

Things New & Old,

A

GOSPEL MAGAZINE,

WITH PAPERS FOR THE FLOCK OF GOD.

"Christ is all."—Col. iii. 11.



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CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
Asa	1
The Harvest of Wheat and Tares	7
Notes for Young Believers on the Epistle to the Romans—No. 16.....	14
The Parables of our Lord—No. 11.....	20
The Cup of God's Wrath	24
Peace in Departing	26
Correspondence	27
Asa—No. 2.....	29
The Harvest of Wheat and Tares—No 2.....	35
Notes for Young Believers on the Epistle to the Romans—No. 17.....	42
The Parables of our Lord—No. 12.....	48
"Surely I Come Quickly"	52
Correspondence	55
Notes for Young Believers on the Epistle to the Romans—No. 18.....	57
My Awakening, my Quickening, my Sealing, and my Deliverance	64
"Nothing but Leaves;" or the Fig-tree Accursed— No. 1.....	78
Notes for Young Believers on the Epistle to the Romans—No. 19.....	85
"Nothing but Leaves," or the Fig-tree Accursed— No. 2.....	92
"If Thou Wilt," and "If Thou Canst"	100
The Parables of our Lord—No. 13.....	105
Important Inquiries—No. 1.....	108
"Whose Son is this Youth?"—No. 1.....	113
Notes for Young Believers on the Epistle to the Romans—No. 20.....	121
Extracts from the East	128
Important Inquiries—No. 2.....	133
Correspondence	137
"Whose Son is this Youth?"—No. 2.....	141
"God so Loved"—No. 1.....	149
Notes for Young Believers on the Epistle to the Romans—No. 21.....	156

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
The Parables of our Lord—No. 14	163
Correspondence	168
“The Revelation of Jesus Christ”—No. 1.....	169
“God so Loved”—No. 2	176
“Are you Saved?”—No. 1.....	184
The Parables of our Lord—No. 15.....	188
Correspondence	194
“The Revelation of Jesus Christ”—No. 2.....	197
The Second Coming of the Lord—No. 1.....	205
Short Papers on the Offerings—No. 1.....	211
“Are you Saved?”—No. 2.....	220
Grace	224
Short Papers on the Offerings—No. 2.....	225
The Second Coming of the Lord—No. 2.....	232
“The Revelation of Jesus Christ”—No. 3.....	240
“Where art Thou?”	247
Deliverance	250
Short Papers on the Offerings—No. 3.....	253
“The Revelation of Jesus Christ”—No. 4.....	260
Zacchæus	268
Faith Healing	275
Correspondence	280
“The Revelation of Jesus Christ”—No. 5.....	281
Short Papers on the Offerings—No. 4.....	288
Mysteries under the Sun	296
Faith Healing—No. 2.....	304
“The Revelation of Jesus Christ”—No. 6.....	309
Short Papers on the Offerings—No. 5.....	317
The end of another Year	324
In Heavenly Love Abiding. (Poetry)	331



Things New and Old.

ASA.

“The Lord is with you, while ye be with him.”

2 CHRONICLES xv. 2.

THE history of Asa, king of Judah, and the Lord's dealings with the remnant who had not revolted from the house of David, is full of instruction for us in these remnant times. There were times when the Lord was with His people most manifestly, and there were times when He was not with that same people. It is so now. Is not the Lord manifestly present to faith in the midst of Christians, when assembled together, gathered to His name, according to His promise, in Matthew xviii. ? And are there not instances when there is no manifestation of His presence with His people, not only where all is mere established form and routine, a man, or men, appointed to everything, and no thought of looking for the guidance of the Holy Ghost, and no thought of the Lord Jesus being present ?

But where there is the profession of being gathered to His name, and the outward form of

owning the presence and guidance of the Lord; where the remnant-separation position is taken, like the separation of Judah from Israel—yes, around the table of the Lord—are there not times and places where there is not the felt, conscious sense of the Lord's presence, either for worship or discipline? Hymn after hymn, scripture after scripture read, and no real divine order, no real manifestation of the Lord *with them*, and consequently, no power for worship, no going out to win souls, and take spoil from Satan. This is not a question of the salvation of the soul. Are there not thousands saved who have never known the reality of the Lord's presence with those truly gathered to His blessed name?

Now, this inquiry is the more important, when we remember the last two conditions of the seven states of Christendom. (Rev. ii., iii.) In Philadelphia we see the state of an assembly truly gathered to Christ, the Holy and the True. He is everything, and everything is approved. In Laodicea Christ is nothing to them, they have everything but Him, and there all is wrong, and all is disapproved. Rich, and increased in goods, but as to Christ, lukewarm indifference. Now, can any one with spiritual discernment question the fact, that there are assemblies sinking into this state? In this sense, then, how solemn the words of Azariah, the son of Oded: "The Lord is with you, while ye be with him."

It is said in chapter xiv., "And Asa did ~~that~~ which was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his GOD." We would not question, for a moment, that, in these days again, the Spirit has raised up those who have sought only to do ~~that~~ which is good and right *in the eyes of the Lord*. Such is the true Philadelphian condition, to have the approval of the Lord. Sadly this is forgotten in the mass of Sardis; but the Spirit of God has led, in these last days, a feeble remnant to desire, above all things, to walk in the sight of the Lord. (Compare Rev. iii. 7-13.)

Verses 4, 5. Strange altars and high places did Asa remove, and built fenced cities in Judah. Strange altars, unscriptural forms of worship, have been removed in our days; and little fenced assemblies have been gathered, holding the blessed security of the Lord's presence for discipline. The land had rest, because the Lord had given them rest.

It has also been wonderful, the deep enjoyment of peace, of rest of soul, after centuries of doubt and perplexity: "Because the Lord ~~had~~ given him rest." Yes, we have had rest, ~~because~~ the Lord has given us perfect peace, rest of soul in His dear presence. Having been justified, we have peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. And not only so, but how calm the peace of the soul, or of the assembly, that rests in the love of God, and the consciousness of the pre-

sence of the Lord—a peace of mind we never knew in the organisations of men.

Asa said, Let us build these cities, &c., “because we have sought the Lord our God, we have sought him, and he hath given us rest on every side. So they built, and prospered.” Surely we may learn here how much holy discipline—yes, walls and towers, gates and bars—have to do with the spiritual prosperity of an assembly of Christians. So they built, and prospered.

The army of Asa bare targets and spears, they bare shields, and drew bows. Thus in active gospel service now, we have found the need of the shield of faith, in going forth to war with the powers of darkness. Great was the host of Zerah, the Ethiopian, the host of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots. And this great host came against Asa. “And Asa cried unto the LORD his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O LORD our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude.” Is not this the true Philadelphian state of soul? A feeble company, having little strength, but gathered to, and trusting in, the name of the Lord. Yes, “Help us, O Lord our God, for we rest in thee.”

Far more in Christendom than the host of Zerah are the determined foes of those who know, and trust in, and rest in the Lord. And

the warfare of the feeble remnant now is not to destroy, but to save. It is not to smite, but to heal. They do seek to gather much spoil, but it is to spoil the cities of Satan of precious souls. And, as Asa brought much spoil to Jerusalem, so would they bring much spoil to the place where the name of the Lord is recorded. Yes, they would bring the spoil of precious souls to the feet of their Lord. Yes, chapter xiv. may be used as very aptly illustrating the work of the Holy Ghost, in separating souls to the Lord, in these last days, as found in the last but one state of Christendom, as prophetically described in the address to Philadelphia.

Have you known this rest of conscience, through the infinite sacrifice of Christ? And have you known this rest of heart, as truly gathered to the Lord? If so, we will now look at the warnings and instructions of chapter xv.

It is the Spirit of God who gives the warning. He came upon the son of Oded: "And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: The Lord is with you, while ye be with him: and if ye seek him, he will be found of you: but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you." We must beware of using these words in reference to the eternal salvation of our souls. In that sense, nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. viii. 30-39.) But,

as to all fruit-bearing, and real testimony for Christ, and consequent reward hereafter, Jesus says: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." To such, how real the privilege! He says to them, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

In Luke xxiv. 35-48, and John xx. 19-23, we have a visible illustration of the Lord in the midst since His resurrection. Yes, Jesus Himself in the midst of them. Do we believe that He is as really present now, though not seen by mortal eyes? Does He open to us the scriptures, by the Holy Ghost sent down to take His place? The question is this—Is it reality, or mere form? In this sense, let us listen to the Spirit speaking to us by the son of Obed. And, to help us in meditating on these solemn warnings and encouragements, let us remember that, though Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea run on to the end, yet Sardis, or Protestantism, came out of Thyatira, or Romanism; and Philadelphia succeeded Sardis. And, in like manner, the awful state of Laodicea follows Philadelphia. And may not this last be the dead and lifeless form of those who have the very truth itself?

If, then, 2 Chronicles xiv. illustrates the gracious work of God the Holy Ghost during the last fifty years, how timely, then, and searching the words of the same Spirit of God by the son of Oded? He thus addressed the remnant of those days. May his words be blest to those who have an ear to hear in these days.

Asa had an ear to hear, "Asa heard these words." We shall see the effect on him, and on the remnant. Surely every verse speaks to us. They were needed then, they are needed now. The works of the beginning of his reign had to be done again. Is it not so with us? Do we not need also to do our first works? What is the true condition of those professedly gathered to Christ? Let us, then, hear the Spirit, in this chapter, speaking to ourselves. Who can doubt the need of this?



THE HARVEST OF WHEAT AND TARES.

THE crops are ripening fast: we may see the colour change. The seed has been sown: all is ready for the closing scene. We go back eighteen centuries. Jesus sat in the little ship, and a great multitude stood on the shore. He spoke many things unto them in *parables*. The time had not yet come to explain these things. The mystery of the church was, as yet, kept a secret. The mystery of the kingdom of heaven, during the absence of the King in heaven, was entirely unknown.

The prophets had not this wondrous interval of time revealed to them distinctly—from the death of Messiah, to His coming again to set up His kingdom on earth. The Spirit had foretold His ministry, His suffering and death, and His kingdom over all the earth.

We desire to call attention to the fact, how exactly this remarkable discourse has been fulfilled. The first parable describes the entire change that took place, from Judaism to Christianity—from reaping to sowing. “A sower went forth to sow.” No longer seeking fruit from barren humanity, but implanting a new life by the preached word. And, to this day, but a part of the seed sown brings forth fruit. Thus the first parable describes exactly what has, and does, take place in a general way. The next three parables describe the outward aspect of the kingdom of heaven during the absence of the King. The last three describe the result of the purpose of God during this remarkable period.

It is, however, to the second parable we desire to call especial attention. “The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field.” The first parable is the introduction of the new principle of sowing seed, or new life, and its results. The remaining six are similitudes. A man sowed good seed in his field. “But while men slept, his enemy came, and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came, and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? From whence, then, hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou, then, that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest, while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn." The word translated, "tare," means, the "darnel," a plant that grows about four feet high, something like rye, but the seed is very injurious. We will keep to the word tare, with this explanation. The multitude could not in the least understand what this parable meant. How could they, since they knew nothing of this long period of time in which it would be fulfilled? It will be quite different in the millennium; as Isaiah had foretold, the wicked will be judged, and die. (Is. lxx. 20.)

We will now hear the Lord's explanation to His disciples. (Ver. 37.) "He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man." There can be no mistake—the sower is Himself. Whatever means He may employ, He is the Sower of the good seed. "THE

FIELD IS THE WORLD." How strange that there should be so common a mistake, as though He had said, "The field is the church." The church is **not** once named in these parables; indeed, it is **not** until we come to chapter xvi. that the church is named, and then as a future thing. "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

No, the field is not the church, but the world; and in this field there are two kinds of seed sown. "The good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked" [one]. Thus the Lord Jesus, looking on to the harvest time, sees only two classes—the children of the kingdom, and the children of the wicked one—the wheat and the tares. This is just what He sees now; two companies, about to be reaped, for the harvest is close at hand. What a sight, to see as He sees!

He (the King) is away in heaven. Two parties compose the kingdom, or, as we say, Christendom. All who are truly born of God, who have passed from death unto life, form one part of the coming harvest; all the unconverted in the kingdom form the other part—the tares. The children of the kingdom—the wheat—are about to be gathered into the garner; the doom of the others we shall find equally certain. Who are they? The children of the wicked one. Who sowed them in Christ's field—the world, that part of the world

that professes His name? "The enemy that sowed them is the devil." These are plain, but awful, words.

This took place whilst men slept. Yes, whilst the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. What is called the history of the church is really the history of this kingdom in mystery. There we may learn the fulfilment of this parable. Who has sown all these hosts of unconverted men in the kingdom during the absence of the King? "The enemy that sowed them is the devil." We must not limit this searching inquiry to the dark ages, when the tares persecuted the wheat to bitter death. What has been the work of the enemy, even during the last three hundred years? Nay, what has been the state of even the most favoured country in this field—England? Almost the whole of the professed ministers of Christ were notoriously unconverted men, and "the enemy that sowed them is the devil." What solemn words! but they are the words of Him who is the truth. And what was the state of those forming the Greek and Roman church? God had His hidden, nearly buried, wheat; and He had His servants proclaiming the gospel, so far as they knew it.

What is the true state of Christendom at this moment? Who are wheat, and who are tares? Who are the children of the kingdom, and who are the children of the wicked one? What?

What say you, reader ; to which class do you belong ? Take the first test. John, writing to the children of God, says, " I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake." (1 John ii. 12.) Have you this mark of the children ? Do you know that your sins are forgiven for Christ's sake ? The children of the kingdom know this. The children of the wicked one never know this—nay, often declare it cannot be known.

To begin with the most boasting in this country—the Church of Rome ; of all the thousands of its priests, how many have the mark of sins forgiven for Christ's sake ? Could you find one in a hundred ? And who sowed all the tares ? " The enemy that sowed them is the devil."

If this be true—and can we deny it?—then what must be the state of the flocks ? We pretend to no infallible knowledge ; the Lord knoweth them that are His. But we have been much—yea, deeply—impressed with the remark of an intelligent christian clergyman of the Protestant Establishment to a friend of ours. After close observation, he had come to the conclusion, that there were great numbers even now of the clergy unconverted. The Lord knows ; but is it possible that He sees thousands of tares—clergymen, professed ministers of Christ, some holding in their head, and some denying, the truths of the Reformation ? And who sowed every one of them,

every unconverted clergyman in England? "The enemy that sowed them is the devil." Think of the spiritual condition of all these parishes. And is Presbyterianism, or any other -ism, any better? Lord, open our eyes, to see as Thou seest.

There are two marks of the wheat—very unmistakable ones. We have seen one: sins forgiven for Christ's sake—not for the sake of anything we have done, but for His sake who died for us, and was raised from the dead for our justification; and the other is—that the wheat is ready to be gathered into the garner; to be taken, at any moment, to the inheritance of the saints in light. Thus they are ready, and wait, "giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," &c. (Col. i. 12.) Yes, they have eternal redemption through the blood of Christ, and are therefore ready, as the children of the kingdom, to be taken to the garner.

We beg of all our readers to apply at least these two tests: Have you the blessed certainty that your sins are forgiven you for Christ's sake? and can you give thanks that you are—yea, that the Father HATH made you—meet for the inheritance of the saints in light? If you cannot answer these two marks in the affirmative, whatever your profession, or position in the kingdom, YOU may be a tare. O God, search us by Thy truth.

We will look, in the next place, at the harvest.

NOTES FOR YOUNG BELIEVERS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

XVI.

CHAPTER IX. It will be noticed, there is now a change in the epistle. The next three chapters form a parenthesis. The righteousness of God has now been fully revealed and explained in His dealings with, and bringing to Himself, both Jew and Gentile. Both alike guilty, and now both alike justified ; so that there is no condemnation, and no separation from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. But if this be so, what becomes of all the special promises to Israel in the prophets ? This is the subject taken up in these three chapters.

Had the apostle, who had so clearly brought out this truth of no difference *now* in God's dealings with both, ceased to love the nation of Israel ? Nay, his love for them was so intense, that, like Moses of old, he had, as it were, been beside himself. He says, "I have great heaviness, and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." In some cases, that intense love carried him beyond the guidance of the Holy Ghost. (Acts xx. 22 ; xxi. 4, &c.) No doubt the Lord bore with His devoted servant, and overruled all for good—ours at least—though Paul suffered imprisonment and

death. How much this must have added to his grief of heart—to be hated and persecuted in every city by those he so deeply loved. How like his Lord, whom he so devotedly served.

Verse 4. He owns their full national privileges. “Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.”

What privileges! The adopted nation, with whom God had dwelt in the tabernacle. These privileges were never given to any other nation. The eternal God had become incarnate, taking flesh from that nation. All this is fully allowed. He who is over all, God blessed for ever, as to the flesh, the body, He was born of Mary, of the seed royal of that nation.

But now another principle is brought out. God had, unquestionably, made a difference, even in the seed of Abraham. The seed of Abraham were not all the elect, adopted children of promise. “But in Isaac shall thy seed be called.” “The children of the promise are counted for the seed.” A multitude sprang from Abraham; but Ishmael was rejected, and in Isaac alone was the chosen seed.

There was the same purpose of God in the election of Jacob. It was said unto Sarah, “The

elder shall serve the younger." It was also written, though many hundreds of years after, by Malachi, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." This matter of the free, sovereign favour of God is of great moment for Paul's explanation; and no one who believed the scriptures could doubt it, in the cases referred to above; and God had said to Moses: "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." Surely, then, God had a sovereign right to shew mercy to the Gentiles, the very thing that so offended the Jews. It is remarkable how all that say they are Jews now, or take Jewish ground, always dispute the sovereign grace of God.

Many learned men deny divine sovereignty, but God is wiser than men. We must not forget that man is proved by the cross to be at enmity with God. He has no desire, naturally, toward God.

Verse 16. "So, then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." This is very humbling, but surely true.

Verse 17. Pharaoh is given as a sample of the wickedness of man, and God's just judgment upon him. How long God bore with his daring infidelity and rebellion, until, in the just government of God, he was given up, hardened, to his own destruction. Let every rebel against God beware, lest Pharaoh's doom be his own. Pha-

raoh was a blasphemer. He 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.) Let the scoffer of this day beware, lest his heart be hardened against the Lord, to his eternal destruction. "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will, he hardeneth." Men may say, If that is the case, "why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?" Did not Pharaoh resist God? Have not you resisted and refused God? "Who art thou that repliest against God?" Has the mere creature, the thing formed, a right to ask, "Why hast thou made me thus?" Nay, has God formed me thus? Far from it. Is He the Author of all man's rebellion and sin? Mark, it is not a statement, but a question—"Hath not the potter power over the clay?" &c. Is not God Sovereign? It does not say He has made some unto dishonour. His wrath against all ungodliness is made known, but how long has He first endured, with much long-suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction? Did not Pharaoh fit himself to destruction? So of every sinner.

It is, however, most blessedly true, that He afore prepares the vessels of mercy unto glory. As to that, it is all sovereign favour: according to the riches of His glory. "And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared

unto glory." Man fits himself unto destruction, as the Jews were doing. God fits the vessels of mercy to glory.

Verse 24. "Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles," quoting Hosea in proof of this: "I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved," &c. Thus does he prove, from their own prophet, that mercy should be shewn to the Gentiles.

Then he quotes from Isaiah, and shews that it is only a remnant of Israel that shall be saved. Yea, "Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha." Surely their rejection of Jesus, whom God had made both Lord and Christ, proved their guilt could not be greater. But human perversity did go even beyond this. They had **KILLED** the Just and Holy One of God, and even then clung to the law for righteousness.

Verse 30. "What shall we say, then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness." The Jews sought righteousness by keeping the law, but never reached it. Is it not so to this day? All who take Jewish ground, and seek to be righteous by keeping law—no matter what law—they never

reach it. They never can be sure they are sufficiently righteous for God to justify them, thus they never attain to peace with God. The more religion an unconverted man has, the more difficult for the gospel to reach him. And why did they not attain to righteousness or justification? "Wherefore? BECAUSE they sought it not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law: for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone."

And how did the Gentiles arrive at righteousness, and peace with God? They heard the glad tidings of mercy to them, through the Redeemer's blood; they believed God; they were justified; they had, believing God, peace with God. Is it not even so now? The gospel is heard by a person brought up under law, hoping, some day, to keep it so as to be righteous, and then hopes, in another world, after the judgment-day, to have eternal life, and peace with God. Often filled with gloomy doubts—even forebodings of eternal wrath—he tries human expedients—a priesthood, to whom he unburdens, if sincere, the darkness of his soul, the weight of his sins, and the dread of the future. Does he attain to a righteousness that fits him for the presence of God? Never. Will any other religious expedient give this blessed peace with God? Not one.

How different, when a poor, guilty, ignorant, heavy-laden sinner hears the gospel, and believes it, like the Gentiles of old! They had not the

law, and did not seek righteousness by its works. They heard the sweet story of the love of God to sinners such as they. They heard how God had pitied them—yea, had given His beloved Son to die for them; that He had died, the Just for the unjust; that God had raised Him from the dead. They heard the glad tidings of forgiveness of sins through Him; they heard, they believed, they were justified from all things, they had peace with God.

Dear reader, have you so heard, so believed? Are you thus justified? If so, have you not peace with God? But our next chapter will bring all this out more fully.



THE PARABLES OF OUR LORD.

THE UNJUST STEWARD.

LUKE XVI. 1-13.

“There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore. And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of

light. And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

Of all the parables, this has generally been looked upon as the most difficult of interpretation, because of the apparent praise of that which is dishonest; but we hope a careful consideration of its detail will tend in a great measure to remove the difficulty, and help us to arrive at what is intended to be taught by the same.

It should first be noticed that it is not our Lord who commended the unjust steward (the very reverse is pressed in the application of the parable), but it is 'the lord' of the parable—the "certain rich man." He thought the steward had acted 'wisely' or 'prudently,' seeking to make friends of others when being turned out of his lord's service: indeed, it was, what appears to be the teaching of the parable—sacrificing present for future advantage. In this sense "the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light."

Our Lord adds His own interpretation, or perhaps we should say 'application:' "Make to

yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." Here another difficulty presents itself, as to who are the 'they' here spoken of. But it is judged to be customary for the evangelist Luke to word sentences in this way, when the sense is made passive or impersonal ;* thus here it would read that 'ye may be received,' and the sense would be, 'Make to yourselves friends *by* the mammon of unrighteousness [worldly possessions], that ye may be received hereafter into everlasting habitations ;' similar to the words, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven ;" "He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord," &c.

Then follows the assertion that the faithful and the unjust in little things will be so also in greater things. And then, "If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" That is, who would trust a professed Christian with any spiritual mission that had not been faithful and just in worldly matters? Thus a bishop "must have a good report of them which are without." (1 Tim. iii. 7.)

Again, "And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you

* See Luke vi. 38, 'shall men give,' in the sense of 'it shall be given;' verse 44, 'men do not gather,' for 'are not gathered.' Chapter xii. 20, 'thy soul shall be required,' literally 'they shall require thy soul;' and chapter xiv. 35, 'men cast it out' for 'it is cast out.'

that which is your own." As Christians we are supposed not to have earthly possessions (still keeping up the character of "stewards"), so the goods are here called 'another man's'; and if we are not faithful in these temporal things, how can we expect the blessings of heavenly things which really belong to us?

The parable is summed up by shewing the impossibility of serving God and mammon. We are to serve God, and in serving Him we are to be strictly faithful in dealing with that which belongs to others; and also to use what we have, not to seek present ease or advantage in this world, but to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt.

It will be seen then that this parable has not a gospel character, but it was addressed to the disciples, and is rather a call to faithfulness and devotedness in the Christian—in imitation indeed of that One who 'emptied himself,' and who became poor that we might through His poverty become rich. As we sow so shall we reap (see 2 Cor. ix. 6), and it may be that some of us have not that measure of heavenly blessing that we should have were we better stewards in earthly matters: we have not that which is 'our own,' because we have not been using the things entrusted to our charge as stewards, as God would have us. May the Lord make us more faithful, spending and being spent for Him.

THE CUP OF GOD'S WRATH.

A YOUNG christian friend of the writer, who was an earnest evangelist, was in the country preaching concerning the solemn events which are at hand, namely, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His people, when the dead in Christ shall first arise, and then we (believers) which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1 Cor. xv. 51-58 ; 1 Thess. iv. 13-18 ; John xiv. 1-3), and go with Him into the Father's house, so that we shall be ever with the Lord ; after which God will pour out the cup of His wrath upon the ungodly. Immediately he had spoken the above words, there came out of an adjacent public-house a man with a glass of beer in his hand, and who called out, "I am going to drink the cup of God's wrath." God's judgment was swift and sure, for directly he had uttered the words he fell dead at the feet of the speaker, ushered into the presence of that God whom he had mocked.

Truly, my dear reader, you will admit that this was very solemn teaching for those around. It plainly shews that God is not to be mocked ; remember that all men are responsible to God. Nothing can take away man's responsibility. Have you thought upon the subject, and that all must give an account of the deeds done in the

body, whether good or bad? If a believer, you will have to be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ (in your glorified body), so that your own works—your service—may be tested (2 Cor. v. 10; 1 Cor. iii. 12–15), whether they are gold, silver, precious stones, or wood, hay, and stubble, for the fire must try every man's work.

The believer cannot be judged, for God's word is so emphatic on that point. "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, . . . shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life." But if you die unconverted in your sins, you have wilfully refused the Object of God's love, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself a ransom for all; and what is your doom? Hear what God says: And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead (now raised up), small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. . . . And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire (Rev. xx. 11–15), prepared, not for you, but for the devil and his angels. (Matt. xxv. 41.)

Now will you, with that awful future before you, refuse God's offer of salvation? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Take God at His word, do not delay, do it now, for "Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation."

And you, dear fellow believer, my brother in Christ, are you working out your salvation with fear and trembling? are you walking worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called? are your loins girded and lamps burning—waiting and watching for the Lord Jesus, who says, "Behold I come quickly?" (Rev. xxii. 7, 12, 20.) May our response be, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Amen.

J. B.



PEACE IN DEPARTING.

It is related of Martha Hooton, who departed 1847, aged 94 years:—She had long rested in the record of God in Christ for eternal life. A minister visited her a little before her departure, and asked "if she felt her responsibility before God?" She replied she had not for a long time! "Indeed," says he, "why, have you not broken the commandments of God?" Oh, yes, many a time; but the Lord Jesus became responsible, He took them and bore them away on the cross, and I have had nothing to do with them for a long time now. Thus she fell asleep, triumphing in the finished work of Christ. He is our rock—resting in Him.

CORRESPONDENCE.

1. "E. G. C.," Rotherham. We are not told that the Lord Jesus ascended in His body to heaven, until after He had been seen of His disciples forty days. (Acts i. 3, 9-11.)

It was rather the intense love of His heart to His disciples that hastened Mary away, to tell them the wondrous news. Touch me not—do not linger—away, and tell them—so to speak—of this new relationship. "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father," &c. There is nothing, however, to disprove that He did not then present Himself to the Father, and so speak peace to the disciples direct from the throne of God. But the same love that hastened Mary with the news of His resurrection, and their new position, also lingered to convince Thomas of the truth of His true resurrection: thus, He then said, Reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side. The love of Christ makes both requests quite clear. Oh, what joy it was to Him to take us into everlasting relationship with Himself!

2. "J. H.," Lugar. The house, in 1 Timothy iii. 15, is the same as the house in 2 Timothy ii. 20; but, as to its condition, how greatly changed in so short a time! In the first epistle it is viewed as the dwelling-place of God—"The assembly of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." This is what God views it to be, and what it should be. It was the assembly in order, with instructions as to its elders and deacons. But, in the Second, it is the house, all that professes the name of Christ, but in sad disorder. It would seem, the church's failure dates specially from that year when the beloved Paul was

let out of prison, and rejected by all Asia. (2 Tim. i. 13, 18.) There is no other pillar and ground of the truth but the assembly, however feebly expressed. But in this second epistle it is no longer a question of bishops and deacons, but of individual faithfulness to the truth: Timothy must hold it fast.

Now, from that day the great house, that is Christendom, has vessels to dishonour, and to such an extent, that we may not know who are the Lord's. This does not shake the foundation—"The Lord knoweth them that are his." What is, then, to be the path of the Christian who is led by the Spirit and word of God? Clearly to depart from iniquity. He is to purge himself from these. It is not that he is to excommunicate others; for the corruption is so general, as described in chapter iii., that the mass of the great house is going on with evil. He must, then, purge himself—he must separate from evil. This is the great principle provided for the faithful Christian, and, however great the evil and confusion, there will be those he may find, if he looks to the Lord, "that call on the Lord out of a pure heart," and with them he is to follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace. He is to continue in the things which he has learned.

The Epistle to Titus seems to have been written at the same time as 1 Timothy, and there it is, "Set in order the things," &c., bishops and deacons. How different the solemn charge to Timothy! Read carefully chapter iv. The most solemn charge to preach the word, individual responsibility to hold fast the word. And this was the last thing that Paul himself, after his rejection, was enabled of the Lord to do.

A S A.

II.

2 CHRONICLES xv.

“HEAR ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: The Lord is with you, while ye be with him: and if ye seek him, he will be found of you: but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.” Whilst, as we have seen, this cannot now be said to the individual believer; as to the eternal salvation of his soul, or the love of God to him in Christ; yet cannot these words be true of an assembly now? Or does an assembly once gathered to Christ always remain so? It is clear if they are gathered to Christ, He is in their midst. He says so. And in the beginning this was so. It was the very constitution of the church of God. But did it continue to be so? We read in our chapter, verse 3, “Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law. And in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries. And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city,” &c. Israel had the true God, teaching priest, and laws, but they did not own them; and we see the result.

Has it not been the same with the church?

Yes, for a long season what an utter departure from owning the Lord in the midst of the assembly! He is ever the same, and the Holy Ghost is ever here; but for a long season where should we find the assembly gathered unto the precious name of the Lord Jesus Christ, so that He was manifestly in the midst of them? And in those days there was no peace to him that went out, or came in. What vexations and persecutions! What hatred of sect against sect, or so called church against church! And further we see unquestionably that after the blessed reviving in Philadelphia, there will come a state of things when Christ is not in the midst, but outside knocking, "The Lord is with you, while ye be with him."

These warnings are not given to depress, or discourage, far from it. No, "Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded." Can anything in these last days be so strengthening and encouraging as this, "The Lord is with you"? The question then is this, How is His presence to be realised and enjoyed? "And when Asa heard these words . . . he took courage, and put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah . . . and renewed the altar of the Lord," &c (Ver. 8.) This must be done if we would enjoy the manifest presence of the Lord in our midst. As the Spirit says, "Little children, keep your

selves from idols." Whatever we trust in, or rest in apart from Christ, is an abominable idol. And if, like Asa, we hear these words, every idol must be put away, and the altar be renewed, the Person and the work of the Lord Jesus must have the alone supreme place before our souls. This is the secret of souls being truly gathered to Him. "And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, WHEN THEY SAW THAT THE LORD HIS GOD WAS WITH HIM." What is there to attract souls now if Christ is not manifestly in the midst? We could not desire to see them gathered to a Laodicean assembly. How solemn then these words of Oded! "The Lord is with you, while ye be with him."

"So they gathered themselves together at Jerusalem in the third month," &c. Oh to be gathered now in the power of resurrection, and so gathered, putting away all idols, and renewing the true table of the Lord! This would lead to large-heartedness. "And they offered to the Lord the same time of the spoil." Oh how much is spent on self; in dress, in amusements, in superfluities, that might be offered to the Lord! Souls are starving, and thousands perishing around, and a cry for the gospel in the dark towns, and villages, even of England. Oh, if those pro-

fessedly gathered to Him would but offer unto the Lord the spoil. And what purpose and diligence is expected of us! if they were bid "to seek the LORD GOD of their fathers with all their heart, and with all their soul." Fellow believers, is it so with us? What is our profession worth if it is not? The Lord stir up all hearts.

If we are in His presence, there must, and will be holy discipline. "That whosoever would not seek the Lord God of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman." There must be no toleration of the flesh: "Baptised into his death." "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him." The old man must be treated as dead. How little we have learnt this lesson! But if the Lord is with us, there must not be room for a bit of self. Yes, there was purpose of heart, no lukewarmness: "They sware unto the Lord with a loud voice, and with shouting." "And all Judah rejoiced at the oath: for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire; and he was found of them: and the Lord gave them rest round about." (Vers. 14, 15.)

We know it is not for us now to make covenants, or to swear oaths. But should there be less earnestness or purpose of heart in lowly dependence on the Spirit of God? May the Lord arouse us every one to seek the Lord in the

midst of His saints truly gathered to His name, with all our hearts, with our whole desire. Is the Holy and the True our whole desire? He who loved us, and gave Himself for us; He who loves us to the end; He whom we shall so soon see! Is He our whole desire? They "sought him with their whole desire." If this is not the case, that which merely professes to be gathered to Him would soon become Laodicea, and He outside. And what was the result when they sought Him with their whole desire? "He was found of them." Precious words of encouragement to them, and to us. Yes, to the end it will be so. If but two or three seek Him with their whole desire, He will be found of them. Shall we doubt this? It was to Jerusalem they were gathered together, for there He had recorded His name. But long before this He had said, "In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." (Ex. xx. 24.) And long after this, He said to us, concerning His assembly, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Yes, His presence is our Jerusalem. There He is found of us, if we seek Him with our whole desire.

"And the Lord gave them rest round about." When he had finished redemption, and risen from the dead, did He not stand in the midst and say, "Peace to you," perfect peace, perfect

rest? There is not only peace of conscience, but peace, rest of heart, found in His blest presence that can be found nowhere else. But let us beware of the cold-hearted indifference of Laodicea. There is not one thing the Lord can approve in that condition of soul. (Rev. iii. 15-18.)

Many Christians have great difficulty in giving up their favourite idol, the principle of what is called the mother-church, and gathering simply to Christ as at the beginning. It was really beautiful in Asa: "Concerning Maacha the mother of Asa, the king, he removed her from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove: and Asa cut down her idol, and stamped it, and burnt it at the brook Kidron." Yes, if we would enjoy the peaceful rest of His presence, all, and every idol must be given up. Surely there ought not to be a moment's hesitation betwixt Christ and the idolatry of even mother-church, since she and her end is so fully described in Revelation xvii.

We would again repeat the caution, let not the reader apply these warnings and encouragements to the question of his soul's eternal salvation. That is wholly the work of Christ, and it is finished. But as it regards the condition of all assemblies, it would be impossible to overrate the importance of these words of Oded. May the Lord use them to stir up our hearts to seek

the Lord in the midst of His saints with all our heart, and all our desire.

The failure of Asa after all this reviving is also full of solemn warning : but for the present we close. C. S.



THE HARVEST OF WHEAT AND TARES.

II.

MATTHEW XIII.

“THE harvest is the end of the age.” This is not the word which means “world.” It is the end of the period of the kingdom in mystery whilst the king is in heaven. It is the judgment of the quick, or living. Not at all like the judgment of the dead as described in Revelation xx. The devil is not to sow his tares for ever. The harvest is the end of summer, it is not however the last day in the year. The fast approaching harvest is the end of this summer of grace. The end of the present sowing of the Son of man, and the sowing of the devil ; the end of the present mixed state of wheat and tares in the kingdom. It is the separating time—many things connected with this harvest are not explained here, but in the epistles, and by the Holy Ghost.

We will look, however, at the measure of explanation the Lord gives us. “He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good

seed is the Son of man." Yes, whatever means are used, whether the pen of the writer, or the lips of the speaker, it is the Son of man, using a man, or what He will, by the Holy Ghost. And mark, the field is not the church, but "the field is the world." The sowing would not be limited to Israel, but the whole world. This whole world belongs to the Son of man in heaven : and before He left, He commissioned His servants to sow the seed in the whole world, to every nation.

He further explains that there are two parties in the world ; He says, " The good seed are the children of the kingdom ; but the tares are the children of the wicked one." This evidently refers to that part of the world where this mixed state exists ; what we call Christendom, Christ's kingdom, now He is in heaven. Now this is a very serious matter. All professors who are not " born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God," are the children of the wicked one. And still equally solemn is the fact explained by the Lord, " The enemy that sowed them is the devil." Ah, we little think what power Satan is permitted to exercise in Christendom, while men sleep. In the very beginning of the sowing time, the apostle, speaking of the children of the wicked one, says, " For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of

Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." (2 Cor. xi. 13-15.)

If such was the case in the beginning, what is it now, so near the end, for the harvest will come? "The harvest is the end of the age." And mark, the harvest at the end of this period of sowing, is not the conversion of the world, or the tares in the kingdom. The reaping time must come, "and the reapers are the angels," but it is for judgment, not for conversion. "As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this age. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." We must not press a parable beyond that which is the truth intended, and this is truly most solemn. The certain doom of mere professors: the revelation that, whatever their ecclesiastical dignities, they are the children of the wicked one, sown by the devil, and about to be judged, not converted: this is most clearly foreshadowed in this parable.

There is no instruction as yet, either as to the church the body of Christ, or of its being taken up to meet the Lord. But a state of things requiring a period of time totally distinct, both from the dispensation of law then about to pass away, and also from that glorious time of the reign of Messiah foretold in all the prophets. A period of mystery when the king should be in heaven, or away. And during that time the enemy does his utmost, and his worst, in the world which belongs to the absent King. In the future kingdom all shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest. All nations shall come up to worship at Jerusalem. But during the days of this parable, the mystery of the kingdom, all is in direct contrast with the coming dispensation as foretold in scripture. And from this chapter where the Lord first made known this present interval, in which we live, we have abundant confirmation of what is here described. The history of eighteen, nearly nineteen, centuries of Christendom, also, agrees perfectly with this prophetic parable. It is therefore absolutely certain that the harvest will be as here described. Yea, is it not God who thus speaks to us?

Let us very briefly notice a few scriptures in confirmation, or explanation, of this parable; such as the great prophetic discourse of the Lord Jesus in Matthew xxiv., xxv. three days before His death. Jerusalem had rejected Him, and

only awaited an opportunity to kill Him. Their house was left desolate. We may notice the three divisions of this great discourse. 1st. To the Jews up to verse 31. Then to us, or Christendom, up to verse 30, chapter xxv. Then to, or concerning the nations, to the end.

What would characterise the state of the Jews during this whole period, from that time when Jesus foretold the destruction of their temple, to the time of their great tribulation, is described—a time of continued calamities, and evil, with abounding iniquity. At last the abomination of desolation is set up, as foretold by Daniel the prophet. Then the time of their great tribulation, and then immediately the appearing of the sign of the Son of man; and He is seen coming in the clouds of heaven. Mark, this period in their history was unknown to the prophets.

And now, what characterises this period as to Christendom? and especially its end? Read verses 22 to 30 of chapter xxv. Does not all this perfectly agree with the parable under consideration? It is as the days of Noah, and the evil in it; the evil servant about to be judged. Half the virgins have no oil—have not the Spirit of God, and are shut out. And then as to the nations, the same distinction, judgment and blessing at the end. Again we have nothing as yet of the rapture of the church. Just as the tares were cast into a furnace of fire, where there is ~~wailing~~

and gnashing of teeth, so those who stand on the left shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. We learn however, that this judgment of the living nations is at the coming of Christ. It is "when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, THEN shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another," &c. Clearly then all nations are not converted, either during, or at the end of this period, foretold in this parable of the wheat and the tares. In the epistles also the same truth is constantly taught. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." (2 Thess. i. 7-9.) Yes, this is the certain harvest of Christendom. The tares may deny it. But everlasting punishment is the doom of the despisers of the present grace of God. Oh, ye mere empty professors—poor deceived children of the wicked one, hearken: "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 [judged] who believed not

the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess. ii. 10-12.) Do not forget this is the sure word of God. Judgment, everlasting in its punishment, is the end, the harvest of this wondrous period in which we live.

Is Satan to spoil the field of Christ for ever? Is he to fill that field with tares, and is there to be no end of his work? The kingdom of God shall be set up on earth, but where will the tares of this age be then? Where will the reader be, when the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father? Have you received the word in a heart prepared? Have you been born of the incorruptible word of God which liveth and abideth for ever? Have you the certainty that when the wheat is gathered into the garner you will be there? May God awaken you by this short paper to flee from the wrath to come: to escape from the many snares of the enemy in which he holds and deceives his children! Still the voice of mercy sounds. It is still the day of grace, and salvation. How long this may be so, no one can tell. The harvest ripens fast. Men are being bundled into human confederacies; but if not in Christ, it is only ready for the burning. Such is the end of all that is false, in the close of this age. It is evident there must be a dispensation of the millennial kingdom totally distinct from the period in which we live.

C. S.

NOTES FOR YOUNG BELIEVERS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

No. XVII.

CHAPTER x. 1. The apostle here pauses a little. It is the pressure of his heart's love. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." They had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. He was greatly distressed at the troublers, who sought to pervert the Galatians; yea, even longed that they would cut themselves off. But how he grieved over the mass of deceived Jews. Are we so grieved for the mass around us? Can we say our heart's desire and prayer to God for them, is, that they might be saved?

Verse 3. "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." You will remember the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel. (See chap. i. 17; iii. 21-25.) Thus the Jews who rejected the gospel, of necessity remained in ignorance of that righteousness. And thus it is at this day, all who refuse the revelation, that God is just and yet the Justifier of the ungodly, must, if at all anxious to be saved, seek to establish their own righteousness; and thus refuse to submit to the fact that God is righteous

in justifying freely, through the redemption there is in Christ Jesus.

The Father's meeting of the prodigal in Luke xv., will illustrate this subject. The prodigal, like the poor Gentile, had come to himself. The whole parable is most striking: the shepherd had come to seek the lost sheep, yes, He has, as we know, died for it. The Holy Ghost has been sent down from heaven and seeks the lost. And now the father has his full joy in receiving the lost son; he, the father, came to meet him. Deep exercise of conscience had taken place in the prodigal. A sense that there was plenty in the father's house: and a readiness to confess his sin, this always marks the Spirit's work. But as yet he was ignorant of the best robe. He hoped to be a servant, like every human heart, but totally ignorant of all that was in store. He had his rags, his guilt, his shame. He owned all this to his father. Had he a robe for the father? He had nothing but rags. Did the father tell him he must make a robe, a garment to fit him for his house? No. The father had a robe for him. Oh, look at the father, "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him." This is how God meets the repentant sinner in his rags without a robe. The father said: "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his

feet." Thus joy fills the heart of God to receive the lost sinner. Not so the elder brother, he prefers to work out a righteousness of his own. What a contrast! Sad and fatal mistake! The prodigal had no robe for the father. He had nothing but rags and sin. The Father had the best robe, the righteousness of God for the prodigal. Yes, and the ring for his hand, everlasting love: and the walk provided for, shoes for his feet. All things new and all of God.

Now Israel, like the elder brother, would not have this compassion, and righteousness of God. Indeed they were ignorant of it. "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." They had followed after the law of righteousness; they had tried to keep the law so as to be righteous. They had tried to make a robe to bring to God; but were ignorant of the best robe that God had to give to them. Is this your case, reader? are you trying to make out, to work out a righteousness, to bring to God? Do you say, Must I not try to keep the law so as to be good, and fit for the presence of God? Do you not see your mistake? are you not trying to bring the robe to God? What then is the best robe?

Verse 4. "For Christ is the end of the law, for righteousness to every one that believeth." Yes, Christ is the best robe—the end of all the re-

quirements, and all the sacrificial types of the law. God hath made him to be unto us righteousness. We need no other, to go into the presence of God our Father. Practical righteousness before men is another question, but not the subject here.

“Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth these things shall live by them.” But the prodigal had not done these things. And we have not done these things: we are guilty and have no righteousness to bring to God. But believing God, He can, and does reckon us righteous; and that by a work DONE, not something which has to be done. Christ has not to come down from heaven to die on the cross. He has once been down here and died for our sins. He has not to be raised from the dead, all is done, it is finished. Just as the father met the prodigal, the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” This was just what Israel would not do. They would not confess that God had made that same Jesus, whom they had rejected and crucified, both Lord and Christ. They would cling to the law for righteousness, and they would not in their hearts believe on Christ as their righteousness before God. How many are doing the same to this day! They will seek to be righteous, but never attain to it. They never know

the righteousness of God in justifying them the moment they believe.

Verse 11. Now the apostle quotes their own scripture in proof. "For the scripture saith, WHOSOEVER believeth on him shall not be ashamed." This proves there must be a time when the no difference doctrine should be in force. "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek (or Gentile): for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For WHO-SOEVER shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Joel ii. 32.) What a blessed fact is this: all, whether Jew or Gentile, that really come to the Lord, calling on Him, are as sure of a welcome, as was the prodigal. Which of these do you prefer, reader? If even it were possible, would you prefer that you had never sinned, and that you had wrought out a righteousness fit to bring to God, thus bringing a robe to God; or, owning all that you are, and all you have done, and now as a hell-deserving sinner, confessing with your mouth, and believing with your heart the Lord Jesus, your ever subsisting righteousness before God? We cannot abhor ourselves too much; but oh, that deep compassion to meet us just as we are, and clothe us with the best robe, the ring, and shoes. And how is this righteousness of God made known? Read verses 14-15 for the answer. By hearing the word, the sent gospel of peace. What glad tidings! Those who sought righteous-

ness by law hated those good tidings and the preachers of the gospel. It is exactly so to this day, by all who say they are Jews and are not. Is it not a most astounding fact that man should hate and reject his greatest good, the gospel of peace? He will try or hope to try some day to make his own peace with God. But he will not have the peace made by the blood of Jesus; the peace preached to them that are afar off, and them that are nigh. Yes, peace proclaimed to all. "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah saith, "Lord who hath believed our report." The word of the gospel was preached to all Israel: but they would not believe it. It is preached now, perhaps as it never was before, to all Christendom; but they will not believe it. We shall see the final result of all this in the next chapter.

God has His own, in spite of all man's perverseness, whether Jews or Gentiles, as Isaiah boldly said, "I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me." Thus has the apostle proved the two things from their own Old Testament scriptures; no difference, and the sovereignty of God. Whosoever, Jew, or Greek, shall call upon the Lord shall be saved—and oh, blessed soul-sustaining truth, He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy. Was Israel then lost because God was not willing to save them? "But to Israel, he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my

hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.” They would not come unto Him : they refused the best robe, the ring, the shoes. May this not be the case with the readers of these lines. He that cometh unto Him shall in no wise be cast out.



THE PARABLES OF OUR LORD.

THE POUNDS.

“ A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant : because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin : for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man : thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow : wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury ? And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given ; and from

him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me."—LUKE XIX. 12-27.

THE context of this parable tells us why our Lord spoke this parable. It was "*because* he was nigh to Jerusalem, and *because* they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear." Christ is the nobleman, and He is still away, waiting till the time arrives to receive His kingdom in its manifestation.

This must not be confounded with the hope of the coming of our Lord. The parable refers to Christ receiving the kingdom, and is spoken of in connection with Jerusalem, which is subsequent to the saints being caught up to meet the Lord in the air. It is, however, worthy of note, that the parable represents the *same* persons who receive the pounds when our Lord went away, as being alive when He returns and calls those servants to give an account of their stewardship, though ages may, indeed, roll on between His going away and His return. All were to be faithful while they await His return.

No doubt, every one has been struck with the similarity between this parable and that of the talents, in Matthew xxiv. The chief difference, is, that there each received a different sum—one, ten; one, five; and one, one; whereas here, all receive the same amount—one pound. May not

its application to us be, not so much to specific gifts, as to what simply attaches to a profession of Christianity. Not natural gifts, but gifts connected with our profession. Here the persons are described as servants, and, as in many other places, those who profess to be servants are accounted as such, and made responsible accordingly.

There is another class spoken of — citizens. These sent a message after Him, saying, “We will not have this man to reign over us.” And of these we read: “Those, mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.” These are, doubtless, primarily the Jews: they are *His* citizens, though the language of defiance is the language of man universally.

But the others are servants, and two of them made a good use of their pound, and received a “Well done,” and a reward, according to the increase gained. But the other returned his pound, and insolently charged evil on his master. He had laid up the pound “in a napkin,” instead of trading with it. He, however, owns his master as “lord,” and was surely bound to do his best for his master; and even if he had thought him an austere man, he was none the less responsible to do *his* duty; for the other was his master.

The rewards—ruling over cities—point out its more immediate connection with Israel by-and-by;

nevertheless, it strikingly illustrates our duty as servants of Christ. We call Him Lord and Master; and so He is; and we, as His servants, are bound to serve and obey Him. A mighty privilege indeed it should be counted by us to do anything for such a Lord, to whom we owe all we are, and all we have. But here it is our responsibility. A pound is given to each of us, with the injunction, "Occupy* till I come." Use what gifts you have, not for yourself, but for your Master; your reward will be by-and-by.

The pound which the unfaithful servant had is given to him who had gained ten pounds, which brings out the important principle, that he who uses his gifts, has more given to him; while he who does not, loses even that which he had. How similar this is to that solemn word: "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" May we all be found faithfully using the gifts God has given us. It will surely be for our good; for if we take His yoke upon us, we shall find rest to our souls, and it will be for His glory. How good it would be for some to be using the gifts they have, rather than to be lamenting over the want of gift, remembering the word that "he that watereth, shall be watered also himself."

* Or, "Trade ye till I come." The word does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament.



“SURELY I COME QUICKLY.”

DEAR christian reader, how it cheers our pilgrim hearts, when we remember the last words of the Lord Jesus, “Surely I come quickly.” (Rev. xxii. 20.) That One “whom, not having seen, ye love” (1 Pet. i. 8); He who so loved us as to leave all the glory which He had with the Father from all eternity, and came into this scene, and was here, “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” (Is. liii. 3.) For us! oh, what wondrous and unbounded love! we must exclaim. “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb, without blemish, and without spot.” (1 Pet. i. 18, 19.) And now, having accomplished the work of redemption, in a way which has met both the claims of justice, and the holiness of God, He has taken His seat in glory, but is coming again to claim His purchased possession. “This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” (Acts i. 11.) What a precious revelation this is to our hearts, that the same Jesus who had been crucified, was risen, and had been with them forty days, as a proof, to satisfy their hearts: and was then seen to go into heaven, a cloud receiving Him out of their sight; and they were witnesses that He was gone. But now we have the

fulfilment of that promised supplication on our behalf: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." (John xiv. 16.) And we know the Father has heard His prayer, and answered it, and sent the Holy Ghost down here, to lead us in the light of the word through this wild desert; but we cannot say it is a trackless one, for that blessed One has trod it, and has left us an example that we should follow in His footsteps. And now He is on high He is still occupied with us in our path down here, and looking after our interests for the future; so we can leave all in His hands, for He said, "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me: in my Father's house are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you." (John xiv. 1, 2.) And thus He leads our hearts on, in anticipation of that moment when He will come again. Oh, then, dear reader, let us remember that word, "Set your affection [or mind] on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. iii. 2), and then we shall be so filled with the beauty and glories of that risen, exalted, and glorified Man, as to see all beauty in Him, and shall be able to say that He is to us the "chiefest among ten thousand." (Song of Solomon v. 10.)

Now we have our responsibility-side to look at, whilst our Lord is away, though it must all flow from real love and unhindered communion with

Himself; for, "as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." (John xv. 4.) Surely it is our desire to be found in Him, bearing fruit to His honour and glory; and "every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." God is the husbandman, and He is interested that the vine should be fruitful; He wants to get fruit from it, it is what He expects, and looks for. This is why we are left in this scene. The Son, we know, has been cast out of the world, and now we are left to shine as stars in the night for Him. Till that bright morning, when He, that One who addresses Himself to us as, "I, Jesus," will fulfil that promise, "Surely I come quickly" (Rev. xxii. 20), to take us to that place of which we have spoken. Then "there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. xxii. 5), and we shall go no more out.

"The dead in Christ shall first arise
At the last trumpet's sounding;
Caught up to meet Him in the skies,
With joy their Lord surrounding:
No gloomy fears their souls dismay;
His presence sheds eternal day
On those prepared to meet Him."

F. T. J. M.

CORRESPONDENCE.

3. "J. B.," Otley. To the one troubled about the use, or non-use, of the form of what is called the Lord's prayer, the question is this: did the Lord intend to teach His disciples the spirit of prayer suited to their then position—His Jewish disciples; or the form of prayer suited to the use of the church? We judge, if the latter, the form of words must have been alike in Matthew and Luke; and would have been in His blessed name. (See John xvi. 23–26.) The petitions are specially suited to an earthly people.

As to the difficulty felt in the prayer in Notes on Leviticus, page 123, "hasten thy kingdom," when we think of all the present increasing sin, misery and sorrow, and rejection of Christ, we can say, "hasten thy kingdom," in the same sense as those words: "And the Spirit and the bride say Come." And in response to the precious words of Jesus, "Yea, I come quickly," we can say, "Amen; come, Lord Jesus." When we pray thus, it is not only for His coming to take us to be with Himself, but for His glorious appearing and kingdom.

4. "W. C. O.," London. It is most timely to have our attention called to 1 Timothy ii. 1–6. The neglect of this exhortation is sure to lead to sectarian narrowness of mind. How often instead of supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks FOR ALL MEN, the desires of our hearts do not go beyond the little circle of ourselves. No doubt much prayer has gone up to God for the queen of these realms; and what cause for thankfulness that she and the royal family have been preserved in answer to those prayers! The

Christian has greater power with God hearing prayer, than in army or navy. God can cause the Mahdi's hordes to melt away.

In the short paper of a reply, we could not notice each clause in this important scripture. May our hearts be enlarged, and our prayers and thanksgiving be more led by the Holy Ghost, according to the mind of God our Saviour. There are no barriers on His part, "who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." Yes, "God so loved the world," though the world rejects His grace: "who gave himself a ransom for all." This does not alter the fact that believers only have redemption through His blood.

5. "J. H.," Liverpool. Your question is scarcely suited to the general readers of this magazine. If a Christian is convinced that there is anything at a funeral service dishonouring to Christ, or contrary to the scriptures, it is evident he cannot **attend**, though it be the funeral of a parent. The scripture does not supply or recognise any funeral ceremony; but then, as at all times, if subject to the Holy Ghost, He will lead us to do what is pleasing to God and suited to the occasion. And we do not judge that He ever dictated the same form of words to be read over the remains, or at the funeral, of believers and unbelievers. The ignoring of the presence of the Holy Ghost is, no doubt, the root of this and many other mistakes.

We are not under the ceremonial dispensation to which Leviticus xxi. 1, 3, 10, 11, refers. And 2 Corinthians vi. 17, whilst referring specially to separation from idolatry, would also teach us the holy principle of separation from all known evil. Therefore if you see it to be evil, do not do it.

NOTES FOR YOUNG BELIEVERS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

XVIII.

CHAPTER XI.

“I SAY then, hath God cast away his people? God forbid.” Paul himself was a proof of this, for he was an Israelite. “God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.” It is not God who hath rejected His ancient people: “He saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.” It is important to see this side of the truth—the perfect readiness of God that Israel—nay, that all men—should be saved. It is man that is the rebel, the breaker of the law, and now the rejecter of the mercy of God.

But then there is the other side also. When Israel had so rebelled against God, that Elijah said, he alone was left. He said:

Verse 3. “Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.” Here we have the deep, universal rejection and hatred of man against God. This is man in the full exercise of his own will. But has God left all men to their own free choice and wicked course?

“But what saith the answer of God unto him?

I HAVE RESERVED to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal." God does not say they have reserved, or preserved, themselves ; no, He says, "I have reserved." Just as we have seen in chapter ix., if God had not done this, they would all have been as Sodom and Gomorrha.

Verse 5. "Even so, then, at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." Yes, at that very time none could deny that the nation, as such, was mad in its hatred and rejection of Christ. Saul himself was a proof of the exceeding madness of the Israelites against Christ. But, just as in the days of Elijah, there was then an election of grace, of free, unmerited favour of God. Dear young believer, you will be greatly tempted to reject this abounding, electing, free favour of God. In this day few heartily believe it. We would have you embrace it with your whole soul. Is it not evident that both Israel and we Gentiles are so bad, such utter rejecters of the grace of God, that, if it had not been for His election, in free favour, grace, none would have been saved—all, all would have been like Sodom. Yes, the total ruin of man, and the election of God, stand or fall together. You cannot truly hold the one, and reject the other. Mark, these scriptures shew there is no unwillingness on God's part, but man will not have the grace of God. When this is seen, how precious

to the believer is the blessed truth of the election of grace ! “And if by grace, then is it no more of works : otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace : otherwise work is no more work.” (Ver. 6.) This is self-evident. Salvation by works, of whatever kind, must set aside the free favour of God. Do you stand in the free, full, everlasting favour of God ; or are you seeking to attain to it by works ?

This is just what Israel were doing, but “Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for.” With all their hatred of God, as revealed in Christ, they were, at the same time, zealous of the law, and seeking righteousness by works. Rejecting the free favour of God, they never would obtain it by works. On this very account their city was destroyed, and they were scattered or slain. “But the election hath obtained it,” that is, the free favour of God in which they stood. And, as to the rest, the rejecters of free, unmerited favour, they “were blinded.” And the scriptures are abundantly quoted, to prove that this would be so in verses 8-10.

Now here are two facts. The prophets have foretold that these rejecters would be given up to judicial blindness, and this has really been so for long centuries. If a self-conceited rejecter of the truth of the election of grace should read this, oh, beware lest He give you up also to blindness

and hardness of heart. How long has God held out His hands ready to receive you? And are you still a rejecter, like self-righteous Israel? God may, in righteous judgment, give you up to hardness of heart, and to the darkness fast setting in.

But will the present rejection of the grace of God by Israel, and their consequent blindness, ultimately alter the purpose and promise of God? We must now look carefully at the dispensational bearing of this question. God had overruled their fall for great blessing to the Gentiles. And, if this be the case, how much greater will be the blessing of their fulness? The Gentile world had been given up to gross idolatry, as stated in chapter i. But now, if the casting away of Israel as a nation has been "the reconciling of the world," what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? The apostle is not here speaking of the calling, or heavenly privileges, of the church, but of earthly privileges.

When God called out Abraham, and separated him from the nations, he became the olive-tree of blessing and promise on earth. His seed became that tree of privilege, of which he was the root. It is not a question, then, of being branches in Christ, but branches of the olive-tree of promise, or privilege. Relative holiness, too, or separation from the world. Some of the natural branches were broken off—not all Israel, but some. And, to

carry out the figure, Gentiles had been grafted into this olive-tree of privilege.

Let not the Gentile boast, however: he says, "Thou bearest not the root, but the root thee." And mark, it was because of unbelief they were broken off. It was not because God willed to break them off, but because of their own unbelief. And the Gentile stands by faith. "Be not high-minded, but fear." There was judgment, severity, towards Israel, which fell through unbelief; but toward the Gentiles goodness—"If thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." God is also able to graft Israel in again.

It is also utterly contrary to nature to graft the wild olive into the good. In all nature, the good olive, or apple, is grafted into the wild. But God had taken the poor wild Gentile, and grafted him into the good Abrahamic tree of privilege. And, further, the apostle would not have them ignorant of this dispensational truth, "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," &c. (Vers. 25, 26.) Thus the time of "no difference" shall come to a close; the purpose of God in gathering out of the Gentiles shall be accomplished; then all Israel shall be saved, as it is written. Then shall every promise to them be fulfilled. The whole then living nation of Israel shall be gathered to their own land, and then be born of God, as it is written.

Such is the purpose of God, though they are the bitterest enemies now ; God elects so to do.

Verse 29. "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." He never changeth. Not one jot or tittle of His word can fail. The literal translation of verses 30, 31 is important. "For as indeed ye [also] once have not believed in God, but now have been objects of mercy, through the unbelief of these ; so these also have now not believed in your mercy, in order that they also may be objects of mercy." This is very wonderful, and shews out the principle—He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy. The Gentiles had no claim to salvation ; they were dead in sins, in unbelief. God shewed them pure mercy. Israel would not believe such mercy, and forfeited all their privileges through unbelief, that so God might at last save them as a whole nation, but as objects of mercy. "For God hath shut up together all in unbelief, in order that he might shew mercy to all." "O the depth of the riches," &c. Not one shall be found in the church above, or in the future kingdom of God on earth, but what has been saved as an object of mercy. The free favour of God in both cases thus reigns triumphant.

One word, before we close this chapter on the solemn warning, that if Gentile Christendom does not abide in His goodness, it, too, will be cut off. Was there ever a time when the goodness, the free

favour, of God were more distinctly rejected than the present moment? Never, since the days of the apostles, has the full, free grace of God been so preached, and therefore never so rejected. We lately visited a large town, where an excellent large room had been built, for the preaching of the pure gospel of the grace of God. It was closed. Another very large building was occupied by those who are, like Israel of old, seeking to attain to righteousness by works, and ritual, and the barely concealed Mass. Standing and sitting room was crowded. Will God bear this for ever? Surely the end is near. The Gentile branches must be cut off. Thus has the Spirit of God explained this period of "no difference," in these three chapters—ix., x., xi. After its close there will come the dispensation of the kingdom of Christ, as foretold in all the prophets. And at that time all Israel will be saved, as objects of His mercy. "To whom be glory for ever. Amen."

This closes the doctrinal part of this most wonderful revelation of the righteousness of God, in His dealings with man, the reading of which will profit us nothing, unless made good in our souls by the Holy Ghost. Has He, as we have passed along its wondrous pages, thus used His own word? Have we truly owned ourselves as ruined, ungodly sinners? Have we learnt that there neither has been, nor can be, any good in the

flesh? Have we believed God, who hath raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences? Have we individually gone over those offences, and seen that they were transferred to our holy Substitute? Can we say He was raised from the dead for MY justification? Surely, then, we are justified by faith, and have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, standing in this abounding free favour of God, what should be our walk? Yea, further, being made free, and having the Spirit of life, what should be the fruit? The remaining chapters give the answer to these questions.

MY AWAKENING, MY QUICKENING, MY SEALING, AND MY DELIVERANCE.

IN August 1849 I completed my twenty-first year. I cannot recall a single religious impression previous to that period. I was not grossly immoral—disposed rather to pride myself on my morality: but I was entirely godless: God was not in all my thoughts. I mingled little with men, and so knew little of the infidelity of the day, yet I was infidel at heart: I had an infidelity of my own, one of its leading features was a vapoury idea of the grandeur of man.

The first religious impression I can recall, was about two months after the above date: I had

caught a bad cold, and one night after I had gone to bed, the thought arose in my mind, What if this cold were to settle on my lungs, and I were to die? I tried to shake it off, but it stuck by me for a time and made me uncomfortable, till I dropped off to sleep. In the morning I awoke better, and it was forgotten.

It was the custom of my father's house to dine early on Lord's days, after which my habit was, in summer, to spend the afternoons out on a rocky knoll, on a hill side, in the midst of a plantation of spruces, where, with a panorama before me, and but rarely interrupted, I could be alone with my thoughts and my book; in colder weather, I spent them by the fireside in my own room, which was in a little cottage detached from the house.

It must have been on the first or second Lord's day after my cold, that on rising from dinner, I went to a book case to select a book. Side by side with my favourite Shakespeare stood five duodecimo volumes of Dwight's "Theology." For years they had stared me in the face, and their title was quite familiar, but I had never dreamt of looking within, nor, I believe, had any one in the household. How they came there I never knew, but they had a mission from God. My hand was raised to take down a volume of Shakespeare, when something within whispered, "Take that other." I threw the thought from

ness, but it returned, and after a few minutes of inward strife I carried off the first volume of Dwight. The hand of God was upon me.

I sat down in my chamber, before the fire, opened the book, and began to read an argumentative discourse on the existence of God, but little fitted, one would have said, for the conversion of a soul; yet it was God's word for me.

Deistical in my thoughts I had long been, but I had never questioned the existence of God. Now, however, from a dreamy idea, He seemed to become to me all at once a living reality—a personal Being, with whom I had to do; and I soon found myself on my knees before Him. For what I asked I have no recollection, but I went on reading and praying from day to day: I was thoroughly awake now, and in earnest for salvation.

How many days thereafter I cannot now say, nor what the direct agency, but never shall I forget the impressions that filled my soul when it first came home to me that there was a Man in the glory of God; that the Son of the Eternal had really taken humanity upon Him, had lived, died, risen, and ascended into heaven, and sat down on the throne. It was like the rising of the sun on midnight darkness; my soul revelled for a season in the glory of the thought, whose grandeur shone out for me all the more vividly against the dark background of my previous

dreams of human greatness. I now for the first time saw where the human greatness was. I believed that Jesus was the Christ, the Saviour, the Son of God. Scripture has since taught me that I must then have been born of God. (1 John vi. 1.)

That salvation was through Christ, and only through Him, had now become for me a certainty, but I was far as yet from seeing it *mine* in Him. I still thought that my doings, and above all my repentance, had a part to play in the matter of my personal salvation—with the application of His salvation to me—all was yet misty; and the grand effort of my soul became to repent of the past, and to live well for the future. I wanted above all things to *feel* repentant: I thought if it were real in me, I should weep over my sins, and I tried hard (thank God, in vain) to wring tears from my tearless eyes. Had I been allowed to shed one tear, I might have rested on my repentance instead of Christ. What mercy in that which then appeared to me so sad!

I went forward at once, and partook of the weekly "sacrament," and in the course of the next week called on the bishop under whose teaching I then sat with my parents, to ask counsel of him. I was advised to go home, take a sheet of paper, write down all my sins, and repent of them! How little thought that dear man, any more than myself, how he was then

helping the devil ! How little he knew what that delusive counsel might have cost my soul, but for the grace—the free, sovereign grace of God.

I attempted to follow out his advice, but I had not half covered the page of foolscap before me, when the conviction of the hopelessness of the task caused me to lay down the pen, and sent me again to my knees and my efforts.

It must have been somewhere in the second or third week of my soul exercise, that, as I was kneeling one evening beside a chair, pleading for pardon, and striving after feeling, there flashed into my soul the thought, “What am I doing ? God says He forgives sins for Christ’s sake, and here am I trying to wring it out of His hand by my repentance.” It was light from on high. My prayers were instantly turned into praises. My load was gone. I knew my sins were forgiven. My soul was at peace. The child looked up into his Father’s face and knew his Father. I do not know whether I then used the words “Abba ! Father !” but perfectly well do I recollect that the Fatherly character of God took then, and held ever after, a prominent place in my soul. The name acquired for me then, as it has ever since retained, an inexpressible sweetness ; I delighted to repeat it over and over. Night after night I went out into the open air, like a bird let loose, and in the solitude of the midnight, *skipped and leaped* rather than walked along the

road for hours, gazing delightfully up into the starry heavens, with the thought that these were all my Father's; that He had made them all, and that He dwelt above there, and filled all things, and yet cared for and loved me! and I poured out my joyous soul in praises and prayers and thanksgivings.

Besides the scriptures I read other books; among them I recall specially, Pike's "Early Piety;" but Dwight was my pocket companion: he was in danger of becoming an idol. My first quarrel with him was when I came to his thoughts on "Assurance." He made that an *attainment*, and a rare one—a something to grow out of a long life of piety, and a watchful self-scrutiny; while I, a mere neophyte, felt it in my soul, fresh and clear and bright, from God and from His word. Christ had by that time become too precious, and His work (though still in many ways hazy) too clearly my foundation for that teaching: Dwight lost authority over me. From that day to the present, my assurance has never wavered. Much and sadly have my experiences tossed to and fro; but that was always as a rock rising above the surface of the waves: it was Christ.

Equally vivid is my recollection of my first conflict, at an earlier day, with the doctrine of works. I had not yet got clearly from the word the true place of these, and, while knowing I had

the forgiveness of sins, I still supposed my works had something to do with my continual preservation and final security; but I well remember the thought, that however needful my works might be, I had found a higher and nobler motive to serve God, in the debt of love and gratitude arising out of what He had done for me in Christ, and that should be henceforth my motive. The heart was in advance of the head. It was some time before I got it clear doctrinally. I had to reach it in the very teeth of the oral teaching I was under.

Another thing was, that all fear of death had at once and for ever disappeared: I *longed* to depart and be with Christ; a longing that never left me till I laid it down long, long after, in view of the privilege of living for Him here, and exchanged it for the blessed hope of His coming. In those early days, I felt and could not but compare myself to a balloon, tugging and straining to rise, but still bound to earth by cords that only needed to be severed in order to allow its soaring upwards. I felt that I belonged to heaven and to God.

Alas! it was not long ere the presence of the evil within made itself felt, and sorely, sorely it perplexed and harassed me, for I did not understand it; and two-and-twenty weary years of fruitless effort to better the flesh, intervened before deliverance came. Oh! the buffetings,

the hopelessness—many times, the anguish—of those years. Peace with God I had: it was never broken, though communion often, often was. Assurance I had, and it never wavered, even though failure made me groan as under bondage. It was not salvation I wanted: I had it, and I knew I had it. I knew I had eternal life; and though I did not understand I should not come into *judgment*, I did know I should not come into *condemnation*—that there was none for me. I had no terrors, no fears, no misgivings as to the future; it was *the present* that tortured me: it was present holiness I wanted; it was power over sin, only that I had no other idea of that than its extinction. What I groaned over was, the finding that when I would do good evil was present with me, and that, while delighting in the law of God after the inward man, a law in my members brought me into subjection. *I was two-and-twenty years in Romans vii.* I tried at times to persuade myself that chapter was Paul's experience, and ought therefore to be mine; but it would not do; and the painful feeling uppermost in my mind was, that there was something out of joint. I well remember speaking of it once to one with whom I was associated in service to the Lord, and telling him that nothing but the unshaken conviction I had of the gospel being of God, and that therefore the fault must be somewhere in myself, kept

down the bitter feeling that it had disappointed my hopes: I had looked to be bettered inwardly, while I felt that my heart was not a whit better after twenty years of experience, than on the day of my conversion. I was assured in reply that it was not my heart that was still as bad, but my spiritual perceptions of evil that were more acute; but I knew that was not the answer to the facts, and I could only groan on.

The "Holiness by Faith" doctrine attracted me, as promising to meet my need, but I found that all it had to offer me was holiness "up to the measure of each day's consciousness." I felt that was but a lowering of the standard; it would not do for God.

When I first heard of the doctrine of the two natures, I turned eagerly towards it, and meeting with one who had written on it, and was supposed to understand it, I hoped and asked for light. He took up two books, and, holding one in his left hand said, "This is the old nature, and this (placing the other on top) is the new; and it is the business of this to keep that down." It was evident to me that if that were so, then the sinlessness claimed for the new nature must be unreal, for it was admitted it might fail to keep the other down, and what was that failure but sin on the part of the new nature, if it were its business or responsibility to restrain the old? I elicited no satisfactory explanation. Now, was

he wrong in claiming sinlessness for the new nature? Assuredly not; 1 John iii. 9 settles that; but he was all wrong in laying the responsibility on the *nature* instead of on the individual: responsibility is in the *person*, not in the nature: it is "I," the man, whose business it is, in the power of the Holy Ghost, not to walk after the flesh—not in the old nature, but in the new. It was thus that an erroneous presentation of an important truth repelled me from the truth itself, and it was not till seven or eight years later, that, along with other correlative truths, I learned that the solution of the problem that had so long perplexed me was, that I had in me two opposing natures; the one incurably bad, the other holy and sinless; and that I had been toiling away in the effort to effect what God, in Romans viii. 7, has pronounced *an impossible thing*—the bringing of the carnal mind, the evil nature, into subjection to the law of God! No wonder I failed and was disheartened.

Once I had learned with the apostle, or with him whom he personifies, that it was as having in me two opposing natures that "with the mind I myself served the law of God, but with the flesh, the law of sin," failure became intelligible, and I understood, with him, that it was *deliverance* I needed from the one, in order that I might walk in the other—*deliverance*, not *improvement*. Then came the discovery that power over evil was not

a change to be wrought in me, so long vainly hoped for; nor a deposit or store of imparted strength within, in whose power to act; but Christ—"Christ the power of God"—a power external to myself, "the power of Christ to *rest upon me*;" Christ making perfect *His strength* in my weakness; strengthening with might by His Spirit in the inner man. It was not myself made strong in myself, and so taken out of the place of dependence, as it were; but, while still powerless in myself, enabled to do all things through Christ which strengthened, and that, as "strengthened with all might according to the power of his glory," and so kept hanging on Him continually; faith bringing Him in to meet every recurring need as presented; its practical daily lesson, how to use Him as power—how to know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death; and all in the energy of that divine Spirit, who, as the law of the life in Christ Jesus, has made me free from the law (or principle) of sin and death.

It was not the end of conflict, but, I bless God it was the end of bondage. It was not that the flesh had ceased to lust against the Spirit, but that the character of the conflict was now understood, and the source of victory known: Christ and His power resting in one; its expression that walk in the Spirit enjoined in Galatians v.,

as in the sense of dependent weakness, Christ is looked to and leant on: not *opus operatum* action of doctrine or truth even, but Christ acting by His Spirit in positive divine delivering power on the soul. I can tell of no experiences at this point, at all akin to what has been termed "second conversion," any more than I can speak of any so-called "sinless perfection;" all I can say is, that I know the truth, and the truth has made me free.

To God be the praise! to Christ be the glory! it is grace, grace, grace, from first to last.

I may add here that in relation to the law, my thoughts (save in the earlier months when yet unformed) were those generally held by the "evangelical" Christians whom I eventually found myself thrown with. I had no fear of the law. I reckoned myself quite outside its *judicial* jurisdiction. My salvation, my justification, my acceptance, I never for a moment supposed in any way dependent on my keeping it; but with the usual inconsistency, I held to and spoke of it as my "rule of life"—the rule for the regulation of my conduct—though really with another inconsistency, Christ rather than it, was long before my soul as the standard, my non-attainment to which so deeply harassed me. My views on this found so clear an expression in a hymn which, near the middle of the period, I wrote in Portuguese, that I have made and append here

a translation, which reproduces pretty faithfully the thought.

For the grace, the love, the mercy, the long-suffering, the patience, and the wisdom that have displayed themselves throughout the five-and-thirty years of my christian pilgrimage, I would eternally bless my Father-God, and my gracious Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

R. H.

Thou art my hope, Lord Jesus,
My soul hath found in Thee
What sorely here it needed—
Peace and security.

Since ever I have known Thee,
Since first Thy grace I saw,
Fears from my heart are banish'd,
I dread no more the law.

The wrathful sword of justice
Suspended o'er my head,
Discharged on Thee, my Saviour,
Its death-stroke, in my stead.

The death which Thou didst suffer,
Was suffer'd Lord, for me;
For pleas'd Thou wast in purest grace,
My substitute to be.

What love to me, my Saviour!
Love in that cross did shine;
That cross endured, accepted,
For my sins, Lord, not Thine.

How much, Lord, it behoves me,
 My life to consecrate
 To Thee, who to redeem me,
 My guilty place didst take.

Thou art my rest, Lord Jesus ;
 Repose hath now my soul,
 As all my sins in all their guilt,
 On Thee, my Lord, I roll.



In the version now in use, the last two verses have been substituted by the three which follow.

Thy work, divinely perfect,
 Divine in value too,
 Was by our God accepted
 As expiation due.

Redemption's solid basis,
 Stable, and just, and sound ;
 Of reconciliation too,
 The happy, holy ground.

Thou art my rest, Lord Jesus ;
 With calm repose I see,
 That all my sins in all their guilt,
 Were laid by God on Thee.



“NOTHING BUT LEAVES;”

OR,

THE FIG-TREE ACCURSED.

MARK XI. 12-21.

“AND on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry: and seeing a [or, one] fig-tree afar off, having leaves, he came, if haply he might find anything thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. And Jesus answered, and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it” “And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots. And Peter, calling to remembrance, saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig-tree which thou cursedst is withered away. And Jesus, answering, saith unto them, Have faith in God.”

There is one striking peculiarity attached to this miracle of the Lord Jesus. It is the only one of judgment, or the curse. Every other miracle was of the character of blessing. What, then, can be the spiritual significance of this single exception? Let us look at it, both in itself, and in its connection with its context.

Jesus is about to enter Jerusalem, and He sees one fig-tree afar off. He desires fruit. See Him walking to this one tree, so fair, so full of leaf. But when He came to it, “he found nothing but

leaves." For the time of figs, of fruit, was not yet. Surely He who saw Nathanael under another fig-tree knew that there was nothing but leaves on this. Yet He came to it, desiring fruit. He shewed that desire, being hungry. And now He pronounced those remarkable words—"No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever." And He spake those words to be heard by His disciples. "And his disciples heard it." That was the last day of that fig-tree; judgment was passed upon it. The very next morning, "as they passed by, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots." How swift and complete the judgment! There can be no more fruit for ever from that tree—it is withered from the very roots. Well might Peter exclaim, "Master, behold, the fig-tree which thou cursedst is withered away." What *can this remarkable action of the Lord mean?* What is its teaching to us?

Let us now notice the context of this miracle. What a yesterday it had! Certainly, to all outward appearance, one of the brightest days of Israel. The entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem—garments spread, and branches of trees cut down, and strewed in the way. "And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the LORD: blessed be the kingdom of our father, David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest." Never had the leaves

of profession shone with a fresher green. And then we find Jesus entered Jerusalem, and into the temple; and when He had looked round about on all things, He went out, and retired from it all to Bethany, the place of the family remnant.

Now, do you not begin to see the meaning of those remarkable words, "Nothing but leaves"?

Then what took place on the day that judgment was passed on the one fig-tree? See Him enter the temple again; see Him casting out the buyers and sellers, and overthrowing the tables of the money-changers, and suffering no man to carry a burden through the temple. Hear His words: "Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves." Is not this again, "Nothing but leaves"?

There is also another striking connection of scripture with this miracle, here in Mark xi., xii., and also in Matthew xxi. In both cases the parable of the vineyard follows, as it were as an explanation of the miracle of the one fig-tree. The two, taken together, become most deeply interesting. There can be no mistake as to the meaning of the parable. The Pharisees and scribes understood it to mean themselves. God had planted His one vineyard—He had separated one nation from all nations of the earth. It was the trial of what is called in

scripture the flesh—the trial of man in his fallen nature. Men, they had placed themselves on this ground of probation, and engaged to keep the law. God had come, seeking fruit, but had found none. As the owner of the vineyard, He had a just right to look for fruit. The parable explains how Israel had treated the prophets and servants of Jehovah, and, as the last test of man, God had sent His own Son. Did He find fruit? Never were there more leaves, as we have seen, but "nothing but leaves." They said, "This is the heir: come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him." The more we study this parable, in dependence on the Holy Spirit, the more we see how it explains the meaning of the miracle—"Nothing but leaves."

The connection of scripture is still more striking in Matthew, as shewing the connection between this miracle and the Jews, or Judaism.

First, there is the judgment on the one fig-tree that yields no fruit.

Secondly, the parable of the vineyard, which goes beyond all endurance, in the rejection and murder of the Son.

And, in the third place, the wedding feast. (Matt. xxii.) When they had done their utmost, in rejecting and murdering the Son of God, then it was proved there was no fruit to God in

man, even in that one nation so highly privileged. God had come down, manifested in flesh, born of a woman, full of grace and truth; but there was no love of God in the nature of man. Never had there been such a tender, loving Neighbour to man as Jesus; but there was neither love to God, nor love to the neighbour, in man. The flesh was proved to be only fit for the curse, for it was sin, and only sin. Then, after all this, in the riches of His own infinite grace, God spread the feast for man as a lost sinner, and the servants were sent to call the guests—sent first to that very nation, yea, that very city of Jerusalem. And what took place then? “They would not come.” (Matt. xxii. 3.) And when other servants were sent, assuring them that all things were ready—all that man as a sinner could need in the presence of God—entreating them to come, “they made light of it, and went THEIR WAYS, one to his farm, another to his merchandise.” How terrible the sin of rejecting the riches of the grace of God! How bitterly all this came to pass, and their city was destroyed.

Thus, as to Israel as a test of man in the flesh, the green-leaved one fig-tree of profession, there was no fruit for Christ. He came, seeking fruit, but found “nothing but leaves.” No more fruit in this the brightest day of profession, than in the dark days of Elijah; yet, in both cases, and

at all times, God has an election of grace. This is seen in all scripture, from Abel downwards. God has His remnant of Hannahs and Simeons. But religious man in the flesh is tested, weighed in the balances, and found utterly wanting: "nothing but leaves."

Let us now look at this remarkable miracle a little more closely: first, as to Jerusalem, or Judaism; and afterwards as to Christendom.

Jerusalem was the centre of religion—the one green fig-tree of profession—it looked upon all other nations as dogs. Its privileges were exceeding great. The flesh, or man in his natural state, had been tried now in every possible way; and the result, as seen in the last test, the sending of Jesus, the Son of God, had proved that there was only sin in man. This is a lesson that must be learnt, and it is impossible to separate sin and the curse—sin and its curse. Thus, if the one fig-tree is the one nation tested in the flesh, and the flesh is found to yield no fruit—nothing but leaves, nothing but sin—its judgment, its curse, must come. But here we come to the most solemn part. The judgment on the fig-tree was terrible, and final. There was not only no fruit found then, when fully and finally tested, but it received its judgment, and there was to be no fruit from it **HEREAFTER FOR EVER**. There is to be no fruit from Israel as in the flesh, as children of Adam, hereafter for ever.

How little have they—yea, how little have we—understood this. It may be said, How can this be so, since we know from scripture that they will be the most highly-favoured nation on earth, when the kingdom of God shall come on this earth? The instruction of the Lord to Nicodemus settles this apparent difficulty. “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” When the Lord restores the house of Israel, He says: “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes,” &c. (Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.) No, the trial of man in the flesh, of sinful flesh, is over for ever, withered from the root. “Now is the judgment of this world.” (John xii. 31.) This will take us beyond Jerusalem, or the Jews, to the whole world under judgment. Man in the flesh is like the one fig-tree, for ever under the just judgment of God: nothing but leaves; hollow, heartless profession, but no fruit. The whole world is like a condemned prisoner; all are concluded guilty, under judgment, waiting for execution. It is there the glad tidings of mercy and pardon begin, and are so suited to us. Let us, then, next see how the teaching in this most singular miracle applies to us, or rather to Christendom.

NOTES FOR YOUNG BELIEVERS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

XIX.

CHAPTER xii. We come now to practical righteousness, the state and walk of those who have been made the recipients of the grace of God, who have been taken up in sovereign, free favour, justified from all things; without condemnation in *Christ*. It is by this very compassion of God that these precepts are addressed to them. "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies [or compassion] of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable [or intelligent] service." It certainly does require some intelligence, as to these bodies, to yield them up thus in intelligent service. We are "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." (Chap. viii. 23.) They are about to be fashioned like unto His glorious body. We are about to bear the image of the heavenly. Even as to our bodies, we shall soon see Him, and be like Him. (Phil. iii. 20, 21; 1 Cor. xv. 48; 1 John iii. 2.)

Now, having intelligence as to all this, we can give up our bodies beforehand, to be His now, to be used in holy separation to Him, and for Him. What a privilege! But this cannot possibly be, if we are conformed to this world—a

world at enmity with Him. And as we have been renewed in spirit, "be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

If God has saved us, in pure mercy and compassion, then let us intelligently seek to know His will, prove what that will is. This will require spiritual intelligence as to the time or dispensation in which we are found. The good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God as to this can only be known and proved in lowliness of soul and entire dependence.

Verse 3. "For I say, through the grace given unto me." What a constant need of the sense of the free favour shewn to us individually, and given unto us! It is this that enables us to have low thoughts of self, and to think soberly, or to think so as to be wise, as God has dealt to each a measure of faith.

Verses 4, 5. As there was one nation *in the flesh* in the past dispensation, and a covenant of commandments adapted to that dispensation, "so we, being many, are one body IN CHRIST, and every one members one of another." What a contrast this is to Israel; and we must have intelligence as to this, or we cannot prove the excellent will of God to us now. In the past no person could be in Christ. Christ must die, and be raised from the dead, or remain alone; but now we are

one body in Christ. And this truth must rule all our obedience to Christ. We are to act in union, like the various members of the human body, even as we are one body in Christ. It is not so much the doctrine of the one body here, as the practice of all the members of that one body.

Verse 6. Still ever remembering, "Having, then, gifts differing according to *the grace* that is given to us." Surely, whatever may be the service in the one body in Christ, it is all grace all free favour. With this blessed sense of the free favour of God, let us be diligent in the service, whatever it may be—whether prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation, or ruling. Let all be done with cheerfulness, and thus these heavenly precepts are so plain, they need no explanation, further than seeing all must be done in reference to the one body in Christ. And yet each precept is of the utmost importance, and can only be kept as walking in the Spirit; indeed, these are fruits of the Spirit. Will the flesh, still in us, "cleave to that which is good," or, "in honour preferring one another," or will it "bless them which persecute you"? Nay, it will ever persecute that which is born of the Spirit.

Verse 16 should be, "Have the same respect one for another, not minding high things, but going along with the lowly." The very opposite of this world's ways.

Verses 17, 19. How liable we are to forget

this blessed teaching; how ready the flesh is to return evil for evil. And how sad when indolence takes the place of providing things honest in the sight of all men. Yea, without care, the Christian may fall into the almost universal dishonesty of the world. Is not a deceitful, dishonest transaction of the same character as highway robbery? These are words that need to be put up in every office, shop, and house: "PROVIDE THINGS HONEST IN THE SIGHT OF ALL MEN." Oh, for more faith and unswerving obedience in the common things of every-day life. We are persuaded it is carelessness in these things, if not worse than carelessness, that is the cause of much of our weakness. And how the flesh in each of us would avenge ourselves! But these are the words of the Spirit to us: "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves," &c.

Did He, whose precious name we bear, avenge Himself? The day of vengeance, of judgment on an ungodly world, will come; but are we not the followers of Him who healed His enemy's ear? Oh, to be more like Him. What tender words are these: "if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink." Where shall we find such words apart from the inspired scriptures of truth? Leave man to himself, will he act thus? No, no, these are the precious fruits of the Spirit. May they abound in us more and more.

Chapter xiii. The path of the heavenly man on

earth is continued. What is to be his conduct as to the government of this world? He is to be subject. He is to regard the powers of government that be, as appointed of God. He is to be far from lawlessness and insubordination. "And they that resist shall receive to themselves judgment" [or, bring guilt upon themselves]. The Christian is to be, of all men, most loyal, even for conscience sake. "Render, therefore, to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."

Let it be observed, there is no precept here that we should take a place, or part, in the world's politics; but be subject. The church, or the Christian, is always looked at as not of the world, yet, in it, he must be subject: whatever the form of government, his path is to be subject; and, dear young believer, God is wiser than we are.

Chapter xiii. 8. "Owe no man anything." These few words are very comprehensive. Not merely debts when due, but to seek to pay all demands as soon as due. To do this, a Christian should always seek to live below his income, and do his business within his means. This may require much diligence and self-denial, but what misery will he avoid. These words, then; are important, when applied as to income and expenditure. And also, whatever kindness may be shewn us, let us seek to return it with large interest. "Owe no

man anything, unless to love one another" (New Translation). Ah, that is a debt never fully paid, for it is to love one another as He hath loved us.

The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. (Rom. v. 5.) Now, in its exercise, it flows out to others—the love of God in our hearts by the Spirit—and the result is, "he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." Thus the commands as to our neighbour are all fulfilled. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." This is by the twofold power of the love of God, already shed abroad in our hearts, and by the Spirit which has been given. This is not putting the Christian under law again, and telling him, if he keep it, God will love him, and give him the Holy Spirit. Neither is it telling him to pray for the Spirit, that he may keep the law. It is the opposite of all this. The love of God and the Spirit he has, and love worketh no ill to his neighbour. Therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. How beautiful the order of God is, and the effect is never put before the cause.

Verses 11–13. Again, there must be intelligence, in order "that, KNOWING the time," &c. But if Christians do not know the time, but suppose the very contrary, that the world is about to be converted, or to get better, that the night is not far spent, indeed that it is not night at all, but a grand day of development and human advance-

ment—if thus so dark and mistaken, how can they know the perfect will of God for walk, of holy separation from a world doomed to judgment? Is it not impossible?

What a word for this moment!—"Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep. . . . The night is far spent, the day is at hand." What an arousing motive for holiness! Beware of all pretended holiness that has not this intelligence and this motive. What! is the Lord at hand, and we, Christians, asleep?—whether we think of joy to us, for ever with the Lord—how near now our salvation—or the day of wrath and judgment on a rejecting world. "Let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." If the world is steeped in dishonesty in this dark night, "Let us walk honestly, as in the day." What a change there would be in the conduct, even of Christians, if we were really to awake, to expect our Lord, day by day.

Should you like to be found of Him walking in rioting and drunkenness, in chambering and wantonness, or in strife and envying? Surely not. "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Oh, that we may awake from sleep, and, waiting for our Lord, thus put Him on. The world will not hear the gospel—they will not read Christ in the word. May they, then, see Christ in

us, and in all we do—living epistles, read and known of all men.

They will look at us, narrowly will they watch us. They know not how Satan seeks to trip us up. They know not the temptations and buffetings of the believer, and, without constant dependence on the power of God, how liable to fail. But may the world never see us making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. The Lord bless these precious precepts to both writer and reader. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Oh, how soon we shall be for ever with the Lord!

“NOTHING BUT LEAVES;”

OR,

THE FIG-TREE ACCURSED.

II.

MARK XI. 12-21; LUKE XIII., XIV., XV.

WE have now seen how this most singular miracle depicted the final probation of Jerusalem, the city of religious flesh under law. It brought forth no fruit to God, only sin, and therefore could only be accursed; and it is so judged that there can be no fruit on it for ever.

We will ask you to look at another scripture to see how this is. “For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of

the law to do them." (Gal. iii. 10.) Does not this make the whole miracle clear? They, the one nation, the one fig-tree, were of the works of the law. Of this they made their boast—they did not continue in all things written in the law to do them. There was no fruit. Nothing but leaves. This is what man was in the flesh under law. Therefore according to what was written in the law, they could only be pronounced accursed. If they looked back there was nothing but failure and sin. If they looked forward there should be no fruit for evermore, they were under the curse, withered up from the root. What a fact! The flesh would be tested no longer—as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse. And there was no escape but by redemption. Therefore the apostle says, speaking of the Jews, 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law.' How could this be done? Oh, hearken to the awful answer, "being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Galatians iii. 13.

What a place did the holy One of God take, not only for the Jews who were under law; but "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ." For it is written, in another scripture, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Corinthians v. 21.

We would now ask your attention to the remarkable order of this subject, in the Gospel of Luke. In chapter xiii. 6-9, we have the parable of the fig-tree, which helps us to understand the miracle, only in a much wider range than Jerusalem. Still it is God coming to man, seeking fruit, and finding none. For three years he had sought fruit and found none; then "cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" It is let alone the fourth year, until all should be done to it that could be done. "And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that, thou shalt cut it down." Thus has man been fully tested for four thousand years. Could more have been done for man to produce fruit in the flesh, if any good could be found in him, than had been done, especially in the last thousand years? From the days of David, men had the Psalms, Moses, the law and the prophets; and last of all the Eternal Son Himself came down from heaven; but He found no fruit. Thus the four thousand years of man's probation were consummated. Man had been fully tried, and nothing found but sin, and hatred to God. Man was proved guilty, and only guilty—under sin, under judgment. No fruit henceforth for ever from the utterly withered fig-tree, withered to the very roots—under judgment, but its execution delayed.

Then in Luke xiv., it is not God coming

seeking fruit, but spreading a feast for man, when man had no fruit for God! The great supper of a complete and eternal salvation is spread. Is not this worthy of God? And he "sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready." Will not the whole human race at once accept such unbounded, unconditional kindness as this—nothing required, all provided? Did they come? Not one. Have *you*, reader? Were you better than they? "They all with one consent began to make excuse." What a revelation of the heart of man. No heart for the costly feast of God. Does this exhaust the rich display of the free favour of the infinite Provider? No. "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the POOR, and the MAIMED, and the HALT, and the BLIND." It was done; but this did not satisfy the heart of God. Again He says, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." Have you, dear reader, been *compelled* to taste, yea, to feast on the riches of His grace? Then you will understand if we go a step further.

He who came desiring fruit in chapter xiii., is the infinite Provider in chapter xiv. In chap. xv. He Himself becomes the Seeker of the lost. And remember that the lost one, after four thousand years, had no fruit, no savour for God. Leaves

there were—plenty of profession. The very people who heard His words should have been, with all their privileges, the salt of the earth. Jesus said, "Salt is good; but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dung-hill, but men cast it out." This is what sin has made man to be. Not worth throwing on the dung-hill. Oh, only fit for everlasting burning. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

"Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him." Did they feel that the words of Jesus had revealed the true condition of their own sinful state? They were attracted to Him. Do you believe these words of Jesus—that not only is there in you, that is in your state by nature, no fruit, but that you cannot be made useful to produce fruit in others: fit for nothing but to be cast away as loathsome? If so, you will be attracted to Jesus, and hear His wondrous words. Of course, the religious pharisee will turn from all this with disgust and murmur now, as then. Now turn to chapter xv.

What a revelation of God THE SEEKER. The Trinity is occupied in seeking the lost, so lost that he had no fruit, and no desire or appetite for the free-favour feast. Is it true of you? Have you an ear to hear? Are you that lost sheep, so utterly lost? Are you that fig-tree withered by sin to the roots? Have you thus

judged yourself in the presence of infinite grace? Do you say, "I was not aware that I was so bad. I thought if I became religious there would be holiness, and fruit to God, and so at last I should be fit for heaven: at least I have hoped so. But if this is the teaching of the Lord Jesus, I must be greatly mistaken?" Dear friend, can there be a doubt that this is the teaching of the Lord? are they not His words? What we need is to have an ear to hear, and he whose ear is open, let him hear. Whether man knows it or not, this is his true state by nature, dead in trespasses and sins; withered from the roots. Tried in every way for four thousand years, and God found no fruit. And from that sinful withered nature, there shall be no fruit henceforth for ever—"not fit for the land, nor yet for the dung-hill."

And to such God spread the richest feast that was ever made in the universe—the glorious feast of His great and eternal salvation. And so vile was man, that he utterly despised it! And, reader, "thou art the man!" Thou hast made light of it. Didst thou never prefer a novel, a tale, the pleasures and sins of this world, to Christ, the salvation-feast of God? Ah, all the world stands guilty before God. And if all the world, then you, and I.

But, has God left us, as justly He might, to perish for ever in our wanderings? Chapter xv. is the answer of infinite sovereign grace. Yes,

what sovereign love, for the Son of God as the Shepherd, to come down from the glory He had with the Father, to seek that lost despiser! There he is, as far as he can get from God. No heart for God. Withered, no power to get back to God. Is your ear opened to hear Him? Is your eye opened, the eye of faith, to see Him? Then see Him come to seek and to save that which was lost. Do you believe Him? Then see how He sought you until he found you. Have you sinned? He sought you even there. He bare your sins in His own body on the tree. Were you withered from the roots, dead in sin as to your state? He was made sin for you. Did He not seek you until He found you? But all was on His part; you did not seek Him, you did not want Him. He sought you; He wanted you; and He laid you on His shoulders never to part with you, until He has you at home. And then will He not rejoice? All heaven will hear Him say, "Rejoice with me."

Does this lead you to repentance? Is your mind now changed about yourself? Do you abhor yourself not only for what you have done, but because of what you are in your very sinful nature, a nature that can yield no fruit to God? If there be fruit, it must be in a new nature, yea, be the fruit of the Spirit dwelling in you. But still more, is your mind changed about God—that He is not the Requirer seeking fruit, but the

Giver, in infinite love, seeking the lost? Can you now rest on the shoulder of Jesus? He will hold you fast. Oh, trust His infinite love and power.

And further, as the woman sought the lost piece of silver, so has the Holy Spirit come down from heaven to seek you; still God the Seeker, in sovereign grace seeking His lost ones. Has He found you? Has He revealed to you the value of redemption?

And still further, have you ever met the Father? Have you ever owned your sins to Him? He saw you a great way off! He is the Seeker, and the Receiver now—result of the work of the Shepherd that died for the lost sheep; result of the work of the Spirit's light, or revelation of Christ the light, to the dark lost soul. Joy, joy, the Father embraces the lost son, once withered from the roots by sin in Satan's far country. He receives the beggar of the dung-hill, to inherit the throne of princes. And now the Seeker is the Giver. But oh, is that best robe put upon you? Is the ring of everlasting love on you? Are the shoes, power and fitness for walk, on you? Is the Father's house on high your happy home? Are you thus made fit for it? Glorious grace. Grace to the fruitless, grace to the withered up from the roots. Grace now, grace for evermore.

C. S.

“IF THOU WILT,” AND “IF THOU CANST.”

Read MARK I. 40-45; IX. 14-29.

IMAGINE a person to be drowning, and a man passes by at the time. What will qualify the latter to be the saviour of the drowning person? The possession of the “*will*” and the “*power*” to save. He may have the will, but lack the power; or, he may possess the power without the will. To be a deliverer he must possess BOTH qualifications.

Now, that which constitutes Christ a perfect Saviour of sinners is His possession of both the *ability* and *willingness* to save. Think of that, dear reader, the only One who can possibly save your soul from hell is both able and willing to do so.

Now the above scriptures bring this out in a very striking manner. The poor leper, weary of his sad condition, comes to Jesus, saying, “*If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.*” Now here was faith in Christ’s competency to heal; but there was, at the same time, a lack of faith in His willingness to do so. The leper did not doubt His *ability*, but he questioned His *love*: “*If thou wilt.*” There was something about Christ he had yet to learn. Doubtless, he argued thus: “Here am I, a poor unclean leper, from

whose presence all men flee. Now, although I believe that this wonderful Person *can* cleanse me, my fear is, that He, in common with others, will turn in abhorrence from my loathsomeness."

But was it so? Ah, no! Forth from the lips of Jesus came those precious words, "*I will, be thou clean*"—words that discovered the love of that wondrous heart that throbbed in the bosom of the Incarnate God. "And as soon as he had spoken, *immediately* the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed." Oh, what an answer to the leper's doubt! What a blessed exercise of the Saviour's power and love on behalf of that needy one!

The grand point disclosed by this miracle is not merely Christ's *power*, but His *willingness*, to save. It may be, my reader, that you, like the leper, distrust not the former, but the sense of your vileness as a sinner leads you to doubt the latter.

My friend, have you ever considered what it was that led the Lord Jesus to leave heaven, to come into this world of sorrow and woe—this scene in which, by His perfect identification with suffering man, in everything but sin, He gained the name of the Man of sorrows? It was *love* that brought Him here, love to the sinner; and it was in the energy of that burning, quenchless love for ruined man, that He bowed to the stroke of divine justice, and bore, in His own

sinless person, the judgment due to the sinner. It is now the joy of the Saviour-God to welcome, and to cleanse from sin's foul disorder, every sinner who comes to Him.

Remember, Christ has said, "Him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out;" and, observe, He said nothing about the character of the one who came—only, "Him that cometh." It is thus left open for the vilest to come to Him. He has pledged Himself to receive whosoever comes, and He cannot deny Himself; you may be the worst character in the world, but if you come to Jesus, He is bound to receive you. Do you not know that the only charge which the Pharisees could bring against Him, was, "This man receiveth *sinner*s, and eateth with them;" and that the witness which He Himself bore as to His divine mission to earth, was, The Son of man is "come not to call the righteous, but *sinner*s to repentance"?

Listen! As soon as He had spoken, *immediately* the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. Yes, and the *moment* you believe on Jesus you will be saved.

Oh, glance again at that wonderful scene. The holy Son of God is bending over the unclean leper, who, crouching at His feet, seeks the exercise of His blessed service of grace. Listen to the word of compassionate love; mark the touch of power; see the joyful uprising of the

cleansed one, and gain eternal peace for thy troubled heart from the glorious fact, that He who, in a bygone day, thus displayed His love and power in cleansing the leper, is now in glory, waiting and yearning to manifest the same love and power towards *you*, in cleansing you from all sin, through the virtues of His own blood.

A terrible scene is depicted in our second scripture. The power of Satan over man is there seen in its most frightful form. A poor child, possessed by a demon, is brought to Jesus; and even as they bring him, the spirit tears him, and he falls on the ground, and wallows, foaming. The broken-hearted father appeals to Christ. "*If thou canst* do anything, have compassion on us, and help us." Here the man questions, not the *love* of Christ, but His *ability*—"If thou *canst*." Now mark the answer. Jesus said unto him, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." That was to say, The question is not, if "I can heal," but, "If thou canst believe."

"And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said, with tears, Lord, *I believe*; help thou mine unbelief." The poor father's heart is tested, all doubts as to Christ's power vanish, and faith fills their place: "Lord, I believe." It was sufficient; the great Deliverer speaks the word: "Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into

him." The demon leaves his prey, and Jesus, taking the child by the hand, lifts him up.

Have you, my reader, ever doubted the power of Christ to rescue you from the dominion of the devil? Then learn the lesson taught by the narrative, that the question is not, whether Christ *can* deliver you, but, whether you *believe*. The only reason you are yet subject to the enemy's thrall, is, that you have never yet come to Christ as a poor, helpless sinner, trusting simply to Him for deliverance. Want of confidence in Christ's power and love keeps millions of souls from blessing.

Remember, it is the power of God which is exercised in the sinner's deliverance from the dominion of sin and Satan. Is there any limit to *that* power? And do not forget that the blood of the Son of God is the ground for the righteous display of that power on the helpless sinner's behalf. Now, who shall estimate, and what can exhaust the value of *that* blood?

Did you notice that the Lord did not merely command the foul spirit to leave the child, He added, "and enter no more into him." That child was thenceforth safe from the attacks of the foe. Christ does not save a sinner merely to expose him to the subsequent dominion of the devil. He delivers eternally all who have believed on Him.

Come, then, to Him at once, just as you are,

naked, helpless, and vile, confiding simply in the efficacy of His *blood*, the love of His *heart*, and the power of His *hand*, and in a moment shall you be transferred from the vile clutches of the devil to the safe keeping of the Son of God, who is the devil's conqueror, and who, as the risen Shepherd, keeps, by His Omnipotent power, every one of His sheep, for He has said, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall *never* perish, neither shall any [man or devil] pluck them out of my hand."

W. H. S.

THE PARABLES OF OUR LORD.

THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT.

"Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him an hundred pence; and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not; but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that

debt, because thou desiredst me; shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."—MATTHEW xviii. 23-35.

THIS parable commences with the word, "therefore," and is thus joined on with what precedes. Peter had come to our Lord, and asked how often he was to forgive an offending brother: till seven times? "Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, until seventy times seven"—that is, in perpetuity. "Therefore" was the above parable spoken to them, and this, indeed, explains its meaning. We who have been forgiven our many sins—the ten thousand talents—ought we not to forgive our brother his hundred pence?

The proportion of the two sums mentioned is surely not without significance. Ten thousand talents would be about £3,420,000, and a hundred pence about £3. How small anything we can be called upon to forgive in another, is, in comparison with that which God has to forgive us, before we can be His! And then, when we are His, the many grievous things we have to be forgiven!

In this parable is a principle, often overlooked by Christians, namely, that, according to what we measure out to others, such will be measured out to us. (Matt. vii. 2.) God, in His government, brings this about, notwithstanding our being

Christians, and this accounts for many of His dealings with His people. God's *grace* does not do away with His *government*.

Some may feel a difficulty as to how the unmerciful servant could be punished after he had been forgiven, as if the forgiveness of God were a sort of conditional pardon, that could be withdrawn, if we were unfaithful afterwards. But there is no such thought in scripture, and the parable does not say that the servant was punished for *the same* debt he had been forgiven. He was forgiven *that* debt, and then punished for what was afterwards due. Man is such a failing creature, that, if he were forgiven to-day, he would owe another debt to-morrow. This we see exemplified in Israel. On the day of atonement, the Jew's sins were atoned for, and forgiven; when he again began to sin, and there was, of necessity, a remembrance made of sins every year (Heb. x. 3), and a new atonement made, and forgiveness given. Now the one sacrifice of Christ perfects the believer for ever; but the parable does not enter into the subject of justification, nor was the work of atonement then completed.

The last part of the parable has also presented another difficulty to some, because it seems to imply the loss of the soul. The unmerciful servant was delivered to the tormentors, until he should pay all that was due; but in scripture, persons are taken up in the character they assume. Here the

persons spoken of are "servants," and the parable must not be taken out of its connection. Professed servants may be thus unmerciful, and may be lost eventually; and the parable may also apply to those Jews who had been forgiven their "ten thousand talents," but who would not forgive their Gentile fellow-servants their "hundred pence." Their condition was indeed hopeless; for they could never repay to God what they owed.

Still, it has a lesson for us all. Let us not forget the mighty debt we have been forgiven. The unmerciful servant "went out" from the presence of his lord, or he could not have dared to seize his fellow-servant; and so we may forget what we have been forgiven, and fail to forgive our brethren seventy times seven. As we have seen, God, in His government, will measure to us according as we have measured to others. The merciful shall obtain mercy, and we surely need this to the journey's end.



IMPORTANT INQUIRIES.

"E. W."

As your questions are of importance to thousands, we will state them in full. You quote, "shall never perish" (John x. 28); "abide not in me" (John xv. 6); "live after the flesh, ye shall die." You say, "I came to Christ, a lost sinner. I believe that He died for me, became my Sub-

stitute, and, through His sacrifice, I am made whole. I rest on John v. 24, and also 1 John v. 10-13. I believe that the blood of Jesus cleanses me from all sin, because God the Father, who sent the Son, says so. My hope and trust is in His word ONLY. I know I have eternal life the Spirit witnesseth with my spirit that I am born of God." We will now take each of your momentous questions.

"Can a believer, a man born again, live after the flesh, and, consequently, die eternally?" We often create difficulties by adding to scripture. You will notice, you have added the word, "eternally." "Consequently die eternally." A believer may so fail, so sin, that it is a sin unto death; and if you compare 1 Corinthians xi. 30 with 1 John v. 16, 17, you will see what is meant there is the death of the body in chastisement. But the scripture you refer to (Rom. viii. 1-17) is evidently characteristic—those in Christ, and those in the flesh. Life and holiness characterise those in Christ; sin and death, those that are in the flesh, and walk after the flesh. "They that are after the flesh." "But ye are not in the flesh." Thus it is not a man born of God, but a man in the flesh; if not born again, he walks in the flesh, and the end is death. If, therefore, a man walks in the flesh, he has no right to conclude he is born of God. We will now put your question again, that is, as you intend it: Can a

man truly born of God so walk in the flesh, can he so sin, as to perish eternally?

The scripture answers, *No*, he cannot so sin, because he is born of God. The man who practises sin is not born of God, but is of the devil. Read carefully 1 John iii. 8-10; v. 18. The believer is to reckon himself dead to sin, and no longer in the flesh—not on that ground—but alive to God. It may be said, But do we not see such as have made a great profession afterwards walk in the flesh, and practise sin? We do, and this proves they never were born of God—they never had any root. (See Matt. xiii. 21, &c.) Can an apple-tree evermore grow crabs? It may grow good apples, or poor fruit. And so with us, and so the reward.

“Can he abide *not* in Christ, and be burned?” It has often been observed, that the theme of John xv.—the vine—is fruit-bearing. The Lord does not say, If YE abide not in me, YE shall be cast forth, withered and burnt, &c. If He had, then our final salvation would depend on ourselves, and not on what He has done, and what He is. He says, “If *a man* abide not in me,” &c. He may be an outward disciple, like Judas, and, having no living link with Christ, will ultimately perish.

“Shall never perish.” (John x. 28.) Here the Lord is speaking of His own very sheep, given to Him of the Father. “My sheep.” There

can be no mistake about these. "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand."

You ask, "Is it not that I shall never perish, if I abide in Him; and that, if I abide not in Him, I shall be lost?" Now this is mixing up two scriptures on quite different subjects—fruit-bearing and eternal life. If we do this, we are perplexed, and in confusion. Let us keep to the plain facts of these words—John x. 27–29; the eternal life and absolute security of the sheep of Christ, given to Him of the Father. Now what is eternal life? Is it not, at least, the contrast of mortal life? Mortal life is the possibility and liability to die—a life that can cease to be. Eternal life is surely the opposite of all this. It is the life that cannot possibly be liable to cease—it is imperishable. And more, read the blessed words the Spirit used at first to your soul. (1 John v. 10–13.) "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." Therefore, if any man says that it is mere life in us, liable to perish, depending on something we do, that man makes God a liar, and denies what God says—that it is eternal, or imperishable, and is in the Son. This is a character of Christianity peculiar to us, and to deny it is so, is to make God a liar.

We repeat your further words, they are most im-

portant inquiries. "I have salvation. Can I take myself out of the life-boat? 'Shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.' But can I pluck myself out of His hand, and be for ever lost? Not that I wish to do so—God forbid—I want to know more fully my standing, and prove it by scripture." This is the question of the absolute security of the sheep. What does Jesus say? "Shall never perish neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.' How beautifully He illustrates this place of security. Look at Him, and look at His sheep. "He layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing; and when he cometh home . . . saying, Rejoice with me." It had wandered as far as it could. He carries it all the way home. Hark! He whispers to you, "shall never perish, none shall pluck thee from my shoulder of infinite strength." Its security does not depend on its clinging to Him, but His love to it, and unfailing power. We will look at your further desire, if the Lord will, in our next: "I want to know fully my standing, and prove it by scripture."

"T. C. H.," Ryde, Isle of Wight, desires to acknowledge the receipt of a box, containing jewellery, from Queenstown, for the Lord's use, with many thanks. It came just at the time to meet the need of poor saints.

“WHOSE SON IS THIS YOUTH?”

1 SAMUEL xvii. 55.

THERE were two characters in which Saul had known David. There was another in which he did not know him. There are two characters in which great numbers have known something of Christ, the antitype of David. There is another character in which they know not Christ. What were those characters in which Saul knew David?

He had known David as one who brought musical refreshment to him, and he had known him as his assistant. He had never known him, and he did not know him, as the complete saviour. It will be a searching question—In which of these three characters do we know Christ?

In the end of chapter xvi. we find Saul troubled. “And Saul’s servants said unto him, Behold, now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee. Let our lord now command thy servants, which are before thee, to seek out a man who is a cunning player on an harp.” David is sent for to take this place. “And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armour-bearer. . . . And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon

Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand : so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him."

It is therefore evident that Saul well knew David for his amusement. For this purpose "he loved him greatly;" and also as his assistant, or armour-bearer.

Do you ask, How can this be applied to us in this day? How? Is it not the very picture of Christendom? Let us ask this grave-looking, religious man, as he walks to what he considers his place of worship. "Well, friend, where are you going this morning?" "I am going to my place of worship. I can assure you there is splendid music, and the best singing in the town. After a week's worry, cheating, and being cheated, and all the trouble of conscience, it is so soothing to hear the sacred music; it does so refresh one, and drive evil thoughts from one—yes, I feel quite refreshed and well, and the trouble of mind is gone. And it is all sacred, all about Christ. I do love it greatly."

"Well, friend, but what about the salvation of your soul?"

"As to that, all I can say is, Christ is my helper (armour-bearer, like). I know I could not save myself without Him. I could not fight the battle of my salvation without my Armour-bearer."

You may say, What can a man want more

than this, to know Christ for refreshment, in sacred service of music and song, and as his helper in the great work of saving his soul?

Let us put another question or two. "Well, friend, we see you are delighted with your religion, for soothing, refreshment, and to help you in the battle of salvation. But do you know Jesus as your complete and eternal Saviour? Have you redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of your sins? Do you know Him raised from the dead for your justification? Do you know Him, at the right hand of God, as your unchanging righteousness? Do you know that you have eternal life in Him?"

As we have seen, Saul had known David as his amuser and helper; but he knew him not as the alone saviour. And mark, the battle had not to be fought, but the battle had been fought and won by David alone, in the valley of Elah. This is the great mistake of all who take Jesus as their helper, instead of their Saviour.

Let us look at the shadow in this historical picture, and then at the substance, in the battle fought and won at Calvary. "David took an harp, and played with his hand. So Saul was refreshed," &c. But what a change takes place immediately in the next chapter, xvii.! The Philistines gather together to battle. The enemy musters his forces in the broad valley of Elah. In that valley there is no hand of David

to refresh with sacred song, no David to help as armour-bearer. The terrible Goliath of Gath defies the armies of Israel. Saul and all Israel heard his words, and were dismayed, and greatly afraid.

And what must be the state of that soul which has only known religion as Sunday refreshment, or Christ as a help and a make-up, in fighting his own battle for salvation: when suddenly, after returning from some soothing evensong or ritual, he finds the Philistines in the valley of death? He trembles with dismay and fear. The soothing melody of sacred music, the sweet notes of the organ, reach him not in the dark valley of death. Satan appears as his defier and accuser. The armies of his sins stare him in the face, and he is alone in the dark valley. He knows no Saviour.

And if an army of those deceived with him stand by him, they are all dismayed with him, and afraid. None can help him. Not a man in Israel could meet the giant of Gath. "And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid." No man was found able to help Saul to fight the battle of his salvation. What a picture of a deceived professor brought into the valley of death! Assuredly, reader, this will one day be your case, if you only know Christ for refreshment and help. Saul found not David here to play the harp, or to bear

his armour. No, the anointed of God must be the complete Saviour, or nothing.

How striking the details of this inspired picture! The father (Jesse), in his councils, determines to send his son to his brethren. God the Father, in the councils of eternity, determined to send His Son for His brethren in the vale of sin and death.

Forty days had Goliath presented himself, and all seemed lost, when David, the son, was sent from the mountains to the valley of Elah. There he alone met the power of the enemy. Alone he slew the defier of Israel; alone he fought, and won the battle. He was not the helper now of Saul, but the complete victor and saviour. See him take the head of the Philistine, and he brought it to Jerusalem. He that descended alone into the valley of Elah now ascends out of the valley of death to the heights of Jerusalem. The work was done, the battle was won. There was the anointed David, the complete saviour. There could not be a question, or a doubt, of it.

But Saul knew him not in this character, neither when he went forth to meet the giant, nor when he had slain him. Is this your condition? Do you neither know Jesus as the sent One of the Father, to meet the whole power and charge of Satan, to accomplish eternal salvation; nor as the risen and ascended victorious Christ at God's right hand?

“When Saul saw David *go forth* against the Philistine, he said Abner, whose son is this youth?” Saul knew him not. Neither did Abner know him. “And Abner said, As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell.” How many Abners would say the same now as to David’s greater King? Who is the mighty Saviour, who came from heaven to fight the battle of our eternal salvation alone? How many would have to say, As such I know Him not!

Just, in like manner, “as David *returned* from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul, with the head of the Philistine in his hand.” Does Saul know him now? Not in the least. “And Saul said to him, Whose son art thou, thou young man?” Now He who died the death of the cross, He who came down into the valley of Elah, this scene of sin and death, “that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;” He who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification, when He had by Himself made purgation for our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high! Do you know Him, or do you say, Who is He, and what does it all mean? Are you a stranger to that complete Saviour, Jesus, the risen Christ?

Do you say, Well, I will pray to Him to *help me* to save my soul. Ah, there is the darkness

of unbelief. Could Saul have asked David to help him to kill the giant, when David had killed him, and had his head in his hand? Could Saul ask David to go down into the valley of Elah, and help to save him? Impossible! It would have been a flat denial of the wondrous victory of the saviour David. Here is the great mistake of the Sauls and the Abners of this day. They would gladly have Christ to help them, if unbelief is only allowed to doubt, and deny that the battle is won, the work once and for ever done. "It is finished," Jesus said it in His last words on the cross. God has declared His full and eternal satisfaction, for He has raised Him from the dead. He, the alone Saviour, was as distinctly seen by His disciples alive from the dead. He was seen as clearly ascending up to heaven. He was seen as distinctly in brightness above the light of the sun. All this is as clear to faith, to those who have not seen, but believed, as ever was David, the victorious, seen by Abner and Saul.

The whole question is this: the battle had been fought, and David had not to help Saul to fight it. The battle of our salvation has been fought, and Christ has not to help us to fight it.

If we turn to a greatly perverted text, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," and if we examine the context, we shall find it is not working *for* the salvation of the soul. This

they had. They were called saints in Christ Jesus, and as holy ones, or saints, they were to practically manifest, work out, the eternal salvation they had. Oh, let not Satan use this scripture to lead you to think you can work out a salvation of your own, by his delusive, soothing music, and religious refreshment, and ritual performances; or that, if you will try and fight a little now and then, Christ will be your armour-bearer. Thus is Satan leading on the great mass of Christless profession in this day. May God awaken you to your fearful danger! If not, you will surely find your refreshment end in the gloomy valley of death. And there alone, in all the darkness and horror of death, having rejected the eternal salvation preached to you through the finished work of Christ, His death and resurrection—oh, who shall help you there? Can you expect Christ to help you, He whose complete salvation you have rejected? Be not deceived. It will be too late if the unbelieving eye is once closed in death, in the valley of Elah.

It will now be very blessed to turn to the contrast, as we find it in one whose eyes were opened to know David, not for refreshment merely on the harp, not to be the armour-bearer, or helper, but to own him as the victorious saviour.



NOTES FOR YOUNG BELIEVERS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

XX.

CHAPTER xiv. "Now, him that is weak in the faith receive not to (the) determining of questions of reasoning." (New Translation.) We may make a mistake either way. We may become so narrow as to reject a brother weak in faith, or we may make our receiving a cavilling person, the determining of doubtful questions, and reasoning speculations. The Holy Ghost would have us carefully avoid both these extremes. In many things such as eating and drinking, esteeming one day holy, or all days alike—in all such matters, we are not to judge one another, but walk together in love.

Verse 10. "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand [or be placed] before the judgment-seat of Christ." This is not a question of being brought into the judgment for sins, or sin. That has been settled earlier in the Epistle. (Chap. viii. 1, 33, 34.) The Lord assures us this shall not be. (John v. 24.) What then is meant here? Simply the question in hand. The fact that all will be placed before God, who cannot make a mistake in what He approves, should be a wholesome check in preventing the injurious habit of judging one another. "So then every one of

us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more."

Surely this does not teach us to be indifferent when the Person of Christ, or the truth in Him, is attacked: for Paul had to withstand even a Peter to his face. But it does teach us "that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." To do so, is not to walk according to love. A weak brother might, by seeing me eat things offered to idols, be led to do so, and his conscience being defiled, he might fall into idolatry, and get, for the time being, under the power of Satan, and, as to fellowship, away from Christ. In fact, just where a wicked person had to be put for the destruction of the flesh. (1 Cor. v. 5.) This would be destroying a brother, instead of the flesh, or, on the other hand, his conscience might be destroyed. In any case love would seek to put no stumbling-block in a brother's way.

We have also known cases where a person has observed the Lord's day as the Sabbath, in a pious but Jewish way. Another person to shew his superior knowledge has done things on the Lord's day which were a desecration in the eyes of the former; and the result has been most disastrous to both. For years both conscience and communion were lost or destroyed. Do not, however, for a moment suppose that these words "destroy not him," &c., can possibly mean the destruction of eternal life. Scripture cannot contradict itself.

If it seems to do so, it is evident we have not got the true sense of one at least of the texts. If the eternal life we have in Christ could be destroyed, then it would not be eternal. And of those who have eternal life, Jesus says, "they shall never perish," that is enough for faith. It is, however, a most wholesome and important thing to have the judgment-seat of Christ constantly before us. It would preserve us from much judging, or even devouring one another.

The great point here is serving Christ acceptably to God. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink ; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men." These are precious words : righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. If God reigns in our hearts, there will be consistency, that which is consistent with the holy place we are in. "Let us therefore follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." This will lead us to do nothing, whether in eating flesh or drinking wine, whereby a brother may be stumbled. This must not, however, lead us to compromise the gospel. Had Paul also refused to eat with the Gentiles lest he should offend Peter, that would not have been for edification, but would have compromised the gospel. It was saying Christ is not enough for your eternal salvation, you must also keep the law.

Thus by some the law was held as superior to Christ. In like manner, if a society of men were to say, Christ alone is not enough for the deliverance of a sinner and his complete salvation, you must take a pledge with us not to drink wine—it would not be of faith, or love, or edification, thus to compromise the gospel. It would soon be, as with the Judaising teachers, to seduce from Christ. If Christ has not the pre-eminence, something else soon will have. Satan ever seeks to use that which is good to displace Christ. Law is good, temperance is good; but let us watch lest we use either to rob us of Christ. We need to be kept on the right hand, and on the left. These remarks are only intended to apply where temperance is put in the place of Christ. Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind, and let us each remember “whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” Let us ask ourselves in the presence of God, do I need this for my body which is the Lord’s? Is there any brother I know, who will be stumbled if I take it? Have I faith, is it pleasing to the Lord that I take it, or that I do this?

And let us be very careful as to boasting in these matters, or in judging our brother. “Hast thou faith? have it to thyself BEFORE GOD. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.”

Chapter xv. The apostle says, “We that are

strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." How tender then we ought to be now in these days when all are weak, and feeble together. "Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification." Is not this truly lovely? Where shall we find it perfectly exemplified? Oh, there is One, yes, one only perfect One. "FOR EVEN CHRIST pleased not himself." No self-vindication; "but as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me." His eye ever on and up to the Father, He was the expression, the revelation of the Father, God manifest. And all the reproaches He felt to be against His Father. He answered not again, He pleased not Himself, but His ineffable delight was to bear all, and do the will of Him that sent Him.

"Now, the GOD OF PATIENCE and consolation grant you to be like minded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus. That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." What a prayer! how needed at all times, but more especially in these last days of discord. He is the perfect copy; it is "according to Christ Jesus." He has received us to the glory of God, yes, as objects of mercy according to the riches of His grace. Let us never forget how He has received us, in receiving one another. Then the scriptures are quoted to shew how grace has, and was, to abound to the

Gentiles. This shewed that Jewish believers were not to reject them.

It is also to be observed, that these scriptures will have their complete fulfilment in the millennial kingdom. "There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles ; in him shall the Gentiles trust."

Then follows another prayer, "Now, the GOD OF HOPE fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." How distinctly the state of the soul is connected with the coming of the Lord, though it is not the subject of this Epistle ! May we know our Father as the God of patience, and the God of hope.

Verse 14. In this verse it must be noted that there is no thought of the first bishop of Rome. "And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish ONE ANOTHER." Now is it not remarkable that in the whole of this inspired letter to the saints at Rome, there is not a single sentence that can have the slightest recognition of, or reference to, such a person as a bishop of Rome. The brethren were able to admonish one another ; and each was responsible according to the measure of grace bestowed, as in chapter xii. The first bishop of Rome and his successors are a pure invention of after times.

Had Peter been, or any other brother THE BISHOP of Rome, Paul must here have recognised him as such. Does he not rather declare his own apostleship, as minister of the Gentiles. (Verses 16-20.) All this to Paul was the free favour of God, "because of the grace that is given to me of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles," &c. And the result of all this blessed favour, he could offer up to God, "being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." Now, all thus being of the free favour of God, he could glory. "I have therefore, whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God." The young believer will do well to ponder these precious divine principles of service—how the Gentiles had been made obedient to the gospel. Through mighty signs and wonders, by (not human wisdom or eloquence, but) the power of the Spirit of God. And what a mission to the Gentiles! And mark, the true work of this evangelist, not to build on another's foundation. "Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named," &c. This is most important. Oh, think even in this day, how many thousands of nominal Christians are in the towns and villages, who have never heard the gospel. And in many places, there is a real thirst for the simple truth. It is most cheering to know how God in sovereign grace is using tracts. Still, it is pleasing in His sight, that His saints should not

only spread these in faith, in regions beyond, but also the evangelist take the glad tidings everywhere, "and round about."

Some may say, we are not evangelists. No, but you can help the evangelist ; let him be well supplied with tracts and books : these greatly help him in his blessed work in winning souls to God, and in building them up when converted. You can help, perhaps, most in prayer, and sympathy. You can help him to take lodgings in the distant village. In a word, if our hearts are stirred up in the sympathy of Christ for precious souls, He will open up the way in which we can all be fellow-helpers in this blessed work. The Lord give us more of the yearning after souls we have in these verses.



EXTRACTS FROM THE EAST.

It is sweet, in the midst of the din of war and all its sad concomitants, to be assured that the Lord is carrying on His own work of grace. We are filled with thankfulness that the work in Egypt still goes on. The midnight cry, "Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him," is heard in towns and villages, and even in remote corners ; and along with it the glad tidings of grace, which enables every awakened one to meet Him, by simple faith in Him, as the One

who was once here, and in love, suffered and died, the just for the unjust. Surely we are thankful to hear that a good many are being gathered to His name, and meet to remember His death, in hope of His near coming. But if we should stop here, should we not be in danger of stopping short of God's thoughts and purposes? He would have us preach repentance and remission of sins in the name of His beloved Son, until the very moment He arises from His present position of grace, to come for His own, preparatory to the execution of judgment. And if we, who have been favoured with clearer light, allow ourselves to become soured, and self-occupied, either individually or ecclesiastically, we shall be but poor ambassadors of peace to the world. One can almost envy the freshness and simplicity of saints in Egypt, and desire that they may be long so kept. Those who labour in the word find open doors and meet with much blessing. Dear black Abdulla, I hear, is still going about in his simple way from village to village, and has either gone, or is going to a distant province, where, as yet, no labourer has been.

It is a little remarkable that recently a very old book has been found in a convent, in which the writer speaks of the coming of the Lord, the first resurrection, and the thousand years of the kingdom. Church history tells us that this doctrine flourished much in the middle of the

third century, especially in parts of Egypt. And now that it has been revived, is it not a little remarkable that traces of it should be found in old writings hidden away for centuries in their convents ?

A few days ago I sent some parts of scripture and tracts to Suakim, in answer to the request of a brother, chief engineer on one of the British ships of war stationed there. So it is not all dark in the track of war. Some of the soldier brethren are with the advanced portions of the army in the Soudan. May the Lord watch over and shield them. I have heard of one of them who departed peacefully to be with the Lord. No doubt he found it far better than to remain in the body in this dark scene of strife. Others of them in their letters, speak of the struggle to keep their heads above water; but so far all seem to have been kept—a mercy to them in their circumstances; and to us all, wherever our lot is cast. We are to remember, that to be kept in the midst of trials means positive growth.

Some of the sailors remarked to us last summer, that doubtless saints surrounded by home comforts think of them as having but little joy in the Lord, while the fact is, they are often filled to overflowing; and when a few of them get together in prayer or around the word, they find a rich feast in an occasion where saints in more favoured circumstances, might perhaps find

only dry crumbs. We here felt the force of the remark ; and should it not be a rebuke to us, that the very abundance of our mercies often proves a snare to our souls and leads us to forgetfulness of God ? Alas ! that we should ever gather around the word, and find it stale food, or what is worse, get occupied about it in a way that ministers questions rather than godly edification !

The interest of the civilised world daily becomes more and more centred and absorbed in these lands. And this is the more remarkable when we observe that England, the chief power interested, is being compelled to do so, in spite of her present policy and wishes. Our thought here is that these troubles will continue until Islam, as a power, be completely broken. These sad, bloody wars, in Egypt and the Soudan, were not brought about by political aggressions from without, as the Russo-Turkish war, for example, but by the revival of the religious spirit of Islam from within. This is to be noted. It was this that compelled England to interfere, in power, and still keeps her there, contrary to her desires. This is especially true of the Soudan affair. No one thought, and no one wished, that a few semi-barbarous tribes, inhabiting those undesirable climes, so difficult of access, should be the occasion of such great military enterprises, and such intricate and danger-fraught diplomatic negotiations. But so it is, in spite of the wisdom

of the world's great ones; for there the ancient spirit of Islam has revived; and they must meet it whether they will or not. Perhaps, internal jealousies will compel European powers to preserve Egypt as a separate kingdom, and this I think will be the case, as will doubtless be the case when they shall have to consider Palestine and Syria; but the fact is, that whatever are their motives, they are now face to face with a question which they themselves regard as the most difficult of all that affects them internationally. As saints our interests are elsewhere; but as long as we are in the body, it would scarcely be true, if we would say, that we have no interest at all about what goes on in this mundane sphere. It is surely not our object, but we observe it as we pass on. And indeed we have divine light as to the course of this world and its end.

February 14th, 1885.

B. F. PINKERTON.

IN answer to inquiries, the Editor would here say, that he will be happy either to forward help to the Lord's servants in Syria and Egypt, or give information to those who wish to do so direct.

C. S.

IMPORTANT INQUIRIES.

No. II.

YOU say, "But can I pluck myself out of His hands? Not that I wish to do so, God forbid—I want to know fully my standing, and prove it by scripture." From what we have seen, we may fairly conclude the teaching of the Lord in John x. is that His own sheep, given to Him by the Father, shall never perish, either from within, or without. The statement is absolute. We now turn to the scriptures as to your standing, so that your faith may rest in the word of God. We do so, feeling how important this truth, *the believer's standing*, is to all who are His.

You say, "I rest on John v. 24 and also 1 John v. 10-13." Let us then examine these verses carefully. None but the Holy Spirit would lead you to rest on these words of the Lord. He says, "Verily, verily," (that is, Amen, it is the truth) "I say unto you," (it is Himself that speaks unto you), "he that heareth my word" (His sheep hear His voice. He has opened your ear to hear His own words. You are quite sure that He is the truth), "and believeth on him that sent me," (You believe that God sent His Son for the very purpose of your eternal salvation—to be delivered for your offences, and raised again for

your justification. You do believe on Him that sent Jesus. What are the next words of Jesus, to you, then?) "hath everlasting [or it should be, eternal] life;" (This then is the truth, you have eternal life. You have it now, and it is eternal life,) "and shall not come into judgment," (This is the new and correct translation. You have the divine assurance that *you* shall not come into judgment. What then is your standing or position, now?) "but is passed from death unto life." This is now your new standing, as in another scripture: "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. (2 Cor. v. 17, 18.) Just as He took our standing or position, and was not in the state personally we were in, became "sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God IN HIM;" then according to scripture, you as a believer, have passed from one standing to another in Christ. You have eternal life, as we shall see, in Him the Son of God. How can you then, turn that which is eternal into that which is not eternal, but a life that may perish?

But you say, "May I not pluck myself out of His hand and perish for ever?" Do you mean if I should sin, should I not immediately lose all and therefore might perish? We will now look at one or two things you believe. You say, "I

believe that He died for me, became my substitute." "I believe that the blood of Jesus cleanses me from all sin, because God the Father who sent the Son says so." You remember all the sins of Israel were laid on the goat once a year, as their substitute pointing to Christ. Now were some, or all, your sins laid on Jesus, your substitute? Remember all were future then. Did God miss one that you may commit, and therefore for that one you shall cease to be a child of God, and have eternal life? Such a thought would deny that the atonement of Christ was infinite. It would deny that the blood cleanseth from all sin, only for the sins you have committed in the past. No, no, God has fully judged our sins, all our sins, on the cross; and more, He there condemned, judged to the utmost, the very sin of our nature. (Romans viii. 2; 2 Cor. v. 21.) So that as seen in Christ, we are without condemnation, the very righteousness of God. If this is not so, there is no solid ground of peace for an hour. It is on this ground, if we sin we have an advocate with THE FATHER. (1 John ii. 1, 2.) It is on this ground we can come to the Father in confession, with the certainty of forgiveness.

Now read the other scripture on which your soul rests, 1 John v. 10-13. It is clear that they who trouble you, and seek to hinder you from believing God, make Him a liar. Is not this so in verse 10?

Words could not be plainer. "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son." And mark, the record of God is the very point before us. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." Do you see it is not only eternal, but it is not in our own keeping? no, it "is in his Son." As Jesus said, "because I live, ye shall live also."

Now do they not tell you that they are very dangerous people who do thus believe God? God grant they may not rob your soul of this precious truth. They would try to persuade you, that you have not eternal salvation, and eternal redemption, and eternal life; but a something dependent on yourself and therefore not eternal life. A something in you, that you may lose. No, it is in Christ, and it is yours, and therefore you cannot lose it. A child cannot cease to be a child after it is once born, unless it die. And as a child of God you cannot die, for the life is eternal, and cannot die. As a Father, He will chasten you, just because you are His child. Now will you notice, this scripture is written that you may know that you have eternal life. For the present farewell.

If you hear from the troublers again, we shall be happy to look at any scripture they can point out.

CORRESPONDENCE.

6. "An Earnest Seeker," Toronto. For fifty years the Lord has been teaching us from His word that New Testament saints have eternal life in the Son. He has not shewn us a single text in the Old Testament on the subject; and where He has not spoken, it is wise for us, surely, to be silent. We learn from the words of Jesus, that "He that believeth on him that sent me, hath eternal life." And again, "He that believeth on me hath eternal life." These, and many such texts, are connected with FAITH in the sent Son of God. Yet faith may be taken in a general way as evidence of eternal life. And there it is well to stop, without reasoning about what is not revealed. You say, "If they had life, was it not in Him, of course not manifest until after He had risen; and if they had life, what was it in, if not in Christ (or in the Son)?" To have eternal life *in* the Son is the distinctive privilege of the Christian. No one could be in such a position as to have life *IN THE SON* before He arose from the dead. (1 John v. 11, 12; John xii. 24; Luke xx. 38; John v. 21.)

May we ask, Have you the blessed certainty that you have eternal life; or is the enemy of your soul seeking, by these questions, to draw you into his net of perplexity and doubt?

We will take a look at his net, after your next question. These are your words: "Will you also shew me if, when a soul is quickened, whether the Holy Spirit takes up its abode, or, in other words, is sealed; or whether such an one can be lost, after all; and the difference, if any, between being quickened and born again?"

You may not see it, but this is all the fine, silken web of the spider, of the one cord, or double cord, of the net of the fowler. Texts of scripture even may be spun to make this net for your feet; and the workman used to spin and form the net, may have no idea what he is doing. But what is the enemy's object with this net? It is to draw you from the gospel, from Christ and His finished work, to the work of the Spirit in you. Important as that is, yet it is not the ground of our relationship with God. He, the Holy Ghost, is the witness of it, and the seal of it. But we are sons of God before He bears witness that we are. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." (Gal. iv. 6.)

We must not put life, or quickening, in the place of *faith in Christ*, or *faith in God*, who sent and raised Him from the dead. How soon we get away from the gospel into human confusion. What is the gospel God has so signally used in the deliverance of souls these last fifty years? Is it not this that when a sinner believes God, through sovereign grace, he is accounted righteous before God; that he has peace with God, BY FAITH, through our Lord Jesus Christ; that he has access BY FAITH into the everlasting, free, unclouded favour of God; that he is made the righteousness of God in Christ; that he has eternal life, and shall never come into judgment; that he is passed from death unto life; that he is a new creation in Christ Jesus; that old things are passed away, and all things become new, and all of God? All this absolutely and eternally true now of every believer, born of God, and thus a child of God. This is the

gospel God has so used. Now, if this has been attacked, and theories of quickening and life put in its place, in Canada, it is a sad mistake; and it is a mistake to bring sealing, at the moment of believing, as the remedy. Much may be true of a believer, and yet it may be minutes, or hours, or days, or months, or even years before he enjoys full liberty by the sealing of the Spirit. Let Satan get us away from the certainty of the gospel in the net of reasoning about life and quickening, then he will give you a gentle pull, and he will say, "Are you quite sure you feel you are quickened?" You may say, "I hope so." That will just suit him. Then he will say, "Ah, that is good; but now examine yourself. Do you feel you are sealed?" Somehow you will say, "I seem to have a little dust in my eyes, I cannot exactly tell whether I am sealed, or not." Now he gives you a strong pull. He says, "Ah, if you are not sealed, you may be lost, after all."

We have just heard of a young believer, so harassed by these injurious reasonings, that he left the table of the Lord, in utter uncertainty as to whether he was sealed. Where, in all this reasoning, is Christ? Where His finished work? Where is the certainty that when you are brought to believe God you have eternal life, beyond judgment, passed from death unto life?

May all the beloved saints of God be delivered from this net of human reason, and be restored to the simplicity and absolute certainty of the gospel. Having seen that this net of reasoning draws the eye of faith from Christ, we have no desire to be drawn into its meshes and entanglements. Have you found one atom of good these theories have done in Canada? Is there a par-

ticle of food for the hungry souls around? Do these speculations unite the children of God together in bonds of love? When these things come in, when such men arise among ourselves, the apostle says, "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

7. "H. A.," Blackpool. John vi. 49, no doubt refers to the death of the body. The manna was a figure of the human flesh or body of Christ, the sent One from the Father. But this was not all that was needed. His blood must be shed; and both these truths received in the soul give life. "He that hath the Son hath life." Not only that Son incarnate, but dead, and risen from among the dead. The body of such an one shall be raised from the dead. But he has now eternal life, and as to that shall never die.

It is by no means certain "*that some Christians*" deny eternal misery or punishment, and reject the idea of a hell, &c. They are Christians who hear the words of Jesus, and believe God who sent Him. They who deny eternal punishment, do not hear the words of Jesus or believe them. (Matt. xxv. 26; John iii. 36; Mark ix. 43-48.) These have no just ground for saying they are Christians. How can they be Christians and reject the words of Christ? May the Lord awaken such, and deliver them from the delusion of Satan. A man dying of thirst would neither need a chemist nor an angel to tell him that water was water. A lost sinner does not need a voice from heaven to tell him the scriptures are from God. They meet the thirst of his soul in all its need, and nothing else does.

“WHOSE SON IS THIS YOUTH?”

II.

1 SAMUEL xvii. 55.

IN Jonathan we have the very opposite of Saul. Saul only knew David as his *amuser*—playing on the harp, or his helper—as armour-bearer. Jonathan knew him as the victorious saviour. He, too, had been in the valley of Elah. He had found himself utterly helpless there to meet the power of the adversary: he had been sore afraid and amazed, like a man when he is brought to look death and judgment in the face, and he finds himself utterly helpless. Satan, the accuser, brings the army of all his sins, like the Philistines, in battle array. He cannot deny them. He is guilty, he feels it, he owns it, yet finds no relief. For forty days Jonathan had found no relief. Have you ever known the bitterness and horror of conviction, and death and everlasting judgment before you? Have you had your forty days?

Your fighting your own battle will not do now. The soft, soothing strains of music will not soothe your terrified conscience. But Jonathan now “saw David go forth against the Philistine.” With what intense interest he watched him! Yes, he saw David go forth alone to meet the adversary. He saw him take up those five

smooth stones from the brook. He saw him take his sling. He heard those words of faith. He saw David put his hand in his bag, and take thence a stone: he saw the arm lifted up to sling: the stone is gone, the giant falls. "The stone sunk into his forehead, and he fell upon his face to the earth. So David prevailed." He saw all this, and more, he saw him take the sword of the giant, and with his own sword cut off his head therewith. Could he have a single doubt as he saw David take the head of the Philistine and carry it to Jerusalem? He heard his father's strange questions as David stood before him, with the giant's head in his hand.

As Jonathan saw David descend into the valley of Elah, and do this great work of victory, have you seen by faith the Son of God descend from the glory He had with the Father, to this valley of sin and death? Have you seen Him go to the cross, and there alone win the eternal victory for us? Was it not there, alone before God, He bore the wrath due to us? There He fought the battle for us, but all alone: we helped Him not. Hark to those words as He conquers in death: "It is finished." Yes, as finished as when the head was struck from Goliath of Gath. Could there be a question that it was finished, when David ascended to Jerusalem with his head in his hand? Can there be a question for you, if you see and believe that God hath raised up Jesus

from the dead? Could Jonathan help, or could he ask David to help him to kill the giant? Surely not; it was done. Can you help Christ, or can you ask Him to help you to save your soul? Surely not; the work is done. And all is yours the moment you believe God. Yes, yours for eternity.

Now, what was the effect on Jonathan when he beheld the saviour David before his eyes? “The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.” And what will be the effect on you, if your eyes are open to behold the Saviour Jesus? Your heart will be knit with the heart of Christ. You will say, He loved me and gave Himself for me. You will sing, “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.” Yes, unto Him be glory, will be now your every desire, and will mark your every action. Let us trace the picture a little further.

When Jonathan beheld David, the all-victorious saviour, did he ask him to become his helper? No, “Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David; and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.” Ah, only let your eyes be open to behold the risen, glorified Saviour, who has

finished the work of eternal redemption, and you will strip yourself of all self-righteousness. You will take your fastings and fightings, your music and ritual, and lay them all at Jesus' feet, saying, Thou art worthy, Jesus, Lord. Nothing short of the revelation of Jesus, the complete Saviour, can strip you of self-righteousness, and self-fighting. Jonathan freely gave up both robe and sword to David, yes, and girdle, too, the emblem of service.

There is not a greater contrast between light and darkness, than there is between living faith in the Person and finished work of Christ, and the dark unbelief of praying to Christ to help you to do the work yourself. This, Jonathan did not do to David. He was saved from the horrors of Elah. He was saved from the defying adversary. He saw and believed: we see not, *but we believe on* God, who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead:—who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Believing God, we are justified—we are saved. It is done, it is finished; our Jesus is not on the cross now. He is not in the sepulchre now. He is in the brightness of the glory of God. He has neither to fight the battle again, nor to *help* us to fight it. Peace with God is the everlasting portion of those who, like Jonathan, believe it is done.

Not so poor Saul, the mere imitator of faith.

What so offended the old man ? Ah, he could not bear that song "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands. And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him."—"And Saul eyed David from that day and forward." It is the same with the poor Sauls of this day. They cannot bear to hear that all who believe in Jesus and the finished work of eternal salvation which He has wrought, have eternal life ; that they are justified, and know it ; they have peace with God, and they are in the unchanging love and favour of God in Christ—and all through the finished work of Christ. Yes, the Sauls are very wroth, and these sayings displease them sore. And they eye those who believe this glorious gospel from that day forward. Oh, how often in their frenzy of hatred, they cast their javelin at David, for what they do to the members of His body, they do to Christ. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

What ! ascribe such ten thousands of blessings to those who only believe in Christ or to Christ for them, and to ascribe almost nothing to us, with our sacraments, and priests, and music, and services, and long repetitions, and works, and fightings ? Why, the most we ever get is a hope, that the giant will be killed by all these. But to say he is killed ; to say the work is done ; to say you are saved ; to know it, and to strip all off and to give all the glory of a present, known,

and eternal salvation to Christ—we will not have it, we will not believe it. No, the most we can get here is a hope to be saved hereafter.

Do you say, "But is not this doctrine of a finished salvation—the finished work of Christ—a very dangerous doctrine, and will it not lead to great indifference and carelessness in walk? Our priests tell us to avoid such people, and not to hear them, nor read their tracts and books."

Let us follow the inspired illustration, and see if we have an answer to such queries. Saul did not believe in this saviour David; he would still use him for his amusement on the harp; but this only increased his hatred to David. "And David played with his hand, as at other times: and there was a javelin in Saul's hand. And Saul cast the javelin, for he said, I will smite David even to the wall." And the subsequent history describes Saul filled with ever-increasing hatred to David, the saviour of Elah, until Saul's death on Gilboa.

It will be so, nay, it is so, with every rejecter of the full, eternal salvation in Christ. The gospel is brought before you, as David stood before Saul with the head of Goliath in his hand. You reject Jesus as your Saviour, and go back to use Him for your musical entertainment and soothing pleasure. As sure as Saul hated David, so surely will you hate Christ, and all connected with Him. And yet, as with Saul, you will be

troubled with anxious fear: "Saul was yet more afraid of David; and Saul became David's enemy continually." (1 Sam. xviii. 29.) How fearfully true this is of thousands in our day! May every reader of these lines be delivered from this dreadful state!

Jonathan, on the other hand, sees the work is done, is finished. His heart is turned to the saviour David. He knows he is saved. He does not ask David to help him fight the giant. He gives up robe and sword. Does this make him indifferent as to David? Saul asks him and all his servants to kill David. Did he? "But Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David." (1 Sam. xix. 1, 2.) Blessed Jesus, the more the heart knows Thee as the complete Saviour, the more shall we delight much in Thee. Thou art our joy, our crown, our all.

Jonathan made one great mistake, as to reward a fatal mistake, he remained in the house of his father, the king, who hated David, the true and future king. Yet in the house of his father he confessed David. Many more particulars as to this may be seen in a tract written years ago.* It would be deeply interesting to trace the future history of these men, as illustrating the two principles of owning Jesus as the complete Saviour, to merely using Him for refreshment as in this day. It is enough to see that one

* "*Jonathan*," Morrish, London.

engenders deep hatred to Christ; the other, great delight in Him. And this delight is the true spring of an obedient walk. As Jonathan said to David, "Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee." In this, however, we shall do well ever to keep in mind our entire dependence on the Lord—to give up robe, sword, bow, and girdle to Him, the true David. But there can be no real delight in Christ, as the spring of a holy obedience, unless we know Him as our complete and eternal Saviour.

In Jonathan and Mephibosheth, we have a double revelation of Christ in those types.. In Jonathan it is the finished work of Christ; in Mephibosheth, it is the kindness of God revealed in the person of David. Mephibosheth remained identified with David during the days of David's rejection. Jonathan remained in his father's house. How exact the balances of the sanctuary! We need to know both, to really leave the house of Saul and be identified with the present rejected Christ. May we be assured that the battle is over for us; redemption accomplished; and hear, and believe the word of God. "I will surely shew thee kindness for Christ's sake!" "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." Certainty of salvation will not lead to indifference about Him who has thus saved us.

C. S.

“GOD SO LOVED.”

JOHN iii. 16.

THE substance of a first preaching, on Lord's day, March 25th, 1835; and again, after fifty years, on March 29th, 1885.

We will read from verse 14: “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Before we notice the wondrous revelation of God in these verses, it may be necessary, for some, to refer to a fatal mistake made by many in applying the doctrine of the new birth, as stated to Nicodemus, as though Christ meant, or taught, the new birth by water baptism. We must notice that the Lord was not speaking to a Christian about the church or Christianity, but to a ruler of the Jews; and He was speaking to him about the kingdom of God—that kingdom which God will assuredly set up on earth. And we must not confound the terrestrial glory of that kingdom with the celestial glory of the church. No doubt there are even important principles in common. Whether for the kingdom

or the church, 'fallen man must be born again; but to suppose that the new birth is a priestly act of man, in the ordinance of baptism, is the most fatal heresy. It destroys the efficacy of the word, and faith. If a man can make a child or adult a member of Christ by water, there is no need for either faith or the word of God.

But the Lord does not say one word about baptism in His discourse to Nicodemus. He evidently speaks of that which Nicodemus ought to have understood. Now turn, and see if this was not the case. In Ezekiel xxxvi. 22-37 we have a very complete account of what God will do when He gathers His people, Israel, again, and sets up His kingdom—that of which Jesus spoke. And when He has brought them to their own land, He says, "THEN will I sprinkle clean water upon you . . . and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Water was the well-known emblem of purification. Thus will Israel be born again in that day, by the operation of the Spirit of God, no doubt applying the word, as in our case.

It is important to notice also the entire change as to the law, when God shall thus set up the millennial kingdom. Under the law God com-

manded, required everything. In the kingdom of God He produces everything by the new nature and the Spirit. Even repentance is produced after they are born again in the land. "Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities, and for your abominations." (Ver. 31.)

The law could not produce in man that which an absolutely holy God requires; but God will produce it in His people: "and cause you to walk in my statutes." This is very blessed. Well, there is not one word of christian baptism, either here, or in the Lord's words to Nicodemus.

Let us now look at these verses, John iii. 14-16. We would call attention especially to three things in these precious words of Jesus:—

First, the atonement has the first place: "even so must the Son of man be lifted up;"

Secondly, Why was this, the death of Jesus on the cross? The answer is, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son;"

Thirdly, What was the purpose of God in Christ being so lifted up—so given? "That whosoever [or, every one] that believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

We must never fail to notice, that in the gospel the atonement has the first place. To exclude this, and preach what is called the Father-

hood of God, is the delusion of Satan. "So must the Son of man be lifted up." As Jesus said, on the way to Emmaus, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" And again, to the disciples gathered in the upper room, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." And after this manner the apostles preached the gospel: "Opening and alleging, that Christ MUST NEEDS have suffered, and risen again from the dead." (Acts xvii. 3.) "For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures." (1 Cor. xv. 3.) "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." (1 Pet. ii. 24.) "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." (Chap. iii. 18.) "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." (Rom. iv. 25.)

Jesus assures us this *must be*: "Even so must the Son of man be lifted up." The work of Christ on the cross is the only true foundation for the glad tidings of God; and His resurrection from the dead is God's assurance to us of sins forgiven, and justification from all things. "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.)

But now, in the second place, WHY WAS THIS? Why did the eternal Son, by whom all things were made, and by whom all things subsist—why was He nailed to the cross? Why did He thus groan from beneath the load of our sins? Why *must* He thus die, the propitiation for our sins? Oh, wondrous answer! let heaven and earth hear it. FOR GOD SO LOVED!

Let sinners hear it. The cause was the unfathomable, eternal love of God. For God so loved. Do not suppose that God loved us because Jesus died for us—that He *then* began to love us. Did He love Israel in Egypt because the blood was shed, and sprinkled on the doorposts? No, the blood was sprinkled as the token of His love. His purpose was to spare them. They were sinners, and thus the lamb *must* be killed, and the blood must be sprinkled, to shelter them from righteous judgment. Oh, wondrous grace! Christ lifted up on the cross was the manifestation of God's eternal love to us.

You may say, How can this be? I am sure I never deserved such love as this, neither before, nor since, I have tried to be a Christian. How can God love me, since I hate myself, and only deserve to be cast out of His sight, or into hell?

All this is really true, whether we know and own it, or not.

But mark the contrast between the love of God and man's love. Man loves that, or those, whom he thinks deserving of his love. Not so God. For whilst nothing can shew more distinctly God's abhorrence of sin than the cross of Christ, yet it is even there that the love of God to the sinner shone out in all its glory. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. v. 6, 8.)

And all this, when it had been fully proved that there were none that met, or could meet, by law, the righteous requirements of a holy God. All were guilty as to acts. All were also dead in sins, children of wrath. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins," &c. (Eph. ii. 4.) "God so loved." If sin had not come in, and Jesus had not been lifted up, the love of God could never have been known, and would never have been manifested. The telescope may reveal the great works of God, and the microscope the no less wonderful minute things of God; but no glass can be formed of sufficient power to manifest the love of God.

No, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only-be-

gotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." Here alone is the revelation of what God is to us, and what His love is to us. It is fully manifested. The sending of His Son manifests what He is: God is love. Surely we ought to love God. Man under law was required to love God. But looking within, or at himself, he could never say, I have found it, here is love. Has it not been fully proved that man, with every privilege of the law, only hated God? God was manifest in the flesh as Son of man. Did man love Him? He hated, only hated Him, and sought miserable satisfaction in killing Him, the Prince of life. No, it is not, if we love God, then God will love us. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Do you not see, dear readers, it is not our love to God, but God's love to us, when we deserved nothing but eternal wrath? Owning this honestly, that you only deserve wrath, can you say, "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love"? Oh, do you so enjoy this love? Is it perfected in you? That is, do you so know and believe the love that God hath to you, that that love casteth out all fear? If we know that there is nothing but infinite, perfect love in God to us, how can we be afraid of Him? Nay, "because, as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect

love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." If you are afraid of God, you are thinking of your own love, and that is not perfect. If you are thinking of His love, how can you be afraid? for He has brought you to be as Christ is, even in this world. As Jesus said, "I ascend to my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." Oh, blessed position!—"As he is, so are we in this world."

Do we not love God then? Oh, yes; but let us remember it is love *produced*. "We love him, because he first loved us." (1 John iv. 6-19.) We thus see that we cannot possibly be under law and grace. If we are on the ground of love to God [as a requirement, we entirely set aside the gospel of the glad tidings by which love is produced. We will now pass on to the third thing we find in these precious words of Jesus. May the Lord open our understandings to understand the riches of His grace.



NOTES FOR YOUNG BELIEVERS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

XXI.

CHAPTER xv. 22. "For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you . . . and having a great desire, these many years, to come

unto you." Here a fact of no little importance is recorded.

The Holy Ghost well knew the future arrogance of the professing church, and how Rome would be the ultimate head of those pretensions. He has therefore carefully excluded all knowledge as to who first preached Christ at Rome. It is evident, from these words, that the apostle of the Gentiles had, as yet, never been there. Neither is there a particle of evidence that either Peter, or any other apostle, had been there when it was founded, and the brethren were able to edify one another. We also learn that this epistle was written about the time that Paul went up to Jerusalem, to carry the contributions to the poor saints. That is a little before he was sent a prisoner to Rome. (Acts xx., xxi., &c.) He did not know what means the Lord would employ to send him to Rome. Let us learn in this that the Lord can, and will, accomplish all His purpose.

Verse 29. "And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." Yes, and though bonds and imprisonment, and the fierce Euroclydon, awaited him as companions to Rome, yet his Lord did not disappoint him. It was from Rome, and at Rome, the Lord used him in bringing out the fulness of the gospel in the revelation of the church. And from thence he sent the precious stream of truth to the Ephesians, Philippians, and

Colossians. Thus, in the severest storms of life, we may rest in patience, assured that He doeth all things well. In verses 30, 31 we see how the apostle valued the prayers of saints he had never seen; and yet the Lord answers those prayers in His own way.

He has in this chapter spoken of God as "the God of hope," and "the God of patience." "Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen." Thus we surely need to know Him as the God of hope, patience, and peace. How important thus to know Him in these last and difficult days.

Chapter xvi. We now have the closing remarks and salutations. The Lord would not have the devoted Phebe forgotten. She was a deaconess, or servant, of the church in Cenchrea. "That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also." These verses throw much light on the true character of the deacon, as appointed by the apostles before the failure of the church set in so sadly. There is not a shadow of the modern clerical idea. "A succourer of many." Evidently this was in temporal things. She was to be received IN THE LORD, in that relationship. And what beautiful love and care. She is to be assisted in whatsoever business she has in Rome. It might then be said, See how these Christians love one another.

At this time, also, we find Priscilla and Aquila in Rome, and their devotedness is noted. There were no St. Peters then, but "the church that is in their house." And, unto verse 16, we have various companies of saints, which appear to belong to different houses, all forming the one assembly of God in Rome. (See verses 14, 15.) "And the brethren that are with them;" or, "all the saints which are with them." There were those then that took an oversight of these several companies of brethren, or saints. Such were called elders, or overseers, in other early epistles. But why is there no Bishop of Rome addressed? Simply and evidently because there was no such person. Nay, it is most remarkable that there is not one word in this Epistle that can be used as an authority for the episcopacy of Rome. How strikingly this displays the foreknowledge and wisdom of God!

Now contrast the Rome of that day with this. To return to the church as it was in Rome, as found in these salutations, what should we find? No pope or bishop of Rome, no cardinals, no clergy, no monks or nuns; not a single priest performing mass; no grand buildings, called churches. But we should find different gatherings of saints by calling, knowing their sins forgiven; justified from all things; having peace with God; able to admonish one another. All these assemblies, in certain houses or places, were

under the care of the Holy Ghost, and labouring brethren are named in each company—the whole being members of the one body of Christ. We are compelled to own that there is no similarity whatever between the church in Rome in the year 60, and the Church of Rome in these days. Rome is evidently a departure from the true church of God.

Is it not remarkable that the only official person named—if we may so regard the deaconess—is a woman. And, lest the persons saluted should be regarded, or referred to, as priests, or *episcopoi*, women are named amongst them. How beautiful it was when they were thus brethren dwelling together in the unity of the Spirit, and some of the brethren labouring much in the Lord—such as “the beloved Persis.” Dear young believer, is there any reason why we should not be content with the same simplicity now?

Verse 17. “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause [or form] divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.” There are two things here we must carefully notice. Division is an evil in itself—it is strongly condemned in other scriptures. (See 1 Cor. i., iii.) We also learn, that if any are practising that evil, by causing or forming divisions, contrary to the doctrine they had received, others were to avoid them; that is, to separate from them. But if believers do thus

separate from and avoid those who form divisions, do they not also form a sect, or division? No, obedience to the word is not division. And, further, those who cause divisions may always be known by the spirit in which they act. "For they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ," &c. We never go wrong if Christ is the only object. Happy is it when it can be said, "For your obedience is come abroad unto all men." "Yet I would have you wise unto that which is good and simple concerning evil." It is most deadening to all spiritual life to be occupied with evil.

"And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." That is certain: whether he persecutes or seduces, it is but for a little while. He still is the accuser, but shortly he will be cast down. In the meantime, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen." This is repeated—verses 20, 24. Yes, the grace, the unclouded favour, unchanging love, sovereign and free, be with you all. Then follow the salutations of others. But even Timotheus is "my workfellow." What unfeigned humility and brotherly love!

As Paul commended the elders of Ephesus (Acts xx.), so here he says, "Now to him that is of power to stablish you, according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest

[and by prophetic scriptures—New Translation], according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations, for the obedience of faith. To God only wise be glory, through Jesus Christ, for ever. Amen.”

Yes, God is able to stablish all believers according to that which Paul calls “my gospel,” my glad tidings. The glad tidings committed to Paul have a wide range. The solid foundation of those glad tidings we have seen unfolded in this Epistle—the righteousness of God revealed in justifying the ungodly—both as to sins, up to chapter v. 11, and also as to sin, chapter v. 12 to viii. 4. It also contains the glad tidings of deliverance from sin and law; peace with God; no condemnation to them in Christ Jesus, whether as to sins, or sin; and no possible separation from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

Here is also just a reference to a still further revelation, of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began. This mystery is fully explained in Ephesians iii. This was not made manifest in the scriptures of Old Testament times. How could it, since it was then kept a profound secret? But it was revealed by prophetic scriptures, that is, of the New Testament. It is, however, remarkable how soon that heavenly mystery was lost, and Christendom went back to an earthly Judaism. It not only put itself under law for righteousness, but set up a worldly church

government, in imitation of Judaism; so that soon all trace of the church, as seen in scripture, was lost for long ages. Such is man. He has always become foolish; all his wisdom is folly.

The closing words of the Epistle direct us not to man, or to what calls itself the church, but "To God only wise be glory, through Jesus Christ, for ever. Amen." However man has failed; however the church may fail as a testimony for God on earth; God shall be eternally glorified, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. C. S.

THE PARABLES OF OUR LORD.

THE TALENTS.

"For [the kingdom of heaven is] as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents, went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents; behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents; behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee

ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."—MATTHEW XXV. 14-30.

THIS parable is very similar to the one of the Pounds (Luke xix.), only here one receives five talents; one, two; and another, one, "according to their several ability;" whereas, in Luke, each received one pound. Here the wicked servant buried the talent "in the earth;" in Luke it was wrapped "in a napkin." Here the faithful servants are made rulers over "many things," and "enter into the joy of their Lord;" in Luke they were put over "cities."

This parable shews that all have not the same ability, but all have the same Lord to serve, and all should have the same zeal in their Master's service. Each is to use the gift; and this implies it is not something already possessed in nature, it is bestowed by the Lord, to be used for Him. It will be seen the words, "kingdom of

heaven," have been added. It is the faithfulness of His servants, rather than the kingdom.

Here the sovereign goodness of the Lord comes out. Surely it would be more than an ample reward to rule over many things; but it is added, they are to enter into the joy of their Lord—to be brought into immediate association with Himself. Who can estimate what this will be?

Thus we are called upon to be using our talents for the Lord in His absence. It follows the parable of the Ten Virgins. We are to use our talents, not to sleep. When He returns, He will ask us as to how we have used these talents. It may be that the reader has but *one*—let him use that faithfully, and not, as is the temptation to many, wish he had more or different gifts, and thus be neglecting the one he has; and our Lord will accord to him His divine approval on His return, and make Him a sharer of His own joy.

We feel the especial danger, is, as in our parable, to those who have but *one* talent. It may seem so small in comparison with the gifts of others, and it may be for doing things unseen by mortal eyes. Ah, but *God sees*; He has given the talent, and the *one* talent is given according to "ability," as much as those who have more. Then such could not use two if they could get them; their work is to use the one they have. May God arouse all to use the gifts He has given in dependence upon Himself, the living God.

As in the parable of the Pounds, so here, *all* receive gifts. This agrees with Ephesians iv. 16, where, under the figure of a body, there is that which *every* joint supplies—*supplies*, mark, not receives, though that is true also; but every part has its office to fulfil, and each has to do that which specially belongs to it; and no one is so insignificant, that the most exalted can say, “I have no need of thee.” Yea, the parts that we think to be less honourable, have the more abundant honours. All is so beautifully fitted, that there should be no superfluous member, and no lack. (See 1 Cor. xii.)

We doubt not many of the complaints of the lack of gift would cease were each using faithfully, as to the Lord, what he has. We are also told to “covet earnestly the best gifts;” but he that is not faithful in a little, cannot be entrusted with that which is greater, while the talent of the slothful servant is given to the one who had received the ten. Let us not forget, also, that even a Timothy needed the exhortation to *stir up* his gift (2 Tim. i. 6); or it might lie dormant and unused. There is much need in many places, but who can tell the amount of talents there are buried in *the earth*, or earthly things? May God arouse us to the sense of need, and to our individual responsibility.

The Master will return, and we shall have to give an account of our stewardship. “We must

all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. v. 10.) But the apostle joins with this—"We labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of [or, acceptable to] him."

As in the parable of the Pounds, all who take the place of servants will be judged as such. The unprofitable servant said he knew his master was a "hard" man; yea, more, that he took what did not rightfully belong to him; and he was afraid, and went and hid the talent in the earth. All a tissue of excuses, to cover up his unfaithfulness; but it shews how man, and even those who profess to be God's servants, may regard their Master in heaven. All is *hard* work to the slothful, and it is wicked to charge injustice to God. So he is called a slothful and wicked servant, and is consigned to the outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

But the faithful enter into the joy of their Lord, a rich compensation, surely, for any little service we can do here for that One to whom we owe all we have, and all we are, though nothing is little done for such a Master. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. xv. 58.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

8. "T. H.," Port Glasgow. The subject of the Lord's agony in the garden is so solemn, we feel our words must be few. The distinction betwixt His bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows in Isaiah liii. 4, and His atonement for us in verse 5, is most clear. But to make His agony in the garden any kind of mere human fear of dying, or death then, in the garden, and that He was answered in being saved from dying in the garden, would be a most serious mistake, and would greatly tend to take away the true, awful character of bearing the wrath of God due to us. Whether in Matthew, Luke, or John xviii., it was the one and same cup of awful wrath against sin that was before His soul. That the angel took it away is untrue. In Luke the terrible agony came after the angel strengthened Him. (Luke xxii. 43-45.) And in John the cup is still before Him, after the agony and prayer in the garden, as he rises strengthened to meet all that was before Him. It was on that cross, on which He voluntarily offered Himself, that the awful cup of divine wrath against sin must be drunk. He must suffer and rise again. It is remarkable, that in these days, all theories are welcome to men, that lessen the true loathsome character of sin, and the true awful character of the cup of wrath, infinitely loathsome to the Holy, Holy, Holy Jehovah Jesus. But He must, and did drink it on the cross. "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. ii. 20.)

"THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST."

WHEN the church had so sadly failed, as we see by the later Epistles of 2 Timothy, 2 Peter, Jude, and 3 John ; and thus, when the perplexities of the last day had set in, how exceedingly blessed to have "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass." We fully admit that great mistakes have been made in attempting to explain this book. And perhaps one mistake above all others has been the source of all other mistakes ; that is, the omission to carefully notice the division the Lord Himself makes as to the contents of this blessed book in the 19th verse of the first chapter. He said to John, "Write the things which thou hast seen." That was evidently what he had then seen up to that moment in chapter i. 1-18. Then, "and the things which are." The things that are, as we shall see, occupy chapters ii., iii. The things that then marked the condition of the seven assemblies in Asia. And these, seen prophetically, describe the whole history of the professing church to the end in seven successive epochs, or states. Then "and the things which shall be hereafter," or after these ; that is, the things that shall take place after the close of the entire history of the church on earth.

Thus there is first, the introduction; then Christ as seen in the midst of the churches.

Secondly, The whole history of Christendom so long as it is recognised.

Thirdly, What will take place after the close of this period in which the church is gathered.

Now is it not most gracious of our God, to give His servants the very revelation of all this, in relation to His Son?

We would not then assume, or seek to explain, but rather in lowliness of mind, seek to understand all, in His presence, who has thus been pleased to reveal them. It is evident, however, that if we try to apply the things that should take place after the gospel period, as though they belonged to the period in which we live, we cannot possibly understand them. The Lord guide us in our meditations by the Holy Spirit.

If we then just read the book, we find in chapter i., the Lord, not as Saviour here, but as Judge, clothed in judicial robes, walking in the midst of the churches. And, as we have seen, how He divided the subjects of the revelation.

In Chapters ii., iii. the successive but complete history of the church downward to the end.

In Chapters iv., v. what will take place in heaven after the church is no longer on earth.

In Chapter iv. The creation-claims, and glory of the Lord.

In Chapter v. the redemption-claims, and glory of the Lamb.

In Chapter vi. what will take place on earth after the church is gone and is seen in heaven. The Lamb begins the judgments by which He will take possession of the inheritance. The clouds grow dark, the storm gathers. But!

Chapter vii. is a parenthesis in which God reveals His gracious, and hitherto unknown, purposes of grace, even in the midst of most fearful judgment.

Chapters viii., ix. The seven trumpet blasts of judgment; first on the circumstances, and then on the persons of men.

Chapter x. Time to be no longer prolonged, the period of dates, or of the end begins. (Dan. ix.-xii.)

Chapter xi. Three years and a half of Jewish history run on to the end; the sounding of the last angel. This closes the direct line of prophecy.

Chapter xii. Reveals the sources and character of this world, and its opposition to the Christ of God, and His people Israel.

Chapter xiii. The Roman empire appears on earth again: its terrible persecuting character.

Chapter xiv. A general outline, or synopsis, of the seven great events.

Chapters xv., xvi. Preparation; and the pouring out of the wrath of God upon the earth.

Chapter xvii. The full-blown character of

apostate Christendom, now become Babylon. The resurrection of the Roman empire explained. Its connection with, and the destruction of, the great harlot.

Chapter xviii. The detail of the destruction of Babylon.

Chapter xix. The great harlot being destroyed, the marriage of the Lamb takes place. Then the coming of the Lord, and His saints WITH HIM. The supper of the great God ; and the destruction of the Roman empire.

Chapter xx. Next the judgment of Satan. The millennial reign. Then afterwards the judgment of the dead.

Chapter xxi. The eternal state to verse 8. Then further details as to the bride—the Lamb's wife—during millennial days, to chapter xxii. 6. Ending with closing remarks. Such is an outline of the subjects of this wondrous book.

And all this direct revelation God was pleased to give unto Jesus Christ, to shew His *servants* things which must shortly come to pass. We must not overlook the persons thus pointed out, "his servants." They are the persons to whom these things are intended to be shewn and understood. However deeply the outward church may be fallen, still the Lord Jesus has His servants. Which would you say was His servant in John iii.—Gaius, or Diotrophes ? It is not likely that the latter would understand these

things; neither have his successors ever done so. Surely there is a reason why the apostle John is also addressed as a servant. Is not that the true position to take? Be not ye many masters.

Now John "bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw."

Let us then approach with holy reverence, and read this book as the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Wondrous privilege to have the future thus opened to us. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is near."

Verse 4. "John to the seven churches," &c. John the servant has the responsibility to communicate the Lord's mind to the assemblies. But the Lord is the self-existent and eternal One; and though the subject of the book is governmental judgment, yet it is blessed to see grace and peace first "unto you." The number seven is frequently used as a symbol of completeness in this book. And how truly, how infinitely complete, the Spirit before the throne; and that throne the throne of judgment. Yet grace and peace still to the assemblies from Him. "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth." Now what a revelation of the Person of Christ is this. Do we know Him in each

of these characters? The last days of failure had begun: man had wholly failed in every position in which God had tried him. But the faithful witness is revealed as the object of faith, and as the risen One, having the pre-eminence very death. But now a new title is revealed. "And the Prince of the kings of the earth." The world has rejected Him in this character. God now reveals Him to us as the coming Prince of the kings of the earth.

Verses 5, 6. What a test these verses present to the various gospels and states of men! It is not unto me, and my efforts after holiness in self; no: "Unto him that loved [or loveth] us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." Oh, beware of those false teachers who would tell you that no one can know that he is saved, or that his sins are washed away. Is there a breath of uncertainty in these precious words? Is it unto Him who I hope will wash away my sins? Are these words yours? Do they express the very state of your doubting heart? If so, you are utterly wrong. We beg of you, let the question of your sins be settled, before you attempt to understand the judgments of this book.

But there are two things: not only has He washed us from our sins in His blood; and if washed whiter than snow, without blame in His sight; but he has also made us what He is Him-

self. Is He the Melchisedec Priest—the Royal Priest? He has made us just what He is. "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father." Oh, what glory. He has made us like, and suited to Himself. "To him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever." Amen.

Verse 7. This glorious One, thus revealed to us, is surely coming from heaven: and mark the condition of the world when He comes. Will He find the world converted, and glad to see Him come? "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."

Is it not amazing that Satan can deceive men with the thought that they will all be converted before Christ comes: the "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. May our hearts be bowed in worship, as the glories of the Lord are thus revealed to His servants. How encouraging in the midst of last-day failure.

Verse 9. Now what can we say to John's salutation, Is it true of us? He says: "I, John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ." He does not say, I am your apostle, or bishop, or anything of the kind; but "your brother." But do we know anything of companionship in

tribulation? There is no question that this will be the case in proportion to faithfulness to the rejected Christ. He "was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." Whether he was banished there, as is said, or not, that is not the point. Whether a prisoner there, or a labourer there, he was there for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. Now, wherever we are, and in whatever condition of life we are in, can we say we are in our Patmos, where we live, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ? If it has not been so, may our God grant from this day it may be so.



"GOD SO LOVED."

II.

JOHN III. 14-16.

THE third thing we notice then in these verses is this. What was the purpose of God in Christ being so lifted up—so given?

"That whosoever [or every one] that believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." We have seen that the propitiatory death of Christ must have the first—the foundation place in the Gospel of God. "Even so must the Son of man be lifted up." The cause of this, was, "God so loved." We now come to the purpose of God in all this. Surely this is a deep and wondrous

theme. God has His own eternal purpose respecting us poor sinners. It was no after-thought when sin had come in, and surely no subsequent thought when Christ had died or we had believed. No, the greatest gift ever given in the countless ages of eternity, the gift of His only begotten Son, was according to purpose. "That whosoever believeth in him." Mark, this purpose was not limited now to Israel, as a nation. No, "whosoever believeth in him." This is a message for you, *to you*, because to every one that believeth. The only limit or distinction is faith, "That believeth in him."

Now the question is this, Do you believe *in* Him? Many would not deny there is such a person as Jesus, the Son of God. The demons were compelled to own that. We do not ask, Do you believe there is such a person as Jesus, once on the cross, now at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens? but we ask, Do you believe *in* Him? Is He the object of your faith, and of your trust? The Waldenses fully admitted the existence of the church; but they would suffer martyrdom, in its most cruel form, rather than say they believed *in* the church, as an object of faith and trust. Is Jesus the object of your faith? Have you received Him as your Saviour, in whom you trust for present and eternal salvation? This faith is not the belief of demons, but it is the gift of God. We beg of

you to answer the question in the presence of God. Have you this faith IN Jesus? Can you abandon every hope in yourself, and rest in Him alone for eternal salvation? Do you say, I do believe in Jesus; but oh! my sins, and especially some of them, they so trouble me? It is all well to abhor ourselves; but did not Jesus die for all the believer's sins? Was He not lifted up on the cross for that very thing? Have we not seen that the atoning work is done? Can those sins be charged on Him now? Then, can they be charged on you who now believe in Him as your complete and eternal salvation?

God's eternal purpose then was that every one that believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. If this purpose embraced every one that believeth in Him, and you believe in Him, then it surely means you—it embraces *you*. God is love, and what did He purpose concerning you? that, through the lifting up of the Son of man, you should not perish, but have eternal life. You may not yet know how good this news is, and how many there are that treat it as the greatest error. God grant you may believe it with an understanding heart.

What then is eternal life? Sometimes we understand what a thing is, by looking at what it is not, or in contrast. What then is temporal or mortal life? It is life that may cease to be. That is the life of all living creatures; as to the

life even of man's body, it may cease. It may be for a day, or a month, or a year, and then cease to be. Now many would admit that God had so loved as to give a life, not eternal, but temporal—a life that may be lost or cease to be—may be for a time, and then cease to be. Now eternal life is the opposite of all this; it is life that cannot cease; it is not the life of a creature, it is the life of the self-existent Son of God. Not temporal, but the self-existent, eternal life. And has God so loved, that, through the lifting up of the Son on the cross, we, every one that believeth in Him, should have the eternal life that cannot, that will not, cease to be—the life of the self-existent, eternal Son? This amazing fact is revealed by Jesus.

In scripture, eternal life is spoken of in two ways. The one as to the believer's future state as Matthew xxv. 46. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." See also Romans ii. 7. It is also, as we shall see, spoken of as already the portion of the believer. These words of Jesus, "should not perish but have eternal life," do not necessarily imply present possession.

We will look at other passages which leave no uncertainty as to this. Even in this same chapter, "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

(Ver. 36.) Here are two things equally certain as to present position. The believer hath eternal life as a present thing, and on the unbeliever the wrath of God abides.

As to the believer the Lord makes it most certain. He says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, HATH eternal life, and shall not come into judgment, [it should be,] but is passed from death unto life." Have your ears been opened to hear the words of Jesus? Have you been brought, through grace, to believe God who sent His Son? Then the Lord Jesus assures you that you have eternal life; that you shall not come into judgment; that you have passed from death unto life. Why should you doubt Him? He further says, "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day:" only there must be faith in His death, as well as in Him as the bread come down from heaven in His incarnation. "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life." Nothing can shew more ignorance of His word, or spirit and truth, than to pervert these words of Jesus as though He spake of the bread and wine in the Lord's supper. It is receiving the fact of His death, the shedding of His blood, for our salvation. Whoso does this hath eternal life.

And mark, Jesus does not speak of life that may be lost, or that might be taken from you, or that could possibly cease to be: no, it would not in any such case be eternal life. It is as imperishable as Himself, as it is Himself, and it cannot be lost or taken away. *He says*, and to faith that is enough, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all, and no man [or one] is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." (John x. 27-29.)

Satan and unbelief would say, do not be so sure that God so loved you as to give His Son to be lifted up for you, that you might have such certainty as this. Has He said, that you shall never perish; that, as a believer, you not only have eternal life, but none can pluck you out of the Father's hand? "Oh!" Satan says, ever serpent-like, "He knows that if you should sin, you will lose all and pluck yourself from His hands, then where will your eternal life be?" What a liar the old serpent is! But we have the sure word of God, and has He not made full provision should the true follower of Christ in a moment of temptation fail or sin? Was not that sin borne by Jesus on the tree? What saith the scripture? "And if any man sin, we have an

advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins," &c. (1 John ii. 1, 2.) Yes, "*God so loved.*" Sad indeed it is that so many will not believe that God so loved: they prefer to cling to the dark reasonings of unbelief.

Is it then a light matter to disbelieve God as to this? "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God **HATH** given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." Yes, God so loved. Is it dreadful heresy to believe what God so plainly tells us—His very record? And mark, eternal life is in His Son. Can the Son cease to be? can the life He is, then, cease to be? He is the eternal Son. It is not something apart from Himself that we may lose; "He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life."

Do you ask, Is it the will of God that I may really know that I have this blessed portion in the Son, even eternal 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. 10-13.) Oh, how clear the record of God; but beware how you despise it or reason it away.

This is the gospel God was pleased to give to a poor country boy to preach fifty years ago, and

this is the same gospel God gave him to preach last night, and gives him now to lay before the reader. That gospel he received not from man. For weary months he was struggling under law, seeking to meet the *requirements* of the law, and ever failing. God the Giver, and God the Producer of all He requires was, as yet, utterly unknown to him. He was returning to his home in a village near Laughton, weary and sorrowful even to despair. He was alone with God in the lane: he fell to the ground in the middle of the road and groaned, "Oh Lord, I can do no more, I can go no farther," and he felt in his soul he was lost. It was there the Holy Spirit revealed to him the true blessed fact that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." And oh, from that day, what mercy, depths of mercy! what failures and chastenings! But the writer has ever proved the truth of the words of Jesus—none, no one, has been able to pluck him out of His hands. Be there few or many days before we see the face of Him for whom we wait, may we never cease to proclaim the same glad tidings—that the moment a soul is, through grace, brought to truly believe God, he has eternal life, eternal salvation, is for ever perfected by the one sacrifice of Christ, and stands in the full unclouded favour of God in the Beloved. "For we are complete in him." May

God, to whom all praise is due—God who so loved, bless these few words to all who read them.

C. S.

“ARE YOU SAVED?”

THE CHURCHMAN'S ANSWER TO
THE QUESTION.

THE cover of a magazine from Cornwall, for March, 1885, has been sent us, containing one of the boldest denials of the gospel we have ever seen in print. It surely ought to have been headed “A Churchman's Answer,” &c., as we trust there are many who would utterly repudiate such an answer. The clergyman who signs this article or answer, gives three reasons why, as he says, the clergy never ask such a question when speaking about church-going and sacraments, as “Are you saved?”

“First, your clergy cannot ask you this plain question, whatever others may do, because it would be unscriptural; secondly, misleading; and thirdly, impossible for you to answer in the affirmative.” “It,” scripture, “tells us, of course, that God *has* saved us (Eph. ii. 5; Titus iii. 5; 1 Peter iii. 21) so far as He can do so,” &c. “It nowhere permits us to call ourselves ‘saved,’ but them that *are being saved.*”

It will be seen that the very foundations of Christianity are here attacked. And surely this

is a case in which we are called to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints. Far be it that these pages should be taken up in mere controversy; but when thousands of souls are being betrayed by such false teaching, is the servant of the Lord to be silent? No, reader, we solemnly assure you that we write for your soul. It is the question of your soul's salvation.

Is the certainty of a believer's salvation scriptural? turn to Luke vii. 50. Jesus speaks to a sinner. He says, "Thy sins are forgiven." "Thy faith *hath saved thee*: go in peace." Were her sins forgiven? Was she saved? May she believe Jesus and say, Yes, my sins are forgiven; Yes, I am saved? J. H. says it would be unscriptural. Reader, shall you, if a believer, and I, receive the words of Jesus, or the clergyman's?

In 1 Corinthians xv. 1, Paul speaks of the gospel which he preached, he says: "Which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand: by which also YE ARE SAVED." He then tells them that Christ died for our sins; and that all depends on whether He is raised from the dead. "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." (Ver. 14.) Yes, if Christ is not risen, then the clergyman is right, ye are not saved, ye are "in your sins." (Ver. 17.) Is it not blasphemy to say, God has done all He could do? Has He not raised Christ from the

dead, the absolute proof that the believer is saved, is justified, accounted righteous before God? Again, in Ephesians ii. 5-9, "*By grace ye are saved.*" "FOR BY GRACE ARE YE SAVED through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." One would think no man could be found to say after all this, God had done all He could; but you must not believe Him, that you are saved, though He says it is so. Shall we believe the word of God or the word of a clergyman? That is really the question.

"Who *hath saved us*, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works," &c. (2 Tim. i. 9.) Am I to say: No, He hath not saved us, the clergyman says we are not saved, it is unscriptural? "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." (1 Peter i. 9.) "But unto us *which are saved.*" (1 Cor. i. 18.) "In them *that are saved*, and in them that perish." (2 Cor. ii. 15.) "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved," &c., &c. (Mark xvi. 16.) Then how many other scriptures state the certainty of accomplished salvation in other words. Is not Jesus set before us as the Author of eternal salvation. "By his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us.*" (Heb. ix. 12.) "In whom *we have* redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." (Col. i. 14.)

"For by one offering *he hath* perfected for ever, them that are sanctified." "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." "There is no more offering for sin." (Heb. x.) "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, **HATH** everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (John v. 24.) "By him all that believe **ARE** justified from all things." (Acts xiii. 39.) There are these blessed divine certainties true of every believer: he has peace with God, being justified by faith; he has access into the present favour and grace of God; and the future before him is the glory of God. In Christ he is without condemnation: and nothing can separate him from the love of Christ. (Rom. v. 1, 2; viii. 1, 38, 39.)

And will you now say that the knowledge of salvation is unscriptural? Will you give up all this which God tells you in His holy word? Fellow believer, we are invited to give up this divine soul-sustaining certainty, for what? Positively nothing with any certainty. If I understand this doctrine it is this: God has done His best to save you: He has failed, for you are not saved. Now you must do your best: the clergyman will do his best with sacraments, and the like, yet after all, it is still uncertain whether you can be saved.



THE PARABLES OF OUR LORD.

THE TEN VIRGINS.

“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. A'terward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.”—MATTHEW xxv. 1-13.

WITH this parable we all are, happily, more or less familiar, however short we may come of being practically in its spirit. It is the normal condition of the Christian, like the saints of Thessalonica, to be waiting for the Lord from heaven, to be going out in spirit to meet the Bridegroom.

It may be a question as to *when* the parable more definitely applies. It is introduced by the word, “then.” In the previous chapter we have, “Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.” (Ver. 42.) And in Luke

we are exhorted to be like unto men who wait for their Lord, that when He cometh, we may open to Him immediately. All of which well agrees with the thought, that, from the beginning of the church, the true position of the Christian has been to be going out to meet the Bridegroom.

It is true that, some fifty years since, there seemed to be a definite cry raised, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh;" which was followed by much searching of the scripture on the subject, and a general revival followed as to the hope of the coming of the Lord in the hearts of His saints.

Along with this, many grave mistakes were made, by attempting to fix dates when our Lord should come, in direct conflict with the assurance, that we know not the day nor the hour; and this agrees well with our parable. And as these various dates, one after another, passed by, and our Lord came not, we fear that many a one dozed off again, and slumbered and slept, though we trust a few still are really looking for, and expecting their Lord with their lamps still burning; while the foolish fixing of dates, and the inevitable failure, estranged many an earnest Christian from the after study of the prophetic books of scripture.

Sad indeed it is to read in the parable that they *all*—wise and foolish—fell asleep, after having once gone out to meet the Bridegroom. And with this agrees the fact, that, until comparatively recently—as just referred to—there is scarcely a

trace to be found of any Christian looking for his Lord as a present hope before his soul.

Does not the call yet continue? And may it not yet wax louder and louder—"Behold, the bridegroom cometh"—as, in many prophecies, there would seem to have been a partial fulfilment before the full and final one? In the parable, we do not read of the virgins *again* going to sleep after they were once awakened by the call; while we fear many who once heard it have given up the hope, and, in this respect, have slumbered again. The cry, too, is at *midnight*; we know not whether the darkness is quite at its full, though alas! it seems hardly possible to be worse than it is.

As in other parables, the virgins are taken up on their profession. They all profess to go forth to meet the Bridegroom, and they are all furnished with lamps—the lamps of profession. But only the wise have oil in their vessels: the foolish have their lamps, but no oil—a *profession without Christ*. Alas! the state, we fear, of many thousands in this day of nominal Christianity.

Well, as they all slept, so they all awoke at the cry, and trimmed their lamps. And now it is on the approach of the Bridegroom that the foolish find they need something they do not possess, for they find their lamps are "going out" (as it should read, not "gone out").

The wise virgins cannot supply *their* need. They must go and buy for themselves. In the

meantime the Bridegroom arrives, and they that are ready go in with him to the marriage ; and—awful words !—“the door was shut.”

But the foolish virgins now appear. It does not say that they have procured any oil, but they come, and are represented as crying, “Lord, Lord, open unto us. But he answered, and said, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not.”

What words of warning are these to the professors of this day ! Will you still be deceived ? Will you still profess to be God’s people ? Here you are represented as *deceived* up to the very gates of heaven, as it were ; but then to hear those fatal words, “I know you not.” Alas ! one trembles to think of the responsibility of any who help on, with ritualism, or any other means, the fatal delusion, that a mere human religion is all that is needed. May God open the eyes of all who are being led astray by the delusions of Satan. The exhortation is still, “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money ; come ye, buy, and eat ; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” (Is. lv. 1.)

All closes with these seasonable words : “Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.” With oil in our vessels, with joy we can look forward to that happy moment, when we shall hear “the voice of the archangel and 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."

We have looked at the various parables in the New Testament. It will be seen that they embrace a wide range, even from Christ seeking fruit in His vineyard (Israel), until He comes again, and receives those waiting for Him, and calls His servants around Him, to hear how they have been engaged for Him while away. We have also seen there are some *fundamental* truths taught in the parables, such as Christ becoming "a sower," because man is too bad to be able to render any acceptable fruit to God. And also life after death of the wicked, in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, and an impassable gulf which prevents escape. Also the wonderful *grace* of God, in the way in which He seeks the lost, and receives the prodigal to His bosom ; but nothing more, or different, is to be expected from God as good news. In the Old Testament there were Moses and the prophets ; *now* there is the gospel of the grace of God. If men reject this, neither would they believe though one rose from the dead.

We have also the wonderfully true pictures of the professing church—not its glory and beauty, for, as a whole, here it has none ; but of the evil mixed with it—evil in doctrine, and evil in

person, true pictures indeed, which could only have been drawn by the finger of God.

All this throws light upon what our Lord said to His disciples, after He had been relating some of His parables. He said, "Have you understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord. Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man which is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." (Matt. xiii. 51, 52.) Thus the parables embrace things of the old dispensation, and things of the new: and a man instructed in these has a *treasure* from which he can draw. And, as we have seen, in several of the parables are the very truths Christians need in this day, that they may see things as God sees them, and be looking for only that which He has said is to be expected. But every truth taught in the parables is confirmed, again and again, by other parts of scripture, so that none can say, "It is only in a parable." No, all God's truth is one. But God Himself has stamped an importance upon the parables, so that a man instructed in them shall have a treasure out of which he can bring things new and old.

May God enable us, each and all, to do this, to our own blessing; and to Him be all the praise.



CORRESPONDENCE.

9. "A. B.," Highbridge. "Amen," in 1 Corinthians xiv. 16, seems to be the expression of conviction, rather than taking part in worship or giving of thanks. No doubt it may be either. But here it has reference to the unlearned, and unbelievers, if such come in, and occupy the place of the unlearned. We must not lay down rules for the assembly, but in all things seek the guidance of the ever-present Holy Spirit. We learn here the importance of speaking, or praying, or giving of thanks in the Spirit; and also speaking so as to be understood. This is often overlooked in the assemblies. And surely there can be no objection, for either brethren or sisters, with holy reverence, saying audibly, at the close of a prayer or thanksgiving, "Amen." Silent indifference is most sad. The Lord keep us from this; it is most deadening. We may also conclude that the careless utterance of "Amen" is profane. Oh, for a deeper sense of the presence of the Lord!

10. "G.," Bournemouth. We must decline answering such anonymous questions, and especially when some are seeking to entangle.

11. "M. S.," Stowmarket. In the May number of this serial (page 121), the words, "All who have been truly baptised unto the death of Christ," do not refer to the mode of baptism, but to the thing signified in the type. We have truly taken that place of death with Christ. We judge it would not be for edification to enter upon the other much-controverted question of infant baptism.

12. "F. G. H.," Bristol. The keeping of an instrument of music in our private homes must be

left to individual faith ; we think it would come under the instruction in Romans xiv. 1-6.

13. "H. A.," Blackpool. Your question as to the tares in Matthew xiii. has been answered in the article in this magazine, "The Harvest."

Hebrews x. does not teach that the believer once purged is no more conscious of sin, but "That the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins." The sins of those under law were transferred to the goat every year on the day of atonement. This did not perfectly purge the conscience. There was still the remembrance of sins—a felt need of something more to put away those sins, that they never could be charged on the conscience. Now that something, infinitely more efficacious, has come. All the believer's sins have been transferred to the holy One, made sin for us, and never can be re-transferred to us—never can be charged on us. They are gone for ever ; to be remembered no more. He who bore them is in the glory, the assurance that we are reckoned righteous. Believing this we are justified by faith, and, not as you say, "peace of soul ;" but we have peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord : peace that never can fail or change, whilst Jesus is alive from the dead in the glory. It is indeed true that the Christian may do some foolish thing, yes, may sin, and confess it to God and be forgiven, and yet mourn all his life. But does this touch his peace with God ? It is written, "He died for our sins." If they had not been charged on Him, they must have been charged on us ; then we should have a conscience charged with those very sins which we deeply abhor. Peter sinned fearfully. He learnt to

distrust himself, and he learnt the precious grace of Him he so loved. But was his "peace for ever fled"? Nay, when converted, turned from trusting self, he was to strengthen his brethren. He was conscious how he had sinned, but he had not a conscience charged with that sin. Another who sinned in forsaking his Lord, was inspired to write: "And the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." In various ways we each have to learn, it is His mercy from first to last.

In the all-wise government of God, we may reap here in sorrow whatsoever we sow; but we must not confound this with the infinite and everlasting efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ. It is also true, that the least allowance of sin, or an evil thought, may hinder communion with God until confessed, and then forgiven.

14. — Bedford.—The word "Abba" is said to be a Chaldaic form of the Hebrew word for "father," used to express tender confiding love. (See Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 6.) Christ hanging on the cross finished that work, which enables God, in righteousness, to forgive your sins. He is not on the cross now for your sins, but raised from the dead for your justification. Will you read Romans v. 1-3; 1 Corinthians xv. 14-17; 1 Peter i. 3? It is quite true, as you find, if you stay only looking at Christ on the cross, you never can say, Abba Father. If Christ be still bearing wrath on the cross, then you are not justified. The Holy Ghost was not sent whilst Jesus was on the cross, but when He had ascended up on high. You want to know a living risen Christ.



“THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.”

II.

CHAPTER I.

VERSE 10. “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day.” No doubt, on that Lord’s day, the Spirit filled the soul of John with thoughts of the Lord. What a preparation for the right understanding of this revelation. “And heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying,” &c. May we not say this great voice demands our most earnest attention? It was the Lord that spoke to us in that great voice. He said to John: “What thou seest, write in a book, and send it to the seven churches.” (Ver. 11.) Thus John is used to communicate what the Lord shews him. He is the inspired instrument, he is to “write in a book.”

“And I turned to see the voice that spake with me.” How much we need turning to see the One that speaks to us. “And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks [or lamp bearers]. And in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the Son of man,” &c. (Vers. 12, 13.) Mark, John did not see Him as Jesus, Saviour, but clothed in judicial robes, girt for judgment or government. And that in the midst of what He still regards as golden light-bearers in this world. There was the whole, complete state of

the churches, and one in the midst like unto the Son of man. And is this the first revelation of Him we need to have? Behold the Lord in the midst of the churches, for discipline and government.

What purity, divine righteousness, penetration, burning judgment, against all evil! what majesty and glory! He is the worthy One to govern His assemblies. If we thus knew Him, should we run about amongst the assemblies seeking to put everybody right? What mischief has not been done by even real servants of Christ, through forgetfulness or ignorance of this revelation of the first and the last, in the midst of the assemblies. Even John, the beloved and aged apostle, may have needed this, judging from the sad state of the assembly in his Third Epistle. Ah! this revelation should make us slow to judge our brethren. Will it not have the same effect on us that it had on John? He says, "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead." (Ver. 17.)

Do we not need this revelation of the Lord? We cannot either understand, or bear to look at the state of Christendom, unless we have thus been at the feet of the Holy and the True, in the midst of the seven candlesticks. "And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last." (Ver. 17.) Have you ever felt the softness of that hand? Have you

heard the sweetness of that voice? When overwhelmed with a sense of His judicial majesty, and our own utter unworthiness, then how sweet to hear Him say: Fear not. This is the much needed lesson, in order to be able to deal tenderly with others, and to understand the patient, gracious dealings of the Lord with assemblies. Does He not say, as it were, I know what you deserve, but I died for you? “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.” (Ver. 18.) Thus was John prepared for the further revelation of Jesus Christ. Are we thus prepared to read and understand? Does our state of soul answer to that of John’s? Human pride and self-sufficiency will not do here. Lord, open our ears to hear, and prepare our hearts to meditate on this book in Thy presence as thus revealed.

Verse 19. John was not to forget what he had already seen—the Lord Himself in the midst of the churches, clothed in judicial majesty and glory. The Lord says: “Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter” [or after these]. We often forget the first, but each of these three divisions of the book, or revelation, are equally important: the presence of the Lord as Judge in the midst of the churches; the things that are, during the whole history of the churches, or

Christendom whilst owned of God; and then the things that shall take place after the close of Christendom as God's testimony on earth. Remember it is the Lord that thus divides the Revelation into three parts.

Verse 20. "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks." John may have been meditating that Lord's day on this very matter. As the stars had been set in the heavens to give light, so the gifts of the ascended Christ had been set in the church to give light. But what a mystery it must have appeared to the aged and last apostle, that a kind of episcopal clericalism was now coming in, and excluding the very true gifts of Christ. Yea, as he says, "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not." Yes, even the apostle was refused by this new clerical assumption. What a mystery is clericalism in its beginning, and its whole course. First it refused, and then for ages persecuted to death the true servants of Jesus Christ.

A careful study of the Third Epistle of John will greatly help us to understand the Revelation. What a comfort to see, however great this mystery, still the stars, the gifts of Christ for His church, are in His right hand! He is revealed as holding the administration, however outwardly clericalism may prevail, and however

dreadful the outward state of Christendom may become. He sees the gold: He knows them that are His, and there are no other light-bearers in this dark world than the assemblies. He says: “The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.” From much that follows, it is evident the word “angel” does not here mean a spirit. It is also used to mean a representative or messenger, as in Matthew xviii. 10: “In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father,” &c. And Acts xii. 15: “Then said they, It is his angel.” 3 John will help us much to understand who the angels are. Look at the character of the aged Gaius, and then at the rise of the clerical spirit in Diotrephes, and then can we, in the light of the New Testament, doubt which of these are the stars or angels? Which represents the mind of the Lord as to the church? Yes, for the comfort of the aged apostle, the Lord thus instructs him. The mystery of iniquity would still work, enough to overwhelm the heart of John, but the Lord would still hold the administration in His right hand.

CHAPTERS II., III.

WE now come to the things that are—the complete history of the present period. The seven addresses, divide the history into seven divisions or epochs. We shall find this to be the case.

Verse 1. "Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write." Just as John wrote to such as represented the assembly, and not directly to the assembly (3 John), so the Lord does not directly address the assembly at Ephesus, but that or those which represent it—"The angel of the church." It will be found also that He reveals Himself to each assembly as most suited to the state of that assembly.

And as clericalism was beginning to displace and refuse the gifts by Christ (3 John), He presents Himself as having the administration. "These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." What a blessed revelation of Jesus this is. He is the same as from the beginning. Let us not forget this; and that at the close of the first century He thus had to reveal Himself. He now gives His judgment of the first state of the church. Throughout He approves of all He can.

Verse 2. "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience." There was not the same freshness as forty years before at Thessalonica. Then there was "work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope." We learn from 2 Timothy, 2 Peter, and Jude, how much evil had come in. And the Lord says to the angel: "And how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which

say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.” (Vers. 2, 3.) What lessons still for us. And all this, and more may be, and yet the heart be declining from the Lord. “Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.” (Ver. 4.) The love of the bride waiting for the return of the bridegroom had begun to decline, and for long centuries that first love was almost lost. We may hold the doctrine of the Lord's return to take the church, His bride, but oh! has He the place of the first love in our hearts?

Verse 5. “Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”

These warnings have again a special voice to us in these last days, now that the Holy Spirit has again restored the privilege of knowing the Person and love of Christ, and the hope of His coming to take us to Himself, as the church had it in the beginning. Has He the same place in our hearts, or are we fallen? Can He say, “Thou hast left thy first love”? Yet they had this mark, there was not indifference to evil: “Thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.” (Ver. 6.) We are not told what those

deeds of evil were, so that the principle might stand good, whatever the form of evil. From 1 John we may conclude it was the practising of sin; and this every true Christian must hate.

Now, though 3 John was not addressed to the assembly at Corinth, where Gaius lived, yet all the godly would no doubt receive it with thankfulness, though sent to Gaius. So here at Ephesus, and to all in the first stages of the church's history, it is, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." (Ver. 7.) Thus the Spirit reveals the words of Jesus, not only to the angels, those who distinctly represent the churches, but to every one whose ear is open to hear, not the church, but what He saith unto the churches in this revelation. May He open the ear of every Christian who reads these few lines.

Now mark, the promise in each case is to one class only. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." (Ver. 7.) We shall find different circumstances at each stage of the church's history, but faith is the evidence of life, and overcomes, whatever the circumstances. Evil had come in, false apostles and the like, but there were overcomers. And these should not be blest merely in an earthly paradise, but "eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." It would have been dreadful

for man to have eaten, and lived on for ever in a body of sin, even in paradise. This could not be. But the overcomer shall live on for ever with Him, and in the paradise where sin can never come. Thus evil coming in, and false apostles, clericalism, and evil doers, and even the true believers declining from first love, marked the first stage of the church's history. May the Lord write its lessons on our hearts.

THE SECOND COMING OF THE LORD.

WILL THE SAINTS BE LEFT TO PASS
THROUGH THE TRIBULATION, OR WILL
THEY BE TAKEN AWAY FIRST?

THESE are questions which are exercising the minds of many Christians at the present time. And surely they are questions of great moment to all who are looking for the Lord Jesus. It is certain, that if we have to pass through the time of tribulation, such as never was, and never shall be again, we cannot be waiting and looking for the Lord at any moment or quickly. Instead of that blessed hope, we should have before us, the terrible day of the Lord. Now which of these two things do the scriptures put before the Christian?

One thing we must notice carefully is, what scripture is addressed to Israel, and what is spoken to us. Unless we note this distinction, all will, and must be, error and confusion. God never

forgets His promises, and will never fail to keep them, whether to Israel, the church, or to an individual.

“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. For the Lord’s portion is his people ; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.” (Deut. xxxii. 8.) Let us not forget this. With God, all the present political changes, that have, or are taking place, have reference to His purposes concerning His people Israel. And though, as a nation, they are cast off for the present, yet every promise to them in the books of Moses, the Psalms, and the prophets must be fulfilled. Do you doubt this ? Can God fail ? Let us bear this well in mind. It lies at the very root of all prophetic inquiry. Equally important, however, is the question before us : Will the saints, or the church, be taken before the coming of Christ in judgment on the living nations of the earth ?

Let us first, then, look at a few scriptures that speak of His coming to the earth. In Matthew xxiv. we have a most deeply interesting discourse of the Lord on His coming, and the end of the age. This He gave as He sat on Mount Olivet, overlooking the Jewish temple. His disciples, who were all Jews, were astonished to hear of the complete destruction of the splendid buildings.

Mark, they have not a thought of the church, or of the present period of the church. Their thoughts and questions are entirely respecting the temple and the end of their age, or history. The Lord answers those enquiries, and foretells exactly what has happened, and will happen, until the terrible end. (Read vers. 4-14.) It is a period of continued suffering for them. Mark, He does not here speak of Christians, but of Israel's sorrows, and of salvation beyond these terrible sufferings; that is, what will take place according to the prophets. Thus those who shall endure through the tribulation shall be saved like Noah, to people the millennial earth. "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." The Lord is not here speaking of the present salvation of Christians, as though their salvation depended on themselves; neither is He speaking of the present gospel of the infinite grace of God: but "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached," &c. Does not even this shew there will be a time at the end, when the full gospel of the church period will cease, and the gospel of the kingdom be again preached as it was before the present period? If we look at the context of these verses, it is clear the subject here is not the church of God.

Read verses 15-31. All this is about the Jewish temple. The abomination of desolation is to be set up in it, as foretold by Daniel the prophet,

during the last part of the prophetic week, or three years and a half of their history. It is the terrible tribulation through which they pass. But not a word about the church being in that tribulation. And *immediately* after that tribulation the Son of man appears. "And THEN shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and *they* shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." Mark, there is no mention of Christians at all in this terrible scene of alarm. It might be thought they are meant by "the elect"—the angels shall be sent with sound of trumpets to gather them. Therefore the elect here does not mean Christians; for, as we shall see presently, Jesus Himself—not the angels—will come to fetch them.

Now it is true, whilst the Lord in this discourse does not say one direct word about the church, yet there are parables describing the state of the world at the end when He shall come, and these parables will apply also to Christendom. This part is from chapter xxiv. 32 to xxv. 31. Then follows a description of His coming, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations," &c. There is nothing said about the judgment of the dead at His coming, neither here, nor in any other scripture. It is the

judgment of the quick, or living nations, at the glorious appearing of Christ. Neither is there a word about Christians here. We shall learn all about them elsewhere. The church had only just been announced for the first time in Matthew xvi., but not fully revealed there. Now that it is revealed, we can trace remarks applicable to the church.

This is also the case in the shorter account of the prophecy in Mark xiii. Whilst it is chiefly occupied with Jewish matters, yet the last verses can also be read as solemn warnings to us. "Watch ye therefore, for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning," &c. It is an awful thought that the great mass of Christendom is sleeping, and refuses to be awakened. He says, "And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch."

The manner also of His coming to this earth is fully described. He says, "For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day; but, first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation." (Luke xvii. 24, 25.) The world will not be found converted, but sudden, terrible, and unexpected as the flood in the days of Noah, or the rain of fire and brimstone on Sodom, will be the day when the Son of man is

revealed. Then again, "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars: and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity: the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall **THEY** see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." It does not say then shall *ye* see, but, then shall *they* see the Son of man coming in a cloud. Never does scripture say that Christians will be on earth, and see the Son of man coming in the clouds. No! Jesus says, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." We shall find this more fully explained as we go on. Ah! it may be the present peculiar distress of nations will prove to be the beginning of sorrows. Surely the Lord calls upon us to take heed. And to the world the warning is most solemn, "For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." (Luke xxi. 25-36.)

There can be no doubt, both as to the certainty of the time of tribulation, and that "he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." (Acts xvii. 31.) Assuredly "The Lord

Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. i. 7, 8.) Yes, "Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so. Amen." (Rev. i. 7.)

All this is absolutely certain—Jesus will so come to this earth, immediately after the tribulation such as never was. He will come in flaming fire to judge the living nations. Let us, then, now enquire: Do the scriptures teach that we who are Christians will be on earth during that tribulation? And shall we be on earth when Jesus thus comes to judgment? Will He come to judge us, or a rejecting world?

It was not until the very eve of His betrayal, to die for our sins, that He spake on this subject to His disciples, and through them to us. He was about to leave this world. The future was before Him. Well did He know the very thoughts that would exercise us as to the present distress, and the impending time of dreadful tribulation. He speaks; let us hear Him. Jesus says, "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.)

Mark, this was an entirely new revelation. What a contrast to all the terrestrial promises which had been given to Abraham, and to his seed; whether in Moses, the Psalms, or the prophets. Yes, it was the night of Thy dark betrayal, when Thou, blessed Lord, didst reveal to us this celestial destiny and glory. Now is there anything in these precious words like judgment in flaming fire? He does not say, I will send the angels for you. No, I will come myself; I will come again, and receive you unto myself. Amazing grace to such hell-deserving sinners, now made one with Himself, the objects of his affections, of His love, of His delight. Oh how He felt the parting. But such is His delight in His saints, He must have them with Himself. What would heaven even be to Jesus without His redeemed ones? And can we not say, what would heaven be to us without Him, who loved us and gave Himself for us? Every word in these precious promises is so new, so full, and so certain. It is not the Judge speaking of coming in judgment; but the bridegroom breathing into the ears of the bride, the promise of His return in love.

But perhaps you may ask, Did not the Lord refer to death, when He thus spoke of His coming for us? We will enquire.

SHORT PAPERS ON THE OFFERINGS.

THE CONSECRATION OF THE SONS OF
AARON.

THAT there is much precious teaching, real food for the soul, in the typical teaching of the offerings, no Christian can doubt, yet in no part of scripture do we need more humble dependence on the Holy Ghost. Serious mistakes may be made by pressing one aspect of their teaching; mistakes that may tend to destroy the very characteristics of Christianity, instead of helping us to understand the varied perfections of Christ, and our peculiar identification with Him. Now whilst the atonement of Christ is the alone ground of reconciliation to God, whether of Israel or the Church; yet it would be a grave mistake to seek to deduce from this, or any other type, that the standing of an Israelite before the death and resurrection of Christ, and the standing of a Christian since, *is the same?*

We shall understand the teaching of the lessons of the day of atonement better, if we first meditate on the consecration of "Aaron and his sons." (Ex. xxix.) If we read Hebrews ii. 10-13, we need have no question that Aaron and his sons then, typify Christ and his brethren now. We see Him crowned with glory, and bringing many sons to glory. "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified, are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them

brethren," &c. This was the substance of the glad tidings sent by Mary to His disciples, on the very morn of His resurrection. Now with the New Testament certainty, that we are brought by His resurrection into the same standing and relationship to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us now seek to drink in the teaching of the type of consecration.

Now notice at the end of Exodus xxviii. 40, that garments for glory and beauty, were to be made for *both Aaron and his sons*. In verse 41 they were to be put on both Aaron and his sons: "And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother and his sons WITH HIM." Now, as we shall find throughout the types, Aaron and his sons typify Christ and His brethren, or the church. And the people typify the nation of Israel, whether before the church or after. Is there not wonderful grace shewn to the church? May our hearts bow in worship. Is this how God sees us one with His Son, clothed in the same glory and beauty? Mark, this is peculiar to Aaron and his sons. These garments were not put upon the people. "And thou shalt anoint them." Thus we are anointed with Christ. The same Holy Spirit that was upon Him, the holy One, is now on us as one with Him. "All of one." Thus these sons were consecrated and sanctified *with* Aaron, and thus are we consecrated *with* Christ.

They were brought into the same standing as Aaron ; we are brought into the same standing as Christ. Oh, how precious the lessons of the offerings. Never do we find the people brought into the same standing. What distinct pictures of the Christian's peculiar privileges. Not one of the people share these privileges. No doubt many things are common to both Christians and to Israel. In each case there must be the new birth, there must be the same one offering of Christ fulfilling all the types of the law. Still there is throughout this chapter (xxix.) identification between Aaron and his sons. In verse 4 Aaron and his sons are brought to the door of the tabernacle. "And shalt wash them with water." It is a wonderful thing for us to be, as to the new nature, pure and holy. To have a nature that delights in God, and to do His will, even as Christ the holy One, delighted to do His will. "Which thing is true in him and in you." (1 John ii. 8.) This is wonderful association with Christ. Aaron is then to be clothed first. (Vers. 5, 6.) Then he is anointed. And afterwards his sons were to be clothed and consecrated. It was not until Christ arose from the dead that the disciples could be in the new creation, and the Holy Ghost descend on them, consequent on His ascension and glory. Gladly our hearts soar to Thee, Thou pre-eminent, blessed Lord. But oh, let us not doubt the place of glory into which we

are brought, one with our Aaron, the risen Christ.

“Thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons.” And thus Christ and we are consecrated worshipping priests. Oh, wondrous grace, one with our Aaron passed into the heavens.

By what means then are we brought into this identification with Christ—one with Him, clothed with glory and beauty? The offerings will help as to that all important question.

First, the sin-offering of verses 10-14. “And Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the bullock.” No doubt it is the same sin-offering that will be the ground or means by which Israel will be brought into their standing. (Isa. liii., liv.) The same sin-offering by which we are brought to God, in our standing. But this is far from saying the standing of Israel and the church is the same. The solemn lesson here is this, that as Aaron and his sons were perfectly identified by the laying on of hands, so the holy One had to become perfectly identified with us, made sin for us. He must on the cross become one with us, bearing our sin, in order that we might be one with Him in all the sweet savour of His Person and offering to God. Mark well now in this lesson of consecration, the identification is complete in both, in all the cases. The hands of Aaron and his sons were laid on the bullock, the sin-offering. “And Aaron and

his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram." (Ver. 15.) This is the burnt-offering. "And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar: it is a burnt-offering unto the Lord: it is a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the Lord." The atoning work was His alone. He alone endured the wrath of God due to us: but then it was that we might be taken into favour in Himself, the Beloved. Is it not wonderful! In this picture we see the purpose of God. He says, as it were, as Aaron and his sons were identified in the laying on of hands, with the sweet savour of the burnt-offering, so all typified by the sons of Aaron, that is Christians, are identified, made one with Christ in all the sweet savour of His Person and work before God. This goes far beyond standing before the throne of God. It is as He is, so are we in this world. Yes, God says, so to speak, I will have My delight in you, though it cost Me the death of My Son. Oh, think, what the Son is to the Father: such are we—one with Him, identified with Him, in all the ineffable delight of the Father. Who but God could have such thoughts, and who but He could give such pictures?

Again, there is another ram; the ram of consecration. Here is also the same identification. "And Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram." (Ver. 19.) The blood of this ram is put alike on the right ear of Aaron

and his sons. "Then shalt thou kill the ram, and take of his blood, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about."

What perfect association with Christ. The ear as an emblem of hearing and obedience; the thumb of the right hand, service and action; and the right foot, the emblem of walk. All connected with Him. After the blood, the oil is sprinkled. We are anointed with Him according to the value of His blood. The very garments of Aaron's sons were sprinkled *with him*. Thus are we identified with Christ; in all our obedience, service, walk, that is, as seen of God, and we should be seen in this world by men, as one with Christ.

This offering also partakes of the character of the peace-offering, and Aaron and all his sons feed in communion. "And Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." What a picture this is of the identification, the oneness of Christ and His brethren *now*. "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified, are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren."

No doubt the privileges of the congregation of Israel were great, and will yet be greater. They might see the sons of Aaron associated with him,

and here was a standing, a peculiar place of oneness; but it was a place the people could never take, a feast of which they could never partake. Of Aaron identified with his sons, it was said: "And they shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them: but a stranger shall not eat thereof, because they are holy." (Ver. 33.) Thus however great the privileges of Israel as a nation, they never come into the standing of the sons of Aaron. The scripture everywhere guards against such a thought, as that the standing of the church and that of Israel is the same.

They will be born again. They will be saved by the same atoning death of Jesus. But have we at all understood our peculiar standing and privileges? We are brought into favour in, and with Him, the Beloved; clothed in glory and beauty with Him; anointed with Him; separated, consecrated, eating with Him. And, precious grace, He is not ashamed to call us brethren. We shall, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, understand these pictures of God better if we look at each of the offerings separately. We will, if it please God, next look at the day of atonement. The Lord give us grace to walk according to our consecration.



“ARE YOU SAVED?”

A CHURCHMAN'S SECOND ANSWER.

“THE question would be *misleading*. It would—nay, it does—naturally lead men to think that the work is *done*, whereas it is only just begun. Why, not even CHRIST'S work for our salvation is finished, for ‘he ever liveth to make intercession for us;’ nor is the Holy Spirit's work accomplished; much less our work done. We must ‘*work out* our salvation.’ (Phil. ii. 12.)”

Here we have a direct attack on the truth of the finished work of Christ on the cross, as the sure foundation of our eternal salvation. Such a question as Are you saved? would imply that a sufficient work had been done by Him to save you. That is how it would be misleading! And this, not by an open infidel, but by a churchman!

Let us take an illustration. Here is a sailor seated at a supper provided, who yesterday was on a wreck going to pieces. The lifeboat put out and took him off. There are present with him a friend, and also this churchman. His friend says to him, “Are you the man that was saved from that wreck yesterday?” “Hold,” says the churchman, “that is a *misleading* question. It will lead this man to conclude naturally that his salvation from that wreck is completed; that the captain of the lifeboat has

actually finished the work he went out to do. He has only just begun to get him off the wreck, to *save* him. It will not do to give the captain all the credit of saving him. It is commonly believed in these parts, that I have a large share to do by my sacraments in saving shipwrecked sailors. And if you tell him it is done, where am I? Besides it is our doctrine, that he himself has a great deal to do, to save himself."

But the friend who has listened to all this says, "The man is saved, he is in this chair, he is eating his supper." "He is not," says the churchman, instead of eating the supper you have spread before him, we must, I TELL YOU, take a pair of oars, and pull, he must work out his salvation. He must save himself by his own works." You will say no person could be so ignorant as to talk in that way. But does it not truthfully illustrate our subject. Did not the Lord Jesus come from heaven and go to the cross to bear our iniquities? Was He not raised from the dead for our justification? Does not God say, "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.) Yes, through the mighty principle of faith, they have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Surely they rest—for they now enter into rest—yes, their rest, and peace, and

joy in God is as real, as the sailor's rest in his chair. It is absurd to tell him to pull at the oars to save himself, as he sits in the chair, in a house on land. He may eat the supper with real thankfulness that he is saved from the wreck. It is equally absurd to tell a saved sinner to save himself. He now has peace with God ; he cannot seek to get peace. He is now accounted righteous. God is righteous in so accounting him righteous, through the *finished* work of Christ. Christ is made his righteousness ; and he in Him is made the righteousness of God. How then can he want the churchman to help him to acquire righteousness, or salvation, when he is saved, and is clothed with the very best robe, the righteousness provided and given to him by God his Father ?

The churchman dares to deny that Christ has finished the work. Think of that work : " Lo, I come to do thy will." He says, " Why not even Christ's work for our salvation is finished, for He ever liveth to make intercession for us." The priestly intercession of Christ is thus perverted in order to deny His finished atoning work which He came to accomplish for our salvation. Now for whom does He intercede ? Let John xvii. answer that question. It is for true believers only, who are saved, who have eternal life, and he says, " I pray for them : I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given

me." Read the whole chapter in proof. If we look at the type, priesthood was not to save them out of Egypt. The blood of the lamb must be shed for that. Priesthood was instituted for a people already redeemed, to sustain them in worship. The priesthood, and intercession of our great High Priest, is for those only who are already saved, who have redemption through His blood. It is not to save them in that sense; but to keep them when saved. And, precious truth, He is able thus to keep them saved even to the very end, to preserve them, and restore them, to wash their feet. And even should they fail or sin, they are restored to repentance and communion, through His intercession as their Advocate. (See John xiii.; Heb., and 1 John ii. 1, 2.)

Neither in scripture is the work of the Spirit in us the ground of our salvation. He testifies of Christ and His finished work for us. The sailor had not to pull to save himself from the wreck as he sat in the chair. The Philippians were all "saints in Christ Jesus." (Phil. i. 1.) Therefore *they* could not have to work for their salvation, or to get to be saints in Christ Jesus. The context plainly shews they were to work, and work now Paul was away, to shew they were saints, or holy ones, in Christ Jesus.

The sailor had not to eat his supper as a means of helping him to get off the wreck. He could eat it in thankfulness because he had been saved

from the wreck. In like manner to take the Lord's supper as a means of being saved, or to get saved, is a grievous mistake. You can only take it properly, and with true thankfulness, in remembrance of Him who has finished the work that gives you eternal salvation. Blessed Lord, say, Let there be light in the dark parishes of England, and there shall be light.

C. S.



GRACE.

"THOU Son of the Blessed, what grace was manifest in Thy condescension ! Grace brought Thee down from heaven ; grace stripped Thee of Thy glory ; grace made Thee poor and despised ; grace made Thee bear such burdens of sin, such burdens of sorrow, such burdens of God's curse as are unspeakable. O Son of God ! grace was in all Thy tears ; **grace came out of Thy side with Thy blood ; grace came forth with every word of Thy sweet mouth ; grace came out where the whip smote Thee, where the thorns pricked Thee, and where the nails and spear pierced Thee.** O blessed Son of God ! Here is grace indeed ! Unsearchable, unthought of riches of grace ! Grace to make angels wonder, grace to make sinners happy ; grace to astonish devils."

J. BUNYAN.

SHORT PAPERS ON THE OFFERINGS.

II.

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT.

LEVITICUS XVI.

WE have seen in the consecration of the sons of Aaron, that identification or association with Aaron was the leading lesson, or thought, typical of the church's oneness with Christ. Now, identification is not the subject here. In consecration, the hands of Aaron *and his sons* in every case were laid on the head of the offering. On the day of atonement this was not the case in one instance.

We must, however, notice the fact, that sin was found even in the sons of Aaron. "And the Lord spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the Lord and died." It was on this occasion, the day of atonement was instituted. Thus, if the sons of Aaron typify the brethren of Christ, the church, as distinct from the people of Israel, the fact is brought before us, that the believer now may sin. We need not say that this is fully recognised in the New Testament; and to say that we have no sin, is to deceive ourselves, and to deny the truth. And further, as in this type both the sons of Aaron and the people of Israel were redeemed from Egypt, before the day of atonement, so we

must look on atonement here, as bearing on those who have redemption, who are saved, as truly as Israel had been saved from Egypt.

There is a great amount of instruction in these types that can only be understood and enjoyed when we see that it is meeting the claims of a holy God, and our real need after we have redemption through the blood of Jesus. One may say, I know I had redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of my sins, when I first believed; but what about my sins and failures since then, since I was a Christian? All these pictures will answer your question.

Do you now see the reason why the day of atonement is named in connection with the sin of the sons of Aaron? We will now look at the chapter (Lev. xvi.), and then at its application in the New Testament.

The first question is, How can the holy character of God be maintained in the midst of such sons of Aaron, such a people as Israel, and indeed in a universe where sin still is? We might apply it to ourselves in this way. How can God be righteous, in accounting such as we find ourselves to be, as blameless in His sight? He who undertakes this matter must himself be pure. Aaron must not come into the holy place without a sin-offering. He must be clothed with holy garments, he must wash his flesh and so put them on. In all this he must typify the holy

One of God—the only sinless, pure One, who could undertake to maintain the righteousness of God, in accounting us righteous in His sight. The holy One needed no sin-offering for Himself, He needed no new birth for Himself, no washing of water by the word; He was intrinsically in Himself all that these figures meant. Then the house of Aaron has the first place. “And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin-offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house.” There is then this difference: a bullock for the house of Aaron, and a goat for the people. (Compare vers. 6, 15.) Thus we have, first, God’s claims met for the church, and then for the people, or the future kingdom of Israel.

Let us not forget that this is not for redemption, but for the continued unchangeable reconciliation by atonement, of those who are already redeemed by the same one infinite sacrifice.

Another important distinction is this, the difference between propitiation and substitution. One goat could not shew this distinction. There are then two goats to be presented before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. “And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat,” or the Azazel. Both these goats point, as shadows, to Christ, but each in a different way. The one is by death, a sin-offering; the

other is presented alive, as we shall see, the substitute of the people.

First then, we have the bullock for Aaron and his house; and his house is reckoned as himself. And he "shall make an atonement for himself and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin-offering which is for himself." Before he enters with the blood, he must "take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands, full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail. And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord," &c. Such an One was required to be made a sin-offering. The more He was tried by the fire of the altar, divine righteous judgment, the more He was beaten small, and the sweeter the inimitable sweet savour to God. And such was Jesus. The cloud of His preciousness covered the mercy-seat before the blood was placed there, before the eye of God.

The ONE equal with God humbled Himself to take this place. The blood of the bullock was now to be sprinkled upon the mercy-seat, and before it seven times. That mercy-seat was of gold, emblem of divine righteousness. What a picture is the throne of divine righteousness, covered with all the divine perfectness of Christ, and on that, now the mercy-seat, is the blood of expiation. This is that which sustains all the new relationships of God, whether with the

church now, or Israel in days past, and to come ; yea, with the universe of which the tabernacle is a type. How could God be just and holy to dwell in a universe defiled with sin, or how could He be just, and yet the Justifier of the sinner ? The blood on the mercy-seat is the answer. The need of death, the shed blood before God, was alike required, whether for the house of Aaron, or for the people—for the church, or for Israel.

The expiation by the Son of God establishes the righteousness of God, and His judgment of sin. Atonement has been made, the blood has been shed. On the cross Jesus said, "It is finished." The same was done with the blood of the goat for the people, as with the bullock for the house of Aaron ; and the reconciliation extended to the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation. And when he had made an end of reconciliation, we get another subject. "He shall bring the live goat : and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away," &c. The sins of Israel were thus transferred to the goat, once a year. And looking as we do at Israel's history, it is God's type for us : they were the sins of a redeemed people, thus transferred to the goat once a year.

Let us now turn to the New Testament, and behold the Lamb of God as far more than fulfilling all these various shadows. With the Israelite there was always a troubled conscience. He was redeemed from Egypt, and the year's sins were transferred to the goat; still he was not fit to enter the most holy presence of God: "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest." No, all the blood that constantly flowed, and the blood of atonement once a year, could not perfect the conscience. (Heb. ix. 7-9.) The way was not yet opened into the holy presence of God. This was Jewish ground; and we must confess that a great many are still on the same ground, or standing. The standing or place of an Israelite was shut out, not fit to enter the holiest. The standing of a Christian is in direct contrast with this. Christ has come, and by "his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." By one sacrifice for sins, He has both opened the way for us into the presence of God, and by that same one sacrifice separated us to God, or sanctified us; and further, He has for ever made us fit for that holy place. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

Thus the contrast is, very striking. The Israelite was never perfected; the Christian is for ever perfected. With the Israelite, sins were

constantly remembered, and required another day of atonement. With the Christian now, it is the exact opposite: "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. x.) The Israelite required ever-renewed sacrifices; with the Christian "there is no more offering for sin."

On which ground is the reader: shut out, unfit to enter in; or having boldness to enter, and not only fit, but for ever fit, for the holy, holy presence of God?

Do you say, How can this possibly be? I know my past sins were forgiven when I first believed, like Israel when brought out of Egypt; but what about my sins since, and if I fail or sin now, do not I need—? Need what? Another sacrifice? Surely not. Look at Jesus as the propitiation; He has fully glorified God, fully maintained the righteousness of God. And on this very ground you can come to the Father, even God your Father, and confess your sins; and there on the ground of what Christ has done once, not on the ground of another sacrifice, or an imitation sacrifice, you find forgiveness and restoration to communion with God your Father. (See 1 John i. 9; ii. 1, 2.) Now, if you look at Jesus as your substitute, were only your past sins transferred to Him on the cross, or the sins of one year? That was so with the Israelite. That is not so with the one who now believes God, who "raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for

our offences." Surely our offences include all, from first to last: and therefore for all our sins, was He "raised again for our justification." Do we enter into these things? Do we really believe God? Then we can truly say, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Would you not now like to look at the offerings a little more closely in detail?

THE SECOND COMING OF THE LORD.

II.

WILL THE SAINTS BE LEFT TO PASS
THROUGH THE TRIBULATION, OR WILL
THEY BE TAKEN AWAY FIRST?

It is evident the Lord did not refer to death, when He gave those assuring promises of His coming again to receive us to Himself in John xiv. 1, 2, for He marked a clear distinction between death and His coming again. He says, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die," &c. (John xxi. 19-23.) And further, the disciples saw Jesus ascend up into heaven: "And a cloud received him out of their sight." This was not death, neither His spirit, but Jesus risen from the dead. And

“this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” The coming of the Lord then cannot possibly mean death.

Now mark, there is not a word here about our being in the great tribulation, either in the precious promise of Jesus to come and receive us to Himself, or in the testimony of these two men. And in neither case can it mean death. That He will come to the Jewish nation is also certain, and that immediately after their tribulation (Matt. xxiv.), as we have seen. But is not that altogether different from His coming to receive us to Himself in the heavenly mansions? When speaking about us to the Father He says, “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.” (John xvii. 24.) Yes, we are the objects of His delight, and He must have us with Himself. And if we carefully examine every scripture addressed to us, in reference to the coming of the Lord for us, it is never connected with the tribulation. “Waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Cor. i. 7.) So in chapter xv. The subject of the believer’s resurrection, and the mystery, “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in

a moment," &c. But not a word in the chapter about our passing through the tribulation.

So in Philippians. "For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body," &c. (Phil. iii. 20.) Still all is *bright hope, no terror of tribulation*. If we had to pass through it we could not be looking for Jesus as Saviour, but we must be looking first for the terrible day of wrath. But for us it is the very opposite, for "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (Col. iii. 4.) Now is not this most remarkable, that when He shall appear, and all tribes of men wail because of Him, then we shall appear with Him in glory? We cannot then, if we know the scriptures, be waiting for the day of wrath to come, though come it will to this rejecting world. The early Christians were "turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." (1 Thess. i. 9, 10.) How then can we be looking for that day of wrath, when we are waiting for Jesus, who has delivered us from the wrath to come? "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?"

(1 Thess. ii. 19.) Oh yes, it is not the day of wrath that is our hope, but that day of unclouded brightness and joy in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming.

But we now come to scriptures that speak expressly on the subject. "To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ WITH ALL HIS SAINTS." (1 Thess. iii. 13.) Now he certainly will not find us in the tribulation, if we come *with* Him when He comes, neither can He possibly come to judge us, since we come with Him. When He appears we shall appear with Him, when He comes we shall all come with Him. He comes with all His saints. In chapter iv. the Holy Ghost carefully enforces this. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God BRING WITH HIM." You may say, how can this be? Will not Jesus come to judge us as we have always been told? Indeed He will not, for when He comes in judgment His saints come with Him. "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints to execute judgment upon all." (Jude 14, 15.)

Does not this agree with His promise, that He will come and take us to Himself? (John xiv. 1, 2.) If we, all saints, come WITH HIM when He comes—and this is as certain as that He died and rose again—then He must first have come to take

us away to Himself. This is just the revelation or explanation given to Paul. "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.) Yes, from that moment we are with Him, and therefore when He comes, we come with Him.

Now mark, up to this point, our being taken to be with the Lord, there is not one word about the day of the Lord, or the time of tribulation. Notice carefully there is nothing in this scripture to hinder the Lord from coming in the air at any moment to take us to be with Himself. But now see what immediately comes after: "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 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. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake

you as a thief." (Chap. v. 1-4.) Now taking this scripture just as it is, are there not two very distinct events here? the blessed hope of the church to be taken to meet the Lord, and to be with Him, and to come with Him; and then after that the day of wrath, to the great surprise of the world. To which does the reader belong? To the church of God about to be taken to meet the Lord? or do you belong to that deceived world about to be judged?

Now mark the earnest prayer of the apostle. Does he pray that the saints may be preserved *through* the tribulation, or *unto* the coming of Christ? "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Chap. v. 23.) No; there is not a thought of the saints or the church passing through the tribulation. The Lord is coming to receive us unto Himself; and we need preserving until then. In the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians this question is still more distinctly shewn to us. The assembly was evidently passing through much trouble and persecution; and some one tried to alarm them as though the very day of the Lord had come. (See chap. ii. 2.) "That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand [or come]."

Bear in mind, he has already told them that when the Lord comes, all His saints come with Him. Now he describes that coming, and shews them that they will then be in rest, not in trouble. The world will then be in trouble, not they. "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance when he shall come to be glorified in his saints," &c. (Read chap. i. 7-11.) Yes, it is rest and glory to the saints in that day. It is flaming fire and everlasting destruction to those who have not obeyed the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. He had told them in his first epistle of the coming of the Lord to take them to Himself, and then he had told them of the day of Christ and the day of wrath after. He says here, "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him." These two things are brought before them to prove they need not be troubled as though the day of Christ had come. Only let us see these two things take place first. Then it is evident we cannot possibly be in the terrible tribulation which follows.

There is not one thing named which has to take place before Christ may come and gather us to Himself; but several things are named which must take place before the coming of

Christ in judgment. The falling away, or apostasy—the man of sin must be revealed, &c. (See chap. ii. 2–13.) Thus to make the church go through the tribulation, would be to throw all scripture into confusion. No, He comes to receive His own redeemed ones. And afterwards will follow that time of tribulation such as never was, and never shall be again. It may be asked then, Who will those saints be that do pass through the tribulation? We have seen unmistakably in Matthew xxiv., they are the people of Israel.

Jesus says to them who know Him now, as the Holy, and the True, “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.” (Rev. iii. 10.) This is not said to the remnant of Israel, it could not, for they will have to pass through the tribulation, as Jesus plainly tells us in Matthew xxiv.; and all the prophets plainly bear testimony to the same fact. No; He will come first and take us to Himself. And oh, how soon! He says, “Surely I come quickly.”

C. S.



“THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.”

III.

CHAPTER II. 8.

“AND unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write.” We now come to the second stage of the church’s history. This is marked by fierce persecution. And Jesus is revealed as “the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive.” How suited to the tried, suffering saints. Have we not each found, when love has grown cold, and the world has taken the place of waiting for the Bridegroom in our hearts, that then the Lord, in His unchanging love to us, has sent us a time of trial and suffering? He knew the trial and poverty of His suffering saints: and no doubt the chastisement had its sanctifying effect.

Verse 9. He says, “I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, but thou art rich.” This may seem like a contradiction. What! those hated Christians, exposed to the fury of heathen mobs, hunted from place to place, cast into loathsome dungeons, torn to pieces by wild beasts, put to every form of degradation, and deep poverty, and Jesus says, “But thou art rich”! Yes, rich in His love; rich with Him throughout eternal ages. Oh, suffering saint, at thy wits’ end as to this world, hear the words of Jesus: “But thou art rich.” The church did recover from the persecu-

tions of this its second stage of history, but there was another danger that threatened, yea, attacked the church from which it never fully recovered. Jesus said, "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." The rapid increase of the ritualism that had been resisted by Paul in the Epistle to the Galatians, now spread over the church like a blight. The effect was to take believers back to the condition they were in before the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ—the observance of days, and festivals, and ceremonies, which now were but beggarly elements. (See Gal. iv. 9, 10.) All this practically ignored redemption, and the everlasting completeness of the believer accepted in Christ. It set aside the righteousness of God, and led men to seek to acquire righteousness by law and the ordinances of men. From this the church, as a whole, has never recovered. And it would be well for us, individually, to inquire, Are we in the full blessed liberty wherewith Christ has made us free—"perfected for ever," or are we in the helpless bondage of the Jew before Christ came—ever struggling for, but never getting deliverance?

As to suffering, the Lord says, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer," &c. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." How sweet and cheering His promise to the suffering, persecuted saints. As

Satan had led the world to put Him to death, so Satan was permitted to put them to death. Little do we know what it was to be faithful unto death. But a martyr's grave was accompanied by a crown of life. Such shall not be hurt of the second death. These, then, were the characteristics of the second stage of the church's history.

Verse 12. "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write." This brings us up to the third epoch of its history. The manner in which the Lord reveals Himself now, plainly shews that judgment is needed at the house of God. "These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges." This brings us to the time of Constantine. The church began to dwell where Satan's seat was. It was fast becoming a great worldly institution with its head quarters at Rome, the very seat of Satan. Spiritually it was decaying so fast as to tolerate them that held and taught the doctrine of Balaam. When Satan could not curse Israel, then he used Balaam to lead them into association with the heathen and to commit their sins. This was exactly what happened again in the third stage of the church's history. The temples of heathen gods, with many of their feasts and ceremonies, were called christian churches, and christian worship. And Christendom became almost more corrupt than heathenism. It is not now doing the deeds only of the Nicolaitanes, but "So hast thou also them

that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate." Persons were recognised as Christians, who were practising sin. Such had been declared by John to be of the devil. (1 John iii. 8.) This grew to such a head that in the next stage of the church's history the clergy were allowed to have concubines, but not allowed to have wives. If there was not repentance there must be judgment. "I will come unto thee quickly and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." And again the Lord says, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." This is for the last time said to the mass of professors; after this it will only be said to the overcomers.

How suited the precious promise of the Lord to such a state, when those who falsely professed to be His servants were seeking honour in this world, even where Satan's seat was at Rome! He says, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna." Not at the table of the emperor, or the feasts of the world, but that unknown, hidden feast with Himself, "the hidden manna." "And will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." In all probability the names of these hidden approved ones have never come down in human history. They had the hidden secret approval of their Lord, and would be utterly despised by the seekers of

honour in this world. Is it not so now? Those who enjoy the sweetness of communion, and approval with the rejected Jesus, are least known in this world. Reader, how is it with thy soul and mine? are we satisfied with that hidden stone—the Lord’s approval—however unknown by this world? And still more closely, do we prefer even now His secret approval rather than open and known approval before the world, or even the church?

We now come to the fourth epoch of the church’s history—what are called truly the dark ages—the address to Thyatira. We must notice a remarkable contrast now. There are two parties—Jezebel, and a remnant. All is open to Him who is revealed thus: “These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass.” In the midst of such terrible darkness and wickedness, He saw that which He could approve. He said, “I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.” We have no approval of Christ to surpass this in any of the previous states of the church; indeed, none equal to it. Is this the Lord’s approval of popery? Far from it. He says as to that, “I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel,” &c. Now if we study the history of wicked Jezebel, how she stirred up Ahab to persecute the

true servants of the Lord to death, such in the dark ages was Rome, or that woman which professed to be the church of Rome. Has she not in her wickedness ever stirred up the civil power to persecute to cruel deaths the true children of God? Every mark here of Jezebel's wickedness is the distinct character of Rome.

Who, then, would be the angel of this dark period? Whom did the Lord so highly approve? The true church of God under various names, and no doubt many who had no name. These have ever been hated and persecuted by Rome, by Jezebel. And, however Rome has reviled true Christians as heretics, and as holding the doctrine of devils, yet something of their true history has come down, which answers exactly to what the Lord here so strongly approves.

They may have been called Paulicians, Poor Beggars, Waldenses, Wicklifites, and other names of reproach. But great as have been the hatred and curses of Rome, greater still was the infinite love and approval of their Lord; and He whose eyes are as a flame of fire, can make no mistake.

Now read the judgment on Jezebel. Space is given her to repent, and she will not repent. How long has He borne with her wickedness?—some thousand years or more, and He still bears with her to the end. But her children shall be killed with death. Her judgment shall surely come, as revealed further on in this revelation.

In verse 24 the Lord turns round again to mark the distinction He makes, between Rome and the remnant, now addressed as a distinct class. Rome may put upon them paper caps with painted devils, as a sign that those they put to death hold the doctrines of devils, but do they think they can deceive the Lord Jesus whose eyes are as a flame of fire? No, He addresses the remnant of Thyatira as not having "this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan as they speak." He bids them hold fast till He comes. And now, for the first time, He addresses overcomers first, as though none except the overcomers are in the least expected to have an ear to hear. The great mass of Jezebel are thus given up. They have no ear to hear what the Spirit speaks to the churches. But in their folly they will even arrogate to (what they call) the church the authority of the Spirit, and blindly demand obedience to its authority instead of to the Spirit by the word. And how suited the promise here to those who have, at the instigation of Jezebel, been crushed by the powers that be! (Read vers. 26, 27.) And better still, "I will give him the morning star." In each case the promise comes down to the individual. "I will give him," &c. Is Jesus Himself the morning star to your soul—more precious than all beside? What could He say more? I will give him myself.

“WHERE ART THOU?”

GENESIS III. 9.

GOD made man upright, and put him in the garden where was everything that was pleasant and good. Everything was to be subject to man, and he was to have dominion over all. And God brought the cattle and fowls to Adam, and he named them. Man is made the head, centre, and ruler over all; put in the place of perfect earthly blessing. But all this could only be held and enjoyed in dependence on God. But, alas! how soon all was let go. The work of the enemy, the wretched distrust of God in man's heart, in spite of all the blessings that surrounded him; lust and pride worked, followed so quickly in that dreadful act of disobedience, with its direct consequence; man becomes a coward, he cannot stand before the conscience he has now acquired, he flees from God, his kind gracious Benefactor.

But God is love, and it was love that put man there in that garden of delight at the first; and He is the unchanged and unchanging One: “The same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.” The man, changed and terrified, flees from God—God, in the energy of divine love pursues, seeking the lost. But “God is light,” and everything must be brought to the surface, no keeping back, and why should there be the holding back? for He knows all, and with Him is the remedy.

“If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.” Adam’s heart condemned him ; but God saw further into the depth of the ruin than Adam, and, blessed be His name, He saw the remedy too : the source of all the evil judged and crushed under the heel of the “ woman’s seed.”

“Where art thou ?” Man must come out from his hiding-place ; as the leaves could not satisfy the conscience, so now the tree cannot hide from God. And how many trees there are that men are hiding behind to-day, busily engaged in plucking and sewing the leaves together ; but they cannot stand “the light.” Prayers, almsgiving, attention to every religious and secular duty, a spotless reputation, holding the highest place in the estimation of others, a member of this or that church. These and many others, men are hiding behind, and in restless activity seeking to stifle the conscience which condemns, and says, “not fit for God.” It is God that asks, “Where art thou ?” And He furnishes the answer, both for the sinner and the believer. The former is in his sins, that awful, lifeless condition, “in the flesh,” and thus unable in anything to please God. In the far country—where the famine is—without Christ, without hope, without God in the world, unclean ; unjust, an outlaw, an enemy ; the sword of judgment hanging over his head.

But, believer, “Where art thou ?” And God’s

word again furnishes the reply; and what mind, however great, could have given birth to such a thought—it would have been blasphemy to have expressed it—but God has spoken, and shall we not hear? Not in the first man where *all* is ruin, but in the second Man where there is nought but blessing. In Christ Jesus, where there is no condemnation. He, blessed be His name, bore it all on that tree, and now it can never touch the one in Christ. "Accepted in the beloved," not merely in Christ, though that is true—but "*in the beloved*," the One so dear to the heart of God. In the Father's house, seated at His table, having on the *best* robe, which is surely none other than Christ.

- "Now we see in Christ's acceptance
But the measure of our own;
Him who lay beneath our sentence,
Seated high upon the throne.
- "Quicken'd, raised, and in Him seated,
We a full deliverance know;
Every foe has been defeated,
Every enemy laid low.
- "Soon, O Lord, in brightest glory
All its vastness we'll explore;
Soon we'll cast our crowns before Thee,
Whilst we worship and adore."

G. S.



DELIVERANCE.

(*A reply to E. F., Ventnor.*)

THE case you name is not an uncommon one, where souls have been converted during revival preachings, or where the preaching has been chiefly the *love* of God shewn, as you say, in the gift of His dear Son. Blessed and most important as this is, yet if the sinner's utter lost condition is not understood, the end of all flesh before God, and the righteousness of God in the way He has met that lost condition by the propitiation of Christ, there may be joy in believing the love of God for a time, but assuredly, conflicts and doubts will follow, and may last for years.

If you turn to the Gospel of John, you will find first the blessed Person of the Son of God. (Chap. i. 1-18.) Then He is presented to us as the Lamb of God, bearing away sin. And He tells us, "The Son of man must be lifted up." The awful character of sin is thus implied, and the one only infinite Sacrifice that has met it: and thus is maintained the righteousness of God in reference to sin. Then the way is cleared to reveal the love of God, as the spring and source of all in the gift of His Son.

If you turn now to Romans, you will find the great foundation truth on which peace with God rests, the Righteousness of God. This is fully

revealed in chapters i. to iv. Has the one you name learnt this, that she is guilty in God's sight, only guilty; and by all efforts at law keeping cannot be righteous, still guilty. And that God is just, righteous, in justifying her through the propitiation of the death of Jesus? When she thought she was born again, did she know that she had eternal redemption through the blood of Jesus? She could not, in the least, know this, unless she had first been made to know that she was a helpless slave of sin and Satan. She may have these lessons to learn yet. Oh, how blessed that God takes up a poor slave and sinner, that cannot help herself. If she sees how God has been glorified by the death of Jesus, even as to her sins, and also sin, her whole case has been met to the glory of God.

Then she may see, in Romans iv., how God reckons her righteous, and in the end of that chapter, that this is on the principle of the substitution of Christ by faith. God accounts the believer righteous in this way. He has raised up from the dead our Substitute, Jesus our Lord, "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Now see the consequences of this act of God in raising up Jesus for our justification: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." This being settled, we now know and enjoy the love of God, and we

are now shewn how God in all this has revealed His love. Thus the righteousness of God gives us peace; and the love of God shed abroad in the heart enables us to joy in God.

It is amazing that we poor, guilty sinners have, in divine righteousness, been brought into this grace, or favour, wherein we stand. But if you turn to Ephesians i. you will find this was the eternal purpose of God, and, according to that purpose, we are accepted, or He has "taken us into favour in the beloved." You may say, "How can this be, since the person I name has such dreadful conflicts with the devil and wicked spirits?" Is it not in this very Epistle (chap. vi.) that we have the fullest account of such dreadful conflict, even with wicked spirits in the heavenlies? How important then is it to have on the whole armour of God. Is every part of the armour on this tried soul? Is there any tampering with error? any unrighteousness of conduct allowed? Is there preparedness to tell out the gospel to others? or are the gospel shoes taken off, and laid aside? The shield of faith must not be let down, God is faithful. We must be covered with the certainty of God's salvation. Is the word of God neglected, and then praying always? May our God lead that tried one from herself to these scriptures, and use them in help and deliverance.



SHORT PAPERS ON THE OFFERINGS.

III.

THE BURNT-OFFERING.

LEVITICUS I.

IN the offerings we get the purposes and provisions of God for His redeemed people—Christ revealing the heart of God, our Father, in meeting all our need. The very order of these offerings is blessed. The burnt-offering comes first; then the meat-offering; then the peace-offering; and, last, the sin and trespass offerings. Yes, the order suggests the purpose of God to have us unblameable before Him at whatever cost. We may compare these four offerings to a picture gallery. There is God's end of that gallery, and there is man's end afar off from God. God is revealed in what Christ is in the perfection of His Person and work, but in order that man, the sinner, may be brought to God, the Holy One must be offered a sacrifice for sin. Hence, in the application of the offerings to the sinner, or to man, the sin-offering comes first. In the Gospels we have, as it were, four distinct photographs of the Lord Jesus, and in these offerings distinct photographs or pictures of His work.

It will help us to understand the burnt-offering if we notice a few of the offerings, and the place they had from the beginning.

No sooner had our first parents sinned, than we read, "Unto Adam also, and to his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." (Gen. iii. 21.) What a picture in a few words of the purpose of God, namely, through death to find a clothing, even divine righteousness, for lost and naked man. Does it not point to Him whom God raised from the dead, "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification"?

In the offerings of the first sons of the human race we get what is, and what is not, acceptable to God. "Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering: but unto Cain, and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell." Now what was the difference between the two? The principle of Cain was to approach God by his own works, as though nothing was amiss. The principle of Abel was to approach God by faith in the death of a substitute. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts," &c. Yes, God saw in that offering of Abel a type of the atoning death of His only-begotten Son, and therefore reckoned Abel righteous. We shall see

throughout scripture how God responds to faith in the offering. It was not what Cain and Abel were in their own persons, but it was their offerings. You may be as sincere and as religious as Cain ; you may bring that for which you have laboured, to the true God, and yet be rejected, as he was. There is no way by which you can be accepted but through the death of Jesus.

We will take another case. "God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me." God said this because He "saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Is not this assuredly the true character of man ? Man in the flesh is so bad, God can have no hope in him. Death and the flood must pass upon the whole race. Noah and his family alone were saved through the judgment on the world. Believing the warning of God he became the heir of the righteousness which is by faith. On what principle then did God accept him, and bless him ? Was it a new trial of man, or did God deal with him through the virtue of the sacrifice ? When Noah and his family went forth from the ark, "Noah builded an altar unto the Lord ; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour." Now the great question is this : Will God act according to

the savour of the offerings, or will He act towards man according to what man is? If improved, will God bless him? and if not, will He curse him? What does the Lord say on this point? "And the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth: neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease. And God blessed Noah and his sons." How precious the ways of God in grace shine out here! As to man, there is evil in his heart from his youth. But the action of God flows from what the offering is to Him. Thus all blessing flows to us through the value, and sweet savour of the offering of Christ; yes, even all the earthly blessings man constantly enjoys, seed time, harvest, all; but how little man knows this! It is surely most important to understand this principle of the action of God toward us.

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

We shall see the force of this if we turn to the trial of Abraham's faith. (Gen. xxii.) We must expect every bit of faith God gives to be tried. Abraham was commanded to offer up his son.

God says, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Very wonderful was the obedience of faith: he rose up early in the morning. Very touching is the narrative. Then he took Isaac, and the wood, and the fire, and the knife; and all in faith that Isaac, though he die and be consumed on the altar, yet **THEY** shall return. And his faith looked forward. "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering: so they went both of them together." "And Abraham built an altar there" (probably the very place where the beloved Son of God was nailed to the cross), "and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood." The son of Abraham was spared. God did not spare His Son! God did provide a lamb instead of Abraham's son. "And Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son." And, as in the case of Abel and Noah, God now blesses Abraham according to the value He sees in the offering as pointing to Christ. Man is a sinner. The death of the offering opens up the way for the sinner to God, and removes the barrier betwixt God and the sinner. Only let us remember, this could never be done perfectly by the blood of bulls and goats; these

were only types and shadows, all pointing forward to the precious blood of Christ. The propitiatory death of Christ is the basis, and explanation of God's righteousness in all His past, as well as present, dealings with man.

Let us now, in this light, look at the burnt-offering in Leviticus i. In all these types it is the Lord that speaks; it is the Lord that reveals Himself—first in these types, and then in Jesus, the fulfilment of them. He spake from out of the tabernacle: the veil was not yet rent. The offering brought to the Lord, must (as it is written) be without spot. "If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord . . . if his offering be a burnt-sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord." What a picture of Him, who became a man—one of us—who came of His own voluntary will to offer Himself. Who, of all that ever trod this sin-defiled earth, was the One, the only One, without blemish? Need we say His name was Jesus! Infinite, yet voluntary love. As one has said, "Who loved me, and gave himself for me." Oh, the unknown depths of love, when He presented Himself at the door of the tabernacle to God, in all the spotless purity and perfectness of divine love, and said, "Father, glorify thy name." That is the man, who presented Himself of His

own voluntary will, to do the will of Him that sent Him, cost what it might. And was He not accepted for us? "And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering; and it shall be accepted for him, to make atonement for him."

We shall understand this better when we come to the sin-offering. There we shall see how Jesus became identified with us on the cross as the sin-offering, that we might be identified with Him in all the sweet savour of the burnt-offering. Only the absolute need of atonement must be seen even here, in order that we might be thus reconciled to God, and stand identified with Christ, faith, like the hand laid on the head of the victim, linking us with Christ, in all the sweet savour of His Person and work. Yet in order for this He must die, or we could never be thus one with Him. The grain of wheat must die or remain alone. (John xii. 24.) Thus God acts toward us, according to the value He sees in the perfect offering of Christ. "And it shall be accepted for him, to make atonement for him," or he shall be accepted. Have you laid your hand on this, the firm and blessed ground of faith? He, who made atonement for me, has been accepted for me.

And now, can you say, "I am identified with Him, am one with Him"? Let us contemplate, meditate, on this type of the voluntary offering

of Christ for us in all the infinite perfections of His blessed Person. This will bring out, more and more, the heart of God. His purpose is to have us in the likeness of His Son, the first-born among many brethren. His purpose is to bring us into favour in the Beloved. Oh, wondrous, infinite grace!



“THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.”

IV.

CHAPTER III.

WE now come to that which succeeded Jezebel or Popery (or rather the period of Thyatira)—the address to the angel of the church of Sardis. This surely brings us to the period of the Reformation, or its result, commonly called Protestantism. The Lord continues to address the angel, those that represent the church, whether true or false. Is it not a sad fact in Protestantism as well as in Popery, that many take that place, yea, call themselves the church, who are not in the New Testament sense Christians or saints at all; who have not even the mark of the little children, whose sins are forgiven for His name's sake. (1 John ii. 12.) But as they take that place, they have its responsibilities. (Matt. xxiv. 48–51.)

Now, notice how striking the revelation of the Lord Jesus is, in this the fifth epoch of the history of Christendom. He presents Himself as

"he that hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars." The so-called protestant churches failed to own, or even know, that He had sent the Holy Ghost in all His infinite fulness, and that the ascended Christ had all-sufficiency of gifts to bestow for the church. Colleges and education have taken the place of Christ, and the Spirit, to the unspeakable loss of the church. But let us hear the Lord's own judgment on Protestantism. "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." What solemn words! And do they not most accurately describe the true condition of a lifeless Protestantism—masses of people professing to be Christians, but without a particle of spiritual life? Awake, O reader, and inquire is this your case? Have you passed from death unto life? Are you a child of God, or still a child of wrath, deceiving yourself with the imitations of Judaism? What are all your works, and sacraments, and prayers worth, if still on the way to endless woe? The Infinite, the first and the last, says, "I know." We cannot deceive Him. There are still the remains of gospel light in Protestantism, and He says, "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God." Your works may have the greatest approval before men. How dangerous the flattery of men, deceived like

yourself! But let us get before God, and there try all our ways and works, by His holy word.

Verse 3. "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard; and hold fast, and repent." What was received at the Reformation, the beginning of the fifth stage of the church's history? The scriptures, the very word of God in the mother tongue of the people, so that all could now read the inspired word of God. Are we continuing to value the word of God? This is what the Lord bids us hold fast. Another thing of unspeakable value was received—justification by faith. Thousands received, not the mere doctrine, but the blessed enjoyment of the certainty that they were accounted righteous before God on the principle of faith: and thus they had peace with God. This was the gospel they heard and received. Have you received this in the power of the Holy Ghost? Then Jesus says to you, "Hold fast." Yes, hold fast this blessed certainty received again at the Reformation.

What is the actual state of the Protestant churches as to the enjoyment of this blessed certainty, of justification from all things, made known in the gospel? Take the most favoured, the Established Church of England. Her Articles prove how she once received and held this truth, and the all-sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures. The writer happens to be staying in a large village for a short time, where there is no Roman-

ism, and no Dissent; yet, in visiting amongst the poor, he cannot find a single case, where a person enjoys the certainty of justification, of being accounted righteous before God. We will just look at a sample visit. The writer called on two very aged people, who were very anxious to be saved, and had been so for many years. They appeared to be much in the condition of Cornelius, when he sent for Peter. After a little conversation, I said, “Well, you are getting far advanced,” (one was about ninety-three,) “do you know the Lord Jesus as your Saviour?” They both replied, “We hope so, we are doing our utmost, we pray much, and Mr. — comes and administers the sacrament to us, but (one said) I really do not know whether I am saved; I do not think the Lord answers my prayers, but I do my very utmost, that I do.” The other said, “Yes, we strive our utmost,” and much of the same kind.

As it is a fruit-growing district, and many were gathering cherries, I said, “Now if a man brought us a sieve of cherries, and gave them to us to eat and enjoy, just as we sit here, would you say, I am striving my utmost to get on that tree, and gather some cherries; I must do my utmost to get those cherries? Would you not be rejecting the gift, and despising the kindness of your friend? The man has been on the tree and gathered the fruit, and now freely gives to us.

Do you not know that Jesus is the Man that has been on the tree, to bring us the gift of salvation? He has been nailed to the tree. He has borne our sins in His own body on the tree; He has bowed His head there, bearing the load of our guilt and sin. And now the fruit of His death He freely gives to us, even eternal life and salvation. If the cherry gatherer goes to the tree and gives you the fruit, you have it. You have not to strive your utmost to get to the top of that tree there, to eat the fruit. You have not to pray for cherries when they are freely given to you, have you? You have not to strive for, or pray for salvation, when it is freely given you by the Man that has been nailed to the tree."

The eyes of the old man of ninety-three gladdened with joy as he said, "I never saw it in that way before!"

I said, "If Jesus were to come into this house and tell you your sins were forgiven; that you were justified from all things; and that you had eternal life, would you not believe Him?"

"Surely I should, oh yes, sure."

"Is it not the same when He speaks in His word to you? Now hear what He says: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, HATH everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.' (John

v. 24.) You hear the words of Jesus, you believe God that sent Him."

"Surely I do," said the old man.

"Then does not Jesus tell you that you *have* eternal life?"

Much more followed as to justification from all things, to all who believe the message of God. (Acts xiii. 38, 39.) But is it not terrible to tell these anxious souls to strive, and pray, and take the Lord's supper as a sacrament, in order that they may be saved in the day of judgment? There are villages in England in which the sound of the true gospel is never heard. She has received the scriptures, she has them still; then the word to her, and all Protestant countries, is "Hold fast and repent." Yes, God calls on them to repent. And if not, the doom threatened in 1 Thessalonians v. 3 will come upon them. "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." Thus also the Lord speaks to Protestants. "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." (Ver. 3.)

Shall we stop our ears, and refuse to hear the strong disapproval of Protestantism by the Lord? Looked at as a mass, there is not one word of approval. Is there nothing true or real in all this vast profession? Hear Him speak. He

says, "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy." Is it not exactly as Jesus thus describes Protestantism—a few names? Do we belong, do you, do I, belong to the few approved, or the many disapproved? The Lord search the heart of every reader of these lines. The Lord knoweth them that are His, and surely it is high time that every one that nameth the name of Christ should depart from iniquity.

Again the overcomer is addressed before him that hath an ear to hear. That is, in these days none are expected to have an ear to hear, except the overcomers. We are surrounded with ever-increasing religious sensuous delusions, infidelity, worldliness, and the powerful fashion of this world. "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." You know the particular dangers and temptations that beset your path. Would the Lord say you are an overcomer—the white raiment is yours? When many, who are now written and regarded by men as Christians, shall be for ever blotted out, your name is written where it shall never be blotted out! Will your name, as an overcomer, be confessed before His Father and before His angels? Is it

not time to awake and be in earnest? If you are an overcomer, and the Lord has opened your ear, then hearken not to what the pretended church says, but hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Thus we have the very judgment of the Lord on the result of the Reformation, as He sees it in this day. It is important to notice that Sardis (or Protestantism), like Thyatira (which had Jezebel, or Popery), runs on to the end, to the coming of the Lord. But there is a distinct action of God, by the Spirit, as well as outward characteristics, which mark each epoch of the seven stages of the history of Christianity. The special action of the Spirit of God was in the Reformation. Not only was Popery left aside, but God was no longer using simply a remnant, that is, the Waldenses, &c., as He had done. Thus the Sardis epoch succeeded that of Thyatira. In like manner we shall find the sixth stage, as described in the address to Philadelphia, will succeed that of Sardis, which, though it runs on to the end, yet is practically, as a professing mass, given up to superstition, infidelity, and worldliness. The overcomers are alone excepted. It is no longer, as Thyatira before it, regarded as God's witness on earth. This gives very great interest to our next inquiry as to the closing stages of the church's history.

ZACCHÆUS.

LUKE XIX. 1-10.

WHEN riches are trusted in they are a terrible hindrance. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" Jesus Himself has given us a picture of the awful surprise of a rich man who had lived in luxury with every earthly comfort, when he died. "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments." What a change! How many are hasting on to that awful surprise.

Here was a little rich man who lived at Jericho, the place of a curse. Now it is well to remember that this world is still the place of a curse—it is still Jericho. And whether it is the poor blind beggar, or the rich publican, or tax-gatherer, sin and the curse are here, and death is here. And neither poverty nor riches can remove one or the other. It is difficult to get the gospel before the rich, but if one should read this, who is unsaved, let him ask himself this question, "With all my earthly comforts, is not this world a very Jericho?" Oh, the sting and curse of sin! That sting is as dreadful in the mansion as in the cottage. And every day brings you nearer to *the end* of it all, and then the sad surprise of that flame of torment—unending torment. And all these undeniable facts on the very testimony of the word of God.

Well, there was nothing in the riches of Jericho that could satisfy the little rich man. He was chief of the tax-gatherers, and he was rich, but this did not satisfy the desires of his heart. There was a crowd, a press of people, but to merely mingle amongst that crowd would not satisfy the desire implanted in his heart. That crowd was around Jesus, but that crowd could not meet the yearning of his heart, or the need of his conscience.

Are you satisfied with riches? If that were possible, how sad it would be, with the surprise of hell before you. Are you satisfied with the crowd of profession about Jesus? Do you say, I am in the great fashionable crowd established by law; or, I am in the opposite crowd of dissent? Does this satisfy you? Unhappy, deceived man if it does. A different desire took possession of the soul of Zacchæus.

“AND HE SOUGHT TO SEE JESUS.”

Is this, has it ever been, the longing desire of your heart, to see Jesus? The only Jehovah-Saviour Jesus—the living Jesus—Jesus Himself? Ah, not the crowd, not the priest, but Jesus. Oh, sin-burdened soul at Jericho, will aught do for thee but Jesus? Peters and Johns are all well, but “he sought to see Jesus, who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.” Earnest soul, you cannot see Jesus for the press. You say, “How am I to see and

know what is truth? Only see and hear that crowd. Thousands upon thousands are in that press, some crying, Sacraments, sacraments, come to us and we will forgive your sins. You must hearken to us, and perhaps you will be saved. Some are shouting, Works, works for salvation; some, Do penance, do penance; some exalt feelings; some, holiness by faith. Oh, what a press, how am I ever to know the truth and be saved?"

Now look at that little earnest man, why he runs away from all the crowd. Do you say, "I am unlearned, I am too little to see through it all?" That is just what he was; but he ran away from them all. Do likewise, run away from the confusion of the Babel of discordant sounds. Do you say, "Where am I to run to?" Run anywhere, so that you can see Jesus. He ran and climbed "*a sycamore tree to see him.*" But how do I know that I shall see Jesus for myself? How do I know that I shall speak to Him, and be saved?

Now just mark another thing. Not only did Zacchæus desire to see Jesus, but Jesus desired to see him. The eye of Jesus was on Zacchæus in the sycamore tree. Wherever you are, do you desire to see Jesus? Then be assured Jesus wants to see you. For you may rest assured God put that desire in your heart. The devil may put it into your heart to seek salvation in sacraments, and priestly ritual, but God alone

will bring you to Jesus Himself. "And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchæus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house."

An earnest soul says, "I must climb a little higher to see Jesus. But Jesus did not tell Zacchæus to climb a little higher. No, but, "Make haste and *come down*." So He says to us, make haste, and come down. We cannot be too little for Jesus. Let us come down, and be just what we are in His presence. Do not think you have to repent first, and give up your sins and then come to Jesus. No, you will never truly repent until you see Jesus the Lord. How long Job tried to climb a little higher, but when he saw the Lord, he made haste and came down. He took his true place before the Lord. He says, "Now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Job never repented whilst looking at himself. Neither will you. What a moment was that when the eyes of Jesus and Zacchæus met. Have you ever met those eyes of infinite love to the sinner? It takes many years for some to cease climbing. But Jesus says to you, "Make haste and come down." And where are you to come to? He did not say, Come to Peter, or John, or Andrew. Did he say, Come to my mother, and she will try to soften my heart toward thee?

Some would represent Jesus as so hard to the sinner, that he needs His mother, angels, apostles, saints, to intercede and try to soften His heart toward the sinner. Ah, they do not know the blessed Jesus who said to Zacchæus, "come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house." Yes, Jesus not only bids him come down to Himself, but He must be his guest; and He must abide with him. And does He thus bid you come down at once, direct to Himself—it may be in the deepest self-aborrence? He says come down to Me, from all thy efforts to climb, and I must abide with thee. What a Saviour! Just as Zacchæus was, little tax-gatherer, down he came to Jesus, at His word. And may you do the same? Yes, and do just as he did: he received Jesus joyfully. Do thou the same, and He abides with thee for ever.

That God should thus welcome the sinner to Himself is most offensive to poor deceived, self-righteous men. "And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner." Thus also, at this day, are the riches of the grace of God rejected and despised. Ah! let them murmur. Oh, Jesus, we adore Thee, that Thou hast, in perfect love, thus revealed Thyself in grace to us!

As yet Zacchæus does not half apprehend this precious grace to him. He "said unto the Lord,

Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor: and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation I restore him fourfold." In itself this was very good to his fellow men, and contrasts with the hypocrisy of the Phariseism of this day. Can you say you are giving half of your goods to the poor? The same thing was found in Cornelius. "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God." Yet he was one that needed to know the salvation of God. (Acts x.) There perhaps never was a day of more cruel selfishness than the present. Think of the waste in dress, in tobacco, wine, and pleasure, whilst families are starving for bread.

But mark, Jesus did not say, for so much almsgiving salvation is sent to thee. He did not say, thou hast merited salvation by thy works! He can never say that to a single, guilty, fallen child of Adam.

"Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, for so much as he also is a son of Abraham." "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." "So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." (Gal. iii.) Faith and salvation cannot be separated. In Jesus the Saviour he saw the Lord. Salvation that day was come to that

house. Has Jesus thus come to you at Jericho ? As He says, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." It is the old, old story of the grace of God that *bringeth*, it does not come *seeking* salvation in you, but *bringeth* all you need ; nay, all that He in infinite love can give : for He gave Himself.

Why has the Holy Ghost left the record of this lovely incident, if not to shew you that Jesus is the one object to attract you to Himself ? Do you want to see Him ? Ah, He wants more than to see you ! He must abide with you : you must be taken into everlasting companionship with Him—not on the principle of works, but through faith.

Abraham believed the promise of God. He was accounted righteous. Do you believe God, who has raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" ? Then by faith you are justified, and have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. God says so, it is the truth. Make haste, then, and come down—down just now ; Jesus waits to receive you. He must abide with you. Salvation, infinite and eternal, is come to you. Do you want to know the truth ? He is the Truth. Do you want forgiveness ? He says, Thy sins be forgiven thee. Do you want eternal life ? He says, He that believeth hath eternal life.

Why should you not receive Him joyfully? God grant that you may come down, and receive Him now, and be for ever happy. C. S.



FAITH HEALING.

(A reply to W. J., Harlech.)

MOST of the scriptures you quote are in the Old Testament, and refer to the dealings of God in that governmental dispensation. Exodus xv. 26 was a promise to that people. They were to be blessed here in this world, if they did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. Their blessing was conditional on obedience. This is more fully explained to them in Deuteronomy xxxiii. The Lord is clearly the healer of the body, "For I am the Lord that healeth thee." Indeed all these blessings have reference to the body here on earth.

But to apply this to the Christian would be a great mistake. We are blest, not with earthly blessings, but "with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ." (Eph. i. 3-7.) When Jesus left His little flock on earth, He gave no promise that they should, if obedient, be exempt from tribulation; but He said in the world they would have it. And the more obedient they have been to His word, the more has the world hated them and persecuted them. The most obedient and devoted servant of Christ could say, "Blessed

be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble," &c. (2 Cor. i. 3-6.)

May it not be said to some, "Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him : For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth," &c. (See Heb. xii. 5-8.) Is it not a great mistake to suppose that absence of chastening is a proof that we are right? It would rather prove we were deceived. This may be what Satan is aiming at in all this.

Exodus xxiii. 25 is a similar promise to Israel. "And ye shall serve the Lord your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee . . . and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come." How important to bear in mind the difference of dispensation in the dealings of God! One would think no one could apply such a scripture to Christians. And it is a serious thing to say we are Jews, when we are not, but do lie. (Rev. iii. 9.) For the Jew, affliction was a mark of rebuke, to the Christian it may be a token of love to one whom He loveth.

You will perceive the next scripture given is

of the same character, and could not possibly be applied to us now. "And the Lord will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all them that hate thee. And thou shalt consume all the people which the Lord thy God shall deliver thee: thine eye shall have no pity upon them," &c. This was God's governmental dealings in that dispensation. Can any one suppose it is in this period of infinite grace to man?

We will now look at your next; and a most solemn scripture it is. "And Asa, in the thirty and ninth year of his reign, was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians." (2 Chron. xvi. 12.) Now here was a man of God who had committed the very common sin of making alliance with the world. He made a league with Ben-hadad, king of Syria. He gave him silver and gold, he relied on the king of Syria, and did not rely on Jehovah. (See ver. 7.) He was then rebuked by the prophet Hanani, "Herein hast thou done foolishly." Did he repent at the word of the Lord? Far from it! He, in his folly, persecuted the prophet. And now the Lord, in his love to him, afflicts him in his feet. Does he now repent, and turn to and rely on the Lord? No, he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians.

And as Elihu says, "Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man. To bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living." (Read Job xxxiii., xxxvi.) God's gracious object in such cases, and they are common, when a believer has sinned, is to bring him to repentance and confession. (See James v. 13-16, and 1 John v. 16.) And how often may you see a Christian like Asa. He fails grievously, and refuses to bow to his Father's afflicting hand. He gets chafed and angry. If it is in his circumstances, he will borrow money wherever he can get it, and thus struggle against the hand of God. And if it is affliction of the body, he may struggle against God in the same disobedient spirit. He refuses for a time to rely on God his Father, and to return to Him, in confession and humiliation.

It is not going to the physician that is so wrong, but the state of his soul in doing so, as to his sin, and the Lord's claims. Nay, where there is brokenness of spirit, as in the case of Hezekiah, as he explains this matter when he had been sick, the Lord may use the physician—indeed he used Isaiah as a physician. No doubt there was faith, but there was also a plaister made of a lump of figs laid upon the boil. (Is. xxxviii. 21.) And are there not many physicians who never go to see a patient, but who first look to the Lord

for guidance as to what remedy they shall prescribe?

Afflictions are not always because of some failure. This was not the case in Hezekiah. (Is. xxxviii.) His history up to this point is beautiful and refreshing to read. But the Lord saw a great temptation coming upon him, in the letters, and flatteries, and presents of the king of Babylon. His affliction and restoration should have prepared him against the seductions of the enemy. If we are not conscious of some sin, for which the Lord is afflicting us in His love, let us take it as a warning, and look to the Lord for increased watchfulness lest we are entangled in the flatteries of Babylon. In every one of these Old Testament histories we see a picture of our own experience.

The writer looks back over more than half a century of the experience of his own failures and God's goodness, and he can say, "It was good for me that I was afflicted." Deep humiliation, surely, becomes him that he needed those afflictions, but he could not have done without them, and would not have been without them. The Lord doeth all things well. But we hope shortly to turn to the New Testament scriptures you refer to; in the meantime let us remember that, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." (Ps. xxxiv. 19.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

15. "S. S.," Southampton. You ask, "Will you kindly tell me what dependence is? I try to work myself up to be dependent; I try to work up a certain amount of feeling," &c. Will you read what Jesus said when they brought unto Him infants? "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein." (Luke xviii. 15-17.) Does the little child resting in its mother's arms of love, try to work itself up to be dependent? Does it try to work up a certain amount of feeling? Does it even try to love that tender, loving mother that cares for it every moment? The flesh is ever restless, and distrusting. But dependence is, as born of God, to rest in confiding trust in Him whose love and care of us can never change.

No doubt you know something of the terrible evil of the flesh; but have you given it up as God has said, "The end of all flesh has come before me?" If we really accept this, God's conclusion as to the flesh, as to self, then we cease from "trying to work ourselves up." What a long, a life's lesson, to learn that we are nothing, and to rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. The trying to work ourselves up is a clear proof we have a little bit of confidence left in flesh. We may talk of being dead with Christ; but a dead man does not work himself up. Now instead of trying, just look through the scriptures, and see what God has made Christ to be to you.



"THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST."

V.

CHAPTER III. 7.

WE now come to the sixth stage, or epoch, of the history of Christendom. And whilst Popery and Protestantism still continue to the end, yet, in the address to Philadelphia we get a new display of the Spirit's energy. In the midst of, and succeeding, that which had a name to live and was dead, the Lord Himself (not any ecclesiastical system) is presented as the object and centre of attraction to the children of God. Yes, while Romanism and Protestantism are running their course of failure, there are those found whom the Lord can address as the angel, as *representing* the church.

May our eyes be opened to behold Him, and our ears to hear Him. Thus He speaks to us. "These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth." You will notice, this is different from the revelation of Jesus as Judge, in the midst of the churches, in the first chapter. In the midst of all the failure of the church, He is revealed to us as He that is holy, He that is true. It is not the church, but Christ Himself. Are we occupied by, and attracted to, Him, or

associated with that which is set aside? What a relief to get away from man, the spoiler, to Christ, the holy; from the modern Babel of confusion and falsehood, to Him that is true. Such is, in this stage, the action of the Holy Spirit to lead souls, not to ecclesiastical systems of religion, but to Christ Himself. Oh, are we attracted by the moral excellencies and glories of Christ? Are our hearts satisfied with Himself? What can we want beside?

The heart may be satisfied with this blessed revelation of Jesus Christ, in these last days of failure and declension. But, you may say, I am so perplexed with the present state of the house of God. What discord and divisions! What is he, and who is he, that can undertake the government of the present state of the church? Well, there is no emperor, king, prime minister, episcopal archbishop, pope, council, or conference, revealed to us in this address, in the sixth stage of the church's history. Therefore we must conclude that to none of these is committed the governmental power to rule the church of God in these days which succeed the Reformation.

Truly, we need the revelation of the right Person to govern the church on earth in these last days. This is exactly what we have revealed. Eliakim, the son of Hilki'ah, was over the household. (2 Kings xviii. 18.) "And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call

my servant, Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah: and I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand. . . . And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open," &c. (Is. xxii. 20-23.) Yes, the holy and the true is revealed to us, and the words spoken by the prophet to Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, are applied to Him in these last days of Christianity. Have we really understood this?

Have our eyes been taken off every human form of government and assumed authority over the house, to Christ Himself, the true Eliakim? Oh, how we pass over that which is of the utmost importance. Is not Christ over His own house? The key of government is on His shoulder. When all has failed, He faileth not. Thus is He revealed: oh, that in peace we may thus know Him, and own Him. If not, we shall either go with the crowd, or be utterly discouraged, in these days of human folly and division. He has all wisdom, and all power. His love and patience never fail. We cannot trust the church. We may trust Him for the government of His church, or of the few who desire in all things to be guided and governed by Him, as distinctly and implicitly as we own Him for our salvation. All is on His shoulder; all in His power. May our

hearts evermore confide in Him. Surely this revelation of Jesus Christ is most precious to our souls.

And He says, "I know thy works." Is not this enough, however misunderstood by the world or the church? What is the state of soul so precious to the Lord Himself in this day? Is it great display in religious activities? Is it great power and display in those He thus addresses? Is it because they have great power of miracles or preaching, as in the first stage of Christianity? No, He names not any of these things. He says, "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." How far do we answer to these three things? Are we conscious how little strength we have? Well do I remember a dear labourer of Christ saying—not, I am thankful I can preach to great crowds, and do great things—no, but, "I am thankful to find I cannot sometimes speak a word for Christ to souls I meet in the train, or elsewhere: thus I learn I have no strength; and if I do speak, it is Christ speaking by me." And can we say, though all else seems gone, Yet we have the word? Jesus says, "My word." Yes, Lord, we have Thy word. Oh, how the name of Jesus is denied in all kinds of ways. One was speaking of the mighty power of Christianity—one who

would entirely ignore the divinity of Christ, and deny His atoning death. What a contrast to the state of soul here described. Well, there is the contrast between the mighty power of Christianity without Christ, and Christ in felt, confessed weakness. But we shall see more of this boasting in the last state of Christendom.

Jesus says, "My name." Have you denied it, and taken some other name? or can you say, That precious name is all to me, and I am ashamed of every other? If this is so, He will not forget it.

Verse 9. Now Jesus lets us know that at this time, as in the second stage of the church's history, there is a great increase of Satanic Judaism, or ritualism. He declares it all a falsehood, a lie. It is really appalling to see its rapid increase. He knows, and He says, "*Behold I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.*" All is in His hands, and nothing disturbs His peace, and His peace He gives to these weak and despised ones. All ritualism is that God *may* love them. May He open the eyes of many, and shew them that the true spring of all acceptable service, is to know that He has loved thee. Yes, to know that He has loved me. Have you the blessed consciousness that Jesus speaks to you, when He says, "I have loved thee"? If you have not, what is all your pretended early holy commu-

nion? Is it not, as Jesus says, not communion with Him, but like those who "do lie"? It may be said, How uncharitable! Is Jesus uncharitable in telling us the truth?

Mark how intensely individual all this is. Can Jesus say to the reader, "Because THOU hast kept the word of my patience"? Oh, think of His patience during these centuries of confusion and folly. He waits the Father's will, and then He comes to take us to Himself. How full is His word of this blessed hope. Are you keeping His word? Am I individually keeping His testimony in His patience? If so, He who speaks to me, says, "I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it." (Luke xix. 41.) If Jesus wept as He thought of the near judgment of Jerusalem, ought not we to weep at the near judgment of Christendom? That judgment shall as surely come, as the past judgment did on Jerusalem. And He will keep His word to every saint waiting for Him. He says it; that is enough for my soul.

Verse 11. And now He says, "Behold, I come quickly." For the first time He thus speaks, in the days of Philadelphia. Oh, what words from His heart to thine and mine. His coming quickly is thus connected with, *not* keeping us through

the world's trial, but *from it*. Does He not know what His words mean? Yes, He will come quickly, and take us, all who are His, to meet Him in the air, and so shall we ever be with Him. If He is coming quickly, how would you desire to be found when He comes? Say, if it is to-day—for He quickly comes—how would you be found? Oh, what a purifying hope His words give: "Behold I come quickly."

He now says, "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." What have you got to hold fast? If you are only hoping to be saved, then plainly you have nothing to hold fast. Have you really the certainty that your sins are forgiven, for Christ's sake; that you are justified from all things; that you have peace with God; that you are brought into favour in the Beloved; that you are the object of the everlasting love of God; that you have the knowledge of His blessed will, in the midst of all the dark confusion of the last days; and all this, and much more, made known to you by the Holy Ghost dwelling in you? Then hold fast what God has given you, in His own sovereign love. Let no man take thy crown.

And again, it is not the assembly that overcometh, but "him that overcometh." We can only overcome as we lean on God, in these days of ever-increasing difficulty. But how suited the promises to the day in which we live. Do

you say, Everything seems going to pieces, and the believer who would overcome seems shut out in isolation? He says, "Him . . . will I make a pillar in the temple of my God." Do you say, My heart is so deeply grieved with putting out and going out? He says, "and he shall go no more out." How precious to the weary heart! No more excommunications, and no more evil, from which to separate.

Blessed scenes of everlasting purity—and so near. Oh, awake, my soul, and wait to see Him. All will be well.



SHORT PAPERS ON THE OFFERINGS.

IV.

THE BURNT-OFFERING.

LEVITICUS I.

THE offerer may bring a bullock, or a sheep, or goat, or a fowl, a turtledove, or young pigeon. But in either case there must be death. Cain's offering, without the death of the atoning victim, cannot be accepted. However great or small our apprehension of Christ, there must be the recognised fact of the absolute need of His atonement.

Verse 5. The bullock must be killed before the Lord. The blood must be shed and sprinkled. There can be no approach to God but by the blood of Jesus. Let no man forget this. The

blood gives us boldness to enter the holiest. To seek to enter in by any other way will surely be to be rejected, like Cain. Now mark the particulars that the Holy Ghost brings before us. The burnt-offering is prepared. "And he shall flay the burnt-offering, and cut it into his pieces." What a night was that, the night before Jesus was led to the cross! What sufferings known, and unknown to us! How He felt the parting; how He felt the betrayal; how He felt the denying and forsaking—the brutal mockery of the soldiers, and the intense hatred of devils and men! Oh, blessed Jesus, what a night was that to Thee!

But what was all this to the fire on the altar, the searching judgment of God, and yet to find all 'of a sweet savour unto the Lord'? The victim had to be washed, to be a fit type of the Holy One of God. "His inwards and his legs shall he wash in water." The inmost thoughts of His heart, as well as every step of His outward walk, all was divinely pure. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The head with all the parts were laid in order on the wood, that is, on the fire which is upon the altar. Yes, the head, all the majesty and glory of Immanuel laid on the wood, and the fire. What a sacrifice for a sweet savour. Thus we have the preciousness of the Person of Christ offered up on the altar, a sweet savour to God.

But what is the meaning of all this? It will

surely again help us to remember, that all this is not redemption from Egypt, but God's provision for a redeemed people. When this is clearly understood, the offerings become intensely interesting and most helpful. You say, When I first believed the gospel I knew I had redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins; but when I think of all my failures since, how can I *continue* in the favour of God?

Now the very law of the burnt-offering meets this question of continuance. "This is the law of the burnt-offering: It is the burnt-offering, because of the burning upon the altar all night unto the morning, and the fire of the altar shall be burning in it. . . . The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out." (Lev. vi. 9-13.) Thus is our God teaching us, that He would make a provision for us, that our acceptance should be continuous in all the sweet savour of Christ. And we must not confound this with resurrection, for it is atonement; and the resurrection of Christ is not for atonement, but our complete justification. The hand was laid on the head of the burnt-offering for acceptance. It is our identification with Christ, in the sweet savour of his offering; and this continuous.

Oh, what amazing grace! not that it reaches to our blessings in the heavenlies in Christ; but here on this earth, all through this dark night

until the morning break without a cloud, here we learn how we, from our redemption until we see His face, have become identified with Him continuously, in all His sweet savour.

Now if we turn to Hebrews x. we shall see this most clearly. We learn that these ever repeated and continuous offerings could never in themselves perfect the worshipper. For if they could, they would have ceased to be offered. The Israelites were redeemed; they had crossed the Red Sea, but still there was ever the remembrance of sins, and the conscience was never perfected. These shadows could never satisfy the heart of God, nor perfect the worshipper. They served to point forward to One who came to accomplish the will of God. "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once." This is not our redemption nor new birth, nor conversion, but our entire separation to God in all the sweet savour of the offering of Christ to God—all through that one same offering.

Now the offerings of the law could never give *continued* perfection. "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God." The sacrifices of the law are put in contrast, for nothing finite could be the image of that which is infinite. The work of the priests was never done. The work of Jesus is done: He is set down on the right hand of God. "For by one offering he hath

perfected for ever [or in unchanging continuity] them that are sanctified."

Let us for the present dwell only on the burnt-offering aspect of this precious verse. Of His own voluntary will, as He says, "In burnt-offerings . . . thou hast had no pleasure: then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God." In all the spotless purity of His Person He has made atonement, and identified us with Himself in all the sweet savour of that offering, so that we are continuously perfected, all through this dark night until the blessed morning comes, when we, raised in glory, shall see Him as He is and be like Him.

Beloved reader, do you now see that this has not to do with your conversion, but with your whole path, from that moment to the end of your journey?

Perhaps you say, "But if I should sin, what then?" We shall see when we come to the sin-offering. Or you may say, "If I find sin working within me, what then?" We shall see when we come to leprosy. You may indeed be amazed to find the whole range of your needs, food, failures, and sins, met in Christ as pictured in these types. And all to the glory of God, His portion, all a sweet savour to Him.

The burnt-offering, however, is the first picture in God's gallery. Whatever comes after, this is

the first thought of God, that we, the redeemed, shall be, in unchanging continuity, perfected by that one offering. And mark; the Holy Ghost is a witness that this is so, "Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness."

The mistake of many is this—that they have some great thing to do to attain to this perfection. Look again, is it what you have to do, or is it what He has done? "For by one offering HE HATH perfected for ever them that are sanctified." In the offering Christ is all. He came from the highest glory, and He presented Himself without spot to God. He was the priest, and He was the spotless victim. He offered Himself wholly a sweet savour to God to make atonement. The fire of divine judgment only brought out the sweeter savour to God. And God hath sanctified us, separated us, by that one offering. And He hath, by the one offering of Himself, perfected us, as to the conscience, in continuance, for that is the well-known meaning of this word translated "for ever."

Now have you the witness of the Holy Ghost? Do you believe His testimony to Jesus? Can the sweet savour of His Person who gave Himself for you ever change? And are you not only redeemed by the blood of Christ, which is the foundation of all, but are you sustained as a worshipper in all the unchanging value and perfection of that one sacrifice? The sweet savour

of that one offering shall never cease. Perhaps the most daring wickedness of which man is capable, is to deny the everlasting efficacy of that one offering, and dare to offer a counterfeit, without blood, for the living and the dead. This was borne with during the dark ages, when men had not the scriptures; but who, that has the indwelling of the Holy Spirit can fail to see, that men now by crowds, *who have the holy scriptures* in their hands, are yet doing their utmost to set up again the counterfeit sacrifice of the Mass? This must be the prelude to the judgment of God on an apostate Christendom.

It is a solemn moment. Do you believe God, whether in the typical teaching of Leviticus i., or the Spirit's explanation in Hebrews x.?

We may have little apprehension and weak faith; but notice, whether the man brought a bullock, a sheep, a goat, or a fowl, the same truth is presented. "It is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord." Yes, such is the love of God our Father; He would have the feeblest, the weakest of His blood-bought children know, that they ARE, not may hope to be, but they are identified with His beloved Son in all the sweet savour of His work and Person. Such is our acceptance; such our unchanging perfection as to the conscience, or charge of sin or evil. This was the will of God. Christ came to do His will. His will is done.

He hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified.

The detail of God's thoughts in the various applications of the burnt-offering are most precious. We may see some of these further on. Enough, perhaps, has been said to shew the reader the contrast between the passover and the burnt-offering. When we were first brought to God, it was like Israel redeemed from Egypt by the blood of the Lamb. But, after that, how much we have to learn of the riches of His grace in our wilderness journey. And how much is unfolded in the types of Leviticus. Even as to the great feasts of Jehovah, the passover comes first. (Lev. xxiii.)

The perfect order of the word of God is most wonderful; often we fail to see it from the confusion of human thoughts. Who can tell out the blessedness of seeing the efficacy of the burnt-offering upon us all through our wilderness history? Well, we can only say we joy in such a God and Father. If we take the other offerings in their order, as meeting our every and daily need, we shall have still further cause to joy in God. We will turn next to the meat-offering.



MYSTERIES UNDER THE SUN.

“For all this I considered in my heart even to declare all this, that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God : no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them. All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not : as is the good, so is the sinner ; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath. This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all ; yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead. For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope : for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they shall die : but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward ; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished ; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun. Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy and drink thy wine with a merry heart ; for God now accepteth thy works. Let thy garments be always white ; and let thy head lack no ointment.”—ECCLES. IX. 1-8.

THE preacher had been occupied with certain mysteries as to the death of the righteous and the wicked—mysteries which greatly perplex to this day, and which could not be understood without this book of Ecclesiastes. Sometimes the circumstances attending the death of a well-known child of God are so terrible, and even the

death itself, that we exclaim, How can this be? What can it mean? "There is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that longeth his life in his wickedness." (Chap. vii. 15.) Strange as this may sound, yet it is a fact which we know occurs. A true Christian, through loss of reason, or some other cause, comes to a sad end, and, as to this life under the sun, he perishes. He dies, and is buried; whilst the notorious wicked live—it may be next door—to old age, in much worldly comfort and prosperity.

It is also true that "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death; and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it." (Chap. viii. 8.) And again, "Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him: but it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God." (Chap. viii. 12, 13.) He may go on for a time, as if death and judgment would never overtake him, but come they will, and then he will prolong his days no more.

But here, in this life under the sun, there is this mystery. "There is a vanity which is done upon the earth; that there be just men, unto

whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked: again, there be wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous." (Chap. viii. 11-14.) Now, no one can deny that this does sometimes happen. It is very mysterious. That a truly justified man should come to such a terrible death, through loss of his reason, as might only be expected to happen to a wicked man; and that a wicked man should die peacefully in his own bed, as people say, "He went off like a lamb!"

And further, "All things come alike to all: THERE IS ONE EVENT TO THE RIGHTEOUS, AND TO THE WICKED; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath." (Chap. ix. 2.)

Is it not well, when some terrible event happens to a justified man, to ponder the words of scripture? The fact is thus distinctly recognized, that, as to this life, with all its circumstances, there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked. Yes, it is so. The same pains, infirmities, sickness, death; in pestilence, or in war; the utter failure of the mental powers in old age; yea, the dissolution of the body—there is one event to the wicked and to the righteous. In either case it is the same: "For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know

not anything, neither have they any more a reward ; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished ; neither have they any more a portion for ever in anything that *is done under the sun.*" (Chap. ix, 5, 6.)

This is most solemn, but is it not absolutely true ? But, mark well, these scriptures only speak of the things that are seen, the things under the sun. Go back but a few hundred years, is it not so ? The wicked and the righteous are both alike utterly forgotten. They may have toiled in righteousness, or revelled in sin, one event has happened unto them. They have no portion or reward in this world "under the sun"—the memory of them is forgotten.

"For all this I considered in my heart, even to declare all this, that the righteous and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God." Precious words of comfort ! However sad and perplexing their end may have been, "their works are in the hand of God." Oh, the riches of His grace ! No circumstance of body or mind can change His love. There we can leave them.

And yet it is most true, "No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them." All things come alike to all, that is, in this world, under the sun. Is it not most sad that great numbers take this scripture, or pervert it, as though it proved that no man, by any means, can

know that he is saved? This scripture describes facts under the sun.

It proves that nothing that can happen, either to the justified or the wicked, is sufficient, in this life, to determine whether he has the favour of God, or not. That is, no providence under the sun, however painful or pleasant, tells of this. We may be stricken with sorrow at the death of a well-known believer. How solemn the voice to us! "There is one event to the righteous and to the wicked." And we can declare this, "that the righteous and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God." And this is all we know from all travail beneath the sun. Thus, if reason be fled, and the end so sad as to crush our hearts, let us remember, this does not prove, in such an extreme case of sorrow, that the sufferer has lost the favour of God. No, wondrous words! "one event to the righteous and to the wicked." He knoweth why, and we can leave the righteous and all his works in the hand of God.

What has God to say to us in all this? Let us hear Him. "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works." God would have us personally to cultivate a cheerful disposition as a remedy against morbid depression; but also to one who knows what it is to eat the bread of the table of the Lord with joy—not to be saved, but because he is saved eternally—what untold

joy! And to drink the wine, not hoping to get redemption through His blood, but because he has redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins, and, having this, now God accepts his works. But let all know, that to eat the bread, and drink the wine, as a means of getting saved, is abomination in the sight of God.

And now, if you can eat the bread, and drink the wine, in real joyful thanksgiving for redemption, then, "Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment." Let no mysteries or perplexities under the sun take away this devotedness and holiness of walk. This is exactly what Christendom in the end has not—the white raiment, and the anointing with oil. (Rev. iii. 18.) But let thy garments be always white. Avoid the very appearance of evil, not to get saved, but because thou hast eternal redemption, and, having that, "let thy head lack no ointment." (Chap. ix. 7, 8.)

How divinely perfect is the word of God! Without this book of Ecclesiastes, we should be utterly perplexed with what sometimes happens to the Christian under the sun, not only during his life, but even in his death. But there this inspired book stops; and by the things that happen to him here under the sun, of his future state we know nothing.

We must not, however, suppose for a moment

that the light the Holy Ghost gives in this book, as to the things that may take place in common with the righteous and the wicked under the sun, sets aside the solemn teaching of other parts of scripture, as to the Father's discipline of His children, as is seen in Hebrews xii. 1-14; or even the death of the body, in some cases, as governmental judgment in discipline, as in 1 Corinthians xi. 27-31.

Let us now look for a moment at the resurrection contrast. (Read 2 Cor. iv. 14-v. 9.) Light breaks upon this dark scene. No longer, no man knoweth, but, "Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you."

We do not look here at the things that are seen beneath the sun, but at the things which are not seen, and eternal. "For 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."

All is now changed. "Always confident, KNOWING that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord." All is intelligent confidence. We are not here under the sun. The house may be dissolved—this does not shake our confidence. It may be sad, and painful; but we see beyond. "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory." "And as we have borne

the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

Both these scriptures are equally true. In the death of the righteous and the wicked, one event happens to both. Yea, the righteous may be allowed to die as the wicked; and the wicked, on the other hand, as the righteous. But not so the resurrection. Whatever may have been the death of the righteous, the justified believer, he is raised in glory, he is caught up, to be with and like his Lord. Unbounded and eternal joy awaits him. Yea, and even at dissolution, he knows that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

But to the wicked, the condemned unbeliever, his destiny is now also as clearly revealed. He may have closed his eyes as the righteous; he lifts them up in hell, being tormented. And when the righteous, raised from amongst the dead, shall have reigned with Christ through millennial days, then the rest of the dead shall be raised, to stand before the great white throne. Then no more will happen one event to the wicked and the righteous. The righteous then will be for ever blest in the glory of God; the wicked be for ever in the lake of fire. (Rev. xx., xxi.)

"Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works. Let thy garments be always white, and let thy head lack no ointment."

FAITH HEALING.

II.

(Reply to W. L. continued.)

WE will now look at the passages in the New Testament.

Matthew viii. 17. Indeed this chapter is a blessed revelation of Jesus entering in sympathy into all the sufferings of humanity. His tender heart felt it all, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."

If we turn to the place in Isaiah liii., we find the distinct line drawn betwixt His life-suffering and sympathies, and His atoning death. He was despised and rejected by the Jewish nation in verses 1-3. Then in verse 4, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." Then in the following verses His atonement, "But he was wounded for our transgressions," &c.

It is a subject that gives great comfort to our souls, to see thus that He not only bare our sins, but also our griefs and sorrows; He entered into them, bare them, made them His own. Every sorrow and affliction we feel, He in sympathy bore them first. Thus in His living ministry, as in Matthew viii. 17, we see Him in tender

sympathy casting out evil spirits and healing all that were sick. So in the other scripture you point out, Mark ix. 23 ; only here it is the terrible case of a child possessed of an evil spirit: and this was a case which He alone could deal with, and the father's faith must own this.

It is a very affecting case ; surely no Christian doubts for a moment that the Lord Jesus both had, and manifested His power to heal the sick, to cast out devils, and to raise the dead. Life, death, and the elements of nature were all subject to Him, for He is God over all, blessed for evermore. He acted in divine sovereignty in the exercise of this healing power. Indeed, such had been the display of miraculous power even in the prophets, as He Himself shews in the case of Naaman, and the widow of Sarepta.

We find the same sovereignty in the action of the Holy Ghost since He has been sent down from heaven. "God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will." (Heb. ii. 4.) Then also the same divine sovereignty is seen in 1 Corinthians xii. "To another faith by the same Spirit ; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit dividing to every man severally as he will." Thus the Godhead of the Holy Ghost is seen in connection with this very question—"As He will."

Thus so far we learn that when the Lord Jesus was on earth, He exercised the power of healing. And further, when He had finished the work of redemption, and, though rejected on earth, was received up to heaven, He then sent down the Holy Ghost, who, in His divine sovereignty, imparted the power, or rather, gift of healing to whom He would.

Now we must not ignore the Holy Spirit, as is often the case; and act and argue as if Jesus was still on earth in His body, as He was once, to heal the sick. We must not forget, that He, having accomplished redemption, and risen from the dead, an entire new order of things has been introduced by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. If you will look through the Acts you will find that the gift to heal the sick was limited to the apostles and a few others. James v. 14-16 is quite a different matter. It is the prayer of faith on the confession of our faults one to another. The church of God was then still in its unity; but now, where is either THE CHURCH in its unity, or the elders of the church?

Do we see then that the Holy Ghost is pleased, in these days of sad division and utter failure, to impart to any man or men the gift of healing? Surely we might suspect any man who made such pretensions. That the Lord is pleased to answer earnest believing prayer, is surely true, as every Christian holds.

The deduction from the above scriptures is "that Christ is the Saviour for the body as well as for the soul. And if the health of the body is defective, He also is the only one to restore it." Yes, He is the giver of every grain of wheat also. But does that imply that there must be no farmers, millers, or bakers? He uses the means to supply our needs. And does He not bless the means used in infirmaries, hospitals, &c.; we do not find in the scriptures, the setting up of faith infirmaries to set broken bones, or cure sickness.

We do not doubt that every blessing to man flows through Christ's atoning death, but that does not imply that all medicine and medical skill must be laid aside, and that we must expect to be healed by faith, any more than that we may dispense with food and expect to eat our dinner by faith.

Yet the Lord Jesus when here below, did both heal the sick, and feed the hungry; and the Holy Ghost, who is still on earth, "dividing to every man severally as he will," did whilst the church remained in its unity impart the gift of healing. But in these last days you find the pretension of such power more in connection with some delusion of Satan, as in spiritualism.

Only very lately a book was sent us from a spiritualist, a converser with demons, who denied the atonement of the Lord Jesus; and yet was a wonderful medium of power to heal the sick;

giving you abundant cases equal to any of Bethshan. There could be no doubt this was the direct work of Satan.

Of the other scripture you name, 1 Corinthians xiii. 8 certainly shews that miraculous gifts would fail or cease. But love never faileth. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. What a blessed fact! We have not to love Him in order that He may love us. We have not to serve Him in order that the Holy Ghost may be given us. But we must ever remember we are not to judge of that love by things under the sun; for whom He loveth He chasteneth. Now in all ministry love is of immense importance. Thus betwixt the sovereign distribution of gifts in 1 Corinthians xii., and their exercise in chapter xiv., we have this chapter of love (xiii.) coming in between. The Lord grant that we may ever follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts. We need this all the more, as Satan is busy preparing the way for antichrist. (See 2 Thess. ii. 3-12.) Yes, every movement of the present day is either preparing the way for antichrist, or leading the true saints of God to wait for His Son from heaven. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come!"



"THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST."

VI.

CHAPTER III. 12.

WE will linger a little longer on this precious verse. If you refuse all the names of a divided Christendom, you will then have to bear some name of reproach. He knows it all, He feels it all. Was He not called Beelzebub? He says, of the overcomer, "I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name."

Oh, how dear to His heart are the overcomers in this day. What are the names and honours of Babylon, compared to the holy delight that awaits us in the city of His God, the new Jerusalem? Not titles emanating from Rome, or this world's universities, but "coming down out of heaven, from my God."

Titles may come from heaven or hell, which would you prefer?

Let it be well remembered, that again it is only the overcomer that is expected to have an ear to hear. And "he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." This address then, to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, is the special word of the Lord to

the churches or assemblies in this day. And the overcomer, whose ear is open, will thus know the mind of the Lord at this very time.

The church, as it was in the beginning, has failed.

Thyatira, or Romanism, as Jezebel, has failed ; Protestantism, or Sardis, has failed ; all have failed as a testimony for God on earth. Now in Philadelphia, there is an entire change ; it is no longer a church, or assembly, or church principles, but Christ in His personal glory and purity : "he that is holy, he that is true ;" and He on whom the sole government rests. Thus the Spirit sets the Lord Jesus before us, and thus He speaks to us. Now in this day of utter ruin and departure, is your ear open to Him, or closed ?

It will not do to rest now on church principles ; we must have to do with the Person of Christ ; and, whatever weakness, there must be the reality suited to Him. If there be an attempt to set up an imitation of the church, it will fail. It is a feeble remnant, or a single overcomer, who has Christ alone.

From this hour may He be the one blessed object of our souls ; and our ears be open to hear Him.

Verse 14. We now come to the very last stage of recognised Christendom ; after this it becomes Babylon, or the beast. "And unto the

angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.”

When all have failed, He is still the Verily, the Amen. All the purposes of God are fulfilled in Him, the last Adam. In the past eternity, He said, “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God;” and He is the faithful One. In the end, in the midst of all that is false, He is the faithful and the true witness. In all things surely He has the pre-eminence; He is “the beginning of the creation of God.”

Now He speaks, may we hear His judgment on a boasting Christendom. “I know thy works.” Unconverted, proud men, may boast of being the true church. He says, “I know thy works.” Is there a secret thing unknown to Him? He says, “Thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.” Surely, it would be more honest to make no profession of Christ, than whilst making such a profession to be utterly indifferent about both His blessed Person and His holy teaching. No one can fail to see the increasing indifference about Christ.

How is it with the reader? Is your time spent in idle gossip, or pleasures, or zeal for forms of godliness, denying the power, and with no heart for Christ? If so, let us further hear the word of the Lord. “So then because thou art luke-

warm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." Yes, so far from the world being converted, the lifeless professing church is to be utterly rejected, as nauseous to Christ; and for these very reasons—"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

What a description! And mark, these words are spoken to the angel of the church in its last state, to that, or those, who should truly represent the assemblies of God. Do you say, Well, the angel means the clergy and ministers of these days? It may be they think so, and take this place. But if this is so, then what words, what a description of the clergy? "Wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." We must not forget the few names of Sardis known to Christ. But if these words of Christ are addressed to a proud, boastful clergy, of these very last days of Christendom, is it not awful, and high time to awake from the fatal slumber? There is not one thing about these that Christ can approve. No, these are marks of the unconverted. They are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. If these lines should ever meet the eye of one unconverted clergyman or minister, do ask yourself, Do these words describe my real state? When you think of

death and judgment, are you not wretched and miserable? As to all enjoyment of the present favour of God and true riches, are you not poor indeed? As to all certainty as to where you will spend eternity, are you not utterly blind, not knowing whither you are going? And as to the righteousness of God, are you not naked? Can you say the righteousness of God is upon you? No, but you are naked, and unfit for the presence of God, and yet you are boasting of riches and increase of goods!

You hope to acquire righteousness by works of law, and this you preach to others. Do you not see that you cannot do this without rejecting the righteousness of God, accomplished by the death and resurrection of Christ? What is the death and resurrection of Christ to you? What is it to you that the holy One has passed through the fire of divine judgment, a sacrifice for sin? Jesus says, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich." You must admit you have not got it yet; your seeking it by works of law is the proof you have not got it; no, you are naked; He says so, and He does not counsel you to seek to be clothed by works of law, or ritualism: you must come to Him for divine righteousness. Do you say, And must there be no practical righteousness then? Yes, He says, "and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed." Divine righteousness, justified,

accounted righteous before God first, then practical righteousness before men—white raiment. There never is, or can be, the latter without the former, and in this divine order. And then “anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.” Do not rely on the teaching of man; for the natural man, however educated, is not, nor has, the anointing of the Holy Ghost.

We must not, however, limit these words of Jesus to the clergy of this day. Are they not of vital importance to all who make a profession of Christ—this boasting Christendom—about to be cast off for ever as God’s witness on earth? Are you trusting in its boasted riches, its vast machinery, prosperity, and worldly power? Do you think outward prosperity in this world an evidence of divine favour? What a mistake! No; Jesus says, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.” Be in earnest, and change your minds on this matter. Chastening is rather a mark of divine love, as in Hebrews xii.

Oh, poor deceived Christendom, do not vainly suppose the Lord is with thee, and approves thy doings. No; He says, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” Thus, in the very end there is nothing of a corporate character the Lord owns as a whole. He is

outside, but knocking still. Oh the riches of His grace! He seeks the individual communion of His saints. This must be so, until we meet Him in the air, as revealed to Paul. (See 1 Thess. ii. 19; iii. 13; iv. 15, 18; v. 23.)

In this last stage there is no body of Christians owned as such; and to get the end, as to believers, we must go back to Philadelphia; and for this reason, the coming of the Lord is most distinctly brought out in Philadelphia, but not named in Laodicea. Until He comes, if any man hears the voice of Christ, he will then cease to be a Laodicean, and no doubt will be caught up to meet the Lord; but the mass of Christendom, unconverted Laodicea, will go on to the full-grown Babylon, as we shall see further on in the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Thus we know that they who are not Christ's will be left behind, as surely as all that are Christ's will be taken up to meet Him, and be for ever with the Lord.

It is also remarkable that the promise to the overcomer in verse 21, is so worded as either to be adapted to the individual overcomer until the Lord come, or to the overcomer who shall be saved during the terrible crisis that shall follow when Christ comes, not to take His saints, but to reign with them, as we shall see at the completion of the first resurrection. (Rev. xx. 4.)

Are these things so? Have the seven stages

of Christendom run their course? Is it a fact that any day the Lord may come; and all who are His be taken up to meet Him, and all the rest of Laodicean professors be left to, then, worse than Laodicean darkness? To which state do you answer—that described in the address to Philadelphia, or that to Laodicea? We do not ask to what body of people do you belong, but what is the state of your soul? Mark, the case is revealed in the clearest possible way. There is nothing our Lord Jesus blames in the former; there is not one thing He approves in the latter. Christ is everything to the soul in one state; He is nothing to the soul in the other. You cannot be in both these states. Which are you in then? Are you about to be caught up to be for ever with Him who loved you, and gave Himself for you, or left to be punished with everlasting destruction at the coming of the Lord, with all His saints? You may succeed for a brief moment in your worldly designs, you may hate and despise the true followers of Christ with little strength; but do you know what awaits them? We will pass on next to the scenes that await the redeemed of the Lord.



SHORT PAPERS ON THE OFFERINGS.

V.

THE MEAT-OFFERING.

LEVITICUS II.

IF we have learnt the meaning of, or God's thoughts revealed to us in, the burnt-offering—that all through this dark night, until the break of day, we are identified continually with Christ in all the sweet savour of His offering, once offered; for ever perfected—it will then be truly blessed to see what is the next thing presented to us as believers, for our food along the journey. This is the meat-offering. We desire to write simply for the least babe in Christ. For it is the law of the meat-offering, that so “shall all the sons of Aaron have one as much as another.” The sons of Aaron have thus, again, a privilege which the people do not enjoy—carrying out the figure of the sons of Aaron being a type of the church as the brethren of Christ. They have the privilege of feeding in enjoyment on Christ that the people of Israel will not have, even in millennial days. It is the will of our God and Father, then, that all the redeemed brethren of Christ shall feed on Him, in blest enjoyment, “one as much as another.”

The sons of Aaron were redeemed from Egypt. We have redemption through His blood. They

were the recognised priests of Jehovah. "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." The sons of Aaron had not to eat the meat-offering in order to get to be priests, or to get salvation and deliverance from Egypt. Neither have we to take the so-called holy communion to get to be saved, or to obtain redemption. If we have redemption, how can we have to do any thing to get it? We feel more and more the importance of bearing in mind, that all these offerings are for those who have redemption. Truly all point to Christ, and reveal the rich provision of our God and Father. Perhaps you say, But must I not take the Lord's supper? Certainly, if you can truly give thanks because you have redemption, but not without this certainty; it is mere mockery and unbelief to do so.

If, then, we can say we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins, and that we are perfected, in unchanging continuity, by His one sacrifice—identified with Him, taken into favour in the Beloved, in all the sweet savour of what He is to God, as seen in the burnt-offering—we may now look at the next thing, the meat-offering. Here, mark, there is no death, no atonement. "His offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon." (Lev. ii. 1.) This is

evidently Christ in His incarnation, the spotless humanity of Christ; what He was in His life down here below; the bread that came down from heaven. In verse 2 we have what Christ was to God, and in verse 3 what He is to us. The handful of flour and oil, with ALL the frankincense, was burnt at the altar by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord.

In His birth He was begotten of the Holy Ghost in sinless purity. As a child, He was "filled with wisdom, and the grace [favour] of God was upon him." (Luke ii. 40.) Yes, from the moment He was born of the Virgin, He was this sweet savour unto the Lord.

Fine flour, mingled with oil, and anointed with oil. And when He, in grace, identified Himself with the remnant of Israel, in the baptism of John, "Lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. iii. 16, 17.)

He knew no sin; there was no stain of inward corruption in Him, to hinder the Spirit of God descending on Him, the beloved Son of God the Father, in whom was all His delight—the meat-offering that satisfied the whole heart of God. He could say, "in whom I am well pleased." Oh, how the Father delighted to say, in a voice out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son." And,

not only was He the food, the delight of God the Father, but surely, as all the sons of Aaron had their portion of the meat-offering, one as much as another, so have we our portion, our food, in Christ.

“And 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. . . . And of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace” [or, favour upon favour].

There was a striking illustration of this on the day of the dedication of the altar. (Num. vii.) It is shewn in that chapter that the offerings of the twelve princes of the tribes of Israel were exactly alike, pointing to Him who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Now, as to the meat-offering, take the first, the offering of Nahshon, the son of Aminadab. “And his offering was one silver charger, the weight thereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl, of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them were full of fine flour, mingled with oil, for a meat-offering.” Yes, in the meat-offering God had His portion, and all the sons of Aaron their portion. And both the large and small silver vessels were full of the meat-offering. Thus Jesus, as Man, anointed with the Holy Ghost, fills the infinite heart of God: “and of his fulness have all we received.”

Yes, surely that which satisfies the infinite, must satisfy the finite.

Fine flour; yes, there was no unevenness in Him. See Him crushed and bruised by the sorrows that oppressed Him during His life. But all infinite loveliness, divine perfection—ever presented unto God for a sweet savour; and the nearer He came to the cross, the sweeter the savour. It was when Judas went out, He said, "*Now* is the Son of man glorified." He was betrayed by His own disciple. The Pharisees and priests consulting to put Him to death, the powers of hell seeking to crush Him; and the more He is crushed and bruised, the sweeter the savour ascending up to His Father. Oh, precious Jesus, food of my soul! Oh, to be more like Thee!

Verse 11. "No meat-offering which ye shall bring unto the Lord shall be made with leaven, for ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the Lord made with fire." Leaven, in scripture, is the well-known type of evil; leaven of Herod, of malice, and wickedness, &c. In Jesus was no evil, no root of sin. In Himself He was ever the perfect, sinless offering to God—sinless humanity—and, as such, anointed with the Holy Ghost.

The hand was never laid on the meat-offering—no, sinful humanity could not be identified with the holy, sinless, perfect One: He must die, or remain for ever alone. There is no hand of

identification laid on in the offerings, unless there be death. God must be glorified by His death, before man can be brought into identification with Him. The two goats, on the day of atonement, shew this. The hand is not laid on the meat-offering, but opened, to receive of His blessed fulness. Salt must not be lacking from any of the offerings made by fire; it must not be lacking from the meat-offering. All that is acceptable to God is, according to His own eternal purpose, the salt of the covenant of thy God. Jesus came to do that will of God in all the four aspects of His offering. When we read and meditate on His history in humanity here below, let us remember that He is our food, according to the eternal purpose of God.

Honey was not to be burned to the Lord; that which ferments, and becomes corrupt, may not be offered to God. There was nothing in our adorable Lord that could become corrupt. His very body was purity itself, and could see no corruption, even in death. He was truly man, capable of suffering and death; but as there was not, and could not be, personal taint or corruption in Him, His death must be perfectly voluntary for us.

Will you notice, then, how carefully leaven is forbidden, in verse 11, in that which typifies Christ. Then verse 12 seems to state a contrast. "As for the oblation of the first-fruits, ye shall

offer them unto the Lord ; but they shall not be burnt on the altar for a sweet savour." And yet, in verses 14-16, there are firstfruits, green ears of corn, dried by the fire, &c. " And thou shalt put oil upon it, and lay frankincense thereon : it is a meat-offering. And the priest shall burn the memorial of it, part of the beaten corn thereof, and part of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof : it is an offering made by fire unto the Lord."

Here, then, we have two very different kinds of firstfruits. Both are offered unto the Lord. But in one case they shall not be burnt on the altar for a sweet savour. Neither is there any frankincense. In the other case oil is put upon it, and frankincense is laid thereon, and this may be burnt unto the Lord, " with all the frankincense thereof." And in this there must be no leaven or honey. For no leaven or honey must be burnt for a sweet savour unto the Lord.

No doubt practical questions will here be suggested to the reader. All this is instruction to those who have redemption through the blood of Christ. Yes, and you say, True, I have redemption. My sins are forgiven. But can I say there is no leaven of evil in me ? Is there no corruption in me ? Do I know any Christian whose kindness, or honey, may never ferment into corruption, and even enmity ? And when I am tried by fiery trial, is the savour more sweet to

God? Sadly, I must confess, it is the opposite. And if there is no frankincense, no sweet savour, in me, how can I be offered up to God at all? How can I be accepted of Him? I see all this most blessedly of Christ, even in His sinless humanity down here; but, seeing there is still leaven in me, and in all believers on earth, how can we be sustained in accepted favour with God?

These are thoughts that many a reader who really enjoys Christ as the meat-offering will want explaining. Is not this so? We will turn, then, to another scripture in Leviticus which will explain in detail more fully these very points.



THE END OF ANOTHER YEAR:

HOW HAVE WE SPENT IT?

WHETHER converted, or unconverted, this is a solemn question. If unconverted, you are hastening on to death and judgment, where every secret thing of another year must be brought out. All that you have said, and all that you have done, will be brought out of the books before that terrible throne. "And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. . . . And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire." Oh, will you

close another year unsaved? You may be weary with the pleasures or sorrows of another year: soon it will have passed away, like a cloud. And will you still turn a deaf ear to Him who, in tender compassion, says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"? Oh, try Him, come to Jesus before the year is out!

But do you profess to be a Christian? Then how have you spent this year? Take heed that you are not deceived. Remember, Jesus says that out of the mass of profession there are a few names, a few that shall walk with Him. (Rev. iii. 4.) And "he that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment." Have you been an overcomer this year? If not, is it not high time to wake out of the delusive sleep of mere profession? Are you a child of God, and have you neglected prayer and dependence on God, so that you have sinned? If so, come at once, before the year closes, and fully confess your sins to your Father. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Oh, what mercy! "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the FATHER, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins." (1 John i. 9; ii. 1, 2.) Do not go on another day without confession and restoration to communion with your Father.

Or have you spent the year in contentions and strivings about unprofitable questions? Is this a lost year, both as to spiritual growth and usefulness? Does it need to be thus, if even called to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints"? The Lord enable us to discern between things that differ. Or have you spent the year in spiritual dearth? These are "clouds without water, carried about of winds." (Jude 12.) This is one of the terrible marks of apostasy. Its opposite is stated thus: "If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth." (Eccles. xi. 3.) Have you spent a year in soaring high in profession, but without giving a single drop of refreshing rain to others? Then surely you will have been driven about by the winds of this year. Oh, what a windy year it has been! enough to blow about the clouds without rain, until they do not know where they are.

But if the clouds be full of rain? Well, how are we to know if they are full of rain? The proof is very real—they empty on the earth—they are a blessing to a dry and thirsty land. Have you been a blessing to anybody this year? Or have you been, with itching ears of quibbling criticism, living in selfish uselessness and vain conceit? You may call this testimony, but has God used you to give a little refreshing rain on the earth?

But do you say, Well, as to the past sad year, all has been failure ; but how am I to be refreshed myself, and be a blessing to others ? For these two things, we would ask you to look at two scriptures. The figure is changed, but the truth is the same. In John iv. 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 into everlasting life." Now, if you have not received the gift of Christ, all knowledge, and mere doctrine, and so-called testimony, leaves you as thirsty, as dry as a cloud without rain, driven about. What would be the state of a meeting where all are such clouds ?

But if you have received the Holy Ghost, and He supplies the water of the word, then are fulfilled those wondrous words of Jesus, "shall never thirst." It is now in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life. There is now in him an inexhaustible source of unchanging satisfaction and joy. The Holy Ghost, ever refreshing him with the water of the word, he knows no drought. His trust is in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. "For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." (Jer.

xvii. 8.) What a contrast to the poor head-knowledge cloud without water.

The other scripture we would look at is in John vii. 37-39. Do you say, The end of the year has come, and I am still unsatisfied, still thirsting for something I have not got? I have tried all the feasts of the year, and the various teachings of men; still I thirst, I thirst. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, JESUS stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." Do you hear His blessed voice, His invitation to you? He knows that man, with all his ritualism and feasts, or all his opinions, cannot satisfy you, so He says to you, "Come unto me." Like the cloud gathering its water from the vast ocean, so you must come to Him, and drink of His infinite fulness. There can be no rain on the earth, no blessing to others, except as you come first to Him, the only fountain of life and joy. He does not say, Let him come to the church, or to the priest, or to His blessed mother; no, Let him come unto Me, and drink.

And what will be the result? "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Rivers of living water are not like clouds without rain, driven about. Then which are you most like, an empty floating cloud, or a river of blessing to others?

"But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." But now Jesus has glorified God, and has been raised from the dead glorified. The Holy Ghost has been given, and is here on earth. Have you received Him? If so, your privilege is now to be a river of living water—not the dry bed of a river, needing water merely, but full to overflowing. God grant it may be so with each of us, should we be down here another year.

Many a reader of this little gospel magazine may say, I read this little book to get blessing to my own soul; and many a high and dry cloud may despise it: but you say, What can I do to be a blessing to others, to rain on the earth?

I will tell you what a constant reader told me a day or two ago. He lives in a village where there is no ministry of Christ within reach of his home. He is very aged. Few could possibly have less privileges than he has had. If a few Christians met in any house in the villages around, they would be discountenanced, and probably turned out of their houses. Satan reigns in these dark villages. What can T. F. do in such a place? He receives one copy of THINGS NEW AND OLD. He said, "I always read it twice. Then I send it to the village of H. It is read by three or four families there. I send another, the

same (I think he said "Word and Work"). It is then sent to the village of C., a village where the gospel is unknown, except it enters in this way. Several families read it there. It then goes on to B. And so, some twenty families have the gospel brought to their doors, and food to the hidden sheep of Christ. Thus one hundred souls may be reached continuously by one copy of THINGS NEW AND OLD.

Now, if every reader of this little magazine did likewise in the coming year, should the Lord in long-suffering tarry another year, nearly one million souls would be reached, in a monthly stream of rain on the earth.

Oh, dear fellow-Christians, will you not earnestly cry to God in prayer that this little paper may be a cloud full of rain, to be thus emptied in blessing on the earth? We only desire to continue in this service, so long as the Lord gives refreshment and blessing by it to His scattered flock in these last dark days. You who are the Lord's can thus help, both in prayers and in seeking the hidden sheep and lambs of Christ. Is it not "high time to awake out of sleep"? We call upon all our readers to awake. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." Ah, even yet before the year closes we may be for ever with the Lord.

Let not Satan discourage you by the dry clouds driven of winds. Come to Jesus Himself;

seek close, abiding, satisfying communion with Him; and then He will shew you what to do, so that, as a full cloud, you may be emptied on the earth. Remember, we are in the days of lukewarmness as to Christ, neither cold nor hot. Beware of the chilling stream of indifference. You must either walk close to Him, come to Him, and drink, or be a cloud driven about by the wind. And now, before we bid farewell to 1885, may the Lord revive His work in all our souls. Amen.

C. S.



IN HEAVENLY LOVE ABIDING.

IN Heavenly Love abiding,
 No change my heart shall fear,
 And safe is such confiding,
 For nothing changes here.
The storm may roar without me,
 My heart may low be laid,
 But God is round about me,
 And can I be dismay'd?

Wherever He may guide me,
 No want shall turn me back;
 My Shepherd is beside me,
 And nothing can I lack.
 His wisdom ever waketh,
 His sight is never dim,—
 He knows the way He taketh,
 And I will walk with Him.

Green pastures are before me,
 Which yet I have not seen,

Bright skies will soon be o'er me,
Where the dark clouds have been.
My hope I cannot measure,
My path to life is free,
My Saviour has my treasure,
And He will walk with me.

Ere yet another morning
My spirit may be free,
As absent from the body,
At home, O Lord, with Thee.
O sleep! O rest! how precious,
As guarded by Thy care,
I'm waiting for Thy promise
To meet Thee in the air.

The Lord Himself, e'en Jesus,
Amid the ransom'd throng,
Its glory, joy, and beauty,
Its never-ending song.
O day of wondrous promise!
The Bridegroom and the bride
Are seen in glory ever:
O God! how satisfied.

