holy Ghost that filled Jerusalem with astonishment. Then was fulfilled that word of Jesus. "For John

truly baptised with water; but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." This Jesus spake after He was risen from the dead.

Now, by the Holy Ghost there was a new thing on the earth. There had been Jews and Gentiles, but there was now a new company formed, baptised by the Holy Ghost. "There were added about three thousand souls." Thus we see the risen Lord adding together by the Holy Ghost. Ever after that new company is known by the title, THE CHURCH, or assembly. We have no doubt the word church should be omitted in the last verse of this chapter (Acts ii.), as in the revised version. It was the Lord's work—the Lord *added* (together) such as were being saved; or, such as should be saved. This omission is striking. If the historian was relating the building of a city—say London—he describes the first houses that were built. He would not say, These houses were added to London. They were built, and formed the beginning of London; and every house built afterwards it could be said was added to London. And so, without controversy, every saved believer from that day is regarded in scripture as added, baptised into the one only church, His body. Is not this the meaning of the word, did it not embrace every Christian? "And great fear came upon all the church." (Acts v. 11.) Did not this mean the separated company? "And of

the rest durst no man join himself." If we bow to scripture, we must own that all believers formed the one church of God, wherever found. When the apostle wrote the inspired epistles, and addressed them "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth," and other places, did not that term include every saint in that place? There cannot be a doubt of it.

As we said, before Pentecost there were the Jews and the Gentiles. Since that day scripture recognises three things: "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God." (1 Cor. x. 32.)

We will now look at the third aspect—the one body.

Could anything more distinctly express unity than the human body? "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." This is not merely union, but unity, oneness. "For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body." "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. . . . That there should be no schism in the body. . . . Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." (1 Cor. xii.) The thought of different schisms, or religious bodies, is utterly condemned in these inspired verses. And all this is so minutely stated, that there may be no schism, or divisions. Christ

is not the Head of churches and religious bodies, but Head of "the church which is his body." "There is one body, and one Spirit."

Now we would ask the reader to notice one thing as to entrance into the one body, as a very common and fatal mistake is often made as to this. Many hold that they are made members of Christ by water baptism. If they held that they became members of the outward profession of Christianity by water baptism, we do not object. They are thus brought into a place of great privilege and responsibility. Yet great numbers of such are never converted, never saved, and never form part of the body of Christ.

Two things have been overlooked. It is not by water, but by the Spirit, we are baptised into one body. And it is not man, but God, that hath set every member in the body as it pleaseth Him. In water-baptised Christendom are there not saved and unsaved? Have not evil men and deceivers crept in unawares? Could any man say that all who have been baptised with water have eternal life? Is it not rather unto, or into, death as a profession? Nothing is more distinct in the word of God than baptism by water, and the baptism by, or in the power of, the Holy Ghost. In the remarkable case of Cornelius and those with him, they received the baptism of the Holy Ghost before they were baptised with water. (Acts xi. 15.) The Samaritans were baptised with the Holy Ghost

some time after they had been with water. (Acts viii.) Simon Magus was baptised with water, but not with the Spirit. Who would deny that there are many like him in that particular?

To say the Holy Ghost would baptise an unsaved man into the body of Christ, though baptised with water, would be madness, or worse. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Thus God could not set a wicked, unsaved man in the body of Christ. Could it please Him to do so? Impossible! A pamphlet was put into our hands the other day, with this title on its back—"The Baptised Church of Jesus Christ in Folkestone." Now the question is, what is the baptised church, which is His body, in Folkestone? Would it be either those who had been baptised by water in infancy, before they believed? or, as in this case, those who had been baptised in water after they professed faith in Christ? Both would be equally wrong as to membership of the body of Christ, for it is not by water at all, but by the Spirit. We do not ask, Have you been baptised with water, and thus make an outward profession of Christianity? That is not the question. Neither do we ask, Have you become a member of any of the churches, or bodies of men, on earth? This you may have done, and yet be lost eternally, having no part nor lot in the matter of which we write.

But in scripture we find the one body united to

a glorified Christ in heaven—one with Him, the Head, as the members of the human body are one with its head. And we find that all believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, are baptised by the Holy Spirit into that one body; that God hath set every one of them in the body as it hath pleased Him. And we ask, Hath God set you there? Have you received the Holy Ghost? Are you baptised by the Spirit into the one body of Christ? Take care that sacramental water does not take the place of the Spirit of God. If you have received the Holy Ghost, you will find these things clearly revealed in the scriptures of truth.



THE HOPE OF THE LORD'S COMING.

No. II.

THERE is also another striking illustration of the true practical effect of the hope of our Lord's coming in the Israelitish jubilee. Every fiftieth year the trumpet of the jubilee was to be sounded; and the value of the land was reckoned from that time. The reason was this. If an Israelite had waxen poor, and had been obliged to sell any of the land that had been allotted to him according to his tribe, when the jubilee trumpet sounded it came back to him again. It was said that "In the year of this jubilee, ye shall return every man unto his possession." The consequence was, that if an Israelite

wished to sell his land, the value of his green fields was reckoned according as the jubilee was near or distant. "If thou sell ought unto thy neighbour, or buyest ought of thy neighbour's hand, ye shall not oppress one another: according to the number of years after the jubilee thou shalt buy of thy neighbour, and according unto the number of years of the fruits he shall sell unto thee: according to the multitude of years thou shalt increase the price thereof, and according to the fewness of years thou shalt diminish the price of it: for according to the number of the years of the fruits doth he sell unto thee." (Lev. xxv. 14-16.) The directions were minute and clear. They shewed that if any one wished to sell his fields, their value would be little or nothing if the jubilee trumpet were expected soon to sound. And is it not really the fact, that, if we are waiting for God's Son from heaven, the best earthly possessions will have little value in our eyes? Whereas, if we are not looking for the Lord, and give way to the thought that He will not come for many years, then will not earthly possessions be highly valued by us? No doubt this jubilee year was typical of the coming of Messiah to His people on earth, and then putting them into possession of those earthly blessings which Jehovah promised them; but we are using it now to illustrate the solemn fact that the *hope* of our Lord's coming must necessarily draw our minds and hearts to where He is, and detach us

from minding earthly things, or esteeming anything here beyond its present blessing, or as we can use it for the glory of God. We may be sure of its being a true test of our hearts. "According to the number of years thou shalt increase the price thereof, and according to the fewness of years thou shalt diminish the price thereof," was said to the Israelite as to his land: and can we be valuing anything we have at a high price, if we are really waiting for God's Son from heaven? With the man of the world, who is without God, and having "no hope," it must be otherwise. He knows nothing better than what he sees; but the child of God, knowing he is purchased with the Saviour's blood, that he has received the Spirit of Christ, and that the Lord Jesus is coming to take us unto Himself, that we may be ever with Him, cannot but see that his place is not to be sleeping as others, but going forth to meet the Bridegroom. And if really thus occupied, how can he be laying up treasures upon earth?

Look also at Jeremiah. The prophet had been taught to look for the judgment of God upon the sinful nation. He was shut up in prison, and the army of the king of Babylon besieged the city. He knew that God would deliver the city into his hand. It was a humiliating and serious moment, and the prophet had declared to Zedekiah, king of Judah, Though ye fight with the Chaldeans, ye shall not prosper. But the faithful prophet had

the word of the Lord, and he knew and told the people that after seventy years God would deliver His people from captivity, and bring them again into their land. This was the hope of the faithful in that day. Appearances were all against it. There was no sign of such a thing—nothing in what they saw to warrant such a return of blessing. But God had said it. They had His word for it; and to a faithful heart nothing more is required. And so now. There is no human appearance of the Lord's coming to take us to the Father's house—no sign that He is at hand—no circumstances occurring to prove to others that He is coming quickly; so that the scoffer still says, All things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. But the word of the Lord is, "I come quickly !" and He bids us watch and wait for Him.

As to Israel's future, who were then on the point of being led into captivity, the prophet could say, "Thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good will toward you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I

will be found of you, saith the Lord; and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord; and I will bring you again into this place, whence I caused you to be carried away captive." (Jer. xxix. 10-14.) Thus the prophet had a clear and unquestionable revelation from Jehovah as to the future deliverance from captivity and blessing of the Jews; and so we have the clearest instruction as to the Lord's coming to take us into glory, to be for ever with Himself. Now the prophet Jeremiah so believed the word of God as to His people, that he laid out his money accordingly. This shewed that he really believed the word of Jehovah. He bought the field of his cousin, Hanameel, weighed him the money, even seventeen shekels of silver, "subscribed the evidence, and sealed it, and took witnesses, and weighed him the money in the balances." Jeremiah says, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open, and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days: for thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Houses, and fields, and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land. . . . Fields shall be bought in this land, whereof ye say, It is desolate, without man or beast: it is given into the hands of the Chaldeans." (Jer. xxxii. 8-15, 43.)

This was the prophet's hope in his day, and so real was the word of God to his soul, that he laid out his money in reference to it. And did not our blessed Lord say, as to us, "Whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay?" and again, "Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just"? Did He not also say, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also?" (Luke x.; Matt. vi. 20, 21.) And are we really laying out our money in such a way as to be looking for the Lord's recompense when He comes? Are we so living, and walking, and acting, as those who believe with our hearts His own words, "Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be?"

Two things will characterise those who are really looking for the Lord Jesus—readiness to serve, and clearness in testimony. Our Lord said, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord." (Luke xii. 35, 36.) This is not merely accepting the doctrine, but so believing it, so influenced by it, as to lead the soul into exercise about honouring Him now, and to inquire, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Instead of sleeping, as do others, the long, flowing garment is rolled up, and fastened round the waist, so that

whatever, or whenever, the Master's word may be, such are ready to do His will. It is manifestly taking the place here of a servant of Christ during His absence. The heart is in tune with His own desire to occupy till He come. It is not the slothful servant, who knew His Lord's will and did it not; but the soul, conscious that time is short, that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh, that the end of all things is at hand, occupied in this one thing of carrying out the Lord's will during His absence. How simple, and yet how happy, this is! How contrary to His mind, how grieving to the Holy Ghost, to be intellectually taken up with prophetic events, and yet for the heart to be cold toward Himself. Surely it is high time to awake. The night is far spent, and the day is at hand, and our salvation is nearer than when we believed. No rules, no ecclesiastical arrangements, will effect this. No human organisation can bring this about; no, it is intensely individual. It is the exercise of faith, and love, and hope in our Lord Jesus Christ which alone can produce the girded loins. The eye and heart looking upward for the bright Morning Star, and crying to Him to "Come," while the soul burns with desire for the salvation of sinners, and cries, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." How opposite all this is to the cold, dry, formal acceptance of a doctrine! How different it is where the truth is so received into the heart as to kindle real earnest-

ness, and draw out fervency and devotedness to the Lord, and care for those around, for the glory of His name!

But, with the girded loins, the lights also should be burning. The direction of the burning flame is always upward—it points to that which is above the earth, while it communicates light to those around. It makes everything manifest. Such, too, should we be. Such a clear, unmistakable testimony should be given by us, always pointing to Him who is at the right hand of God, our hearts always in warmth and energy going upward to Him, so that others may perceive that we belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, and are going out to meet Him. It is a sad thing when friends and neighbours do not know us as on the Lord's side. The light must be dim indeed when passers-by fail to observe it. The oil must have got very low, and the wick have been sadly neglected, for the light to be not manifested. You may drop in on a drowsy, sleeping friend, and find his lamp flickering, and almost obliterated by the corrosion of a neglected wick, but he no sooner is awakened, than he discovers his neglect, and by trimming the lamp, and replenishing it with oil, it speedily burns as brightly as ever. Such it may be, in a spiritual sense, with many of the Lord's people now. When the soul grows careless under, it may be, a pleasant and prosperous course, it becomes, before it is aware of it, drowsy and sleepy. The pleasing cir-

cumstances of outward ease so satisfy the heart naturally, that God is for a time forgotten, His word neglected, and secret prayer and praise laid aside ; so that, instead of being servants waiting on the tip-toe of expectation for the coming of the Lord, and being a bright testimony to those around, the light is almost gone out, and the flowing garments have become entangled with the cares of the world, its pleasures, and its lusts. Oh, that by the power of the Holy Ghost we might all be aroused, so that, with fervent hearts going upward to our Lord in earnest prayer and grateful praise, and distinct testimony going out to those around, it might be manifest that we are not merely holders of the doctrine of our Lord's coming, but really as men that wait for their Lord. What a marvellous change there would be in life, walk, and testimony, if the coming of our Lord were known in our souls in the reality of *hope*. Still, He says, "I come quickly;" and, before He does come, He would have us count upon the sufficiency of His grace!

It is very clear that our loving Lord Jesus desires to have us with Himself. He said (and "He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever"), "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be *with me where I am*." It is not here, His coming to us where we are, for that surely He does, for He never leaves us nor forsakes us; and in a very especial way, "Where two or three are

gathered together in my name," said He, "there am I in the midst of them." But His desire expressed to the Father is, that we should be with Him in glory where He is. His heart longs to have the objects of His love with Him. And not only so, but that we should behold His glory, for this He knows, and this only, could give us perfect satisfaction. Not only, then, has He given to us the glory which the Father has given to Him, but His heart's desire is that we should be with Him, and behold Him, who was here a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, in the place of highest exaltation, and feast our souls with everlasting delight in gazing upon Him, and contemplating His personal glory. What a satisfying object for our hearts He ever will be. We shall soon see Him! What a change then!

"No more struggle, no more woe,
 No more tossings to and fro;
 No more sorrow, pain or sighing,
 In the home to which I go.
 No temptation to enthrall me,
 And disturb my peaceful breast;
 In the 'Father's house' of glory,
 There the weary are at rest.

Come, O hasten, my Beloved!
 Quickly come, my loving Lord!
 All my heart and soul are hanging
 On the promise of Thy word;
 Come, my best, my only treasure,
 In Thy brightness I would shine;
 I my own Beloved's 'lily,'
 Thou my 'tree of life' divine."

CORRESPONDENCE.

46. "B. F. P.," Syria. We believe there is no question but that Roman time was reckoned the same as ours now. (See Haydn's "Dictionary of Dates," page 210.) "Day began among the Romans at midnight, as with us." What might appear a discrepancy as to the hours of the crucifixion, is in perfect harmony, supposing John to give Roman time, and the others Jewish. Indeed there is much to favour the thought that John usually used Roman time. In chapter iv. 6 "the sixth hour," or 12 a.m., would be a most unlikely time; 6 p.m., Roman time, is much more probable. Then verse 52: had this been Jewish time, 1 p.m., there would have been time for the nobleman to return from Cana to Capernaum. But if it were 7 p.m. Roman time, this accounts for the nobleman remaining all night.

If, then, John, who wrote his Gospel so much later than the others, used Roman time, the case stands thus: the *trial* of our blessed Lord was concluded about the sixth hour—6 a.m. Roman and our time. (John xix. 14.) He was crucified the third hour, Jewish time—our time 9 a.m. (Mark xv. 25.) There was darkness over the land from the sixth hour to the ninth, Jewish time; or, our time from 12 noon to 3 p.m., as recorded in Mark xv. 33, 34; Matt. xxvii. 45; Luke xxiii. 44. Thus the trial closed about 6 a.m.; the crucifixion at 9 a.m.; the darkness from 12 noon to 3 p.m.

It is not stated what took place from 6 a.m. to 9, but if we compare John xviii. 28 with xix. 14, does it not appear that our blessed Lord was waiting to be crucified whilst the Jews kept the very

passover that pointed to Him? Truly they knew not what they were doing.

47. "F." We must remember that the gospel is God's proclamation of forgiveness of sins to every one that believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ. If a person says, "I cannot believe;" we reply, Not believe God! What cannot you believe? You cannot believe what God says. How dreadful! What must be the state of that creature's heart which will not believe God—not believe what He says! It is quite true that faith is the gift of God, and the fruit of the Spirit, but it is also true that "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The truth is, that those who are so longing for faith in our Lord Jesus Christ unto salvation, have faith in Him. If you ask them how they approach God, they will answer, "Always by the Lord Jesus Christ; of course, I could not think of coming to God but by Him." Now what does God say of such in His word? He says that "He [Christ] will save to the uttermost [completely] all that come [or draw near] unto God by him." (Heb. vii. 25.) Again, if you ask such if they were conscious they would not live five minutes, to whom would they look to save them? They reply at once, "To the Lord Jesus Christ." These answers shew that they have faith. Faith does not look at self, or feelings, or even to its faith, but to Christ. A man does not know he has organs of vision because he sees them, but because he can behold objects outside himself; so the proof of a person being a believer is that he looks outside himself to the *Lord Jesus Christ* as the *object* of faith; his confidence is *founded* on the *work* of Christ, and the written and unchanging *word* of God is his sole *authority* for faith.

From what you say, we infer you are constantly going to Christ, confessing yourself to be "lost," and pleading His own word, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in nowise cast out." Well, this is faith, and it is the place of perfect safety; and when you rely on His word, "I will in nowise cast out," you will have peace. Are you not mixing up things which greatly differ—safety, assurance, and happiness? *Safety* depends entirely on our fleeing to the Lord Jesus Christ as our only escape from coming wrath. *Assurance* is connected with relying only on God's word, who says that those who believe on the Son of God have remission of sins, have everlasting life, are children of God, have received the Holy Ghost, and shall not come into judgment; while *happiness* is connected with our walk. If the Spirit is grieved by a carnal, worldly walk, He will have to reprove; whereas, if we are walking in the truth as obedient children, He will fill us with joy and power. We much regret that we have been unable to reply to your questions before, but trust we shall soon hear that you know your *safety*, that you have *assurance*, and are *happy*, not in self, but in the Lord.

48. "B.," Ryde. We judge that Ephesians v. not only shews the union of Christ with the church, but the figure used there of husband and wife, and the character of Christ's affections, as nourishing and cherishing her, and speaking of her in this respect as his own flesh, when read with 2 Corinthians xi. 2, and other scriptures, sets beyond all controversy the bridal relationship of the church with Christ. This, however, may be referred to again in our issue of "Plain Papers on the Church."



“THE SALVATION OF THE LORD.”

“AND Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.” The redemption and deliverance of Israel out of Egypt is God’s own type, or picture, of the redemption and deliverance of a soul. We propose, then, to trace in the history of their deliverance how completely salvation is of the Lord.

Let us commence with their condition in Egypt. They were slaves of Pharaoh, in bitter bondage. They felt it, and “sighed by reason of the bondage.” (Ex. ii. 23, 24.) There was deep, real misery, “and God heard their groaning.” This is God’s starting-point. In a few words we have man’s real condition brought before us. Was it not so with the poor miserable prodigal when he came to himself? Did you ever come to yourself? Have you ever discovered and felt that you are, or were, in the bitter bondage of Satan, the present Pharaoh of this world? Did God ever hear you cry and groan by reason of the bondage?

This is man’s condition, though he does not know it, and will not believe it. He talks of progress and freedom, and is all the while held in the grip of Satan. It may be Satan holds him in pleasant golden chains, or cruel iron ones, or sad and heavy leaden ones. Such is man, conceived in sin, shapen in iniquity; the slave of lust, passion, or fashion, and utterly unable to deliver himself.

“Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” (Eph. ii. 2, 3.) Thus are all men in the power and bondage of Satan, just as Israel were under the cruel bondage of Pharaoh.

Now it is generally thought that, if man will give up sin, and deliver himself from the bondage of Satan, then he may hope that God will save him. This is a great mistake. God did not send Moses to tell them, that if they would deliver themselves from Egypt's bondage He would save them. This was just what they could not do. This was just what God said He would do. “And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows: and I AM COME DOWN TO DELIVER THEM. . . . Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.” (Ex. iii. 1-10.) Mark well that God thus commended His love to them, that whilst they were slaves to Pharaoh, without power to deliver themselves, God sent Moses to bring them forth

out of Egypt. It is just so God hath commended His love to us, in sending His only-begotten Son. “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.”

Truly God is love. He loved Israel when they were poor miserable slaves; He heard their groans, He knew their sorrows; He came down to deliver. Did God hear that deep groan of yours? Did you say, “What a fool I am—what a slave of sin and the devil! I am no better; I have sinned again. What will be the end of it? Oh, the power of these evil habits!—the cruel yoke of sin! I cannot give it up, I cannot deliver myself; worse and worse.” “I am come down to deliver,” says the Lord. What a surprise this is to many, to see God intervening in richest grace to save the guilty and the lost. He did not come down to condemn, but to save. God is not thus known. The other gospel, which is not another, sets man trying all his life long to deliver himself. We hope our readers see the difference between God sending Moses to tell Israel to do their best to deliver themselves, and telling them that He was come down to deliver them. Then we trust you will also see the difference between that no-gospel, which is ever telling you to do your best to deliver yourselves from the slavery of sin and Satan, and the true gospel of God, which reveals His righteousness in sending His own Son, through whose precious blood we have eternal redemption.

If you do not know your wretched condition as a miserable slave of Satan, the cruel god of this world, how can you know the amazing kindness of God in sending His Son to deliver? How true it is that "the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." What a pitiable sight is a poor blind slave of Satan, dreaming that he is free, and needs no deliverer.

But this paper will be put in the hands of some who know they are helpless slaves, who cannot deliver themselves. And to such it is good news that God has sent His Son to deliver. Now the first effect of the message coming home to the heart and conscience, is to give a loathing of sin and its slavery, and a desire to escape from it, and to worship God. It was just so with Israel. "And the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped." Thus it is with a quickened soul. There is faith that God has looked upon our misery, and now there is an earnest desire to escape from the slavery of sin and Satan, and go forth a worshipper of God.

The next step of a quickened soul is to delight in the law of God after the inward man, but not being yet delivered. The way of deliverance is

presented by keeping the law. Then commences a dreadful struggle, and often a long one.

We have a most striking illustration of this in chapter vii.

BRICK-MAKING WITHOUT STRAW,

or, law-keeping without strength (Ex. v.), was to Israel what Romans vii. is to a quickened soul under law. Look at the poor Hebrews, now that the commandment comes to make the full tale of bricks without straw. Straw, or no straw, bricks must be made. They wander all over Egypt, seeking stubble instead of straw. The taskmasters beat them. Rest there is none. “Go, therefore, now and work; for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks.” Was their case any better? Nay, it was worse and worse. The effect was to put a sword in the hands of Pharaoh to slay them. Even Moses said to the Lord, “Wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.” Have you ever been at Pharaoh’s brick-kiln? Ah, you may be there now. Do you say, This is exactly my condition—far more miserable than I was before the commandment came with awful power to my conscience? Sin has revived. Strength or no strength, I feel I ought to keep all the commands of a holy God.

I do not want to do this evil, yet I do it. I want to love God, and fail. Yet still a slave; no rest, no peace, no strength. Like the poor Hebrews, I have run all over Egypt, seeking a little stubble, a little strength to keep the law. I have been to book after book, to preacher after preacher; often I find, instead of a little strength, a taskmaster ready to beat me. "I am carnal, sold under sin." I am told to work, work, and not to listen to vain words of grace. All this puts a sword into the hand of Satan to slay me. Dear reader, is it so? Are you doing the things you most hate? And then, does Satan rush at you, and say, What, you hypocrite, do you pretend to be a Christian? Look at your works—nay, look at your sins. You are idle! you are idle! And now, if you are really in earnest, you will feel as if eternity depends on your fulfilling the tale of works. Yet you have no straw, no strength, and the works will not hang together.

There is still lust, and lust is sin; and the state of the soul is now terrible. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Brick-making without straw, or law-keeping without strength, brings no deliverance. "I am carnal, sold under sin." How terrible this is! and the lesson must be learnt. "For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." Yes,

law-keeping, instead of bringing deliverance, ends in the discovery of the truth—that there is not one bit of good in me, that is, in my flesh. Poor Moses sank in despair, when he said, “Neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.”

And now another striking fact is brought out. When a soul is under the bondage and slavery of sin, and further, under the bondage of law, the very promises of God fail to give relief. See how graciously the Lord reveals Himself as the God of promise. In chapter vi. He says, “I have heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched-out arm,” &c. (Read Ex. vi. 1–8.) These are precious promises; it is God who thus speaks, “I will take you to me for a people.” But is it not most remarkable that for the present these promises fail to give the least relief? “And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses, for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.” How often this is the case, after utter failure to find peace and rest by works of law, the soul seeks to find deliverance by, as they say, acting faith in the promises! You read the promises. Yes, you say, it is God that speaks; but I get no relief for

anguish of spirit and cruel bondage. Of course, the children of this world know nothing of this deep soul exercise; no, they sail smoothly on to everlasting woe, deceiving and being deceived. Is it not strange, though, for a sincere soul to find no deliverance by the promises? There is a distinct sense that there is some great question still unsettled. You try to keep the law, and have no strength: you try to believe the promises, but say, How can they apply to me while still a slave to Satan, led after wealth or pleasure, fashion or sin? Then thoughts of death and judgment give great anguish of spirit. We hear a reader say, "Yes, that is just my experience, but I thought no one passed through what I have."

Now we come to another class, another step. Having failed to get deliverance by works of law, and by trying to lay hold of the promises, providences are looked to for deliverance. There is great danger at this point. We have met with cases where persons practising known sin tried to persuade themselves it was all right, because of the earthly temporal providences of God which they enjoyed. Now read Exodus vii. to xi. Did God ever interfere in providence for any people in so remarkable a way as for Israel in the land of Goshen? The most dreadful plagues fell upon their enemies, and they were spared. But did these providences give deliverance to them? Not in the least—not a yard did they escape. At the

very end of chapter xi. we read of Pharaoh, "he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land." Something was yet needed; some great question had yet to be settled. The Lord direct both us and our readers to His word, that we may see in our next paper what that something is—what is that question that must be settled—before there can be deliverance and rest to an anxious soul.



PLAIN PAPERS ON THE CHURCH.

No. III.

AS WE have seen, whilst the four figures that are used are distinct, yet they also set forth unity the temple—the assembly—the body—the bride.

"In whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." Yes, every living stone, every soul that has passed from death unto life, is fitly framed together. Is it right, then, for any man to take those born of the Spirit, and build them into a building or society of his own? Again, since all believers in any given place are part of "the church which is his body," can it be right to take some of those believers, and form divisions, or human churches? And surely the truth that "there is one body" forbids the thought of taking the members of Christ, and making them members of human, though religious, bodies. If the "one

body" be such a striking figure of unity, then "the church" also must be one, for it is His body.

Such also is the teaching of scripture as to the bride. We cannot separate the two, as may be seen in Ephesians v. 24-32; indeed they are here "the church," "his body," and the love of the husband to "the wife." "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

Such is the interest God has in the church—the body, the bride—that we get a figure of it so early as in Genesis ii. God, speaking of Adam, who was a figure of Him that was to come, said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." There was no creature found suited for the man. The one bride was the workmanship of God, wrought in a very peculiar way. The one bride was formed out of the sleeping [in figure dead] Adam. There was, however, only one Eve formed, and presented unto the man. We thus see God's thoughts of Christ and the church, the bride of the Lamb. It is the good pleasure of the Father, that Christ, as the man, should not be alone. What Eve was in paradise, the church shall be in the heavens. Oh, wondrous purpose of God! "I will make him an help meet for him." From Pentecost to the second coming of the Lord, is not this the great work of God in this world?

All believers should already rejoice, and give

thanks to the Father, because He hath made us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. But, oh, what a moment will that be when the church, as the bride of Christ's affections, is presented to Him glorious, "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing"—holy, and without blemish. But if God only formed one Eve, as revealed in Genesis ii., so in Ephesians do we find only the one church. "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it," &c.

If we now pass on in scripture until after they that are Christ's have been raised from among the dead, and we who are alive, and left until His coming, have been caught up with them, to meet and be with the Lord, we do not find the marriage of the Lamb take place for some time. When John was called up to heaven, at the close of the vision of the church's history on earth, and when he saw the throne set in heaven, then the redeemed, who had been caught up to meet and be with the Lord, were thus revealed to him. "And round about the throne were four-and-twenty thrones: and upon the thrones I saw four-and-twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold." (Rev. iv. 4.) Thus they are kings and priests—crowned priests, sitting on thrones. On earth the four-and-twenty courses of priests never sat down. Their work was never done. Neither were they crowned kings. That beautiful little song ex-

plains how we received these wondrous privileges : “ Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” (Rev. i. 5.) Yes, that precious blood fits us to sit on thrones—the work is done. We enter into perfect rest, in the very light and glory of the throne of God, clothed in priestly robes of white, and having crowns of gold. Not a cloud—not a spot. Jesus said, “ 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 a place!—what a home above! Here we shall wait, and worship, until the Lamb takes the book, and takes His place in the centre of the throne. No doubt it will be a great surprise to some; it need not be, if we believe the revelation thus given to us now. “ The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass.” Yes, *shortly*—it may be in a few hours—we who are washed in the blood of the Lamb may be seated on those thrones of glory, clothed in white raiment, wearing crowns of gold. It will surely and shortly come to pass. Oh, how gladly shall we join the mighty chorus, “ Thou art worthy.” This will be our happy and blessed place during that terrible period of wrath, and pouring out of judgments on the earth. When the

Lamb takes the book, then, so near the throne, we not only sit, but sing the new song.

We will pass over the time of the opening of the seals, the sounding of the trumpets, thunders, and pouring out of the vials of judgments—days of the full ripening of Christendom in the awful wickedness and judgment of Babylon. Then, but not until the final overthrow and judgment of Babylon, will the marriage of the Lamb take place. “And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.” If you would know the end of all human boasting and progress—yea, the end of Christendom, after the true saints of God are taken to be with the Lord, read Revelation xviii., xix. 3; and remember these things will shortly come to pass. After the judgment of Babylon, the saints are seen *as* the crowned elders for the last time. They “fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen, Alleluia.”

We now come to the marriage of the Lamb. And observe, the marriage is in heaven. The bride must be where the marriage takes place. Therefore there is no ground for the thought held by some, that the bride always means Israel. There is no thought in scripture of Israel being taken as a nation to heaven. Every promise to them is as to blessing on earth. The bride, then, is evidently the church, which is His body, which is then in heaven. But immediately before the appearing of Christ with all His saints, the marriage

of the Lamb takes place. There are vast multitudes present beside the bride. "A great multitude." They are distinct from the bride, for they say, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness [righteousnesses] of saints." Thus the heavenly bride of the Lamb is as distinct as the Eve of paradise. And she now takes her distinct and highest place as the wife of the Lamb. "And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." Thus the well-known figure of an Eastern marriage is used to express or reveal the wondrous place the church shall have according to the eternal counsels of God. As God presented Eve to Adam, so that supreme moment has now arrived when the church is presented glorious, without spot or wrinkle, to Christ, the second Adam.

We understand the position of Eve, when we remember that she was one with the man placed over this lower creation. We understand, in some measure, the position and glory of the church, the bride of the Lamb, when we know that she is one with Him who, as the Second man, is placed over the universe. It was made by Him, and for Him. Such the everlasting destiny of the church, the wife of the Lamb—when He comes in judgment,

they come with Him. (Rev. xix. 11-16.) "And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given UNTO THEM." (Chap. xx. 4.)

We now pass on to the vision when the first earth and the first heaven are passed away, and the new heaven and the new earth appear. Even then the bride is seen in all her distinctness. "And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." It does certainly seem to us most clear that Israel as a nation never having been taken up to heaven, cannot thus come down from God out of heaven. No, it is the church, the bride, not seen now as once it was on earth. But what will it be as coming from God out of heaven—the workmanship of God? How perfect in glory! How pure and holy!

All this is so dear to the heart of Christ, who loved the church, and gave Himself for it, that, after closing the revelation of the eternal state in chapter xxi. 8, we have an additional and special description of the bride, the Lamb's wife. "Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, 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." Here, again, the bride, the Lamb's wife, under the figure of a vast city,

the holy Jerusalem, the holy dwelling-place of God, is seen—not what we were in humiliation and sorrow on earth, but descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Surely we ought to know and expect this, for Jesus said long ago, “And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.”

We could not in this short paper attempt to explain the heights and depths, breadths and lengths, or consider all the wondrous symbols used to describe the joint administration and glory of the bride of the Lamb. But, glorious as is the vision, do not forget it must shortly come to pass. What will it be to be there—to come out of heaven from God, to reign with the Lamb over the nations of this earth! Oh, blessed destiny, thou bride of the Lamb! Even now it is our privilege to be communicators of the water of life to others, having drunk it ourselves.

Yes, it is Jesus Himself that says, “I (Jesus) have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches: I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.” Is it so, beloved reader? Do you know Jesus? Is He the Bright and Morning Star to you? Anything, nothing, or everything? “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come.” Are you really a member of the body of Christ? Have you heard and be-

lieved? Are you now inviting others to come? Are you longing for Jesus to come? Do you say, I am only a poor sinner that longs to be saved—a heavy-laden sinner, that longs for rest and peace with God? Well, there is another sentence for you—yes, for you. “And let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Yes, you say, I thirst, I long, I wish I had the certainty of salvation; I am indeed heavy-laden, I hate myself and my sins more and more; but how am I to know that this water of life is free to me? Does not Jesus say, “Let him that is athirst, come?” Does He not say, “WHO-SOEVER?” Does He not, then, mean *you*? The water of life, then, is free to you, for whosoever surely includes you. Do you say, After a little more pleasure or sin? Is that thirsting for salvation, for the water of life?

Oh, beware, for “He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

Very solemn words to those who reject His grace; very precious words to those who are washed in His blood. He who thus speaks to us in infinite love may come as we write, or as others may read these lines. May each believer be found waiting, and ready to enter into the joy of the Lord.



SPIRITUAL-MINDEDNESS.

WE may not only trace our failings and sins as children of God to our lack of spiritual-mindedness, but we may be sure that the work of the Lord would prosper more with us if we were more spiritual. Nothing can compensate for a lack of it; and everything falls into its fitting place and season when we are *spiritual*. Individual and collective relationships and duties are then readily taken up as unto the Lord, for the heart is set on honouring Him.

Being *spiritual* is used in scripture in contrast with being *carnal*. To be *spiritual* we must be abiding in Christ; in no other way can we walk as He walked. To be *carnal* is to walk as men. They each describe a *state* in which a Christian may be. We cannot be spiritual in fits and starts. Apart from occupation with the Lord where He is—beholding with unveiled face the glory of the Lord—and taken up with His perfections and love, how can we be spiritual? Does not the Holy Spirit direct us to Him there? We see Him there crowned with glory and honour. We there behold the Son of man glorified. The Holy Spirit takes of the things of Christ, and shews them unto us. He makes us know that we are in Him, that “as he is, so are we in this world.” Thus we dwell in love and dwell in God, and God in us. Marvellous blessing!

While the Spirit also shews us what man is in the rejection of Christ, He also blessedly shews us that we have died with Him, and that Christ in the glory is our life. A spiritually-minded Christian is led and taught of the Spirit of God, walks in the Spirit, and knows that he is an object of Christ's continual care and blessing. He also knows that Christ is all—that all his springs, strength, and blessings are in Him; so that he estimates himself as “having nothing, and yet possessing all things” in Christ. The eye of his heart is on Christ, he glories in Him, finds satisfaction nowhere but in His presence, and knows that *all* other springs are dry, that He is the Fountain of living waters to his soul. He is thus constrained to take up various duties, relationships and necessary employments day by day as unto Him, and he proves that His gracious blessing is with Him; he is consciously dependent on the Holy Ghost for power and guidance to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, and to walk as an obedient child in subjection to the word of God, so that whether he eats, or drinks, or whatever he does, he may do it all to the glory of God.

The natural intellect may be taken up with the letter of scripture so as to accumulate a considerable store of bible knowledge, and such may outwardly go through the accustomed routine of meetings, and be zealous in the promotion of much that is kind and charitable to others; but

to be taken up with Him of whom the scriptures testify, to be associated with others according to His word with an eye to His glory, and to have an exercised conscience before Him, and abiding confidence in His love, are very different matters. There are few things, perhaps, we have more to watch against than taking up divine truth with mere natural intellect, for it is a deadly enemy to spiritual-mindedness. Such persons can give utterance to some of the most profound truths of scripture with such levity as to often astonish those who hear them. Learning the truth, and holding the truth in communion with Him who is "the truth," is surely the way of the Spirit of God. The flesh and the Spirit always act in opposition, and cannot be commingled; though those who have begun in the Spirit may so drift away as to try to be made perfect in the flesh. Those who were once spiritual may now need to be aroused from a dead and drowsy state, and turned to Christ for light and blessing. We cannot be spiritual only on certain occasions. It is a *state* of soul resulting from intercourse and occupation with the Lord by His word and Spirit. Those who are thus living before Him, and walking habitually in His ways will know His mind.

All saints are not spiritual. The best in these days are feeble; but we may be feeble without being carnal. The unspiritual state of many is often painfully evident. It was so in the apostles'

days. Paul could speak of the Corinthian saints as "the temple of the Holy Ghost," and yet wrote that he could not speak unto them as unto *spiritual*, but as unto *carnal*, even as unto babes in Christ. (1 Cor. iii. 1.) How very solemn!

We shall find in scripture three blessed effects of being spiritual; though no doubt there are many more: 1. *Discernment*—"he that is *spiritual* judgeth [or discerns] all things." (1 Cor. ii. 15.) No one has such ability to examine, and distinguish between things that differ, and to discern the working and power of Satan, or of the flesh, or of the spirit of the world, as those who are spiritually-minded. This is no doubt why, when evil is decidedly judged by some, others fail to perceive anything very grave in it. These Corinthian saints, for instance, had both moral and doctrinal evils among them, and had apparently no exercise of conscience before the Lord about them. Afterwards, when they got before the Lord about them, what deep exercise of soul they passed through, and what care, what indignation, what zeal, what clearing of themselves, and what avenging they manifested! We must not then be surprised if saints, who instead of being spiritual, are fleshly in their habits and pursuits (not to say covetous and worldly), should fail to discern the holiness of the path marked out by the Spirit of God for the members of the body of Christ.

2. Those only who are *spiritual* will be in a state to receive the teaching God is ready to impart. The Corinthian saints were not fit to receive what the apostle so desired to communicate for their souls' profit. He says, "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, *neither yet now are ye able.*" (1 Cor. iii. 2.) In what other way can we account for Christians, of intelligent minds in ordinary matters, being privileged to hear some of the most precious lines of divine truth ministered, and apparently with no result? Is it not clear that there must be the *spiritual* state in the hearer as well as the speaker for lasting spiritual blessing to be effected? Few things, we believe, are more important at this time. If hearers are so carnal as to listen to spiritual teaching just as they would to a lecture on Astronomy, is it any wonder that there are not more blessed results? There must be capacity in the hearer to receive what is ministered. Do speakers and hearers think sufficiently of this? Meat may be of the best quality, but the person ministered to being only a babe there is not capacity of reception, and it is rejected, while milk is eagerly fed upon. But why are they so long babes?

3. A *spiritual* Christian is in a state to set others right: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are *spiritual* restore such an one." It is a mistake to suppose that because I

am a child of God I can therefore set right those who have gone wrong. It is the *spiritual* who are enjoined to labour in this way. Such will not be hard and legal, and self-confident in their ways. No; they will shew meekness in such service; they will be humble and dependent on the Lord, and not act in haste and wilfulness; but knowing full well not only that there is in themselves the same tendency to evil, but that they would fall into the same fault, and commit the same trespass, unless kept by the power of God; therefore they act according to that word, "considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." (Gal. vi.1.)

May we have grace to hearken to His voice who says, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." (Gal. v. 16.) Where this is lacking, how can there be spiritual-mindedness?



THE HOPE OF THE LORD'S COMING.

III.

THE next great event then, which the Christian is taught by the word of God to look for, is the coming of the Lord *for us*. This may take place at any time; we know not when. There are no signs given in scripture concerning it; for the Christian being already seated in heavenly places in Christ, looking for signs, or events to be fulfilled on earth, would not be consistent with this hope.

The Lord Himself may come to-day, or He may not. It was long ago it was said, "A little while and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry." Our place then is to be watching, for we know not when the time is. We are set by the Lord as loved, and saved, and blessed by Him, in the posture of looking for Him. Blessed attitude! It is indeed a purifying hope. Our Lord would have us earnest, active, faithful, loving, and watching, "as men that wait for their lord." Almost His last word to us is, "Behold I come quickly!"

The Lord's last presentation of Himself for our expectation is as "The Bright and Morning Star." The morning star comes after midnight and before daybreak. The first thought on seeing this star is that "the day is at hand;" but it has not yet come. It is the harbinger of the day, but it is not the day. The Bright and Morning Star is *our* hope. It is all peace, and love, and joy then. No judgment accompanies the Star. As only those who are awake and watching see a morning star, and perceive its brightness and good cheer, so it may be that those only who are Christ's will see Him then. It will be the crowning act of divine grace, the finish of the work He has begun, to give us bodies like His own, and take us away to be for ever with Himself. As all His ways of grace in us and to us, as the new birth, cleansing of conscience by

His blood, and the gift of the Holy Ghost are all the secret workings of His power in our souls, why not His coming for us be also secret? Why may not unbelieving sinners so miss us as to know we are gone away, but not to know where? Why not send hither and thither in search of us, as the unbelieving sons of the prophets sent fifty strong men to search for the translated man of God? Why may it not be said again, as of faithful Enoch whom God took, that he was not *found*? We are taught then to look for the Saviour, to wait for God's Son from heaven. He comes for His own. All others are simply left behind. Distressed no doubt they will be when they realise their sad state. Their frantic cry will be, "Lord, Lord, open unto us!" But it is too late! too late! they cannot enter now. The door is shut. Those alone who are Christ's have entered into glory, the others are untouched; all mere professors are left behind, to await their final doom. He comes *then* only to the air, and we are caught up to meet Him there.

But when Jesus comes out of heaven as "the Sun of Righteousness," He will come in manifested glory. Every eye shall see Him then, and we shall accompany Him. He comes in flaming fire. He comes in His own glory, and the Father's glory, and the glory of the holy angels. Now He comes to judge: "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" He will judge

first the quick or living, and after a thousand years, He will judge the dead. He comes to take His rightful place; and nothing can escape His all-searching eyes which are as a flame of fire. All tribes of the earth shall wail when they see Him. The armies which are in heaven will follow Him, when He thus comes out. The Lord comes with His many crowns, and His saints are with Him. When He came last it was to save; now it will be to judge; then it was in grace, now it will be in righteousness; then it was as "meek and lowly," now it will be to assert His rights with His sharp sword, and His vesture dipped in blood; then it was to do good, suffer for it, and take it patiently; now in almighty power He will stand for the rights of God, and put down all rule, and all authority, and power; then He was here allowing man's will to have its own way even in taking Him by wicked hands, crucifying and slaying Him; but now He will "shew who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords."

These things mark the coming of Christ *with us* to the earth. 1. It is public—every eye shall see Him. 2. He comes to judge and make war in righteousness. 3. He brings His ancient people Israel into their long looked for blessings on earth. It is "the day of the Lord." This is *their* hope. The prophets have abundantly set this before them; and the promises of God must be fulfilled. Their

prophetic testimony almost closes with this bright and blessed hope for the faithful of God's earthly people, in connection with this period of Messiah's fiery rule and judgment; for Zion must be redeemed by judgment. "Behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But *unto you that fear my name shall THE SUN of RIGHTEOUSNESS arise with healing in his wings*; and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall." (Mal. iv. 1, 2.) In beautiful harmony with this our Lord said, when speaking of the coming of the Son of man; "Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left." That is, one taken away in judgment, and the other left for blessing in the earth under the wing of the Sun of Righteousness. (Matt. xxiv. 40.) This we shall find generally in scripture, when the Lord's coming to the earth, or, the day of the Lord is the subject, that some are taken away in judgment and others left for blessing; for "the Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather together *out of his kingdom* them that offend, and them which do iniquity; and they shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. xiii. 41, 42.)



CORRESPONDENCE.

49. "B.," Dublin. Our want of space would be a sufficient reason for our not entering upon the subject of the Revised New Testament, even if we were disposed to do so. Many persons, both in this country and America, have written critically upon it. While there are still some serious defects, we are thankful to find that many of the errors which have been well known to bible students for many years, and often referred to in publications, have been corrected.

50. "R. N.," Jarrow. Your question as to a Christian being a member of a "trades' union," is a very serious one. If your fellow-workmen merely demanded a Tax to allow you to work, this, though unjust on their part, you might submit to. But if by paying, even if you receive no benefit in case of strikes, &c., you are considered a member of the union, then the word of God speaks in unmistakeable words. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." (2 Cor. vi. 14.) Now to be a member of a trades' union is to be so yoked. And it seems clear, a Christian would thus become guilty by association, of every act, or outrage, the union might commit.

It further seems to us, that the principle of trades' unions is contrary to the relation of masters and servants as recognised in the word of God. That relationship is reversed, and the servants combine to be masters; and dictate terms both to their masters, and their fellow-workmen.

We need not then tell a Christian that it cannot possibly be right, or for his good, or for God's glory, to act contrary to the word of God.

HAVE YOU A WEDDING GARMENT?

MATTHEW XXII. 1-14.

It is a serious question. It may be treated with indifference by many now, but the time will come when the question must be fully met. How awful will it be then to discover, in the presence of the Lord, that your only covering is the filthy rags of your own self-righteousness! Let us look at our Lord's instruction on the subject, with all the reverence and godly fear which it demands.

The Lord is speaking by parables. He uses the striking illustration of a marriage-feast. He says, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king which made a marriage for his son." It is God making a marriage-feast for His Son. Observe, it is all of God here, not acting in the way of *law*, but in richest *grace* bringing unworthy men into happy association with His own Son, according to the good pleasure of His will, on the principle of *gift*, and not of *works*. We are therefore told that He "sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding; and they would not come." Thus divine love was refused. We may look at this having had its accomplishment in the days of our Lord and of the twelve, who went into villages and cities preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom. The call was refused; "*they would not come.*" The Jews kept

their own traditions, and preferred a murderer to Jesus. They rendered no fruits under *law*, but hated and rejected God's messengers, and, last of all, His Son, and now refuse *grace*.

“Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage.” (Ver. 4.) This is a different message from the first, because it is not only an invitation, but one based on the fact that the marriage-feast had been prepared at great cost—every thing had been done, the table spread and furnished, seats prepared, and a welcome ready, waiting only for the guests. And what can this be, but the fuller testimony of rich and abounding grace to the same people, sent out consequent upon the accomplished work of Jesus, when the Holy Ghost came down to announce a glorified Saviour who had died on the cross for sinners, but who was alive again, and who had entered into heaven itself by His own blood? Peace had been made, redemption accomplished, and the veil rent. Nothing more was needed. All things were ready. All that was wanting to complete the festive scene was the arrival of the guests, in response to the gracious call, “Come to the marriage.” The results of this marvellous way of dealing with the sinful nation are deeply affecting. For the most part the message was treated with indifference. They did

not openly reject, or oppose, but they considered (like many now) that the necessary employments of *this life* had greater claims on their attention and interests than the *eternal* blessings which the message of grace now invites the heart to receive. We are told, "They made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise." Man will go his own way. He claims the right to do his own will; and his way and will are never according to God's way—"They went *their ways*." Now these were not what men call immoral things to which they turned, but their wickedness consisted in esteeming the necessary occupations in earthly things of more importance than the glorious invitation to the marriage of the king's son. The royal banquet was nothing to them. "They made light of it." But while the many despised grace, there were others whose enmity was bitterly stirred up, so that they shamefully handled and put to death the king's servants who brought the invitation. We know how literally this was fulfilled, according to our Lord's words, "the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them." (Vers. 5, 6.) As late as Acts iii., Peter, in addressing the Jews, charged them with the guilt of having killed the Prince of life, yet he assured them that, even then, if they repented, God would send Jesus, and bring in "the times of restitution of all things, which God had spoken by the mouth of

all his holy prophets since the world began." But, instead of the nation repenting, this gracious appeal was soon followed by Peter being imprisoned, and Stephen being stoned to death. Thus we see the twofold effect of the ministry of grace to the Jewish nation. The consequence was, that, after long patience, God manifested His governmental displeasure toward them for their evil ways. "When the king heard thereof, he was wroth; and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city." (Ver. 7.) History tells us how literally this had its accomplishment in the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, the Roman general. Few scenes of distress and misery have ever been known on earth equal to it, wherein more than a million of people died. Surely "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

The history of the Jews, as set before us in these striking parables of the vineyard in the previous chapter, and the marriage feast, shew what man naturally is, whether under *law*, or under the ministry of *grace*: by the one he is convicted as a law-breaker, and therefore under the curse; and by the other a despiser of divine goodness. By both he is brought under the judgment of God, and proved to be utterly unfit for His presence, shewing that, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John iii. 3.) How true it is that "many are called, but few are chosen."

The consequence of Israel's repeated refusal to walk in God's ways, was the outflow of the grace of God to sinners of the Gentiles. Paul usually acted on this principle, and tendered the gospel to the Jew first. On one occasion we hear him saying to the Jews, "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." (Acts xiii. 46.) We Gentiles, then, pick up, as it were, the crumb which has fallen from the Jewish table. Hence the parable goes on, "Then saith he to the servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find bid to the marriage." (Vers. 8, 9.) Thus, from the days of the apostles until now, the gospel of the grace of God has been carried into all parts of the world. Instead of God's ministrations being confined to one nation, as in a former dispensation, the true servants of our Lord Jesus have the fullest commission to preach the glad tidings of an accomplished redemption to every creature—to go into the highways, and wherever souls are found, to assure them of present remission of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified, through faith in our Lord Jesus. Thank God, the door is still wide open, and the Master's word is, "As many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage."

The parable does not close without alluding to the results of this world-wide ministry of grace. But there is no mention of its having been sent forth as a means for improving man in the flesh, nor of the world getting better under its influence; much less is there any idea that it would prove to be the instrument for bringing in the long-predicted time, when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Is. xi. 9.) On the contrary, like many of the other parables of "the kingdom of heaven," we find that the result is very awful—a mixture of good and bad, of mere professors, as well as real people of God. In the parable of the virgins there were "wise and foolish." In the parable of the seed sown in the field, the result was "wheat and tares." And in the parable before us we read, "So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all, as many as they found, both *bad* and *good*; and the wedding was furnished with guests." (Ver. 10.) How solemn the thought that the gospel is used by Satan to deceive and gather bad, as well as blessed by God to the saving of sinners!

These words certainly teach us that the ministry of the gospel will gather together all sorts of people under the profession of Christianity, many of whom would be mere professors, which we know has been very manifestly the case; some persons using Christianity as a present advantage

on earth, without considering how they will appear in the Lord's presence, when every one will give account of himself. Those who know what sin is, and have had the consciousness of deserved wrath because of their sins, have learned that all their righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and that they need, not only an invitation to the marriage-feast, but a wedding garment to suit the occasion, which He only who provides the feast can give—a garment suited to Himself. When the soul knows that he thus consciously stands in that which suits the presence of God, that he is become the righteousness of God in Christ, he has no fear as to the future, but goes on his way rejoicing, in hope of the glory of God. He knows that all things are of God, and gives Him all the glory. It is God who provides the feast, gets everything ready at a wondrous cost, sends out the gospel invitation, and supplies the wedding garment for the guests. Such is His *grace*, and such its perfect suitability to us. For any persons, therefore, to imagine that their own filthy rags, however ingeniously put together by ordinances and religious duties, are suitable for the Lord's presence, will find themselves awfully deceived. No human fitness, no creature righteousness, no righteousness of the law, can suit His glorious presence. Oh, no. Nothing less than the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, can suffice for His glorious presence. The soul

who has a divinely-wrought faith knows this, and can unhesitatingly say,

“Had I an angel’s holiness,
I’d lay aside that beauteous dress,
And wrap me up in Christ!”

It is this point which is of such vital importance in the parable. To err concerning it is fatal; it is not to take our true place before God, nor to accept what His grace so freely gives, for “Christ is the end of the law for *righteousness* to every one that believeth.” (Rom. x. 4.)

Everything must be real for God’s presence. He is not mocked. Nothing can escape His all-searching eye. By-and-by every one must be manifested. Every welcome guest must have “a wedding garment.” Nothing short of “the righteousness of God in Christ” can suit the presence of His glory. He who invites to the marriage feast provides the needed garment. The attempt to take a place there without a wedding garment is fatal unbelief and betrays ignorance of God. We read, therefore, “When the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment, and he said unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And 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.” (Vers. 11-13.)

We learn from scripture that man is proved to be insubject to God both by law and grace. Under the righteous threatenings of *law*, he manifested hatred and rebellion against God, and departure from God. As regards *grace*, he makes light of its ministry and refuses it, or he professes to receive the word, and, at the same time, considers his own fancied righteousness good enough for the presence of God. Having gone about to establish his own righteousness, because he is ignorant of God's righteousness, he has not submitted himself unto the righteousness of God. How can he, therefore, escape divine judgment?

How richly the grace of God is ministered to us in the person, the work, and words of the Son. How true it is that, "All things are ready; come unto the marriage." Everything has been done in the one sacrifice for Christ to secure the eternal happiness of every coming sinner. Not one thing is left for the coming one to do. He has simply to believe the testimony, and enter in, and sit down at the feast. "All things are ready." Sins have been so judged in the cross of Christ, that God now proclaims forgiveness of sins and justification from all things, to every one that believeth. Thus, sinner as he knows he has been, he can sit down at the feast with a divine certainty, founded on the atoning death of Christ and the word of God, that he has remission of sins. Then, again, that we might be capable of being in eternal glory,

the same blessed gospel proclaims the gift of eternal life now to every one that believeth. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." (John iii. 36.) That we might have this love of God shed abroad in our hearts, know that we are His children, and that we are in Christ and Christ in us, the Holy Ghost is given to abide with us for ever. And that we might be able to stand consciously in God's most holy presence in happiness for ever, the same blessed gospel declares that God has made Christ to be unto us righteousness; that the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ is unto all and upon *all them that believe*. (Rom. iii. 22.) Let the reader not fail to notice this is not righteousness by law-keeping, or by religious doings of any kind, but the righteousness of God by faith. Is it any wonder then that an apostle should exclaim when considering Christ in glory, That I may be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ *the righteousness which is of God by faith?* (Phil. iii. 9.) Is it surprising that a child of God should lay her head on her dying pillow in perfect peace, and say—

Without one thought that's good to plead,
 O what could shield me from despair;
 But this—though I am vile indeed,
The Lord my righteousness is there?

Can the reader say this? we lovingly ask. Can you look up and thank God that now by the pre-

cious blood of Christ you have remission of sins, that, through His grace, you have received eternal life, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, and that Christ in glory is your ever subsisting righteousness—that you are made the righteousness of God in Him? Surely this is to have on the wedding garment.



“THE SALVATION OF THE LORD.”

No. II.

WE have seen the amazing grace of God in coming down, in the person of the Son, to deliver the poor lost sinner whilst a slave of Satan and sin. We have seen the effect of this message being believed to lead the sinner to seek deliverance by works of law without strength, like Israel making bricks without straw. After the struggle, which almost ends in despair, the soul seeking deliverance by the promises, and then by the providences of God, yet still groaning for deliverance, still in the grip of Pharaoh.

Something altogether different must be done; a deep, unsettled question must be settled. The eyes of all Israel must be now fastened on A LAMB without blemish. Every man must have a lamb—a lamb for every house. “And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month.” For four days the lamb was thus before them. Has your eye ever been thus fixed on the Lamb of God? And mark, God not only sent the Lamb

without blemish, but He must be lifted up—He must needs suffer. So the lamb for every man must not only be put up, but it must be killed. “And the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.” The deep question of sins must be settled. The Israelites were sinners as well as the Egyptians. You are a sinner as well as the wicked around. Sin must be judged, either in the Lamb without spot or blemish, or on every house in Egypt. “And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts, and on the upper door-posts, of the houses wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.”

The dreadful night of judgment on Egypt was come. “And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you.” All this is a different matter from our law-keeping when guilty sinners—a different matter from even promises and providences. It is the Son of God set forth crucified before us. We beg the reader to answer this solemn question: Have you taken shelter from judgment beneath the blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God? Have you learnt the judgment of God on sin in the cross of Christ? And, whilst you take shelter beneath this precious blood, have you by faith fed on, received the whole Lamb as your salvation of God? Have you there seen the exceed-

ing dreadfulnes of sin? Have you had to do with it, with bitterness of soul—with bitter herbs? Do you believe God, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you”? All who trusted God’s testimony to that blood were saved from the judgment of that dreadful night. He passed over wherever He saw the blood.

Beware of trusting in anything else. There was no judgment on a single family that believed God about the blood. The death of the lamb—the blood—was the all-sufficient token, the all-sufficient shelter from divine judgment. Do you believe God? Can you say you have redemption through the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of sins? Egypt was smitten with judgment. Judgment also hangs over this doomed world. God hath appointed a day in which He will judge it. And there is no shelter from God’s judgment on sin but the blood of the Lamb. That one sacrifice, once offered, for ever shelters—for ever cleanses from all sin. God is satisfied. Divine wrath against sin is satisfied. And the love of God to the sinner is fully manifested in the death of Jesus. Yes, Jesus appeared once to put sin away by that one sacrifice. He bore the sins of many.

If you have, then, been brought, just as you are, to rest beneath the shelter of the blood of Jesus, you may now rise up, and turn your back for ever on Egypt. Israel arose, and marched out of Egypt. But mark, not a step did they take

before the lamb was killed. What a night to be remembered by them, and surely no less so by us, when we have learnt the delivering power of the blood of Jesus. Thus they marched for four or five days. Some souls seem to never get beyond this. They have taken shelter beneath the cross, and may be they have taken a little march heavenwards; but they are still in Egypt, still in the world, and of it to a sad extent. Satan feels he has lost hold of them, but, whilst they are still in Egypt, they are within reach. Now must be learnt the lesson of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea. Up to this point we have only learnt the blood of the Lamb shed *for us*; and, as to fact, we are still alive in these bodies in the world. At such a time we are very liable to look back. Now what did Israel see behind them? Pharaoh, and the whole power of Egypt, pursuing them, and dead against them. And what do they see before them? Death—the Red Sea. The inward thought of the heart is, Shall we now fall into the hands of Pharaoh, or perish in the sea? Terrible doubts beset the soul at Pi-hahiroth. “And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord.” Very bitter was their cry. Their case was now desperate—worse, they said, than if they had never left Egypt. There was the most powerful army, and greatest

king, on earth close upon them, and the sea before them. Against such a force they were helpless.

How often is the case similar, when a soul finds himself without strength, helpless; Satan bringing the whole power of the world, its temptations and snares, and then the sins of a past life come rushing behind, like the armies of Egypt. Satan would then persuade the child of God that it would have been far better to have remained in the world, and have made no profession of leaving it.

Must not Israel fight now? Must we not now put forth all our energy and strength, in determined effort to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil? No; quite another lesson must be learnt at Pi-hahiroth. “And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you this day: for the Egyptians which ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.” Now, standing still is not fighting; no, “the Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.” No doubt this is foolishness to the natural man, but it was the power of God to salvation. What a display of that power, as to the Red Sea as a figure of death. That sea, that death, was their deliverance. All who had taken shelter beneath the blood, they and their households were now “baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” (1 Cor. x. 2.) “And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon dry ground.”

It is important to notice the difference between the Lord coming down in grace to Israel, when slaves in Egypt, and their being brought out in complete deliverance. We have seen that neither God's intervention in love alone, in Exodus iii., their earnest desire to escape, and worship, and all the efforts to make bricks without straw of chapter v., or all the promises of chapter vi., or all the special providences of chapters vii.—xi. were able to deliver. The lamb must be slain and its blood sprinkled, as the basis, by sheltering them from judgment, of their deliverance. Still another lesson had to be learnt. The passage of the Red Sea—the figure of the *death* of Christ for us. That lesson also, not complete in itself. The lesson of the Jordan or our death, and resurrection with Christ. Then indeed Israel was not only *out* of Egypt but *in* the land.

The wilderness came in as a parenthesis to prove them, to shew them what *they* were. From Egypt to Sinai all was pure grace. As the Lord said unto them, “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings and brought you unto myself.” (Ex. xix. 4.) They then placed themselves under law, and, from that day, their proper wilderness experience commenced. These distinctions will be found to make the whole history extremely instructive.

We now turn to the glad tidings of God, and see how distinctly this past history of Israel's de-

liverance helps us to understand the dealings of God with a soul.

In the New Testament epistles we find man is found morally in the very condition of Israel—a slave of Satan, dead in trespasses and sins, far from God in guilt and misery, without strength. (Eph. ii. ; Rom. ii., iii.) How truly an awakened sinner finds this to be so. He reads of the love of God, but it alone fails to give relief. He desires to worship, he is a slave of Satan. He tries to keep the law, he has no strength. He tries to get comfort from the promises, but he is filled with anguish at the fuller discovery of what he is in himself. He says, The promises cannot be for me. He seeks comfort from the providences of God ; all fail to deliver and bring him from Satan to God.

Oh, how painful, and how blessed, when all fails, and the Lamb is brought before the soul! Jesus must needs suffer. He must be lifted up. Without shedding of blood there is no remission. The amazing truth is revealed to the soul also of the death of Jesus for us. He believes God that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, “Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” Yes, the death of Jesus for us, as our substitute, is learnt, bearing our sins, raised from the dead for our justification. Thus as Israel saw the Egyptians no more, so, as to our sins, what we have done, all are gone. We are justified from all things. Thus, as to sins, we

have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. But having thus peace with God as to all we have done, there is then another question, not what we have done, but what we are, as children of the first Adam. Here the further lesson of the Jordan comes in. Not only the death of Christ for us, but our death with Him, and resurrection with Him. Dead to sin and alive to God, is now the position we are to reckon ourselves to be in. Do we so reckon? Have we accepted this wondrous place in Christ? Alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord, the deliverance from *sin* is complete. Not only justified by His blood from sins, what we have done, but when sin is taken up as it came in by Adam, how much more has grace abounded.

The wilderness came in by the bye, so to speak, a needed experience to prove them, and shew them what was in their hearts. In like manner we must know, it may be by bitter experience, what we are. The apostle could say, "For I know that in me, (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." And this experience lies between the Red Sea and the Jordan, beginning at that very point, where we, like Israel, slip from grace to put ourselves on the principle of law as they did at Sinai. The moment it is the question of what *we* are to God, Romans vii. describes our experience.

Have we practically learnt these solemn lessons? When all else failed, have we taken shelter from

deserved wrath beneath the blood of Jesus? Have we rejoiced in our justification from sins by His death for us? Have we learnt the utter ruin of our old man? and that we are crucified with Christ, brought through death with Him, one with Him in resurrection, as He is, and loved as He is loved? How complete then is our deliverance. How great His glory? To Him be everlasting praise.



THE HOPE OF THE LORD'S COMING.

IV.

WE have thus far seen that what we are taught to look for is the coming of the Lord for His saints. Then we have 1st, *resurrection*—the dead saints raised. 2nd, *the change*—the living saints changed in a moment. 3rd, *translation*—all caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so be for ever with the Lord. Between our being caught up and taken to the Father's house, and our coming out of heaven with the Lord in glory, all will be manifested at the judgment-seat, or bema, of Christ. Christ will present us to Himself a glorious church without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, and the marriage of the Lamb will take place. Thus the church will have her distinctive place in the glory.

“The sons of God” will be manifested when Christ comes out of heaven; for “when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also

appear with him in glory." Now the sons of God are not manifested—"the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not;" but when the Lord is revealed from heaven, every eye shall see Him, He will be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe; then the world will *know* that the Father has loved us as He has loved Jesus. All creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. We are told that "the earnest expectation of the creature [creation] waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God . . . the creature [creation] itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty, [the liberty of the glory] of the children of God."

Thus we see that the creation cannot be brought into deliverance before the sons of God are manifested, or revealed in glory *with* our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is, however, important to see that during the interval of our being caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and our coming out in manifested glory with Him, the judgments of the seals, the trumpets, and the vials in regard to men on the earth will take place. During this interval also the great struggle now going on between popery and infidelity will reach its climax. The great whore, (which may be wider than popery, but certainly includes it,) is judged and set aside; nor will the marriage of the Lamb take place, and his wife have taken her place as such, having made

herself ready, before the corruptress is set aside under the judging and avenging hand of God. It does not appear that this Satanic imitation and foul corruption of Christianity in the great whore will be judged by the ministry of angels, or directly by the hand of God. The infidel power will be allowed of God to thoroughly destroy her, and sack her of her wealth. We read, "The ten horns which thou sawest, and the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are finished." (Rev. xvii. 16, 17.) It is this which creates such joy in heaven. I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, "Alleluia; salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever." (Rev. xix. 1-3.)

This Satanic system of corrupt Christianity having been thus judicially set aside, the bride is now seen, the marriage of the Lamb takes place, after which the Lord will come out of heaven in manifested glory, and His saints with Him.

What a moment that will be when the Lord

comes out of heaven with His saints to judge and put all enemies under His feet! What consternation and distress will fill the minds of those who see Him coming! That all on earth will see Him is perfectly clear, for it is written, "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."

What an awful event that will be! Like a thief in the night, not in the least expected, He will come. Men, wrapt in false confidence and carnal security by the power of Satan, will be crying "Peace and safety," up to the very time when sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child, from which there is no escape. Like the ante-diluvians who refused the testimony of Noah, and gave themselves to eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away, so shall it be when the Son of man cometh. How little men think now of the solemn seriousness of hearing the gospel of the grace of God! To many it seems only an idle tale. Who heeds the warning of coming judgment? Where are men fleeing from the coming wrath? Who bows to the Lord Jesus as the *only* Saviour, and to the blood of His cross as the *only* ground of peace? Are not most people saying, by their ways, if not in actual words, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die"? How appalling is the fact that so many

hear the sweet words of Jesus, who said, "Come unto me and I will give you rest," yet turn their backs upon Him, and listen unmoved, again and again, to the awful warning, "He that believeth not shall be damned." Oh, that the power of God by His Spirit might be put forth in opening the eyes of many to see the precipice immediately before them, which can only plunge them into an abyss of eternal agony and despair. May multitudes around us hear effectually a voice behind them saying, "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" If the reader of this paper is unforgiven, and unsaved, we pray you in the name of the Lord Jesus to turn to Him, and receive remission of sins. Look to Him and live! Fall as a helpless, guilty sinner, into His loving arms, and taste and see His goodness and His grace! Go not another step as you are, but

" Stop, poor sinner, stop and think,
 Before you further go:
 Will you sport upon the brink
 Of everlasting woe?
 Once again, I pray you stop,
 For, unless you warning take,
 Ere you are aware, you drop
 Into the burning lake."

Christ appears before God for us, and we are to appear before the world for Christ.

We shall, throughout eternity, be the proof of the efficacy of Christ's work.

CORRESPONDENCE.

51. "S.," Wincanton. Those who are born of God love His children. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." (1 John iii. 14.) Thus, while we are taught of God to love all saints, yet, when we speak of "fellowship," it is a very solemn matter. How can we be faithful to our Lord, and yet have fellowship with ways which the truth condemns? A faithful servant of the Lord will never plead for "the traditions of men." How then can two walk together except they are agreed? How can there be *fellowship*, if one is standing out for doctrines of men, and the other, as having separated from such things for the Lord's sake, contending only for the Lord's claims, and the authority of His word? It seems to us to be simply a question of subjection to the will of God. We need grace and patience in dealing with such. It has been truly said, "It is not the quantity we do that marks our spirituality; but the perfectness with which we present Christ." The word of God plainly says, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." (Eph. v. 11.)

52. "K.," North Devon. Two things mark the ways of God in His present dealings—grace and government. Those who "have tasted that the Lord is gracious" and who know themselves to be His children, are nevertheless objects of His governmental dealings: so that "whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption," &c. (Gal. vi. 7, 8.) These two lines—

grace and government—run all through scripture. It cannot be otherwise; for God's saving us in pure grace by no means diminishes His perfect abhorrence of sin, and His perfect holiness. Though you say you once had the comfort of being God's child, and were kept walking in His ways for a time, yet since you have fallen into sinful ways your now having darkness of soul, and doubts of your own eternal security cannot be wondered at; from your own statements it is clear you are reaping what you have sown. Our counsel to you is to make full confession to God of your sins, and then believe His word that He is faithful and just to forgive you your sins. Thus encourage yourself in Him, who delights to restore those who are out of the way. If you have weakness in reference to intoxicating drinks, touch nothing of the kind, let nothing persuade you even to taste such beverages. Above all, cry to God continually to keep you from falling, and He will do it. While you pursue a sinful course, never expect to be happy; but rather fear you may be spiritually blind, not able to see afar off, and to have forgotten that you were purged from your old sins. (Read 2 Peter i. 5-9.) We pray for you, and shall be thankful to hear of your true restoration to the Lord, and then to His people.

53. "S.," London. You will find your question repeatedly replied to in this Magazine during the last few months. It is quite true that the church is not called "the bride" in Ephesians, but in chapter v. what is it that Christ loves and nourishes, but the church for which He gave Himself, and which He is now sanctifying and cleansing by the washing of water with the word? What is it that will ere long come down from God

out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband? Who is it on earth that says, "Come" to the Bright and Morning Star, but "the Spirit and *the bride*"?

54. "C.," Bristol. It is always safe to keep to the lines of truth laid down in scripture. It is not said that a child of God *must sin*; but he is enjoined not to sin, and if he does Christ in heaven is His Advocate. The important point to see is that when a soul receives God's testimony to the sin-cleansing value of the blood of Christ His Son, his conscience is purged, and he is so perfectly cleansed from sin and that for ever, that God says, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." He is also a child of God. From that time, having no more conscience of sins, having received eternal life, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, such are commanded, as we have said, to "sin not." With God's children sin is the exception, not the rule of their lives, as it was in their unconverted days. When they sin their distress is great, because they are conscious of having sinned against the Father who so loves them as He loved Jesus. They not only have great sorrow of heart, but their communion with the Father is interrupted by their sin. It is therefore said that such have an Advocate with *the Father*. That Advocate is not only "the righteous" One, who once perfectly glorified the Father in this world of sin and death, but who is also "the propitiation for our sins," and the sender of the Holy Ghost. Hence in response to His advocacy the Spirit convicts us of our sin, enables us to judge ourselves and confess our sins, and so brings home the word of God upon our consciences as not only to assure us of forgiveness, but to "cleanse us from all

unrighteousness." Thus communion with the Father is restored. Precious ministry for God's feeble and erring children.

55. "M.," Taunton. It is only after much gracious and patient dealing with our brethren, and waiting on the Lord, that we judge an individual Christian would be justified in saying that there is such "evil in a gathering that he cannot go to the Lord's Table." It sometimes happens that elder brethren are investigating a matter, and have found certain charges alleged to be untrue, and others requiring much careful examination, and, after all, find it to be a case that does not call to be laid before the assembly. Besides, one should be perfectly sure he has the Lord's mind before he sets up his own judgment in opposition to the whole assembly. Again, Is one to give up honouring the Lord at His Table, because the others are not so earnest and faithful as they should be? especially, as you say, when those among them are "far before us every way." It is possible that a gathering of saints may be in such a bad state as the faithful must purge themselves from; but we do believe it will only be after every means has failed to recover them, by such who are spiritually-minded, and have the Lord's glory at heart. It is not always, we grieve to say, that those who are occupied with assembly discipline are themselves personally walking orderly; on the contrary, their history has shewn how much they had need to judge themselves. Galatians vi. 1 should never be forgotten by such. It is only when we are consciously in the presence of God, self-judged, forgiving, and humble, that we are able to deal aright with those who have erred.

56. "E.," Sydenham. Man was created in

God's image, made upright, was in a state of innocence, and evidently without the knowledge of good and evil. This we know came in by the fall. After God had said to Adam, Cursed is the ground for thy sake, in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life, it is added, and the Lord God said, "Behold the man *is become* [observe, is become] as one of us, to know good and evil." We are told also that when they had both eaten of the tree of which God had commanded, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; then "the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked." Hence they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons, and hid themselves from the presence of the Lord. They had now the internal consciousness of the difference between good and evil. Is not conscience always, when active, exercised about right and wrong? and could there have been this before man had the knowledge of good and evil?

57. "I," Maryport. In an assembly meeting, scripture forbids a woman to speak. "Let your women keep silence in the churches [assemblies], for it is not permitted unto them to speak," &c. (1 Cor. xiv. 34.) But we do not see how a few gathered around the Bible, in a private house, to study the word, can be called an assembly meeting. It seems to us to partake more of a social gathering, where, as far as we see, there could be no restriction to a sister asking questions, or modestly making remarks, provided she does not teach. About this scripture says, "I suffer not a woman to teach." The grace of God is needed for this, as well as everything connected with our behaviour. It is blessed to know that "He giveth more grace," and that "He giveth grace to the humble."

“WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT?”

ANOTHER year of the long-suffering of God is now well-nigh come to a close. “Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come.” (Is. xxi. 11.)

Let us meditate a little on the year that is passed—a measured portion of “the night”—the long, dark night of man’s rejection of Christ. God has His own, those whom He has taken out of the world, who are not of it, but given to Christ. But let us not shut our eyes to the awful fact, that this world has rejected and killed the Son of God, and still rejects Him. Satan, the great enemy of man, is the god of this world; and nowhere does Satan display more enmity against Christ than in the professing church. Is not Christendom a caricature of the church of God, as seen in scripture in the beginning? How rapidly infidelity is increasing in it everywhere, and, if not infidelity, the grossest idolatry. As a Hindoo idolater said to a professed Christian: “We have no idolatry like yours. We worship an idol, as representing God; but you bake a god, worship it as God, and then eat it.” Surely this is the lowest depth of dark idolatry. And Satan calls this wickedness holy communion! Watchman, what of the night? Is it not getting

darker, darker, ripening for the terrible judgment? And what is the state of the world around? Violence and lawlessness, dishonesty publicly defended. Surely there never was a time when Christians even needed more to cry to God to preserve Her Majesty the Queen, and the members of the government, from even the hands of the cruel assassin. What a thrill of horror went through men's hearts when they heard of the cruel murder of an Emperor, and then again of the President of the United States. Surely, if we remember the cruel death of the Holy One of God at the hands of men, we cannot wonder at anything. And yet what a year this has been! Perhaps the climax of human wickedness in 1881 has been the awful fact, that professing Christians have deliberately chosen an infidel as their fit representative. And, what is worse, there seems to be no sense of shame or repentance. Yes, the long night of man's rejection of Christ grows darker and darker. Soon men's hearts will fail them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. Is it not even so now in measure? Are not the powers that be, which are ordained of God, being rudely shaken? Who can say what further shocks may be felt before this year is out?

“Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night.” In the

watchman's reply there are two facts brought before us; and then he says, “If ye will inquire, inquire: return, come.” Let us, then, at the close of this year of the dark night, return, and inquire concerning these two things:

First, then, “The morning cometh.”

Secondly, “And also the night.”

“Oh, happy morn! the Lord will come,
 And take His waiting people home,
 Beyond the reach of care:
 O morn, too bright for mortal eyes,
 When all the ransom'd church shall rise,
 And wing their way to yonder skies—
 Call'd up with Christ to reign.”

“The morning cometh.” “Behold the Bridegroom.” “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” For Jesus saith, “Surely I come quickly.” This coming morning is our new year of years, our morn of morns—our entire future, our every desire, our hope! our joy! The morning cometh. We have read, and heard, and thought of that bright morning without a cloud; but now it cometh. The morning cometh. Oh, bride of the Lamb, awake, the morning breaks—it cometh; let every child of God awake. The next event is, “The morning cometh.” “The night is far spent, the day is at hand.”

Is it not high time to awake out of sleep? Do you say, beloved reader, if that is so, I am not sure whether I am ready—I am not sure I am saved—I am not sure I have on the wedding garment—I am not sure I have oil in the vessel—I am not sure He will take me when He comes. If I should be left behind! Whatever your profession, is this your real state at the end of another year? Now, we tell you the watchman saith, “The morning cometh.” We are about to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, but first the dead in Christ will be raised. Now, if you could see those so dear to you—it may be a loved child, or a long-departed parent—raised in glory like the glorified Lord; and if you could see those you may have disliked and despised, in that moment, when we who remain and are alive are changed also into His likeness—for you will see us in the unclouded glory and welcome presence of our blessed Lord—would you not at such a moment, so near, give worlds, if you had them, rather than be left behind?

Is Satan tempting you to refuse the present great salvation for the pleasures, and follies, and sins of this evil world? Now, look at all that he can give you for this brief moment before the morning cometh. Another year is nearly gone: how have you spent it? Has Satan satisfied your heart? Has sin satisfied you? Are you happy, shutting God out of your thoughts? Oh, let us

speak to you. Can you refuse Christ, and be satisfied with anything under the sun? He waits to be gracious; yes, after all, God still is love. Will you longer put off the concerns of your soul? How can you, how dare you, since the morning cometh? Yes, the door will be shut, and it will be for ever too late. Do you say, “I long, I thirst to be saved”? Jesus says to you, “I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life FREELY.” “And let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life FREELY.” Oh, precious, infinite grace! every sinner that reads these lines and thirsts to be saved, is surely welcome to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Fellow-Christians, are we longing for the morning that cometh? Does the thought thrill our souls that we are going now to see and be like our risen Lord? Oh, how that morn without a cloud occupies His heart! He who loved the church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. Is He not waiting for that morning when He shall present it to Himself glorious, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without blemish? Yes, the Holy Ghost says to the waiting man in the glory, and to us waiting here below, “The morning cometh.” May the words of the Lord cheer our hearts until we see His face. “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." (John xiv. 1-3.) Sweet, then, the words of the watchman to us, "The morning cometh." But what says he after this bright and blessed morning ?

"And also the night."

Sad and dark has been the history of this long night of man's rejection of Christ, and the testimony of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven : but what will be that period of darkness when the church shall have been taken at the morning that cometh ? Then cometh also the night. Which of these will be our reader's future—the morning of unclouded joy and everlasting brightness, or the night of darkness, sorrow, and judgment ? What was true of ancient Babylon will then soon be true as to the Babylon of the apostate church. The watchman answered, and said, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen ; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground. O my threshing, and the corn of my floor ; that which I have heard of the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you." (Is. xxi. 9, 10.)

Oh, thou boasting modern Babylon, drunk with the blood of the saints, rejoicing in thy pride,

sitting as a queen. What have we heard of the Lord of hosts concerning this great ripening, rich, apostate Christendom? What has He spoken concerning those who have not received the love of the truth that they might be saved? He hath said, “For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (2 Thess. ii. 10–12.) Yes, the morning cometh, *and also the night*. Has He said what He will do with the false, boasting, but lukewarm Christendom, rich, and increased in goods? Yes, He will utterly throw it off as a testimony. The Lord hath spoken: He saith, “I will spue thee out of my mouth.”

Has God revealed the character of that dark, dark night that is fast approaching, after the bright morn of the church? Yes; peace shall be taken from the earth; they shall kill one another—there shall be famine and pestilence—the sword, hunger, and death—the terrible break-up of all social order, like an earthquake; and men shall flee into dens and caves of the earth. (Rev. vi.)

The most terrible, scorching judgments shall fall upon the circumstances, and then on the persons, of men. (Rev. viii., ix.) God hath revealed these judgments, and they will surely come to pass. “And also the night.” Satan will then lead men in open hostility against God. The terrible Roman empire, in its fearful Satanic, destruc-

tive form, will suddenly re-appear. Men will worship Satan. The malignant passions of devils, and men will be let loose in that terrible night of darkness. (Rev. xiii.) Then shall the great whore of apostate Christendom appear in all her abominations, until the infidel kingdoms rise up and destroy her. (Rev. xvii.) May the children of God hear His words—"Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins." Yes, that night of tribulation cometh, such as never was, and never shall be again—closing in the personal coming of the Lord Jesus to judge the wicked, living nations, and set up His blessed kingdom on earth.

The watchman then bringeth these two things before us: "The morning cometh, and also the night." If we should then close this year on earth, may the watchman's words be our motto—"*The morning cometh.*" May this be the deep, settled hope of our hearts, for "we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is; and every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." As we shall be like Him then, so may we more and more seek to walk as He walked, until we are for ever with and like the Lord. Our Watchman never slumbers—may we also be awake, and hear His words. Surely the Holy Ghost thus speaks to us: "The morning cometh and also the night."

OUR CALLING, AND WALKING WORTHY OF IT.

“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.”
(Eph. iv. 1.)

“OUR calling” is brought before us in the first three chapters of Ephesians, and the “walk” that is worthy of it in the last three. The calling is looked at individually in the first chapter, and collectively in the second. The third chapter is a parenthesis, but specially refers to our calling and blessing collectively. The contemplation of divine grace to us as individuals bows the apostle’s heart in prayer to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we may *know* the hope of our calling, &c., and when dwelling on the mystery of the church in the third chapter, it bows him before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we may *enjoy*, and *experience* the power, by the Spirit, of all these marvellous blessings.

Nothing can be more entirely of grace, or higher in their character, than the blessings into which we are called. Nothing could be worse than the state we were in when the grace of God reached us. Not only were we “by nature children of wrath even as others,” but morally walking according to the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, and “dead in trespasses and sins.” There was no

capability of hearing or responding to God's call: "God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not." We were not merely morally bad, but spiritually dead, without life (save natural existence) before God. In this state, God who is rich in mercy, gave us spiritual life. We read, therefore, that "even when we were dead in sins [He] hath quickened us together with Christ." It is then not by law-keeping, not by ordinances of any kind, not by works, but wholly by the grace of God that we are saved and blessed.

Our calling, or vocation, is into an entirely *new order* of blessing. Christianity is not an improvement of the Jews' religion, or something added to it, but that which is distinctly new; so that the believer is now not in the flesh, not in Adam, not a Jew, but "in Christ." The risen and ascended Christ, a new and living Head, is the One in whom he is. Not only are we called unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, but are even now objects of the Father's love and blessing "in Christ."

Our calling too is into a *new place*, not to the land of promise or Jerusalem on earth, but into "heavenly places." It is quite true that the believer is going to heaven bodily, but it is equally true that as to his new standing he is now "in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

Besides, it is a *new character of blessing*: we

are not like Israel called into earthly greatness and prosperity in a sin-stricken world, but blessed “with all *spiritual* blessings.” The thought of such a high and heavenly calling, so filled the heart of the apostle with praise, that he adoringly exclaimed, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” (Eph. i. 3.)

The *relationship* is also *new*, and of the highest, most endearing, and unchanging kind — “the adoption of children.” Nothing less would suit the heart of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ than having a people on earth in this known relationship, and with Him in glory for ever, and, in love, holy and without blame. He might have called us into a lower order of relationship, but the marvel of the grace of God is that we who were dead in sins should be called into the most endearing relationship of children.

All these ways of grace too, let it be carefully noted, are founded on righteousness and truth in the atoning death of the Son of God. “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace.” (Eph. i. 7.) So that every just demand for our sins has been fully met; and thus all our sins are forgiven on the righteous ground of the all-cleansing virtue of the blood of Christ. And not only so, but “we have redemption,” and that in

two ways. The blood of Christ shed for many for the remission of sins gives us redemption by *price*; and redemption *in* Christ gives us redemption by *power*; thus taking us out of our old place and state as far off and dead in sins, and bringing us into a new place and state as “in heavenly places in Christ”—graced, or accepted in the beloved. We have, therefore, as a present blessing to be known and enjoyed, redemption *in* and *through*—in Christ, and through His blood. Thus, while all our blessings are “by grace,” yet they are all founded in righteousness on the blood of Christ, and all secured to us in Christ, who is in heavenly places.

We have, further, among the wondrous blessednesses of our calling, the gift of the Holy Ghost as the *seal and earnest*. Being washed from our sins in the blood of Jesus, God can now set His seal to the efficacy of that work. We are *sealed* and set apart for God for ever, and have the gift of the Holy Ghost as the *earnest* of our inheritance, until we are all brought home to glory. (Eph. i. 13, 14.)

Lastly, we may notice in this brief glance at the individual character of our calling that a *new order of intelligence* is also given us. “Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself; that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in

one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him." (Eph. i. 9, 10.) The deep things of God are now revealed unto us by His Spirit, so that we have the mind of Christ.

Before we proceed further, Is it not well that we should pause, and ask ourselves how far we have made these precious truths our own? Do we habitually take our stand as in heavenly places in Christ, as being God's children, and having the Holy Ghost in us? Have we so received these wondrous revelations of divine truth into our hearts, as to bow us before God in adoring praise, and earnest prayer?

But our vocation, or calling, is also into *collective* blessing, and this also of a new order and kind. Christ having in his death abolished the law of commandments in ordinances to form in Himself of the twain (believing Jews and Gentiles), "ONE NEW MAN"—Christ the Head in heaven, and we His members on earth. In ascension, Christ was given to be "the Head over all to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all;" and, having received the Holy Ghost, He shed it forth on the day of Pentecost to unite believers on earth to Himself as Head in heaven, and to each other on earth. Thus we are members of Christ, and members one of another. Into this amazing blessing He has called us, and set us by the Holy Ghost; so that every believer in the

earth has now access through Christ *by one Spirit* unto the Father, and all believers on earth are indwelt and taught by *the same Spirit*. And further, God has taken His place on earth *through the Spirit* in that which bears the name of the Lord, as His dwelling place—His temple. Though it has now become a great house, and shelters much which is contrary to His mind, and judgment is soon to begin at the house of God, still the Holy Ghost remains with us; and however much corruption and evil may be associated with the precious name of Christ, it is His mind that the faithful should be “endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

It is then this high and sanctifying character of blessing into which we are called through the exceeding riches of the grace of God. Even now, while on earth, we are spoken of in scripture as “raised up together [believing Jews and Gentiles], and made sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus,” and “members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.” God too revealed as purposing, electing, and working all according to the good pleasure of His will to the praise of the glory of His grace, and also that in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus; so that unto Him may be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages world without end, Amen.

How surpassingly blessed then is our calling! All that is said of us is, that we "were dead in trespasses and sins;" but to God it becomes the occasion for bringing out the wonders of grace which were in His heart, and to bring us up from our worst and lowest estate into the highest blessings, and most endearing relationships. Thus He has brought us into the unchanging relationship of children to Himself, cleansed and unblameable in His sight in Christ and through His precious blood, members of Christ on earth united to Christ the Head in heaven, and our bodies the dwelling place of the Holy Ghost.

What a calling! Could anything possibly exceed it? Is anything lacking? Could our blessings be higher, richer, more enduring, or more secure? Oh for a heart to praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for such abundant grace! Oh to so dwell in it, live on it, till our hearts are so melted, as to be meek, lowly, and always led of the Spirit of God!

The calling must be known before we can walk worthy of it; hence, as we have said, the first three chapters of this epistle unfold the vocation or calling, before we are enjoined to walk worthy of it. The last three chapters give us full directions what the walk suited to this calling in God's account should be. The last verses of the Epistle shew the conflict with wicked spirits in heavenly places which all must have, who seek to stand

there (in heavenly places), where God has called us, and set us, in Christ.

To be brief, there are three lines of conduct the believer is besought to pursue in walking worthy of the vocation wherewith he is called—in relation to the assembly, in private or personal ways, and in family associations. It is not in one or even two of these paths the Lord would have us walk, but in all three. This is the difficulty, even to saints pre-eminent for godliness in some things. But the importance of this threefold path deepens as we ponder it, and seek to walk in it. Suppose, for instance, a child of God is taken up with assembly truth and service, caring it may be for the members of the body of Christ in ministering to their necessities, and yet fails greatly to honour the Lord, in the family at home according to His word, how could such be walking worthy of “our calling”? Again, if you see a child of God watchful, and true as to private life, and manifesting little care about carrying out his place in the body—the assembly—or interest in its concerns, how could he be walking worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called? And, further, if a saint is diligent in his place in the family, orderly, and correct, and yet careless as to private life, neglecting prayer and reading of the word, forgetting the life of faith and dependence on the Holy Ghost, not manifesting interest in the matters of the church of God, and giving little

more testimony for Christ than Gentiles around; how could such be walking worthy of this wondrous calling?

I. *Our walk in relation to the assembly* occupies the first 16 verses of the fourth chapter. And here let us not fail to observe that the moral state needed for walking worthy of our calling is, "with all lowliness and meekness, and long-suffering, forbearing one another in love;" all characteristics of the One who was "meek and lowly in heart," whose love was unchanging, and His forbearing and long-suffering with His own so perfect. Where these things are lacking, it shews our souls are not in communion with the Lord, without whom we can do nothing. It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of our souls being taken up with the Lord Himself, in order to be able to walk worthy of our high and heavenly calling.

With regard to the assembly, the Spirit's unity is to be kept, and kept in the uniting bond of peace. The gifts of Teachers, Evangelists, and Pastors faithfully exercised, and thankfully owned, as from an ascended Christ—the Head, from whom by joints and bands the whole body maketh increase. The Lord is to be known in the midst, and all the gifts of the Spirit honoured. Gifts are for the edification not merely of a particular congregation, but "the body." It is important also to see that the three parts of the Spirit's

unity which we are to use diligence "to keep," are, 1. "One body"—composed of all believers wherever they are. 2. "One Spirit"—dwelling in every child of God on the earth; each having access to the Father we are told by "One Spirit," who dwells also in that which bears Christ's name all over the world. "He that hath an ear" is admonished to "hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." 3. "One hope of our calling"—the hope of our Lord's coming. To be keeping the Spirit's unity therefore we must be practically maintaining the truth of "one body," when every child of God will be an object of our interest, affection, and prayers; we should also be honouring the action of the "One Spirit" everywhere, as well as waiting for God's Son from heaven.

II. *Our private walk* is spoken of, from chapter iv. 17, to chapter v. 21. In it we are admonished not to walk like other Gentiles, not to lie, not to sin, not to give place to the devil, not to steal, not to let corrupt communication proceed out of our mouth, not to grieve the Spirit of God whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption; not to once name the filthy deeds of the flesh, not to jest or talk foolishly, not to be deceived with vain words, not to be drunk with wine wherein is excess, nor have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. We are enjoined to put off the old man with his former corrupt conduct according to the

deceitful lusts, and to put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and holiness of truth. We are to speak every man truth with his neighbour, give to him that needeth, minister grace to our hearers, and be kind and forgiving to one another. We are to be imitators of God as dear children, and followers of Christ, by walking in love as He walked, and be filled with the Spirit; we are to walk as children of light, walk circumspectly, use our opportunities well, be intelligent as to the Lord's mind, going on our way singing and making melody in our heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things unto God and our Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. How could we walk worthy of our calling if these precious fruits were lacking? Oh, for grace to be devoted to our Lord in ways worthy of this high and heavenly calling!

III. *The family circle* is also where we should walk worthy of our calling. A full and clear revelation of the Lord's mind in the varied relationships of the family are given. (Chap. v. vi.) We are to shew piety in private life, and at home, as well as in the assembly. Whether we are wives, husbands, children, parents, servants or slaves, or masters, we are each told how to walk and act according to the Lord's mind. What a dishonour to the Lord when we fail to shew piety at home! May we judge ourselves about these things, and humble ourselves before God, and confess our sins.

to Him who is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. How impossible to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, unless we are consciously standing before God as "in heavenly places in Christ," and know that we are blessed by the Father, and loved by Him, as He loved Jesus. Enjoying "our calling" is certainly the only way to walk worthy of it.



WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT?

If we look at the history of the children of Israel at the close of their journeyings, and ask two questions, what widely differing answers we should get! Suppose we were to ask, first, What hath Israel wrought? We should get the answer in Deuteronomy ix. Yes, at the very moment when God was just about to bring them through the Jordan into the land, they had been a stiff-necked people, and had been rebellious against the Lord. Not only had they made, and worshipped, the molten calf, but, as Moses said to them, "Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you." This, then, is the answer to the question, What had Israel wrought? Is it not evident, if God had dealt with them on the principle of law, according to what they had wrought, that, in righteousness, He could only have cursed them?

Let us now look at the other question—"What hath God wrought?" For an answer to this question we must turn to Numbers xxiii., xxiv. Here, at the close of their journey, we find the power of men and Satan combined to curse them, the very thing they deserved, if dealt with according to their sins. Balaam said, "Balak, the king of Moab, hath brought me saying, Come, curse me Jacob; and come, defy Israel. How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied? For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him. Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." "From the top of the rocks." What a contrast to the plains below! There we learn what Israel had wrought—what they were, and what they had done. Here, on the heights, we get God's thoughts of His people, and what He had done. Balaam saw Him a person on high, whom he could not resist. Israel were a sanctified, or separated, people from the nations. God, who came down to deliver them from Egypt, is the same at the end of the journey. There is no change in God. "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? He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel. . . . God brought them out of Egypt.

. . . According to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought?" What they had wrought was rebelliousness and perverseness. God had redeemed them from Egypt, and at the end of the journey thus completely justified them.

All this is fact ; but how God was righteous in thus passing over their sins, and not imputing them unto them, is not revealed in the Old Testament, and cannot be explained, except by that propitiation by the blood of Jesus which God hath set forth, to explain His righteousness, for the remission of the sins of His people.

We have thus, very briefly, looked at these deeply interesting scriptures. And now, at the close of another year, which may be the close of our journey here below, we would ask the same two questions ; What have we wrought? What hath God wrought?

If we are believers, God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them—then, whatever He hath wrought in us is to His praise. But how much of our past has been like Israel in Deuteronomy ix. ! Surely, if God were to deal with us according to what we have wrought, if He were to enter into judgment with us, could He justify our ways? No more than He could have justified Israel. Let us look up from these plains of Moab—let us look up from what we have

wrought—whilst owning it all before Him; let us remember where God justified, it is then from that time said, “What hath God wrought?” Now, if we look up to those heights above, what do we see? One in His presence, seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high. What hath He wrought? Did He not come down in infinite love? Did He not engage our eternal redemption? Has He not accomplished it? Was He not delivered for our offences? We see Jesus; we see Him; God sees Him. God raised Him from the dead for our justification, our accepted sacrifice, atonement, righteousness, sanctification, redemption. God says, all that believe in Him are justified from all things.

Thus the believer’s justification is entirely on the ground of what God hath wrought. “He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel.” “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” This could not be on the ground of what we have wrought. Hence, whenever we look at ourselves, or what we have done or felt, as a ground of peace with God, we are unhappy and uncertain, filled with doubts and darkness. God, who changeth not, delivered up His well-beloved Son to bear our iniquities, and raised Him up again from the dead, for our justification—therefore He gives us the blessedness of sins forgiven, and sin not imputed. Yea, God, who, if He

judged us, ~~must~~ condemn, is now our Justifier. Oh, wondrous grace reigning through righteousness! God is just; ~~and~~ the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. From this time shall it be said, What hath God wrought? If we thus close our wilderness journey, let us remember God is for us. God is greater than Balak, or Balaam, or Satan the accuser. He is for us at the close as at the beginning. When He has proved us, and shewn us all that is in us, He loves, He justifies ~~unto~~ the end. "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." "Moreover . . . whom he called, ~~them~~ he also justified; and whom he justified, ~~them~~ he also glorified." What hath God wrought?

