

Things New & Old,

A

GOSPEL MAGAZINE,

WITH PAPERS FOR THE FLOCK OF GOD.

“Christ is all.”—Col. iii. 11.

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Things New and Old.

THANKSGIVING.

THE year just passed away has been a year of trial and suffering to many: perplexity in the world, and sorrow in the church of God—what need of prayer and endurance! We feel assured however, it will be helpful to our souls, to recount a few of the things for which we can, as believers, give thanks.

1. We can give thanks, that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ “hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”

For this we have not to pray, but to give thanks. “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” (Rom. viii. 29, 30.)

We can thus look back into eternity, and

give thanks that our salvation is according to eternal purpose. Yes, giving thanks to Him, "who *hath* saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began." (2 Tim. i. 9.) What a theme for thanksgiving !

2. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." This again was not in answer to our prayers, but for which we can surely give thanks. And what God purposed in eternity, Jesus accomplished in the fulness of time, or in the due appointed time.

And further, for the believer's thanksgiving, redemption is not only accomplished, but we have it. "In whom WE HAVE redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." (Eph. i. 7.) Again, we have not to pray for redemption or the forgiveness of sins when we have both, but surely to give thanks.

3. If we believe God we have not to pray for justification and peace. Believing God we are justified. It is written, "By him all that believe ARE justified from all things." (Acts xiii. 39.) We are reckoned righteous, believing God who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. "Therefore being justified by faith, WE HAVE peace with God

through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. v. 1.) All this is distinct cause for thanksgiving.

4. But now as to the present journey through a world where everything is against Christ, and therefore against us as believers, and we, like sheep, ever ready to turn aside. How can we, and for what can we, now give thanks? We can each one give thanks because "the Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." We have not to pray for a shepherd, but to give thanks. Oh, to know Him and trust Him more. Think of what He does for us, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures," &c. (See Psalm xxiii.) Is not every verse a wondrous theme for thanksgiving? It is not prayer here.

5. But in the midst of so much temptation, and needing some one to sustain, succour, and help us that we fail not, can we now give thanks? Yes, we can give thanks for our great High Priest. "For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we, apart from sin." "Wherefore he is able also to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

6. But if they fail, can they, besides confessing their sins, also give thanks? Yes, they can give

thanks because they "have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous : and he is the propitiation for our sins." (1 John ii. 1.) Oh, what marvellous themes for thanksgiving !

7. But if they should die, as to the body, can they then give thanks, or is all uncertain in that awful moment ? They can surely give thanks, for they well know that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. (See 2 Cor. v. 1-8.) Concerning this the Christian alone can say "We know," and therefore he alone can give thanks and say, "We are confident . . . and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

8. And in the immediate prospect of the coming of the Lord, that which will so terrify the world, can we look forward to His coming and give thanks ? Yes, with fullest joy, for come what may Jesus has given this divine assurance : He has said, "I go to prepare a place for you ; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John xiv. 2, 3.)

Now, beloved reader, if you are a Christian, you can give thanks for every one of these things ; and if not, you cannot give thanks for one of them. We might go on, and add greatly to the list of matters of thanksgiving.—Oh, how blessed that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ !

C. S.

"THE LIFE."

IN 1 John v. 19, we are told that "the whole world lieth in the wicked one;" and in Ephesians ii. 1-3, that "we walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all [Jews as well as Gentiles] had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh . . . and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." What a solemn statement as to the condition of man in the world! The whole world lying in the wicked one! Children of disobedience, energised by the prince of this world! By nature the children of wrath! How terrible, and how absolutely hopeless the condition!

Yet this is the condition of the "first man" as described by the Spirit of God, and that too, after 4000 years of testing, with every appliance for his recovery. But there was no recovery for the first man. The ruin was complete and irretrievable. He had fallen under the power of Satan, and his life was blighted and utterly corrupted by sin. Without law, he was lawless; under law, a transgressor; in the presence of grace, in God come down to earth, revealed in the Son, he was a God-hater. Such was the terrible condition of man, in whom the fountain of life was corrupted and ruined.

Blessed be God, another life has been manifested in the very scene where the first was destroyed, a life that subsisted in the Son with the Father from all eternity, and was manifested in Him down here on earth before the eyes of men. "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." This was a new beginning for man in grace, and the revelation of a new life for man, a life that was before all worlds, and before all creatures, and a life that Satan could not touch, nor sin corrupt. This new beginning is life revealed in the Person of the eternal Son in manhood down here, and so the apostle says, "That which was from the beginning." It is not the same as "*In the beginning*" in John's Gospel, where the eternity of the Word is the subject. "In the beginning was the Word." The Word existed in the beginning, did not *begin* to exist then, but *existed*, and, moreover, spoke into existence everything that *began* to exist. In the Epistle of John, "the beginning" is the beginning of the manifestation of eternal life on earth, in the Person of God's Son become Man. The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among men here below, and through that veil of flesh His glory shone out before their eyes. They saw Him as an only-begotten with a Father, and the fulness of grace and truth was there for man. What a

wonderful beginning! He was “the Word of life.” “In him was life, and the life was the light of men.” “Light” and “life,” “grace and truth,” shone out in Him amid “the darkness” of this world. It was a wonderful display! It was God Himself come down into all the misery and wretchedness of man—God manifested in the flesh. All that God is in light and love, truth and holiness, righteousness and grace, shone out. “The life was manifested,” and in this life there was the display of all that God could be in eternal blessing, for His lost and guilty creatures. The life was manifested in the Person of the eternal Son become man, and dwelling among men, the light of life shone out amid the darkness, and shone for every man, not for Jews only, but for Gentiles as well. It was the brightness of heaven itself let down into the darkness here, and shining for all, just as the sun, the mighty orb of the day, shines for the whole world.

I repeat, it was in the Person of the Son; and when men saw Him, they saw the life. Faith saw the life and rejoiced in its light. The apostles were attracted to its glory, shining out in Him, and became the witnesses to others of that wondrous life. In every word He spoke, in every movement, in every act, they saw the life shining out in its divine nature and character. They heard it, they saw it, they gazed on it, they handled it with their hands. The apostle who

wrote this epistle, could say, "The life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." Yes, they saw the life, and followed its pathway of light through this dark world. They witnessed its patient ministry of love and mercy, in ten thousand ways relieving from the misery and wretchedness sin had brought in. Then, last of all, and greatest of all, they saw it meeting man's utmost need in that terrible cross, where all that God is in majesty and lowliness, shone out in the judgment of sin; and all that He is in love and grace shone out in righteous blessing for man, resurrection witnessing eternal victory over sin and over all the power of Satan. The clouds of darkness were now broken; God had come out, and the clear light was now shining out in all the glory of grace, witnessing unhindered and unlimited blessing for man. The apostles saw, believed, possessed. They were made partakers of the life, and brought into fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. The revelation of this life was a revelation of blessing, to them and all who receive their word, bringing into a fellowship which lifts the soul above the circumstances of misery and sorrow through which we pass in this world. They saw the life, displayed, and not only were quickened with it, but also drank in its spirit and character, as they

beheld its outgoings in the blessed Son of God. Partakers of the divine nature, they were also filled with common thoughts, desires, delights, joys with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ: and this in an established and known relationship, of which Christ was the measure and character. Who can estimate the blessedness of this?

And now the apostle says, “That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” The apostles *saw*, and have *borne witness*; we have *believed*, and enter into fellowship with them. What more could we ask on this side of the glory, than to be brought into a fellowship like this? How unspeakably great the blessing! Would we, like the foolish Gnostics, seek for something beyond this? some new and further development? Are we not satisfied with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ, and fellowship with them? Surely this is enough to satisfy and fill the soul. ¹⁴ ²³ by *faith* we enter into it now; but it is what we shall have in glory, when introduced into the deep, eternal joy and blessedness of the Father’s house, where we shall be like Christ, and shall see His face. We are not there yet; but it is all unfolded to us, and faith drinks it in, and the heart and affections are moulded by it, and find their home there, and a joy which the world knows not of.

“These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full,” says the apostle John, who had drunk to the full at this eternal spring of joy. “That your joy may be full”! What a word of comfort for those to whom sin had wrung out a full cup of sorrow, but who have come to Christ to drink of the fountain of life and blessing, and exchange that cup of sorrow for the cup of joy! It is not a half and half thing that cannot fully satisfy. We are brought to that which is the spring of heaven’s own joy, which fills the heart of the Father with eternal delight, which commands the homage and praise of all the hosts above, the very centre of heaven’s glory, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and revealer of the Father; and surely this is enough to fill our poor hearts with a joy never known before. God would have us filled even now with the joy that will fill us through all eternity. He has connected us by faith, with a scene which His own presence fills; and He would have us enjoy the relationship into which He has brought us, finding our spring of joy in Himself, and drinking to the full.

May we know more and more the fulness of this joy with which God Himself delights to fill us, that in some feeble measure, at least, we may reflect that Christ in whom it has been revealed to us, and in whom we are introduced into the fulness of eternal blessing.

A. H. R.

SHORT PAPERS ON THE OFFERINGS.

VI.

THE MEAT-OFFERING.

LEVITICUS II., XXIII.

WE have been dwelling on the contrast between the oblation of the first-fruits, which could not be burnt on the altar for a sweet savour, and the meat-offering of the first-fruits, which must be burnt without leaven, a sweet savour by fire unto the Lord.

Leviticus xxiii. will explain this more fully. Only we must again bear in mind that all this follows the passover. It is instruction for those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. It is, "When ye be come into the land which I give unto you." Now, dear reader, how as to this? Have you redemption through His blood? As Israel passed with Moses through the Red Sea out of Egypt, have you passed with Jesus out of Egypt through death? And, still more, have you passed with our true Joshua through the Jordan of death into the land; through death into resurrection, the antitype of Canaan? "When ye be come into the land which I give unto you."

We must be "dead with Christ" and "risen with Christ" to understand these things, and in the heavenlies in Christ. (Col. ii. 20, iii. 1; Eph.

i. 3, ii. 6.) Oh! have we come into this land which He hath given unto us? "Here we rest in wonder viewing."

And first as to Himself. Is He not the first-fruit wave-sheaf, the first sheaf of the harvest? How blind the Jews were not to understand this. The very day of the passover was the day when He was offered up, the Lamb of God. And the very day they waved the first ripe sheaf, He arose from the dead on that first day of the week, the morrow after the sabbath. "And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it." (Lev. xxiii. 11.) Thus our Jesus having been delivered for our iniquities on the cross, the true atoning Lamb of God, was on that very morrow after the sabbath, accepted for us. Accepted for our eternal redemption—accepted for our righteousness, our justification—accepted to be evermore our subsisting righteousness. Yes, God in righteousness raised Him from the dead for our justification, on the very day that the wave sheaf was waved before the Lord, in type for the acceptance of Israel.

"And ye shall offer that day, when ye wave the sheaf, an he lamb without blemish of the first year, for a burnt-offering unto the Lord." Mark, there is no sin-offering on that day. He "knew no sin." He needed no sin-offering for

Himself. The burnt-offering was what He was to God in all the sweet savour of His Person and work. All went up a sweet savour to God.

Oh! the joy that God had in receiving Him from the dead, accepted for us. Thus the true meat-offering is offered on that day. "And the meat-offering thereof shall be two-tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the Lord for a sweet savour: and the drink-offering thereof shall be of wine, the fourth part of an hin." In this, or with this offering made by fire there must be no leaven or honey. This is Jesus, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. No change in Him. The same sinless purity after He had made atonement for our sins, as before. Wholly acceptable to God, and accepted for us. All is absolute purity. Still, we receive from His fulness, and grace upon grace, as we share the thoughts of God. It is blessed to dwell on these things—feeding on Christ as the meat-offering.

Yes, the reader says, all that is truly blessed, and most true of Christ, the first-born from among the dead—Christ risen from the dead and become the first-fruits of them that slept. To have offered leaven, the type of evil, with that meat-offering would indeed have been utterly out of place. But you have not explained my difficulties as to the church, or even as to myself. Evil soon shewed itself in the church. And after

my conversion there was evil in me that I little expected, and it soon shewed itself. And the question is this, How can the church be sustained in acceptance with God? or, how can I, as a Christian, be in His unchanging favour, seeing the honest truth is, that there is still evil in both the church and in me?

Very true; we will now look at that part of the subject. Now you will have to count fifty days, from the day that Christ arose from the dead unto Pentecost, that is the fiftieth day. That is the meaning of "Pentecost." Fifty days separate these two meat-offerings.

Verse 15. "And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath, shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat-offering unto the Lord. Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves, of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven, they are the first-fruits unto the Lord." Is not this very remarkable? this new meat-offering is not burnt for a sweet savour unto the Lord: it could not be, for it was baked with leaven. Whatever this may typify, there is the distinct recognition that there is evil in it. Yet it is composed of fine flour. And they are the first-fruits unto the Lord.

Now what took place on this very fiftieth day—the Jews' Pentecost—fifty days, the morrow after the seventh sabbath since Jesus died, and arose from the dead? Acts ii. gives a full account of what took place on this very day. “When the day of Pentecost was fully come.” This chapter records how the Holy Ghost came down from heaven, and by the preached word, gathered together the children of God; and on that day the kingdom of God began, the church was formed. Then appeared on this earth the new meat-offering—the two loaves were made—both the kingdom and the assembly were new, entirely new. Redemption was accomplished, the Holy Ghost could now come to dwell in the assembly on earth.

At first it would seem strange that the new meat-offering should be baken with leaven. That which was so strictly forbidden in the meat-offering that so clearly pointed to Christ, should now be baken, recognised in the *new* meat-offering; that which evidently (we now see) points to the kingdom of God and the church. Need we say how exactly the Antitype answers to the type? How soon it was manifested that, though the assembly was separated from this world, sanctified to God, yet there was evil, even in it. And so of every believer, though born of God. Fine flour—a new and holy nature that delights to do the will of God. Yet that

which is born of the flesh is still flesh. The believer soon finds that the leaven of his old nature is still there; ah! that nature could not be offered to God, it would not bear the fire of holy divine judgment, and ascend up a sweet savour to God. A sweet savour to God! nay, it is loathsome to ourselves, and we abhor the leaven that is still in us.

And if we look at the assembly in all its history or in all its present state—true it is about to be presented glorious, without spot, to God—but, oh, can the present jarrings and discord, worldliness, pleasure seeking, evil speakings and divisions—can these go up bearing the fire of divine judgment for a sweet savour unto God? It is no use denying that these things are found in the assembly, or church of God—in those who are Christians, and thus form the church of God. We know that all this, and much more, is leaven, and cannot go up acceptable to our God. And, oh, how much honey, and how often the mere courtesies of life take the place of the salt of the covenant of our God.

If all this be true, how then can the church be the first-fruits unto the Lord? Let us be clear as to the fact, that is, that the fiftieth day after Jesus arose from the dead, the church was formed by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven. There can be no question then that this type of the new meat-offering refers to it.

Let us then proceed to examine the wondrous provision for its acceptance.

Verse 18. "And ye shall offer with the bread seven lambs without blemish, of the first year and one young bullock and two rams: they shall be for a burnt-offering unto the Lord, WITH THEIR MEAT-OFFERING, and their drink-offerings, even an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord." Then follow the sin-offerings and peace-offerings—here all is Christ. God is glorified in the burnt-offering of Christ, so amply set forth here. Then Christ, the offering for sin; and Christ offered for communion, the peace-offering. And mark, "with their meat-offering" is Christ without leaven, a sweet savour unto God. Oh, wondrous truth! God has been perfectly glorified even about all the leaven in the church and in each individual believer. And mark verse 20. "And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the first-fruits, for a wave-offering before the Lord." Thus the whole perfect infinite value of the Person and offering of Christ, is presented with the church, before the Lord. Oh, the rich, the infinite provision of our God! thus, whilst distinctly recognising the condition of the church, its evil or leaven which He cannot accept, yet all has been judged in the one offering of Christ, and the church is thus accepted in Him. Do we believe this, that every bit of evil in us, all the leaven in the church we know, and do not know,

has been judged to the glory of God? Could we desire a more complete provision for us? Jesus has glorified God about every bit of evil we ever detect in the assembly, the new meat-offering. And while the leaven cannot surely go up to God for a sweet savour, yet we are offered to Him with all the sweet savour of His blessed Son. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures." (James i. 18.)

Very precious is the teaching in these two meat-offerings so very distinct in character, yet waved together. What pains, if we may use such a word, has God taken to tell out the provisions of the riches of His grace.

"THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST."

VII.

CHAPTER IV.

"AFTER this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven; and the first voice which I heard [or which I heard at first, chap. i.] was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; . . . said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter," or after these. You will remember that the Lord divided the book into three parts: "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be after these." So that

"after these," refers to after the close of the "things which are," the whole sevenfold history of Christendom as described in chapters ii. and iii. This is a point of immense importance. If we do not notice this, all that follows must be confusion, as we shall go on supposing the rest of the book to refer to "the things that are," that take place whilst the church of God is on earth; whereas the church is no more seen on earth after chapter iii., until she comes with Christ in chapter xix.

What we get here is this: Christendom having come to its close, the redeemed having been caught up to meet the Lord, as revealed to Paul, (1 Thess. iv., &c.) the voice now calls John from earth, to see what will take place in heaven, when they, the redeemed, have been called away from the earth. And thus he is shewn the things that will take place in heaven, and then on earth. Surely this becomes intensely interesting. Would you not like to know what will take place when you arrive in heaven in your glorified bodies of incorruptibility? Will you then have to stand before the throne of God, either to be judged, or to be sheltered from judgment? Let us carefully observe what will take place.

Verse 2. "And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne." This is not the present throne of grace, but the future throne of

judgment. The one that sits on that throne is revealed in connection with creation glories. 'And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.' In the midst of this glory, where and what is the place prepared for the saints of God? Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you." Oh, to pass up in spirit like John, and behold that place. Surely it will be a solemn moment when the redeemed arrive in the very presence of God. Shall we have to be judged before that throne? Have we to wait until that moment before we know what our eternal doom will be? Truly, we shall all be manifested. But what a question is this to each of us: what will really take place when Christendom, as a witness of God on earth, has come to a close? when Christ has fulfilled His promise, having come to take us to Himself, whether them that sleep, or those that are alive and remain until He comes Caught up to meet Him, and be for ever with Him. What then will take place? The next verse is the answer.

Verse 4. "And round about the throne were four and twenty thrones: and upon the thrones I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold." The word translated "seat" is the same as "throne." Is not this a marvellous

sight? What will it be to be there? What a glorious contrast to the gloomy thoughts of men, that after death the redeemed will have to come into judgment for their sins. And yet every thought in this marvellous verse is in perfect harmony with all scripture. How near to God: around His very throne. Did not Christ once suffer for sins, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God"? (1 Peter iii. 18.) Not one whom the Father hath given to Him shall be missing there.

But there were thrones around the throne: shall any be brought so near as to share in the reign of God over the creation? "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.) This is the place prepared for His saints. "And upon the thrones, I saw four and twenty elders sitting."

Why four and twenty? This was the number of the order of the worshipping priesthood. (1 Chron. xxiv. 18.) Are the saints then priests, as well as kings? "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," &c. (Rev. i. 5, 6.) Thus are they seen in heaven, kings and priests unto God, and His Father. Nothing could satisfy the heart of Christ but our being like Himself. Oh, that word "sitting." Not standing before the throne. Our great High Priest is not standing. "After he had

offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, SAT DOWN on the right hand of God." By that precious blood we enter heaven, and sit down in perfect rest. Do we believe this revelation God has been pleased to give us, of what will surely be the blessed portion of all the redeemed? Still borrowing from the symbols of priesthood, they are clothed in white raiment, and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

This is not the unclothed state of the departed spirits now, but the state of those clothed in the glorified body, fashioned after His likeness at His coming. "Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." (2 Cor. v. 1-6.)

What a place prepared for us. But is it possible that such hell-deserving sinners as we have been, shall be prepared for that holy place? Yes, when we see Him we shall be like Him. (1 John iii. 2.) Can you doubt that He is fit for that place of unsullied purity? Then if we are like Him, shall not we also be fit for the same place? Is it not for this the saints can even *now* give thanks? Are they not brought into favour in the beloved? (Eph. i. 6.) Oh, to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." (Col. i. 12.) Lord, awake us to the reality of this heavenly vision, and one so near! Oh, think,

beloved reader, before another year has passed, we may be seated in the unclouded glory of God, in perfect rest and peace. Jesus says, "Surely I come quickly."

This is our immediate future. What a hope!

Can we look to that judgment-throne without one fear? Not unless we know the blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin. Oh, poor deceived ones, can your prayers to the blessed Virgin, or to saints, or angels—can your baptism, or other so-called sacraments—can your masses, or your confessions to man—can all your weary works for salvation, enable you to look at that scene of heaven's brightness, with the certainty that you will sit in perfect peace in the unclouded presence of God? You know these things can give you no such certainty—no such place, as that revealed to the saints of God in this precious verse. Why will you wander on in darkness?

Verse 5. Here we have clear evidence that this is not the present throne of grace. No thunderings and lightnings proceed from the throne of grace now. And He, the Spirit, who is *now* down here, to make known the grace of God, will then become the divine agent of the judgment of God, in all its intensity. "Seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God." Seven is the symbol of perfection or completeness. The burning judgment of fire will be as complete as the present free favour of God.

It may now be on the mind of some to ask, But will there be no more defilement, no more need of washing to the holy, worshipping, royal priesthood in heaven? No, no more need of a laver filled with water. No more washing of the disciples' feet. "Before the throne was a sea of glass like unto crystal." What a symbol of abiding purity! What a joy to the heart of God, and what indescribable joy to us, to walk where there is nothing that can ever more defile. Transparent purity. Do not our hearts warm with expectation? How gracious of our God to give us such a revelation of the things that will surely take place in heaven, after "the things that now are" shall have passed away.

We must remember that in this chapter we are in the scenes of the creation-glories of the Lord God Almighty, and what brings us there; other glories we shall see in the next. In verse 7 we have the heads of creation, as in the symbols of Ezekiel i. and x. The word "beast" should be "living creature." In verse 8, we have the seraphim action of Isaiah vi. All connected with the throne of God, as the "Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." The student of scripture will have noticed that the action of the cherubim is judgment, and of the seraphim purification. Both these are combined in our chapter: the action of God's throne towards the earth, will be for judgment and purification.

Verse 9. "And when those living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power : for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Not one of these royal priests says, I am worthy : no, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power : " this looks forward to His reign. Not merely over Israel or the earth. "For thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." We see not all things put under Him. Yet all things shall be put under His feet.

This may suggest another reason why twice twelve or twenty-four is the symbolic number of these thrones, and the higher privileged elders who sit on them. Twelve is the number of administration ; and will not the joint administration of the heavens and the earth be given to Him as "head over all things, to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" ? When that future administration is revealed, in chapter xxi. 12-14, we shall find the same twice twelve. As the last Adam, all things will be put under Him conjointly with His bride the church.

THE LORD'S DESIRE.

"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."—(JOHN XVII. 24)

WHAT was before my mind in turning to this scripture was just the desire of His own heart. I do not believe, beloved, that He will really get the desire of His heart fully until He has got those He has ransomed with Himself in His own presence.

It is so beautiful to remark in His blessed word, even this John xvii., that, notwithstanding all the failures that are in us, and all the wilfulness, all the negligence, all the carelessness, and all the indifference, He has not one word to say to His Father against us: the marvellous love and grace of His own heart passes over all our failures, shortcomings, and slights of Himself. He appeals to His Father that they may be one. "Father, I will;" oh! beloved, does not that sink down into our hearts! Is it not His own voice in our hearing, so to speak? "Father I will"—"I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

It is so sweet and so precious that we get John xvii. after the previous four chapters. The blessed Lord had been speaking to those who had

been with Him, and He turns to His Father from them and speaks to His Father in their hearing—those who are dear to His heart, it is the eleven, because Judas had left before.

In chapters xiv., xv. xvi., He speaks in their hearing and to them, and in the xvii. He looks up to His Father, and how blessed! He says, "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

Remember He is not yet come to the cross, but it is in anticipation of that work which is to be accomplished on Calvary's tree; it was especially this verse which was before my heart. He is speaking to His Father, and His words are worth our meditating on continually.

When these desires are fulfilled, then it will be as it says in Isaiah, that He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied. And it is in connection with that blessed word in Hebrews xii., "Who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross," &c. The joy was having those whom He had been into death for, with Himself in His own image, and to the praise and glory of His own blessed name—even for eternity. We will just read the verse again: "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

L. T.

CORRESPONDENCE.

1. C. C. W., Southall.—Your difficulty as to the different times named as to the crucifixion of Jesus in Mark and John, is entirely removed when we observe that Matthew, Mark, and Luke use Jewish time—six in the morning, to six in the evening. And John, who wrote so much later, uses Roman time, which is the same as ours, from twelve to twelve.

Thus in Matthew xxvii. 45, 46, there was darkness from the sixth hour, or twelve at noon, to the ninth hour, our three p.m. Then that bitter cry on the cross.

In Mark Jesus was crucified at the third hour, our nine a.m.; at the sixth hour, our twelve, darkness until the ninth, our three p.m.

In Luke, darkness at the sixth hour, our twelve noon, until the ninth hour, our three p.m.

In John there is no hour given, either of the crucifixion or the darkness. But about the sixth hour, Roman time, our six a.m., when Jesus stood before Pilate in the place Gabbatha, there He, the holy One of God, was condemned, and delivered to be crucified. (John xix. 13, 14.) There is little told us of what He suffered at their hands, from six a.m. to nine. Thus all is in perfect harmony. In our time, about six He was condemned, and delivered to be crucified. At nine He was crucified. At twelve there was darkness until three.



SHORT PAPERS ON THE OFFERINGS.

VII.

THE PEACE-OFFERING.

LEVITICUS III.

THE peace-offering is probably the least understood of any of the offerings. Will you read carefully this chapter, Leviticus iii., and then the law of the peace-offering, chapter vii. 11-34.

If in the meat-offering, there is fellowship in receiving, as we have seen, "all the sons of Aaron, one as much as another," it is of the sweet savour of Christ in His life, and perfect obedience unto death. Here, it is fellowship in the sweet savour of His death. We shall find it answers in some respects to the Lord's supper: fellowship in the remembrance of His death.

In chapter iii., whether the peace-offering be of the herd, or of the flock, or a goat, whatever be the measure of fellowship, it must be through death that we can alone have fellowship. The spotless victim must be without blemish before Jehovah. Such was Christ. "And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering," &c. There can be no worship, no fellowship, unless there be identification with Christ. It is of no use talking about repentance, and baptism, and worship; if you are not identified with Christ,

you cannot be in fellowship with God, or worship with His people. What wide-spread delusion there is on this matter! As the offerer came before God with his hand on the head of the peace-offering, do you come into His holy presence identified with Christ? Is this your condition at the Lord's table?

The offering, though for food, must be killed. The blood must be sprinkled; it is "an offering made unto the Lord." Surely this has not now to be repeated. And mark, this is not the offering made for sin. Do we thus remember Him, as an offering made by fire unto the Lord? Oh, the sweet savour of that one offering, Jesus, in all His perfectness and preciousness, offered to Jehovah. Do we remember that God our Father has His portion in that offering? "The fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards"—all the inwards, is "an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour UNTO THE LORD." With us, how often the energy of our inmost thoughts is contrary to the path of holy obedience we long to pursue: not so Jesus, our offering. The whole energy of His soul, His inmost thoughts and desires, tested even in the midst of the darkness of this world, the rage and hatred of devils and priests, yea, and the wrath of God due to our sins pressing upon Him; yet the energy of His whole soul, the divine and human affections of His tender heart, went up,

"an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord." Oh wondrous, perfect, infinite love! "And the priest shall burn it upon the altar: *it is* the food of the offering made by fire unto the Lord." "All the fat is the Lord's." (Vers. 11-16.)

And so was the blood—the life, the Lord's and until the great one sacrifice should be offered, the life of these sacrifices must not be eaten. Man could not be thus identified with the Son, until He died and rose again. (John xii. 24.) Until then the life of the offering was forbidden to be eaten.

God then has His food, His portion first in the sweet savour of the offering of Christ, and this is what is shadowed forth in the fat and the inwards going up on the altar a sweet savour to the Lord.

We will *now turn* to the law of the peace-offering, as applied to us. (Chap. vii. 11.) The great principle is that the sacrifice of peace-offerings shall be offered *unto the Lord*. In coming to the Lord's table, it is not merely to receive, but to offer praise, and thanksgiving, and worship, in holy fellowship. Thus, in speaking of fellowship or communion at the Lord's table, the apostle refers to this very offering, Israel's fellowship. He says, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being

many are one bread [or loaf] and one body; for we are all partakers of that one loaf." The principle of identification is the same, at the Lord's table, or Israel's sacrifices, or of the Gentiles. "Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?" If God had His portion, and they had theirs, they were partakers with God in the sacrifices of the altar. In like manner, to eat of that loaf and drink of that cup at the table of the Lord, was to have fellowship with the Lord. It was to be identified with the Lord, and with all that are His, like the particles of the one loaf.

It was the same, and is the same to this day in the worship of idols. This gives idolatry its most fearful character. "But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils." Israel then had fellowship with God in eating of the typical sacrifices: to eat that flesh was to be in communion with Jehovah? To eat the Lord's supper is to be identified with the sweet savour of Christ, in fellowship with Him, and all saints. To eat in the idol's temple that which was offered to idols, was to be in fellowship with devils. And yet men are seeking and proposing to set

up images again, and restore idolatry again, as the religion of this land ; seeking that England should again have established "fellowship with devils"! It may be the sin of ignorance, they may not know how Satan is leading them on to the wickedness of the last days. We need not be ignorant, for these scriptures are plain enough. O Lord, deliver thy people from the wiles of the devil ! (1 Cor. x. 16-21.)

We will now return to our chapter, Leviticus vii.

Verse 12. "If he offer it FOR A THANKSGIVING, then he shall offer with the sacrifice of thanksgiving unleavened cakes mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and mingled with oil, of fine flour, fried." When we come then to the Lord's table, if it be with thanksgiving, we remember the Person and work of Christ. Here all can and did go up for a sweet savour to God. They offered the flour, which shews in figure His pure humanity, begotten and anointed of the Holy Ghost. In Him was no leaven of sin. Praise should ascend with unmixed joy in Him, the Holy, Holy One, once offered a sweet savour unto the Lord.

But if we are identified with Him, as the worshipper of idols is identified with demons, are we then pure and sinless? If we have fellowship with Him, are we *now* like Him in pure sinless perfection, as to our nature, and even as to practice? Is the whole church, or the

individual believer, now like Him, the Holy One ? Oh how soon we shall be ; yes, we shall see Him, as He is, and be like Him. But reader, can you or I, can any child of God, *now* say, I am *pure*, without the leaven of evil in my old nature ?

Verse 13. How exact are the balances of the sanctuary. " Besides the cakes, he shall offer for his offering leavened bread with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace-offerings." Thus it is, as it was in the meat-offering, where it is Christ, there is no leaven ; where it is the church, or the individual saint, there is the recognition of the truth, that evil is still found : and therefore there is leavened bread with the sacrifices of thanksgiving. We may deceive ourselves with thoughts of our sinless perfection, as to the eradication of evil from our old nature ; but there are no such mistakes in the word of God. Is not the type equally striking in there being leaven when it points to us, and no leaven when it typifies Christ ?

Now when we come to the Lord's table our communion is twofold. If it be thanksgiving, it is in thankful remembrance of Him. And when the offering was for thanksgiving, it must be eaten the same day : " he shall not leave any of it until the morning." (Ver. 15.) But where it was a vow, or a voluntary offering, it was to be eaten the same day, and on the morrow. (Ver. 16.) A vow had reference to the future,

With us there is a yielding of ourselves as a sweet savour to God—a yielding of our bodies as such. “That ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service,” &c. (Rom. xii. 1.) With the Christian, however, it is not a vow, but devoted dependence on God.

This is not limited to the Lord’s day, or to the Lord’s table, but to be continuous, the lasting effect of communion with Him. But inasmuch as the sacrifice of peace-offerings was a shadow of Christ, it must not be kept until it might become corrupt, on the third day. He that ate it at all on the third day, could not be accepted. There was no corruption in Him, neither could His holy flesh see corruption. It would be abomination to eat of such flesh of the sacrifices with a taint of corruption, or for us to allow such a thought of Christ. Where such a thought is allowed, all communion must be lost. How terrible the sin of such as speak of the Lord, in the days of His flesh on earth, as unfit to stay in Jerusalem at night, or to enter the temple! It would be abomination to have communion with them, be they who they might. “It shall be an abomination, and the soul that eateth of it shall bear his iniquity.” (Ver. 18.)

So jealous is God as to the purity of His spotless and undefiled Son, that no flesh should be offered as a type of Him, and His sweet

savour offering, that even touched anything that was unclean. It may be said, These were but shadows ; true, but surely the substance of these shadows may not be less pure than the lessons set forth in these shadows.

When we hear Him pleading with the Father, His words are not then shadows ! Is it not the desire of His heart that we should be kept from evil ? Is it His will that we should be mingled with the world ? He says, " They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world : sanctify them through thy truth : thy word is truth. . . . And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." (John xvii. 14-19.) What a precious, holy example ; may we have grace to tread in His steps ! Ah, how often we are like Peter, following afar off : and then warming ourselves at the world's fire—that world which still hates and rejects the Lord of glory.

Very important questions now present themselves. May we have grace and wisdom to look them fairly in the face, however they may search us.



“IF THEY SHALL FALL AWAY.”

HEBREWS VI.

WE have had an earnest request to give a short exposition of this scripture, one which causes great perplexity to many; some taking the six things named in verses 1 and 2, as the six foundation truths, on which the church stands—especially “the doctrine of baptisms and laying on of hands,” which are supposed to mean christian baptism, and modern confirmation; upon which the whole church is said to rest. This view is especially advocated in parish magazines.

Then, again, how many souls have been distressed, almost to despair, with the thought, that having sinned, it is impossible for them to be restored. “For it is impossible . . . if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance.” Terrible words when so understood. What can they mean? How can they be explained?

Now from either of these two points of view the inquiry is most deeply interesting and practical. Millions are baptised and afterwards confirmed; and are assured that by these ordinances they are brought into the church, become members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven: and this verse and these

words are pointed out as the scriptural authority on which all this building rests.

Is it true, or a total misapplication of scripture? The eternal destiny of millions rests on the solution of this inquiry. It is all the more important because, if this gospel of ordinances be true, there can be no other.

Let us go into a parish where every person has been baptised, and confirmed. Every one, then, is regarded as born again by baptism, a member of Christ, a child of God, &c. Plainly you could not preach another gospel to such. If they are born again by water, they do not now need to hear the word, and be born again by the word, as of old. (See 1 Peter i. 23; James i. 18.) It would be difficult to conceive a more effectual way of setting aside the gospel, as preached by the apostles. Let us look the matter fairly in the face. We meet with a man cursing and swearing, and perhaps drunk: he has been made a child of God, we are told, by baptism, and confirmation. We are told he has fallen away by sin. Just here would come in the other difficulty—it is impossible to renew such to repentance.

But others, beside those who pervert this scripture to mean ordinances, as the foundation of the church, feel this difficulty. They have been truly converted, born of God, are the children of God. And they say, What if I sin, nay, I have sinned: it is not with me as it was;

I fear I have fallen away, and the word says, "It is impossible . . . if they shall fall away to renew them again to repentance." Can this be the meaning of this scripture? Would it not make the Christian's position far worse than the Jew's before Christ died? Undoubtedly, for he could have brought a bullock, or a goat, and have been restored by repentance and another offering; he could have laid his hands on its head, and through its death he would have been forgiven.

What then is the meaning of this scripture? You must notice, this Epistle was not addressed, like others, to the church of God. It is the voice of God to the professing multitude of the Jews, just before the overthrow of the temple worship, and the destruction of both the temple and Jerusalem.

Further, notice that from chapter v. 12 to end of chapter vi. is a parenthesis: afterwards the apostle returns to the subject of Melchisedec. The subject of the parenthesis is the state of the professing Hebrew Christians. He says, "Ye have need that one teach you again WHICH be the first principles of the oracles of God." They did not know which were the first elementary principles, that is, the measure of truth as known to the Jews before Christ, or the perfect and complete truths of Christianity, since Christ had come, died, and risen again. They were in exactly the same state as those writers in the

parish magazines, who, having gone back to Judaism, do not know the difference between Judaism and Christianity. They have need that one teach them WHICH be the first principles of the oracles of God. (Ver. 12.) What these clergymen build upon, the apostle says, we will leave if God permit. Is it not so? See chapter vi. "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ," or, as in margin, "the word of the beginning of Christ," "let us go on to perfection:" that is, to the complete truth of Christ. Let us leave Judaism, and go on to Christianity. Indeed the subject of the Epistle is the contrast between these two things. Thus the six things we are to leave, are distinctly that beginning or measure of truth the Jews had before Christ.

"Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works." In Judaism the building, to use the figure, never stood. The foundation had to be relaid once a year. Indeed, as often as a man sinned, a foundation of repentance and sacrifice had to be relaid. It was sinning and repenting. (See Ezek. xviii.; Lev. xvi.) This Epistle shews the complete truth now is in direct contrast—that is eternal redemption: for ever perfected. The foundation is one sacrifice, which never can be repeated.

"And of faith toward God. Even the faith of Abraham and of all Old Testament saints, was toward God. That is, they believed the

promise, and looked forward. Not so now, one infinite sacrifice has been offered ; all now is accomplished, and, believing God, we are justified from all things. And He says, " And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

" Of the doctrine of baptisms." It is the same word that is translated " divers washings" in chapter ix. 10. Evidently this cannot be christian baptism. For there is one baptism, not baptisms. Neither could the apostle say, we would leave christian baptism. No, it simply means, leaving the typical washings of the law, very precious as the beginning of the word of Christ, but what were these as compared with the blood of Christ which now cleanseth us from all sin ?

" And of laying on of hands." You will find if a man brought a burnt-offering, or a sin-offering to the Lord, he must lay his hand on its head. All these shadows had now served their purpose, and must be left. The one sacrifice of Christ is now the perfect truth and excludes all others.

" And of resurrection of the dead." This was *the measure of truth made known to the Jews before Christ*. There would be a resurrection of the dead. This was known. (John xi. 24.) The complete truth is " Through Jesus the resurrection FROM the dead" (Acts iv. 2)—the blessedness of the first resurrection. From which the

rest of the dead are excluded for a thousand years, and the coming of the Lord to take His own. Thus we leave the Jewish measure of truth and go on to the complete truth of Christianity.

“And of eternal judgment.” The Jews knew the solemn truth of death and judgment, and that that was eternal. That is a most solemn truth; but if that were all, we should be in the same fear and bondage they were in. But whilst this is not denied for a moment by the Christian, yet the complete truth is, “so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” (Heb. ix. 28.) Now the minds of these Jewish teachers were all in confusion on these important distinctions, just like the writers of widespread parish magazines. Jesus says plainly to the believer that he shall not come into judgment. (John v. 24.) These writers do not believe Him, and look forward to the day of judgment, to fix their doom.

Now the apostle says, leaving these first principles of truth, we will go on to perfection, that is, to Christianity. “And this will we do if God permit.” (Ver. 3.) The word “for” connects what had gone before with what comes after. We must therefore keep up the contrast between Judaism and Christianity: all will then be simple. “For it is impossible for those who

were once enlightened . . . if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance ; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

Now what is this falling away from ? It is a falling away from Christ, a giving up of Christianity, and going back to the many offerings, washings, and ordinances of the law. These were all right as shadows pointing forward. And no doubt the claims of antiquity were great : ordinances which had been appointed of God. No wonder the tendency was so strong to give up Christianity, and go back to Judaism. Indeed they had been practising it, and, as James said (Acts xxi. 20), they were all zealous of the law. Hence the universal importance of going on from Judaism, to perfection, or Christ. Those sacrifices and washings had now lost all virtue, and could never renew them again unto repentance. It was impossible.

Let us mark the difference between "tasting" and "drinketh in" of verses 4 and 7. Jesus had foretold this in Matthew xiii. 18-23. This multitude of Jews had anon with joy received the tidings, that Jesus was the risen Lord and Christ. They had taken the place of disciples, in the light of Christianity. They had *tasted* of the heavenly gift ; they may have even been the subjects of miraculous power of the Holy Ghost. *Tasted* the word of God, &c. But if all this was

merely as wayside seed ; or seed on thorny ground ; and not having received the seed into prepared ground—and if, in times of trial, they (having no root) give up all profession of Christianity, and the eternal efficacy of the one sacrifice of Christ, and they go back to the many sacrifices of the law—on that ground, having finally apostatised from Christ, they are then where repentance is impossible, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame. This shews that if we deliberately join any community we become guilty of their deeds. The Jews had rejected, trampled, so to speak, on the Son of God, whom they had crucified ; to go back to them, was to become afresh deliberately guilty of their sins.

But how different the earth that drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it and bringeth forth, &c.

Is it not so ? One hears the gospel and says, I like that, but he merely tastes. Another, crushed with the sense of sin, with heart and conscience prepared for the word, says, That is what my soul has wanted for years, and he drinks in the word, as the prepared and thirsty land drinks in the rain. Reader, which is your case ?

C. S.



“THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.”

VIII.

CHAPTER V.

WE have dwelt a little on the creation claims and glories of the Lord God Almighty in chapter iv. Before we pass on to the redemption claims and glories of chapter v., we would press the importance of remembering the exalted place, or position, of the elders sitting on thrones around the throne of God. We are told, these are the things that must take place after the close of the history of Christendom, as described in the things that are, chapters ii. and iii.

We know from 1 Thessalonians iv. and 2 Thessalonians ii. 11, that the rapture of the church will take place before the final apostasy, and the manifestation of the wicked one. We have seen how the promises point to such a place for the redeemed. They are destined to judge the world; yea, to judge angels. This double administration will be committed to the twice twelve royal worshippers, so near the throne. The more we meditate on this amazing revelation, the more our hearts are bowed in worship. No other company are ever seen in such a place of nearness. We shall see that the innumerable company of chapter vii. “*stood before the throne,*” whilst these are seated in the innermost circle around the throne. What a contrast!

There has been, and is, a sad effort to make this standing before the throne, the position of the redeemed church. This is but the diluted doctrine presented in a book lately given the writer to examine; in which the author has the boldness to give the Old Testament saints the higher standing of the twenty-four elders, and the church of God has to take the lower standing of being before the throne in chapter vii.! We name this, in order to shew the need we have to watch against all suggestions of the enemy through unbelief. More as to this, when we come to chapter vii.

CHAPTER V.

We now come to the taking the inheritance. The book, or roll, of judgment that will usher in the inheritance, is not found buried in Ireland (whence many in the world are now turning their eyes); but in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne. The challenge is given with a loud voice: "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" We see in Jeremiah xxxii. 6-14 what was the custom in Israel, as to the book of inheritance, both sealed and open. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open," &c. Also it must be a near relation to have the right of inheritance, and the redemption. (Ver. 8; see also Ruth iii. 12; iv. 1-10).

Verse 3. "And no man in heaven, nor on earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon." How remarkable that John the apostle did not understand this in the least; he could only weep because no man was found worthy to open, and to read the book, neither to look thereon. What kinsman could be found worthy to claim a universe once ruined by sin?

Just here we have a striking contrast between knowing in part as now, and knowing then as we shall be known, when that which is perfect is come. It is not an archangel, or seraphim, but "one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." Yes, the elders in the light and intelligence of God, knew how He who sits on the throne had humbled Himself so low as to become man, the kinsman of the lost and ruined sinner, that He might redeem both the sinner and the inheritance. Root of David, about now to appear in royal majesty of the tribe of Judah.

Do we not thus own Him? Blessed Kinsman, Thou hast done the kinsman's part. May our eyes and hearts be fastened on Thee. Let us read these words, knowing assuredly that these things are about to take place: soon we are about to be in these scenes. John says, "I beheld, and, lo

in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb, as it had been slain." What a sight to behold! The once suffering One, now in the midst of the throne, in the midst of the four agents of judgment and purification; and in the midst of the royal priesthood of those whom the Father had given to Him.

Is not this in keeping with His prayer: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." Let us not doubt that the Father will answer this desire of His heart, concerning us who have believed His word. He has all power in heaven and in earth, under the figure of the seven horns and the seven eyes. And He, the glorious Lamb, once slain, has perfect right to the redeemed inheritance. "And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne."

Let us meditate on what takes place in heaven, before He opens the first seal—before those judgments take place by which He will take the inheritance. First, the throne as seen in the living creatures, own His right to take the book. Then the four-and-twenty elders fall down before the Lamb. They are with Him; but oh, how gladly shall we fall before Him! Oh, with what delight shall we adore Him! No jarring notes

of discord and strife—no division there! “Every one of them harps.” But here appears what may seem strange, there is deep interest and sympathy for some saints in distress, who need the sweet odour of prayer before the throne. We shall soon learn who these are; but first let us listen to the song of the redeemed.

Verse 9: “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof.” Cannot you even now join that song? perhaps not intelligently—but you can surely sing the song of your own redemption. But there is something more in the *new* song of heaven. That He has redeemed us, the church, would not be new: and ancient copies of the scriptures make it clear that this song refers also to others; thus, “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open its seals; because thou hast been slain, and hast redeemed to God, by thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and made them to our God kings and priests; and they shall reign over the earth.” Mark, this song, then, embraces others who shall reign over the earth, redeemed from all nations. We shall learn who these are as we proceed further in the Revelation. We learn how deeply we shall be interested in all that concerns Him.

Now mark in verse 11, when the myriads of the angelic hosts gather around this blessed scene, they do not take the nearest place, neither

do we read that they either sit, or sing, in the immediate presence of God and the Lamb. They are heard "Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." For every one of these things He yet waits, reviled and rejected of men. Angelic words that express His glory over the inheritance. All creation joins in His praise—all shall own the worthiness of the once suffering Lamb. Thus what the elders sing, and what the angels say, has reference to the future glories of the Lamb. And also notice this is not what is taking place now in heaven, but what will take place hereafter, or after the whole history of Christendom. God has been pleased to give us the revelation of what will take place in heaven, and then on earth, from the time the redeemed are seen in heaven, after the taking of the church, to the time she comes with Him in judgment to the earth in chapter xix.

When the Lamb takes the sealed roll, worthy of all—all His by creation and redemption—then are revealed further redemption purposes of God, and the new song is about that, and those who are thus spoken of: "And has made them unto our God kings and priests: and they shall reign on [or, over] the earth." This gives great joy to the angelic hosts, and they declare the Lamb worthy to receive power, riches, wisdom,

strength, honour, glory, and blessing. If we examine each of these things, we must own, every man even from Adam downwards has failed in the use of all these: and thus He who sits on the throne is the only worthy One. Judgment we shall find on earth, tribulation such as never was and never shall be again; but we are now fast approaching the time when He who is worthy, He whose right it is, shall reign.

It is most blessed to see the intelligence and harmony of heaven in this unfolding of the coming glories of the Lamb. "The four living creatures said, Amen." The expression of active power as yet of the throne, said, Amen, as it were, So be the glories of the Lamb. The redeemed, as represented by the elders, can find no words to express their deep approving joy. "And the four-and-twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever."

Is this our state? What effect has this revelation on you? We have heard what those elders sing, and what the angels say with a loud voice, yea, what all creation will say when they own the Lamb to be worthy of blessing, and honour, and glory. We have heard cherubim and seraphim say, Amen! Very soon we shall fall down and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever. Do we need to turn to this world's politics, to guess what is coming on this earth? All is indeed guess-work there, but all is certain

here. Every mouth shall soon be stopped; the scoffer shall scoff no more. Let us, then, turn to this sure word of revelation, and read with certainty the thing that are coming to pass on this earth, when Christianity shall have run its course of failure, and the redeemed be seated in the bright intelligence of the presence of God.



THE SIGHT OF A BIBLE.

AN EXTRACT.

“MY eldest son,” said one, “has been sceptical from his boyhood. The best of sons; but a real rejecter of Christ. For a long time past he has been a miserable man; with everything on earth: riches, honour, &c., yet as *wretched* as he could be. Then a serious illness, which no medical skill could relieve, seemed to make his case hopeless. He went alone to some baths in S——, and on the day of his arrival there, was invited by one of the patients into his room. There he *saw* a Bible—and that was enough. He could not rest till he got one, and read its sacred pages. He received and believed the gospel, and rejoiced in the forgiveness of sins through the precious blood of Christ.”

Such is the simple and truthful account of the way in which our God delights in sovereign grace.

The sight of the neglected Bible was enough for the Holy Spirit to use, in deep conviction of sin. And that same blessed word of God contained the revelation of the good news of God to that soul. Oh, what can meet the misery, and the cause of all the misery of man, but the precious blood of Jesus? What a passing from death to life! What a new creation!

Reader, are you also neglecting and rejecting that book of all books? or is it the greatest treasure you have on earth? How great is the privilege in this day of having the word of God. And how great also the responsibility! May the above encourage the faith of parents.



NOTES FROM AN AGED SERVANT OF CHRIST.

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the *flesh* I live ~~by the~~ faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."—GAL. II. 20.

I BELIEVE that this verse gives us the normal position of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, whether we really understand it or not. We have had the death of the blessed Lord Himself before us, and I believe in order to enter into, in any little measure, the truth that we *get* in this second chapter of Galatians, we must really

understand that the Lord Jesus Christ died for us, that He has been into death for us. That is what the apostle says at the close of this verse; but we often fail to realise that that blessed One has been to the cross just for us individually, I say for *me*. That is how the apostle speaks here; he says, "I" to begin with—that was Saul of Tarsus—"I am crucified with Christ;" but when he speaks of the new man he says, "nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ"—but Christ—"liveth in me."

And then to go to the close of the verse again, when he speaks of the life in the flesh, he says, it is by faith of the Son of God. Here he takes it individually again: "who loved me and gave himself for me."

Now I believe, beloved, just to enter into this one precious scriptural truth, brings the believer into a large place: and divine liberty in the presence of God. The old man is gone judicially. Well, we can say, where is it gone? where did I lose it? At the cross of Christ. How came that about? The One that loves me was crucified for me, and I am crucified with Him. And we must always remember it is not *in* Him, because if that corn of wheat had not fallen into the ground and died, it must have abode alone. The Lord might have abode until this present moment and been alone—but it comes up in resurrection and brings much fruit. Therefore you get the

blessed word in Ephesians: Quickened together with Christ, "and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ." There was no "in" previous to the resurrection, but here you get the truth as it is in deed, and in reality: I am crucified *with* Christ, there was no being in Christ before. He went to the cross, as we get elsewhere, to put away sin, to put away what was of me, by the sacrifice of Himself. Those He died for are to reckon themselves to be in a place of death as far as the first man is concerned, but being now born again, He takes us up in resurrection, and just tells us where we are set in Christ. That is what Paul is speaking about in 2 Corinthians xii. He is speaking about a man in Christ, only he could say, he was caught up to the third heaven: we cannot say as much *as that*, but he could say, *whether in the body or out of the body* I cannot tell; the old man is condemned in the death of Christ, and we have acquired a new possession founded upon the resurrection of Christ. And now the apostle says, The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Oh! beloved, if our souls would think of these divine realities, surely, *surely*, we should feel and act far differently from what we do now. We have been called by God and obeyed the calling, and we should manifest that our citizen,

ship is in heaven. Christ does not belong to this world, neither do any who are born of God, they are His property, heaven is their home. We are admonished to be passing through as pilgrims and strangers with the knowledge that our commonwealth is in heaven.

What is the key to this divine walk that the Holy Ghost is bringing before us through the word? Just the knowledge that the old "I" is dispensed with for eternity by the death of Christ. How do I exist? I live, because He who lives and was dead is alive for evermore; because He is my life, it is in Himself up there that He is my life, indicated by the power of the Holy Ghost, making it real to faith, bringing it home to my understanding; the word opened to my mind, the Holy Ghost makes it a reality, and the apostle says, the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God. Who is it? The One who loves me, and gave Himself for me. The Lord grant that you and I may be more and more under the sound of His blessed voice, and the fascinating power of the word: that alone is the separating power from everything that is of the world, and separating from everything that is not of Christ.

May our God keep us occupied with the One who is the joy and delight and the Object of His own heart.

L. T.



"THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST."

IX.

CHAPTER VI.

WE have now seen what will take place in heaven, immediately after the close of the history of the church on earth, as revealed in chapters ii. and iii. In chapter iv., we have seen the creation-glories of God ; and in chapter v., the redemption-glories of the Lamb. We now come to what will take place on earth after these things.

The opening of these seals of the book is preparatory to the Lamb taking the inheritance. He alone is worthy to open them. He opens the first seal, and there follows the immediate action of the throne. "And I heard, as it were the voice of thunder, one of the living creatures, saying, Come." This seems to be the correct reading. The throne of God calls for judgments on the earth. Not a call to John to see, but a conqueror goes forth on a white horse to conquer. Being on a *white* horse would seem to imply pretensions to righteousness in his course. The first thing, then, that takes place on earth after the church of God is gone, will be the march of some great conqueror.

Verse 3. When the Lamb opens the second seal, He calls for further judgments, and of a different character. A *red* horse goes forth, "and power was given to him that sat thereon to take

peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword." Surely this is plain. This will evidently be a time of dreadful slaughter on the earth. Can any one doubt that the world is preparing for this? God restrains men until His church be gathered out, and then peace is taken from the earth. Think of the implements and materials of destruction the nations are preparing for that day. And men know it not. God has thus revealed to us what will surely take place.

Verse 5. At the opening of the third seal, the judgments are still more terrible: "lo, a *black* horse." It is the black famine that follows the terrible state of anarchy, and mutual bloodshed.

Verse 7. At the opening of the fourth seal, a *pale* horse; and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell (or the grave) followed him. And he had power to kill a fourth part of the earth with the four sore judgments of God, with the sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth. This world has refused the mercy of God, and now it must have the judgments. How terrible will be the state of this poor world; and the church may close its history any day on earth, and these judgments will surely come. God has shewn us the things that "must shortly come to pass."

Verse 9. The opening of the fifth seal demands very special attention. "And when he had

opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony that they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they [were] should be fulfilled."

These are they who are spoken of in chapter v. 10: kings and priests, and they shall reign on the earth. For the present, they are told to wait for a little season, until others are killed like themselves. We shall find both these companies in chapter xx., when the reign begins; they had to wait until then. There are no thrones prepared for them in heaven, as with the elders, but there will be thrones on earth for them. They cry for vengeance, like the remnant in the Psalms: so cries not the church.

It is thus revealed to us that, after the close of Christianity, there will be, even in the midst of these terrible judgments, a remnant saved—even as there was a remnant saved before the church began at Pentecost. This remnant, however, will be slain, and their souls will have to wait a little season. They will not, as we shall

see, be raised from the dead for some time, not, indeed, until the completion of the first resurrection in chapter xx. This is revealed to us, and will surely so take place. If we believe God, all is simple; if we reason about it, all will be in confusion.

Verse 12. At the opening of the sixth seal, we have the most terrible symbols, or figures, of the break up of all social order. When a symbol is given, it is that distinctly: that is, the events plainly cannot possibly be intended to be literal. If these things took place literally, there would be no mountains left for men to hide themselves in. What we have to do, then, is to bear in mind how these symbols are used in scripture. A great earthquake is a terrible break-up of the earth's crust: such a social break-up of society will take place. The sun is the emblem of supreme rule. Government, or supreme rule, will be utterly darkened. And, as the moon is the lesser rule, or that which reflects the rule or light of the sun, so all subordinate rule will become utterly corrupt, like blood. All that are eminent, like the stars, will fall; all government, all that is considered stable, will be utterly removed and broken up. The more we dwell on this, the more assured we may become that everything is tending to this very end. But so terrible will all this be when it comes, that the kings of the earth, and all classes, will believe

the great day of the wrath of the Lamb is come. They will, under this mistake, cry to the mountains and rocks to fall on them and hide them. Does not this remind us of Psalm ii.: "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth," &c.?

What a revolution will this be! What a sudden break-up of social order amongst men! How many professing Christians are preparing the elements of destruction for that day! Already that lawlessness, the growl of discontent, and infidelity, beneath the strata of society, are like the noises heard in the earth before an earthquake—the terrible forces of human wickedness ready to break forth. The fierce hatred against all restraint, smouldering beneath, ready to break out the moment the time arrives. So frightful the shock when it comes, that supreme government becomes black as sackcloth. And all that reflects government now will be like blood. Eminent persons will fall like untimely fruit shaken by the wind. Everything that now governs society will be rolled away. Everything that has stood for ages immovable will be moved out of its place. "Yet once more, I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." (Heb. xii. read vers. 26 to 29.) This terrible break-up of all order, following the judgments of the opening of the previous seals, will fill all classes with the utmost confusion and alarm.

All this is about to take place, and again we ask, have not all classes, kings, great men, rich men, mighty men, slaves and free men, an indescribable foreboding of some terrible catastrophe? How oft you hear the remark, Things cannot go on as they are. Think of the diabolical wickedness of so many secret murderers, seeking to kill by cruel deaths the emperors, kings, and rulers of the earth! We solemnly call upon all Christians to be in constant prayer, whilst we are here, for the preservation of our beloved Queen, of kings, and of all who, under God, have authority over us. But, believing this revelation, we must warn all such that this terrible break-up, like an earthquake, is at hand; shortly will it come to pass.

Oh that emperors, queens, kings, great men, rich men, captains, mighty men, bond and free, would now be warned. It will avail you nothing in that day to flee to the dens and rocks of the mountains. But it will avail you now to be warned, to flee to the only refuge God has set before you. Remember, all classes of men, if you have not come to Jesus, if you have not accepted Him as your entire and eternal salvation, you are under the very wrath of God. You may be seeking salvation by works, by the lying sacrifices and ceremonies, and delusions of men crafty to deceive you. Oh, deceived, lost souls! these things will profit you nothing in that day when

the Bridegroom shall have come, and the door is shut—for ever shut—to you who have refused the grace of God, the free forgiveness of all who believe Him.

We entreat all classes of men to consider: there is but a step between you and the terrible plagues written in this book. Oh, how terrible it would be for you to read this paper after the church is taken, and these fearful judgments have begun. Remember if you refuse, oh ye kings and great and mighty men—if you receive not the love of the truth, that you may be saved, that "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess. ii. 10-12.) Oh ye high and lofty ones, who would disdain to hear, believe, and accept the precious glad tidings of eternal salvation through Jesus, we beg you to read these solemn words of revelation, of what is certainly about to take place. Be wise, oh ye kings!

We are aware of the special effort of Satan to make of none effect these warnings of God. Books of human reason are being written, and sent out; but they are the wanderings of the human mind—wandering in darkness, through history, to find what will seem like a past fulfilment, each contradicting one another, until they conclude that not only is all confusion and doubt,

but that God must have designed it to be so !* We have no intention of wandering in the darkness of human reason, and the logic of human pride. The evident object of all this is to take away the solemnity of the midnight cry, the coming of the Bridegroom, the receiving of those that are saved, and the terrible warnings of this book as to what is really coming on this earth. We trust it is in love to the whole church of Christ, yea, in the love and pity of God to the whole world, that we desire to lift the warning voice. We desire, then, in simple dependence on the Holy Spirit, to write as one who believes assuredly that these things will shortly come to pass. Our object is not to be occupied unduly with the errors of men, but with the sure truth of God ; and we count, so far as it shall please God, to have the demonstration of the Spirit.



SHORT PAPERS ON THE OFFERINGS.

VIII.

THE SIN-OFFERING.

LEVITICUS IV.

IN the burnt-offering we have seen how we are accepted in Christ. The hand was laid upon the head of the burnt-offering, wholly offered up to the Lord, a sweet savour. In the meat-offering,

* See article in "Methodist Magazine," December, 1885.

how we receive from His fulness, Jesus, the bread from heaven. In the peace-offering, how we have communion with the Father and the Son. Wondrous provisions for a redeemed people! But if a priest, or a ruler, or one of the redeemed people, should sin, is there a provision for that? Now, whether we look at Israel as redeemed from Egypt, or those for whom these types were written, there was and is this most serious question: we have, indeed, redemption through His blood, but in how many things we fail. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."

Now the unspeakable riches of the grace of God, not only reveal to us His provision for His people as to their sins and trespasses against Him, and also against one another; but the sin-offerings in all their varied aspects shew out in type the one sacrifice for sin as the BASIS of all relationship with God.

No doubt the blood of the paschal Lamb, redemption, is that basis; but in Leviticus the various aspects of atonement are brought out, as meeting the claims of God, and our need.

It must not be overlooked that these offerings were not for wilful, presumptuous sins. Let not the desperately wicked heart of man presume that, since God has made an infinite provision for the sins of His people, therefore he may go on in a course of wilful sin. Such an one

will find at last, to his eternal cost, that the devil has deceived him.

In these short notes, we can only dwell on the leading principles of this deeply interesting subject. It is found as a matter of experience that sin is more terrible, in proportion as we know our relationship to God: "If the priest that is anointed do sin." Do we know that He "hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father" (Rev. i. 5), a royal priesthood (1 Peter ii. 9)? That we are anointed, intelligent worshippers, in spirit and in truth? Well, the provision in such a case is first brought before us. "Then let him bring for his sin which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the Lord for a sin-offering. . . . unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord: and shall lay his hand upon the bullock's head, and kill the bullock before the Lord." There is thus the identification. He shall lay his hand on the bullock's head. Sin is thus imputed or transferred to the victim unblemished in itself. What a picture of the holy, blameless One! "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." At this point let us well understand the difference between the laying on of hands of the burnt-offering, and the sin-offering. In the burnt-offering, we are identified with Christ; in the sweet

savour, acceptance of Christ: in the sin, or trespass-offering, Christ became identified with us in all the loathsomeness of sin. In the actual approach of man to God, it is always the sin-offering first, and then the burnt-offering. In the unfolding of the riches of His grace, it is, as we have seen, the burnt-offering first. This was the eternal purpose of God, to bring us into favour in the Beloved.

But if such an one, who has been brought into favour in Him, should sin or trespass against God or man, and this comes to his mind in the light, he is sorely distressed. He knows he has redemption, he knows his relationship—a child of God: this only the more distresses him. The inmost desire of his heart is to be upright, and this only makes his sorrow the more bitter and unendurable. What then is the remedy for such an one? Not certainly another sacrifice, “for there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.” We must not here forget that the one sacrifice of Christ has more than taken the place of all these sacrifices; and that one sacrifice once offered was for ALL our sins. He once “bare our sins in his own body on the tree.” By faith we are identified with Him, like the priest that laid his hand on the victim’s head. As that bullock was delivered, bearing the priest’s sin before the Lord, so has Jesus been delivered before Jehovah, bearing our sins and made sin for us. That bullock must be

killed, accounted as sin. Jesus, bearing our sins, must die, must suffer. Expiation must be made. The blood of the bullock was sprinkled before the Lord, and some of the blood was put upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense. Thus Jesus, by His blood once shed, and He entering as man for us, entered by, or with, His own blood. Thus worship and communion can be, and are, restored to us.

And though made sin, yet the fat and inwards of the bullock were to be offered on the altar of burnt-offering, wholly a sweet savour to God. The same Jesus who was made sin, and took the loathsome place of the cross, was the same Jesus offered up a sweet savour to God, as the burnt-offering. Never was the obedience of Christ more perfect, or more precious to God, than in becoming sin for us. What was the inward thought of His tender heart? That the Father might be glorified in our eternal salvation. Could anything be more precious to God who so loved?

Have I sinned, then, as a child of God, a worshipping priest? This sin gives me a deeper sense of my old sinful nature—I am overwhelmed with shame and sorrow.

What do I learn in these types? That God has met me just there; provided for me just there, in the fullest discovery of my utter vileness, as to the flesh. How? By the Holy One being made sin for me, and in taking my every sin

and making them all, as it were, His own. And after "He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God." (Heb. x.)

Is not this remedy as real, this deliverance as great, as if He were to come down from heaven again, and endure the wrath due to that very sin we mourn over? Has He not done this once for ever? How blessed, then, to learn these lessons by the way. Needful lessons they are—the provision of God for a redeemed sinner.

As a worshipping priest, if I have the thought of sin, communion and worship are, and must be, interrupted; but the application of the water of the word restores both. Yes, He has made my sins His own. By a sacrifice, also for sin, He has condemned sin. And, oh! think what it cost Him! The very prospect made Him sweat as it were great drops of blood; for He had to become truly man to do this. See Him, though God over all, yet so truly man as to kneel down in prayer; "and, being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." (Luke xxii. 44.)

The laughter, the mocking, the curses, the spitting, and smiting of men, could not quench His infinite love to us. He must, He did, glorify God in our full eternal redemption. See those ferocious soldiers nail Him to the tree! See Him lifted up, and in His agony derided and mocked by man! All this might have been, and

He only a martyr: but now, forsaken of God, bearing sin, atoning for our sins—well might the heavens turn to blackness and darkness. But it ~~is~~ finished, the veil is rent, and now He is risen, yea, ascended, and sitting at the right hand of the majesty on high.

Verse 13. "And if the whole congregation of Israel sin," &c. Not only might the individual priest sin, but the whole congregation might sin. Just so, as we well know, not only may the individual Christian sin, and a worshipping priest, but a whole assembly may fail, and sin. Well, it is the same sacrifice, an offering for sin, that must be offered. When our hearts are overwhelmed with a sense, both of our own individual share, and of corporate failure, it is well to remember how God has provided for all this in the same one sacrifice. The hands of the elders must be laid on the head of the bullock, before the Lord. The blood must be shed and sprinkled before the Lord, and the fat burnt on the altar of burnt-offering. Do we not often forget what it cost the Lord for the failure of the church, though that be in ignorance? Are there not many things of which men boast, for which Jesus had to bleed and die? Perhaps nothing would be more astounding, if we understood this better—the sins of ignorance of the congregation. Compare the whole professing congregation now, with the church in the word of God

in the beginning. If we look at the perfect Servant, who surely is our example, we find the principle of His obedience was to do nothing for which He had not the word of His God and Father. It might even be good in itself, and needed. Bread was good, and He needed it; but would He turn the stones into bread without the word of God?

Now, in the congregation of Christendom, is it not the exact reverse of this? If it only seems good for the church, and it seems as if the church needs it, there is scarcely a thought as to the will of God in His word. How many things there are practised, that would be found to have no authority in the word of God; and which cannot be of faith, and therefore must be of sin, for whatsoever is not of faith is sin. No doubt much of this is sin of ignorance.

It may be hid from the eyes of many readers of these lines. But mark, there was no excuse when the sin which they had committed became known to them. (Ver. 14.) Is it a light matter, fellow Christians, that we should do these things and boast of them, for which Jesus had to suffer the atoning death of the cross? God grant that we may be more exercised by the word of God. Whatever is practised ecclesiastically that is not according to the word of God, is sin. What a searching fact is this! And it is sin that needed the blood of expiation. Perhaps no person on

earth, but the Son of God, would have refused—who could do it—to turn the stones into bread, after fasting forty days, without the word of God. We feel assured it would lead to much confession and humiliation, if all congregations would test what they are doing by the word. Have we the Lord's command for this, and that? How much of Judaism, yea, heathenism, would have to be owned as sin. Is it not high time to awake?



IF WE SIN WILFULLY.

HEBREWS x. 26.

“FOR if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.”

There is a similarity between these words, and those we have considered in chapter vi. It is the impossibility of being restored to repentance by Jewish ordinances, of those who give up Christianity and go back to Judaism. This impossibility will be still more clear if we examine these words in chapter x. 26, &c. Only there is this difference, the apostle had now gone on to the perfect truth, as to eternal redemption by the one sacrifice of Christ. And when that is

once known and understood, it becomes a self-evident fact, that to go back from that, to the imperfection of the law, with all its imperfect sacrifices, makes restoration by those impossible.

There are four things in this scripture.

1. "For if we sin wilfully."

2. "After we have received the knowledge of the truth."

3. "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins."

4. "But a certain fearful looking for of judgment."

1. Wilful sin is an awful thing. In the law there was no provision for wilful, or presumptuous, sin. If a man sinned through ignorance, he might bring his sin-offering, atonement was made for him, and he was forgiven. Not so he that did anything presumptuously, and despised the word of the Lord. "That soul shall be cut off from among his people." (Num. xv. 27-31.) How many of the true children of God go in mourning and darkness, fearing that they have sinned wilfully, and they fear that there is therefore no hope. Now can a child of God sin wilfully? Scripture would say, No! He that is born of God, doth not practise sin—he is born of God, has a nature that cannot so sin. (See 1 John iii. 8-10; v. 4, 18.)

The sin of Judas was wilful, presumptuous; the terrible sin of Peter was not wilful. Judas

intended, sought opportunity to betray Christ, he was the son of perdition. Peter, in the hour of human weakness, did the very thing he hated. He was a quickened soul, doubtless, born of God, but had not yet learnt his own weakness. Even in the case of an undelivered, though quickened, soul under law, it is not wilful sin, far from it. "For that which I do, I allow not, for what I would, that do I not, but what I hate that do I," &c. (Rom. vii. 14-23.) This is a sad state to be in, but the truth must be learnt. "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." Until that lesson be learnt, we do not accept Christ as our complete and eternal salvation. And the Spirit is given as the seal of eternal redemption through His blood. At present we will not say more on this head. The reader must know, though mourning over much in confession, whether his case is like that of Judas, or that of Peter. But let us now seek to discover the special point or sin intended in this scripture.

2. "After that we have received the knowledge of the truth." Now "the truth" brought out in these two chapters is the perfect and abiding efficacy of the one offering of Christ, in contrast with the many sacrifices of the law. The law made nothing perfect or complete. All its sacrifices, and washings, and purifications, could not rend the veil, and open the way for the sinner

to enter the presence of a holy God. It "could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to his conscience." Now "the truth" is revealed, Christ has come, and "by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Having *once* accomplished this, there was no need to offer Himself often.

In the end of those ages of Jewish sacrifices, He had appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself *ONCE*. In chapter x. the infinite value of His *ONE* sacrifice is "the truth" fully contrasted with the many sacrifices which could never take away sins. There was the constant remembrance of sins every year, proving that as to the conscience, the question of sins between God and the worshippers had never been settled, and by the blood of bulls and goats could never be settled.

Now "the truth" is that by the one sacrifice of Christ that question has been eternally settled. It was not the will of God to leave man in the former unhappy state. God so loved us, that He could have no pleasure in those sacrifices which left sin still there: they only pointed forwards. Yea, as to the Trinity, "the truth" here revealed brings out three marvellous things: the will of God in eternity, written in the book, that the Son should come to satisfy God as to sin: "to do thy will, O God."

Then, secondly, the Son came and did that will perfectly, by the offering up of Himself. So that by these two things, the will of God, through the offering up of the body of Jesus Christ once, we are sanctified, set apart to God. And thus the question of sin between us and God is settled for ever. There is no uncertainty as to this. If He who came to do the will of God in this matter was still in the grave, there would be the greatest reason to doubt. "But this man, after he had offered ONE sacrifice for sins for ever [or in continuity], sat down on the right hand of God." So that while He sits there at the right hand of God, "the truth" is proved, and cannot be denied: and more, this is the declared effect of His being there abidingly. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." This word translated "for ever" which only occurs in Hebrews, means "abiding continuance," so that the verse before us, in contrast with the many sacrifices which could never perfect the conscience, declares that Christ by one sacrifice of Himself has perfected the believer in abiding continuity.

Then in verse 15 we have the third thing, that the Holy Ghost is a witness to us. Thus the Trinity assures us that the question of all our sins is for ever settled by the one offering of Christ. And this is the special blessed truth here spoken of. Oh, what a truth, the truth that

the question of sins as between us and God is so settled. "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." If we know this, if we in our souls accept this, then it is most evident, as the word says, "Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin." It must be so, since He came, according to the eternal will of God, took a body for the purpose, that He might put away our sins never to be remembered against us—to settle for ever, by that one sacrifice for sins, the whole question of our sins, as between us and God. And He has done this, and in proof is seated at the right hand of God. Then the result is, as God declares, we are for ever perfected; sins no more to be remembered against us; boldness to enter His holy presence: every barrier for ever removed. Glory be to God!

But mark, this one infinite sacrifice must set aside entirely all other sacrifices, which could never take away sins.

3. "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins."

This is a self-evident fact, as we have already seen. That which is infinite and perfect must set aside all that is finite and imperfect. Is it not then sad that "the church," so called, should have invented other sacrifices for the living and the dead? Sad beyond expression! but what will not man do when he turns away from the word of God? Where "the church" flatly con-

tradicts the word of God, let us hold to the word of God. He says, "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins."

What is it then to sin wilfully after receiving the knowledge of this special truth, as now made known to these people professing to be Christians, who are by birth Hebrews? It was plainly to forsake the assembling of themselves together as Christians. It was to go back wilfully from the profession of the eternal efficacy of the one offering of Christ, and to go back to the offerings of Judaism. So that to those who did this, it was solemnly declared that there was nothing for them,

4. "But a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." This is indeed most solemn, but it must be true. If those who despised Moses died without mercy, will it not be so, yea, "of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

Surely all this was involved in giving up the one sacrifice of Christ, which had at least professedly sanctified them or separated them from Judaism, as a people called Christians; and now to go back to the murderers of Christ! And to

despise the grace of God, which they had professed, and to go to those sacrifices which now had no value. For there now remained no more sacrifice for sins. Then it evidently followed there was nothing but judgment for them.

Now, reader, have you done this? Have you wilfully despised the one sacrifice for sins, and sinned wilfully by going back to Judaism with its sacrifices? There is no question that this was the special warning in this scripture.

It may be asked; But do not Romanists and ritualists do this very thing in seeking salvation by sacraments and masses? Is not this despising the one infinite sacrifice of Christ? No doubt it is, only there is this difference, they have never known "the truth" especially brought out in these chapters. They have been brought up in darkness, seeking salvation by works. They have no idea what being perfected for ever by one offering means. Assuredly, if they despise the grace of God, they are lost. Yes, let every priest and clergyman know, and all others who may read these lines, that if he does not accept Christ as the perfect and eternal salvation, he is lost. And without question, if he die refusing the only salvation of God, he will be lost for eternity. We earnestly entreat all such to search the scriptures. Think not of being saved by works, and pretended sacrifices for sins. God cannot be pleased with your works until you have accepted salvation

through the blood of Christ. And then works will be acceptable, not to be saved, but because you are eternally saved. C. S.



IMPORTANT EXTRACTS.

“THE ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON.”

“WE beheld His glory, not of the Son as such, but as of the only-begotten Son of the Father. He had all the title of that excellency and value in everything. All that that was to the Father was with Him. It is His personal glory made visible in flesh.

“The difference between *μονογενής* (only-begotten), and *πρωτότοκος* (first-born), is that the first is His relationship to God eternally; the second is His relationship to other things. Thus ‘I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth.’ (Psa. lxxxix.) This is not what He is essentially.” (*Notes on John, Coll. Writings*, J. N. D., vol. xxv. p. 334.)

A comparison of the texts that speak of the Lord as the first-born, and as the only-begotten Son of the Father, will abundantly confirm the above.

We only find the highest title of the Son in John, when the church had failed as a testimony on earth; then the Spirit by John, brings out the glory of the eternal Son, as the only-begotten of the Father.

“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.” (John i. 14.) “No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” (Ver. 18.) “God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son.” (John iii. 16.) “He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.” (Ver. 18.) “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through him.” (1 John iv. 9.) We can only worship and adore Him. He was in this ineffable relation to the Father in the beginning. Such was the eternal Son whom the Father *gave* to die for our sins. Amazing grace!

The word first-born, on the other hand, is used by the same Spirit when speaking of His pre-eminence since, and over creation, in reference to persons or things. “Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature. For by him were all things created,” &c. “And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.” (Col. i. 15–18.)

So Psalm lxxxix. 27 as above, “Also I will make

him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth." This does not speak of His eternal relationship, but His position on or over the earth. And again, "That he might be the first-born among many brethren." Thus the scripture is perfectly uniform in the use of these two distinctive aspects of His glory. It would be a sad mistake to confound them.

There remains another scripture (Ps. ii. 7) which foretells the incarnation of the Son, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." The term only-begotten is not used here. Neither in the quotation of this in Hebrews i. 5, but "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." "And again when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world," &c. How careful the Holy Ghost has been to keep the varied glories of the Son distinct. Whether His eternal relationship as the only-begotten of the Father—the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, and as such sent that we might have eternal life; or as having the first-born pre-eminence over all creation, or as the incarnate Son. May our hearts receive each of those relationships and glories with adoring gratitude and worship.

C. S.



CORRESPONDENCE.

NOTES OF A LECTURE IN "THINGS NEW
AND OLD," 1884.

My attention was called to the article at the time, by a brother at Reading, and I wrote to him as follows:—"October 11th, 1884. As I read the MS., I rather hesitated at the same word 'execrable.' (Page 233, 'Things New and Old.') But I think the writer strove to express the loathsomeness of sin, and what it was for the Holy One to bear it on the cross. Most solemn subject, made sin for us. The thought is this, the carcase was regarded as 'sin,' as you know there is no difference in the Hebrew: sin and sin-offering. Surely it was because He was the most holy, that sin was so loathsome. What words can express what it was for Him to be made sin ?

"If you look at Leviticus xvi. 26, you will see there it could not be merely death (as in Numbers xix. 11-14) that was the reason why the one should wash, &c., as there was not death, but the imputation of sin, in the case of the scape goat. I think you have scarcely caught the writer's *idea*; though I believe he felt far more than he has clearly expressed. But you cannot for a moment suppose, that he meant that the holy, holy Lord, was in His adorable Person what that word means, but sin which He bore.

Never more glorious than when so on the cross ; but it was there in the darkness, He became Galatians iii. 13. Let us beware of intellectual meddling here, yours or mine, but adore in worship."

I have read the article over again, and I can say with great enjoyment to my own soul ; and if any one will read it in communion with the Lord, he must utterly refuse the impression or meaning sought to be put upon it, that the writer, or the lecturer, had the most remote thought of impugning the adorable Person of the Holy One of God. No word can go beyond the fact that He was made sin for us on the cross. The doctrine of the article is, as I understand it, that the Lord Jesus was in His own Person ever the perfect, holy, sweet savour to God ; but as made sin, or the sin-offering, no heart can conceive, no words express, no pen describe, the depths into which He sank for us. Did not the thought of it make Him sweat, as it were, great drops of blood ? Did not the endurance of it make our precious Jesus cry out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" I am sorry that any one could have read the article, and have allowed the thought for a moment, that either the author or the editor, would send forth a single sentence that implied a spot or a stain on the adorable Person of the only-begotten Son of the Father. EDITOR.

SHORT PAPERS ON THE OFFERINGS.

IX.

THE SIN-OFFERING.

LEVITICUS IV. 22.

"WHEN a ruler hath sinned," or when one of the people sin through ignorance, in any case, whether the sin or trespass be against the Lord or against the neighbour, there must be the sin-offering. Without shedding of blood there is no remission. We do not propose to examine at this time the various details of the sin and trespass offerings in these chapters, but to take up the great principle, the absolute requirement of atonement. It should be observed that in these cases of sin, and atonement, it is not propitiation, but actual substitution. Propitiation is the foundation of all relationship with a holy God. This was shewn on the day of atonement. God must be glorified by the death of Christ, this is the very first thing. The blood of the expiatory goat was brought into the very presence of God, and sprinkled before, and on, the mercy-seat. And no hand was laid on the head of that victim. And the bodies of those beasts must be burnt outside the

camp. The blood was sprinkled on the holy place, and the tabernacle. It was for the priests' household, and all the congregation. It typified the blood of Jesus, as it is written, "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world."

In this sense He tasted death for everything. (Heb. ii. 9.) He thus glorified God that His love could flow out in righteousness to the whole world. "God so loved." God is love, and God is light, and an infinitely holy God could not dwell in the midst of a sinful people, and in a sin-defiled universe, and be indifferent to sin. His righteousness demanded propitiation; and the blood of propitiation must be shed and sprinkled first on the golden mercy-seat, and then sprinkled on that which typified the church, the people, and the universe, as seen in Leviticus xvi.

And all this is a picture of Him "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." (Rom. iii. 25.) All God's dealings with this whole world have reference to that propitiation. It is what Christ was to God in His propitiatory death that establishes the righteousness of God in proclaiming forgiveness to all. "Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference."

Now, as atonement, or propitiation, was made for all Israel, as well as for the house of the priest,

so, "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." Oh think! as the body of the beast whose blood was brought into the sanctuary was carried out without the camp and burnt, so Jesus was taken out of the city, away from the temple, to a place of a skull. There the holy One, without blemish, was made sin for us. There God was glorified, and His righteous claims met.

But to return to our chapters. (Lev. iv., v.) We do not here find that aspect of the atonement, but substitution. In each case it is more like the people's goat of substitution on the day of atonement. The hand is laid on the head of the substitute. It is the transfer of sin; and the victim is dealt with in the place and stead of the one, or those who have sinned. Every sin must be confessed and laid on the head of the sin-offering. All this evidently could not make the fallen sinner perfect, or give peace of conscience. There was not a moment in which the person, whatever position he occupied, from the priest to one of the people, might not have some sin of ignorance, which needed the death of a substitute.

We will now turn to a few scriptures to see the way of God in dealing with His people's sins. Thus He speaks of His own people Israel, "Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity." "Come, now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall

be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isa. i. 4, 18.) He speaks again, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." What words are these for God to speak to a guilty nation, or to the reader, or writer, as once guilty sinners ? (Isa. xliii. 25.)

Or even yet more. "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins : return unto me ; for I have redeemed thee. Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it ; shout, ye lower parts of the earth : break forth into singing, ye mountains," &c. (Isa. xliv. 22, 23.) Mark the joy of God in pardoning our sins, to be remembered against us no more. The Lord hath done it. But how ? And how are we to know it, and share with God in this blessed certainty ?

We pass on to another chapter. (Isa. liii.) Here is a despised person, rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Yes, a life of griefs and sorrows. A wonderful discovery is made, whether to the soul now, or Israel in days to come—that this Person was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. Here is an actual substitute, that is dealt with, in our stead, for our transgressions and our iniquities. Just as on the day of atonement the iniquities of

Israel were laid on the head of the substitute : or when a priest, or ruler, or the congregation, sinned, the sin was transferred to the head of the victim, and atonement must be made in order that sin might be forgiven. So here a person takes the place of all those offerings. "And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "For the transgression of my people was he stricken." "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities." "He bare the sin of many." (Read Isa. liii. 4-12.) Thus this Person is the great Antitype of all the sacrifices of the law. Who is this, the sinner's substitute ; or rather, the substitute of His people, bearing their sins ? In another place He says, "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair : I hid not my face from shame and spitting." All this did He suffer from the hands of men.

His bitter cry when bearing sins, and enduring the wrath due to them, is heard in the Psalms. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?"

It is also said of Him : "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isa. vii. 14.) Wonderful things are said of that Son in chapter ix. 6, 7. And further, when God heard the confession of Daniel's sins, and the sins of His people, He sent the angel Gabriel to announce the fact, that it should be

the Messiah who should "make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." (Dan. ix. 24.) Mark, this is a great advance in revealed truth. All the offerings find a fulfilment in a personal Substitute—the righteous Servant of Jehovah. (Isa. liii.) And that Person who shall make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness, is the Messiah. God will soon open the eyes of His ancient people the Jews to see this.

We have not yet had the name of this rejected and despised One, the sinner's Substitute, and the Messiah, but as the time drew nigh, indeed was come, the due time announced by Daniel, this same Gabriel, angel of the Lord, was sent again to announce the birth and name of this long foretold One. He spake to Joseph, saying, "Joseph, thou Son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary, thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS [that is, Saviour]: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us." (Matt. i. 20-23; Luke i. 26-33.)

Thus have we learnt that the Substitute of

Isaiah xiii. is the Messiah, and that He made reconciliation for iniquities. That Messiah's name is JESUS. And that He who shall save His people from their sins, is God—Jesus, the Son of the Highest. Many glories await Him, but let us pursue our subject—Jesus, the bearer of His people's sins.

If we have the testimony of Gabriel at His birth, we have also His own testimony at His death. He had come up to Jerusalem to be betrayed and crucified. (Matt. xxvi. 2.) It was written in the volume of the book, "Lo I come to do thy will." And now the hour was come. "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it: for this is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matt. xxvi. 27, 28.)

On that very night He was betrayed. At six the next morning He, the holy, holy One, was condemned. At nine He was crucified. At twelve darkness covered the earth until three. The awful cry was heard, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He was Jesus, He was wounded for our transgressions, Jesus was bruised for our iniquities.

Reader, can you say, He loved me, and gave Himself for me? Reconciliation was made for iniquity. Solemn words! He cried, "It is finished," and bowed His blessed head, and gave up the ghost. The atonement was finished. His

body was laid in the sepulchre, but not to remain there. God raised Him from the dead: proof, everlasting proof, that His one atoning sacrifice was accepted for ever. He shewed Himself to His disciples in full proof of His resurrection from the dead. Ever to be remembered were His first words to His redeemed little company, "Peace be unto you." And He shewed them His hands and His side. Earth had rejected Him; heaven was opened unto Him. There was no righteousness in this world which had rejected, and killed the only righteous one. The righteousness of God was exalted in receiving Him up above all heavens.

God the Father had given His only-begotten Son. He was with God, and was God in the beginning. The Son had accomplished the will of God in His one sacrifice for our sins. He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. And though this world had rejected, despised, yea killed with the most shameful death, the holy One of God; yet all this was to accomplish the will of God. And God did not leave the world in its own darkness: but He sent the Holy Ghost to remain here to lead and guide believers into all truth. Let us then next look at the explanation the Holy Ghost gives of the effect of the atoning death of Christ, since He came down on the day of Pentecost. May He, the Spirit, guide us into all truth, to the glory of God.

“THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.”

X.

CHAPTER VII.

WE might linger over the solemn warnings of the opening of the sixth seal, but we must now pass on to the deeply interesting parenthesis of chapter vii.

You will notice before we come to the opening of the seventh seal, God has been pleased to give us this break, as it were, in the prophetic history. Before He reveals the judgments of the blasts of the seven trumpets, He lets us into a few secrets of His gracious purposes, even in the midst of such terrible judgments.

Verse 1. If we compare Daniel vii. 2, the four winds would indicate the strife and conflict of the history and times of the Gentiles. This then is suspended until certain things or purposes of God are revealed to us. And first, the purpose of God as to the elect remnant of Israel. For they are, as to this earth, God's special care. The promises in the Old Testament are almost entirely to them as regards the future kingdom of God on earth. We only need to read the prophets to see that.

God has not forgotten His promise to the fathers. Therefore, before the four winds are let loose, before the further storms of judgment

blow upon the four divisions, or where the four empires have been, an elect number of the tribes of Israel are sealed with the seal of the living God upon their foreheads. This is not historical, it is not as yet earthly distinction or mark, but sealed by an angel. The judgments are stayed until they are sealed. There is great care to shew that they are of Israel. The tribes are named by name, and the elect number from each making up the multiple of the number (12) of administration on earth, but a thousand-fold. "And there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand." Let the emperors and kings of the earth beware how they treat those who are yet destined to reign with Christ, their Messiah, on earth.

But this is not all. "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." (Rom. xi. 15, 25.) Thus these two things go together; the elect remnant of Israel to be gathered in; for this they are sealed: and the fulness of the Gentiles.

First, the sealing of the remnant of Israel, whatever may take place, and however terrible the time of their tribulation as foretold by the

prophets, and by the Lord. (Compare Daniel with Matt. xxiv., &c.) True, they are not sealed by the Spirit as Christians are, but by an angel, and it is the seal of the living God. God will keep His promise to Abraham. Then follows the purpose of God as to the Gentiles.

"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." How gracious of our God, before going further into the terrible scenes of human wickedness and judgment, thus to give us the sure outcome from it all, both as to Israel and all nations. This vast multitude then will be clothed in white robes, with palms of victory in their hands; and they ascribe salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

But lest we should mistake them for the church or the royal priest-elders, both they and the angels are contrasted with the elders. The elders, as we have seen, are brought nearest to the throne of God, or nearest to God. They sit on thrones in heaven around the throne of God. Not so this multitude. They stand before the throne. There is a great effort to Judaize and

rob the church of this wondrous place. Yea, some give the Old Testament saints the place of sitting around the throne in chapter iv., and would give the church this place of subordination; for mark, this multitude stand before the throne. "Stood before the throne and before the Lamb." We have had a large book lent us, holding these erroneous views of the church.

And further, the angels do stand around the elders, but they do not stand around this robed multitude. Blessed as will be their state even standing before the throne, the angels stand round the elders and the throne, and they fall before the throne on their faces, and worship God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever, Amen. Now examine each word in this angelic ascription of praise, and you will see they have, like chapter v., the future glory and kingdom of Christ before them—the final outcome of the time of tribulation.

But more, a question is raised by one of the same elders—and that is the question we wish to have decided—Who are they? Are they the church, identified with the worshipping elders? "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" Now John did not know, so he said, "Sir, thou knowest. And

he said to me, These are they who came out of great [or the great] tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Now mark, this blessed vision is given in this book before the great tribulation is come. And it is a scene which is to take place after the tribulation: for this complete robed multitude could not have come out of the great tribulation before it took place. But the church of God is taken before the great tribulation. (1 Thess. iv. 14-18.) Then the day of the Lord. (1 Thess. v. 1-5; 2 Thess. ii. 1; Rev. iii. 10.) They are taken to the place prepared, to sit in the brightness of the glory of God. (Rev. iv. 4.) All this is before the tribulation of the book begins, so that they, the church, cannot possibly be the multitude that shall come out of the great tribulation. That multitude cannot therefore possibly be the church of God.

We shall find them again, like and with the martyred company of the fifth seal, at the completion of the first resurrection of chapter xx. And thus they are the future earthly saints that shall reign with Christ on earth. (Chap. v. 10; xx. 4.) Nothing could be more clear. And passing on to those scenes of millennial glory beyond the awful judgments that will deluge the earth, we may now examine the remaining verses of our chapter, and inquire, are they heavenly or earthly scenes?

Chapter vii. 15. They have come out of the, or a great tribulation. As to the great multitude, this is, no doubt, the time of trial spoken of in chapter iii. 10. They have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. In Matthew xxiv. we learn that the Lord comes immediately after the Jews' great tribulation. And this introduces the millennial kingdom on earth. "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." Is that the millennial throne of the Lamb, Messiah on earth? and is that temple on earth or in heaven during the millennial reign of Christ? One fact stated in chapter xxi. will help us in this inquiry. In the heavenly new Jerusalem there is no temple. "And I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."

This would seem to point to the fact, that the great multitude will have their portion in connection with the temple, and reign on earth—and every word that follows confirms this thought. We could not speak of hunger, and thirst, or the sun's heat in heaven. But all is in keeping with their blissful state on earth. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall

feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters."

Thus shall they be blest during the days of the Lamb's millennial kingdom on earth. The last few words in the chapter may indeed reach on beyond the kingdom to the eternal state, as more fully revealed to us in chapter xxi. 3, 4. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

The blessedness of the earthly kingdom, as described in Isaiah lx., is in perfect keeping with this revelation, only there the difference between the earthly kingdom and the heavenly bride was not made known. "Violence shall no more be heard in **THY LAND**, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory," &c. And notwithstanding the terrible judgments about to be poured out on this earth—the tribulation, such as never was, and never shall be again—yet immediately after the tribulation, "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. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect

from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Thus will the elect of Israel, and the great multitude be gathered to sit in His kingdom on earth. And whilst the revelation of this chapter vii. is entirely new, so much so that John needed the explanation of the elder, yet is it in perfect harmony with all truth which had been revealed before. This book is the filling up or completing of all prophetic truth.

God has thus been pleased to make known to us by revelation His purpose, both as to Israel and to the nations, after the completion of the church, and before we enter upon the direct and terrible judgments of God upon a guilty world. It is mercy rejoicing against judgment. His mercy endureth for ever.

Think how long that mercy has borne with the church's apostasy, and the world's rejection of His grace in Christ Jesus. When this revelation was given, it was then the last time, or hour, of antichrists; for there were many. Yet His mercy lingereth through all these centuries. But the midnight cry has now gone forth, and the door will soon be shut.

God grant that the reader may not have to stand without and cry in vain, Lord, open unto us. If not saved, oh come, and come now to Him who said, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

"THE MESSAGE."

1 JOHN I. 5.

THE apostle John had seen Jesus, and had beheld in Him the manifestation of "that eternal life which was with the Father," and what he had "seen and heard" he declared unto the saints to whom he wrote, that they might have fellowship with him—a fellowship which was "with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." Nothing could be more blessed than this wondrous association and fellowship into which the saints are brought, and so the apostle had written them these things that their "joy might be full." All this is the expression of God's infinite grace to poor sinners, whom He has been pleased to lift out of the depths of ruin, and to deliver from the power of sin and Satan, giving them divine, eternal life, and bringing them into His own presence, and establishing them there in a known and eternal relationship with Himself. This is pure, unmingled grace, the fruit of infinite, eternal love, and it is most blessed indeed.

But the human heart, in its wretched perversity and wickedness, is ever ready to abuse grace, yea, even to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, if it can; and so we find the truth of God guarded on every side. If God, in infinite grace, takes up vile sinners, and brings them into His own presence, and into fellowship with Himself,

it is cause for profoundest joy and gratitude; but in doing this, God never does, and never can, set aside His own character. His unsullied holiness, His absolute purity, must shine out in all that He does, as well as His love and grace. If "God is love," "God is light" as well. "Light" and "love" are the very essence of what He is in His nature. And if we are made partakers of the divine nature, recipients of that life—that *eternal* life—which was manifested in Jesus the Son of God here upon earth, we must remember it is the nature of One who is light, absolute purity, necessarily detecting and excluding all evil. Hence the apostle says, "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that GOD IS LIGHT, AND IN HIM IS NO DARKNESS AT ALL."

No language could be used to describe more forcibly God's intrinsic and absolute purity. It is a purity that admits of no degree of evil. Not only is God "light," but no "darkness" can mingle with that light. Darkness is necessarily excluded by what He is as light. And if we have been brought to God, we are not "in darkness," but "in the light." It is the place and condition into which we have been brought. We "were once darkness, but now light in the Lord." (Eph. v. 8.)

In our natural state we were "darkness;" now, as redeemed and brought to God, and made par-

takers of the divine nature, we are "light in the Lord." What a change, both of place and condition! Once afar off, but now in God's presence in Christ, brought nigh through His blood! Once enemies; now reconciled, and in cloudless light, able to look up into God's face, and say, Abba, Father! Once incapable of having a common thought, or feeling, or desire with God; now possessed of the divine nature, and able to have fellowship with Him, and with His Son Jesus Christ!

Do we then say we have been brought to God, and have fellowship with Him, and while claiming these things, do we walk in darkness? Then it is all a "lie," and we "do not the truth."

If we have been brought to God, we are in the light, for God is light, and we have been made partakers of the divine nature. God has been revealed in Jesus, and through this revelation we have been brought to Him, receiving the life which was manifested in Jesus. And thus we are brought into fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. Only as possessing this life can we have fellowship with God.

And if we possess this life, and are in this fellowship, we are necessarily in the light. The light is what God is in the purity and holiness of His nature, and we participate in this nature, and thus are in the light. But if we *say* we participate in this nature, and in it have fellow-

ship with God, while we walk in darkness, we connect darkness with Him who is light. It is to say darkness belongs to that pure and holy nature, that divine life, which was manifested in Jesus. And this is a lie, and we do not the truth. We are still in the moral darkness of nature, and know not God.

“God is light, and in him is no darkness at all!” It is a solemn statement, which shews the necessary exclusion of evil from His presence. The cross is the measure of this. There we see His awful abhorrence of sin when He abandons His own Son, and commands the sword to awake against Him as made sin for us. Abandoned of God on that cross the suffering Victim was overwhelmed in darkness, in unfathomable sorrow, left to drink the cup of God’s wrath against sin. That bitter cry of anguish, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” shews the utter impossibility of the darkness mingling with the light, or of sin having a place in the presence of God. All this is unspeakably solemn, if we look at the flesh, or the old nature and what flows from it; and yet it is unspeakably blessed when we realise that we are in the Son, and that our life is in Him. We are brought to God *in Christ* “As he is, so are we in this world.” We are in the light, but it is as partakers of the divine nature, and thus in our nature morally, like God Himself, and this is most blessed indeed. But it

searches the heart, and tests our practical state. Are we habitually walking in the fear of God, and judging the flesh with its lusts, so that nothing is seen in our walk or ways but what is Christ-like? Do we carry in our souls, daily and hourly, the sense that we are in God's presence? And do we realise the manner of life that becomes that place? We *are* in the light, we *are* in God's presence.

We are not there to-day and some place else to-morrow. *It is the place we are in as Christians.* May the power of this truth possess our souls, giving us that holy sobriety of soul, and abhorrence of sin, suited to the place we are in, and the nature and character God has given us as His own children.

A. H. R.



EXTRACTS FROM THE EAST.

Beyrout, December 29. 1885.

"I WENT on to Jerusalem, where I had access to a few souls, and left some books. From thence I proceeded northwards by land to Nazareth; but touched two points by the way, and met with some souls, and left some books. In every place I met some who had been reading the books formerly, and are somewhat interested to see me and get some more.

“At Nazareth I remained five days, and was quite happy, and saw a good many. Thence northward to Tiberias, where I slept one night; and after two days more reached Deir Mimas, near the foot of Mount Hermon, where I made a short visit.

“I was really encouraged by my visits at the different points, and felt assured that the Lord has some souls even in the moral and natural desolations of Palestine, to whom God’s word is precious. How *far* and how *fast* they will get on is a matter we can leave to Him. It is a joy to be used, even in helping them a very little. A good many I met were schoolmasters, and are accustomed to give out to others any light they get. I seek to help them by a clear gospel.

“Here is a sample of what often takes place. In Jerusalem I was invited for the evening to a friend’s house. Several came in. One of them, a schoolmaster, had been reading, and was interested to see me, and ask questions. He said, ‘I have been reading your exposition of the Romans, and would have liked if you had gone more fully into some of its knotty points.’ ‘What knotty points?’ ‘Oh, election, and some of its kindred subjects, which are so difficult, and are the strong meat which only those who are of full age can take in.’ ‘Why, my dear friend, election is not among the advanced truths of scripture at all.

We cannot call it strong meat. It is really A B C truth in scripture. For such is the state of fallen man, that when God wants a people, He has to *choose and call them.* ‘Oh, but chapter ix. is very, very difficult.’ ‘But, my friend, may not the difficulty be with you? Perhaps you have not yet mastered chapters i., ii., iii. You are a schoolmaster. Suppose a pupil would come to you complaining of the exceeding difficulties of the rules of fractions, and you found that he had not yet mastered addition, multiplication, and division, and subtraction: what would you do with him? Why, of course, you would take him back to the first rules of arithmetic. Now, so it is with divine truth. You must first learn what man is in Romans i., ii., and then what God has done in grace in chapter iii. After that you may go on step by step, and when you reach chapter ix., you will have no difficulty.’

“This was the opening of the evening’s conversation. So the way being thus opened, we looked into the truths of Romans as to what man is, and what man has done: the others present listening, and some of them asking questions or stating objections. And this is a sample of how we get access to souls. Some get stirred up, and desire to have a book to read. This is selected for them, and freely and cheerfully given, and in some instances they are promised

some special book or tract, not at hand, but which will be sent by first opportunity.

“Again, I am walking over to Bethany, and have a guide. ‘Well, Sergis, what are you?’ ‘A Christian of the Copt religion.’ ‘Well, where would you go if you were to die to-day?’ The old answer, ‘If my works are good, to heaven. otherwise not.’ Then the remainder of our time as we walked over Olivet and Bethany, was mostly taken up with these important questions. He cannot read Arabic, but his aged father is a Coptic priest resident in the Holy Land: he is a great reader, and is delighted to look into christian books. ‘Now, Sergis, you kindly take this parcel of books to your father, and give him my christian love, and I am sure he will be interested to read what I give you.’ He was not in Jerusalem, or I should have called on him, and made his acquaintance.

“Now I must not omit to tell you of the last night of my journey. I spent it in the quiet of a Jewish family in Sidon. The brethren in Deir Mimas have been for some time interested in some Jews in Sidon, with whom they have had much conversation about Israel’s calling and hopes, and what Christianity is, &c.; and they told me these Jewish friends were anxious to see me, and that I might spend the night with them on my way. One of the brethren came with me a day’s journey on foot (I was riding), to intro-

duce me to them, and make arrangements for me to spend a night with them.

"I was interested in them. They have been deeply affected by the spirit they witnessed in the brethren in Deir Mimas, and are quite willing to listen. We went over God's calling of Israel, and His ways past and future with them. We had Isaiah viii., and Daniel ix., and a good many other scriptures, which relate to Christ's birth, rejection, and death. Also His present place in heaven, and what Christianity is. The rapture, and what follows. Altogether it was a profitable evening, with no controversy. They quite freely communicated to me their thoughts and expectations, which are of course Jewish. They are of Aaron's family. The old man is a merchant, and has travelled much in Russia and elsewhere, and knows the state of the Jews. One of his sons has a good deal of discernment, and grace may yet call him.

"They say that there are now about 80,000 Jews in Palestine and Syria; 12,000 in Jaffa, about 30,000 in Jerusalem, 7,000 in Hebron, 7,000 in Tiberias, and 12,000 in Jafed. Other authorities put the number of Jews in Jerusalem at about 20,000. All agree that they now form two-thirds of the inhabitants. Of the remaining third, one half are foreigners. All the activity there now is on the part of foreigners. It is religiously a city of 'stirs and activity,' and

is getting ready for its part in coming events, just as fast as London, or Paris, or Rome, is getting ready.

"I have long been impressed by the wine-press of God's wrath, in which the *vine* of the earth is cast to be trodden outside that city. (Rev. xiv. 17-20.) It differs from the harvest of the earth mentioned before, and seems to be more definite and specific, and more severe. I have long thought that man's religion, in its various forms and types (apart from open heathenism), will eventually be found centred in Jerusalem and Palestine; and that God will in due time execute special judgment on it: in what form I do not undertake to say, but it will be terrible.

"Almost all sects are even now represented there; even some wretched coteries of heretics have taken up their headquarters in this city. . . . Oh how solemn to think that all these events are just at the door. Men, in their blindness, see not. How much grace we need just now to go on in grace, having confidence in God's word, which is the only thing that abides.

"Since last writing to you, I have fresh word from Mesopotamia. From all, I gather that there has been some blessing in souls there through the truth. Some six new correspondents addressed a letter to me, which I received just before my last journey. Word from Upper

Egypt still good. May the Lord in mercy keep them fresh in a sense of His love and grace. If we do not drink in peace and communion from the living streams of grace, 'living waters' will not flow from us to refresh others. We shall only be clouds without water carried about by winds of strife, as 'Things New and Old' so forcibly expresses it.

"The temptation seems to me to be strong now, to get us away from simple grace. I lately recalled what took place at — meeting, as to those who calmly accept death, rather than deny God's blessed Son. At Nazareth a good many were present on one occasion, and the question came up, 'What about our forefathers, who lived and died before this Protestant light came to us?' Well, I said, it was a question of what God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, was to their souls. If any of them had Him, they went to Him. And it appears that many accepted oppression, and even death, rather than deny Him.

"They mentioned a case that occurred there (*Nazareth*) in the memory of some of the older ones. A young girl was washing clothes at the fountain; a Mahomedan stepped over them with a lighted pipe, and, it may be, let fall on purpose some coals on her clothes. Female like, she said something bitter about the use of tobacco. He then accused her to the judge, who

decided it was constructive blasphemy against their prophet, who himself used tobacco, and praised it, and that she must either embrace the faith or die. She replied, 'You may kill me if you choose, but I shall not deny my Lord Jesus Christ.' They then tied her to the tails of horses, and dragged her to death !

"Well, Christ was certainly something (yea, everything in the supreme moment of trial) to her soul. It is not Protestant light, but what Christ is to our souls. The former are just as ready to boast of their superior light, as many in the west are to boast of theirs. But increased light is only increased darkness, the moment there is a state of soul to boast of it. Any who have been favoured with increased light, dare not give it up, for God hath given it to them ; but, oh, how much all need His help to maintain it in communion. . . .

"Your Brother in Christ,

"B. F. PINKERTON."

Surely it is blessed to hear of a few called of Him, in the desolate land, where His feet once trod. We would ask the earnest prayers of all who are the Lord's, who read this paper, and especially for His blessing on the tracts and books in Arabic, scattered amongst the vast numbers who speak that tongue. C. S.



SHORT PAPERS ON THE OFFERINGS.

X.

PROPITIATION AND SUBSTITUTION.

WE come now to the teaching of the Holy Ghost, on and after the day of Pentecost. It was not until Jesus, our atoning Substitute, was glorified, that the Holy Ghost could come to dwell here in the redeemed. Jesus had distinctly told them, "For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." His presence here, then, is in consequence of redemption being accomplished by the Son of God.

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost used Peter to announce, in the very city where Jesus had been rejected and slain, that God had, according to the scriptures, raised Him from the dead and made Him both Lord and Christ—the very Jesus whom they had crucified. This announcement convicts them of the deepest and blackest sin ; and makes them cry out, " Men and brethren, what shall we do ? " They are directed to repent and be baptised in the very name of this once rejected, now exalted, Jesus Christ, the Saviour Christ, for the remission of sins—just as was foretold by Gabriel, the angel of God. And with many other words did he testify and exhort.

And the effect was marvellous. "The same day there were added about three thousand souls." The day had now dawned, when "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Reconciliation for iniquity had now been made. The veil was rent—Jesus had entered heaven, by His own blood. He entered into the holy place, and now the mercy-seat is opened to the whole world. Peter did not as yet fully comprehend this. But the Holy Spirit acted upon this great truth. Jesus had cried, It is finished. God had rent the veil. Here it may be well to be reminded of the contrast between the propitiatory aspect of the sacrifice of Christ, and Christ as His people's Substitute.

Propitiation is what the blood is to God for His people and for all creation. As He said, as to redemption, "When I see the blood." So on the day of atonement, when the blood was first sprinkled before God, He saw the blood. But the blood of bullocks and goats never enabled God to rend the veil. Those sacrifices could not open the mercy-seat to the whole world. The blood of Jesus was shed, the veil was rent, the mercy-seat is opened to the whole world. Hence the Spirit of God gives the word now, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord." And to shew that none are excluded, the first preaching sets the door wide open to the very murderers of Jesus; and three thousand enter in. It is on

this ground that all *preaching* proceeds in the Acts. Indeed, the commission was as wide as the human race. "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke xxiv. 47.) No matter, then, of what nationality you are, repentance and remission of sins are preached to you. God sees the blood; He is glorified by the death of His Son. The propitiatory mercy-seat is opened to you. Repentance and everlasting remission of sins are proclaimed to you.

In this aspect, as the propitiatory mercy-seat, the atonement is, as to the whole human race, unlimited. And thus the gospel is preached unto every creature. God has been glorified on the cross. But the atonement, in the sense of substitution, is limited to believers; to those who have redemption through His blood.

Let us, however, look at the scriptures. We have seen the door opened to the rejecting, despising Jews, by the preaching of Peter. Let us now see the same door opened to the Gentiles by the same apostle. After speaking of His death and resurrection, he says, "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, WHOSOEVER believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." (Acts x. 43, 44.) Thus

blessed be God! to both Jew and Gentile, the effect of the propitiation is an unlimited proclamation of mercy and forgiveness of sins. God sees the blood, infinite in value, before Him; and thus whosoever believeth in Jesus, shall receive remission of sins. Through the propitiation, forgiveness is preached. And to all who believe the message of God, from that moment they know Jesus as their Substitute, all sins and trespasses are forgiven: to this the Holy Ghost bears witness.

The preaching of Paul is on precisely the same ground. What does he preach to the Jews in their synagogue, and to the crowd of Gentiles? First, the death and resurrection of Jesus. Then the unlimited proclamation of forgiveness, with the absolute assurance that all that believe are justified from all things. Read his proclamation in Acts xiii. Does this set aside the sovereignty of God? Not for a moment. Forgiveness of sins is truly preached to all; for the same words were preached to the Gentiles. And what was the effect? "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed."

Now why should Christians differ about these two things? Is it not the clear doctrine of scripture that forgiveness of sins is preached to all, to every creature? Is it not an absolute fact that

all who believe God ARE justified from all things ? God says so in His inspired word. But if you ask, And who do believe ? the answer is perfectly clear, " As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed." We have no more right to deny one of these truths than the other.

Nothing can exceed the importance of the soul clearly understanding the ground of these two things : the propitiation of the death of Christ by which He has become the mercy-seat to the whole world, and His substitution for His people's sins, by which THEY are justified from all things. It is the same sacrifice once offered. But, reader, have you the clear certainty in your own soul that, believing God, you are justified from all things ? Do you say, " Well, I do not enjoy that certainty " ?

It is no use denying the fact that there are many, who we trust are Christians, who do not enjoy the certainty that their sins are forgiven ; and that God cannot impute sin to them. We would seek to help such.

Now first as to *propitiation*—God glorified about the whole question of sin, and sins. What is this ? Who did it ? and where was it done ? Where was God glorified about the whole question of sin ? Have you ever thought seriously of those hours of darkness, when Jesus was nailed to the cross, bearing the whole wrath of God due to sin ? Have you really thought of the infinite

suffering of the Son of God, made sin? Now think of those words, the cry of Jesus, long foretold—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And have you ever thought of those further words: "It is finished; and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost"? Why was He thus forsaken? What was finished, and where was it finished? Solemn questions of eternal moment. Atonement was there and thus made. Propitiation was there and thus, by the Son of God, FINISHED. ON THE CROSS, on the cross alone, God was there glorified as to sin. And all that followed, was because He, the holy One, made sin; had there on that cross glorified God. The infinite suffering of Christ, because of sin, was the atonement.

We must here notice two most bold errors held by some as to the atonement. The one is, that Christ was making the atonement during His blessed life. The other is, that it was not finished on the cross, but had to be made somehow after His death, now He is in heaven. This has many shades of error, such as Romish masses, fresh sprinklings, making propitiation without shedding of blood, or the suffering of divine wrath. For none would be so daring as to say that Jesus is now enduring the wrath of God. Now both views entirely set aside the true character of atonement or propitiation. Both set aside the awful nature of sin. Both are equally false.

In truest sympathy He entered into and carried our sorrows, and was thus perfected as the Captain of our salvation. But carrying our sorrows, and bearing our sins, must not be confounded.

It was as He approached the cross, He cried out, "Father, glorify thy name." It was in the garden, with the awful cup before Him, that He sweat as it were great drops of blood. There He said, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." Precious Jesus! the cup of wrath was still future, still before Him. It was only on the cross He could say, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It was in that darkness His soul was made an offering for sin. It was on "the tree he bare our sins in his own body;" yes, on the tree. During His life He was despised and rejected of men; but the Father could say, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." But on the cross all was darkness—forsaken of His God! There was the atonement made. There it was finished: there He bowed His head and died. Jesus said, "It is finished." There my soul rests in peace.

To say that He was making atonement during His life, would be to say that, though sin was imputed to Him, though He was made sin, yet sin is not so terrible, but God could have communion with Him when made sin. But on the

cross the righteousness of God is fully revealed. Though it be His holy One, yet now sin is reckoned to Him, and He is bearing sins, He must now be forsaken of God until atonement be made. And it was made by Him, the infinite Son, so that God is glorified. Thus two things could He now say, as He bowed His blessed head in death, "It is finished." "FATHER, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Yes, whether as the propitiation, glorifying God; or the substitute of His people's sins, all was over—it was finished. And wilt thou, O vain, reasoning man, say that it was not finished? Wilt thou say that He had still to make propitiation in heaven, and priests to make it on earth? Wilt thou still deny that it is finished? and say that there must be millions of repeated sacrifices offered yet, or one sacrifice offered continuously? Or wilt thou say, it is not finished, for there must be renewed sprinklings if we sin or fail? All the subtleties of Satan and unbelief would deny those blessed words of Christ, "It is finished." Begone, unbelief! God was glorified by the finished work of Christ; propitiation was made by that work of Christ on the cross, so that *through* Him is preached the forgiveness of sins, and *by* Him all that believe are justified from all things.

We will next look at what followed the propitiatory death on the cross. But let us hold fast the blessed truth that "It is finished." And

ever remember that it was not in heaven, but on the cross, Jesus spake those precious words. It was when He expired on the cross the veil was rent. His entrance into heaven, and sitting down, was in consequence of having glorified God on the cross—of having obtained eternal redemption for us.



"THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST."

XI.

CHAPTER VIII.

HE who is worthy now opens the seventh seal. And yet there is delay before the awful blasts of judgment are sounded. "There was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." These are angelic judgments. "And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets." God can use the powers and principalities He has created. The silence in heaven denotes the pause before those judgments begin.

There is another very marked change. The Lord Jesus does not now present Himself as the Lamb during these judgments.

Verses 3-5. These verses are taken by some as giving authority to pray now to angels. But is not this the Lord Jesus in angelic form? "There was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the

golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand." It is true the action is not at all as the intercession which He, as our great High Priest, makes for us now before the throne of grace, as we see in the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is that we may find grace and help in time of need.

Here the prayers of the suffering saints are answered in judgments on the earth. "And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake." This reminds us of the man clothed with linen, scattering the fire of judgment from the throne of God over the city. (Ezek. x. 2.) It is that man clothed with righteousness to whom all judgment is given, that hears the prayers of the suffering saints, and answers their prayers with fire from off the altar. Men have rejected His grace and free forgiveness, they must now have His judgments. Sin must be purged or judged. In Isaiah vi. we see, when the seraphim took fire from the altar and laid it on the mouth of the prophet, his iniquity was taken away, and his sin purged. Jesus has passed through the fire of divine judgment. Have you received the testimony of God to the cleansing efficacy of that blood which

cleanseth from all sin ; or are you still hasting on to that day when angelic judgments, that is, judgments direct from heaven, shall be cast on the earth ?

This is no vain speculation to amuse you. These things will shortly come to pass. God is slow to execute wrath. “There was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.” We have seen in chapter vi., that there were those on earth that were slain for the word of God ; and they were bidden to wait until their brethren were killed. Here then we have the prayers of their brethren presented with the efficacy of the intercessor as an angel of judgment.

We only know of one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus. There is, then, not a shadow of authority in the word of God, to pray to angels or saints. These are evidently Jewish figures, borrowed from the temple. The golden censer was a type of Christ Himself. The incense was brought into the most holy, before the blood, pointing to the glory and excellency of His Person, who should make atonement, whose blood should be presented before God. He alone then could offer the prayers of all saints with the sweet savour of His blessed Person, as known only to the Father. Out of His blessed hands, perfumed with His own excellences, those prayers will ascend to God. But all is changed now : not for continued grace, but for judgments.

Is it not then most suited that He who is known to us as the Lamb of God should then assume the character, as in days of old, of the angel of judgment?

“The altar” of incense is the golden altar that stood before the throne in the holy place. The altar from which the fire was taken is the altar of burnt-offerings. So that the measure and character of judgment on Christ, as our Substitute, on the altar—the cross—will be the character of the wrath cast on the earth upon the rejecters of forgiveness through the death of the cross.

Verse 6. “And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. The first angel sounded; and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth; and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.”

The loftiness of men will be smitten and destroyed; and the green grass, the prosperity of men, will also be utterly destroyed. Thus in these more direct blasts of judgment from God, the circumstances of men are first smitten. What a warning this is!

Man, as a fallen sinner, has no right even to the things of this life: it is all the mammon of unrighteousness. Whilst the men of this world are grasping to possess that which they little think they will have soon to give up, surely it becomes us to take heed to the teachings of the

Lord as to worldly goods, and the example of the saints in the beginning of the church's history in Acts ii., iv.

This is a very serious matter. Surely this Revelation of Jesus Christ is intended to have a separating power on us as to all present circumstances. Do we really believe that we are about to be taken away from this whole scene, and that then these judgments will follow?

"And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain, burning with fire, was cast into the sea, and the third part of the sea became blood," &c. This would set before us some empire that had long been considered as a mountain. The judgment of God falls upon it, and it falls burning into the raging billows of the people, as angry waves, and the result is those waves of men become blood.

The figure seems clearly to imply great destruction of all that appears stable. And this is not limited to the earth, or the seat of the four empires, but extends to the sea; that is the people beyond their limits. With this there is great destruction of trade, the ships and resources of men. Oh, how little men know what is before them! And all along, as we read of these judgments close at hand, the voice so well known to us still says, "Let not your heart be troubled; neither let it be afraid." Do we hear Him? Do we believe Him?

In the third trumpet-blast of judgment, it is still the circumstances of men. Some very eminent person falls, as a burning lamp. In hot countries rivers are very expressive of fertility, and earthly blessing. The Christian, receiving from Christ, becomes a river of water of life to others. (John vii. 38.) And there is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God. (See also Rev. xxii. 1, 2.) Here it is the very reverse. "The third part of the waters became wormwood, and many men died of the waters because they were made bitter." Oh the bitterness and death that await the inhabitants of this world!

"And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten," &c. There seems now to be darkness falling on the governing powers of the third part of the earth. That is of the prophetic earth—the seat of the four great empires—it is utter moral, and perhaps also political perplexity or darkness. Men's minds will be terribly affected.

There is now a break and a change, marked by "an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound." The judgments of the first four trumpets have been on the circumstances of men. Now the three deeper woes are about to fall on the persons of men.

Chapter ix. "The fifth angel sounded; and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to HIM was given the key of the bottomless pit [or abyss]." This is a person: and it would seem to be Satan permitted to let loose the fallen angels out of their prison, on to the earth. All government is now darkened by diabolical agents. Earthly symbols are used, but they are only figures. To these locusts was given power, "as the scorpions of the earth." Then they are not locusts or scorpions of the earth, but as, or like them. The air is filled with demons let loose, like clouds of locusts; and their torments are like the sudden stroke of a scorpion. Oh, what will it be then to remember the grace and mercy, once offered to men?

Mark, their dreadful work will not be to hurt the grass, that is, the circumstances of men: neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. God will preserve the sealed of Israel from the torment of these demons.

It is evidently the minds of men that will be smitten with these torments for a given time, as they have no power to kill. Nay, "In those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them."

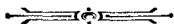
Verse 7. Perhaps no words can be found to express the terribleness of these symbols. Their

shape: they assume strength and power "like unto horses prepared unto battle." "On their heads as it were crowns like gold." They assume, as it were, divine righteousness. Faces as men—intelligence. Hair as women—they may assume winning gentleness; but their teeth are as the teeth of lions. Who can hurt them in return; for they have breastplates, not of (righteousness) gold, but of (destruction) iron? They are swift in the spread of their tormenting poison. "And the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle." It is the thoughts or doctrines they leave behind them—they have stings in their tails. They have a king over them; and he is the angel of the bottomless pit. And his name is Apollyon, the destroyer.

Oh, ye parents, is it for these scenes you are so carefully bringing up your children in the fashions and pleasures of Satan's world? Remember, these things will surely come to pass, yea, quickly come to pass. Are there not symptoms of their near approach? From the palace to the cottage is there not distress of nations, with perplexity and fear, for the things that are coming on the earth? Oh, what will it be when the true church is taken away, and God sends men these strong delusions? Awake, behold the Bridegroom! And will you be for ever shut out and left to these terrible judgments on

which we have been dwelling? We entreat you not to cast these things aside. God is bringing out this book of Revelation in all its explanations with clearness: for the time is short.

May God awaken every reader of this little paper to the fact, that the last days, long foretold, are fast running out their course. Fellow Christians, do we believe God? He has given us this revelation; do we believe it? And these things as yet are but the beginning of the wrath of God about to be poured out on a Christ-rejecting world.



ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS RESPECTING THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL.

“Do you think all the Jews in Palestine are of the two tribes, and that the ten tribes are still hidden, or are they of the twelve tribes generally? And what do the Jews themselves say as to the ten tribes and the two?”

I asked my venerable informant, the Jewish priest, specially as to this matter; and his reply was exactly what you would have made. He said that the ten tribes as a whole were carried into captivity, and are unknown until now. However, a few individuals of them joined Judah, and are found amongst the Jews until this day. He said some of them are to be found here as

elsewhere, but they are few. He quite believes in the future restoration of the ten tribes ; and was interested when I pointed out to him that, having given up the one God before their captivity, they are doubtless now in heathenism or some false religion, and will so remain until God visits them to bring them back. He could quite accept also that the Jews now known will have to pass through special trials, and be dealt with more severely than the ten tribes. And I explained this to him as being on the ground of their greater responsibility, for having had far greater light, especially the presence of Christ among them.

He assured me that David's family is still well known, and that there are many of it now in Jerusalem ; and that the rightful heir is known.

While on this subject, I may add as a matter of interest, that there are now about 80,000 Jews in Palestine and Syria ; and they seem to be much stirred up, and expect that the time of their restoration is drawing near. All authorities agree that *two-thirds* of the present inhabitants of Jerusalem are Jews. Gentiles estimate the entire population at 30,000. But D. C., my informant, assured me that there are now 30,000 Jews in Jerusalem, for they had recently taken a census. They have no wish to make a display of their numbers, for fear of the Ottoman government, which has pro-

hibited their settling in Palestine unless they become Ottoman subjects. The reason is this, if any considerable number of foreign Jews (Russians, for example), emigrate hither, the consul of that government claims them as his protégés, and gives the Ottoman government a deal of trouble. He has a little kingdom of his own. Jerusalem is now practically under the rule of its foreign consuls.

Old D. C. is intelligent, has travelled much and knows the Jews well. He has made his calculation, that their restoration must take place within twenty years. He and his sons had been anxious to see me for some time, and they gladly entertained me for the night, and gave me a good bed (a pallet) between the old man and his son Isaac.

We spent a long evening, and had up many questions: such as—the general scope of dispensational truth; God's ways and purposes as to Israel. I heard what they had to say, and asked them questions on different points. They then listened to all I had to say, and manifested a good deal of interest. Their thoughts of God's ways and Israel's future are narrow indeed, as we might expect. Israel is to be restored and blessed, Messiah will be raised up, and there will be forty years of events preparatory to the full glory of the kingdom. During this time the resurrection will take place. All Jews buried in

Palestine will be raised first, and will never die again, although they will only be restored to their natural bodies. Hence the desire of all Jews to be buried in Palestine. But other Jews, and all the old believers will be raised also to enjoy the kingdom. Messiah will then reign a thousand years; then the judgment, and after that no man knows what will be.

We had up the genealogies of the Gospels and Isaiah vii. 10-16, and I met all their objections kindly; so that they had nothing further to object. I had opportunity to shew what we believe as to Christ's Person and the Atonement, His resurrection, and present place in heaven—the proclamation of the gospel to all—what Christianity is, and what our hope is in contradistinction to that of Israel. We had up Daniel's weeks, and the one week remaining for Israel; the false Messiah, and the faithful remnant, their persecution and dispersion; the Gentile remnant; Christ's appearing; the gathering of the ten tribes; Israel's place of blessing and supremacy during the kingdom, and kindred truths.

They had read the four Gospels, and were interested to hear the character and object of each one of them.

“But if the kingdom is near, why could not you have a part in it, and be blessed with Israel?”

I shewed them that this could not be. I am

not a Jew, and, as a Christian, my only hope is to be taken to be with Christ.

“But pious Gentiles of old got blessing with Israel.” Yes, for God was then owning Israel, but now He is not. They are now under the sentence of “Lo-Ammi!” If I should seek blessing on Israel’s ground now, I should only be a bad Jew, and a worse Christian. Christendom has really taken that place. They say they are Jews, but are not. God has rejected Israel since they rejected Christ; and there can be only spiritual and heavenly blessing now, and in connection with Christ where He is. We as Christians wait for Him from heaven, and if He be not our portion and hope, we have nothing but cutting off and damnation to expect. They were interested in this point.

They are perfectly aware that Protestantism has alleviated their condition; and are delighted to know that there are now many who do not deny Israel’s hopes. This greatly confirms pious Jews. They admit that there are very many Jews who care little for their own hopes.

They feel the spirit of persecution now raised in some places against them, and admit that this is of God, to shew Israel that they cannot expect rest and blessing among the Gentiles. To this hour they are still—

“Tribes of the wandering foot, and weary breast.”

They say that they can feel safe nowhere. Only three years ago there had nearly taken place a massacre of the Jews in Beyrout, and another in Alexandria, through a false accusation that they had taken some christian children to get their blood for sacrifice. I myself have heard Christians talking about this, and they positively affirm that it is so, and profess to give details. No one actually witnessed it, but they are quite satisfied of the truth of it. I can only account for such a delusion by supposing that God allows it, that the poor Jews may be reminded of their guilt concerning "their brother," whose blood they once wickedly shed ; and will have no rest until they acknowledge their own guilt in the matter ; and see that while they meant evil by it, God meant good ; and that grace really declared that it was expedient for one man to die, that the whole nation perish not.

B. F. P.



CHEERING.

WHAT would be the result if a number of persons were converted, simply through reading the scriptures, in complete ignorance of the various divisions of Christendom ? The following extract, just received from Spain, will answer that question.

"We received a letter the other day from a

civil engineer, a Spaniard, who was passing through a village in Catalonia, where he came across a meeting of sixteen Christians. This work was the fruit of a Bible, sold seven years ago by a colporteur to a widow. It resulted in the conversion of that family, and so increased gradually. They are in the habit of meeting in one of their houses, when they read six or seven chapters, and pray, and exhort each other; generally spending about two hours.

“They have also composed a few hymns; and further, from simply the reading of the scriptures, they remember the death of the Lord Jesus in participating together of the bread and wine; all this without knowing of any other body of Christians.

“It is wonderful, and yet not so with the Lord. The one who wrote is himself a dear, godly man. How true it is, the entrance of God’s word gives light in the midst of the most intense darkness.”

How cheering to our hearts is this gracious display of the sovereign grace of God! How much for Christians to reflect upon. The words of Jesus are as true to the end (Matt. xviii. 20), just as true as at the beginning.

C. S.



CORRESPONDENCE.

2. J. T., Stevenage.—“Can the believer be lost?”—We are sorry that you should find any person professing to be a Christian, throwing a doubt, nay, denying the eternal efficacy of the blood of Jesus. The word of God says distinctly that He obtained eternal redemption for us by His own blood (Heb. ix. 12), and that He has perfected for ever by His one offering them that are sanctified by it. (Heb. x. 12-14.) If a believer can be lost after this, then there is no such thing as *eternal* redemption. And if the believer turn from the sure word of God, in what is he to trust? Is he to trust in his own works, rather than the one sacrifice of Christ by which he is for ever perfected? In such a case, all his works would be dead works of unbelief. Surely no works can be good works of a man who refuses the plain word of God.

That devoted servant of Christ, the late James Haldane, once made a note: “The first great difficulty is to convince a man that he is a sinner; but the second difficulty is to persuade a believer that he is for ever safe in Christ.” Our unbelieving hearts will cling to anything rather than rest in the sure word of God.

It is strange that the scripture your friend named as proof that a believer washed in the blood of Christ might after that be lost, does not either speak of the blood of Christ, or even of a believer.

Now read carefully the verses. “For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein,

and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." (2 Peter ii. 20-22.) We may pervert the scriptures to mean anything the unbelieving heart desires to prove, by taking texts from their plain sense and meaning.

You only need to read this chapter carefully, and it is evident there is no thought of these persons being *believers* at all, much less washed in the blood of Christ and then lost. From the first verse to the last they are false teachers. The very knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ changes a man's outward conduct, yea, as is said, it changes society. There is outward reformation. There was no doubt of this in Judas, though he was a lost soul all the time. The latter end of such false teachers, as described in this chapter, is terrible. It would have been better for these false teachers not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they had known it to have turned away from it. Why did not your friend go on to verse 22? This explains what has happened unto the persons described through the chapter. Just according to a well-known true proverb: The dog is turned to his own vomit again. Now a dog is never in scripture a figure of a true believer, but a figure of a false teacher. Beware of dogs, &c. Then can an unclean swine, a sow, be a figure of a true believer?

However fair the outward appearance, a sow is a sow still; you cannot wash it into a sheep, which is another creature : sooner or later, it will be in its native mire again. It is just so with the false teacher. He may be eloquent and deceptive, but he is not born again. Sooner or later he will, like the dog or the sow, prove his unrenewed nature to have the mastery.

And whilst these solemn warnings are evidently intended for the multitudes of false teachers, making a profession, a merchandise of the church of God, yet they do, and can only apply to those that are deceived, or false. Thus Satan points to what is true of false teachers, and your friend is foolish enough to think that this also applies to true believers. You will find that every line in the whole chapter can only apply to those who never were Christians, but only dogs, or swine.

Surely it is a sad mark of a false teacher, to try to persuade us that the believer washed in the blood of the Lamb can be lost. There is no other Saviour, and no other salvation. If the salvation we have in Christ is not perfect and eternal, where shall we turn ? to whom shall we go ? Shall we turn to our own works, and trust in them rather than the eternal salvation wrought out by Christ ? No ; begone unbelief. Jesus has said, "They shall never perish." I believe Him. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." I believe it. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." I believe it. Yea, the Holy Ghost is a witness to us.

Tell your friend he has fallen into a sad mistake : a Christ-dishonouring error of dark

unbelief. For one soul to be lost, who has been washed in the blood of Jesus ! he might as well say that Christ died in vain. Millions of false teachers may be lost ; but that does not prove that one of the true sheep of Christ can be lost. No ; he will not find such a thought in scripture, if the context be fairly examined. And yet how slow the Christian is to enjoy the blessed fact that he can never be lost. It is the business of every true teacher to set forth the eternal security of the believer in Christ.

3. R. A., Acton. As to Music.—The subject to which you call attention is deeply important—the great use that Satan is making of music in this day. It is indeed quite common to hear the statement, “It was music that led her into the world.” And this of the young, who once professed to belong to Christ.

Only last Lord’s day we observed a company of young men, going to practise with brass instruments at the very hour Christians met to shew forth the Lord’s death. And only a week or two ago an Archbishop in what is called opening an organ, preached on the sweet strains of the organ, and “the groans of the Spirit that cannot be uttered.” (Rom. viii. 23.) And he confessed he could not understand that hard chapter. How could he understand anything, if he did not know the difference between the soft strains of music, and worship in Spirit ?

And is not true spiritual worship lost, whether in the strains of the organ, or the noise of the drum and horn of the army of salvation by works ?

The scripture to which you call attention, whilst true of Israel then, is no doubt written for our instruction. The Lord says, “Take thou

away from me the noise of thy songs ; for I will not hear the melodies of thy viols." And again, "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion. . . . That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David. . . . Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive," &c. Read the context—Amos v. 23, to vi. 7. Yes, the priests and nobles were the first to go into captivity to Babylon. And they who call themselves priests now, and are most diligent in the use of music, are the first to go into the captivity of Babylon, the great harlot. Vast numbers of the clergy are now in her embrace, but her fearful overthrow is near ; when "The voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee." (Rev. xviii. 22.)

As a general may order the bands to play on the eve, and entrance into the storm of war, and death, so Satan is now ordering his bands to play, and organs pour forth their melodies as he hastens on both priests and people of Babylon to everlasting woe. Your inquiry then is most serious. We are about to be caught up to meet the Lord. The great storm of the wrath of God is about to be poured out on this mocking Christendom with all its bands and organs. What then is the Christian's path as to music ? In this, as in all other matters, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Some have kept music in their houses just to enable them to learn tunes to sing to the praise of Him who loved them, and gave Himself for them. If this is not of faith, the Lord enable all of us to give them up for His name's sake.

NOTES OF A LECTURE ON MATTHEW VIII.

(*By that beloved servant of the Lord, the late
John Willans.*)

No portion of scripture is found out of its place. In Matthew v., vi., vii. Jesus was in the mountain unfolding the mind of heaven about man's conduct on earth. It was practically set forth in Christ's conduct—the conduct, in the judgment of heaven, worthy of our common humanity. Remark what honour and dignity are put upon *man*. Not only was he created to inherit what God had bestowed; but, when fallen, mark what God did to bring him back into a state in which he might again hold communion with Himself. The first *rational* act of each of us must be to seek the God from whom sin has separated man. There is no wisdom but seeking God, and learning what is the conduct that becomes us in His sight. There is evil around; evil in ourselves; the enemy, too, spreads his snares; but God is able to spread a table in the sight of all our enemies.

The antidote with which He furnishes us against the evil, is the *word*. The insertion of His word is the remedy for the poison which works within. The word of God is the power of God against evil. Dispensationally we have large measures of truth. How suitable for this

age is the Book of Ecclesiastes, for instance, and Proverbs. God deals with us—through His word largely—in the aggregate and also individually. He is able to attract all hearts to Himself. That which was created by Him, finds its true centre in Him.

In these chapters (v., vi., vii.) there is nothing of grandeur or greatness, except the humility; and humility is the high thing in God's thoughts. God's heart was set upon an humble Christ. Christ humbled Himself that we might the more willingly humble ourselves. It was God, manifest in the flesh, who inculcated these precepts. He had the right to teach, for His was the *power*: God was here, taking His place in the circle of humanity. He took man's proper place in order to encourage us. He who took this low path was the high One; the only One who had a right to all.

I have only dwelt a little on this to introduce a few thoughts on chapter viii. Holy and reverend is the name of Him who spoke on the mount of holiness. There was a charm about His words; they were so gracious and so kind, though heard "afar off," but *multitudes* followed Him. God was veiled, and He had spoken of heavenly-mindedness in contrast to earthly-mindedness; but still they were charmed.

In the leper, in verse 2, we have a poor sinner in the presence of the Holy One. We are here

typically seen: "Grace reigns through righteousness." The leper attributes power to the Lord. He accredits Him as "Jesus of Nazareth, anointed with the Holy Ghost and with *power*." (Acts x. 38.) His thought was of the Lord's POWER. We are too apt to forget this. Christ is righteousness to us. He also is strength and power for us. Whilst we rejoice in His righteousness, we sometimes forget that we need the apprehension of His power to sustain His righteousness practically in our souls. We must not suppose that because we have believed, we have nothing more to do. It is not enough to say that we have life; we must live in the power of it. And in order to have power, we must know the Lord Jesus Christ as the source of power. "His leprosy was cleansed:" then he could say, that the Lord would if He could, and He could if He would.

It is the will of God that sinners should be saved. God bows our wills to His when we are unwilling. He wills our salvation. Is there any obstacle or impediment stronger than God? We are brought into the place of power as well as of love. God can utterly subdue our will. Many look too much at their own will, instead of looking at God's will. We are often engaged in considering our state, rather than in strengthening our faith. When faith comes to God, feeling sin and asking God to kill it, then the will of

God is apprehended, and His power. He is stronger than the will even of the regenerate. He knows the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit lusteth against the flesh. We need to know God's grace, and that His strength is ours, too. He has power to break us down. It is right to take our evil wills to God, and to ask that His power may overcome them. If we come to God just as we are, God will send us away just as we ought to be. There is, then, power in Christ. We are inclined to lean on the side of grace: we fail; then we earnestly plead that we may be restored. *It is well*; but there is another thing which it would be also well to plead, that is, for power in the Spirit to be kept from failing. This would be more elevating to our spiritual character, and more in accordance with the dignity of our calling.

There was no small faith in the centurion. He beseeches the Lord. He knew that the Lord Jesus knew all about it; but he brings it all before Him. We read in another gospel that this servant was *dear* to the centurion. This is a happy instance of this relationship, to which we should do well to take heed in these days, when there is such a dearth of good servants and of good masters. This servant had proved himself worthy to have his master's love, and the master had grace to value that worth. Here we may learn the advantages of having a godly master.

It was no such bad thing to be sick even, in a godly man's house. How rare it is for servants to be really faithful; for masters to be really careful for their servants' weal!

This petition of a godly master was not likely to be made in vain. Jesus did not come to untie the links of humanity, but to bind them the faster; to make love the sweeter; children to love their parents, delight to serve them, to run their errands. It is a real pleasure to the servant that he has so good a master, and then Christ comes and backs it all up with a divine precept. Thus God fastens, with a divine cement, the ties of natural affection. The church should have been a witness, by these holy bonds, amidst the unregulated minds around. It is not in "ecclesiastical" matters only, it is in *this* that the frightful ruin of the church is seen. This divine cement is lacking which should be with us a desideratum. Christianity does not make us *angels*; it should make us better men down here—before we are glorified in heaven. We should be the best fathers; the best husbands; the best sons; the best servants. There is not a thing which belongs to men as men, which God has not cared for in His word.

There have been persons—rare, and therefore chronicled—so generous in their love, that they only needed to know of wants in order to meet them. Such was Jesus. Only go and tell out

your grievances and difficulties to Him, and He will cool down their fever! We do not want to wait till we are better; we only need say that we are "grievously tormented," and the answer comes: "I will come and heal." We only need to state our case to Jesus to have it met. Many in prayer seek rather to ask for help, than to *tell out* their grievances. It would be well did we thus pour out our hearts alone before the Lord, and also when we pray corporately. God would work, He would undertake for us. He knows all about our circumstances, but He would have us tell them all out to Him—our troubles, &c., and He will either get us out of them, or give us grace to bear them. We find rest in the very fact of telling Him where we are. We get comfort, and this not from any impulse of feeling. It is not so much the wanting to get answers to prayer, to prove that we are children. God is better and wiser than we. We need not tell Him what to do. Let us tell Him how careless we are, how we fail, and when we are wrong let us tell Him so. Our faith is proved by telling Him all. The very liberty we have in doing this, proves our confidence in God, and we shall get the answer. The centurion tells the story, states the case. Christ is the repository of God's mercy. Our passions, it may be, are strong; we are "grievously tormented." Well, what tells against us is our being bad *and*

not telling God about it, this does tell against us.

The centurion recognised in Christ the great power of the Godhead. "Speak the word"—this is important. This is the attestation. The Spirit ties men's hearts fast to the word: it is the link between strength and duty. He recognised the omnipotence of Christ's word. When our evil nature would break forth, this word is the only real power to subdue it. We have to struggle. *Our will* says, I must do so and so; *the word* says, Thou shalt not. The working of the Spirit is not dreamy, but intelligent, and by the word. And true men, when the Spirit is at work, will take the word as their guide, without which we are never safe. Oh that God would raise up more men to be very diligent in the school of His word! The Bible is the treasury of God's sayings, and the Holy Spirit applies them. Mark the women at the tomb. The angels brought before them the word. What, then, is the folly of Christendom which declares that the intercession of angels is needed! The angels could only point to the word which Christ had spoken. Believe me, there is no such spiritual worship as obedience to the word of our God. Oh let us be found diving into it! Let us know and obey the word as to what we ought to be as servants, as masters, in our houses—all the day long, and every day.

Let us have a care, and beware lest we be taking a *visionary* place; lest we take up with false ideas of what true worship is. We do right when our souls are sustained in the study to act out God's word. The heavens were created by the word. The centurion accredited God in Christ. He saw Him as the One who said, "Let there be light;" and he knew that fever, paralysis, consumption, all were but His servants: at His bidding they could lay that strong one low, and at His command they would flee away.

We likewise profess to believe all this; but how little of quietness in trouble we have! How circumstances move us! How easily is our equanimity destroyed. But ALL was known to our God beforehand. Casualties there are none: all is under the control of God—of Him who took Lazarus out of the arms of the strong one; who bound down the lions before Daniel; who gave strength to the helpless one at the pool of Bethesda. God knows our condition and the condition of our fellow-saints. Had we the wealth of the Indies, in order to lift our brethren and sisters out of their trials, we should only do harm with it. God sees best and most wisely; and He never allows us to choose for ourselves. Tell God then about your sorrows, and He will either take you out of your trouble, or He will give you His company in the trial. Let God's appointment be what we delight in.

This is great philosophy. No; it is not circumstances we want changed; it is not power. Alexander wept with dissatisfaction that he had not a second world to conquer. It is not health, or getting property: no; it is not a change of circumstances we need; but to have our minds brought into accordance with God's purposes concerning us.

Oh why the perpetual looking to, and leaning upon the saints in our circumstances? they will prove but broken cisterns. It is folly to lean on the saints. It is wise to lean upon God: if we wait upon Him, we have His promise that He will make up for it. Whence such maudlin Christianity—such poor, pale-faced Christians? Surely we ought to be rather giving a helping hand to others, than ourselves looking round for a crutch to lean upon!

“The children of the kingdom.” (Ver. 12.) Alas! that we should so forget God's own people—His Israel—abandoned, as it were, of God, yet not recipients of the grace of the church, as, surely, they ought to be. *This* is the balm of our souls—not that we get such or such a thing; but CHRIST, He is near. The centurion looked for blessing, and God anticipated him. Open out before God all your cares, and all your sorrows. Faith accredits God that all is ordered; that our very hairs are numbered. All was arranged beforehand by God—for our eternal blessing.

"THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST."

XII.

CHAPTER IX.

VERSE 13. "And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God." He who stands at the golden altar, making intercession for the suffering sealed ones, answers in judgment on the adversaries. The four angels of judgment are loosed from the great river Euphrates for a definite time. This is a frightful, overwhelming destruction, it would seem, from the East. It is still more terrible than the previous blast of judgment, though something like it. These have breastplates, not of iron, but of fire, jacinth, and brimstone, &c. Fire and brimstone are connected with death and hell and the lake of fire. It would seem from all the figures used, to be a fearful, powerful delusion from the East, that destroys (kills) all that remains amongst men of the knowledge of God : an active delusion from the mouth, leaving its dreadful sting, from the tail behind. This may now also extend to the death of the body .As to the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, they repented not.

Let us not seek to make of none effect these solemn, terrible warnings, by trying to explain them as referring to the past history of the

church. There may have been foreshadowings of these coming woes in the Mahomedan invasion of Europe; but nothing as yet has taken place that at all answers to these almost indescribable judgments. Just as the past destruction of Jerusalem may be taken as a terrible picture of the coming time of Israel's great tribulation, yet it is a great mistake to suppose that the past was the entire fulfilment of the prophecy, as the coming tribulation is to be such as never has been, and never shall be again. Just so is it a great mistake to suppose the Mahomedan irruption was the fulfilment of these woes, dreadful as that was, and fearful as have been the spiritual consequences, especially in the East. No; these terrors have yet to come on mankind, on the rejectors of the present grace of God.

This is that time, or hour, of temptation which shall come upon all the world, but from which the faithful followers of Christ will be kept. (Rev. iii. 10.) These are the awful judgments of God, which will be poured on this world when the children of God shall have been taken to be for ever with the Lord.

CHAPTER X.

The time is now fast approaching for the Lord to take possession of all nations. "And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages,

should serve him : his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." (Dan. vii. 14.) But mark, it is not by the gospel He comes to take possession ; but here in angel form. Nor as yet as the Son of man. More angelic judgments have yet to take place. "And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud"—emblem of the divine presence. "And a rainbow was upon his head." His promise as to creation will not be broken. "And his face was as it were the sun"—supreme dominion ; "and his feet as pillars of fire." Oh, behold Him ! He who once was nailed to the cross ! The divine presence come down from heaven, in connection with this lower creation : supreme authority over all, He comes with burning, consuming judgments.

He does not now take the seven-sealed roll, but the little book open. "And he set his right foot upon the sea"—the nations outside the earth (that is, the Roman empire) as America, India, China, &c. "And his left foot on the earth." All must feel His power. It is now an open book, and a cry with a loud noise, as when a lion roareth. Oh, ye peoples and nations of the earth, you may shut your ears to the gracious voice of mercy *now* ; but you will not be able to close them to that cry like the roar of a lion, yea, like the noise of thunder. As surely as you read

these lines, so surely will these terrible judgments overtake you, unless you repent now. It is not only the voice of thunder, but seven thunders uttered their voices. And so terrible are those seven judgments, that John was not permitted to write them. Peter tells us that the Lord is "long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." How long has God delayed His judgments! What has He borne with from this awful thing called Christendom!

But now "the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be no longer delay;" not that there should be time no longer. Time is not reckoned during this interval of grace. In the history of God's dealings with Israel, Messiah was cut off, the city destroyed, and they scattered, until the time of the end, or last week, or seven years of their history, before the setting up of the kingdom of God on earth, so long foretold to them. (Dan. ix. 25-27.) Jewish time has not yet begun again. But now there shall be no longer delay. This period in which we live is a mystery. Its great transaction is gathering out the church. It was kept hid, also

God's dealings with the nations until the kingdom—all this was unrevealed in the prophets.

Verse 7. "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished [completed], as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." This little open book then will be found to bring before John, and us, God's dealings. It certainly, at first sight, seemed delightful to get to know the future dealings with God's ancient people again, during the long-delayed "time of the end." But when John understood what was about to take place, it turned his thoughts to bitterness.

CHAPTER XI.

Up to this point, we must observe, there is nothing peculiarly Jewish in the first ten chapters, except the sealing in chapter vii. : now there is an entire change. It is, indeed, most important to notice this. It is connected with the loud announcement, that there should be no longer delay. Oh, ye groaning Jews of Russia, and inquiring Jews of Palestine, how deeply what follows concerns you. Do you think God can forget His promise to your fathers? Never! and to think that in this Revelation of Jesus Christ, the last seven years, or chiefly the last three and a half years, of your prophet's 490 years are opened up to you. You know well that many things were made known to Daniel

that should take place to your Messiah, and your city, your temple, and nation, during those 490 years, commencing from the going forth of the decree to rebuild the city. What did take place in the 490 years from that twenty-eighth year of Artaxerxes? Within that period the great sin was committed by your fathers of rejecting and putting to death Messiah. Yet that very death was the reconciliation for iniquity. He was raised from the dead, and everlasting righteousness was brought in. He whom you rejected was received up to heaven, anointed the *most Holy*.

Your city was, indeed, restored and rebuilt; but instead of Messiah being anointed over you, as He surely will, according to the prophets, in Mount Zion, on the throne of David, He was, as Gabriel foretold, cut off and had nothing. Is it not so? That as to all the promises to Him and to you, He and you for eighteen centuries and more have had nothing. Now do you notice the last week of this your prophecy has yet to be fulfilled? (Dan. ix. 27.) Will you now read Micah v. 2? Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem. He is to be ruler in Israel. He first goes up to God; and His goings forth are from eternity. Every word is true and clear, the moment you see Jesus, Jehovah-Saviour, to be your Messiah. He was cut off, has nothing here, is gone up to God. He will surely come again, and you will see the wounds in His hands. And

when the first dominion is given to you, He will be ruler in Israel. And yet He is Jehovah from eternity. Do you now see that during your long dispersion, time has been delayed ? But the mighty angel says it shall be delayed no longer. One word more : if Jesus was not your Messiah, then it would be to make your prophets prophesy falsely, which is impossible ; for if Jesus was not Messiah, then no Messiah appeared within 490 years ; no reconciliation was made for iniquity ; and Gabriel's prophecy would fall to the ground.

SHORT PAPERS ON THE OFFERINGS.

XII.

PROPI TIATION AND SUBSTITUTION.

WE have dwelt more on the propitiation aspect than the substitution of the atoning death of our Lord on the cross, because it is so little understood, and it is so important that it should be, as the ground on which forgiveness is preached to all. The one atoning death of the cross was both. Propitiation was what Jesus did : He glorified God as to sin. Substitution was what Jesus did ; He bare our sins on the tree. But all for God, and for us, was done when Jesus said, "It is finished ;" and died. We shall find the application of both these parts of the atonement in the epistles.

But the next thing is not what Jesus did,

looked at as Man, though truly infinite God ; it is what did God do ? When Jesus had glorified God by the death of the cross, having bowed His blessed head in death ; and further, His body having been laid in the sepulchre ; did God leave the One who had *finished* the work, which He had given Him to do in the grave ? Impossible ! He might have left Him there if He had failed to finish the work. If it had to be finished in heaven, or now on earth by human priests ; but, having made propitiation by His blood—that is, having glorified God by atonement—God could not in righteousness leave Jesus in the grave.

The first thing, then, that God did was to raise up from among the dead the One who had glorified Him as to sin. God raised up Jesus from the dead. This has an immense bearing on propitiation and substitution. He who had made propitiation, is now “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” (Rom. i. 4.) Thus all doubt as to the work being finished, is for ever removed ; for God has raised Him from the dead who said on the cross, “It is finished.” We could have no greater proof that God is perfectly glorified by Jesus than this, God raised Him from the dead in proof, and that by the Spirit of holiness.

There is thus the most absolute certainty of forgiveness of sins, preached in the name of the

once crucified, now risen and glorified, Jesus. All is now fully open and revealed. The great question was this, How could the righteousness of God be maintained in pardoning and justifying such poor, guilty sinners as we were ?

Forgiveness was preached, and all who believed were declared to be justified from all things. (Acts xiii. 38.) But now God, in the tenderness of His love to us explains how He is righteous in doing this. The explanation is this, and there is no other: "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth a propitiation, through faith in HIS BLOOD, to declare his righteousness," &c. (Rom. iii. 24, 25.) This is shewn to be the explanation of the righteousness of God, both in passing over the sins of His people, past sins before the death of Christ, and also in justifying all who believe now.

Oh, do you see how God is glorified by the death of the Lamb, through which redemption we are justified freely ? Has God justified you freely ? Did not He provide that Lamb ? God sets forth that same death on the cross, as the revelation of His righteousness in mercy to a lost world. Do you believe that He is righteous in justifying him that believeth ? And you believe. Blessed foundation for your soul to rest upon. Can you say, God is just in justifying me ? You must say so, if you believe God. For this is the word of

God. As the propitiatory, or mercy-seat was sprinkled with the shed blood, the blood applied to it, so the infinite value and efficacy of the shed blood of Christ is applied to the throne of God, and the effect is, that throne of mercy is opened to the whole world. Grace reigns through righteousness.

The first part of the day of atonement, as well as redemption, is fulfilled: Jesus has made propitiation for the sins of the people. So that, apart from law, God is righteous by that sacrifice in being my Justifier. (Rom. iii. 26.) You will now get still greater comfort to your soul, by looking at the other part of the day of atonement. It must be borne in mind that both parts, propitiation and substitution, took place at the same time on the cross. If you are a believer—if you believe God that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead—what we mean by substitution is this: Jesus standing as our Substitute. “Who was delivered for our offences.” Just as on the day of atonement, when propitiation had been made, the sins and iniquities of Israel were transferred to the head of the goat, so all believers can say, “He hath laid on him the iniquities of *us* all.” Do you now see how Jesus was delivered for your offences? all our sins laid on Him, transferred to Him? Oh, precious Jesus! and didst Thou thus take the whole responsibility of my sins? Yes; for this He was delivered. Are they

still on Him? Is He still bearing them? Is there, can there be, a sin charged now to Him? No; God says, "and was raised again for our justification." Who is the Justifier who raised Him from the dead—our Substitute standing for us, in our stead? It is God.

Our sins have been laid on Jesus; yes, and fully judged on Him. Yes; and God has raised our Substitute from the dead for the very purpose of being our justification, of being the everlasting evidence that we are justified from all things; yes, and of being our everlasting, unchanging righteousness. Yes; exactly so! Oh rejoice, my soul, then! "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." If you believe God, then assuredly you are thus justified, and you have peace with God. And it is equally plain that if you are not justified from all things, and if *you* have not peace with God, then you evidently do not believe God. If you read on, you will see that if you have thus been saved, and justified through the efficacy of the blood of Jesus, proved and made sure to you by His resurrection; how much more certain is it that you will be saved from wrath through Him? 'For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.' (Rom. iv. 24 to v. 11.) Yes; the whole

question of our sins is settled in divine righteousness. We are justified from all things. Such is the efficacy of the death of Christ. And God who has been glorified by that death, is our Justifier. Who then can condemn?

The first Epistle to the Corinthians is chiefly occupied with the church and its order, when it was seen in its unity on earth; but when the apostle does mention the gospel, it is Christ, the believer's Substitute: "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures: and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." (Chap. xv. 2-4.) Take away that foundation, and Christianity falls to pieces. It would be a mere system of lies. But God has raised Him from the dead, and given assurance to all men. All now is clear and certain. We must, however, never forget that not only did He die for our sins, but there is even a deeper truth—Jesus the fulfilment of the sin-offering. That is, in reconciling us to God, "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might become the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. v. 21.) Thus in the likeness of sinful flesh, and by a sacrifice for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. (Rom. viii. 3.) What deep joy this gives to the soul that knows not only the shamefulfulness of sins, but the loathsomeness of sin, the very nature in us, that produces all the sins; and that this also has been

fully condemned, judged, in Jesus taking the place of the sin-offering on the cross. This was the lowest depth He could descend to for us. He went down to the lowest, that we might be raised to the highest—the righteousness of God IN HIM.

Oh this was good news! This was the will of God and our Father. The grace also of Christ “who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from the present evil world,” &c. (Gal. i. 3–6.) And that this was the sacrifice on the cross, there can be no mistake. For of those who were under the curse of the law, we read, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” In it also was the purpose of blessing to the Gentiles. (Gal. iii. 12.) It is remarkable how the Holy Ghost ever keeps the first great truth of the death of Christ before us—redemption through His blood—even when about to speak of our highest standing and privileges. When our adoption and sonship is the thought, He says: “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, TO REDEEM them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” (Gal. iv. 5, 6.) Oh, how God sees in the redemption-blood His title to bring us to Himself

as His sons. As we have said, all the offerings that follow redemption, reveal the righteousness of God when explained in Christ in all His dealings with us after we have redemption.

Even when the very highest standing and portion of the saints is before the Spirit, He still goes back to redemption—when dwelling on the gracious purpose of God in bringing us into favour in the Beloved, than which nothing can be higher. Oh, think of it, not only in favour, but in favour in the Beloved! In whatever favour Christ as the Beloved is, we are brought into favour IN HIM. But immediately He says, “In whom we have REDEMPTION through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.” (Eph. i. 3-7.)

Do you know that you are in the Beloved, in all the unchanging love and favour of God to His beloved One—in Him the Beloved? How great, then, the value of that blood, through which you have forgiveness of your sins. Oh, the riches of His grace! And if He has thus loved His church, of which you are a part; if you have thus redemption, as to give Himself for it; will He, can He, possibly fail to wash it by the water of the word? Will He fail to present it to Himself, without spot and glorious? Why are you troubled, then, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? May He not still say this to us all? (Eph. v. 25-27.)

And again, is it a small privilege to know with a thankful heart that, instead of untold years of purgatorial suffering, the believer is fit for heaven at any moment?—to be “Giving thanks unto the Father, which HATH made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light?” Can you, at this moment, thus give thanks? Only as you have the Spirit’s teaching of Him, “in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” After the so-called Fathers lost the true doctrine of eternal redemption, you never hear them thus give thanks. And to this day, how few have recovered either the full knowledge of what redemption really is, and how equally few can truly give thanks that the Father HATH made them fit for the inheritance, and at any moment Christ may come to take us to Himself. Think of those words: “In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and un-reproveable in his sight.” (Col. i. 12–14, 22.)



“AS HE IS IN THE LIGHT.”

1 JOHN I. 7.

OF old, God said, “I will dwell in the thick darkness.” When He gave the law from Sinai, the mountain “burned with fire,” and God was surrounded with “blackness and darkness and tempest.” In the tabernacle and temple, He

dwelt between the cherubim, behind a veil, in unapproachable majesty. God was unrevealed, and could not be approached.

Now, blessed be His name, it is no longer thus. That solemn question has been divinely settled in the sacrifice of Christ. All God's claims have been fully met. His majesty has been maintained—all His nature fully glorified in the death of Jesus; so that when Jesus died, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. Indeed, the veil was Jesus' flesh (Heb. x. 20), in the rending of which God was revealed, coming down to meet man's need in that wondrous sacrifice, revealed in light, and known as a Saviour God. In mercy to man He remained hidden until He could manifest Himself in the light, on the ground of that perfect sacrifice in which His righteousness and holiness were declared, as well as His unspeakable love to man. In that wondrous act, in which man's sin was atoned for on the cross, God stood revealed in light, at once displaying His majesty and inflexible holiness in the judgment of sin, and His immeasurable love to man, in providing for him the sacrifice that has put away his sin.

God has rent the veil, and revealed Himself in grace, in cloudless light, to bring man to Himself in that light. It is in the sacrifice of Jesus, His beloved Son. On the ground of that sacrifice, God and man meet together in light which has

no element of darkness in it, all guilt and sin gone for ever; so that man can be in His presence, in abiding and eternal relationship, founded on this immovable basis: "THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST, HIS SON, CLEANSETH US FROM ALL SIN."

Wondrous statement! We meet God in the light. The blood of Jesus is there. It has answered every question, met every claim, it "cleanseth us from all sin." The cloudless light and glory of God's presence can discover no spot where that blood has been applied. If the light could be brighter still, it would manifest but the more clearly that there is not a spot upon us: that *all* is gone, and that we are in the presence of God in the infinite, eternal, and unchangeable value of the blood of Jesus. Oh, what a revelation is this! What infinite grace! What unspeakable love! And oh, what rest and peace for our once weary hearts and guilty consciences! Consciously brought into such a scene, well may we bow our heads in adoring worship.

But there is yet more than this. The scene into which we are brought is one where there is no element of darkness, no discord, no jarring note. We *are* in the light, and *walk* in it. Once we were in darkness and walked in darkness—walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit which now worketh in the children of

disobedience. But we are no longer there. We are now in the light, and walk there. And now what is so blessed is that “If we walk in the light as he is in the light *we have fellowship one with another.*” How could it be otherwise? We are brought into fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. Here there can be but one mind, one thought—the mind of God, of Christ. It is an abstract statement of what belongs to the light into which we are brought, and where we walk. All is looked at according to the presence and nature of God, where there is no disturbing element to produce jarring or discord. There we walk in the light as He is in the light, and we have fellowship one with another. We are brought to God, are in the light, have eternal life, fellowship with the Father and the Son, and with one another. How immense the blessing! and how blessed the privileges! All is divinely perfect and without any flaw, and proclaims the pure grace and infinite love of God. Such is the truth presented to us in its abstract perfection according to the nature of God, and His manifestation in grace; and the heart utters its praise to Him, and takes in the blessed revelation. The life that has been manifested, and which is given to us, is perfect. The cleansing power of the blood of Jesus which enables us to subsist in the presence of God, is perfect. Perfect and cloudless the light into

which we are brought. And perfect the fellowship we have with God, and with one another, in the light, according to the relationship in which God has set us as His own children.

Now there is a home question before we close. *How far are we living and walking in the power of this truth?* This is the practical side for every one who has been brought to God. This truth is the standard God has given us. Do we want a lower standard? Do we want something now that we shall not have in the joy and brightness and eternal blessedness of the Father's house? It only shews *how little* our souls have drunk in the truth. How the truth lays our hearts bare! If we brought our motives, our desires, our ways, our walk, into the presence of God, to measure and weigh all in the light, should we not be on our faces in confession before Him who "is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"? Nor could He fail us, *cleansing* as well as forgiving; not only giving us a standing in the light, in virtue of the blood of Jesus; but cleansing our ways by His purifying word, according to the place we are in—cleansing from "*all unrighteousness*" as well as from "all sin." May His word even now search our hearts, and lead us to the judgment of all that will not bear the test of the Light.

A. H. R.

SHORT PAPERS ON THE OFFERINGS.

XII.

WE will now turn to that epistle which more than any other explains the offerings. As no types could possibly set forth fully that which is perfect and infinite, we shall find from first to last, the instruction is mainly by contrast. God has spoken to us in the Son: "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins [or made purification for sins] sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." This is surely in contrast, not only with Moses, Aaron, and an earthly priesthood, but He is before us in contrast to all angels, principalities, and powers. The Son is God speaking to us, the brightness of the essential glory of God, the effulgence of God. No creature can be compared to Him who made and upholdeth all things or creatures. He by Himself, with no help of man or creature—He made purification for sins. And having once done this, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

How great the salvation then that flows from such an accomplished work—by such a Person! "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned

with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man [or thing]." He has glorified God as to sin to the utmost; and God has straightway glorified Him. Could there be a greater proof that He has glorified God, and purged our sins, than to see Him seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high? Let us also remember that this great salvation was entirely His work, not ours. He combined, so to speak, everything in His own person, in bringing many sons unto glory. Everything in the law found its fulfilment in Him, though often in infinite contrast. He was as the Priest to offer the victim, yet He was the victim. He confessed our sins as His own. "A merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make *propitiation* for the sins of the people." (Chap. ii. 17.) This must be the offering of Himself for sins, as He was not a priest after the order of Aaron, or of the tribe of Levi. This is fully opened up in chapter vii. "Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once when he offered up himself."

Can you say, He offered Himself for my sins? What did He actually offer up Himself for? Those very sins, you, if you are a believer, have committed during your whole life from beginning to end. Did He thus undertake for you? Were

all your sins laid on Him, reckoned to Him? Have you ever fairly looked at this question? What love was this to you!

Those sins, yes, only one of them must have shut you out from the presence of God and light and holiness. Thousands of sacrifices for sins had been offered before. But for 1500 years man had been shut out by a veil: "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest." (Chap. ix. 8.) But **now** the very one who offered Himself for the sins of the people, and if you are a believer for your sins, that very Man, is in the holiest in heaven itself. Not as a priest of the earthly tabernacle.

"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." (Heb. ix. 12.) He has entered as our Substitute, not by, or through the value of the blood of goats and calves, but according to the infinite value of His own blood, shed for us on the cross. By which He has surely obtained eternal redemption for us. When the atoning work on the cross was finished, yes, when He cried, "It is finished," and bowed His head in death, *then* the veil was rent from top to bottom.

But have you entered into the meaning of that eternal redemption, which He obtained for us? What is redemption? It is not only being bought,

or a ransom paid, fully sufficient for the sin of the world. Redemption is something beyond this. It is the complete deliverance out of one state or condition, into another; as Israel after they were brought out of Egypt; and, as a slave when he is brought out of slavery into the state of liberty, his former master has no more claim; or as a prisoner redeemed from bondage, every link of his chains gone. Now to say all the world is redeemed from sin, and hell, and Satan, is to make redemption mean nothing: it is to destroy its meaning. Can all the world say, "We have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins"? You know they cannot. Can you? If you are a believer you greatly dishonour Christ if you cannot say, He has obtained eternal redemption for me; Satan has no claim on me; not a sin remains on me—not a link of the chain. I am brought out of that bondage to sin and Satan, all sins being forgiven for ever. Brought out of darkness into light, and in that light for ever. For such is the redemption that He has obtained for me. It was obtained for me when He died on the cross. It is possessed the moment the sinner believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. God said, "When I see the blood I will pass over." The blood on the throne, yes, Jesus Himself on the throne, is the proof that God will remember our sins no more.

What about your conscience? In contrast with

the blood of bulls and goats purifying the flesh, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Now what is it to have a purged conscience? Nay, first, what is conscience? Is it not the sense, or knowledge, that because of what you have done against another, that person has this thing against you? I know the sins I have done, and God knows them even far better than I know them; and if He has one sin on His mind against me, my conscience is bad and not purged. But here is a marvellous thing. God has so loved me, as to give His only begotten Son to take the full responsibility of *all my sins*. And He the Son has done it. And this was not only to cleanse me, by His blood from all sin, but also to purge my conscience, to remove every trace of fear or thought, that God has, or ever can have, one single thing against me. There is nothing but love, unhindered love.

Do you say, This may be very true as to all sins before conversion; but my trouble is about sins since I had redemption? Stay, you forget the redemption Christ has obtained is eternal. And just here comes in that wondrous fact, that all the sacrifices of Leviticus were for a people, God's people, who had been redeemed; who had sung the song of redemption in Exodus xv.

Yes, even the day of atonement was appointed after the sin of the sons of Aaron. So that what God is teaching us here in these references to those sacrifices, really meets the whole question of our sins, whether before or after we were brought to Him.

Quite true the offerings of the law could never do this; but do not say the one offering or sacrifice of Christ could not do this. For this He came; for this He died; for this He offered Himself, through the eternal Spirit. "How much more shall the blood of Christ.. purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." Do you say, My sins are so great, so aggravated, I cannot feel sure that God who knows all, has nothing against me, and will never remember my sins any more? Then you do not believe that Christ did the work He came to accomplish. Do you say, It is past all human apprehension, or conception, that a vile sinner, or still worse a failing believer, should be brought to know with certainty not only that his sins are forgiven, but that God can never impute sin unto him—never more have anything against him? Surely if he should sin, would not God have that sin against him? If He have, in what particular would the death of Jesus be superior to the death, or blood of a goat? Would He not have to suffer and die again? And this cannot be. There remaineth no more offering for sin.

It is at our eternal peril if we reject the infinite value and efficacy of the blood of Jesus. And, oh think of the blessedness of those who believe God, who have entered the holiest in perfect peace, assured that God can never have one thing against them. This is a purged conscience. For this our Jesus offered Himself. And He has entered heaven to appear before the face of God for us in proof that our sins, once laid on Him, are gone to be remembered no more. So that whilst He is there, our consciences are perfectly cleansed, or purged. We are in the light as He is in the light, and His blood cleanses us from all sin. There is nothing in the heart of God towards us but perfect love.

Do you say, I dare not accept this; it would lead to utter neglect of the *service* of God? Why, friend, *you* are mistaken, not God. This very purging of the conscience from dead works is "*to serve the living God.*" Yes, depend upon this, until your conscience is thus purged, or until you do thus believe God, all your works are dead works of unbelief. And if you are even a Christian, and do not know this blessed truth, that God can have nothing against you, you have no power for real service to God. You say, How can this be, since I see so much failure, sad failure even since I was, I trust, converted? And you look at yourself until you are dumb, yes, a dumb Christian, just as Zacharias was a dumb priest,

whilst he doubted the word of Gabriel, the angel of God. He said "whereby shall I know this?" What a question, when God had sent him word it should be so. On this very account he was dumb. Why are there so many *dumb* Christians? Simply because there are so many *deaf* ones who refuse to hear the word that God hath sent to them. You are in company; not a word for Christ dare you speak. Why? Because you have not fully believed what God has said about a purged conscience.

Is this truth beginning to dawn upon you? You will be like Zacharias when he had called for a writing table and said "his name is John." Can you just sit down now and say, "his name is Jesus"? Can you bless God that He has purged your conscience from all sins for ever? perfected your conscience for ever? Oh, you will be no longer dumb, but ever ready to sing and make known how God sent His beloved Son "to give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God: whereby the day-spring [or sun-rising] from on high hath visited us." We, on the north part of the earth, scarce know what the sudden day-spring or sunrise is in the east. It is just like that when the full value of the blood of Christ bursts upon us. We would ask a wide question: How is it there is so little power and liberty to make known the great salvation to others? Is it not

because the blessed truth of a purged conscience is so little enjoyed ? Is not all service, apart from this, mere unbelief ?

We have dwelt rather at length on this question of a purged conscience, because of its vast importance in every way ; and also that it is so much overlooked. And also because it is the great need of thousands ; yes, the need of great numbers of those who are Christians. We shall find the subject still continued in chapter x. Yes, God knows its deep importance to your soul and mine ; and therefore in pure love He gives us still further explanation. What a theme the whole question of our sins, past, present, and future, should there be any in future, all settled by the blood of Jesus, so that the conscience is purged. No charge will God ever bring ; all is peace, everlasting, perfect peace. Is there no peace with you ? Then *sit down* and write "**HIS NAME IS JESUS.**"

AN ADVOCATE WITH THE FATHER.

BLESSED indeed it is to see how rich and full is God's provision for our need. There is not a single need that can possibly arise in the history of God's people, that He has not foreseen, and made provision for. And it is well if our hearts have drunk in this blessed fact, for it will help to give us confidence in God, and enable us to go to Him in every time of need.

In John, we have the manifestation of eternal life in the Person of Jesus; and as partakers of this life we are in relationship with God, and have communion with the Father and the Son. But this communion may be broken through sin. The relationship cannot be destroyed, but communion is interrupted. Now the same grace that brought us into this relationship with God, restores communion also when it has been lost through sin. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father." This is God's gracious provision for His own children when they have lost communion through falling into sin.

Before we look at this point, let us notice a little the fact, that God's word makes no provision for a believer to sin. John says, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin *not*." He does not say, "that ye *may* sin," but "that ye sin *not*." In the first chapter he says, "If we say that we *have* no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;" and "If we say that we have not *sinned* we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." So then, we *have* sin, and we have *sinned*. Yet, true as this is, God, has brought us to Himself in grace, where we walk in the light, as He is in the light. But what is the ground of this? How could God, consistently with His own nature and character, give us such a place? The simple, soul-satisfying

answer is, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Blessed and sure foundation for our souls to rest upon! "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." How wonderful is God's grace abounding over all our guilt and shame! And the greater the sin, the brighter shines the grace that abounds over it. But "shall we *sin* that grace may abound? God forbid." "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not." It is all to deliver us from sin, not that we may go on in it. God is not only "faithful and just to forgive us our sins," but also "to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." In virtue of Jesus' blood we are pardoned once and for ever; but we are also morally cleansed through the word applied in the power of the Holy Ghost. A new nature is given, and as this is regulated by the word, we are cleansed from all unrighteousness. May we then lay to heart, that the whole work of grace is to *deliver* from sin—from its guilt, and from its power and defilement. "These things write I unto you that ye sin *not*."

But the soul-humbling fact remains, that the believer, though a child of God, and walking in the light, does fall into sin; as James says, "In many things we all offend;" and as John here

says, "If any man sin." We still have the flesh in us, and if allowed in the least degree, it is sin, and communion is broken. God has condemned sin in the flesh on the cross, and if we are allowing what He has condemned in the sacrifice of His Son, He cannot have communion with us.

Now God has made provision for the restoration of this communion when it has been lost. "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father." God provided a Saviour for us as lost sinners, and He has provided an Advocate for us as failing children. And thus His provision is complete. It covers the whole range of our need from first to last. Jesus *died* for us to save us, and now He *lives* for us on high, a High Priest with God, an Advocate with the Father; and there He maintains our cause, according to the value of an already accomplished and eternal redemption, founded on the shedding of His own blood.

There is a difference, no doubt, between His intercession as in Hebrews, and His advocacy as in John. But all is founded on the value of His sacrifice for us. In Hebrews His intercession is in view of our *weakness*. Here His advocacy is in view of *sin* which has interrupted communion. Both are needed. We are *weak*, and can no more take a single step in the wilderness journey in our own strength, than we could have saved ourselves when in our sins. It was as much the

power of God that conducted Israel across the wilderness, as it was His power that saved them out of Egypt. And so it is with us. It is God's salvation, and God's power from first to last. We are "kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time;" and because we have a High Priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, having been tempted in all points like as we are, except sin, we can "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (1 Peter 1-5; Heb. iv. 15-16.)

But in John it is not merely a question of weakness. It is if any man *sin*." And here "we have an Advocate with the Father." It is *with the Father*." Mark, though we may have sinned, the *relationship* is not broken, God is our Father still. The relationship abides, but communion is interrupted, and needs to be restored. And this is brought about through the advocacy of Christ, who has undertaken our whole cause. We *have* this Advocate. It is God's provision, and nothing can possibly hinder His services for us in this capacity. It is an unconditional service characterised by pure grace. It is no movement on our part that secures it. It is not, *if we repent*, or *if we confess our sins*, but "*if any man sin*, we have an Advocate." It is all grace. The whole movement begins with Him, just as when

He saved us in the first place. As surely as sin has interrupted our communion with God our Father, so surely the advocacy of Jesus goes on to bring about its restoration. And this is what makes the restoration certain, sooner or later. If left to ourselves we could never get right. But all begins with Him, and His work cannot fail, blessed be His name ! Repentance and confession have their place, but these are the results of His advocacy, not the cause ; and the difference is very great. But we will look at this a little more fully, that our souls may get the full benefit of it !

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)



“THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.”

XIII.

CHAPTER XI.

As the subject of the temple specially concerns the Jews, we will speak of it as it were to them. And more especially as some are earnestly inquiring about these things. You will notice your temple, the temple of God, is again to be rebuilt. No other temple but that at Jerusalem is ever called the temple of God on earth. We are at once reminded of Ezekiel : “ And there was given me a reed like unto a rod : and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple

of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." This could not possibly apply to the church, or Christendom. In the church there are neither Jews nor Gentiles, for all are one in Christ Jesus. But when the Jewish time begins again, there is the same distinction between the highly favoured Jews and the Gentiles that there was before Christianity and the church. (See Isa. lx. 3, 5, 11, &c.; lxi. 6, &c.)

There are, then, Jewish worshippers in the temple: but the court is still trodden underfoot of the Gentiles, forty-two months: that is, three and a half years of your ancient time reckoned. This, again, is in perfect harmony with your prophet speaking of the last time of the end—the last week, or seven years. "And in the midst of the week he shall [that is the Prince of the Gentiles, the restored Roman empire] cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease," &c. (Dan. ix. 27, compare Dan. xii. 7, 11.) Jesus has told you to mark this epoch. (Matt. xxiv. 15.) Read all He says about it.

Do not forget that at the end of these three years and a half, the Son of man shall come with the clouds of heaven, and set up His kingdom on earth. (Dan. vii. 13, 14; Matt. xxiv. 29, 31.)

What scenes have yet to happen in and around that city Jerusalem !

Verse 3. "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three score days, clothed in sackcloth." This shews that God will, during these three and a half years, even day by day, maintain an adequate witness or testimony. Two witnesses, being adequate, sufficient, does not necessarily mean *two men*. There will be a distinct and sufficient witness for God, even when the world, led on by Satan, is against the Jewish remnant of that terrible period. And men will not be able to kill or destroy this testimony. God gives them power, as he gave to the prophets of old. Almost each particular has a parallel in the Old Testament. They prophesy until the beast rises out of the bottomless pit; we shall read all about him farther on. He puts to death the witnesses at Jerusalem, and after three days and a half they are raised from the dead, at the very time the nations are rejoicing over their death. Such is man. From the day that Cain slew his brother Abel, the wicked have hated the righteous.

All this is surely not about Christians, but the Jewish remnant, and that city called Sodom and Egypt. It is getting ready for the winepress of the wrath of God.

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were

great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." (Vers. 15-18.) The sounding of the seventh angel brings the general history down to the close. Then other distinct revelations are given.

Man is a rebel against God; what real right then can he have to the kingdoms of this world? True they were given into his hands for a time, but how has he used the power from Nebuchadnezzar to this very day? These verses look at the transfer of the kingdoms of the world to Messiah, as a then accomplished fact: they "are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever." How blessed to pause and contemplate the happy change that awaits this groaning creation!

Verse 16. The four and twenty elders are still seen seated before God on their thrones, and they fall on their faces and worship God. How calm their thanksgiving and praise in the presence of God! They give a summary to the end; they are wholly occupied with the glory and majesty of God. "We give thee thanks, O Lord God, Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned." How perfect the harmony of the redeemed with the mind and work of God! What is man with all his vain boasting, and daring wickedness, when God puts forth His

infinite power? Well may we say, Greater is He that is for us than all they that be against us. The anger of the nations, what is it, when His wrath shall be come?

Here then closes the general, connected prophetic history of the revelation. It is not the revelation of the church, but first of Christ, in His judgments of the churches, or assemblies, right on to the end of their history on earth. It is to him that hath an ear to hear what the Spirit saith unto the assemblies. The words of Christ to such are full of the deepest meaning and instruction, in each of the seven stages of the course of the churches, or of Christendom. After the history of these seven distinct stages of Christendom, the redeemed are seen (having been caught up to heaven), as royal worshipping priests in heaven. Then the judgments that will take place on earth. The first are the providential judgments on the opening of the seals. That hour of temptation that shall come on all the world thus begins.

Then before the more terrible judgments of the trumpets, God reveals His future purposes of grace both to the elect and numbered remnant of Israel, and also to those of the nations.

After this pause, there are the direct judgments from heaven. Angelic blasts of judgment, first on the circumstances, and then on the persons of men. Then time is no longer delayed. The time

of the end begins according to Daniel’s prophecy, and a short summary brings us, as we have seen, to the end, when the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.

CHAPTERS XII., XIII., XIV.

These chapters form a division of the book. In the last verse of chapter xi. which should be read with what follows, the temple of God is opened in heaven: all is safety there—there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament. He will be faithful to His covenant in the midst of all that has yet to be judged, and further judgments have yet to be revealed. There were lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail. Thus is connected the covenant of God with His ancient people. Chapter xii. opens: “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.” Yes, emperors and kings of the earth may trample and persecute the scattered sons of Israel, but what a destiny according to the covenant of God do these words reveal, and confirm: “Daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.” (Micah iv. 8.) It will be truly marvellous when the purposes of

God are fulfilled in giving the supreme dominion of this world to the despised people of Israel. With all subordinate governments at her feet she is crowned with the perfect administration of the world.

Like many of the psalms the first verse in these chapters gives the leading thought. It is a great mistake to confound this woman with the church. The church is not seen on earth, or even the churches or assemblies, after chapter iii.

It is the woman, Israel, which will travail in birth, and be in pain to be delivered. Read on in Micah iv. 9: "Now why dost thou cry out aloud? ... for pangs have taken thee as a woman in travail. Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail: for now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go even to Babylon; there shalt thou be delivered; there the Lord shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies."

Notice that in both Micah and Revelation the supreme dominion of Israel is assured, and then is foretold the awful time of her travail and pain. This labour is not at the birth of Christ, the man-child, but her future travail and flight as described by the Lord in Matthew xxiv.

Verse 3. Here we have the source of the wicked power of the Roman Empire. This is none other than Satan as the great red dragon,

having seven heads and two horns, and seven crowns upon his head. How many mighty ones, stars of heaven, had he cast down ! This is a most humiliating discovery. Power was given by Jehovah into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar ; but here in the Roman Empire, Satan as a great dragon is using man as his tool ! This was clearly seen at the birth of Christ, the man-child. Herod was the instrument, but it was really the dragon seeking to destroy the infant Jesus ; yes, as soon as He was born. God thus reveals everything to us in its true colours. We can read the narrative in the Gospels, and know the mover in the scene is Satan, the dragon, or destroyer.

Verse 5 refers to the past, the birth of Jesus, not the future travail of Israel. Indeed there was no travail of Israel at the birth of Messiah : as says the prophet : “Before she travailed she brought forth : before her pain came, she was delivered of a MAN CHILD.” And this is shewn to be quite distinct from the future travail of Israel, “for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.” (Isaiah lxvi. 7, 8.) At the birth of Jesus the man-child, there was no travail in Israel : this was before her travail. When she brings forth her children then will be the time of tribulation such as never was. The man-child she brought forth was “to rule all nations with a rod of iron : and her child was caught up unto God and to his throne.” This also

was foretold by the prophet Micah: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." (Micah v. 2.) Then after this you read that Israel were to be given up, "until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth."

All this actually took place. Jesus was born in Bethlehem. He was rejected by Israel His people. He was caught up to God. And they have been given up, and will be, until the time of their travail. Yet two things are true of Jesus, Messiah. He is to be ruler in Israel, and He is the everlasting God, whose goings forth have been from of old, from eternity. Who but God could have foretold all this 700 years before the birth of the man-child? Now to pervert these scriptures as if the woman was the church, is either great folly, or a wicked attempt to turn the scriptures into confusion. The whole subject is very simple if we follow scripture, in dependence on the Holy Ghost, and seek to make no intellectual system of our own.

Verse 6. And the woman fled into the wilderness, &c.,—just as we have seen of Israel, in Micah, when the time of her travail arrives. Only here the length of time of her travail is given 1260 days, or the last half-week of years, as foretold in Daniel.

Verse 7. It would seem it is at this crisis that there is war in heaven, &c. This will be an immense change in heaven, and a terrible event for the earth. There can now be no doubt as to who the dragon is, that is cast out of heaven. "That old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." Not yet cast out of the earth, but *into* the earth. God thus begins His mighty conquest by casting him and all his angels out of heaven. At present we wrestle with wicked spirits in the heavenlies. He is now the accuser of the brethren: and we can only overcome him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of the testimony. There will be great joy in heaven, but woe to the inhabitants of earth.

And now mark, when Satan is cast out of heaven he does not persecute Christians. Most assuredly he would have done so if they had not been caught up to heaven. "He persecuted the woman which brought forth the man." It is against her he manifests his hatred. She flies into the wilderness to her place of safety. There will be a remnant that will believe the testimony of Jesus, and keep the commandments of God. Thus we see this chapter is chiefly occupied with the Jews, or Israel, as the earthly people of God. Many of them are feeling assured that the time of their deliverance is near, and God will not

forget the ark of the testimony in heaven. Satan may send forth waters like a flood to destroy them, but God can, and will preserve the sealed remnant.

Many speak of this chapter as difficult to understand. It is in perfect harmony with all other parts of scripture, and most strengthening to our faith in the word of God. Only let us not be led away by the fancies of men; and there are those that lie in wait to deceive.

May we be kept in the presence of the Lord, as we meditate on the further marvellous revelations of this book. Yes, the heavens have received Jesus "until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."



"BETHANY."

JOHN XII. 1-3.

THE thought that I have in turning to this scripture is that the Lord Jesus has made a feast for us for time and for eternity, and therefore it is for us to keep the feast not with the old leaven, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

The Lord Jesus Christ when passing through this scene as a man was not only the rejected One, but everybody, with the exception of His few

disciples, was seeking His life—in other words, seeking His destruction.

I am sure it was sweet to the heart of that blessed weary Man, the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, to have one little green spot, so to speak, just with the two or three at Bethany. There He got refreshment for His own blessed heart; and, beloved, it was not the Lord Jesus Christ making a feast for them; it was they making a feast for Him—they made a supper for Him. I believe, as I said before, it was one of those green spots that He had whilst passing through this scene. And to my own mind, there was that which delighted His own soul when He was in more solemn circumstances and that was when He was upon the cross, when one of the thieves who were crucified with Him could acknowledge with regard to himself and his fellow, “We indeed justly,” we get just our deserts; but he could say, “This man hath done nothing amiss.” I believe that there He got something to refresh His blessed heart even for time and eternity.

But looking at this scripture, beloved, He comes to Bethany, and there they make Him a supper, and Martha serves. Just notice Martha’s case first. She gets all right here about service. In Luke x. it is the same person, but you find that she is all adrift. She is not satisfied with her service; she was encumbered with it; and

because Mary had chosen that good part she complained to the blessed Lord even against that one, and then she gets a gentle rebuke from the lips of the One who loved her. But here the Holy Ghost does not bring one word against her; here she is in position: Martha serves, and serves the Lord Jesus Christ; but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him.

We remember well what came to pass in the previous chapter. Lazarus had been in the grave and, according to Martha's announcement, he stank, for He had been dead four days. He is the one to whom the Lord Jesus Christ Himself said, "Lazarus come forth;" and Lazarus obeyed. The thought in connection with this is that we were all once dead, not physically dead, but morally and spiritually dead, dead in trespasses and sins. It is His own infinite grace that has quickened us. What do we find here? We find the very one that had been in the grave for four days, and raised by the One who was the resurrection and the life, sitting as a guest; he sits at the table with the Lord Jesus Christ. I am just giving you the thoughts that are before my heart.

Mary still keeps to the right place. In Luke x. she is at the feet of the Lord Jesus. Beloved, she is there to gather, to feed on the words that fell from His own blessed lips. She is a learner *there*, a receiver there, but she is

a giver *here*. Just the blessed position that we are brought into through infinite grace ; and it is for each of us to come on a morning like this, to bring forth our little—it may be a very tiny basket—but to be giving Him the homage of our hearts. She may be blamed for what she does. Never mind about that, she did it intelligently and filled the house with the odour of the ointment, and He himself appreciated it.

We have here three different people, and three different attitudes : but they are all ministering to the One Person ; they are servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is sitting with the Lord, being a guest and ministering to His heart ; and serving Him ; and paying homage to Him, that is worship.

May the Lord keep Himself so before us beloved, that whether we are at His feet as receivers, we may be receiving from Himself ; or whether in any little act of service, may we be doing it as unto Himself, serving the Lord Jesus Christ with singleness of eye, to the praise and to the glory of His own blessed name. And if it is worship what have we to give Him ? Let us remember, as the Apostle says to the saints at Corinth, that he was in a position not only to spend, but to be spent for them. That is what the Lord did, He came not only to spend, but to be spent for us. May we have grace to follow the steps of our divine Master. May

it be ours to be at His own blessed feet, and to be giving Him the honour and adoration, and blessing due to Him, and from the bottom of our hearts, for His own glory, and for our blessing. Amen.

L. T.



CORRESPONDENCE.

4. "H. D. R.," Stamford Hill. The words "create evil" in Isaiah xlv. 7, as you say, "surely cannot mean that the Lord is the author of evil." If you read the context, you will see that moral evil is not the question here. It is a prophecy concerning Cyrus. God would raise him up for *good* for blessing to Jerusalem, but also bring *evil*, or judgment, on the oppressing city; as actually came to pass. Jehovah says, "I make peace, and make [or create] evil: I the Lord do all these things." It is simply the *good* of peace, and the *evil* of war, or destructive judgments.

It would be well for men to remember this. They forget the hand of God in governmental judgment in wars, earthquakes, pestilence, bad trade, drought, famines, &c. Everything is sought to be explained by natural causes, and God is shut out. Is there not the hand of God in the present distress of nations? "I make peace, and create evil, I the Lord do all these things." But in the midst of deserved evil or wrath, what mercy! O that God, who so loved this world, was known! Thus there is not a shadow of difficulty in the passage when you notice the subject in the context,



AN ADVOCATE WITH THE FATHER.

I REPEAT, the action of the Advocate does not wait for our repentance and confession. We may take the case of Peter as an illustration. Before he had committed the terrible sin of denying his Lord, Jesus said to him, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." He was indeed on the way to this sin, being filled with self-confidence, and he needed to be sifted, and the sifting was allowed to take place; but Jesus prayed for him before he fell into the hands of Satan, and his faith did not fail. He was indeed sifted, but his faith was sustained even in that dark hour when Satan would have filled him with despair. At the suited moment Jesus looked on him, and His words were brought to his remembrance, and then "Peter went out and wept bitterly." Here was indeed repentance, but it was the fruit of the Lord's intercession, and not what led to it. Afterwards Peter was restored. There was the message to him from the risen Lord by the women, and the Lord appearing to him first of all the apostles, and, last of all, the probing of Peter's heart to reach the root of the evil; but in all this we see only the Lord's own action in meeting Peter's need. And He meets our need too, when we, like Peter, have turned aside. It is a service of perfect love, and unmingled grace, not waiting for anything in us, save the need which

arises from our failure and sin, and even this it anticipates, as we have seen in the case of Peter.

We may now look a little at the ground of this service of our blessed Lord. Our Advocate is "Jesus Christ *the righteous*." The *righteous* One represents us: "as he is so are we." He is our life and our righteousness. We are in Him, the righteous One, and thus stand before God in immutable righteousness. "And he is *the propitiation for our sins*." He has suffered for our sins, the Just for the unjust, has borne them in His own body on the tree, and has perfectly glorified God about them; and His presence on high is the witness of our perfect acceptance in Him, according to the value of His propitiatory sacrifice. On the ground of this, He maintains our cause on high, and, if we have sinned, secures our restoration to communion.

It is important to see that His advocacy is not in any sense to atone for our sins, as if they were imputed to us. He atoned for our sins once in His death on the cross, and this can never be repeated. By that one sacrifice all our sins are covered, and there can be no imputation of guilt to the believer; as it is written, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord *will not* impute sin;" and again, "Your sins and iniquities I will remember no more." We have been pardoned and justified, and are in Christ, according to divine righteousness; so that the advocacy of

Christ can have nothing to do with satisfying God about guilt, or securing pardon for us, as if sin had been imputed to us. Even the sins we may commit after having believed, were all covered by the death of Christ, and they are not imputed to us; but they hinder communion with God, and this is an immense loss to our souls. It is God's good pleasure that we should be in communion with Himself, and that our joy should be full. But practical holiness in us is absolutely necessary for this, because God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. We cannot go on in sin, and have communion with Him, and hence, if we sin, we need to be restored, so as to enjoy afresh the communion we have lost. And for this Jesus our Advocate intercedes, on the ground of the fact, that we are in relationship with God according to divine righteousness, and according to the value of His propitiatory sacrifice.

And now a word as to the *action* of restoring grace. Jesus Christ the righteous is our Advocate with the Father, and His plea for restoration cannot fail. But there is also the action of the Lord's grace towards us when overtaken in sin. A beautiful picture of this action is given us in John xiii., where the blessed Lord washes the feet of His disciples. Peter did not understand then, but would understand it afterwards. He also, in his ignorance and pride of heart, resisted

the Lord's action, saying, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." But "Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." Peter then desired Him to wash his head and hands also; but Jesus again answered, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit, and ye are clean, but not all.' All, except Judas the betrayer, were already washed, and were "clean every whit." They were clean through the word which Jesus had spoken to them. (Chap. xv. 3.) They were born again—born of water (a figure of the word) and of the Spirit—and thus were clean. We are born again but once, and in this get a new and clean nature, and thus are washed all over. But washing of the feet applies to our walk as Christians. Our walk needs to be separated from the defilement of this world, in order that we may have communion with Christ in glory. It is thus we have a *part* with Him. "If I wash thee not, thou hast no *part* with me." Rejected and cast out of this world, He was going back to the Father. But He did not thereby give up His own which were in the world, but "loved them unto the end." And in going to the Father, He would have them linked up with Himself in His own blessed relationship with the Father, to have communion with Himself and the Father outside the world which was the scene of His rejection and death. But to have part with Him—com-

munion with Him—according to that heavenly relationship, it was necessary to have the walk kept pure (the feet washed) according to the truth of this relationship. Thus the blessed Lord has girded Himself for this lowly service of love to His own, in order to keep them in communion with that heavenly scene where He is, forming their affections according to the revelation of Himself to their hearts, as they are being conducted on to their portion with Him in glory.

Do we then fall into sin? Do our feet become defiled in our walk through this evil world? Well, we have an Advocate with the Father, whose plea for us cannot fail, and who also turns to us in blessed grace, with towel and basin, to wash our feet and bring us back into the communion we have lost. By the application of His word to us, we are led to self-judgment, and a walk of holy separation from evil, according to the truth of the cross, in which sin in the flesh has been condemned. May the Lord give us to walk thus, in happy communion with Himself.

Jesus also says: "If I, then, your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you." May we also heed this admonition, following His example in the same lowly grace, and in the power of the same divine love.

One thing more. If we have sinned, and the

Lord is seeking to wash our defiled feet, or if our brethren are seeking to do so in the Lord's name, how solemn if we are resisting this action of grace! God is not mocked! He is full of patience, but if we are rebellious, He knows how to chastise and break our stubborn wills. Oh! may we trust our feet in the hands of the blessed Lord, to be washed when need arises through our failure; bowing to His will with repentant hearts and with chastened spirits, and humble, prayerful dependence on God, seek to walk in His fear, and in the realisation of His perfect and unfailing love and grace.

A. H. R.



"THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST."

XIV.

CHAPTER XIII.

WE have seen that the prime mover of the Roman Empire is Satan, as the great dragon. In this chapter we learn further that the head of that empire, called the beast, is strangely identified with Satan.

We must remember that the fourth, or Roman empire, as it existed when the man-child was born (Christ), occupied a certain part of the world. This may easily be traced by a map. It was the ordered part of the world, under the government of that empire, called in the Revela-

tion "the earth," in distinction from those nations and peoples outside of it. The settled government of the empire may be compared to the firm earth, and those nations outside to the troubled sea.

We shall understand it by taking a case. Take England and Ireland. In history, as shewn on the map, England was part of the earth, or empire; Ireland was outside the empire. Thus John (verse 1) stands on the sand of the sea, "and saw a beast rise out of the sea." If, then, the empire is in distinct existence when this beast shall arise, the figure would be fulfilled suppose the beast was to arise out of such a place as Ireland, outside the earth or formed empire. But waters also describe the unrest of the nations, even where the great whore or harlot sits, which is doubtless on the site of the empire itself. (See Rev. xvii. 15.)

It may be in the tumult of the nations that compose the empire that the beast is seen to arise out of the sea, or scene of unrest and tumults. He has the most striking likeness to the devil, the dragon. The only difference in the photograph is that this beast will not merely have seven crowns on the seven heads, but ten crowns upon his ten horns. He also has all the features of the first three empires, or beasts, of Daniel vii.: the lion, the leopard, and the bear. These followed each other in the four great

empires of the world; only let us bear in mind that God gave the power and kingdom to these. But now "the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." Satan takes the distinct place of God. These are things which shall surely come to pass. No doubt Satan will try to deceive men by giving them fanciful theories, and telling them all this has been fulfilled. Nothing can suit him better.

Verse 3. Men have long rejected the Son of God, to whom all power is given, and in whom all will be yet displayed. Let us see what this same world will do when Satan presents his chief. For a moment there may be tumult and confusion. "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death." Then, "and his deadly wound was healed." Napoleon may illustrate this. One Napoleonic head of the empire was wounded, laid aside—another took his place. Both have passed away. But when Satan's grand man appears, he will have a kind of death and resurrection, for Satan will seek to imitate the power of God. There he is, and what have the wise of this world to say to him? "All the world wondered after the beast." Oh man! with thy evolution, progress, and pride, is this thy wisdom? And not only wondered: "They worshipped the beast, saying, Who is able to make war with him?" Oh human politics! the progress of man is to deeper shades of darkness!

Mark what leads to this worship of the beast is this, "They worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast."

All nations bear witness that man must have an object of worship. And thus we see here that when this infidel Europe has cast off finally all true worship of God, it will be to sink down and worship the devil. Is it not dreadful to contemplate that the nations of Europe will form an empire with all these Satanic attributes? And this will continue forty and two months; the beast, or head of this empire, speaking great things and blasphemies against God. The church is gone, so that he can only blaspheme them in heaven, though there will be saints on earth after the church is gone, as there were before it began.

Verse 7. "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations." These are the saints spoken of in chapter vi. "Their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." This is that tribulation long foretold, such as never shall be again. And all the rest shall worship the beast. "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Since these things are at the door, how important the inquiry: Reader, is your name in the

book of life of the Lamb? Are you associated with Him? Is He your centre, your all—not of the world, but belonging to Christ—or are you a dweller on earth? Are the earth and the things of the world your object? Momentous questions. Is not the world even now filling with violence, as in the days of Noah? What will it be when it is given up to the very violence of the dragon? “If any man have an ear let him hear.” Is your ear open or closed to these things? The man that refuses to hear what God speaks as to the things that will soon come to pass, is he not guilty of folly? Can there be greater folly?

All the world are improving their arms, and seeking safety in weapons of terrible destruction. It will be all in vain. “He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword.” But, as it were in contrast, “Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.” God has never been without a witness on earth, and He will have His saints or holy ones on earth even in these terrible days of Satanic power.

Verse 11. “And I beheld another beast,” &c. Very often these two beasts are confounded, and the first is called “the man of sin.” We must call attention to this mistake. The first beast rises out of the sea—the nations in a state of tumult; the other beast cometh up out of the earth—that is, he comes when the empire shall

have been formed. Satan makes the first beast the head of the empire. (Ver. 2.) Then the second beast, not the first, answers to all the scriptures that speak of the man of sin, or the lawless one. Let us now note the features of this long-foretold "wicked one"—the Antichrist.

He assumes the appearance of a lamb: "he had two horns like a lamb." Yet when he speaks, his words betray him: "he spake as a dragon." He has influence throughout the Roman empire. "He exerciseth all the power of the first beast." He does not lead men to worship God, far from it; but to worship the first beast. Thus we have an imitation trinity: Satan, the beast, and Antichrist. And mark, Antichrist does the same miracles that the Jewish prophets of old did. He maketh fire come down from heaven as did the prophet Elijah. We have a full description of him and his doings in 2 Thessalonians ii. 3-12. He opposes God, and pretends to be God. He sits in the temple of God, for the Jews will receive him, "shewing himself that he is God." Yet he is the wicked one "whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders," &c.

Such is this other beast that shall arise in the Roman empire. He shall deceive them that dwell on the earth by the means of these false miracles. He shall lead men into idolatry, even to set up an image of the emperor, or head of the empire.

This image seems to be a figure of some active power that will be heard, and cause that, as many as refuse to worship the beast shall be killed. Then he causes what is called "boycotting" to be general throughout the empire. No man is allowed to buy or sell who refuseth the mark of the beast in his right hand or in his forehead. Satan is only practising his servants in boycotting at present; but, terrible as it is, what will it be in that day? How sad the fact that the Jews will receive this Antichrist, as Jesus said: "If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." How ready all men are to be led by Satan! The poor deceived world is preparing for these terrible scenes of human wickedness. Is it not almost incredible how lawlessness is being adopted? These things are at the very doors.

Now as to the name, the mark of the beast. When every man, on pain of being boycotted, is compelled to wear that mark, or name, which will count up to 666, there will be no mistake then, or uncertainty, as to what that mark is. The uncertainty now, or our ignorance as to what it is, proves that it has not yet been fulfilled. In fact, the man of sin, Antichrist—this second beast clearly does not come during the days of Christianity, or whilst the church of God is here on earth.

It may be objected that many learned men

have taught that the pope is Antichrist. We do not doubt that; but is he *the* Antichrist described here? Did the pope ever compel the nations to worship the emperor or head of the Satanic resurrection Roman empire? Nay; that empire has not even been restored yet. Which of the popes has compelled men to worship the beast by making fire come down from heaven in the sight of men? Has the pope ever boycotted all men who refuse to have the mark of the beast on their right hand or on their forehead? It does no good but great harm to force scripture, yea, to pervert it to such theories. Let us not seek fanciful interpretations. All this is plainly future, as we shall see more clearly when we reach chapter xvii. There we shall learn that as surely as the Roman empire did exist on earth, as related in history, so surely will it exist on earth again, as foretold in this Revelation.

We have seen in chapter xii. how much Satan had to do with the empire at the birth of the man-child, which was Christ, born of the Jewish nation, and how he will persecute her seed, the remnant, in the time of her tribulation.

In chapter xiii. we have the revelation of the rise of this empire again; the dragon giving to it, or its head, his power, and his seat, and great authority. All the world then wonders after the beast, and worships the beast. He continues forty-two months—that is, three years and a

half—blaspheming God and them that dwell in heaven. The church of God is then in heaven, and he cannot persecute it any more on earth, so that his wrath is against the seed of the woman, that is, the remnant of the Jewish nation. And power will be given him against all whose names are not written in heaven, in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

This opens the way for the man of sin, as described from verse 11 to the end of the chapter. And no one can deny the rapid tendency of Europe to the principles which will be headed up in this son of perdition. What an end to all human pride and boasting! Yes, such is the end of the leaven of Herod; the end of human politics. And what vast multitudes will be deceived with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.

Oh rejecters of Christ, it is written, "Because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved, God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie. That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess. ii. 8-12.) "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober." To the believer, at this moment, Jesus says, "Behold, I come quickly."



SHORT PAPERS ON THE OFFERINGS.

XII.

HEBREWS X.

THERE are two things in the end of Hebrews ix. "Once in the end of the world hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." It is not actually put away yet. "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Sin is also still in the world. But faith is assured that at the end of all trial of man, Christ appeared for that very purpose to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. The work is accomplished, and the result of that one sacrifice will surely follow in its time. Blessed prospect, when we shall see Him and be like Him, sinless as He is pure. And how bright the prospect, when the new heavens and new earth shall appear!

Then there is also this fact, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation." What a pillow, weary soul, is this to rest upon! Do you believe God? Then instead of looking for death and judgment, the just due of the human race, you can look for Him who was offered to bear your sins; and He has so borne them, that He is about to appear, and not a question of sin can be raised. He has passed through the awful

wrath and judgment due to us, and now He assures us that we shall not come into it. He will come and receive us to Himself in infinite love, "without sin unto salvation."

Chapter x. We now turn to the contrast of the many offerings of the law—what they could not do, and to what the one sacrifice of Christ can do, and does do. As we have seen, the offerings of the law being finite, could not possibly express the full infinite value of the one sacrifice of Christ. They were offered year by year, but could never make the Jewish worshippers perfect. If perfect they could have had no more conscience of sins. They never could get a perfect clearance of sins. There was a remembrance of sins every year. The very remembrance of sins was a proof, that the question of sins was not settled. It was never intended that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. They were shadows or figures. And such was the love of God to us, that He could have no pleasure in those sacrifices, which could not bring the objects of His love into His presence without sin: He would have them in the perfect enjoyment of His unhindered love.

Is it not now very blessed to hear the eternal Son speak? "Then said I, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." Dwell on this. He knew the will of God: He came to do it. This is altogether a new thing. "He taketh away the first that he

may establish the second." The system of the law must be entirely set aside, and an entirely new order of things introduced and established. And this is the will of God, not man's will. The whole new order of things must be according to His will. All is now of God. The various offerings of the law had served their purpose to point forwards, and now are set aside. Jesus could say (in the volume of the book it is written of me), "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God."

Now what was the will of God? Is it not revealed in what follows, that we should be sanctified, separated unto God, by the offering of the body of Christ? "By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once." Mark, it was not the will of God to set up another system of many offerings, or masses, but one offering, offered once. It is then a great foundation truth, a fact, that through the one offering of Christ, once offered, we ARE sanctified. Do you believe God as to this? or do you say, No, that one offering is not enough to separate me for ever to God? Beware of unbelief as to this.

Further, mark this distinct statement of inspired scripture: "And every priest standeth daily ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins." This is a universal truth, whether applied to the Jewish priests of old, or to those who take the

place of Jewish priests now. Every such priest, and all who trust in his repeated daily sacrifices for sins, must own, to his inmost sorrow, that all such sacrifices can never take away sins; and hence, there is no peace with, or joy in God.

But now let us turn to Christ and His once offering of Himself. As it is written, "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God."

It is not that He sat down, and then if one of His people should sin, He has to get up, and offer Himself again. No, by one offering He has cleared His people of their sins for ever, in the sense of continuously. Thus our eyes are taken off ourselves. The Lord Jesus, who was delivered for our iniquities, who bore the whole wrath of God due to our sins, who was made sin for us, and once offered to bear the sins of many, who undertook the whole question of our sins—where is He? *Seated*, the very expression of the work being for ever finished, continuously, on the right hand of God. And since all our sins were future, when He bare them in His own body on the cross once, He must have perfectly cleared all away from the sight of God, or His work would not be finished, neither could He sit down in the light and glory of God.

What then is the effect for us of His one offering? Let us hear: "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

“For ever” is the same word in the original as in verse 12. Oh, let us ponder over these wondrous words. What has Christ done for you, my fellow believer, by His one sacrifice? Perfected you as to the conscience in unchanging continuance. It is not that you are as yet perfect as to the redemption and change of the body (Rom. viii. 23.) You are still “waiting for the adoption, the redemption of the body.” You are waiting for the resurrection from the dead. In that sense you are not perfected. (Phil. iii. 11, 12.) You are not yet perfected in sinless purity like Christ, but when He appears you will be. (1 John iii. 2.) “When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” Oh, blessed hope! We are not perfect in the sense of sin being eradicated from us: “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (1 John i. 8.) On all these points the scripture is clear enough.

Neither are we perfect in the sense of no weakness, or no liability or possibility, of sin or failure. No, “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. 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.) Thus there is a liability recognised of “any man” sinning, as we all know by sad experience; and yet there is the most blessed provision and the

relationship to the Father maintained. Only mark, there is no contradiction in scripture. The provision here, in case a believer should sin, is not a fresh offering for the sin. But it is Jesus Christ the righteous. He is still our unchanging righteousness. He is our Advocate, and He is the propitiation for our sins. And here beware of every shade of unsound doctrine, as though He had to make atonement, or has to make atonement or propitiation in heaven after His death on the cross, and consequently not by death, or suffering divine wrath. No, all this is sad *error*, and denies the true character of atonement finished on the cross. Just as the blood was brought into the holiest, and sprinkled on the golden mercy-seat, so the infinite value of the blood of Christ is ever continuously before God. The value of that precious blood ever maintains the righteousness of God, for the sin that is confessed to the Father was borne by Christ on the cross.

In what sense then are we perfected in unchanging continuity? In this sense, that there is not a single charge against us. The way is opened for us into the holiest in perfect peace with God. We are there according to the value God sees in the one offering of Christ; and that is infinite. Everything that once shut us out of His holy, holy presence is cleared for ever away. This was the eternal will of God, thus to bring

us to Himself. For this He sent His Son. To accomplish this He gave Him a body. Far more indeed, though not the subject of this epistle, did God purpose, and it is now accomplished, even to bring us into favour in the Beloved!

Here in the Hebrews, it is the question of the conscience: and by the one offering of Christ the believer has no more conscience of sins. The Holy Ghost is a witness that God has nothing now against the believer, as He says, "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Oh, the holy boldness, or liberty we have to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus. Now the one question is, Do we believe God? You must admit that it is altogether of God. Do not send out the spies of unbelieving reason, to see if it is so. Do not look within to see if it is so. The Holy Ghost bears witness that He who died on the cross, as the sacrifice for your sins, has perfected us for ever—in unchanging continuance. Christendom does not believe the Holy Ghost. All her printed prayers shew that men do not believe this wondrous grace of God. Ever using vain repetitions for God to be merciful, when He declares in the plainest words of all believers, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more!" If you believe God, you must have done with masses and vain repetitions. It is a serious thing to say, We are Jews, when we are not; to set up an earthly priesthood again,

and to repeat prayers only suited for a Jew before Christ died.

If Christ by His one sacrifice has settled the whole question of our sins, perfectly or completely to the glory of God, then plainly there is no more offering for sin. To offer sacrifices now for the sins of the living and the dead, is the most distinct denial of Christianity, be this by whom it may.

But if whilst protesting against such a human priesthood and vain unscriptural sacrifices, in the pretended offering up of Christ on human devised altars, we ourselves disbelieve the testimony of God to the one sacrifice of Christ, what better off are we than they ?

Do you then believe God ? Is Jesus the fulfilment of all the sacrifices of the law ? And infinitely more. Let us go up the picture gallery in Leviticus to God. Is He your sin-offering once delivered for your offences, so that with the hand of faith laid on Christ, you can say, He has died for me ; God has not now one sin against me ? Is He your peace or communion offering ? Have you now communion with the Father and the Son, in the light that reveals all sin cleansed by His precious blood ? Is He your meat-offering ? Is the living Person of Jesus, as seen in the gospels, the food of your soul ? Is He your burnt-offering, accepted in all that He in the sweet savour of His Person and offering is

to God? If so, you will not be filled with doubts and fears, but praise and worship. O God our Father, grant this may be so with every child of Thine who should read these lines, for Thy beloved Son's sake. Amen.

C. S.

COMMUNION—IN WORDS,

By one now present with the Lord he thus adored.

- 'Yes! there Thou art—the One True God, and yet—
- 'A MAN (1 Tim. ii. 5)—“the Man Christ Jesus,”—“God in flesh,” (1 Tim. iii. 16, Greek)
- 'In all Thy radiant beauty seated there
- 'At God's right hand—THE REPRESENTATIVE (Heb. ix. 24)
- 'Of *each* of all Thy members here on earth!
- 'Fountain of life eternal!—where I cleanse
- 'A troubled conscience from *all trace* of sin!—
- 'Thou River of my deep and perfect peace!—
- 'Rock of my rest! Shelter from every storm!—
- 'Balm of my wounded spirit!—Morning Star
- 'Of all my future—Haven of my hopes!—
- 'O DAY SPRING from on high! whose cloudless light
- '*Has beam'd* upon me, banishing *my* night
- 'With dawn of heaven's unfading brilliancy!
- 'Thou *hast* for ever risen on my soul,
- 'Thou Sun of Righteousness, and Life, and Peace!
- '*NOR SHALL* the powers of hell, with all their spleen,
- 'Nor all the workings of *old buried me*,
- 'Deprive me of the honour so supreme
- 'Of always *labouring* to “rest” in Thee—(Heb. iv. 11)
- '*SO satisfied—SO happy—oh, SO still—*
- '*SO quiet—SO at rest from fear* of ill—
- 'For “I have kept the faith” (2 Tim. iv. 7)—*am* walking on
- '“The water” of God's own unfailing “Word,” (Eph. v. 26)

'In which I can't help seeing I "*have died*" (see Greek of Col. iii. 3)

'That this "old man" *was* crucified with Christ; (Rom. vi. 6)

'And *so was I!* (Greek of Gal. ii. 20) Hence "old things passed away,"' (2 Cor. v. 17)

And "all things new"—at least in *God's* account,

Not mine—for He says He "*hath* reconciled

Us to Himself" (2 Cor. v. 18)—*hath* quicken'd us with Christ, (Eph. ii. 5)

And in so doing given a *NEW LIFE*

In which we are so "all of one" with Christ, (Heb. ii. 11)

That what "is true" of Him *is true of us*; (1 John ii. 8)

Hence "as he is so *are we in this world*"—(1 John iv. 17)

Is true to *faith*, though not to *common sense*;

But then *HOW* faith delights and honours God!

Such simple, real, unhesitating faith

As "*quails at nothing*"—vindicating God,

And the exceeding riches of His grace:

THE FAITH that takes Him at *His OWN BARE word*,

And lets it "all be true;" (Rom. iii. 4) yea, **MAKES IT TRUE:**

Which goes *such* lengths as to accredit God

For *ALL THE LOVE* and mercy in *His heart*;

Responds instinctively to *ALL* His mind—

Re-echoes *ALL* His thoughts and sentiments—

Replies "**Amen!**" to *ALL* that He has done—

Reflects back on Himself "the true light" (1 John ii. 8) of

The knowledge of "*IT ALL*" (2 Cor. iv. 6)—His greatest

"joy"—(3 John iv. 4)

His "glory" (Rom. iv. 20)—*all* His heart's unwearied love.

Faith too, retaliates upon the foe,

And 'stead of giving place, **MAKES** him *succumb*

Before the greater power of that word

Which GOD **HAS** *MAGNIFIED 'bove all His name!* (Psalm cxxxviii. 2)

Then **WHY NOT**, O my soul! **DO JUST THE SAME**;

And *so continue* winner of life's game?

C. G. EVERSFIELD.

“THE SUN WAS SETTING.”

LUKE IV. 40.

“Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him ; and he laid his hand on every one of them, and healed them.” Sinner, the sun is setting, wilt thou put off till to-morrow ? “ And when it was day he departed and went into a desert place, and the people sought him, and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them. And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also.” Solemn to think this may have been their last opportunity for blessing ; happy to think they made the best of it.

Fellow-believers, the sun is setting, the day of God’s grace is about to close. If we had the glory of God before us, and the value of precious souls laid on our hearts, surely we should be more in earnest.

Verse 40. “All they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him.” Yes ; it is our blessed privilege to bring those near and dear unto us, to His own blessed Person. “And he laid his hands on *every one* of them and healed them.” Should not this scripture before us exhort and encourage us to count upon Him ? Has the grace of His heart altered ? Surely not. The failure is all on our side. Oh then, may God

in His grace give us to be more devoted to Him, that we be not content with being hearers of the word, and not doers; but being doers, and not forgetful hearers, we may be blessed in our deed.

May He give us to count more upon Himself, and our experience will be, "Christ Jesus, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

K.



CLOSE TO A REFUGE, BUT OUTSIDE.

THE following short paper has been sent by a collier: he says, "The subject of our narrative was a miner. And notwithstanding the many deliverances he had witnessed when in danger, yet he was a rejecter of that blessed One, who came to seek and to save the lost." The writer had many times spoken to him about his soul's salvation: to which he was always indifferent, at the same time thinking the eleventh hour to be time enough.

"In November 1881, he left his home for his usual work; while going along a narrow road in the pit leading to his work place, he was overtaken by a water car that had broken loose some distance above. He was knocked down and killed in a moment, as it were, close to a refuge hole, but outside of it. What a fulfilment of God's word, 'He that being often reprov-

hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy? Had he accepted Christ as his Refuge, then the sudden change would have been sudden glory. This paper may be read by some who are saying 'Time enough yet, I am not exposed to those dangers referred to: and I am in health and strength.' Just think for one moment. Should the Lord call His own to meet Him, while you are reading these lines, and find you a rejecter, what would your health and strength avail you?"

Yes, the poor miner was near to a safety hole, cut in the side of the narrow path. Away from that safety, there was *no* escape from destruction of the body. Just *outside* the ark, when God shut Noah in, was sure destruction, and no escape. Have you not heard the gospel? Are you near the place of refuge, but not in Christ—still outside? how dreadful to be exposed to everlasting destruction. There is no other place of refuge. And how soon the roll and thunder of judgment will be heard on this doomed earth.

Are you in the place of safety—in Christ? There all is eternal peace. There are two words, one of which you must hear from Christ, "Come unto me," or "Depart from me."

If not "come," then it must be, it will be, "depart." Do you say, When may I come to Christ? When may I enter the place of safety? Now, now, He says, come unto Me, and I will

give you rest. There is not a moment to be lost. It was too late for the miner to step into the refuge, though close at hand. For ever too late. May the Holy Spirit, as you read these simple lines, bring you to take eternal refuge in Christ.

CORRESPONDENCE.

5. R. D., Cornhill.—Water was the element of death which covered the old world in the days of Noah—the judgment of God on a world of sin. Eight souls were saved by water. Baptism is a figure of our salvation. With our Noah, Jesus, we pass through death into resurrection. As you say, the judgment of God fell on our Holy Substitute, Jesus; and rising out of death, there is no more judgment on Him; and therefore no condemnation to us who believe in Him. Thus it is not the washing of baptism that gives us the good conscience, but the resurrection of Jesus Christ who is gone into heaven. He has been raised from death and judgment, and, passed above all heavens, is Head of the church. Baptism is a most striking figure of our identification with Him. Buried once unto His death, now for ever one with Him in resurrection. As He died only once, and rose again, so there is one baptism. The believer is buried once in water; and then for ever out. We have not to die, or be buried again; we reckon ourselves dead with Him, and alive again. It is very blessed when once the figure of baptism is understood.

"THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST."

XV.

CHAPTER XIV.

THESE three chapters—xii., xiii., xiv., form a distinct part of the Revelation. And chapter xiv. is divided into seven parts:—

First, the purpose of God—the Lamb on Mount Sion. (Vers. 1–5.)

Second, the everlasting gospel. (Vers. 6, 7.)

Third, the fall of Babylon. (Ver. 8.)

Fourth, the doom of those who receive the mark of the beast. (Vers. 9–12.)

Fifth, the blessedness of those who die in the Lord. (Ver. 13.)

Sixth, the harvest of the earth. (Vers. 14–16.)

Seventh, the vintage of the earth. (Vers. 17 to end.)

We have thus, in the first place, the final results of all these judgments and dealings of God with the earth—Mount Sion in the renewed, millennial earth. The promises in all the prophets as to Sion shall then be fulfilled. "Sing, O daughter of Sion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart. . . . Fear not, . . . the Lord thy God is in the midst of thee. . . . He will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing. I will gather them which are sorrowful."

(Zeph. iii. 14–18.) This is very largely the theme of the Psalms and Isaiah.

The purpose of God must stand as to those who suffer for Christ. The suffering remnant of Israel will have a very special place in association with the once suffering Lamb. They stand WITH Him on Mount Sion. They are the elect remnant. And being a thousand-fold the multiple of twelve—this would imply perfection of administration. Let us bear in mind, Mount Sion in the prophets is on earth: the city of the great King, the centre of grace and kingly rule—but on earth. So here (vers. 1–3) they are not in heaven with the church or the crowned elders of chapter iv. But let us examine each particular.

They have “his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads.” Though on Mount Sion, yet this is a most precious privilege—a mark of association with Himself. It may be asked, But is there not at least one text that speaks of Mount Sion as the heavenly Jerusalem? (Heb. xii. 22.) A careful examination and correct translation will shew this is not the case. “But ye have come to Mount Sion; AND to the city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem,” &c. Thus there are two separate things named: Mount Sion, or mount of grace, in contrast to Mount Sinai, the mount of law and terrors; then the heavenly city, Jerusalem, before us, in contrast with the city of Canaan.

Then, *on* this Mount Sion, John says, "I heard a voice from heaven," or "out of heaven." Now, if it had been a Mount Sion in heaven, he would not have heard it from heaven. There was an immense sound of joy in heaven when the Lamb and the 144,000 stood with Him on Mount Sion, "as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of great thunder. And the voice which I heard was as harp singers harping with their harps; and they sing as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures, and the elders." This is heard on Mount Sion from heaven. And they who sing it are in heaven, but are not the elders or the redeemed, glorified church; but before them, that is, before the elders. And further, the 144,000 neither sing the song in heaven nor compose part of the elders in heaven; but they only can learn the song on earth, on Mount Sion, that they hear from heaven. They are in the earthly glory of the Lamb. The church is the heavenly first-fruits, and they are the earthly first-fruits. "Which were redeemed from the earth." They have not been defiled with all the seducing corruptions of those last terrible days. They have followed the Lamb and shared in His sorrows. "These were bought from among men." They do not seem to have died, but are the "first-fruits unto God and the Lamb," &c. It is truly blessed to contemplate them, the first-fruits of the new millennial earth. What immense comfort

this scripture will give to them passing through the tribulation! Thus we have the sure purpose of God as to the suffering remnant of Israel, as they pass through their last fearful tribulation. Do not confound them with the redeemed church which has been *in* heaven since chapters iv., v.

Second part, verses 6, 7. Having revealed to us the final blessing of the elect remnant, we now learn how this will be accomplished: and also the then testimony of God to the whole world. As now the glad tidings of the grace of God are preached to every creature; and as many as are ordained to eternal life, believe and become the recipients of heavenly glory; even so, then, the everlasting gospel will be preached to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples. And, though the great mass reject it and are given up to strong delusions, yet there will be those who believe God, and who, like Abraham of old, will be reckoned righteous, and will enjoy the earthly, as we the heavenly, glory. Oh the riches of His grace! Every lost soul in the lake of fire, and every saved soul on earth, or in heaven, will own throughout the eternal ages the righteousness of God. One is saved, the other for ever lost; but both according to the righteousness of God. Oh, reader, soon you will have—yea, even now you know, if a believer, that the righteousness of God is your eternal salvation. But, oh, what will it be, if an unbeliever, to know that the

righteousness of God is your eternal damnation ? To have wilfully rejected the forgiveness of sins through the grace of God, at such a cost as the death of the Son of God, in righteousness the wrath of God MUST abide for ever on you. If you have accepted the salvation of God accomplished at such a cost, God declares that salvation in perfect righteousness to be eternal. Thus the righteousness of God is most terrible, or most blessed.

It is time, however, to notice the character of the everlasting gospel that will then be proclaimed so widely. Jesus said, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations: and then shall the end come." (Matt. xxiv. 14.) This angel-announced gospel is also the gospel of the kingdom, or reign and authority of God. It is not the gospel of grace now used in building the church—the gospel of this marvellous parenthesis of the riches of His grace, proclaimed by apostles and evangelists. But an angel proclaims to all nations, with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to him: for the hour of his *judgment is come*: and worship him that made heaven," &c. During this day of the gospel of the grace of God "his judgment" has not yet come. This gospel will not only be preached to every tribe and tongue and people who have not heard the present gospel and rejected it; but it is ever-

lasting. Every word is suited, and will be the glad tidings of millennial days ; yea, throughout eternity when God shall be all. These two verses shew how the righteousness of God will shine out in all its brightness, even as this poor world sinks in the gloom of the worship of Satan. Even then man will be left without an excuse.

Third part, verse 8. It might now be asked, In those days of the preaching of the everlasting gospel, what has become of apostate Christendom ? This verse is the solemn answer ; oh, thou boasting Christendom, hear it ! “ And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” Yes ; her fatal alliance with the states, or nations, is denounced as wrath of her fornication ; she pretends to be the bride, or church of Christ, and is really the harlot of the nations. But this part is so solemn and so important that God has given us two chapters further on, as to her fall and judgment. (Chaps. xvii., xviii.)

Fourth part, verses 9, 10. It may now be asked, What will be the doom of those who worship the beast and his image ? Read verses 10, 11 for the answer to that question. On such the wrath of God will be poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation. “ And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the

presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." It may be said, These are only figures. If they are only figures, what then must be the indescribable torments thus set forth in the most terrible figures that can be found? Ah, rejecters of the Lamb, you will never forget Him whom you have thus despised! Oh remember, your torments will be for ever and ever! You may deny this now, but what will your present denial avail you then? Think of those words: "And they have no rest day nor night who worship the beast and his image." Oh awake! behold the Bridegroom! To-morrow you may be shut out, and left beneath the Satanic influence of that terrible empire.

Verse 12. Here is additional evidence that there will be a suffering remnant of saints on earth even then, who, in patience, keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. It is strange that any should find a difficulty here. Were there not suffering saints before the day of Pentecost when the church began? Why, then, may there not be again after the church is caught up to be with the Lord, during the dark hour of this world's trial?

Fifth part, verse 13. What will become of those who die, who are put to cruel deaths by the raging beast, and the man of sin, or whom he causeth to be put to death? Very precious the answer: "Write, Blessed are the dead which die

in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." Yes; truly blessed are those who will at such a time own Jesus Lord. They may be put to death by this infidel, Satanic empire; but they will rise and be the complement of the first resurrection, and reign with Christ. (Chap. xx. 4.)



PLAIN PAPERS TO DWELLERS ON EARTH.

I.

"WHERE DWELLEST THOU?"

SUCH was the question once put to that heavenly Stranger, who had not where to lay His head in this world. Is it not, however, a question we may ask each other? Where do you dwell?

We read in the Bible that there are two places, and two classes of people, the dwellers in these places. Heaven and earth are the two places, and we are each and all dwelling in one of them.

But you will perhaps say, How can any one be dwelling in heaven whilst he is still alive down here? In scripture the Christian is spoken of as a "stranger and a pilgrim" on earth, and in Hebrews xiii. 14 it is said, "For here have we no continuing [or abiding] city, but we seek one to come."

It has sometimes been illustrated thus : A Christian is like a man in business ; he has his office and his home. He goes to his office daily, but he *dwells* at home. So with a believer, his *home* is in heaven ; his heart, his treasure, his all is there ; but he is still on the earth at work, left here to be for Christ in this scene. I should like, however, to illustrate my subject by taking three characters from the word of God, and drawing an analogy between them, and the two classes of people mentioned above.

CAIN.

This is the first example I take. No doubt you are familiar with his history. He was the first man ever born into this world, and he was a tiller of the ground, whilst Abel, his younger brother, was a keeper of sheep.

They each brought an offering to the Lord. Abel, acknowledging that he was a sinner and deserved only death (for "The soul that sinneth it shall die." Ezek. xviii. 4, 20), brought a lamb as a substitute, which Jehovah accepted in anticipation of, and in virtue of, the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, the holy, spotless Lamb of God, upon the cross, nearly four thousand years after. (John i. 29 ; Isa. liii. 7.) Cain, on the contrary, did not see his need as a sinner, but brought of the fruit of the ground which Jehovah had cursed (Gen. iii. 17), and thought to be accepted. We know

he was not, for he tried to approach God in his own way, instead of in the only way God could be approached, which is through death.

And here let us pause for a moment, dear reader. How are you seeking to approach God? In your own way or in His—which? In John xiv. 6, Jesus says: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." It was "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." (Heb. xi. 4.) And it is through *faith* in Christ *alone* that we are saved, and "Without faith it is impossible to please him." (Heb. xi. 6.)

Think of that *impossible*! What, will not good works please Him? Dear reader, by nature we have none. Isaiah lxiv. 6 says, "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Cain, no doubt, brought of the very best and finest of the fruit of the ground. One could scarcely think he would dare offer to God what was not the very best of its kind; but it would not do, there was no acknowledgment of his state as a sinner before God, there was no faith, neither was it God's way of approach to Him, and so it was worse than useless.

Because his offering was not accepted, Cain was angry, and God in His infinite mercy condescended to speak to him, and point out to him that the way of approach was still open; for the right reading of Genesis iv. 7 is "a sin-offering

lieth at the door." He could still do as Abel had done, and bring a lamb, then he, too, would have been accepted. But Cain would not thus take his true place as a sinner in the sight of God, needing the death of a substitute because he deserved to die himself.

There are, alas ! many people who think as he did, for it is a difficult thing for man to confess himself to be lost, ruined, guilty, and good for nothing. He thinks there is still some good in him ; but the only way to get rest and peace is to believe first what God says about him, as in Romans iii. 9-20, and then accept His way of salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for sinners on the cross, as the rest of Romans iii. explains. It is only for *sinners* that Christ died ; He Himself says, " I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." (Luke v. 32.) And again, " The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Then Cain becomes a murderer, and in 1 John iii. 12, we read it was " Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." When God speaks to Cain a second time he requires Abel's blood at his hands (Gen. iv. 9), and then follows the punishment. He might have had access to God, and been happy if he would ; but now he goes forth from the presence of the Lord, and we never read that he gets back there again.

And here again, if Abel's blood cried for

vengeance, what of the blood of Christ, "which speaketh better things"? (Heb. xii. 24.) Is God unmindful of the death of His Son? And will He not require His blood, too? At whose hands? Oh, you say, Pilate, the Jews, and the Roman empire did it. Dear reader, if you are an unbeliever, you, too, are guilty, for you belong to and are part of the world that put to death the Son of God. And unless you believe in Jesus and are cleansed from sin by His blood, that precious blood, which speaks of mercy now, must be your judgment hereafter.

Having said this in explanation of the events which led up to it, I have come now to the part where Cain becomes a picture of the *dwellers on earth* mentioned before. Cain goes forth from the presence of the Lord, and mark! it says he *dwelt* in the land of Nod. Then we read, he built a city and called it after the name of his son Enoch. (Gen. iv. 16, 17.) Then there are those who dwell in tents and possess cattle, who are rich; there are musicians, and artificers in brass and iron amongst his families and generations; in short, he and his do their best to be happy away from God. All their interests, their treasures are on the earth—it is their dwelling-place, and they have no hopes, no desires, no expectations beyond.

Are there any now who are thus trying to be happy away from God? who think of nothing,

desire nothing, but to be rich, to enjoy life as it is called, and to settle down here, looking for nothing beyond? We know there are many who, like Cain and his posterity, have before them for their end and aim, to make this earth a pleasant dwelling-place; but, mark, it was after Cain had gone out from the presence of the Lord.

Cain's first wrong step was self-will—he would not, as we have said, approach God in God's appointed way; for “without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. ix. 22), and it is self-will all through.

In Jude 11 there is a solemn woe pronounced on some who had gone in the way of Cain; Cain's way was not God's way.

Perhaps you are thinking there is no harm in doing the best you can to get on in the world. What does scripture say? “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” (1 John ii. 15.) And again, “Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God.” (James iv. 4.) And the Lord Himself said when He was down here, “No man can serve two masters; . . . ye cannot serve God and mammon.” (Matt. vi. 24.)

So if you are a believer, though you are in the world you are *not of it*, and should live a blameless, godly life, “that they may see your good

works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. v. 16.) And perhaps by your consistent life they may be won from their evil course to follow Christ also.

If you are an unbeliever, alas ! you are part of that world, and there is but one way of escape. It is to do as Abel did, acknowledge yourself to be a sinner before God. And "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

And what becomes of Cain and his posterity ? In Genesis vi. 5, 6, we read : " And God 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. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." Then, in verse 11, we further read that " The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence." Cain had been violent towards his brother, now the earth is filled with violence.

God brings in judgment, from which, again, there is but *one* way of escape—God's way. Noah, a just man, finds favour in God's sight, and he is told to build an ark ; for there was a terrible flood coming on the earth, and there was no safety but in the ark of God's providing.

Noah preached whilst he was building the ark (2 Pet. ii. 5), but when it was completed the day of grace was over. Only Noah, his wife, and family—in all, eight persons (1 Pet. iii. 20)—

entered it, and God shut them in. Then the flood came and *all* outside the ark were drowned. (Gen. vii. 21-23.) They found, indeed, to their cost that the earth was not a safe dwelling-place. And, dear friends, is it any safer now ?



LABOUR LOST.

2 CHRONICLES XX.

IT is the Lord who saves, by many or by few ; and He never wants anything to be added to it. "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord."

The realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet ; we need not say how it will be by-and-by under God's king. Jehoshaphat did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and yet we see his failure ; but it does not abate one jot from his position in the sight of the Lord. And so we, in the midst of all so contrary ; yet there is the position we have in the sight of God. He does not alter our position, because we do not always rise up to it.

We never need go out of the way to get blessing. We need not go out of the way because of our disadvantages. The Lord acted, and did not wait until the people had prepared their hearts ; He did not withhold from acting because they had not prepared their hearts.

And so amid all the weakness, He is prepared to act far more than we calculate upon. But He did not go with Jehoshaphat when he went with

Ahab. *He* never wants for means. We often think, if we were not encumbered with such and such hindrances, more might be effected; more might be accomplished if we could do as other people do. There is that which often appears desirable; but the Lord is encumbered if we join affinity with that which is at variance with that in which we are set. He only wants that we should move on, and there is plenty in Him for strength. They were strong while they stuck to the truth, and acted according to the position in which they were set: though the ten tribes were separated from the two, yet *while* they were faithful, they were *invincible*.

It was when they were at their lowest ebb, that the greatest exploits were done.

And we need to be separated from all that is not according to the mind of God. We have no power apart from God; but we are in Christ, and we just wait to see the salvation of God.

When the greatest armies came against Jehoshaphat there was not a blow struck; but when he joined himself to Ahaziah, he had to escape for his life. And when he joined for merchandise and commerce, he got shipwrecks. And I do not doubt that is why the end of much of all our efforts is shipwreck. There is much that is counter to the Holy Spirit, contrary to the ways of God. It is a wonderful place in which we are set, there is something to be got

rid of. Our motto will be, Nearer, my God, to Thee. The peace, the rest, the victory, are all connected with it. It was wonderful the rest and peace in Jehoshaphat's days; but the blessed God would not allow in Jehoshaphat anything contrary to His will. He joined with Ahaziah to make ships. Still it was wonderfully tender of God, there was no great upbraiding, *but all his labour lost*, and the ships did not go; it was lost labour. "It is in vain we rise up early." He would have them sleep and take their rest. The day is for labour and the night for rest. "He that believeth shall not make haste." He would have us take the *place* or position in which we are set. "Because ye are sons," God hath sent forth the Spirit. What does not become His presence does not become His child. We walk below the place He has set us as sons.

They had had Solomon's reign, but a greater than Solomon has come; and if He had not died and risen, He would have been the only man who could have been in the kingdom. But He died, death and resurrection are accomplished; and now the kingdom of heaven is open to all believers; and so we can say, "as having nothing and yet possessing all things." And nothing can separate us from the love of God, &c.

Let us cleave fast to that, and be satisfied with it, and want nothing that will go to shipwreck.

G. J.

GRACE ABOUNDING;

OR,

PAUL THE NEGRO.

DEAR BROTHER,—As you requested me to give a simple account of what I told you, about the ways of God with our departed brother F. H. and Paul the once negro slave, I will put it down as nearly as the Lord may enable me.

As our brother H. returned from visiting a sick child, he made a false step on the kerbstone, and hurt his ankle, which caused him to go to the infirmary to get the benefit of their appliances, where his wife had formerly been a nurse. He, along with myself, had made it a matter of prayer for twelve months, that he might be directed to a suitable person for a wife. The Lord directed him to the one mentioned above, He knowing what he would need. Our brother only lived two years of married life, and died on the anniversary of his wedding day, but of the two years, he needed a *nurse* for fifteen months of the time, and the Lord gave him one.

His father, an aged man of eighty years, was very much opposed to his son and his wife, as they were in fellowship as Christians, and would scarcely speak to them. Our brother H. fell asleep at Wakefield, and before his departure, he sent me to ask his father not to bury him in the family vault. The father said he had been a

fool all his life, so he supposed he must consent to that. The family vault was on consecrated ground, and our brother wished to be buried by his brethren.

The father went to the funeral, but said he hoped it would be short and sweet. As soon as the service was over, the father called me to him, and said, "My house is open to as many as will go to tea." This was to our intense surprise, as he hated brethren in Christ. Only a little time before, his son went to have a meal with him, and wanted to ask God's blessing, and the father said, I will have none of that nonsense here. He was a scoffer at Christianity. Our brother told me of this, and we both united to ask the Lord for the salvation of the father.

Well, to my great joy, he said he had never seen aught so solemn as at the funeral, such perfect order, without any apparent arrangement; and at the tea table he asked me to *say* a blessing. After tea the gospel was set before him, and he asked me to have tea with him the following Sunday; and through the seasonable words spoken by the widow, Mrs. H., he found peace in believing, and in a few weeks fell ill and went to be with the Lord.

The night before he passed away he said to the nurse, "If I die before morning, tell them not to bury me in the family vault, but as near to Fred [his son] as they can." He called our sister to

his side, and said, "You wrote me every day Fred was ill; and told me once he was living in Romans viii. I never answered you, but thank God I am living there now; it has been a struggle, but all is peace."

Now as to the Lord's purpose in taking our brother to the infirmary. At the same time, a young man, whose name was Paul, born a slave, from South Carolina, was brought from a ship, he being a sailor, and very ill. Our brother H. took great interest in his soul's welfare, and had him in his room, and bought him a New Testament, and taught him to read John iii.

Paul asked what book it was, and was told that it was God's word to him.

He asked, What God? He was told the God that had made everything.

He then said, "If that God speaks the truth, He must love *me*, for He says that *whosoever* believes in Him shall not perish. So then it must mean *me*, as it does not say either black men or white men." So the word was simply taken as God's word *to him*, for he had no creeds to give up.

And it proved to be the word of life, and caused his heart to so run over with joy, that when in bed the other patients fetched our sister H. to him, thinking he must be going mad. She told him to be quiet, for he said he wanted to be baptised, and go right away to heaven;

and he poured water on himself as he lay (a novel way of doing it).

Yet he held fast by God's word, and never once faltered, but was really bright and happy. He was permitted to go from ward to ward to tell them John iii. One man made game of him, but he looked earnestly at him and said, "God will stop you sudden, God will stop you." And the nurses told me they never witnessed such an awful death in the infirmary. He died in a few days, and Paul went to him and said, "Me tell you God would stop you sudden."

Well, Paul was a little better, and thought he could do a little work, so he came out of the infirmary. The first place he found was the meeting-room. On the Lord's day morning he was the first of any one, and sat behind. I could see during the time that his heart was brim full of Christ. After the meeting was over, I said to him, "Well, Paul, did you enjoy the Lord's presence?" "Oh," he said, "me enjoy the *Lord Himself*." I could not help feeling a rebuke from that new-born babe, not three weeks old.

We obtained employment for him in a drying house, to dry wood, and it was very hot. When asked if it was very hot, he said, "It was very hot the first day, and me say the Lord that did save me could make me not feel the heat, and to-day me could bear it very well." But the Lord did not intend to leave him long with us.

In a week or two he was obliged to give up work, and return to the infirmary. One day he said, "Me just been thinking there will be no black men in the glory, we will all be white, washed in the blood of Jesus." A few days after I met him, and said, "Well, Paul, where are you going?" He said, "Me going back to the infirmary, it may be the Lord is going to raise me up, and if He does it will be all right, and if He does not, it will be all right; but me think if He does, me don't want to give Him more trouble than me can help."

A few weeks after this, Mrs. H. and I called to see him on a Lord's day evening, and found he had been longing to see some of us before he went to the Lord. It was with difficulty we could understand what he said. He said, "Tell mudda—Jesus—mudda—Jesus," &c. And we found he wanted us to send in word to his mother, South Carolina, that he had gone to be at rest with Jesus. Then he told us something about seven shillings, and we found he wanted to send the seven shillings he had earned the few days he was at work to his mother. As he was telling this, one of the nurses came to see me, and said, The matron wishes to see you. And as I was going he said, "Don't leave me." I said, "I will be back directly," and went to see the matron. She said, "Oh yon dear fellow, I envy him as he lies yonder. Oh, I would give worlds if I had

the peace he has ; he is dying," &c. Whilst I was talking to her, his spirit had gone to the Lord.

The nurse found a worn letter under his pillow, very badly written, but the breathings of a mother's love in it. It told out to her darling boy of family loss and trial, and this accounted for his loving desire to send all that he had to his mother. We sent the seven shillings to her, with the news of her boy's death, and received a letter from her daughter some time after, which told the sad news, that what with the joy of her boy meeting with kind friends, his conversion, along with the sorrow of parting with him, she took to her bed, and died in a few days. Paul's earnest desire when dying was, that his mother might be saved.

He often spoke of *his* God and *his* Jesus ; and when asked how he was, he would say, "I'se justly bad, mum, but me trust in de Christ ; me leaves it all to Him." And when asked if he wanted anything, he said, "If anything, it is more faith." I believe his last words were, "Christ is precious," and he calmly fell asleep.

A great many of the Lord's people and from the infirmary followed him to the grave. The matron would have the hearse to the front door. She said, "An honoured man like Paul must go from the front door ;" a thing perhaps never done before.

The matron left soon after and went to London

We heard she was very ill, and Mrs. H. went to see her, and had every hope that she found peace, before she passed away. I may add, Paul seemed to be able only to read John iii. Some years have passed away since he fell asleep, yet his dear bright face and eyes are fresh to many of us still.

Thus I have given the facts, and leave them with the Lord to magnify His grace, as He already has done in all His marvellous dealings with His people.

Hull.

J. B.



IMPORTANT EXTRACTS

FROM

“SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES ON
ACTS.”*

“PEACE was made only by the blood of His cross, still the perfection of the work in Hebrews x. is connected with the Lord’s having entered in by His blood, and so having perfected the work; could we say it was perfected until He had sat down ?

“Ah ! I could not say that. “By His ‘one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.’ You get not merely the clearing of what I am, as walking down here, but perfected

for ever so as to go up there, as well as having no more conscience of sins ; and all by His one offering. Hebrews x. puts the believer absolutely perfect before God, so that he has no more conscience of sins, but is brought into the holiest into the presence of God.

“ But is the work perfected before His ascension ?

“ The work was perfected before, *that* was perfected on the cross ; the resurrection puts God’s seal upon it, and then for us to enter into the holiest, He has gone up to heaven.

“ But until the Lord had sat down, the work had not come to an end ?

“ Had it not ? The point the apostle insists on is, that the Lord is not standing, because the work had been finished. . . . The work was finished on the cross, and God puts His seal upon it by resurrection, and then the full results follow.

“ In the Hebrews Christ is said to be the forerunner, and so there was no such thing as worship until He had entered ?

“ No ; but the veil was rent from top to bottom the moment He died, and now we are talking of the application of that. The whole thing, in short, was done upon the cross, even the resurrection was the effect of that (though of course Christ could not be holden by death), God in it putting His seal upon the work.

“And on that ground peace could be proclaimed fully ?

“Yes, and the Lord could tell it beforehand. Peace was made by the blood of the cross, but I hardly see anybody that gives full value to the death of Christ. I do not mean as to the forgiveness of sins, but as to the whole question of good and evil brought to a point and culminating in the cross. . . . There I see man in absolute enmity against God, and that when God is displayed in goodness ; and I see a Man, perfect in His love to God, and perfect in His obedience to God, in that same cross. I get all the power of Satan, with all the malice of man, and all the righteousness of God against sin, and all the love of God to the sinner, all united in the cross, and therefore I find there the foundation of the new heavens and of the new earth—of God’s glory in short ; and all the consequences of blessing flow out. But then the application is varied, so that everything in heaven and earth will be reconciled by it ultimately. I get the forgiveness of all my sins as a sinner, I am reconciled to God, and get glory like Christ. The Jews will be restored in the millennium by virtue of it ; but these are all effects.”

Who can question the wisdom, foreknowledge and love of God ? He knew the grievous errors that would be promulgated, and the fancies of

men, denying that the propitiation or the atonement was finished on the cross. The answers to these queries long ago are the simplest and clearest answers to the unsound theories on the atonement put forth now. The man that really knows what sin is, and the holy claims of God, cannot afford to give up the atoning work of Christ finished on the cross.—ED.



CORRESPONDENCE.

6. "W. G., Redcar." In the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, "cutting off" was the most solemn act of governmental discipline; and in some cases, involved the death of the body, as in Numbers xv. 30-35. And we know that in this day of surpassing grace there is a sin that is unto death. (1 John v. 16, 17.) That is the death of the body. This cannot, however, affect for a moment the question of eternal life, or the believer being for ever perfected by the one offering of Christ.

The expression "cut off" is very frequently used in the Old Testament, in the sense of expelling from the congregation. It is never used in the New Testament in the sense of cutting off from the body of Christ, or from the assembly, or of one assembly cutting off another assembly. It is a most solemn act, and demands our most prayerful consideration at this time. Three times it is used in the sense of a person judging himself, Matt. v. 30, Mark ix. 45, and Galatians v. 12, correctly translated, that they

would cut themselves off. Once, that apostate Christendom rejecting the goodness of God shall be cut off (Rom. xi. 22) ; once, as the act of Peter (Mark xiv. 47) ; and once as to Paul's walk. (2 Cor. xi. 12.) We are not aware of a single instance in which it is used as we frequently hear it in this day.

The scriptural instruction is however very plain, if we really desire to be guided by it. If there is found to be a manifestly wicked person in any gathering of a few believers to Christ, what is to be done ? Go on with him, when all efforts to restore him fail ? No ; "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person." (1 Cor. v. 1-13.)

And if, as is sadly too common, and ever has been, a person holds and deliberately publishes false doctrine, or by speaking perverse things gathers a party to *himself*, what is to be done ? After the second admonition have done with him. (Titus iii. 10.) Receive not such an one even into your house. (2 John 10, 11.) But in the declension and evil and falsehood of the last days, what must the believer do, who really desires to please the Lord ? Let him read 2 Timothy ii. 19-24. And may the Lord give him, and all such, grace to walk according to His word. It is clear if we do walk according to this scripture, we can have no fellowship with any who deny the finished work of Christ on the cross. But holy separation, purging from evil, is a very different thing from "cutting off."

PLAIN PAPERS
TO DWELLERS ON EARTH.

II.

L O T.

WE have now traced the sad history of Cain, and also of "the dwellers on earth" in Revelation. We have seen that the earth is not a safe dwelling-place, and yet, alas, how many are building their hopes and desires upon it. How many even of God's dear people have never seen that it is a condemned world, and under judgment, which will most assuredly fall upon it in God's appointed time.

It is to Christians who are thus living in the world, and who see no harm in mixing to a certain extent in its pleasures that I would now give a solemn warning, taking as an example the painful history of Lot, the second of the three characters spoken of before.

Lot was the nephew of Abraham, and when Abraham obeyed the call of God to come out from his country, unto a land that God would shew him, Lot went with him. (Gen. xii. 1-4.)

And here let us pause for a moment. Is there any call to be obeyed now? Indeed there is. In Matthew xi. 28 we find the Lord Jesus Christ in grace saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And whom does He address? The weary and

heavy-laden sinner. Have you obeyed His call? Oh, see to it, that, like Abraham who was called, and Lot who came out with him, you, too, may hear His voice and obey it; and I may say, on the authority of God's holy word, He will never turn you away. (John vi. 37.)

You must do as Abel did, acknowledge yourself to be a lost and ruined sinner in God's sight; this is your only title to His grace and mercy, for Jesus died to put away sin, and bring you to God.

But to return to our subject: Lot went with Abraham, and for a time remained with him. As long as he did so, he was blessed, but a change comes; through a dispute between their herdmen, they decide to separate.

Abraham having the mind of the Lord, gives Lot the choice of land either to the *right*, or to the *left*. (Gen. xiii. 1-9.)

It is difficult to believe that Abraham would have given Lot the choice of Sodom, because in verse 13 we are told how wicked the men of Sodom were; it is therefore doubtful whether Lot did look to the *right* or to the *left* as his uncle told him. Verse 10 says, "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar."

Lot seems to have looked straight before him, and because the plain of Jordan was well watered, and just the place he would like for his flocks and herds, he chose to dwell there.

And did he not choose wisely? In the eyes of the world he did; but oh, how sad it is, he chose to pitch his tent toward Sodom, near the very people whom God describes here as "wicked, and sinners before the Lord, exceedingly." (Gen. xiii. 13.)

Dear fellow-Christian, may I ask, are you doing as Lot did? He thought everything of his flocks and herds, and but little of the claims of the God who gave him these riches; and though he was daily grieved at the ungodly conduct of those around him, for he was a righteous man (2 Pet. ii. 6-8), yet for the sake of his flocks and herds, he stays on until God had to put forth His power and in mercy bring him out by force, lest he should share the just punishment which falls on those wicked men.

If we as Christians make friends of, and are quite happy in the company of unbelievers, we are, as James (iv. 4) says, the enemies of God. How solemn!

We hear of people saying, "But then by our intercourse with them we may help them." It cannot be; for in 2 Corinthians vi. 14-18, we are told to come out and be separate, and in many other scriptures too. It is not possible to do good

or to help others if we are disobedient to God's word ourselves, nor can we expect His blessing. The cross of Christ is the barrier between the Christian and the world. (Gal. vi. 14.) How can we who love Him take pleasure in the company of the world that put to death the Son of God?

We do not read that Lot improved the condition of those amongst whom he went to dwell, on the contrary, they appear to get worse.

And now that Lot is settled in Sodom, is he able to enjoy the peace and tranquillity he expected? No; for in chapter xiv. we read that four kings came up in battle against the king of Sodom, and the four neighbouring cities; and Lot gets into sad trouble, for the opposing army is victorious, and carries off the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, taking Lot and his goods too.

Thus God in grace gives Lot a warning, and well would it have been for him if he had then learnt his lesson, without needing further chastening at the hand of the Lord.

Abraham hearing of his nephew's adversity, goes after him, and is enabled of the Lord to deliver him and all his goods, as well as those belonging to the king of Sodom: thus does God deliver Lot out of his trouble. Even after Lot has received this great warning he goes back to live in Sodom, for in chapter xix. we read of his being there again; and the two angels find him there when they come as the messengers of

judgment to that city and the neighbouring ones.

The angels remain in Lot's house all night, and in the morning they take Lot and his wife and two daughters by the hand, and hasten them out of Sodom, "the Lord being merciful unto him" (ver. 16), lest he should be consumed in the iniquity of the city. Lot lingers, and at last he and his have to be almost dragged out of the city.

Ah! how loath he was to leave it; how much he thought of it, and of the new relationships he had formed there. So engrossing do the things of this world become if they are the object of the heart, that they draw it away from the Lord; and when He speaks "once, yea twice," how slow we are to hear and to pay heed, until the Lord has to speak louder, as it were, by taking them away; for, dear reader, Lot entered Sodom a *rich* man, but he left it a *poor* man, his life only and that of his two daughters being spared.

In Lot's wife we see also a sad lesson; her *heart* is in Sodom, though her *feet* are being unwillingly led away from it, and in direct disobedience to the divine command she looks back and is made a monument of disobedience.

And what had Lot's intercourse with the men of Sodom done for them? Just look at chapter xix. 24. Even his sons-in-law, whom one would naturally expect to reverence what he said, when

they hear Lot speak of judgment to come, do not believe him; "he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law." So now, if we believe the word of God that this world is under judgment, and yet go and make friends with it, our words of warning will seem to them as idle tales, and how can they believe us? And by acting thus, we shall have lost the precious opportunity, never to be ours again, of living for Christ in this scene, and of being bright and shining lights for Him in this dark world. (Phil. ii. 15.)



"THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST."

XVI.

SIXTH part of chapter xiv. 14-16.—The once rejected and crucified Jesus is now seen sitting upon a white cloud, having on His head a golden crown—the righteous One, to whom all judgment is committed; "And in his hand a sharp sickle."

The harvest of the earth is now ripe. The wheat and tares are both ripe. It is the end of the age. The tares are gathered and burned in the fire. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear let him hear. (Matt. xiii. 40-43.) "And the earth was reaped." There will be no escape from that sharp sickle.

It is not, however, the gathering of the heavenly saints, but the commencement of the kingdom of God on earth—the judgment of the quick; the gathering out of all that do iniquity, and casting them into the furnace of fire. As to judgment, however, there is still another part.

The seventh part, verse 17 to end. It is the great vintage of the earth. An angel comes from heaven with a sharp sickle. Another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire. This points to divine judgment; even as the fire of divine judgment consumed the victim on the altar, the divine wrath of God against sin is now to be fully displayed.

The grapes of the vine of the earth are now fully ripe. The wickedness of men of the earth is at its full growth. This vine of the earth is cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden *without the city*. This takes place at the coming of Christ with all the armies of heaven. "He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." (Rev. xix. 15.)

And, further, if we compare this with Isaiah lxi. 2, we see it is the long delayed day of vengeance immediately preceding the setting up of the millennial kingdom in Israel: and through them blessing to the Gentiles. Then if we read Isaiah lxii., lxiii., the city is Jerusalem. "For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for

Jerusalem's sake will I not rest until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness," &c. Chapter lxii. Read carefully the whole chapter.

Then He comes and treads the winepress alone. "For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come." The city then is Jerusalem. The carnage of this day of vengeance will fill Palestine: for 200 miles this terrible destruction extends.

This may seem like exaggeration; but it is in perfect keeping with all the prophets. See what the prophet Joel says will take place in those days (chap. iii.); all nations are to be gathered there. Then will they turn their implements of husbandry into arms of destruction. Yes, that very Jerusalem, over which Jesus wept, and where He was crucified, is the place where the last grapes of human wickedness will fully ripen. "For the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great." (Ver. 13.) This immediately precedes the day of Israel's blessing. The day when the Lord shall dwell in Zion. So we may read in Zephaniah iii., how God has determined to gather the nations, to assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them His indignation and all His fierce anger. And this introduces the kingdom on earth. "For THEN will I turn to the people a pure language," &c. And this is clearly at Jerusalem, as may be seen if we read to the end of the chapter.

Then Ezekiel xxxviii., xxxix. shew the gathering of Israel's great enemy, Russia, and all the vast empire of the North of Palestine. He says: "Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm; thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou and all thy bands, and many people with thee." But the day of vengeance is now come. "Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee."

Thus ends at last what men call the Eastern Question. So vast is the slaughter that "seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them, that they may cleanse the land." (Chap. xxxix. 12.) Be careful, then, ye nations, what ye do to God's chosen. He will surely remember your doings in the day of vengeance. When the vine of the earth is cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God, that awful winepress will be trodden outside Jerusalem. It will not be as the last destruction of the city when surrounded by the Romans, fearful as that was; for it says: "And blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs." Thus it is in contrast to the destruction of Jerusalem. That is, it is the destruction of the vast multitudes gathered against it, so great that they cover the land like a cloud. We learn from Zechariah xiv. that great numbers of Jews will have been destroyed in Jerusalem, and the Lord comes just in time to

deliver the city. "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives." *Then*, as in every reference to this time of the winepress of the wrath of God, the kingdom is set up. "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth." (Ver. 9.)

CHAPTER XV.

WE must not however suppose that the fierceness of the wrath of God will only be poured out on the multitudes gathered in the land given to Israel. Another distinct revelation is now given: John saw a sign, "great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues: for in them is filled up the wrath of God." As usual God gives us the security of the remnant, who get the victory, by being slain, it would appear, in this tribulation. (This new vision, however, is occupied with the time of the beast, or last diabolical empire.) They stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. It is a sea of glass mingled with fire: enduring purity, though they have passed through the fire of tribulation. Their song is the joyful praise suited to saved nations. It is the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb—the triumph of judgment over evil. It is also the triumph of the Lamb, the living Lord who only is holy. Faith sees the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven open. This is also very blessed. Whatever may be the state

of Satan's kingdom on earth, the testimony of God is secure in heaven.

Verse 6. The seven angels came out of heaven. The judgments about to be poured out are now direct from God. "One of the four living creatures gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials, full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever." This is more terrible than the judgments of the trumpets. None escape the torments of these vials of divine wrath. Yes, men will then feel the wrath of God against sin.

The first vial is poured out upon the earth, upon the ordered empire, the men who had the mark of the beast.

The second is poured upon the sea, the nations outside the ordered empire of the beast. All becomes putrid corruption; all appearance of life is extinguished.

The third is poured out on the rivers and fountains of waters, and they become blood. Every source of blessing becomes utterly corrupt! The angel of the nations declares the righteousness of God in His judgments. Another answers from the altar. Yes, the wrath of God against sin as felt once by the holy Victim laid on the altar, will be the character of that wrath now poured upon those who have finally rejected the mercy to men proclaimed through His blood. These are the men who have shed the blood of His saints.

The fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun. The supreme power, that is the beast, will burn men with fire. And there is no repentance, men are then utterly given up to judgment. "They repented not to give him glory."

The fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast, &c. What a termination to all the boast of men! Yet this must be so; God has been rejected; Christ has been rejected, and there is no other true light. And now the very throne of the beast, the empire, is "full of darkness." Men will then be in the deepest distress; "They gnawed their tongues for pain." They blaspheme God, and there is no repentance. And these things must shortly come to pass. Poor, careless souls, awake, ere it be for ever too late.

"And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates." This seems to be the breaking up of the eastern boundary of the empire. The way is thus open for the Asiatic nations to come on the scene. The awful character of the imitation trinity of iniquity now comes out—the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, or Antichrist. From them demons proceed, working miracles to gather the nations to the great battle of the great day of God Almighty. They are gathered together like the kings of Canaan in Judges v. 19.

"And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air." The most awful figures are used

to describe this closing vial of divine wrath on rebellious man; such a break up as never had been known amongst men. "And there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great." The judgment of God on apostate Christendom is now fully revealed; indeed, occupies the next two chapters. "To give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." And every island fled away. All separate security, and all that seemed fixed and immovable disappears. Men are smitten with heavy and fierce judgments from heaven. The figure is that of a mighty hail-storm.

This is a brief outline of these seven judgments of the seven angels clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. The wickedness of men will then be punished according to the purity and righteousness of God. Now impurity and wickedness pervade all classes, and all business, and even all governments of this deeply sunken Europe; yea, of the whole world. The Lord knoweth them that are His, and He will surely take them to Himself. But these judgments, according to the holiness and righteousness of God, will surely come to pass. Not a verse in this Revelation shall fail to be accomplished. There may have been foreshadowings of these future judgments; but to endeavour to interpret these awful revela-

tions, as having received their complete fulfilment in past history, is worse than childishness. It can only be attempted by men asleep, as the Lord foretold they would be. While He tarried they all slumbered and slept. Surely it is high time to awake. The last scenes are developing. All is in readiness. There is only just time to awake. Oh ! awake, thou that sleepest. Lord, awake us each one.

We desire to avoid all fanciful interpretation of details, but just to call attention to the undoubted facts in this wondrous book made known to the servants of God.

We now approach the most solemn subject that can be brought before the notice of Christendom—that which calls itself the true church ; that which is dreaming at this moment of universal conquest ; that which will use any means, however diabolical, to accomplish that conquest. How many, with the Bible in their hands, have been dreaming that the Christianity we see around us would extend until it had converted the world. This dream, however, is fast disappearing. Still the solemn question is, *What will be the end of Christendom ?*

May our God, by the Holy Spirit, enable us to understand His answer to that question in the next two chapters.



HAVE YOU PERFECT LOVE?

SUCH was the question an aged Christian asked the writer a short time ago. The earnest manner in which he made this inquiry, shewed how long, and how anxiously, he had been seeking perfect love; but seeking it where it was not to be found. He said, "A person called on me lately and said he had had perfect love for five years: have you perfect love?" "Yes," I said, "I have had perfect love about fifty-two years. Nay, I may go back fifty millions of years, and that love was perfect. But mark, it was, and is, not my love to God; no, it was the love of God to me."

My aged friend had made the common mistake of seeking perfect love in himself. This, no doubt, had hindered the progress and joy of his soul and his life, and sadly blighted his service. To use his own words—though we hope he was mistaken—he said all would have to be burnt up, and he be saved so as by fire. He could not remember a single soul converted to Christ through his long ministry.

We believe many souls, even aged Christians, are under this serious mistake, seeking for perfect love in themselves. Not having clear views of divine grace, they will turn to such a scripture as Luke x. 25-59; and supposing that the Lord

preached the gospel to the lawyer who came to Him tempting Him, they conclude that the way to obtain eternal life is to have perfect love; to love God "with all thy heart," &c. Now it was just because man had not done this, and had no strength to do this, that Christ died for the ungodly. It was the law: and the apostle says, "If there had been a law given which could have given *life*, verily righteousness should have been by the law." (Gal. iii. 21.) Trying then to find perfect love to God in myself, is trying to be saved by the law.

There is however another scripture grievously misunderstood by those who are seeking perfect love in themselves. "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is so are we in this world." (1 John iv. 17.) The question here is this, Is this the correct translation, or the reading in the margin? "Herein is love with us made perfect," &c. "Herein" in what is that love made perfect, even right on to the day of judgment? Is it our love to God, or His love to us? As it says "Herein," let us examine carefully the context. The apostle, conscious of inspiration, could say, "We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us." It is not he that heareth the church, but he that heareth the words of the inspired apostles. Let us then, believing this, hear what John says on this subject of love with us made perfect. All

who do not receive the inspired word are in error.

What then is the source of this love? In us, or in God? "Love is of God." Its source is of God. Is it divine, or human? "God is love." It is His very nature. If we love, it is a proof we are born of God—have His nature.

God has manifested this love in two things, and both prove this perfect love to be of Him, and not of us.

"In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might *live through him*." Yes, the love of God was perfect to us, when we were dead in sins. In this very thing God has commended His love to us, in that whilst we were enemies Christ died for us. The cross manifested the perfect love God had to us, before the foundation of the world. Jesus asks, and waits for the time when the world shall know that God has loved them as He has loved Christ. Yes, this is perfect love from all eternity. (John xvii. 23.) And Jesus says to us, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you." (John xv. 9.) Such is the perfect love of God to us from all eternity. That love stands out in all its eternal perfection when we had no love to God. All was forfeited through sin. He sent His Son that we might *live through Him*.

But there is a second proof that it is God's

perfect love to us, and not our perfect love to Him. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." That love which gave the infinite Son which dwelt in His bosom, surely is perfect love. The cross reveals the hatred of man, not his love to God. But it reveals also the perfect love of God to us. Meditate on this, and seek not to reverse this by finding perfect love in self. If we love, it is the proof that God dwells *in* us, and His love, not ours, is perfected in us. Can you say, I have known and believed the love that God hath to us? God is love. Do you really know and believe this?

Thus the context shews most conclusively that it is not our love to God that is perfect, but His love is perfected with us, or, "Herein is love with us made perfect." Since God has loved us from all eternity, even as He has loved His only begotten Son; and through that Son, has given us eternal life, and provided for the display of His love to us, through this moment of time, and to all eternity—having given us life that can never perish—having brought us into favour in Christ that can know no cloud of change—having loved us in Christ, with a love, from which nothing can separate us—having by His atoning blood, cleared away according to His glory, all our sins and defilement—we can indeed say, "Herein is love with us made perfect, that we may have

boldness in the day of judgment : because as he is so are we in this world."

Yes, the knowledge of and belief of this perfect love casteth out fear. How can we fear the One who so loves ? The effect of this is there is no fear in love. There is no effort, but "We love him because he first loved us." And His love is shed abroad in our hearts.

Oh, what a contrast this is to the vain effort to find perfect love in ourselves ! There is however one serious question, If the love of God is thus perfect to us, how is it we abide so little in the full enjoyment of His perfect love ? Let us hear what Jesus says as to this. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love ; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." (John xv. 9-11.) Is not this the solution why there is so little *enjoyment* of the perfect love of God to us in Christ ?

Are we doing our own will ? Why are we doing this or that ? is it because others do so ? Did Jesus ever walk by such a principle ? Did He do anything because the scribes and Pharisees did it ? He would do nothing but that for which He had the word of the Father. He could say, "I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment,

what I should say and what I should speak.' (John xii. 49.)

How can we be filled with His joy, if we are not seeking to do His will? Only let us sit down and write all we do for a week, even religiously, and we shall be astonished how much we do simply because others do so; without a command from the Lord, or an intimation in His word that such is His will.

In these last days He commends us to Himself and the word of His grace. If then we turn to what calls itself the church, or to human ordinances, or to man in any form, can we expect anything but leanness of soul?

May the Lord use these meditations to turn us to Himself, the source of perfect love; and to keep His commandments; to own the whole inspired word of His grace, as the will of the Lord; and however it may differ from the thoughts and ways of men, we shall find, just as we keep His commandments, so shall we abide in His love.

But let us beware, on the other hand, of turning from the good and perfect love of God to the law; or the principle that God will love us if we only first love Him with all our hearts. Surely man has been fully tried on that principle, and nothing was found in him but hatred to God. Does not the cross at the end of the trial of man fully prove this? whilst it brings out the infinite

love of God to us. We love Him now, because He thus first loved us. To Him be all praise.

C. S.



NOTES ON 2 CORINTHIANS IV., V.

“WORKETH for us . . . while we look.” This is a matter of fact; either our light affliction *is*, or it is not, working for us.

Is it our manner of life? And our manner of life ought to be according to our citizenship. Paul always walked with his life in his hand; he had counted the cost. Where are we? Have we the Christian religion as a colouring to our old life, or have we really the new life? The profession of Christianity ought to coincide with the profession of Christ now, Christ-likeness.

“Knowing the terror of the Lord . . . for we must all appear.” But we are made manifest unto God. All judgment is committed to the Son, so that I cannot think of a judgment unconnected with Christ. Everything connected with me must come out there, but I shall be manifested in glory. To think of the impenitent dead standing in their bodies, and there to be judged! I do not speak of us at the same time, when we are manifested at the judgment seat of Christ—all, everything, will be naked and open. I do not say that it is not all pardoned. I do not suppose there will be a thing there we should wish to

conceal, for all will tell out to His glory. There is nothing that will not come out there, whether good or bad ; it is a kind of moral necessity. The church is caught up, and with Him there He settles things. Not a mere crowd, but an orderly company of glorified saints—a multitude caught up—coming down an organised city, every one in his place.

I am not going to be some great thing, and yet “the least in the kingdom ;” only think of the least here being in the likeness of Him !

The bride is a whole thing. See the clouds reflecting the sun’s light, the beauty so bright that you can scarcely look at it, but every particle of the lovely colours are all the light of the sun.

We rejoice with trembling, knowing how fearful a thing it is for those out of Christ to fall into the hands of the living God.

Why am I not afraid of being manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ ? Because I have been manifested before the judgment-seat of God. He has looked me through and through, and He has forgiven. And as to reckoning it again, why, *there* is Christ. And He ever liveth to make intercession for us. And I believe those that realise it have power against sin.

We want to live Christ, that there can be no question with others whose we are. There may have been a bright conversion ; but has the pro-

gress been such that those caring for us see Christ formed in us, that we are manifest to their conscience? Paul had passed the judgment of their consciences.

Christ knows the worst, all the "ins" and "outs;" we could not explain them even. He not only knows the worst, but justifies. We are glad He knows all, and we can go on from day to day so, not without self-judgment, of course. He hath reconciled us to God, and that knowing the worst of us, and we shall know more of our evil as we move on.

We have to take possession. True, there are the wicked spirits in heavenly places; but who can harm us if followers of that which is good?

"Perfecting holiness." What a sphere for our ambition! It is impossible we should enjoy the grace, and not *go on*, and we cannot be satisfied unless going on.

G. J.



A WORD ON THE ATONEMENT.

It has been denied emphatically that the whole work of atonement was accomplished in this world when Christ was on the cross, and affirmed that the propitiatory part of it yet remained for Him to make "in heaven and after death."

This seems to me to be a very serious statement to be allowed to pass unchallenged. It has been suggested that a few remarks having a formal

reference to this novel position might be in place. My remarks shall be very few. None would have been needed had the author only given that as his own opinion or belief, for in that case the reader would have been apprised of its peculiarity, and would have considered it in that light. But he has written as though what he says is the orthodox view of the atonement, and this has unsettled some minds, and raised the question, "Was the whole work of atonement actually accomplished on the cross, or, did one essential part of it remain to be accomplished afterwards and elsewhere?"

I remark (1.) The atonement is the sin-bearing work of Christ. It is perfectly unique in its nature; there was nothing like it before, nor could there be anything like it after. "Substitution" and "Propitiation" are terms used properly enough, to express two aspects of the same work. It was all accomplished at the same time, when God dealt with Christ on the cross, hiding His face from Him, and causing His wrath to press upon Him. To teach otherwise is to deny the unique nature of the atonement, and implies that substitution alone required suffering and wrath, and that propitiation was of a different nature altogether, and could be accomplished without suffering and wrath.

(2.) Now the doctrine on this grave subject under review is novel; it is neither the faith of

evangelical Christians since the Reformation, nor is it according to scripture. But my present concern is only to point out, that the writer has put it forth as the received faith of all, and appears to regard as novel and false, the doctrine that the entire work of atonement was accomplished in this world when the Son of man was lifted up on the cross. He says of this doctrine, that if it be received, it would sweep away all hope of salvation. Hence, there is certainly a vital question at issue.

(3.) He has left the matter still in a measure of obscurity from his own point of view, for he has not told us plainly at what time and in what state our Lord accomplished the second essential part of atonement. A few years ago the thought was put forth poetically, that our ever adorable Lord went in spirit immediately after death, and appeared in a kind of official manner before the Father. But, so far as I now remember, the author of that thought attached no doctrine to it. Then again, in recent times, some took up John xx. 17, and asserted that our Lord ascended privately on the morning of the resurrection, before He allowed any to come in personal contact with Him. But this was only an interpretation. I never heard any one affirm that it was to complete an essential part of atonement. As an interpretation one would not be troubled about it, even when not agreeing with it. But the writer has put forth a

new doctrine as to the atonement. He emphatically denies that it was finished on the cross, and affirms that one essential part was made in heaven, and after death ; although he has not told us whether he connects this with an alleged private ascension, founded on John xx 17, or, with an official appearance before the throne, in the disembodied state, immediately after death. But I infer that he connects it with the latter.

(4.) Whichever of the two theories he may elect divides, in a purely mechanical way, the unique sin-bearing work of Christ, and I believe subverts it, and introduces a spurious atonement, neither Jewish nor Christian. He who adopts it must ignore the rending of the veil, and will soon find himself in an inextricable confusion as to what atonement really is.

(5.) It introduces confusion into the revealed relationships and mutual actions of the first and second Persons of the Trinity in the work of atonement. It was then, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It was God in the majesty of His own nature dealing with Christ, who was then the holy, obedient and suffering Victim. But afterwards it was, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." The very thought of Christ having anything further to do by way of making atonement is to me horrible beyond expression. He who knows what sin is, knows

that it deserves wrath; and there was wrath when God dealt with Christ as to sin.

But I am only stating briefly the question at issue. I close by affirming that the doctrine put forth is not the received faith at all, and I believe it to be very false indeed, and if received would subvert the work on which our souls rest with divine certainty for eternity. Bold announcements of error require to be answered plainly.

B. F. P.

[In the Press, a Tract on this subject by the same writer.
G. Morrish, London.]

CORRESPONDENCE.

7. C. A. S., Brixton. There does not appear to be any point of truth involved in the use of "kosmos," in Matthew iv. 8, and "oikoumenee" in Luke iv. 5. It is quite true the latter is never used in the New Testament for the material globe; but, as in Matthew xxiv. 14 and Luke ii. 1, for the people or kingdoms of the world. "Kosmos" is frequently used in the same sense, and also to denote the material globe. See the following examples of both: Matthew v. 14; xiii. 35, 38; Luke xi. 50; John i. 10; iii. 16, 17; xvii. 9; Hebrews iv. 3, and many others.

"God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Luke adds, "for all live unto Him." Unto men the departed are dead, and their graves are with us, with the body sown in corruption; but they live to God, as may be seen in Moses being with Christ on the mount. So that whilst they are dead as to the body, they are alive as to the spirit. Matthew xxii. 32 and Romans xiv. 9

are in perfect harmony. God is the God of the living as to departed spirits, and in that sense Jesus is the Lord both of the departed dead as to their spirits, and also of those who are still here alive in the body. He is also Lord as to those who have eternal life and will be raised at His coming, and Lord also of "the rest of the dead who lived not again until the thousand years were finished." "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." Men may despise and reject Him now, they will have to stand before Him then.

S. A. C., Deptford. The address in 2 John is to the elect lady; therefore the word elect would be specially applicable to her. John had found of her children walking in the truth. (Ver. 4.) Verse 5, "And now I beseech thee, lady." The assembly is not addressed in John's epistles. But here it is the responsibility of the elect lady to refuse such as have not the truth of the Father and the Son; or whosoever goeth beyond or addeth to the doctrine of Christ.

The use of the term "elect lady," does not imply that her children who were walking in the truth were not the elect. Surely those wondrous words "elect of God, holy and beloved" (Col. iii. 12) are applicable to every child of God on earth. Error did so abound, even by the end of the first century, that John rejoiced greatly to find any walking in the truth. If so then, how much more so now! May every thought be tested by the word of God, "For many deceivers are entered into the world." And though we are to love one another, yet we are not to be misled by the pretensions of love. "This is love that we walk after his commandments."

PAUL'S DEFENCE OF THE GOSPEL

WHAT was Paul's object, or rather the Holy Ghost's object, in giving us the Epistle to the GALATIANS? Was it not just this, the earnest defence of the gospel? Nothing can be more needed at the present time than an equally earnest study of this defence. We invite our readers to this, not merely to what we may have been given to say upon it, but to an earnest study of the Epistle itself. Remember, the subject is one of paramount, yea, of eternal moment to our souls; and especially if we find that the different gospel here exposed and resisted, has become the almost universal gospel adopted in this day.

Chapter i. 1. "Paul, an apostle, not of [or from] men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead." This then is our starting-point, and it is most carefully defended throughout the Epistle. Well did the Holy Spirit know that those bringing in the different gospel would soon become the predominant party, and that their delusive argument would be the pretension of authority derived from man—what is commonly called apostolic succession. Once admit that, then you must accept as gospel whatever they please to teach, however contrary it may be to the word of God.

We shall see, lower down in the chapter, how careful the apostle is to sweep all this away. He is not of men, or from man, neither is he by or through any authority of men. The true servant of God receives his commission, his call, his authority, from the ascended Christ. "He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors, and teachers," &c. And if we search every line in the New Testament we cannot find a single instance where one of these derived his call, or authority, or ordination from man, or by or through men. Elders and deacons did, but that was quite a different matter. It might be said, But was not Paul ordained to the ministry in Acts xiii.? How could this be, since Paul was a minister of Jesus Christ at the time? And mark, the Holy Ghost called and sent him, and Barnabas, another well-known servant of Christ, to a special work, or, as we may say now, on a mission. And the assembly, not apostles, at Antioch, most solemnly commended them to that mission, with fasting and prayer, and laying on of hands.

If a man receives his authority from man, he is a servant of men. The true servant of Christ receives his commission direct from Christ, "and God the Father, who raised him from the dead."

Paul also could say, "and all the brethren that are with me." The assembly at Rome, and even at Jerusalem was with him, as we shall see.

Without further introduction, he states in a few words the glad tidings to the churches in Galatia—that which he has to defend.

“Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” In this gospel all is from God, and accomplished by our Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing was of or from man. Grace, peace, and deliverance. The infinite price of redemption was given, freely given. “Who gave himself for our sins.” That one sacrifice stands out in all its infinite and eternal efficacy. This is according to the will of God and our Father. With Paul then the gospel is Christ alone. Whatever perverts the gospel is an insult to Christ, and would rob the believer of redemption and deliverance.

Just as when the ransom price had been paid according to the will or vote of the British parliament, for the redemption of the West Indian slaves—to tell a slave it was not enough, that he must supplement it by a life of work and labour, would be to set aside the kindness of the English government, and to rob the poor slave of his liberty, and keep him still in bondage. Yes, this is just what the Judaising teachers were wanting to do in Galatia. To teach anything

besides Christ, or in addition to Christ, for righteousness and redemption, would be to set aside Christ altogether. Yes, Paul felt that the whole truth of salvation was at stake.

Does not this explain his vehement earnestness? He exclaims, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto a *different* gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ." But what would Paul have said could he have seen the vast army opposed to him since? Popes, princes, cardinals, bishops, and thousands of clergy, bringing in a different gospel, indeed the very "*no gospel*" he is here opposing as introduced into Galatia? The Holy Ghost fore-saw all these when He inspired Paul. May we not then read these words as Paul's answer to such an inquiry? They are so important, we will give the new literal translation. "But if even we, or an angel out of heaven, announce as glad tidings to you [anything] besides what we have announced as glad tidings to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, now also again I say, If any one announce to you as glad tidings [anything] besides what ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now seek to satisfy men or God?"

What earnestness! such a contrast to the indifference of the present day. When do we hear

a man speak like Paul? Now the question is this, To whom do these words apply in this our day? And to whom would they apply during the past centuries? It is not very difficult to answer that inquiry, as the case is put so plainly. To take our illustration of redemption. The British nation gave twenty-two millions for the complete redemption of her slaves. Paul says Christ "gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us." This is the uniform gospel which Paul and the other apostles announced; and that this redemption is complete and eternal. This was the very foundation of everything in their preaching, and was well known to be so. "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." And this redemption every believer had. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Thus every man who was a Christian had this redemption, and had forgiveness of sins. If he had not redemption, and needed something beside the blood of Jesus, then he was not a Christian.

If you have redemption through the blood of Christ, complete and eternal, the forgiveness of all sins, then you are a Christian. If you have not, you are not a Christian. You may be trying

hard to be a Jew, and keep the law; but, to speak the plain truth, you are not a Christian, but under the wrath of God as a rejecter of the free redemption that is in Christ Jesus, for the wrath of God abideth on him that believeth not. (See John iii. 36.) All this will come clearly out, further on, in Paul's defence.

Now do you wonder at Paul's earnestness? Paul *only* announced as gospel Christ and His finished work. He gave Himself: that was the full price of our redemption. To preach anything besides is to set Christ aside. To tell a man he has to do anything for it, is to deny that Christ has done it. It really is, as an old countryman said a few days ago, "To set Christ aside." Turn where you will in Paul's preaching, the terms are so plain that we need make no mistake. Take Acts xiii., that well-known preaching at Antioch. First he announced the death and resurrection of Christ; then forgiveness of sins through Jesus preached to all, and the complete justification of all who believe. Just like the announcement of freedom to the slaves, when the ransom had been paid. The Jews or the Gentiles at Antioch, had no more to do for their redemption than the slaves of Jamaica. And to tell a slave in either case that he had to work for it, for salvation or deliverance, would be simply to *reject* the announcement of freedom. It is a hard and cruel thing to tell a poor lost sinner he must seek to be

saved by prayer, or penance, or sacraments, or temperance, or any other thing. Yes, Paul says, let any one who preaches another gospel be accursed.

But let us go on to the defence. You will agree, reader, that this is a serious matter, and fully justifies Paul's earnestness, yea, vehemence.

It was enough for Paul that he satisfied God in thus announcing the gospel of His beloved Son. Yet, strange to say, that which is so pleasing to God is most distasteful to men. Our natural proud hearts hate the free grace of God. How sad! Paul then lets us know that the gospel he preached was not according to man. "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." The gospel is not to be learnt at Jerusalem or Oxford. The soul must be brought into direct contact with Christ Himself. Saul was a most zealous religionist, but he was darkness itself, as to Christ and His redemption. It is then of vast moment to know that he received his gospel by direct revelation from the Lord Jesus.

Since this was the case, to preach anything different as gospel is to oppose not merely Paul, but to contradict Christ. People go back to the Fathers so called. But it is our privilege to go back to Christ Himself. Yes, Paul received the gospel he defended from Christ. What Christ taught him could not be error; therefore what-

ever is different to the gospel Paul preached must be false. Now what he preached was the free forgiveness of sins through that Jesus who had died on the cross, and had been raised from the dead; and he proclaimed that all who believed were justified from all things. And thus being justified from all things, they had peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Every condition had been met by Christ. Now this justification is without any condition left for man to fulfil, therefore Paul and all Jewish believers with him, had to give up entirely seeking justification by law, or on that principle; and were completely justified by, and in Christ. This, we shall find, is the great point Paul has to defend in this Epistle.

Now before we proceed, how is it with our own souls? Are we for ever justified in Christ, or are we seeking to attain to, to arrive at righteousness before God by practising the righteousness of the law? Here are the two principles. The one is what Christ is to me before God, the other what I can attain to be by righteous works before God. The question of justification before men is shewn in James to be by works, the fruit of faith. But, reader, have you fairly given up all hope, or effort, of doing your best to be delivered, or to be righteous on the principle of works? Is it what Christ has done and what He is, or is it what you hope to

be and do for God? If you should be under this last soul-destroying delusion, so natural and pleasing to the heart of man, may God grant unto you full deliverance by our further meditations on Paul's defence of the gospel, as revealed to Him by the Lord Jesus Christ.

"THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST."

XVII.

CHAPTER XVII.

ONE of the last seven angels is now commissioned to shew the character and end of Christendom, called by its true name, "The great harlot that sitteth upon many waters," **BABYLON THE GREAT.**

The poor, aged, banished apostle of the Lord Jesus could never possibly have had such thoughts of that which then bore the name of the church. We must remember, this is the revelation God gave to him to shew to His servants. How could he ever have had such a thought as that the persecuted church should become the great harlot—murderess? Yet such it has been, and such it is, and such it will be, to its sudden and terrible destruction.

Verse 2. The kings of the earth have committed fornication with this religious system—that which should have been the holy, separated spouse of Christ! Alas, how many pens are there ready to defend and boast of this unholy

connection of the church with state, or the spiritual fornication of the kings of the earth with this great harlot! The very senses of the inhabitants of the earth have been taken away, as in drunkenness, with this mixture, or fornication, of the church and the world.

Verse 3. Rome is actually revealed as the seat of this great harlot. "And I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy; having seven heads and ten horns." These are the well-known symbols of the fourth empire, Rome. We have seen the source of this empire, and its director to be Satan, the dragon in chapter xii.

Two things then are clearly revealed to us here. The harlot sits at Rome where Satan's throne is. This harlot is gorgeously arrayed—assuming the royal colours, decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations, or idolatries. Could words or figures be found to describe more accurately the harlot of Rome, that assumes to be the mother of all churches, and yet is full of idolatry? Whilst these marks are distinctly seen in her history, yet her future will be still more arrogant, when the Roman empire is restored again. For it is the beast that is full of blasphemies, and there she has her seat.

She is Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots, the corrupter of every stream. At that time

every religious system in Europe will bear her likeness, and will embrace her abominations. Everything is rapidly preparing. This will be the result when the whole true redeemed church of God has been taken to be for ever with the Lord. The whole of mere professing Christendom will become the Babylon thus described. It may be asked, Can it possibly be that all the dissenting bodies will be swallowed up in Rome or Babylon? Possible! why, are not many of these even now, whilst many true Christians are still amongst them, doing their utmost to hasten on Rome rule? What will be the blindness when the true saints of God, which form the church as built of Christ, are taken away?

Let us not be deceived, this is the revealed end of boasting Christendom. Ah, she calls herself the church. John saw her to be "The woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." This filled him with great astonishment, and well it might. Even to us, with the history of all her wickedness before us, is it not amazing that no cruelty or wickedness is too great, if it can only be thought that it is for the good of the church—that is, this great harlot? Hundreds of thousands of God's saints have been murdered by her. Is she not the instigator of fearful crimes in this day? How little men know that she is still the same!

Verse 7. The angel now proceeds to explain

the mystery of this woman, and the beast that carrieth her. There is then a mystery. A person might say, This is all imagination. The Roman empire did exist, but it no longer exists. Exactly so. "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not." Can any man deny this? When John wrote this revelation the Roman empire did exist in all its imperial power. A time is revealed when it shall not exist. Has this come to pass or not? That is certainly true, at this moment, it is broken up and does not exist; but shall it exist again? Read on and see: "And shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition; and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder," &c. God said it would cease to be: it has done so. God says it will rise again under these terrible conditions: it will; and the harlot called the church will sit on it, and its centre and place is the seven-hilled city of Rome. "The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth." The forms of government of Rome are also given: five had passed away, the sixth, the imperial, then existed; another shall come for a short space; and another, yet of the seventh—the eighth.

Verse 12. This is a very important verse. "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast." These ten kings or kingdoms of the

fourth, or Roman, empire, are distinctly foretold in Daniel. We read : "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed . . . and it shall stand for ever." (Dan. ii. 44.) Some have held the strange mistake, that the kingdom meant the gospel or the church ! The least attention to Revelation xvii. 12, would have shewn this to be impossible. The church had been formed for some fifty or sixty years, and yet these ten kingdoms had not then appeared, neither have they, as there described, ever appeared since that time.

In Daniel vii. the subject is again more fully dwelt upon. Indeed, the awful character of the fourth, or Roman, empire is taken up in its last ten-kingdom form : and one like the Son of man is seen coming in the clouds of heaven, to set up the kingdom of God. "Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise," &c.

Thus in Daniel we learn that the fourth or Roman empire will be in its most terrible character, divided into, or rather composed of, ten kingdoms, immediately before the coming of the Son of man to set up the everlasting kingdom of God. But the objecter might say, Then the

prophecy of Daniel has failed, for the Roman empire has actually passed away, and is not, does not exist as such; and yet none of these things—that is, the ten kings or kingdoms have appeared; the Son of man has not come with the clouds of heaven, and the kingdom of God has not been given to the restored Jews and set up on earth. Our chapter in Revelation makes all this clear. The beast, or fourth empire, was and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit. It is then, when in its most terribly destructive character, that the ten kings appear, and they give their power and strength unto the beast. They are all of one mind in this matter.

The ten kingdoms of this restored Roman empire make war with the Lamb. But the time has now come for Him to put forth His power. For remember, that it is in the days of these kings that God will set up His kingdom.

Now the question is, What will these ten kingdoms do, as it regards the great harlot of apostate Christendom? At the time when they arise, or form the above alliance, she is sitting on the blasphemous beast. How great and far her baneful influence; yea, “The waters which thou sawest, where the harlot sitteth, are peoples, and nations, and tongues.” But she has now run her course. “And the ten horns which thou sawest upon [or as it should be *and*] the beast shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate and

naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.” This is God’s revelation of what the apostasy will become, and of her end. Long has she had her seat at Rome. During this century, especially for fifty years, God has restored the gospel of His grace. And Satan has put forth his wiles to gather as in a net those who had escaped from the dark slavery of Rome. Christendom has rejected the gospel, shuts its eyes and stops its ears, and rushes blind-fold back to Rome. And she, on her part, answers already to verse 18: “And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.”

There are but few kingdoms within the bounds of the old Roman empire that are not nominally under the power of Rome and its darkness; who but God knows how much she rules even England. The felt power of “the woman” becomes greater every year. Every feature of that woman is in strongest contrast to the church of God, which is not of this world. Her great aim and desire is to reign over the kings of the earth.

How little are men aware of what is about to take place in these lands. But Jesus speaks to us, to all whom the Father hath given to Him: “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.) He will not forget this promise. Let us rest in His word with all our souls. This is the next thing, the next event which He presents to faith. This may take place as you read these lines, nay, as they are being written.

And then, assuredly as God has revealed, the fourth or Roman empire will suddenly re-appear as from hell. The false apostate, the great mother of harlots, will be more glorious and blasphemous than ever. She will have her seat upon the beast inspired by Satan. The nations will bear her pride and tyranny no longer, but the ten kingdoms and the beast will throw off all profession of even this apostate Christianity, and burn her with fire. Can we not perceive that everything political and of the world's religion is tending very fast to this same end?

Oh Christians, awake! search the scriptures, and see if these things are so. Is it not high time to awake? Lord Jesus, our eyes are up to Thee. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

But we must next look a little further, at the revealed character and doom of Babylon the Great.



ABIDING IN HIM.

LET us look at the woman in the Pharisee's house, washing the Lord's feet; and at His words: "Abide in me and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit *of itself* except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me."

Fruit-bearing is only the result of abiding in Him, and the real abiding in Him is the being constantly occupied with Him. We get cold if not occupied with Him. Take one day of our mind's course; there are the wanderings and there is the inward spring of evil. It is a course of wandering from the Lord in thought and mind—the effect of being out of communion with the Lord—that is so important whether we fall or not. A person may be walking in a right way, and fall by accident, as we say. But a person may start in a wrong way, and his whole course be wrong; there is a constant going the wrong way; and there is a falling when in the right way. Real fruit-bearing can only be when in the right way, that is, when walking near Him.

The poor woman would not have been in the Pharisee's house if Jesus had not been there. It

is nice to be where Jesus is. I must be in heaven in heart and mind. But wherever He is, there is no obstacle which can keep out love. She loved Him for His grace, and for that which led Him to meet her need. His living Person was there, and she was drawn to Him. There was that in Him which drew her. It is a comparatively easy thing to walk in the presence of one we are drawn to.

If in our own esteem we are sinners above others, and if there is a deep work of God in our souls, and a deep sense of His grace, it does not matter *where* Jesus is, we shall be there. Where there is one of His little ones we shall find him out, however poor and uninstructed. Where He is, and where His are, there shall we be too. And the result of being with Him is conformity to Him. Love attracts to His presence; and in His presence we must be like Him. And to be like Him is to be holy, and the end everlasting life.

He did not say, "Go and sin no more." No, the attractiveness of His presence kept her from that. Her forgiveness—and what that would cost Him!—even absence from the bosom of the Father, the bearing of sin to One so holy—only her own vileness, if she had the sense of *these* things would keep her, would attract her to Jesus; and us, too. And in abiding in Jesus there is fruit-bearing. Having our minds always

in fellowship with Him, the course of our minds will then be fruit-bearing, and the course of our walk will correspond. And thus, and only thus, it is that we shall be kept from falling. May we, in the spirit of this poor thing, not be unable to keep out of His presence. G. J.



PLAIN PAPERS TO DWELLERS ON EARTH.

III.

ABRAHAM.

It is with a sense of relief that one turns from the dark picture of Cain, and the "dwellers on earth," and the sad history of Lot, to the bright one of Abraham, the last of the three characters named in a previous paper.

In Genesis xi. 27 we read of his birth, and from Joshua xxiv. 2 we learn that Terah, the father of Abram, was an idolater, dwelling in Ur of the Chaldees. God calls Abram to come out, and he does so, as we have already seen.

At Haran, however, he and those with him pause, and God has again to speak. Haran is not the promised land, and once more Abram has to go forth, until at length he comes to the land of Canaan, and here God appears to him, and says, "Unto thy seed will I give this land." (Gen. xii. 7.)

What now is the next thing told us of Abram?

Why, in this same verse (7) we read : " And there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him." He becomes at once a worshipper; he is filled with the thoughts of God's wondrous dealings with him, and his heart flows out in worship. Oh ! can we not learn a lesson ? If we have obeyed the call, referred to before, of Matthew xi. 28, what has been the effect upon us ? And note this difference : Abram was called of God to come to a *promised land* ; you and I, dear fellow-christian, have been called to a *blessed Person*. He says, " Come to ME." He, the holy and spotless Lamb of God, died to put away the sin that was the obstacle which kept us away from God, and now, having put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, He calls us to *Himself*. Oh, how much more cause have we to worship than even Abram had ! We are not only brought to Him, but united to Him, are made members of His body, and, as such, are privileged to meet, every first day of the week, around the table of the Lord, Christ Himself in our midst, to praise and worship Him. Do we value this precious privilege ? or do we allow the least little thing to hinder us from being present ? Let us take the lesson Abram's life would teach us.

The rest of chapter xii. records failure : Abram being pressed by famine, instead of relying upon God to supply his need, goes down to Egypt and

falls into sin. It is ever thus when we get off the path of faith, we fall into sin; and, but for the longsuffering and patience of our God, where should we often be? But God follows Abram, and brings him back again, to the very place where he had at first pitched his tent and where his altar was. (Chap. xiii. 3, 4.) And then Abram is in a fit state for God to reveal Himself to him again, as we shall soon see.

We have noticed in the history of Lot, how Abram gives his nephew the choice of land, being quite content to leave himself in God's hands. Is he disappointed? Or is he left without the blessing? Let us look at verses 14-18. As soon as Lot has separated from him, the Lord speaks to him, and tells him to look north, south, east, and west: "For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever;" and again Abram worships.

This is ever God's way, He gives us infinitely more than we are ever called on to give up for Him; the Lord Jesus Christ says, in answer to Peter who had said, "Lo, we have left all, and followed thee," that he shall receive manifold more; ah, dear fellow-christian, in however small a way it may have been, yet have we not proved this true, the more we cleave to Christ, turning away from the world, the more precious we find Him and the deeper our happiness—would that we knew more of it!

Chapter xiv. gives the account of Abram's victory over the conquerors of Sodom and Gomorrah, and his rescue of Lot ; on his return, Melchisedec, king of Salem, a wondrous type of Christ (see Heb. v. 6-10), meets him, and blesses him in the name of the Most High God possessor of heaven and earth ; and Abram gives him tithes of all.

The king of Sodom then offers to Abram the recovered goods ; but the servant of the Most High God will receive nothing at the hands of the world (of which, as we have seen, Sodom is a type), not even a shoe-latchet will he have ; Abram will be rich only by the bounty of God, for he adds, "lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich." (Ver. 23.)

And now how beautiful are the opening words of chapter xv. "*After these things,*" when Abram, entirely separate from the world, is living in faith and dependence on God, the Lord appears to him, and says, "Fear not, Abram : I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."

What blessed words, how they must have rejoiced Abram's heart to hear, what rich compensation for everything else ! But this is not all : God promises him a son, and confirms it by the smoking furnace and burning lamp in the sacrifice ; and in verse 18 again promises to him the land, and to his seed, from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates.

In chapter xvi. Abram and Sarah fail, and seek to make good the promise in their own way, instead of waiting for God to accomplish His own word, in His own time.

But in spite of his failure, God again promises him a son (chap. xvii.), and makes a covenant with him, changing his name from Abram to Abraham, which means a father of a great multitude; and from then on to the end of his life we see how Abraham lived in communion with God; and to him the Spirit of God in scripture twice gives the wondrous title of the "Friend of God." (2 Chron. xx. 7; James i. 23.)

Yet wondrous as this is, the portion of the believer now is infinitely more so. We are told in 1 John iii. 1-3, that we are the *sons* of God, and in the first chapter of that same Epistle (ver. 3) we learn, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." Why do we know so little of it? Even because the things of this world come in, and we too often walk in darkness instead of the light of His presence; the Holy Spirit that dwells in each believer (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20) cannot take of the things of Christ, and shew them unto us (John xvi. 13-15) if our minds and hearts are running on the earth, and the things of this life. Oh, let us see to it that we obey the apostle Paul's injunction, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." It was only

"after these things," when Abraham would receive nothing from, and have nothing to do with, Sodom, that God did thus commune with him.

In the end of chapter xviii. we find Abraham, who is, as it were, above the scene in company with the Lord, looking down on those guilty cities, and thinking of the erring Lot, when he hears of their coming doom, intercedes on their behalf. Lot at the same moment is in Sodom, the very place where judgment is to fall, and little knows of the deliverance which he is about to experience in answer to his uncle's prayers.



BELIEVERS MEETING TOGETHER.

It is difficult to find an express command for believers to meet together. There is an exhortation in Hebrews x., and there is the prayer of the Lord Jesus in John xvii. And there is the history of the Acts of the Apostles, which abundantly proves that Christians did meet together. Even if we had very many positive commands to meet, to do so merely because it was commanded, would be to act upon command.

There is a much higher, though oft forgotten principle, which should bring Christians together. I mean the principle of new life; the outflowing of this new life should be seen in the fact, that Christians do meet together. If I were asked,

why, as Christians, we meet together, I must answer, Because we cannot help it. The disciples went to Galilee after the resurrection of their Lord, because He told them ; but they needed no commandment to bring them together in the upper room at Jerusalem. Their abiding together was the necessary result of the acting of the life of Jesus, which was in them. His circumstances, their own circumstances, everything brought them together. They had hoped that Jesus was their Messiah. They had confessed this hope by following Him. He had been cut off, and they were separated from those who cut Him off. They were outcasts with Jesus. They had one common heart, one common life, one interest, one Spirit. They were necessarily together, unless forcibly kept asunder : and their reason for getting together is ours also. And if there were no hindrances forcibly tending to keep us asunder, we should all come together by the attraction of our new nature, and new circumstances, like needles to a loadstone—that is, to Christ.

The things which prevent Christians coming together are various. There are all the many systems which men have devised, counteracting the attractions of the new life. Great is the difficulty of getting out of the things that we are in, and out of which we must get, if we would gather together. It is something we are in which hinders us from coming together. Naturally

Christians draw together. All in the place who really believe would be together were it not for some hindrances. All are redeemed by the same blood, anointed by the same Spirit, and united to one living Head in heaven. Union and communion are but the eternal life which is in us coming out in action. If we be in communion with our living Head, we shall not be waiting many commands to induce us to gather together; the least hint will be enough. The fact is, God has *put* us together, and we must, unless we be disobedient, remain together till He commands us to separate. Look at John xx., Acts ii., iv., and xx., Ephesians iv., &c. G. J.

CORRESPONDENCE.

9. J. R., Newton-le-Willows. In Romans vi. the Holy Spirit is not speaking so much about water baptism as of that of which baptism by water is a type. He is meeting the common objection to grace. If Christ be all to you, as is set forth in chapter v., then you mean by that that you may go on in sin. How can this be, since we are baptised into, or unto, His death? These persons had accepted the gospel, and the atonement—Christ's death *for* them; but this is death *with* Him: "Buried *with* him." This had been professed even in baptism. Not only that Christ died for them, but they took the place of death *with* Him. A dead person does not then go on in sin. He is to reckon himself dead to

sin and alive to God. Burial in water is a most striking figure of this; but only a figure, not the reality. "The like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us." (1 Peter iii. 21.) We pass from death unto life, like the persons saved out of the flood. It is not accepting the gospel, but rather the results of the gospel. Thus those who believed were baptised. It is not that we are actually dead, buried, and risen; but we take that place; we reckon ourselves to be such. (Compare Col. ii. 12, 20; iii. 1, 2.) Thus you will see the thing signified is death to the old man, and new life in Christ, all sins being forgiven.

Your other question, as to the Lord's supper, will be answered by referring to Acts xx. 7. The disciples came together to break bread. Though the apostle Paul and his companions happened to be there that day, yet it is evident the disciples were accustomed to come together, not merely to feed on the word of God, but to break bread, in obedience to Christ. There is nothing in scripture of the nature of a priest offering a sacrifice for sins now. All that is the effort of Satan, to set aside the infinite value of the one sacrifice on the cross. Neither is there anything of a minister administering the sacrament. That also takes away the true character of communion: that is, all having equal fellowship in His death. Read carefully 1 Corinthians x. 16, 17. To set a man between the saints and God to administer a sacrament, would alter the whole thing. It is all the members of the body of Christ. "We bless," &c.

But, then, it is a real act—real bread, real wine—so read 1 Corinthians xi. 23-26. Now if

Paul received this from the Lord, he could not have obeyed Christ if he neglected this blessed ordinance of fellowship in breaking of bread. "This do" is the injunction, and this was to continue until Jesus comes again. (Ver. 26.) Then, believing these inspired words, how can we despise the words of Christ to Paul? It is quite true the church of God is nowhere now seen together in one place, doing this; but wherever two or three are gathered to His name, they will surely desire to do His will, just as though all the church was doing so.

10. F. S., Wincanton.—It would seem that the Holy Ghost did so order that the serious question of the attack on the gospel at Antioch should not be settled there, but at Jerusalem by the apostles, elders, and the assembly; so that all occasion for division should thus be avoided. (Acts xxi.) And though, in the present ruined state of Christendom, we have neither apostles, nor official elders of the church (for the church is nowhere in unity as then), yet surely we learn the mind of the Lord in all such cases now. When serious error comes in undermining the gospel, we should seek the council of the brethren in the fear of the Lord, and in dependence on the Holy Ghost. And where this is the case, it is a most serious thing to set aside the decision of such an assembly.

The Lord is still present where two or three are gathered to His name. If we set this aside, there is nothing left but utter confusion. What we need in these days is to wait patiently on the Lord until we know His mind. May He preserve us from all self-will on the one hand, and from all allowance of false doctrine on the other.

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.

XVIII.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WE come now to the fall and judgment of Babylon the Great—the woman that sitteth on the seven mountains: the well-known symbol of Rome. An angel came down from heaven to declare her true character and terrible overthrow. Now has there been, and is there, a vast system of idolatry and wickedness, having its seat at Rome, that answers to these fallen characters—a false system of religion that will be the habitation of demons, and the hold of every unclean, foul spirit? And have all nations been intoxicated with this system of wickedness and sought the favour of this woman? And is she connected with all the worldliness and riches of the world?

If our eyes have been opened to know the holy and heavenly character of the true church of Christ as built by Him—not of this world though in it—"Elect, holy, and beloved," the exponent of Christ on earth, then we must at once perceive that that which *pretends* to be the mother church of all churches answers, not to that which is built by Christ, but in every particular to the woman as here described. This wickedness may be more fully developed as it will be when the true church is gone to be

With the Lord. For centuries she has been the habitation of demons. Where has there been more cruelty than is found in her, Satan using her to put to death the saints of God? What is she doing and plotting to do at this moment? Ah, England, thou hast shut thine eyes to the gospel of the grace of God, and now thou art blinded. The whole power of Romanism is determined to crush thee, and thou knowest it not! But oh, ye Christians that are in her at this moment, what do you think of her lies and despotism, and murders, and plots, and diabolical cruelty? Can you think the idolatry and luxury that characterises this great Babylon in which you are found in of God? What does God say to you? "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins."

If you do not come out of her, then remember that you are partakers of her unparalleled iniquities, which will yet increase more and more. "Her sins have reached up to heaven." Whose sins? The sins of that woman which calls herself the mother church, whose seat is on the seven hills of Rome. Do you hear the voice from heaven, "Come out of her, my people"?

No doubt she will prosper amazingly during the short period of the power of the dragon and the beast. But her overthrow will be sudden and terrible, like a great millstone cast into the midst of the sea.

“And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.” What is said of Cain may be said of her in every case where she has put to death a saint of God. “And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous.” (1 John iii. 12.) It is not only that this great, idolatrous system is not Christian, but it hates Christianity and seeks to destroy it. And oh, how sad it is to be blinded by Satan and know it not. How soon she will receive her just reward.

Reader, we are close on the very coming of Christ to take His blood-bought church, and apostate Christendom will ripen fast and get ready for her sudden overthrow in judgment. It is a solemn inquiry, Am I helping on Babylon, or in blessed separation from her?

Yes; the ten kings and the beast will destroy her! It will be sudden and terrible. Let us not forget the destruction of Christ-rejecting Jerusalem. And is the Babylon of wickedness to go on for ever?

CHAPTER XIX.

ALL heaven is moved at the destruction and judgment of this great harlot. Can we wonder at this when we think how God has borne in patience with her wickedness for so many centuries? Now can there be any mistake as to

who this great harlot is ? We are aware of the effort made to deceive Christendom by assuming that this harlot is literal Babylon restored on the Euphrates. But she is not literal Babylon, but "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT." She sits upon the scarlet beast, having seven heads and ten horns ; and that in its last, restored, diabolical state. She is intoxicated with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. Her vast influence is over peoples, and nations, and tongues. She is fallen, and her last state is that she becomes the habitation of demons, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. She is in this state when the ten kingdoms of the Roman empire shall be formed and give their power to the beast or head of the empire ; then they and the beast shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire—and thus great Babylon shall come into remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. All this is plain revelation.

Now is there anything on earth that answers to this ? Is there any great ecclesiastical system that has its seat at the seven-hilled city ? Has it *fallen, fallen* from what it was ? Read the epistle of Paul to the church of God in that city. Read every verse, and compare it with that vast system that calls itself the church now, and can

anything be found more opposite in doctrine and practice? Whatever you find in Rome is the opposite of Christianity. And what is most remarkable, every feature of MYSTERY-BABYLON is found at this moment in her; not fully developed, but developing. Soon her sins will have reached up to heaven, and God will remember her iniquities. We are compelled to admit these things are so. May the Lord's people who may be in her, hear the words of God: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins."

Now since these things are so, can we wonder at the outburst of joy in heaven at her overthrow and judgment? Hear that mighty "voice of much people in heaven saying, Alleluia, salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great harlot," &c. Solemn words! "And her smoke rose up for ever and ever." Oh poor, intoxicated England, how art thou also ensnared by the great harlot!

Some may be ready to say, How can these things be? How can Christendom come to such a terrible end? We have been expecting that the church would conquer the whole world. Others will say, We expected the gospel, as now preached, would convert the whole world. Still others will say, These things cannot be, for Christ said to Peter, "Thou art Peter [a stone], and

upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." How, then, can it become a vast system of worldly power, corrupting the earth, and God destroying it by these ten infidel nations? The answer to all these things is this: it is not that which Christ builds, but that apostate mystery of iniquity which man builds and has built. We will look shortly at that which Christ is building.

But, first, what have been the facts? What had that outward profession of Christianity become even before the apostle John departed? Was it not even then the last time, because there were many antichrists and many false prophets? (1 John ii. 18, iv. 1.) And see what was the state of the seven assemblies in Revelation ii. and iii. Read again the sure inspired words of Paul. (Acts xx. 29, 30.) See the awful state of the professing church described in 2 Timothy iii. 1-9. Then, again, 2 Peter ii., the whole chapter. Then read Jude. If we believe these scriptures, we must admit that the unscriptural doctrine of the conversion, or conquest of the world by the church, is a strange delusion of Satan to deceive men.

What is the condition of those nations and districts where the church of Christ was first planted? The Mahommedan religion, with its only hope of a paradise of beastly uncleanness,

reigns over those very lands. And is the Romanism of the western empire any better? Has Christ built either of these systems of black iniquity? A thousand times No!

Have the words of Christ failed, then? Let that vast multitude gathered in heaven to celebrate the judgment of the great harlot answer as to that which Christ has built. Will you read what they, with a voice like mighty thunders, say: "Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white," &c. Paul, writing of this, said: "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it: that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." (Eph. v. 25.) What a contrast to Mystery-Babylon! Reader, to which do you belong?

Now in this supreme moment, when the church as the bride or wife of the Lamb is presented to Him glorious, in the brightness of purity, without a spot, then will it be seen that the gates of hell have not prevailed against her. Ah, many of those who compose the church of Christ, have been dragged from their homes, buried for long

in dark and loathsome dungeons; and put to cruel torture and shameful death at the orders of the cruel bishops of Babylon the Great. But have these gates of hell prevailed against a single member of the body of Christ? No! not one has perished!

Death cannot separate from the love of God in Christ. But the dead in Christ will have been raised first, and we who may remain until He comes, shall have been changed in a moment, and taken with them to be with the Lord. The gates of hell have not prevailed, the church—the wife of the Lamb—is presented glorious, amid the high alleluias of the great multitude, called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

The four and twenty elders and the four living creatures worship God when Babylon, the great harlot, is judged. And then the bride, separated from the multitudes in heaven, takes her true place as the wife of the Lamb. Thus judgment has begun at the house of God, and apostate Christendom is the first to be destroyed. Then shall it be said, God “hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.” The figure of marriage is carried out in the blessedness of those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. The bride will have her own peculiar place, though there may be vast numbers of Old Testament saints, and saints saved after the church has been taken during the time of

the judgments on the earth, described in this book.

How solemn to think that all these events are at the very door. The various actors and principles are fast developing themselves. Assuredly, reader, we are hastening on to one of these events, either to form part of that Mystery-Babylon, or to form part of the church presented glorious to Him for whom we wait. Now to which do you belong at this moment, for the next may be too late? It is in a moment that the living members of Christ will be changed, and then for ever be with their Lord. (See 1 Cor. xv. 51; 1 Thess. iv. 15-18.)

Let us next inquire what will take place after the destruction of the apostate harlot, and the marriage of the Lamb.



PLAIN PAPERS TO DWELLERS ON EARTH.

IV.

ABRAHAM.

WE have traced the history of this wondrous man up to chapter xx., and here, alas, again we read of failure; but in chapter xxi. Jehovah fulfils His promise to Abraham, and gives him a son. Isaac is born, and the outward form of circumcision shews him to be set apart for God, in obedience to the covenant of chapter xviii.

7-14, so that we may say he was separate from his birth. Is it not very marked how the principle of separation runs through the whole of God's dealings with Abraham? and now with Isaac also?

From this child of promise—Isaac—is to spring the great nation God had promised, and more blessed still, through whom was to come the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who was to be their Saviour and Messiah, thus fulfilling that wondrously blessed promise which brought in the poor Gentiles. "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. xii. 3.)

Ishmael now is cast out; the divine teaching on this we have in Galatians iv. 22-31.

Isaac grows up, and almost reaches manhood, when God calls to Abraham, and bids him offer up this very child of promise, even Isaac. And will he, can he do it? Can he thus give up the promises and slay his son? Yes, when bidden of God he can, and does, as we see in chapter xxii. How touching is that scene! As they go up the mountain, laden with the wood, the fire and the knife, Isaac asks a very natural question, "But where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" (Ver. 7.) Abraham's answer is most beautiful: "My son, God will provide himself a lamb." (Ver. 8.) What marvellous faith his was!

They reach the top of the mount, and Isaac permits himself to be bound on the altar.

Abraham takes the knife to slay his son, when God again speaks : " Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him : for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me." (Ver. 12.) God commends his obedience, and renews His covenant with him in still more beautiful terms. (Vers. 16-18.)

And did God provide Himself a lamb ? Indeed He did. A ram was found caught in the thicket, which was sacrificed instead of Isaac ; but the Lamb of God's providing was not given till nearly two thousand years after ; I refer to the Lamb of God in John i. 29.

Abraham yielding up Isaac is a striking picture of God Himself, who yielded His only Son that He might die for poor perishing sinners. Oh, think of it ! for Jesus there was no escape if we must be saved. God *spared* Isaac, but the word of God tells us that He "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." (Rom. viii. 32.) What wondrous love ! Oh, dear unsaved one, may this love win you to Himself now, and break down every barrier that keeps you away from Him.

And here we may leave the history of this wonderful man, and take up the many points of his life, which may be helpful lessons to us.

In Hebrews xi. 8-19 we learn that it was *by faith* Abraham lived and acted thus ; by faith he

first obeyed the call to come forth, not even knowing where he was going: it was *faith* and *obedience* all through, and so it must be with us.

Then again, as Abraham who dwelt in tents, and the Jews, his descendants, who are spoken of as "strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. xi. 13), so the Christian is a stranger and a pilgrim here; he is born of God, and as the Lord Himself says, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John xvii. 16); and being thus called out of it, he is sent back into the world, to testify by his life that he belongs to Christ, and to speak of Christ to those around him; and as to his own path to walk by faith, looking up to God for guidance for every step. Abram knew not where he was going, neither does the Christian know the path God is leading him in; but he knows that "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom. viii. 28.) And is not this enough? "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." (2 Cor. xii. 9.) We have too His blessed assurance, "My God shall supply all your need." (Phil. iv. 19.)

Are we content to have all our sources and supplies from above?

But not only is our home in heaven, our Saviour is there too, and it is from thence that we look for Him to return, and take His saints

to Himself, to be with Him and like Him for ever.

And now in closing, I should like to ask the same question I began with, Where do you dwell? Are you engrossed with this world, with pleasure, riches and the things of this life? If so, again I must remind you that this earth is not a safe dwelling-place. Cain did not find it so; Lot did not either; and in the Revelation we see that the *dwellers on earth* will not find it safe, for there is a time of judgment coming.

Or, Are you a stranger and a pilgrim here? living here for the time only, and having all your springs and sources from above? Then look up, and behold what will be your portion in the coming time of judgment on the earth? You will be with the Lord Himself, the One who is the judge; and to be with the One who has loved us so much, and to be like Him too. Never more to grieve Him, nor bring dishonour on His name, will far more than make up for any trials or difficulties we have had to pass through in the path of faith and obedience down here.

The apostle Paul, who passed through more trials than any one ever did experience except the Lord Himself (see 2 Cor. xi.), says, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (Rom. viii. 18.)

Is not all this blessing worth anything and

everything that this poor world can give? Can you find anything to equal it?

Let us then be as Christ would have us, walking in the path of faith and obedience, that when He comes we may not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

PAUL'S DEFENCE OF THE GOSPEL.

II.

GALATIANS I.

HERE we may notice the great human objection to the gospel, as revealed by Christ to His servant Paul. Whoever preaches the same gospel is invariably charged with antinomianism, that is, the setting aside of the law in the sense of liberty to break it. Paul speaks of this, "(as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just." (Rom. iii. 8.) And again, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" Read his answer. (Rom. vi. 1-15.)

But what an answer to this insane charge against the gospel taught to Paul by Christ, in our chapter (Gal. i. 15-16): "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen;

immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood," &c. No one can read the conversion of Saul but must admit that it was by pure, unmerited favour. It was "by his grace," or free favour. But he says, "it pleased God . . . to reveal his Son *in* me." Not only what He had done for him, but *in* him. Yes; God took up in free grace that mad persecutor against Christ, and said, My Son shall be revealed *in* him. The radiance of the glory shone into the earthen vessel. Even Christ, as the beloved Son, shone in him, and like Gideon's broken pitchers, the radiance of the glory of Christ shone out of him. Yes; he could say, "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also, Christ shall be magnified *IN* my body, whether by life or by death."

There is something worthy of God in this, to take up the mad hater of the rejected Christ, and say, as it were, My rejected Son shall be seen in you, and be reproduced in you. Was this that he might break the law? Did not Christ far more than fulfil it? Paul was not dead to the law that he might break it; but for Christ that he might bring forth fruit unto God. Yes; thus it pleased God. And does it not still please God that each believer should be a reproduction of Christ? What a vocation! May we each walk worthy of such a calling. And, mark, it was

not to preach mere doctrines, but "that I might preach *him* among the heathen." Yes, Christ takes the place of law. Christ is the gospel.

So distinct and certain was the revelation of Christ to Paul, that he needed no conference with men. He takes pains to shew us that he did not go up to Jerusalem to be ordained by the other apostles. As we have seen, he derived no authority from them, and he knew absolutely nothing about apostolic succession. Three years after, he went up to Jerusalem to see Peter. He was with him fifteen days; yet, though he was there over two Lord's days, he saw none of the other apostles, only James, the Lord's brother. What a complete setting aside of all mere human authority.

Paul had to do directly with the Lord. One might have thought, in reading Acts xv., that he went up to Jerusalem about the law and circumcision, by circumstances: here it tells us it was by revelation. It was thus the will of God that the question should be settled, not at Antioch, but at Jerusalem, the very seat of Judaism, so that there should be no division. But that conference, he tells us, added nothing to him. Who, however, would have thought that the first principal person Paul would have to withstand in the defence of the gospel would be Peter himself? But so it was. He says, "I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed."

What was he to be blamed for? He treated the believers of Antioch, who were not under law, as if they were not fit to eat with—fearing those who had the law *and* Christ, and separating from those who had only Christ. This was not upright, but dissimulation. If they of the law were better than the believers without the law, then the gospel Christ had taught Paul was not true: plainly then Paul must rebuke Peter. Ah! if Paul were here now, how many Peters would he have to rebuke? Is there not a growing determination to despise and shun all, or rather the few, that hold the doctrine of Paul? There are millions who are seeking to attain to righteousness and fitness for heaven by keeping the law in addition to the salvation they hope they have or may have in Christ. Every one of these are in uncertainty, and if sincere, in bondage and misery. For these we write.

Chapter ii. 15. Let us now examine carefully the mode of Paul's defence of the gospel of God. He begins with the believing Jews: "We Jews by nature . . . knowing that a man is not justified by the works of law, but by the faith [or principle of faith] of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by works of law; because on the principle of works of law shall no flesh be justified." Here are two principles of justification so different that you cannot

have both. The Jews had been on the one principle, seeking righteousness by works of law for 1500 years. They never could attain to righteousness on that principle, for there was not one righteous: on that principle all were guilty. They, the very people to whom the law was given, had now to give it up, in order that they might be justified on a totally different principle of faith.

And, further, this principle was the very gospel that Christ had revealed to and taught Paul. This shews how greatly Peter and all his imitators are to blame. For if the believer, justified in Christ, is still a sinner, unfit for those on the principle of law to eat with, then plainly Christ would be the minister of sin in having taught Paul such an error. There is no escape from this—He would in that case have led Paul to be a transgressor. He says: "For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor." The principle of justification by faith, which Christ had taught Paul, destroyed the principle of justification by works of law. If, then, Paul now gave way to Peter, and built again the principle of works of law, this clearly involved the terrible fact, that Christ was the minister of sin in thus teaching him to set aside the one principle and establish the other. Thus the gospel was undermined by the dissimulation of Peter. Now, if this was the

case then, is it not so now? This is surely an important question to examine.

It is most important in every way, not only as to peace with God, but to shew that to rebuild the principle of justification by works of law is to make Christ the minister of sin; for it was He who first taught His honoured servant the truth of justification by faith. This is most serious when we remember, that the great party in Christendom for justification by works of law, not only would not eat with those who are justified on the principle of faith as taught by Christ to Paul, but they declare them cursed heretics; and when they have the power will imprison, torture, and put to the most cruel death, every man, woman, and child, that dares to believe the truth as thus taught by Christ!

But also, as a personal question, this subject is of the utmost importance. What is the effect to a soul to be under law? What effect had it had on Paul? "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live to God." The law had come with its righteous demands and had found him a guilty sinner before God, and it could only kill him. Righteous he could not be on that principle, for he was guilty. His just sentence was executed on his Substitute. But this was not, as we shall see further on, that he might break it; no, it was, as he says, "That I might live to God." The law could not give life,

it could only kill—in Christ risen we live to God.

Paul now looks at the cross of Christ and says—mark it well—"I am crucified with Christ." I was once under law responsible to keep it; now I am crucified with Christ. There is the end of all my responsibility under law: the end of my whole self under law—crucified with Christ.

Have we accepted this solemn truth? If my old self is thus judged and executed, is there an end of me personally? It is true I am thus judged, thus executed, crucified: "Nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." It is all Christ now. "And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Thus Paul defends the gospel. He had given up entirely the law, both as to righteousness and life. The Jew who was under law could never be justified by, or on, that principle, and had to give it up in order that he might be justified on the principle of faith. He was guilty, and law could not justify the guilty—it could only kill; therefore he had to be dead to it in order that he might live by Christ being his life—living in him.

He now becomes bolder. To introduce the law for righteousness would be to frustrate the grace, or free favour of God; yea, it would be to declare that Christ had died in vain. This is

how he puts the matter : "I do not frustrate the grace of God : for if righteousness come by law, then Christ is dead in vain." (Chap. ii. 21.)

Do you say, This is very strange. I have been taught from my infancy to seek to be righteous by keeping the law. It was hung up before my eyes, and I was taught to pray that I might keep it—in a word, I have been taught to seek righteousness by keeping it, just as a Jew was for anything I see. Now be very careful here : tell us what has been the effect of all this teaching ? And what has been your desire, your object, in all your efforts and prayers to keep the law ? Has it not been that you might attain to righteousness, so as at last to be saved ? Now, candidly, have you not been entirely disappointed ? You are not fit for heaven ; you are not righteous ; you have not peace with God ; you do not even know that you have eternal life. Nay, further, the more you pray and seek after righteousness by keeping the law, the more sin you discover to be in you. And the truth is, sin in some form or other has dominion over you. You are not what you want to be, you are not what you ought to be. You are doing the things which perhaps you hate, and you cannot do the good that you long to do. Oh, do you not see that you are praying and striving to frustrate the grace of God ? There would be no grace or free favour in it, if you could attain to righteousness by keeping

the law. God tells you, you are a ruined sinner under judgment, and you pray and strive to prove it is not so. Do not forget that if the doctrine that thousands are preaching be true, that righteousness comes by law, "Then Christ is dead in vain."

Yes, that very law which can only kill, and which God gave to prove to man his lost and guilty condition before Him, that very law Satan now uses to frustrate the grace of God, and thus, if possible, to make the death of Christ to be in vain. Well might the apostle call these deceivers, who were seeking to draw Christians back under law, the ministers of Satan. (Gal. v. 7-9; 2 Cor. xi. 13-15.)

Before we close this important chapter, let us recall the illustration of the redemption of a slave. The ransom has been paid by a kind friend as an act of free favour. Liberty is proclaimed to the slave. Believing that act of kindness, without a penny of his own, he is free. He is told that it is all very well as far as it goes; but he must not have the presumption to so really believe the kindness of that friend, or to be quite sure he is free—indeed, he must now pray, and work hard, in order to attain or obtain his liberty, he must, in fact, still wear his chain, and toil on, and only hope to be free at last, if ever. Is not this an illustration of the bulk of Christendom? If he follows this fatal advice

does he not entirely frustrate the kindness of his friend? If he obtains his freedom by works, then the ransom was paid in vain. Is it not exactly so with every soul seeking righteousness on the principle of works of law? If even he could obtain it, and be justified before God, on the principle of works, would he not thus frustrate the kindness and grace of God in giving His Son? Would you, if you could, like thus to prove that Christ died in vain? For just as if the slave can obtain liberty by his own works, then the ransom need not have been paid; in like manner, if you can be justified before God by your works, then Christ need not have died.



JOHN XV.

It is a question of fruit-bearing and not of life. Judas was gone out, and they were all clean; it was to His disciples He spoke. I know if I do not abide in Him I am as a withered branch. What use is a Christian who is not abiding in Christ? *No use*, no use for the world, no use for the church. We know, as Ezekiel says, that the vinewood is no use, not even to make a pin of. It is "cast forth."

Men would not leave scattered vine branches about the garden path, they chop them up and burn them. They are no good unless the sap is in them. Abiding in the vine, His words abide in us.

G. J.

MY FATHER KNOWS.

DEUTERONOMY XXXI. 6.

Go where thy Father leads thee—let no doubt
 Assail thy mind, though He should bid thee part
 From dearest friends; though He should shut thee out
 From human spiritual guides; yet to thy heart
 He will speak words of peace, will cheer and bless,
 Even though He lead thee through the wilderness.

God will Himself thy spiritual food assign.

Thankful take all He gives: though streams be dry,
 The fountain head, the well of life divine,
 Is open—God will all thy wants supply.
 In faith and prayer look thou to Christ thy Head,
 Nor fear that thou shouldst lack thy daily bread.

And should He in His wisdom see it fit
 To keep thee low in body or in mind,
 Thou still in peace at His dear feet mayest sit,
 And listening to His voice rich treasure find.
 Then be not downcast, hope on to the end,
 Low paths do oft the fairest pastures tend.

Hear when He bids thee take the lowest place;
 There sit thee down, and there abide His will.
 'Tis there that He will meet thee, and His grace
 Display; and till He bids thee thence be still;
 Thou wouldst not murmur when His will constrains
 Thy soul, nor chafe when that loved hand restrains.

'Tis said from darksome pit, the upturn'd gaze
 At noonday can discern the stars in heaven;
 So too the soul, deep shelter'd from the blaze
 And glare of earthly sunshine, oft is given
 Bright revelations of God's love to see,
 And glorious beamings of His majesty.

Then rest thee in thy low estate, seek nought
 Too high, nor things thy God withholds from thee;
 Lie meekly at His feet, thy highest thought
 To be like Jesus in humility.

And know, if thou on earth His cross dost bear,
 In heaven thou shalt His crown of glory share.

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