

Things New & Old,

A

GOSPEL MAGAZINE,

WITH PAPERS FOR THE FLOCK OF GOD.



"Christ is all."—Col. iii. 11.



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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
The Passover	1
"I Come Quickly"	7
A Few Remarks on Spiritualism	14
Are You Ready? (Poetry)	24
The Perfect Work of Christ	25
Correspondence	26
"Behold, what manner of love"	29
The Righteousness of God Revealed—No. 1	36
The Coming of the Lord, as made known to the Assembly at Thessalonica—No. 1	43
Letter from the East	52
Correspondence	56
The Righteousness of God Revealed—No. 2	57
The Coming of the Lord—No. 2	64
What is Eternal Life? A Conversation on the Rails —No. 1.....	72
"Infidelity a Rotten Plank:" or, How the Righteous Judgment of God, yet His Grace abounding over Sin, was displayed in His dealing with a Blaspheming Atheist	78
The Grace of God to the Collier Boy	81
The Coming of the Lord—No. 3	85
"This Man Receiveth Sinners"	94
The Righteousness of God Revealed—No. 3	97
One in a Thousand: A Conversation on the Rails— No. 2.....	105
Correspondence	111
The Righteousness of God Revealed—No. 4	113
"Until he find it"	120
"Joy in Heaven"	122
The Coming of the Lord—No. 4	124
Man's Condition, and what is the Remedy—No. 1 ...	133
Everlasting Punishment	141
Man's Condition; and what is the Remedy—No. 2 ...	148

	PAGE
A Letter on what Constitutes the Atoning Sufferings of Christ	153
"Death is Swallowed up in Victory"	168
"Joy Cometh in the Morning"	169
Man's Condition; and what is the Remedy—No. 3 ...	176
"Follow Me"	183
He began to be in Want	190
Outcast from Man—accepted of God	193
Correspondence	195
The First Years of Christianity—No. 1	127
Man's Condition; and what is the Remedy—No. 4 ...	205
"When he came to Himself"	211
Waiting for the Beloved	218
Trust in the Lord	221
Correspondence	222
Man's Condition; and what is the Remedy—No. 5 ...	225
First Years of Christianity—No. 2	234
Letters from the East	242
Correspondence	251
First Years of Christianity—No. 3	253
"But when he was yet a great way off, his Father saw him"	261
A Further Word on the Atoning Sufferings of Christ	268
Correspondence	279
The Queen of Sheba—No. 1	281
"How then can Man be justified with God?"—No. 1	288
First Years of Christianity—No. 4	297
Correspondence	306
"How then can Man be justified with God?"—No. 2	309
The Queen of Sheba—No. 2	311
Words of Jesus as to Eternal Life	325



Things New and Old.

THE PASSOVER.

THERE are four notices of the passover in the Pentateuch. They are as follows, namely:—

1. In its institution, as given in Exodus xii.
2. As kept in the wilderness. (Num. ix.)
3. How it was to be kept in the land. (Deut. xvi.)
4. What it is to Jehovah. (Lev. xxiii.)

1. In its institution, it formed the basis of the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and of their being brought into the land in relationship with Jehovah. The offering itself sets forth a *full Christ*, and all that God proposes is possible upon the basis of it, as seen in Leviticus xxiii. It is not distinctively a burnt-offering, nor a peace-offering, nor a sin-offering, but includes all, being instituted before any such distinctions were brought out.

In Exodus xii. it is presented in all its parts: the blood; the roast flesh; the unleavened bread; the bitter herbs: but the blood is prominent, because it was the night of judgment, and the

blood alone could keep judgment out. The blood was shed and sprinkled upon the lintel and side posts of the houses wherein they ate the roast flesh, &c. There is no type of heaven (the tabernacle being not yet set up), nor anything to shew that it was necessary to sprinkle the blood in heaven, *it was all done on earth* (and for earth in a certain sense); but all that God proposed, both for earth and heaven, was possible when the act that was typified by the passover was accomplished by the blessed Lord Jesus Christ *on earth*.

Within the blood-sprinkled lintels, they fed in security upon the flesh of the lamb roast with fire, and unleavened bread and bitter herbs. The death of the lamb under the judgment of God, the unleavened perfectness of that lamb, together with an honest putting away of leaven out of their houses (ver. 15), and the bitter sense in the soul that their condition necessitated such a sacrifice in order to clear them from judgment—these were all included in the feast on that night, when in all the houses of the Egyptians the firstborn lay slain by the sword of the angel of Jehovah.

2. As kept in the wilderness. (Num. ix.) The notice is brief; it was kept according to all its rites and according to all its ceremonies, but the blood is not spoken of, while (ver. 11) they shall keep it, and eat it with unleavened bread

and bitter herbs. The lamb slain under the judgment of God, His unleavened perfectness, and the bitter thought that their condition had demanded such a death, is here presented ; that is, the *feast* is prominent, not the *deliverance*.

3. Deuteronomy xvi. gives the way it was to be observed when in the land. They were to sacrifice the passover unto Jehovah their God, but no mention is made of what was to be done with the blood ; the prominent thought here, as in Numbers ix., not being deliverance from judgment, but the feast based upon the sacrifice, to be kept by an already delivered people, who were in the land, and in relationship with Jehovah their God there. They were to roast and eat the flesh in the place which Jehovah should choose (ver. 7), and to eat no leavened bread, but unleavened bread, even the bread of affliction. It is to this the apostle evidently refers in 1 Corinthians v. 7, 8 : " For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us ; therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

Not only is the blood not mentioned here, but there are *no bitter herbs* mentioned. The feast is prominent, and it is Christ in death and life that forms the food of the feast. His holy perfectness is called " bread of affliction," for holiness is affliction to nature, which has no part

in the feast, and must be excluded. This is the thought in the Lord's supper, and perhaps the reason why the bread is put first before the cup; only once is this reversed, and the natural order presented, and this is in 1 Corinthians x., where it would seem to be a strong protest against those who went into the world, the idol's temple; the apostle presenting prominently the blood that had saved them from the judgment of the world, and separated them from its idolatry. They *could not* be partakers of the cup of the Lord and of the cup of devils.

It is here put as the basis of the three great feasts of the year, and stretched on in its effects to the establishment of Pentecost and tabernacles, which set forth the coming of the Holy Spirit and the millennial display of the glory of Christ. There is no second type of Christ's death given, but its full results are shewn as based upon the passover only.

4. What it is to Jehovah is set forth in its fulness in Leviticus xxiii. All the thoughts and counsels of God are based upon it both for heaven and earth. The Sabbath, the first feast, sets forth God's thought; it is that of "rest," and rest after labour, and this not alone, but surrounded by the creatures of His hand, enjoying the blessedness the *sense* of His all pervading presence gives; this is indicated by the term applied to it, "a holy convocation"—*a calling*

together of His creatures around Himself in *holy* blessedness. This is the only recurring feast of the year which shews that if sin had broken into God's rest, it was still held out before man as a thing to be obtained. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," shews God and Christ still at work to bring about a rest, of which the Sabbath was but a type. This is eventually brought about by Christ's death *as the antitype of the passover*. But in this aspect of it, it is *wholly Jehovah's*. "In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is Jehovah's passover." (Ver. 5.) Here is nothing about the blood, nothing about bitter herbs, nothing about the roasted flesh, and even the unleavened bread is a feast separated, though resulting from it. (Ver. 6.) It is wholly Jehovah's. It is in type what Christ's death is to God, as the ground of the accomplishment of all the thoughts of His heart for heaven and for earth, which this chapter distinctly sets forth in type. It meets all His claims, it satisfies all His heart, it is a *feast* of Jehovah; and while included in the list of feasts, which are called holy convocations generally, it is not specifically called "a holy convocation," as all the rest are, save the wave sheaf. It sets forth that aspect of Christ's *death* which is Jehovah's *alone*, in which none of His people share, as the wave sheaf sets forth the aspect of His resurrection which is God's *alone*. Who knew the value of His death when

He died? Yet God delighted in it, it was a feast to Him, and that without any disembodied presentation of the blood in heaven, for which there is no foundation even in this type.

Another type is necessarily brought in, the sheaf of first fruits to set forth the resurrection of Christ, and this (as already observed) as it furnishes Jehovah alone with a feast; and the results of this are set forth to us-ward in the *pentecostal period*, where the great harvest of resurrection is reaped, and in the *gleanings*, shewing that the first resurrection is not finished until the remnant of the Jews who are slain in the crisis shall share in it. Thus is heaven filled with the happiest creatures of God's hand.

Then God's dealings for earth begin (the feast of trumpets overlapping gleanings as to time); and the day of atonement, in this aspect of it, sets forth Christ's death as it applies to Israel and the earth; and here the value of the type of the priest entering into the holiest with blood may have its full force *for them*, when Christ entered heaven at His ascension. And although hidden from them through all this period, yet because He lives Israel is not consumed, though without any national polity; yet ready when He shall come out again in blessing to be formed again into a nation, though it be but the spared remnant of it that forms the nucleus of that nation. Blessing will flow out through them to

the Gentiles, and thus earth will eventually be filled with happy, holy beings, who in the eternal state, rejoice in and with God—Father, Son and Spirit.

Surely we should not speak lightly of the passover, nor of the work set forth by it, nor cast a shade upon its perfection, as *completed* here on earth when Christ declared, "It is finished."

G. J. S.



"I COME QUICKLY."

REVELATION III. 11.

WHAT a message is this. Is it not like a telegram from the Bridegroom to the bride? "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say Come." Have you gone out to meet the Bridegroom? Have you received the message? What is your reply? Is it "COME"? "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Surely the bride should rejoice to have such a message from the loving Bridegroom. Once He said, "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."

Now He says, "I come quickly." The Spirit applies this tender whisper to the heart of the

bride. So that "the Spirit and the bride say, Come."

"Quickly" does not mean in so many years. It does not mean, after you have passed through the great tribulation, such as never was, and never shall be again. It does not mean, after the literal city of Babylon is rebuilt. It does not mean, after the man of sin has been manifested. It does not mean, after the Roman empire has been restored. It does not mean, after you have all been slain for the word of God, as those who shall have the then testimony of God, as in Revelation vi. 9. It does not mean, after you have been killed by the man of sin, for refusing to worship the beast, or head of the Roman empire. (Rev. xiii. 11-17.) No, it just means this, that the coming of Christ for the church is the very next, the very first event.

These words, "I come quickly," just mean what they would from a bridegroom coming from a distant shore to take his bride. He sends her a telegram. It does not give the day nor the hour, but it says, "I come quickly." In the gladness of her heart, she sends a telegram in reply—"Come, my bridegroom." Yea, one word expresses the desire of her heart—"Come."

Can you say in reply to Jesus, "Come; come now, come soon, come quickly"? These inspired words were written, expressing the hope of the church, eighteen hundred years ago; but for

long centuries this hope was lost, and death, or even Christ coming in judgment, was put in its place. Yes, not only was the brightest hope taken away, but the most gloomy fear was put in its place; thus robbing the soul of its chief comfort, and the gospel of its joy.

Suddenly, when least expected, in the midst of the darkness that prevailed in the early part of this century, say fifty or sixty years ago, the midnight cry was heard, "Behold, the Bridegroom; go ye out to meet him." Yes, the Person of the Bridegroom has been suddenly again revealed to the church; and the need was felt to go out to meet Him.

The foolish are found without oil in the lamp of profession. Surely it becomes the wise to stand with trimmed lamps, waiting to hear the voice, and to see the coming Bridegroom. But what a moment! How soon the door will be shut. A moment, the twinkling of an eye, the bride is gone; the door is shut.

And then that bitter wail of everlasting despair, "Lord, Lord, open unto us." Will He hear? Will He open? No, no. He says, "Verily, I say unto you, I know you not." Long had the door stood open, and you refused to enter. In the days of Noah, the longsuffering of God lingered 120 years. In this dispensation of richest grace, of deepest mercy, the patient longsuffering of God has waited more than 1800

years. But the day for Noah came at last, the hour, the last moment, and "the Lord shut him in." The eight were shut in; the world of violence and wickedness were shut out. Yes, the door was shut, and it was for ever too late. Another year of longsuffering grace has run its course; but the door may be shut before another comes to a close.

What a reflection if still unsaved—you may be for ever shut out before this year shall close; and then, too late. Not a ray of hope shall ever cheer your dark despair—shut out. "I know you not," Jesus has said. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." (Matt. xxiv. 36-39.) Every word of Jesus will assuredly come to pass. Did He not weep over Jerusalem? Did He not foretell its utter destruction, and that the Jews would be led away captive into all nations? that it should be trampled under foot, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled? (Luke xix. 41, 44; xxi. 22-24.) Yes, and every word He has spoken will as surely come to pass.

Is not the moral darkness and wickedness of the world fast becoming what it was in the days of Noah? Restrained at present, but preparing, and ready to break out in universal violence and bloodshed, such as the world never yet saw? And this will surely be, when the redeemed are caught up, and peace is taken from the earth.

Fellow believers, let us then read our telegram—precious words from the Bridegroom—"I COME QUICKLY." What a calm this gives to the soul in the midst of the storms of the world. And to the one really walking with God, what peace in the midst of these last of the last days of sorrows in the church. Let us behold the Bridegroom. What love! "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church [or, to himself glorious], not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. v. 25-28.)

O bride of the Lamb, what scenes await thee! To be presented glorious to Him who has loved thee, and washed thee from thy sins; to be with Him and like Him for ever. Nothing can separate thee from His love even now; but thou wilt be with Him—yes, with Him in holy, adoring worship, whilst the storms of judgment are poured out upon the earth, and upon the great

Babylon of apostasy : and then shall the assembled multitude of the heavenly host rejoice, and with the voice of mighty thunderings 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," &c. (Rev. xix.) And still further, one of the seven angels said, " Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. . . . Having the glory of God, her shining was like a most precious stone as a crystal-like jasper stone." (Rev. xxi. New Translation.) The bride shall be in every way suited to the Bridegroom.

How sad that so many Christians should be robbed of the enjoyment of this blessed hope. It would even be a terror to some to believe that Jesus really means what He says in those three words, " I come quickly." Would it be terror or joy to you, dear reader, to know that we may now expect Him at any moment ? Is there still some dread of judgment ? If you are in Christ, there is no condemnation ; there is no judgment for sins or sin. He has settled all this when He came the first time. He comes now to us, to all believers, as Saviour, yea, as Bridegroom. As Isaac met Rebecca, so will He, the Bridegroom, meet us. What joy to Him to take us into the place prepared. Then will the desire of His loving heart be granted. " Father, I will that

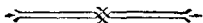
they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." (John xvii. 24.) What words of love then, are these of Jesus.

"I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

Whatever may be the perplexity and confusion, and though some may have been discouraged by reason of the difficulties of the path, yet the Lord does not say, Give in, let go; no, but, "HOLD that FAST which thou hast," if gathered to Him the Holy and the True, and if He can say to us, "Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." Oh the privilege then of holding fast the testimony of the Lord. He will not fail to give the crown of reward. Yes, He says, "Hold fast that which thou hast, that *no man* take thy crown."

Surely our heart's reply, Until Thou come, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe." If He tarry a little longer, may we be kept as faithful witnesses of the rejected Jesus, in the midst of the increasing darkness; and to Him be all praise.

C. S.



A FEW REMARKS ON SPIRITUALISM.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—

Should you deem the following brief remarks suitable for your pages, a few details as to what gave rise to them may be of interest to your readers; and that all should be on their guard against this soul-destroying delusion of Satan's is the earnest prayer of the writer.

One Sunday night, at the close of a gospel meeting of unusual interest, I was told by a friend that three young ladies were waiting outside, and were wishing to ask me what my views were as to spiritualism. On being introduced, their question was put—my answer was, that while much, no doubt, was mere trickery, there was nevertheless, some that was real, and that part I looked upon as Satanic.

They asked if that was my honest conviction, to which I replied that it was; and then followed a conversation, in which some of the points in the accompanying "remarks" were gone into.

It was their habit to meet together once a week, and consult the spirits as to the explanation of any passage in scripture that presented a difficulty, &c., opening their meeting with prayer and the reading of the Bible.

They seemed to have some difficulty in accepting that it was Satanic, because the advice

given them by the spirits was so good, and they were never afraid of the scriptures.

At the close of the interview, I urged upon them, if they still persisted in going on with it, to apply the tests that the word enjoins in 1 Corinthians xii. 2, and 1 John iv. 1, &c. They promised that they would, at the same time saying that they had no doubt but that the spirits would give them a perfectly satisfactory answer.

The following evening they had their usual weekly séance, which led to the giving up of the whole thing. The details of that night's interview with the spirits were terrible, and I believe positively of Satan. At its close they bade the spirits farewell, saying, "We have done with you for ever." The reply was, "You think you have, but we shall torment you for ever and ever."

It appears that these young ladies only got to the hall that Sunday night when the address was nearly finished, and just as they entered they heard the words, "*If your sins are not forgiven before you die, they never will be forgiven at all.*"

They said to one another, "Either that man is telling us a lie, or the spirits have deceived us." Through infinite mercy they were led to the discovery that Satan had been deceiving them, and was leading them on to eternal ruin, holding out the false hope of salvation after death.

May every reader of these and the following lines take to heart the solemn words which first led to their awakening, and with the same blessed result !

From Leviticus xix. 31 ; xx. 27 ; Deuteronomy xviii. 10-12, we learn what God's thoughts are as to consulting the spirits or the dead—all that do so are an abomination unto Him. This in itself ought to be sufficient for every child of God, and should make all such shrink from having any connection with that which professes to have dealings with the spirits, and that quite apart from the question of whether those spirits are good or bad—"a consulter with spirits," "a consulter of the dead (necromancer)," says Deuteronomy xviii.; and we are not here told that good spirits are an exception.

That the consulting of the spirits and the dead, &c., was common among the heathen, is clear from such a passage as Deuteronomy xviii. Having lost the true knowledge of God, they sought to make up for the loss in this way, by bringing in a supernatural power, which was really that of Satan, the god of this world. (2 Cor. iv. 4.)

But as for the people of God, they were "not suffered so to do." (Deut. xviii. 14.) Hence Saul, on coming to the throne of Israel, had exterminated, or nearly so, all in Israel ; God

having provided for His people a better way, or better ways, of learning His mind.

God spoke in times past in dreams, through prophets directly inspired by His Spirit, also in the priesthood by Urim and Thummim. And it was the failure of all these means, owing to Saul's own sin, that led him to seek for a woman with a familiar spirit (one that evokes the spirits) in 1 Samuel xxviii., the resorting to which was also one of the grounds of his death, as a judgment at the hands of God. "For asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it." (1 Chron. x. 13.)

Evidently the witch of Endor was not accustomed to bring up the dead, from her surprise at the appearance of Samuel: the spirit which she and all of her class professed to consult was a demon which personated the one desired. Her alarm at seeing Samuel, whom she herself does not appear to recognise, makes it clear that something unusual had taken place. It was God who interposed in this case to bring up Samuel in reality from the dead, who pronounces from Jehovah (the Lord) the solemn judgment about to fall upon Saul. It is noteworthy that Saul in verse 15 says, "*God* is departed from me," with no sense of relationship, which is, as we all know, contained in the appellation (the Lord) used by Samuel in the verses that follow. To Saul it was simply God.

In another passage, Isaiah viii. 19, 20, we are told that a people should seek unto their God, and the question is put (as though in surprise that any should be so foolish) for the living to the dead? That a people should seek unto their God was right enough, but for the living to seek unto the dead was inexcusable folly; and then we are referred to the law and the testimony, which contain the revealed mind of God, and by which we can measure all other pretended communications from Him or any other source.

Coming now to the New Testament, we find abundant proof of people being possessed with unclean spirits, who in many places are called demons; see for example Mark v. 1-21; Matthew viii. 16, 28-34.

Furthermore, lest any should imagine that these demons are only the spirits of the departed, such a passage as Mark iii. 22-30 makes it plain that these demons were directly Satanic, for when the scribes say, He casteth out demons by the prince of demons, the Lord asks, How can Satan cast out *Satan*?

This is of importance to note, because some affirm that these demons or spirits were the spirits of departed people; the Lord, however, distinctly tells us that they were Satanic. We may add that the use of the expression "spirits" proves nothing as to their being the spirits of the departed dead, because scripture uses the

term in reference to *angels* (Heb. i. 7) and *demons* (Mark iii. 11, &c.), as well as to *men*, whether the *just* (Heb. xii. 23) or the *wicked*. (1 Peter iii. 19.) And herein lies the distinction between these and mere brute beasts. The beast, besides having a material body, is said to be or to have a living soul (Gen. i. 20, margin), in other words, it has animal life, but has no intelligent relationship with God, which latter belongs to all those who possess a *spirit*.

Ecclesiastes iii. 21 is no exception, the word there translated "spirit" being the merely general one signifying "breath" (ver. 19); but even here, without going further into the passage, the distinction is drawn between the breath of the beast, which goeth downward to the earth, and is *mere breath*, and that of man, which goeth upward, and which, though outwardly only the same breath, is in reality much more, and returns to *God* who gave it (Eccles. xii. 7), instead of to the earth.

That these demons of which we have spoken had power is also evident, for it required power to cast them out, a power which of course the Lord Himself possessed, and was able to confer upon His disciples (Mark iii. 15; Luke ix. 1; Matt. x. 8), that power being divine. (Matt. xii. 28.) We are little aware of the power of Satan; he is called the prince of the *power* of the air. (Eph. ii. 2.) True Christians are delivered from

the *power* of darkness (Col. i. 13), an expression used by the blessed Lord in Luke xxii. 53, when all the power of the enemy, the prince of this world, was gathering and being concentrated against Him, heading and leading on too the enmity of wicked men against Himself at those closing moments of His life.

When sinners are converted they are turned from darkness to light, and from the *power of Satan* unto God. (Acts xxvi. 18.) May every child of God have an increased sense of the great adversary in whose grasp he once was held so tightly, and against whose wiles he always requires to be on the watch to the end of his earthly path, and for which he has to put on the whole armour of God! And may this increase too the sense of how great the grace and mighty the power that could, and that did deliver from such an adversary, and that is still needed to carry us safely to the scene where all trace of that adversary's presence will have gone for ever.

As regards the spirits of the dead, nowhere in scripture do we find such a thought as the possibility of man in his present material form holding any intercourse with them; on the contrary, the Lord is said to have the keys of hades and of death; it is therefore in His power, and His alone, to release the spirits, and if scripture is to be our guide, He uses the keys on

two occasions, and on two occasions only, namely, at the first resurrection for the saints, and at the second, just before the great white throne, for the wicked. Meanwhile, the spirit of the saint is with the Lord (2 Cor. v.), and so far as we as alive on the earth are concerned, is "departed" (Phil. i. 23), while that of the wicked is "in prison" (1 Peter iii. 19), and hence not at liberty to be called up when required.

But in those days, even as in our own, people professed to get and to give communications from the spirits, and the children of God are put on their guard against any such thing—they are to try the spirits, not by consulting them, but by putting them to the test as to whether they would confess Jesus Christ come in flesh, not merely confess that He *is* come in the flesh, but confess or own Him as come in flesh. In each of these verses (1 John iv. 2, 3; 2 John 7) the words should run, "confess Jesus Christ come in flesh," and not confess *that* Jesus Christ *is* come in flesh. Demons will not voluntarily own that Jesus is Lord, though this confession will be wrung from them at the end in judgment. (Phil. ii. 10.)

There were false prophets then who were under Satanic influence, even as there were true prophets, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God (2 Peter i. 21; 1 Cor. xii. 10, 11); but notice that whenever it

is a divinely inspired prophet it is always spoken of as *the Spirit of God*, and not the *spirits*. There may be diversities of gifts but the *same Spirit*, that is, the Spirit of God. This is of great importance for the true child of God to remember, for he is indwelt by the Spirit (1 Cor. vi. 19, &c.), led of the Spirit (Rom. viii. 14), taught of the Spirit (John xiv. 26; xvi. 13; 1 Cor. ii. 9-16); and hence is independent of all spiritualistic revelations, pretended or real.

We are satisfied that the whole system of spiritualism is antisciptural, and a snare of Satan's, from which every Christian ought to turn away. Its revival in these closing days of the history of Christendom is no surprise, but an actual fulfilment of the scriptures, for "the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons." (1 Tim. iv. 1.)

We are aware that many in these days have gone in for the thing in an apparently pious and religious manner, opening their meetings with prayer and interrogating the spirits on scripture subjects, and we have been told by some that the advice given by the spirits was so good as to preclude the possibility of its being Satanic. To all such we would say, Be not deceived, "for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (2 Cor. xi. 14), and he could come to the

Lord with an "it is written" at the temptation in the wilderness, to be exposed and defeated again by the selfsame word which he had handled deceitfully.

Many have been drawn into this snare of Satan's through tampering with it as a sort of pastime—possibly not even at first believing in it as a reality, until convinced by unmistakeable proofs, they have given themselves up to its power; but instead of this being of God, we are convinced that it is but the forerunner of those Satanic signs, or lying wonders, which will accompany the presence of the Antichrist at possibly no very distant period. (See 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10.) Their object is to *deceive*, and the awful end for all those who abandon themselves to it will be judgment and perdition. (2 Thess. ii. 11, 12.)

Let no one suppose that spiritualism is all sham and trickery—no doubt much that professes to be real can be easily exposed and accounted for; but, on the other hand, we have come in contact with not a few, on whose word we can thoroughly rely, and who had been completely under its power for a time, but through grace were afterwards delivered from it, and their testimony leaves no doubt on our mind of its solemn reality and Satanic origin.

One word more, and not the least important, the spirits hold out a hope of salvation after

death for those who have died rejecters of Christ—indeed, they teach universal salvation, and this, in common with all the other forms of error in these last days, strikes a blow at the atoning work of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. In scripture we read that “*by one offering* he hath perfected for ever,” &c. (Heb. x. 14), whereas the spirits say that after death even the wicked will be perfected by passing through various stages, occupying a longer or shorter period according to circumstances. “To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because *there is no light in them.*” (Is. viii. 20.)

A. H. B.



ARE YOU READY ?

READY feet to do Thy will,
 Ready hands to serve Thee still;
 Ready mind Thy voice to hear,
 Ready drooping hearts to cheer,
 Ready every foe to face,
 Ready still to shew Thy grace;
 Ready every need to meet,
 Ready to wash erring feet.
 Ready still to watch and pray,
 Ready all the livelong day;
 Ready if to lose or gain,
 Ready if 'tis joy or pain.
 Ready when the Saviour's near,
 Ready when dark clouds appear;
 Ready when the storm is high,
 Ready through a cloudless sky;
 Ready, Lord, to meet with Thee,
 Ready for eternity.

W. B.

THE PERFECT WORK OF CHRIST.

(AN EXTRACT.)

“You will say, But I have neglected Christ after being awakened. It is possible, and it is very sad ; nay, more, as I have said, this gives a handle to the enemy to torment us, but does not change the efficacy of the blood and work of Christ *in God's eyes*, and that is what gives peace. It is not what you think of Christ's work, but what God thinks of it, that saves. Your knowledge of what God thinks of it, by faith, gives peace. God says to Israel in Egypt, not when you see the blood, I will pass over, but, “when I see the blood.” He it is that has been offended, He it is that judges, and He it is that *has accepted* the ransom in justice as He gave it in love. He is faithful and *just* to forgive us. . . . Christ has made peace by the blood of the cross. Christ has done all, and has left us nothing but thanksgiving and praise. If some one has paid my debts, my sorrow at the folly that contracted them, or my joy at their being discharged, adds nothing whatever to the payment of the debt, though both be natural and just. It is sometimes hard to esteem all our feelings as nothing, but it is only a remains of self ; but only think what it cost the Son of God in undergoing the wrath of God, and we shall feel on one hand the perfect

security of our justification, and nothingness of all our feelings compared with what our sin really was in the sight of God ; but He *remembers it no more*, as He has said. If Christ had not completely discharged and effaced it, He could not be in heaven, for He could not sit at the right hand of God charged with our sins, though He was charged with them on the cross.”—*Letters of J. N. D.*, p. 75.



CORRESPONDENCE.

1. W. H., Cornwall. How grieved I am that you should, with so many others, have been turned aside to sorrow and perplexity, by the sad speculations of the new doctrine! What sorrow it has caused. I do believe this new teaching would rob us of everything, and finally land us in Rome. To give up our complete standing, or justification in Christ risen, for our *state*, is exactly what a clever Jesuit would wish.

The tendency would be to get us off Christ to self. An old brother, after reading the first tract, said to me “The tendency of this paper is to lead me to myself, my state.” Satan’s object in all this is to perplex saints. Whatever merely perplexes, is of Satan. And he can use the intellect of the dearest child of God, if off his guard. We must not give up what the Holy Ghost has restored, for Romanism.

Now the other sad point. If Christ “entered heaven by his own blood to make propitiation,” then it is clear He had not made propitiation on

the cross; then He did not make atonement, or finish the work of atonement on the cross. This is exactly what the Church of Rome teaches—the work was not finished on the cross, but is still continued in heaven. And thus are millions robbed of peace with God. Where do you read in scripture, that “Christ entered heaven by his own blood *to make propitiation*”? I am surprised you do not feel such doctrine to be abhorrent to your soul. You may say, But is it not in one text at least, Hebrews ix. 12? Read the whole of verses 11, 12, and see if there is such a thought, and compare this with 1 John v. 6. Is it not the eternal value of His own blood that characterises His *coming*, in contrast with the temporal and imperfect value of the blood of goats and calves—having obtained eternal redemption by His blood, God having rent the veil when He bowed His head in death, in proof that the work was finished? And shall we dare to say, No, it was not finished; He had not obtained eternal redemption; He had not made propitiation; He must enter heaven by His blood *to make propitiation*? This is what you say the author of this new doctrine says, “Christ entered by His own blood to make propitiation.” I beg of you to compare this with scripture. Is there a single parallel text to corroborate the view he takes of Hebrews ix. 11, 12?

Then look at Hebrews ii. 17. Are we to take the *literal* order of words, without spiritual perception, to see there is a parenthesis, simply because the word priest comes before the word reconciliation or propitiation; and thus conclude that Christ had to enter heaven as high priest in order to make propitiation in heaven? Then it

would follow that He must be a priest in heaven before the whole work of propitiation for sins could be made! The like principle of word-literalism would prove that He had to be crowned with glory before He tasted death! Such reasoning would turn every scripture into confusion. (See chap. ii. 9.)

Now turn to the type, Leviticus xvi. The *priest* presented the blood to God to make atonement, or propitiation. Does this prove that Christ must therefore be a priest in heaven, before He could make atonement or propitiation? Mark, if this be so, you must also have Christ a priest after death in heaven, before He made substitution for His people's sins! For on the day of atonement, substitution came in literal order after propitiation. (See vers. 20-22.) And after that the burnt-offering. Indeed, the fair result of this new doctrine would be that Christ did nothing on the cross. That is, the reasoning on priesthood to prove that a part of the atonement was not on the cross, beneath the awful wrath of God against sin, but in heaven, where there is no wrath of God on His Son, would equally prove that no part of that infinite work, either propitiation or substitution, was finished, or effected, on the cross, but in heaven, after He became a priest. Thus it appears to me, the author, in his first tract of perplexity, takes away justification in the risen Christ: and in his second, he denies the finished work of Christ on the cross. The whole thing is as contrary to truth as it can be.

C. S.

“BEHOLD, WHAT MANNER OF LOVE.”

1 JOHN III. 1.

BEAUTIFUL indeed it is to hear these words from one who had known that love so long and so well !

The apostle had just said : “ If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is *born of him*.” “ Born of him,” “ born of God ” ! What a thought ! It is this that causes the apostle to exclaim, “ Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons [children] of God.” It gives us a character and relationship of which the world knows nothing. He who was *the* Son of God, the only begotten, and in whom, as Man, the character and relationship were displayed before the eyes of men, was not known. “ He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.” (John i. 10, 11.) “ Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.”

We have Christ’s relationship with the Father, and we have His place as unknown here on earth. We suffer with Him here ; we shall be glorified with Him there. “ The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God ; and if children, then heirs ;

heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." (Rom. viii. 16, 17.) While here it is *suffering* with Christ in a scene where sin has sway, and where everything has been alienated from God—man at enmity with God, and under the dominion of sin, while the creation groans, and waits for deliverance; but being children of God, we wait for the children's place, our predestined place in glory, and then we shall have the children's portion, when the inheritance is given to the Firstborn, and the creature, delivered from its groaning, shall be brought into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. As His co-heirs we shall then possess the inheritance *with* Him, and reign with Him, having also been glorified with Him. We can well afford, then, to be unknown here in a world that knew Him not. It will not always be so. But we need confidence in God, and patience to wait till the Lord comes. "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (Heb. x. 35-37.) Blessed it is to look forward to His coming, but we must with patience wait for it; and while we wait we must be content to be as unknown in the world.

Now while we wait for Him, and to be in the condition in which He is in glory, we have a present and known relationship with the Father. "Beloved, NOW are we the sons [children] of God." We do not wait for this. We are born of God *now*, and are children and heirs of God *now*. It is a present relationship which we know by the word of God, and have the consciousness of by His Spirit in us. And what a relationship! How vastly more blessed than anything known to this poor world, with all its boasted wealth and intelligence! It is a great thing in this world to be the child of a king, and greater still to be heir-apparent to the throne; but what is this compared with being children of God, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, soon to reign as kings with the King of kings and Lord of lords? Yet this, dear reader, is the dignity and glory of the humblest and poorest believer in Christ. How this ought to lift the heart above all the empty glory of this world, where Christ was a weary, homeless Stranger, not having where to lay His head!

Nor is this all. In the relationship we have with the Father, through Christ we are the objects of His love—love immeasurable, boundless, eternal. He spared not His Son, but freely gave Him up for us all. And who can measure what was involved in that giving? Let the cross answer. Let its horror of darkness, and

unfathomable sorrows of that hour when the Son of God was forsaken, utter their voice, and declare what it cost to redeem us, and make us children of God! Oh it was a wonderful price! But the price has been paid, and we are redeemed, and now have the same place in the Father's love as Christ Himself. The day of glory will manifest this even to the world, according to John xvii. 22, 23: "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, *and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*" This is an ocean of love into which we are introduced—an eternal fulness into which we drink even now.

And what will it be when the fulness is known in glory? "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." What a prospect! *Now* children of God; *then*, not only children, but fashioned into the likeness of the glorified Firstborn! This "*we know*," though it is not yet a matter of public manifestation. But we shall see Him as He *is*. It is a wonderful thought. It is not the glory in which He will be displayed as the coming Messiah. We shall see Him, and shall be with Him in His Messianic glory, as it is said: "When

Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” (Col. iii. 4.) His glory as Messiah and as Son of man will be publicly displayed before the world, and all shall see it; but this is not what is meant when it is said, “We shall see him as he is.” We shall see Him as He is *now* in the glory of His Father’s presence. This is the expressed desire of the blessed Lord Himself: “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.) Here is One loved before the foundation of the world, Object of the Father’s unchanging, ineffable delight; who, moreover, having glorified God as Man here on earth, has been glorified of God as Man on high, with the glory He had with the Father before the world was; who is now in the highest glory, supreme in the affections of the Father, the light and joy and glory of courts above: and this is the One we shall see *as He is*. Oh what a sight will that be! How it will thrill our souls! What rapturous praise our overflowing hearts will utter when we behold that once crucified, but now glorified, Saviour!

But how could these mortal eyes behold Him as He is? It could not be. The glory is of too dazzling brightness. But we shall be like Him; we shall be changed in a moment, in the twink-

ling of an eye, at the sound of the last trump (1 Cor. xv.), and mortality will be swallowed up of life. (2 Cor. v.) Predestined to be conformed to the image of God's Son (Rom. viii.), "we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." (Phil. iii. 20, 21.) This body, humbled by sin, will be changed into a body of glory, after the likeness of Christ's body of glory. "We shall be like him." And this not merely in body, but in spirit as well, so that we shall in every way be united to the glorious and holy sphere where He dwells. Blessed, glorious prospect !

And now, reader, what is the present effect of this upon those who have this hope in Him ? What is its effect upon you and me ? "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as *he* is pure." Have you believed on Him unto life everlasting ? Have you, as a poor, lost sinner, turned to Him in your helplessness, and found Him a Saviour ? And are you now waiting for His return from heaven ? (1 Thess. i. 10.) Do you expect to be *like* Him, when you see Him as He is ? And will this be worth while ? Is it something worth looking for, and waiting for ? Do you now in faith look up and see that blessed One in all the brightness of the Father's glory ? And do you say : I am going to be *with* Him, and *like* Him, in that glory, and then I shall

be eternally satisfied in His presence? Well, if it will be worth while to be like Him *when He comes and takes us to Himself*, it is worth while to be like Him *now*—like Him in purity of heart, like Him in spirit and in ways, giving forth the sweet fragrance of His life all along the path here.

The Lord grant to the reader and to the writer to have Himself as an all-satisfying Object filling the soul, so that the heart may be formed according to what He is, and thus we shall continue to purify ourselves as He is pure—having this measure and character of purity before us—till He comes and completes it in glory.

“ Lord, we shall see Thee as Thou art,
In yonder mansions fair;
We shall behold Thee face to face,
Thy glorious image bear.

“ With what delight, what wondering love,
Each thrilling heart shall swell,
When we, as sharers of Thy joy,
Are call'd in heav'n to dwell!

“ Oh hasten, hasten on that hour,
And call us to Thy seat;
Lord, Thou without us ne'er wilt count
Thy joy and work complete.”

A. H. R.



THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD REVEALED.

“FOR I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD REVEALED.” (Rom. i. 16.) Evidently the gospel that Paul preached was the revelation of the righteousness of God. Let us take a sample of his preaching, and see if we do not greatly overlook this fact in our preaching.

The most striking sample that we shall find is in his preaching at Antioch in Pisidia. (Acts xiii.) Standing up in the Jews' synagogue, he traces their history up to the raising unto Israel a Saviour Jesus. Every eye is directed to Jesus, His death and resurrection—God having raised Him from the dead. Paul now declares the mind of God as to this. He says, “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.” This, then, is the first part of the gospel. Forgiveness of sins, through or by Jesus. Just as the first part of the gospel in Romans is as to forgiveness, or justification from sins, up to chapter v. 11.

Now forgiveness, however blessed, does not include justification in the complete sense. You may forgive your child if he has done a very

wrong thing, but you cannot justify him in wrong-doing, or as a wrong-doer. If you could, then justification must include forgiveness. Let us, however, be quite clear as to this first part of the gospel. The atonement for sins has been made by another, even Jesus, Son of God, and truly man. God has raised Him from the dead, and thus proved His acceptance of the work and Person of Jesus. So that He proclaims to the sinner forgiveness of sins—all sins. Therefore if we believe God, there cannot be a question that our sins are forgiven for Christ's sake.

Now the next words, translated "And by him all that believe are justified from all things," &c., do not exactly express the second part of the gospel. In the original it is not "by him," but "in him." This makes an immense difference. The whole verse is most striking when literally translated: "And from all things from which ye could not be justified in the law of Moses, IN HIM EVERY ONE THAT BELIEVES IS JUSTIFIED." This is a truth of the greatest importance to you if you are a believer, for "in him every one"—therefore you—"every one that believes is justified." By His work on the cross, our sins are forgiven; and *in Him* every one that believes is justified completely. Is not this exactly what we need? The certainty that all our sins are forgiven? This is just what is preached to us, and what God wishes us to know: "Be it known

unto you." Yes, you say, that is good, very good, as far as it goes ; but I am a black mass of sin, and if a parent cannot justify his son in wrong-doing, how is God to be righteous in justifying me ?

Well this is a tremendous question that no human wisdom can solve, and yet no one can have solid, enduring peace with God until this question is solved. And this is the question fully revealed in the gospel. Let us keep before us, then, these two things—justified "*by him*," and justified "*in him*." These two things were evidently before the apostle at Antioch. We may not have noticed the distinction in these two verses. But is it not a fact that just as these two truths have been preached, explaining as they do the righteousness of God, in that proportion has God the Holy Ghost used the preaching of the gospel to souls ?

In the Epistle to the Romans there are the two truths : first, the righteousness of God in forgiving our sins, justifying us *from* all we have done. All the world is proved guilty before God—all are wrong-doers. Not one that can be justified on the ground of right-doing, or his own righteousness, for he has none ; and clearly, on the principle of righteous law, no one can be justified, for all are already guilty. Now Satan would persuade us that God is a Father so full of love that He is indifferent about sin. How singular !

this lying doctrine of the Fatherhood of God is Satan's great doctrine just now. As if God thought so little of sin that He would never punish the sinner. True, God is love; but is He the great Father of lawlessness? What would become of any country if a similar principle of indifference to crime was adopted? Crime must be punished, or society would go to pieces.

If we take the word of God for our sole guide, no doubt we must differ from human theology, It is not the subject of the righteousness of Christ here. "But now THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets." (Rom. iii. 21.) Yes, the very thing we long to understand is now manifested or revealed, standing out quite apart from the law. And yet both the law and the prophets abundantly bear witness, that God would provide a righteousness in justifying the sinner.

From earliest days, the way of faith to God was through the death of a substitute: notably so in the faith of Abel. And further, not only the death of the offering, but resurrection from the dead, as in the offering of Isaac. Also the wrath of God against sin, as in the cry of the forsaken one in Psalm xxii. Then also the offerings of the law pointed to the blessed One, bruised for our iniquities. Yes, God laid on

Him the iniquities of us all. The sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow—all bearing witness that the righteousness of God should be fully vindicated; yes, that righteousness should be exalted above the heavens. How full of this theme are the Psalms and Isaiah.

But now all is manifested, revealed. "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: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." If then all have sinned and come short of that which is suited to God, then it must be quite clear the righteousness in which a sinner can be justified before God, must be entirely of God. How can man have this righteousness? Here theology differs from scripture. Men would tell us it is by the righteousness of Christ—His keeping the law imputed to us, set to our account. It must be seen, if this be the case, if Christ's keeping the law were sufficient to justify us, guilty as we are—then if we are righteous by His holy, righteous life, we should not need justifying again by His atoning death. This error takes away both the true character of sin, and the need of atonement. We are not, then, justified by the obedience of Christ to law, perfect as that was; but are "justified freely by his grace THROUGH THE REDEMPTION that is

in Christ Jesus." We must not forget that we are occupied with justification from sins, and how God is righteous in so justifying. As to anything on our part, there is absolutely nothing. It is *freely*, by His grace, or free favour. But by what means? The answer is, "Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." "We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." In the great type, it was by or through the blood of the lamb. The lamb must surely be killed. It was God's estimate of the blood: "When I see the blood, I will pass over." They were sheltered from deserved judgment. For they were sinners, and they were wretched slaves; they were brought through the waters of death into complete deliverance from the enemy; then they could sing the song of redemption.

This is what we have "in Christ Jesus." Redemption through His blood is the beginning and foundation of everything. It is the manifestation of the righteousness of God. When all failed to give deliverance to Israel—love, work and toil in the brickyards, promises, providences—the lamb was set forth. What a picture of Him, "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."

This is how God reveals His righteousness in justifying all past believers before the death of

Christ. The Creator of all things became man to give Himself, to make propitiation for their sins in the past. And not only so, but "To declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness: that he [God] might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Whether, then, you look back at David's sin, or at the present at your own sins, how is God righteous in justifying both David and you? The expiation or propitiation of Christ on the cross is the answer. He died that God might be just in justifying us. Redemption is through the blood, the death of the Lamb.

It may now be asked, Is the death of Christ the complete justification of the believer? Or is His death the complete revelation of the righteousness of God? According to scripture, we must answer, No. The redemption blood of Christ is the infinite price. Oh think of the death of such a Substitute! Think of God's estimate of that awful atoning death on the cross. What was it for the holy One to be forsaken of God? But if that be all, would God be righteous in forsaking the only perfectly holy, holy One? And if that were all, could we lost sinners be justified? Never. And just here comes in the amazing importance of the resurrection of Christ from among the dead. "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." Yes, the apostle shews if

Christ is not risen, preaching is utter folly, and faith is vain.

The Holy Ghost bears witness to the righteousness of God in this very matter, as Jesus said: "Of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye see me no more." (John xvi. 10.) If Jesus had been left in the grave to see corruption, there would have been no righteousness, there would have been none on earth: for Jews and Gentiles, sunk in sin and guilt, had rejected the only righteous One. And that only One left dead! Oh it was not possible for God to be unrighteous—there is righteousness in heaven—God raised Him from the dead. Let us go on.



THE COMING OF THE LORD, AS MADE KNOWN TO THE ASSEMBLY AT THESSALONICA.

IN the midst of all the confusion of human opinions of the last days, what a privilege it is to turn to the inspired letters before us, written at the very beginning. It is most probable that these are the very first epistles written. And also in these letters we see how much on this subject, the coming of the Lord—and on other subjects, also—had been taught these babes in Christ, when they had been converted but a short time.

The light of the true gospel had broken in upon their midnight darkness. They had heard an entirely new truth, as new to Jew as to Gentile. For 1500 years the Jews had been taught by law what they ought to do, and they had never done it. The poor heathen had worshipped demons, as though they had been gods; and with all their philosophy, culture, and poetry, they were sunk in the lowest depths of sin.

But now the gospel had thrown a new light on man's condition. He was so lost, so guilty before God, that another, a substitute, must needs suffer for him, and must rise again; and that Jesus, the Saviour, whom Paul preached to them, was the Christ. (Acts xvii. 1-10.) Now mark, this was the entire setting aside of the former principle of man's responsibility, and testing by law; and the proclamation of the second Man, the Lord from heaven taking man's place. Man was too bad to save or improve himself. Everything of the first man was put out, or has gone out, and everything of Christ is now brought in. That light was Jesus, what He was, and what He had done. Forgiveness preached to every sinner through Him, and all that believed were justified in Him—forgiven and brought into complete justification IN CHRIST: the old man being set aside for ever; and every believer a new creation in Christ—the new man.

No doubt then, as now, it was hard for the religious Jew to accept this entirely new truth. How hard it is for a religious man to give up all in which he trusts, and believe the gospel of God! But "some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few." Yes, this was the true gospel, and how marvellous its effects! Has this gospel come to you with the power of the Holy Ghost? Has this been your start on the journey? Has this stripped you of all your religiousness, or of all your wickedness? What a fact that Jesus must needs suffer for us! You must see this, that if you are wrong at the start you will be wrong all the way, and, awful to think, for ever wrong at the end. Is it not real love to your soul to tell you the plain truth? You cannot be saved by any efforts to improve yourself: that is only what scripture calls self-righteousness.

By the preaching of the gospel to these Thessalonians, self and all of self was for ever set aside. Jesus must suffer—He has suffered; He must rise again—God has raised Him from the dead: He is the Christ. And what of all who believed this gospel, which is so much denounced in our day as so dangerous? Yes, constantly we meet people who tell us that to tell people the work is done—was done, all

done, on the cross—and that God has raised Jesus from the dead to give everlasting certainty of salvation to all who believe, is most dangerous doctrine.

A letter was written from Athens to all these young converts, after at most a few months, by the inspired apostle, he having to flee from them for his life. Let us read that letter, and learn the effect of what men call this dangerous doctrine. "Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church [or assembly] of the Thessalonians, which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." Thus, all the believers who had heard and believed this gospel, formed the one assembly in God the Father—an expression nowhere else found in scripture—and in the Lord Jesus Christ. It was not the nation of the Thessalonians, or the city; but the assembly taken out of the nation, or city. These young babes, just born again, were all in this wondrous relationship to God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. True, there were no national churches, no sects or denominations; all was of God, and therefore there were none of these which be of men.

Everything of the first man was set aside; the assembly was in Christ—an entirely new creation wholly of God the Father. Such was the church of God in the beginning. Has man

improved on this? Can any of the churches of men say they are in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ? Oh, reader, do you understand these first words to these babes in Christ? How much of man you might have to give up to return to this divine simplicity!

Verse 2. These babes were in such a state that Paul says, "We give thanks to God always for you ALL, making mention of you in our prayers." Think of that—a multitude of believers, all babes in Christ, in such freshness of soul and holiness of walk that he could give thanks *always* for them *all*. And all this was the effect of that gospel so despised in this day of mere form. Three things he could remember without ceasing: their "work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God our Father." Concerning such there could be no question as to their election of God. The gospel had come in power, in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. Of all this multitude not one but knew with much assurance his salvation. They became ensamples. The gospel sounded out from them for sixty or seventy miles around in a few months. Yes, a few months before they were sunk in demon worship, or vainly seeking righteousness by the law. Now they are "turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven,

whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."

Now contrast this with any nation, city, or town, at this day ; where would you find a town in which every believer formed one assembly in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ—all of one mind and one heart, serving the living and true God : and all waiting for His Son from heaven ? Oh what a contrast ! Take the millions of the baptised in London. Where will you find the same gospel that Paul preached, and where the effects ? There was but the one assembly in Thessalonica, how many sects are there in London ? Do we take these things to heart ? Mark, these babes were all delivered from the wrath to come : Jesus, for whom they waited had delivered them. To doubt this would be to doubt the *efficacy* of His death, and the proof of His resurrection. They believed God, and were justified in Christ risen from the dead. All question of sins was settled for ever, never to be raised again against them. Happy babes in Christ ! They were free and bold to sound forth the gospel all around.

Has there ever been anything equal to this ? A few poor strangers came into a city of idolatry. Paul preached this gospel for a short time, and see the result ! They were not turned to God from idolatry to look for wrath, or the day of tribulation, or the man of sin ; but to wait for

the Son of God from heaven. They were converted from Jewish religiousness or heathenism; but not to look for death and going to heaven. No, it was for God's Son from heaven.

We shall find very instructive order in this letter, as to the coming of the Lord. At the end of chapter i. it is the Person of the Son: He is the Object of hope, the one Person to wait for. They went out of Judaism and heathenism, like the virgins, to meet Jesus the Bridegroom. Paul shews in chapter ii. 19 that he had no other hope—no hope of the conversion of the world, neither was death his hope. "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?"

A missionary may go to distant lands and increase his church or sect, on earth. This is often the impression on the native mind, if not the object of the missionary. The Copts said lately, These people tell us that unless we leave our Coptic church, and become Presbyterians, we shall be lost. There is no doubt this is a great hindrance to the real work of God. With Paul it was the very reverse of this. No hope had he but to see all who were turned to God, truly converted, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming. Which will more stir the whole soul to gospel effort, having our hope fixed on the awful state of Christendom, or on the

presentation of the saints at the coming of Christ? Surely there can be but one answer to such a question.

Not only is this blessed hope a powerful motive for preaching the gospel, it has also an equal place in affecting our love one to another, and leading to a walk of holiness. "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." (Chap. iii. 12, 13.) Yes, they had left all to go out, like Rebecca, to meet the heavenly Isaac. They were like companions hasting across the wilderness, suffering at the hands of their enemies, but ever waiting, ever looking for the returning Jesus from heaven. There was but one object before them: the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. This very hope had a sanctifying effect on them all as they waited only for their Lord.

Another truth is stated, a very remarkable truth: "At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ WITH ALL HIS SAINTS." We shall see how this is explained to them in the further details of the next chapter. It might at first sight seem like a contradiction, that all the saints will come WITH our Lord Jesus Christ. It is, however, the plain statement of scripture. "At the coming

of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." "Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring WITH him." (Chap. iv. 14.) "The Lord cometh WITH ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all," &c. (Jude 14, 15.) And, in perfect keeping with these scriptures and others, we read: "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, THEN shall ye also appear with him in glory." (Col. iii. 4.) And not only so, "But we know that, when he shall appear, WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John iii. 2.) This is very wonderful. Oh what grace, what blessedness, and we know it to be true.

But perhaps you say, This would upset everything I ever heard or believed. I thought when Christ came it would be the last judgment, and we should all be raised together to judgment, but how can that be, if when the Lord Jesus appears we are with Him, and like Him, and that we all come with Him? Nothing could be more contrary to what I have been taught. It seems far too good to be true.

But, my friend, I am just simply bringing the precious word of God before you. As we go on in this epistle, we shall find a full, clear explanation of all this, just the explanation the Lord Jesus gave to His servant for these dear young babes in Christ. Let us go on to chapter iv.

LETTER FROM THE EAST.

Beyrout, November 22nd, 1887.

DEAR BROTHER —,

You will be glad to hear that our beloved brother Schlotthauer arrived safely last week, greatly improved in health from what he was when we parted with him nearly two years ago. His restoration to health and return to the East afford us all much joy, and greatly encourage our faith, for there had been much looking to the Lord to preserve him longer for the work in the East, in which he has been engaged nearly a quarter of a century. Such a period of time gives one links with hundreds, I may say, thousands of souls; hence such a labourer, if taken away, would be greatly missed. After a week's visit with us here, he went on his way yesterday to Palestine.

I myself have only returned home a few days since, as I had been away for a fortnight's visit to an assembly near Hamath, which you know is a few days' journey North of this. The fatigues of an inland journey affected my health somewhat, but I trust that I may be better in a few days, and, if the Lord will, I shall go again to Egypt, to visit the saints and see how they do. From letters received from them they seem to be walking in peace, while there is much activity in carrying the truth to new fields, several of which have been recently opened. All

feel how much better it is to be occupied with Christ and His grace than with questions of human arrangements. When all became occupied last year about the question of appointing elders their wings drooped, open doors were not looked for, and, perhaps, not discerned if existing. But the moment their hearts and thoughts got occupied again with the Lord in simplicity, there was peace and love at home, and grace again led out in activity towards needy souls without. O that saints everywhere could learn once for all, and never forget, how simple and blessed is the sheep's path, as following the great Shepherd in resurrection, hearing His voice, and going on to be with Him and like Him for ever. How simple it is to trust in His care, and how blessed to enjoy His protection and love. He never forgets the feeblest, and strong and weak alike need His guidance and the rich pastures His provident love secures.

A dear Egyptian brother recently wrote me, from Upper Egypt, a letter full of encouragement as to progress of the work. I give you the translation from Arabic. He says, "I begin with spiritual salutations from a heart longing to see you. For the love that is in us is of the fruits of God's Spirit, who ceases not to produce in us longings for the heavenly Bridegroom, and also towards one another as members of His body and His bride; for the Spirit has united us

to one another, and to the Head in glory, in whom we are one.

“I have not forgotten our meeting together last winter, and all that then passed at the time of your visit. Truly the Lord ordered it in His wisdom and goodness, thanks to Himself who causes all things to work together for good to them who love God. Our circumstances then were in appearance sorrowful, but our God can turn that which is sorrowful into joy, and bring sweetness from that which is bitter. We now see that formerly we had been over-anxious about the Lord’s work, and did not sufficiently trust in His care and guidance for His saints. But it pleased Him in this way to teach us more of what it is to look to Him alone, apart from human wisdom and arrangement. And now our hearts can rest in His promises, being assured that having begun to raise a testimony and gather His witnesses, He will establish and sustain them.

“His own hand will lead, and we can say with confidence, that He who hath begun a good work will carry it on until the day of Christ Jesus. We can now more easily commit all our affairs into His hand. Formerly we knew this as doctrine; but it pleased Him to allow us to pass through circumstances bitter and trying, and then deliver us with a new experience of His faithfulness and love, and taught us to wait

on Him for everything, and cast all our cares on Him in prayer and supplication. Then He will accomplish the good pleasure of His will for us, and give our feeble hearts rest and comfort. He is full of pity, and will not allow us to be burthened beyond our strength. He would exercise our hearts that they may be watchful and diligent: and ever draw our thoughts to Himself on high, as He leads us forward to meet Him, and be with Him, and like Him for ever.

“As for the state of the assemblies, there is now greater quiet, and much conferring together over the word of God, and all the brethren edify one another. There is also much comfort in praise and prayer in our nightly meetings, and on Lord’s day, and brethren are learning more and more to be quiet and to avoid haste in these exercises. It may be that in outward appearance the state seems to be weaker than formerly; but we are assured that there is an advance in true edification; and the assemblies feel more and more their weakness, and are cast on the Holy Spirit to strengthen our weakness, comfort our hearts, and fill them with increasing desire towards Christ, our heavenly Bridegroom.”

It would seem that the Lord Himself is teaching the same lessons to His gathered saints everywhere. The process may be bitter, but the lessons taught are invaluable.

Your brother in Christ, B. F. PINKERTON.

CORRESPONDENCE.

2. W. P., Manchester. It is utterly unscriptural to preach to the unconverted and tell them their sins *are* pardoned. Peter did not so preach to the nation of Israel. (Acts ii. 38; iii. 18-20.) And again to Cornelius and his friends, "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive forgiveness of sins." Forgiveness of sins was freely preached or proclaimed to all (Acts xiii. 38, 39), but only those who believe are justified from all things. "Therefore, being justified by faith" (Rom. v. 1), believers have forgiveness of sins. (Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14; Heb. x. 14, 17-19; 1 John ii. 12; compare i. 9.) "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive *us* our sins," &c.

Now Matthew xii. 31 does not say all manner of sin *is* forgiven unto men, &c., but shall be forgiven. Surely this is so to all who believe God, in the forgiveness proclaimed to them. But nowhere does scripture say to the unbeliever, "Your sins are forgiven." (2 Cor. v. 19-21.) It is, "made him sin," for *us* believers, not for *them*, that is, unbelievers. When Israel shall be born in a day, they will say, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of *us* all." So *only* can *believers* say now.

You will also find in scripture, that the dead will be judged, not only for rejecting the gospel, but "they were judged every man according to their works." (Rev. xx. 12, 13; Matt. xii. 36.) It would then be a fearful error to tell men they are pardoned, whether believers or unbelievers.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

REVEALED.

II.

THE Holy Ghost bears witness of the righteousness of God, because Jesus has gone to the Father. There was no righteousness on earth in Jew or Gentile. His very disciples had forsaken Him. The great stone covered the door of the sepulchre. What a moment was that! The work of atonement was finished on the cross. He had glorified God in making propitiation for sins; but, as the righteous Man, He lay dead. And, as we have seen, if He is still dead, all faith is vain, we are yet in our sins. Look at Him as your Substitute. If He is dead and that is all, then you are dead with Him, and that is all.

Let us turn again to the Epistle to the Romans, and look at the revelation of the righteousness of God. Bearing in mind the two parts of Acts xiii. 38, 39, we are still occupied with the former part: justification in the sense of forgiveness of sins. The great work of God is now before us in raising Christ from the dead. It is on this ground we are justified, reckoned righteous, as to all our sins before God, "if we believe on him [God] that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences." That is

one thing. See all your iniquities laid on Him, your holy, devoted Substitute. Are they still on Him, or is He still dead and in the sepulchre? No; "He was raised again for our justification." Believing God, righteousness is reckoned to us; we are justified from all charge of our sins. (Rom. iv. 24, 25.)

What, then, was the purpose of God in raising up Jesus from the dead? It will take eternity fully to answer that question. Can any one call in question the righteousness of God in raising up Christ from the dead? The Holy Ghost has come down from heaven to bear witness of His righteousness, in receiving Him to glory. But what then in this verse was the purpose of God in raising Christ from the dead? Assuredly for this very purpose, "for our justification." In *view* of this very thing, and not because we were justified. We are justified by faith—on the principle of faith. And was God righteous in raising our blessed Substitute from the dead for this very purpose, our justification from all sins? You cannot, you do not doubt it. Now, since God did this, you cannot doubt that you are justified. If a single sin of yours or mine had been left on Jesus (our sins were once laid on Him), He could not be in the glory with the Father. For when our sins were laid on Him, He was forsaken of God. He dies no more; He is forsaken no more; He *sits* at the

right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, the abiding proof that our sins are put away for ever. Cannot you, then, say these words: "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," &c. ? "WE HAVE," that is, this is true of every one that believeth, is it not, then, true of you ?

And then, for our assurance and exceeding great comfort, the apostle shews how we have access by faith into this grace, wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God ; and how God has commended His love to us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Oh, there can be no doubt that His *death* is the ground of the revelation of the righteousness of God in justifying us from our sins. And we fail to find a single thought of Christ returning in the flesh to keep the law for our complete justification after His resurrection. Can you find such a thought ? I mean for the second part or aspect of justification. In him every one that believes is justified. (Acts xiii. 39.)

Let us now look at the second aspect, complete justification IN HIM. Can "in Him" possibly refer to our being in Him whilst down here, the Holy One fulfilling all law and righteousness, whilst He was in sinless flesh ? No, nothing can be farther from the truth than to suppose that His incarnation either reconciled God to man or man to God, or that He was in us or

we in Him. He assures us there must be a wholly new birth. (John iii.) And that He, the grain of wheat, must die or remain alone. (John xii. 24.)

It is a sad mistake, then, to go back to Christ in the flesh, either as to incarnation, or keeping the law for our complete justification. We shall see that in our further inquiry. Let us for the present return to Romans. Have we then seen, that as to remission of sins, in that aspect we are justified from sins by the *work* of Christ—what He has done by His blood; and that we are assured of this by His resurrection from the dead?

But now you say, That is quite clear; but then there is what I am. And what are you? A black lump of sin. Can God in righteousness justify a black lump of sin? No, and yet God justifies the ungodly. Not that He justifies sin or ungodliness. We have seen that He is righteous in justifying the ungodly from his sins. Now we shall find how He can justify from *sin*—black, vile sin. And also how He is righteous in doing this. If you had a child which had a propensity for stealing, you could not justify either a theft or the propensity for thieving. You might forgive a theft, but you could not even forgive the propensity. Neither do we ever read of God forgiving, much less justifying the propensity, or, as it is named, sin in the flesh,

the root of all sins. How is God, then, righteous in dealing with sin, the root ?

IN SIN, OR IN CHRIST ?

That is the question. Every man in sin is not justified. Every man in Christ is justified—that is, in the highest sense, there is nothing to condemn, but everything pleasing to God. Dispel now the question of sins for the present, and look at this matter from the highest standpoint—accounted perfect in the sight of God, righteous before God, and God righteous in so reckoning us. How can this be ? you may well say. As is now well known, in Romans v. 12 this question is taken up. There are two headships : Adam, the head of sin, and death, and condemnation ; Christ, the Head of the new man in grace, righteousness, and justification of life. It is not then now the justification of our sins, or sin ; but the righteous judgment of God on the Person of His beloved Son, who offered Himself both for our sins, and also for our sin. So that, all being judged and for ever put out of the sight of God, the believer is justified *in Christ*. We shall find there is no thought of restoring fallen man as of the first head, Adam ; but the entire setting him aside. There is no thought of imputing as much righteousness as will reinstate him. Neither is there a thought of improving fallen man. But the righteousness of God is seen completed in

an entirely new creation in Christ, the Second the last Man.

Let this be borne in mind, and all becomes clear and harmonious. Sin and death came by the first Adam; and though not reckoned as transgression where the law had not been given from Adam to Moses, still death reigned—death and condemnation flowed on the whole race through one offence. But how much more the free gift of grace by the Second, the one Man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded: "For if by one offence death reigned by one [Adam]; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." (Rom. v. 17.) Now the effect of the one offence is toward all men condemnation; so, by the one, accomplished, immutable righteousness, toward all men justification of life. (Ver. 18, see literal translation.) Thus, through the obedience of Christ unto death, the death deserved by us, we have life beyond death in Him, even eternal life in Him; and, if in Him, surely a justified life. And is not God's righteousness fully revealed in this very life? It is not our old forfeited Adam life, but life in the risen Christ. And nothing in Him risen can be condemned.

As to the old creation—the one act of disobedience—"For as indeed, by the disobedience of the one man the many have been constituted

sinner;” then as to the new creation in Christ, “so also by the obedience of the one man [Christ] the many have been constituted righteous.” Now the question is this, Does this mean that man is under law, and is constituted righteous by the imputation of Christ’s keeping the law for him? Or did they who were under law need entire redemption from its curse by the death of Christ? And then is he constituted righteous *in Christ risen from the dead*? Let us pursue this deeply important inquiry.

After 2500 years the law entered, and a nation was put under it for about 1500 years. “The law entered that the offence might abound.” Nothing could improve man; he must be entirely set aside, and that which could only curse him must be entirely superseded, as it is written: “But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” Here, then, are the two positions of man: “That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.”

In Romans vi. the very original profession of Christianity illustrates the truth before us. In baptism the believer is buried unto the death of Jesus Christ. He owns and reckons *himself* utterly set aside as dead unto sin, “but alive unto God IN Christ Jesus our Lord.” (It should be *in*, not *through* here.) It is not the first-Adam righteousness—there is not such a thing.

It is not the old Adam life restored ; that is gone. Thus sins are gone by the one offering of Christ. Sin is judged, as we shall see, and is reckoned gone—and the old life is gone, and now Christ is both his subsisting righteousness and his eternal life. It is not that he is actually dead and gone, but this is his new position and standing, as we shall see. This we shall also find to be power in the Spirit for a new holy walk. It is of the utmost importance then to see that the old man is crucified with Christ and judicially done with. We are justified from all of self by the death of Christ, and our complete justification is in Christ risen.



THE COMING OF THE LORD,
AS MADE KNOWN TO THE ASSEMBLY AT
THESSALONICA.

II.

WE will now look at the remarkable scripture, 1 Thessalonians iv. 13–18. It is evident the apostle had said little or nothing to them, during his few weeks' preaching, about death and going to heaven. The coming of the Lord Jesus from heaven was the blessed hope of the gospel which the Lord gave him to preach. It is further evident that, during the few weeks or months before he sent this letter, some of the assembly had died. This had given them great sorrow, as though those who had died would not be here

when the Lord should come. We can scarcely understand this sorrow now, the coming of the Lord has been so much forgotten, and death actually put in its place.

The Lord has, in His tender love, given a special revelation for the comfort of those dear babes, and not for them only but for us. This will also explain how it is that all the saints will come with Christ, when he comes to judge the living wicked.

We see also that the apostle treats the coming of the Lord as a part of the glad tidings. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." Take away this hope, and the gospel would be totally altered and disfigured. Mark then, what follows is revelation from the Lord. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent [or go before] them which are asleep." What a real and present thing the coming of the Lord is in scripture. It is not *THEY*, but *WE* who are alive. Hence all living Christians should expect the Lord before they die. It is "*we who are alive.*" Also mark how this revelation shews the very order of events.

Suppose you say, "Well, I am waiting for the Lord Jesus from heaven, but when He comes what will be the very first thing that will take

place?" Let us read. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: AND THE DEAD IN CHRIST SHALL RISE FIRST." Is not this a plain answer to your question? The millions, yea, all that are Christ's are raised first. It is the very first thing that will take place. You will find a full account of this in 1 Corinthians xv. And more, there we learn that if this is not so, there is no truth in the gospel at all. If this does not take place, then Christ is not raised; and if Christ is not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept." Thus the resurrection of the dead in Christ is certain. "But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." Read the particulars of this glorious event from verse 42 to end of chapter. What a change for the poor body sown in loathsome corruption, raised in glory.

Do not make the common mistake, that these words speak of the resurrection of all, saved and unsaved. This is that resurrection spoken of in many scriptures of such unspeakable privilege. Jesus said, "But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD, neither marry nor are given in marriage." (Luke xx. 35.) He

also marks with great distinctness the two resurrections, "They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (John v.) Again, He speaks of a resurrection of great privilege. Three times He repeats this in John vi. 39, 40, 44. The Jews were greatly offended because the apostles "preached through Jesus the resurrection FROM THE DEAD." (Acts iv. 2.) For this believers are waiting—"the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body." (Rom. viii. 23.) This is the resurrection of those that are Christ's at His coming. (1 Cor. xv. 23-57.) For this Paul longed, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead;" or, as it should be translated, "from amongst the dead," (Phil. iii. 11.) "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." (Rev. xx. 5.)

Yes, in perfect harmony with all scripture, we are thus assured the very first thing that will take place is the resurrection of those that sleep in Christ. Will they then be taken to heaven first and leave us behind? No. What will be then the second thing that will take place? "Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." How often we hear the saying, „We shall all surely die." The scripture says

just the opposite of this. "We shall *not* all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," &c. Men may deny this blessed hope, and scoff at it, but our God says to us, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

Yes, what comfort to those who were distressed about any who had fallen asleep! They will be raised first. They will not remain unclothed spirits. Their bodies will not remain in vile corruption. They will rise in incorruptibility, in the likeness of the glorified body of Christ. Oh, think of this when you remember the dear ones whose bodies you have left in the grave. The very first thing is, they shall be raised in glory.

Are you bowed down with sorrow in the church, and distress in the world? Do you see the dark shadows of the coming storm grow darker and darker? Oh what a comfort—in a moment we who are alive and remain, shall be changed. We shall rest for ever, rest with the Lord. Is this really our hope? Do we wait for Him, look for Him, this night, this day?

And mark, how these few verses explain the difficulty as to all believers, all saints, when the Lord comes, coming *with Him*. He comes first, as He promised He would, to take us to Himself. All this is as the Bridegroom, and before He comes to judge. Yes, we shall be with the blessed Lord in the place prepared in the Father's man-

sions. Yes, this we learn by revelation. The coming of our Lord in the air, and our gathering together to Him. Just as Jesus ascended up to heaven and a cloud received Him, so we shall ascend in the clouds to meet the Lord. He says, "I will come again and receive you to myself." Do you doubt Him? Why should you? Has He loved us and died for us, and will He not come for us? Has He washed us from our sins, and will He not take us to Himself? Has He died in vain? No; in a moment, and then for ever with the Lord. Thus close the words of comfort to the young converts at Thessalonica.

What is next, or what will follow after the church is taken away to be with Christ? Let us read and mark the order. Chapter v., "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you." All dates, or times, or seasons do not directly concern the church. She will have been taken away before those future times and seasons begin their course. A knowledge of this would preserve men from all the vain fixing of dates. The apostle shews us that all these refer to the world, and not to us. "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they [not ye] shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and THEY shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in

darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief."

Thus nothing could be more clear as to the order of events: the Lord comes in the air for His saints, those that sleep in Him are raised first; then we who are alive and remain unto His coming, are changed and caught up to meet the Lord, and to be with Him for ever. This realises our blessed hope—our full, entire, everlasting comfort. Then comes the solemn warning to the world—the day of the Lord. This terrible day of the wrath of almighty God had long been foretold by all the prophets of the Old Testament, as ushering in the blessing of Israel, and the kingdom of God on the earth. The Lord Jesus has described this time of tribulation such as never was; and then the immediate coming of the Son of man in judgment. (See Matt. xxiv., xxv.)

And all this will come as a thief in the night, yes, in that appalling midnight darkness of this poor world, the Lord will come, and be as little expected by the world as was the flood in the days of Noah, or the fire that fell upon the doomed cities of the plain, in the days of Lot. Is not all this foretold by the very lips of Jesus? There needed no fresh revelation as to all this. But the dear young converts need to know that they are not of that midnight darkness. They are not and will not be in it, thus to be overtaken. No, it is the

poor world, deceived by Satan, and looking for its golden age of lawlessness, crying peace and safety, even up to its sudden destruction by the coming of the Son of man.

It may be asked, How can men be crying peace and safety, in such a time of tribulation? Is it not so in principle at this very moment? Misery and distress of nations are increasing every day, such as no human mind can deal with—and yet men never boasted more of the golden time as coming. But the young converts did need to be told that they were not of this scene. We are not of that world which is hastening on to its midnight darkness and awful judgment: “YE ARE ALL the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.” Is it not a fact that many, who profess to be Christians, are working and toiling and devoting their energies as if they were of the world, and they or their children had to stay here for ever? Oh read these solemn warnings, lest you find you have deceived yourselves, and are left in this, in your world’s midnight darkness, to perish for ever, when you hear those words: “Depart from me, I know you not.”



WHAT IS ETERNAL LIFE ?

A CONVERSATION ON THE RAILS.

I WAS returning from Rochdale the other day, when I found one of my fellow-travellers was from York. He had been deeply impressed with the statements of Mr. Spurgeon, as to the unsound teaching of the present ministers of the Baptist Union, and he was afraid it was true. He said he had sat under the ministry of Mr. Parsons, of York. He asked me, "Do you not think there is a great difference between the preaching of that day and this?" I replied, "Can you find one who answers to Mr. Parsons now, amongst all the popular preachers amongst the Congregationalists of this day—to his earnest preaching of Christ, and His atoning death as the only foundation of the salvation of God?" After serious thought he said, "I do not know of one."

I was telling him of my first preaching in the city of York, more than forty years ago, and how the Lord gave me an immense congregation in a few minutes. I was a stranger in the city, and had a few hours to wait for a train. After preaching, a man asked me a question, and as this man (Mr. L.) was well known to my fellow-traveller, he became greatly interested in what took place. Mr. L. said, "Do you mean to say that a man may know in this world that he is saved—that his sins are forgiven, and that he has eternal life?"

This question aroused intense interest in the large company listening at York. (Just at this point in our conversation, three or four very interesting men entered our carriage.) I then went on to explain how I had answered Mr. L., at York. God, in pure love to us lost sinners, gave His Son to be offered the sacrifice for sins. He having glorified God by the death of the cross, God has raised Him from the dead. And God now says, "Be it known unto you that through this man is preached unto you forgiveness of sins." God means what He says; so that, if we believe what He says, then surely we do know that our sins are forgiven.

Then more, He also says, "And by him, [*or in him*] all that believe [*or every one that believes*] is justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." This is a plain absolute fact. Then further, as to eternal life. Jesus says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath eternal life, and shall not come into judgment; but is passed from death unto life." (Words of Jesus, John v. 24.)

These and other scriptures enabled me to shew that the believer knows with divine certainty that he is pardoned, justified, has eternal life, will never come into judgment for his sins, is saved, has passed from death unto life; is a new creature in Christ Jesus, justified from all things.

God only knows how many souls found blessing that day in York.

All my fellow-travellers had now become greatly interested; indeed, I really think the Spirit of God was working in their souls. At this point I said, before we go further, I should like to ask a question, and for each to give an answer to the best of his ability, and no one to be influenced by the others' answer; but each to answer deliberately for himself. All agreed to this. The question was this—

WHAT IS ETERNAL LIFE ?

No. 1, my friend of York replied, "I think that is one of those things we cannot tell, we cannot say what it is."

No. 2, a highly intellectual, well-educated young man, said after much reflection, "I should say it is the highest faculties of man fully developed."

No. 3, a middle-aged sober christian man I judged, said, "I think it is the enjoyment of God."

No. 4, a man ignorant of the grace of God, scarcely able to apprehend the question, said, "I cannot make your doctrine out; you seem to think God is as willing to pardon the greatest criminals, as better men; and that they have as good a chance to be saved as good men. How long do you make it out it would take to save a right bad man?"

I replied to No. 4, "How long do you think it took to save the dying thief?"

No. 5 declined. He could not say what eter-

nal life was. And he was the only one who seemed not so much interested.

Last of all it was now my turn, in going round the carriage, I said, "First we must notice the difference between existing for ever, and eternal life. Satan, fallen angels, demons, every unconverted man will exist for ever. But they have not eternal life. Eternal life is the life of the Eternal One. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. In him WAS life. he was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." This is that eternal, self-subsisting Son, whom God hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds, or universe. (John i.; Heb. i.)

Here is the foundation of all truth. The Eternal Son is the eternal life, is the truth.

To No. 1. This eternal life is now fully revealed, and declared in the Son.

To No. 2. The eternal life then is not the evolution of the higher faculties of man. Satan would set before us evolution, so as by it to become God. Not so the word of God. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God ;

that ye may know that ye have eternal life.
(1 John v. 11-13.)

This young man was an Agnostic, had been leavened with infidelity by ministers and teachers! I said to him, "Young man, you are young and I am old, or getting old, old at least in the word of God. It has been my study and delight for forty-five years, and, indeed, longer than that, and I can assure you every day it becomes more dear and blest to my soul. Let me beg of you to take that word as it truly is, the word of God—God speaking to your soul." He turned pale with emotion, and said, "Oh that I could believe as I did when a child!" God grant that the word may be blest to that young man.

To No. 3, I said, "Your answer came nearer. But eternal life is not the enjoyment of God, but that which enables us to know, and joy in God." "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John xvii. 3.)

To No. 4, I said, "It is not the greatness of man's sins but the infinite value of the atoning death of the Son of God (oh think of the infinite Creator becoming man to die for the finite creature, man). Yes, it is God's estimate of that devoted love unto death that is the ground of forgiveness of sins unto all alike."

All now left the carriage with hearty thanks for the conversation, except No. 5. There could

not have been a more striking contrast than there was between No. 2 the Agnostic, and No. 5.

I said then to No. 5, "I suppose you are not interested in these matters, or how a man may know that he has eternal life?" "Indeed, sir, I am greatly interested; but I felt I could not enter into the conversation." I trust I found an open ear and open heart, to hear and believe the salvation of God.

And now, dear reader, will you go down into the dark cellar with the Agnostic, shut out every ray of light, and then say you will not believe anything you do not see? You will see neither sun, nor moon, nor stars—will your disbelieving in their existence alter the fact of their existence? No, if you shut yourself up in darkness, and unbelief, refusing every ray of inspired light in the word of God, will that alter the awful fact that, "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God ABIDETH on him"? (John iii. 36.) Oh, ye infidel ministers and professors in colleges, will your Agnostic blindness avail you in the lake of fire for ever and ever? Dark and cruel is your unbelief, in leading the young to doubt, and everlasting woe. "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.)

C. S.

“INFIDELITY A ROTTEN PLANK:”

OR,

HOW THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT OF GOD, YET HIS GRACE ABOUNDING OVER SIN, WAS DISPLAYED IN HIS DEALING WITH A BLASPHEMING ATHEIST.

“THE fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” (Psalm xiv. 1); or rather, “No God;” in other words, it is not want of understanding, but moral corruption, the state of the affections, that leads to atheism. The impenitent sinner *desires* that there should be no God to bring him into judgment, and thus seeks to persuade himself that there is none. He “that doeth evil hateth the light; neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved” (*margin*, discovered). He loves darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil. And hence Psalm xiv. goes on to describe the moral condition of the man who has succeeded in persuading himself that there is “no God.” “They are corrupt, they have done abominable works.” I have been led to these reflections by the perusal of an article bearing the title at the head of this paper, and which was itself extracted from “A Narrative of Parish Work.”

The above title is given, as the expression was used by a christian woman in conversation with an atheist, to whom she said, “You will find infidelity *a rotten plank* some day.”

This man had accosted her in very offensive

language, interlarded with oaths and curses. He had formerly been a religious professor, and was well acquainted with the “letter” of scripture. The woman whom he had addressed, having seriously expostulated with him on his profanity, added a solemn reference to the name of God. He replied, first by a denial of His existence, and then with an impious challenge to his Creator to prove His existence by “smashing himself to pieces.” These words were deliberately repeated; and in louder tones, as the woman whom he addressed fled in terror from his presence, whilst the blasphemer called upon her to take his message to “her God.”

On the very next morning, which was Sunday, this wicked man was with some of his infidel companions, on his way to a neighbouring town, in his usual health and spirits, when he suddenly fell to the ground with a shriek. It was afterwards ascertained that the whole of one side of his body was completely powerless, which of course accounted for his sudden fall, the attack being one of hemiplegia, or palsy of one half of the voluntary muscles of the body—a disease well known to physicians.

Although no word was spoken, divine power was as really in exercise as in the case of the impotent man in John v., whom Jesus cured by a word, and told to take up his bed and walk. Each of these acts of divine power, testify to the

mercy of God, though the one apparently resulted only in restoring to bodily health, and the other, though at first judicial in its character, resulted in spiritual and eternal blessing.

To return to our narrative. The poor stricken blasphemer was carried home, and on reaching it, immediately requested that an evangelical clergyman, whom he had formerly known, might be sent for. On the arrival of the minister, his first words were, "Oh ! there is a God—there is a God—the Lord be merciful to me a sinner." The christian minister spoke to him of the grace of the Lord Jesus, and before he left his bedside the poor penitent found peace. The passages of scripture especially used by the Spirit of God for blessing to his soul, were 1 John i. 7, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin," and John vi. 37, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." He died in a few days, constantly rejoicing in the Lord, but none of his infidel friends came near him.

I omitted to mention above that, in the impious message to the Almighty, he had defied Him to strike him down as the woman's "old Bible" said He had Saul of Tarsus ; and there were certainly some points of resemblance between the cases—sudden and overwhelming judgment in each, followed by a marvellous display of "sovereign grace o'er sin abounding."

May the Lord graciously grant that the striking

exemplification of the truth which this narrative affords, that His all-seeing eye marks the footsteps of the transgressor, and that "there is no darkness nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves," may not be without fruit for His glory, and the conviction and conversion of sinners.

J. H. S.



THE GRACE OF GOD TO THE COLLIER BOY

"I CANNOT give many details concerning David's conversion. But I well remember aunt J. T. saying to me during the preaching in the old (Pottery) turning-house, 'Have you not a word for this poor lad?' pointing to David. I at once spoke to him, and was delighted to find that he had passed from death unto life, while listening to the gospel that memorable night. His answers to my questions were given with that quiet assurance that ever afterwards characterised him."

It is now twenty-eight years since that memorable night, when God was pleased in the riches of His grace, to save every unconverted person present, at that preaching in one of the shops of the old pottery. There was nothing of nature to please or attract, but the quiet presen-

tation of the gospel of God. It was however, as the above writer states, at the meeting after the preaching, or just at its close. Never before had I witnessed such a remarkable instance of divine power, whilst slowly repeating these blessed words of Jesus, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, HATH everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John v. 24); and then, "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe ARE justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." (Acts xiii. 38, 39.) Yes, these words fell upon the company with the power of the Holy Ghost. Some fell on the forms and seats, and some against the wall. David, then twenty years of age, was leaning weeping against the wall, when the writer of the extract above, said to him, "David, are you anxious to be saved?" "Nay," he said, with that calm and heavenly assurance that so sweetly marks a new-born child of God, "I am not anxious to be saved; I am saved; I have everlasting life."

Never once during his twenty-eight years after, did I know him reason, or doubt these precious words of life. He was a man of no excitement or demonstration, but of calm rest in

God. His great delight was to lead the young to that precious Saviour who spoke to him on that memorable night. Yes, even to the last, after many months of extreme weakness and suffering, scarcely able to sit up in bed, indeed, propped up with pillows, he had the young men around him, to read the word of God. The love of Christ had impelled him to learn to read after his conversion.

A few brethren had met with him in his chamber for some time, also to read with him John xvii. His soul had been filled with adoring joy, as they dwelt on this wonderful unfolding of the Saviour's love. They read until they reached the glory in verse 24, "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." This closed the scene, "absent from the body, present with the Lord."

We gathered around his remains, soon to be raised in glory, and incorruptibility. True, he had been a child of toil, and had worked in a coal mine all his days, until strength failed. But we felt his dignity as a child, a son of God, a joint-heir with Christ. There was no hearse, or pageantry. Brethren carried him to the body's resting-place, and neighbours wept around his remains; and as they heard of the grace of God to him, twenty-eight years before, all seemed to feel that the funeral of a nobleman, a queen, or

an emperor, if unsaved, would have been a vain show, as the body, in that case, would have had to remain until the resurrection of judgment—how terrible compared to the unspeakable joy, at the certainty we had, that David's body would be raised to share for ever the glory of Christ!

If called to die, reader, have you that blessed certainty? Yea, have you, like David, heard the words of Jesus? Have you believed on God who sent Him? If so, you have eternal life, Jesus says so. You shall not come into judgment, you are passed from death unto life. Ah! it is no little matter to have eternal life, the life of the eternal Son of God. Have you believed the proclamation of forgiveness of sins, through Jesus? Are you in Him? Blessed truth, "in him, every one that believeth is justified from all things." It was true in David's case. It is true of you if you are a believer. He heard the voice of the Shepherd, and He gave him eternal life. He was not anxious to be saved, or vainly seeking salvation by sacraments or law-keeping. He could say, "Nay, I am saved." Can you say this? If not, whatever your position in this world, you are poor and wretched.

C. S.



THE COMING OF THE LORD,
AS MADE KNOWN TO THE ASSEMBLY AT
THESSALONICA.

III.

SINCE we are not of this world's darkness, let us not sleep as do others, "but let us watch and be sober." Do dwell on every word of this exhortation. Oh beware lest you are drunken with the spread of the doctrines of demons on every hand. These will be drunken, in that night of darkness such as never was before. We are of the day, let us then put on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation. "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation." Assuredly then the church will not be in the great tribulation, in that night of this world's darkness. Let us finish the sentence: "but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him." Thus he comforts them as to those who had fallen asleep. And the Holy Ghost well knew that they would soon need the same comfort as to those who were alive. "We should live together with him." Oh how blessed to know that every true believer, whether he has fallen asleep in Jesus or remains alive unto that moment, when He comes to take all that are His, will live together WITH HIM: "for ever with

the Lord." We shall soon see the need of this comfort as to the living that remain.

Before we pass on to the second Epistle, there is one more verse we would notice in the first Epistle. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Chap. v. 23.) It is the God of peace. Yes, they were in God the Father, and in perfect peace with God in that endearing relationship of Father. Not a sin, not a cloud. All of the old man gone, utterly gone from the sight of God, and perfect, unclouded peace with God. Happy place! the complete justification of every babe in Christ. And, in view of the coming of Christ—to perfect the whole, in glory—he longs for the entire man, body, soul, and spirit, to be sanctified. It is complete separation from everything unsuited to that blessed event, the coming of the Lord. Men talk about sanctification, and, yet ignoring altogether the coming of the Lord, they remain identified with every evil of paganised Christendom! Such is the case, so that if a few believers, whilst in the world seek to walk as not of the world, they are pitied for their ignorance, and it is hinted they must have learnt such crude notions in the dark ages.

But what is the great motive for true, real holiness of walk? Is it not that the entire man

"be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"? Would you like to be found doing anything worldly in that moment (perhaps the day you read this) when the Lord shall come? Is the love of money, the love of pleasure, the seeking of human applause, the grasping at the world, the love of the world, the observing of pagan festivals under christian names, the selfishness and covetousness of this day, are these things, and many more, blameless? Do they become a child of God, waiting for the Lord from heaven? If there was need for this prayer then, is there not still greater need now? Do not be deceived, God must have reality. Are you dreaming of sinless perfection in the flesh; or do you feel your deep need of preservation? Yes, they needed and we need the GOD OF PEACE to separate us entirely from this whole scene which is hastening on to judgment.

It would seem in the second epistle their peace of heart, waiting for the Lord, had been severely attacked. In whatever way, whether by a letter, as from the apostle or otherwise, they were greatly distressed, as though the day of the Lord had come—and, if so, they were evidently left behind. This attack on the young babes gives the occasion for much additional truth being brought out to us in 2 Thessalonians i., ii.

Let us notice the tenderness of the apostle. He does not go at once and argue with them

about their mistaken distress ; but he opens up again so sweetly the relation in which they stand to God OUR Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the grace and peace that thus flows to them from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Then he tells them how he is still bound to thank God always for them "as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth." He was also so rejoiced that he gloried in them in the churches of God, for their patience and faith in all their persecutions and tribulations that they endured.

Surely this was a most blessed way of reminding them that they were not left behind in the day of the Lord. What tender love and calm assurance ! This abounding fruit was a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God—that they may be accounted worthy of the kingdom of God for which they suffered. Such ought to be also the case with us : there ought to be the same patience in bearing all the scorn and reproach of the world, yes, and persecutions also, should they be permitted.

It will thus be manifest that God is righteous in sending the tribulation on those that persecute and despise all true believers. There is a striking parallel between this present time and that. The Holy Ghost, come down from heaven, had

been rejected, and His testimony to Jesus despised. Those whom He gathered to Christ were regarded as a sect, everywhere spoken against. (Acts xxviii. 22.) Now during this century, immediately before the return of the Lord Jesus, the Holy Ghost who remains here, however despised and set aside, has again gathered souls to Christ, and given with great distinctness a restored testimony to Christ, as at the beginning. Now also those He has gathered to Christ are regarded as a sect everywhere spoken against, and the testimony of the Holy Spirit to Christ is rejected. In the first case, the rejection of the Holy Ghost brought down the righteous judgments of God on Judaism; and will not the present rejection of the Holy Ghost's testimony to Christ bring down the righteous judgment of God on Christendom? This is a subject that should have grave reflection. In the eyes of men it is nothing, yet they hate it. But what is the present rejection of the Spirit's testimony to Christ in the eyes of God? Let us return to our chapter.

Verse 7. "And to you who are troubled, rest with us; when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels," &c. At the time of the world's tribulation, and the terrible judgment here described, those dear young babes in Christ, and all in Christ now, who may be passing through tribulation, so

far from being left behind at the coming of the Lord for His redeemed, they will at that time be in perfect rest. Notice this verse carefully, for it is often perverted to deceive Christians now, just as the deceivers were seeking to deceive the saints at Thessalonica then; that is, that they were left for the day of tribulation, to pass through its unparalleled sorrows. No; at that time they and we shall be in rest. We shall see more as to this presently.

Here, remember how the apostle had shewn them in the first Epistle the order of coming events. At the coming of the Lord in the air for His saints, the first event in order is this: the dead in Christ rise first. Then, secondly, we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Thirdly, the day of the Lord then takes place: sudden destruction. (Chap. v.) Then, fourthly, in this chapter (2 Thess. 1) we have the coming of the Lord to this earth in terrible judgment. (Vers. 7-9.) We have also seen that when He thus comes, all His saints will come with Him. Careful attention to this would correct all the mistakes of such men as are pretending that only 144,000 will be taken.

And, mark, Paul, who writes respecting the church and the Lord's coming for it, NEVER speaks of dates. This shews the gross error of such as the Millerites, Dr. Cumming, Mr.

Baxter, and others, in applying dates to the church. May the Lord enable us to rightly divide the word, so as to see what belongs to Israel, and what is the portion of the church.

Let us now look at this fourth subject in the order of these epistles. The Lord Jesus shall come from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire. Oh where will the infidels and mere professors be at that awful moment? And so sudden and unexpected to this boasting Christendom around us at this moment.

You will notice that there is no resurrection of the wicked dead here. It is in perfect keeping with all other scriptures that speak of the judgment of the quick. On whom does He take vengeance? Two things characterise them: "Them that know not God, and that obey not the glad tidings of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Do you know God? If you know Him, you have eternal life. (John xvii. 3.) To know Him is the proof of it: for the believer has eternal life *that* he may know Him: "And this is life eternal, **THAT** they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." If you know God, you cannot doubt Him or His word; therefore, if you know Him, you know that your sins are forgiven, and in Christ you are justified from all things. (Acts xiii. 38, 39.) Oh do not be deceived. If you do not know that your sins are forgiven, and that

you are justified in Christ, and have peace with God, then assuredly you do not know God, and you are hastening on to that fearful judgment from which there will be no escape.

Have you obeyed the glad tidings of the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you preferring the pleasures or riches of this world? Are you living in sin, led captive by the devil? Are you deliberately rejecting forgiveness of sins, and deliverance from them through Jesus Christ? or are you seeking salvation by works, or the improvement of your fallen nature by any means? Then you have not obeyed the glad tidings, you are still on the way to the judgment here described. Are you seeking salvation by a human priesthood, after the pattern of Judaism or paganism, by the imitation of pagan sacraments that have no place in true Christianity? Be not deceived with these things of Satan. You are yet on the way to judgment. Is it not this apostate pagan Christendom that is hastening on to its punishment? Do you think, if you knew God's estimate of the blood of Christ, and, like all Christians, if you had redemption through that blood, even the forgiveness of your sins, would you either be so deceived as to take the sacrament in order to get salvation, or go and see a man offer a sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead? Impossible! Why should you love to be so deceived? Those who knew God,

and had obeyed Him, believing the glad tidings, had redemption, were eternally saved—God said they were perfected for ever (Heb. x. 14), and that their sins and iniquities He would remember no more. (Ver. 17.) They simply believed the glad tidings. The Holy Ghost dwelt in them. They had a nature that delighted to do the will of God. Are you rejecting all this, and then dreaming that you belong to the true church? Is it not quite clear if you do not know God, and reject the glad tidings of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you are not a Christian, but hasting on to this judgment?

As there are no dates given to us as Christians, all dates have reference to God's dealings governmentally with His people Israel, or the world. No one can say how soon these events, or at least the taking of the church, may take place. We earnestly entreat you, reader, to lose no time in having this question settled, whether you are a Christian, or hasting on to judgment. How many are deceiving and being deceived!

And what will be the punishment at that coming judgment? We are pestered with books and pamphlets, as if the professing church was going mad, to prove that there is no such thing as everlasting punishment. Let us, then, carefully inquire the meaning of these words in the next verse: "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction," &c.

“THIS MAN RECEIVETH SINNERS.”

LUKE xv.

“THEN drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.” Reader, have *you* ever done so? You have heard what others said about Him, who, it may be, knew nothing about Him. You may listen to your own heart which totally misrepresents Him, but have you drawn near *unto* HIM to *hear* HIM? Remember that the hour now is when dead souls are hearing the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear live. It is He who speaks in this wonderful chapter. Draw near unto Him now, then, to hear Him.

“This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them.” Did He deny the charge? No, He admitted it fully—it was His glory to receive them. In doing so the glory of His divine origin shone out. “He could not be hid.” He was in the midst of sinners, how would He treat them? Receive them of course. How could *the Son of such a Father* do otherwise?—the Father whose portrait He draws in the third section of this parable. Will He refuse thee? Have you ever gone to Him to ask? “I am too bad,” you say. What, too bad to be a sinner? Are you sure you are not too good? You may be too good, but you cannot be too bad. Thank God for that. That robe, that *best* robe, has covered the chief of sinners, a thief on the

cross, a Mary Magdalene, a woman in the city which was a sinner. That Shepherd sought *them*, that "woman" (figure of the Holy Ghost) found *them*, that Father received *them*; and art *thou* too vile? You wrong the blessed Three.

"Oh, but He was on earth amongst sinners then, and He is in heaven separate from sinners now," do you say?

But is He changed? Has He ceased to own a Saviour's heart, or to do a Saviour's part? Nay, nay, you wrong Him. The very last words He spoke to us from heaven in Revelation xxii. 16, 17, He spake in the character of "Jesus," the name He received because "He shall save his people from their sins"—and what did He say? "Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." He wills—will you?

And why is He in heaven? As the evidence of His *finished* work accepted. For whom? For SINNERS.

"The Saviour died, and by His blood
Brought rebel sinners home to God;
He died to set the captives free,
And why, dear soul—*why not for THEE?*"

"A CERTAIN MAN," AND "WHAT MAN OF YOU?"

LUKE XV. 11 AND 4.

"A CERTAIN man had two sons." The Lord did not say, "What man of you having two sons?"

as He had done in the former parts of this parable: "What man of you having an hundred sheep?" "Either what woman having ten pieces of silver?" He could not speak thus now, for no "man of them" would have dealt thus. Only *grace* deals after such a manner, and there was not a trace of it in *their* hearts. But the heart of this Father is full thereof to overflowing. It is a picture of the Father God—"the God of *all grace*"—drawn by His Son, who had come from His home to make Him known.

Self-interest would lead an owner of a hundred sheep, if he lost one, to leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which was lost until he found it. *Self-interest* would lead a woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lost one piece, to light a candle, and sweep the house, and search diligently till she found it. But only *grace*, sovereign, unmixed *grace*—undemanding all-supplying *grace*—receives to its heart and to its home such a profligate son, and after such a manner.

The Lord shewed that God *sought* on the same principle as they themselves, but He *receives* on His own unique principle, totally different to anything they acted on, and which only drew forth a murmur, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them," from the hard, self-righteous hearts of Pharisees and scribes to whom He spake this parable; though why

should God be denied the joy of receiving back a son if He chooses, would they not do so?

And notice, it is "*this* parable"—not *three*, but *one*. It gives the action of three Persons—three Persons but one God—seeking and receiving, but this diverse action of diverse Persons all concentrated on *one* object—the SINNER.

Dear, dear friend, did you ever contemplate the interest that God takes in *you*, who "would have *all men to be saved*, and come to a knowledge of the truth"?

W. G. B.



THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD REVEALED.

III.

"THERE is therefore now no condemnation to them which are IN Christ Jesus." "It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?" Complete justification IN Christ, and all of God. God gave His Son to bear our iniquities. God raised Him from the dead in perfect righteousness for our justification, to be our everlasting righteousness. Believing God we are reckoned righteous; all sins as completely put away from us, as to any charge against us, as they are put away from our Substitute who once bore them on the cross beneath the wrath of God. "For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that

he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, IN Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. vi. 11.)

Dead to sin, dead to law, and alive to God, but not in the flesh, but *in* Christ; old things are passed away, all are new, all of God—wholly a new creation. Nothing else avails. Every theory of old-man recovery or amendment—utterly a mistake. Every effort to establish our own righteousness—utterly against the gospel. We cannot either understand or submit to the righteousness of God, until we own that we have none, and by works of law can have none. Let us see how distinctly this is brought out. "What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. . . . For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Rom. ix. 30—x. 4.)

Now simply, what had the Gentiles found that gave them peace? They had found, to their un-

speakable joy, that Christ had fulfilled all the righteous claims of God. How blessed! Have you found this, that God sees you in Christ, and Christ to be your righteousness? Faith looks at Christ, and says, God has made His Christ to be my everlasting righteousness. What can I want more? They had not attained to righteousness in themselves. They were not made righteous in the flesh, nor the flesh made righteous by anything imputed to it. This is the grand secret that the flesh, man as in the flesh, man as a child of Adam, had to be entirely set aside—and in Christ, is an entirely new position, a new standing. Here in Christ alone can we find the righteousness which is of faith, the righteousness of God.

Now contrast the effort of Israel. They were in ignorance of the need of this new creation. They were seeking righteousness by works of law. Even Nicodemus was ignorant of man's true state and need. They had and have no idea of the need to pass from law, and sin, and flesh, to Christ, and find all in Him who revealed the righteousness of God to faith. And thus being ignorant of God's righteousness, they went about to establish their own, and thus refused to submit to the righteousness of God. By so doing they rejected the gospel, they rejected Christ.

We thus find in these verses that to seek to establish the old man—man as a child of Adam,

the first man, in any way—is to be ignorant of the righteousness of God, and really to reject Christ. How is it with us, for surely this is a personal matter both in the first and second aspects of justification? Do we truly own the atoning death of the Lord Jesus as the basis of the righteousness of God, in justifying us *from all sins*?

Then secondly, as to complete righteousness, perfect fitness to appear in the presence of God, in what and how is God righteous in bringing us into His holy presence in righteousness suited to Himself? There can only be one answer to that question. In one word it is IN Christ.

But we must again press the question, Is it legal righteousness? Is it the responsibilities of the old man, my own old self, made good? In no wise, or it would not be in Christ, a new creation. Man was placed under law, where man only transgressed the law, and man under law is man under its curse. (Gal. iii.) True, Christ became a curse, died the accursed death of the cross, to redeem them that were under the curse of the law. In this consists the righteousness of God, in forgiving them that believe.

But then, there are two human thoughts as to righteousness in which to appear before God. The Romanist, or infused righteousness; and the Puritanic, or Christ's keeping the law, or, as it is commonly called, the righteous fulfilment of

law imputed to man for his justification. But mark, both these are to make up for the defects of the old man, and make *him* fit for heaven. And, therefore, both these are alike utterly wide of the mark, and unscriptural. It would not be a new creation at all; but a repairing the sad defects of the old man.

Let us take the following illustration. You wish to cross the Atlantic. There are two vessels. One of these ships is utterly rotten and worthless. There are even holes in the bottom. It is a serious matter to trust yourself in that ship. The owner proposes to put or place copper sheathing to cover every hole. But the ship is rotten, and worthless in every timber. Such is man, utterly worthless, a mass of rottenness. Well, the owner says, I will replace new timbers, infuse as it were new life and strength into it, but it is the old ship still. Do you not see that both these proposals are to repair the old ship?

Here is the second vessel, wholly new. She has the strength of iron, and not a flaw or a hole in her bottom. She needs no repairs. In which of these would you cross the Atlantic? These two vessels illustrate a man *in* the flesh, and a man *in* Christ—or theology and scripture. How little is this understood! A man in the flesh, under law he breaks it, and flaws and defects abound. The Romanist would infuse by sacraments, &c., goodness, or inherent righteousness into man,

and in one way or other he may hope for righteousness to be infused into him, until he is fit or suited for heaven. Vain hope. At last he has to be put into the fires of purgatory, and there to stay in all its imaginary horrors he knows not how long. We utterly reject such a denial of the righteousness of God. It is the pagan denial of the gospel.

But is the imputation of Christ's righteousness to make up all the defects of the old man, man in the flesh under law, any more scriptural than the other or Romish error? Is not the root-mistake the attempt to improve and give a standing to the old man? A careful examination of Romans iv. will shew that it is in believing God we are reckoned righteous. That is real justification, accounted righteous before God. Christ was raised from the dead in view of this very thing.

But Christ risen is a new order of things, the beginning of the creation of God—the new creation. As to the old rotten ship, the cross did not improve it, but was the end of it, as it is said, “Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” (Heb. ix. 26.) Have we really laid hold of this fact by faith? The cross is the end of man's world in the flesh—the entire end, with not a shadow of a hope of improvement to man. Here I come to my end, the end of self. All now

must be Christ. No more what I am to Him for righteousness, but what He has done, and what He is for me. The old ship "I" is set aside, condemned. It is now the new vessel—all new; it is Christ. Not "I," but "Christ."

Still many would fear they would lose something if they gave up the thought of the imputation of Christ's righteousness as making up their defects so as to stand before God in law fulfilled, though by Him. If the old vessel has to float you across life's Atlantic, then put on the patches of copper; but if the new vessel, then it *is* new, and of God, and needs no patches. Or take a scriptural illustration. "No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse." (Mark ii. 21.) For fifteen centuries this old garment had been worn, until it was all rags and tatters, as we say. Man was seeking to establish his righteousness under and by law. Did Christ glorify God, in keeping the law, in order to be sewed on to the old garment of man under law? Why, the law was given for a totally different purpose, that sin might be seen to be what it is in open transgression. (Gal. iii. 19, Rom. v. 20.) To seek to mend the old garment then by the perfect righteousness of Christ, would make it worse. For it is seeking to help man to stand before God under law, on the principle of law. The

garment must be entirely new, apart from the old one, even the righteousness of God, apart altogether from law. It must be the new vessel, that is Christ.

Surely when God was in Christ in all the fullness of His love calling man to Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, this was the very last testing and proof of the old garment. What did it find in man but the most deadly enmity in the heart of men, ending in the murder of the Son of God. Thus ended the trial of man in the flesh. Has it not been thus with you? How you have longed to find some good in yourself! How you have struggled, but all in vain. Still you found sin and evil desires. Oh what bitterness of soul to find such weakness, such sin; and in the flesh nothing but sin. Can you say, "For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not"? Why not then have done with the old garment, and all patching up yourself under law, and have done as to your standing before God with the old vessel? Do we not in our very baptism publicly profess this very truth, death with Christ? Read Romans vi., and ask yourself the question, have I taken this place? There is also another very general mistake.



ONE IN A THOUSAND.

A CONVERSATION ON THE RAILS.

II.

It is remarkable how much you may learn of the state of society by conversation on the rails. I was travelling a few days ago on the line to Rochdale, when two men from Halifax got in the same carriage. After a little general conversation, one of them told me of a most interesting address he had heard the Sunday before, given to a Sunday school. The address was on the word *Waiting*. The speaker described a waiting-room at a station: what different characters were all waiting. Then on the platform all were waiting. At last the train moves, and all are off on the journey. Then comes a jerk at the siding-points: if kept on the right line you will feel a jerk. Then the signal posts warning of danger, &c. This was a similitude of the journey of life. Oh, how it was enjoyed!

I said, "And may I ask was there anything about Christ in the address to the young?" "No," he said, "I cannot say that there was."

"Then how were they to get a right start, so as to be sure of reaching heaven at last?"

"Oh," said he, "it was nothing about heaven, it was all about this world."

I found we were as wide apart as the poles—

Christ was all to me, and nothing to him. He did not seem to have the least idea of his danger or of his need of Christ as a Saviour.

His companion now put in a word. He evidently did not like Christ being presented to them as the only way, the truth, and the life. He said, "From what I learn, there are very few Christians in the world compared to others : take the Buddhists, are there not more than four hundred millions in the world ?"

"Yes," I said, "that is true ; and it is said there are three hundred millions, the increase of this last century, of heathens and Mahometans in the world ; and only some thirty millions increase of professing Christians. And then, amongst those who nominally profess Christianity, think of millions of spiritualists, and how many of them possessed by demons, such as are mediums, or have a familiar spirit. And how rapid the increase of this intercourse with demons !" He, however, seemed more occupied with the vast influence of Buddhism, and appeared acquainted with its present attack on Christianity. For, strange as it may seem, yet the learned of this world, who have refused the truth of God, are ready to favour the wild theory of the Buddhists. Thus we conversed.

I said, "Well, now, to come nearer home, we will take profession in our land. If you were to stand at the doors of church or chapel, and ask

every person that comes out if they know that they are saved, that their sins are forgiven, do you think that one in a hundred would be able to say with certainty that they are saved?"

After some thought, he said, "No, I do not think there would be one in a hundred who could say so."

I said, "Then, looking at the whole case, the millions of Buddhists, of Mahometans, and (in Christendom) of spiritualists, Unitarians, and infidels of all sorts, who reject the love of God as shewn in the atoning death of the Lord Jesus, do you think to say that there is scarcely one in a thousand who is a true Christian, and knows that he is saved, would be a fair proportion?"

"Well," he said, "I should think that would be most likely about the mark." This was said as if he had found Christianity a failure.

I said, "This is a very serious matter. I will put it this way. Suppose *you* are not saved, then, if only one in a thousand are saved"—I cannot describe the consternation this produced. It was a conclusion from his own reasoning, from which there was no escape. At this moment the train pulled up at Rochdale, and I got out, with a parting word of exhortation. May God bless that conversation to their souls.

There was one thing this man said I never heard before, as to Cain and Abel. He had observed, it seemed hard to say a Unitarian

would not be saved. Well, I said, take Cain, the first who refused to own himself such a sinner as to need approach to God through the death of another. Abel, by faith, approached God through the death of a sacrifice; Cain did not, but with the fruits he had grown in the earth. There is no mistake which God accepted, is there? This was the strange thing he said as to that: "Well, was not Cain a much more honourable and worthy man than Abel?"

Yes; such is the thought of proud man. Entirely ignoring the fact that he is a guilty murderer, who has killed the Prince of life, he will dream of his own worthiness, and dare to approach God with his own works. Yes, he says, these works make me honourable.

No; without shedding of blood there is no remission. Whoever rejects pardon through the redemption-blood of Christ, let him hear those words: "He that believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him."

How little men are aware that the present rejection of Christ is exactly as foretold nearly 2,000 years ago. Who can describe the wickedness of the world just before the flood? Who can tell the millions drowned to one saved? And He who surely knew, said, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be when the Son of man cometh." Yes, the day is so near: "Because they receive not the love of the truth, that they

might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess. ii. 11.) The truth was never more widely preached than now, and never more rejected. Men will not have it—any lie, any delusion, rather than the infinite love and everlasting righteousness of God.

Is it possible, reader, that you are one of the thousand that have rejected and still reject the only Saviour, Jesus Christ the Lord? If there were only eight saved, as at the flood, would you be indifferent? Surely not. Blessed be God, you need not be lost. Are you thirsting for the water of life? To the very last, Jesus says, "And let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Does not God proclaim free forgiveness of sins to you through Jesus? Does He not declare, "In him everyone that believeth is justified from all things"? Yes, yes, believing on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences and was raised from the dead for our justification, righteousness is reckoned unto us. Do not deceive yourself by self-exaltation—by the way of Cain, bringing the best you can produce of your own. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God; all are guilty alike before God, and to all alike is proclaimed free forgiveness of sins. Is

not this just what men will not have? Who can tell how soon this day of boundless grace may close? If the reader knows, on the authority of the word of God, that he is not with the thousand unsaved, but, through depths of mercy, the one who is saved, give Him all the praise. To you the word "WAITING" will have a different meaning from that with the busy throng at a railway station. Yes, waiting for the Son from heaven, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come—so soon to hear His welcome voice, the Bridegroom coming for His heavenly bride. Oh let us hearken, let us look for Him, let us wait!—Is there any other hope for this dark and sinful world? None. We shall be changed in a moment.

This was no matter of hope to my unsaved fellow-traveller. To him all things remained as they were. May the Lord awake all that are His, to wait His speedy return. Then, poor rejecting world, thy day of doom shall come, the day of the wrath of Almighty God. Ah! to thee Jesus will come in flaming fire, in judgment. Oh awake, awake, ere it be for ever too late.

C. S.



CORRESPONDENCE.

3. W. H., Belfast. It has been said that the moment we think ourselves Philadelphians we become Laodiceans. In the address of the Lord to Philadelphia, it is what He is to them. We cannot think too much about Him. It is always a bad sign when we are occupied with what *we* are. May we so behold Him as to be transformed into His blessed likeness.

As to the society you name, I do not know of a word from God to guide me, or you, to join any society on earth. If truly gathered to Christ, surely we are, like Him, not of the world, even as He was not of the world.

There is one thing, perhaps not suspected by you, that may greatly hinder your soul. God is love, and Christ is the full expression of that love. But then you are earnestly desiring to be something also in this matter. We shall always be disappointed if looking in *self* for love, or happiness, or joy. Even as to all these, we have to say, not "I," but "Christ:" "Whom, not having seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." (1 Peter i. 8.) Read this many times over, and may the Lord shew each of us that it is not by being occupied with our love, or with ourselves, but with Christ—yes, in whom—in Him "ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." God is love: it does not say, I am love.

4. T. C., Whitehaven. No doubt this present interval in the world's history is a period of richest grace; but no one can say how suddenly it may be as it was in the days of Noah (Gen. vi.);

only then the period or time of God's long-suffering was made known ; now it is not. For the present, then, the scripture says expressly : "WHO-SOEVER shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Acts ii. 21 ; Rom. x. 13.) And to the very end : "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. xxii. 17.)

As to Pharaoh, he blasphemously defied the Lord (Ex. v. 2), and God utterly gave him up. This will characterise the man of sin, and all his followers, who will be in like manner given up to strong delusion. (2 Thess. ii.) The world is fast ripening in lawlessness and blasphemy, in readiness for that day. It has not come yet, for he is not yet revealed. But oh, how soon this may be the case, when the church is gone to be for ever with the Lord.

The *light* we have, and the *life*, referred to by Jesus in John viii. 12, are eternal life, for it is Himself, and therefore can never be put out or extinguished. How can that which is eternal cease to be ? It may, as you say, be sadly hidden ; therefore we are each one to shine as Christ here below. (Phil. ii. 15.)

O LORD, do Thou Thy sheep protect,
Be Thou our Stay and Guide ;
Let Satan's wiles have none effect,
But keep us near Thy side.

We're but a feeble few, O Lord,
The wolves are fierce and strong ;
Oh, keep us faithful to Thy word
The desert way along.

Full well we know Thou'rt stronger far
Than man's or Satan's rage ;
That naught our peacefulness should mar
Thou dost Thyself engage. A. A. H.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD REVEALED.

IV.

THERE is this very common mistake, that all mankind are under the law, and that justification has mainly, if not entirely, to do with the fulfilment of law. Now this starting-point is quite contrary to scripture, and to fact. How many millions have never heard of the law of Moses. And in what sense can they be said to be under that of which they have never heard? Yet, it is surely true, they are all under sin and death.

What saith the scripture as to this? In Acts xv. "The apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter"—Whether the Gentiles who had never been under the law should be circumcised and keep the law. You may read the discussion; and what was the decision? They say, "Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment," &c. In Romans i. the awful state of the Gentiles is described, but not one hint that they were under the law; and in chapters ii., iii., the distinction between the Jews, who were under the law, and the Gentiles who

were not under it, is as distinctly taught as words can make it. "For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law. . . . For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves," &c. Finally the apostle proves all guilty—Jews under law, or Gentiles not under law. All need redemption.

In chapter iv. Abraham was justified on the principle of faith, long before the law was given, and the promise was not "through the law but through the righteousness of faith." It is also true that, "Where no law is there is no transgression." There is no actual breach of law reckoned where the law is not given. "For until the law, sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." (Rom. v. 13, 14.) It follows then that the law was not given to men for all that long period from Adam to Moses. And then it was given to one nation, of the seed of Abraham, at Sinai.

Still the question remains, was the law given in order that man by it might attain to righteousness, so as to be justified before God? It was given for the very opposite of this. "Moreover,

the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded grace did much more abound." (Rom. v. 20.) Surely this is plain enough. There is no thought of righteousness by law-keeping: but the offence abounding, and when it had done this, it had done its appointed work. It had proved man's deep need of redemption. And if you have taken the place of a Jew under law, has not your utter guilt and failure just proved this need of a deliverer from it, a redeemer-Saviour? Such is Jesus-Jehovah, Saviour.

This same truth as to the law is stated most clearly in Galatians. The law was given to Israel 430 years after Abraham, and therefore cannot disannul the promise or make it of none effect; because God had given the promise before the law. The inheritance also is not of law, not on that principle at all, God gave it to Abraham by promise. Then the question is asked, "Wherefore then serveth the law?" Now what is the answer? Is it that man might attain to life, and righteousness, either by his keeping it, or by another keeping it for him? No such thought. "It was added because of [it should be *for*] transgressions, till the seed should come," &c. It is strange that theologians should so fight against the plain truth. How could the law have been given to all men, when it was given 430 years after Abraham was justified by faith, and 2500 years

after Adam fell, and plainly was not then given except to the Jews? What was the great folly of these senseless Galatians? Was it not that after the believing Jews, who had been so long under the law, had given it up that they might be justified by faith in the Lord Jesus—that they, the Galatians, who had never been put under it, were so senseless as to be led under it by such mistaken and false teachers, as abound in our day? If it was senseless then, is it not so now, to seek righteousness by the law? “For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse,” &c. Read the whole of Galatians ii., iii. There would be no meaning in these chapters if all men were under the law; or, if righteousness came by law, Christ would have died in vain. We are deeply convinced that much modern teaching on these subjects comes far short of the full gospel of God, and in many cases where it is little suspected.

The truth is man is concluded to be lost under sin, whether the Jews who were under law until Christ, or the Gentile—all are guilty; and the question is still, How is God righteous in justifying the guilty? Evidently the law is of no use for this, it can only curse the guilty; hence they who were under it needed redemption from it. Christ hath done this, as is so clearly stated in Galatians iii. 13, Romans iii. 24. The righteousness of God is revealed, fully displayed in this

redemption. The death of Christ has glorified God, so that He is just and the justifier of them that believe.

Then further, redemption brings us into an entirely new position. It really takes us out of the old, into the new creation IN Christ. Sins and sin have been dealt with according to the full claims of God's righteousness—all left behind, passed away, in righteousness, from the sight of God. It is difficult to conceive what is really meant by either infused or inherent righteousness, when applied to a ruined guilty sinner; and these have no part in the gospel of God. Neither has the imputed righteousness of Christ as keeping the law, placed to our account for law-keeping righteousness, any place in scripture, as repairing man in the flesh, and enabling him to stand before God in legal righteousness.

It is this, "If any man be IN CHRIST, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new, and all things are of God." Mark, this is entirely of God. And it is the very righteousness of God. For, the whole question of sin being settled by the atonement of Christ, the believer is brought into a new position *in* Christ, which is the very righteousness of God. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin: that we might be made [or, become] the righteousness of God IN

HIM." (2 Cor. v. 16-21.) What we shall be when with Him, and like Him, we are reckoned to be *now*, on the principle of faith; and that is righteousness imputed, or reckoned. We are reckoned righteous before God. It is *in Him* risen from the dead. "But of him are ye," that is of God, "*in Christ* Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption." (1 Cor. i. 30.)

What complete justification is here in the risen Christ, and all of God. Righteousness was accomplished when God had raised up Christ from the dead. And all in view of our justification, really to be our unchanging righteousness. Not as alive under law, but as dead to sin and law, and alive *in Christ* to God. (Rom. vi, vii.) Here then is the bright display of the righteousness of God. He glorified God on the cross, obedience unto death. Could God in righteousness leave Him in death? Impossible. The Holy Ghost has come down from heaven to bear witness of this stupendous fact. Jesus said, "of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more." (John xvi. 10.) Yes, the Holy Ghost is the witness that God has received our representative to glory. And our justification is in its completeness, or our perfect acceptance without a charge, or without a need, as to righteousness, is what God has made Him to be to us, in Him in that glory. Hence our justification in

Christ in its completeness takes in what is called our acceptance *in Him*. Yes, all is *in Him*, at all events this is the work of God, and therefore the righteousness of God.

Let us take this thought to Ephesians i. 3, 4. All is of God the Father. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies *in Christ*: according as he hath chosen us *in him* before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." (Read verses 6, 7, 11, 13.) All is *in Christ*.

This then is what God has done, according to His own eternal purpose. He has brought a people, once guilty, and dead in trespasses and sins, to Himself, without blame before Him in love; and all this in perfect harmony and consistency, with His own character—absolute righteousness. But let us ever remember that this is not by restoring, or improving, or reinstating the old man under law, but by a new creation *in Christ*. Our very life is new to us. Not the life of the first man spared; but the life of the new man, in the last Adam, the eternal Son of God. We have still to contend with that which is born of the flesh: but we can reckon *ourselves* dead with Christ, dead indeed unto sin, but alive to God *IN Christ*. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircum-

cision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule peace be on them." May this, beloved reader, be the rule of our walk, having no confidence in the flesh. C. S.



"UNTIL HE FIND IT."

LUKE XV. 4.

II.

OH the perseverance of grace! "*Until* he find it." Never till that moment does the good Shepherd relax His efforts. And how far had He to go after "that which is lost"? To where it was—stripped, and wounded, and half dead. And was this all? Had He not to go into death itself to get the sheep out? "The good Shepherd giveth *his life* for the sheep." And has He not suffered this for thee, my reader? "Who gave himself a ransom for *all*, to be testified in due time."

Oh the persevering diligence of grace! "What woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and *seek diligently till she find it?*" (ver. 8.) Reader, has the stupendous fact ever possessed your mind, that there is a divine Person in Christendom—the Holy Ghost—here for the very object of bringing the piercing rays of convicting light to bear upon the hearts and consciences of dead sinners?

The Son must seek the lost. All is founded on His work, therefore it is put in the first place. It maintained God's righteousness, and permits Him to justify him that believeth in Jesus. The Son must seek the lost, the Spirit must quicken the dead, before the Father can receive the repentant sinner.

And when He hath found it where does He, the good Shepherd, put the sheep? Back with the ninety and nine? Never. "When he cometh home," not till then does He put the sheep down.

But is there no "wilderness" for the believer? Certainly, but he passes through it on *the Shepherd's* shoulders—the place of strength and of security. There are many who think they would not like to make a profession, lest they should not be able to keep it. If believers, they forget that Christ will *keep them*. There are those who fear lest they should not "hold on." Do you think the good Shepherd will let go? He says, "None shall pluck them out of my hand." Will He save sinners and lose saints? Never. "He is *able* also to save them to the uttermost"—that is all the way through—"that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." "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"—that is, by His living to intercede for us now:

"I HAVE a Friend; oh such a Friend!
So kind, and true, and tender;
So wise a counsellor and guide,
So mighty a defender!
From Him who loves me now so well,
What power my soul shall sever?
Shall life or death, shall earth or hell?
No! I am His *for ever*."

"JOY IN HEAVEN."

(LUKE XV. 7, 10.)

JOY in heaven, what produces it? The repentance of ONE *sinner*. Marvellous that *heaven* should be so stirred by what produces so little commotion on *earth*. That there should be joy in heaven over what produces little else but contempt in the world.

An heir is born to some powerful sovereign, or such an one is married, or ascends the throne, and there is great rejoicing and merry-making on earth. Some mighty conqueror returns at the head of his victorious armies, there is great rejoicing on earth; but such matters receive little notice in heaven. Some poor, broken-down, miserable wreck of a man or woman on a heap of filthy rags or straw, in some tumble-down garret or hovel, turns their face towards heaven and says, "Father, I have sinned," or "God, be merciful to me a sinner," and all heaven rings again with joy. And where is the source and

spring of this joy? In the heart of the blessed (that is, happy) God. "There is joy *in the presence of* the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Who is in their presence, and in whose presence are they? In that of God. That is where the joy is from which all heaven catches the tone.

And only to think, that it is not the faultless self-righteous Pharisee that produces this joy; it is the repentance of a *sinner* that does so—of *a* sinner? Yes, there is joy in heaven over ONE sinner that repenteth. Will you, my unconverted reader, yield heaven this joy? *Your* repentance would do so. Do you ask, "What is repentance?" It is that change of mind which godly sorrow works. Not the sorrow of the world that works death, as in the case of Judas. A change of mind as to God, that whereas you thought Him hard and exacting, you own Him to be just, and merciful, and gracious. That whereas you thought yourself righteous, and it may be even religious, you own yourself to be a sinner, to be utterly without claim upon Him on the ground of anything you are or have done, and cast yourself unreservedly upon His mercy.

May the Lord lead you to do so, dear unrepentant reader, for His name's sake.



THE COMING OF THE LORD,
AS MADE KNOWN TO THE ASSEMBLY AT
THESSALONICA.

IV.

2 THESS. i. 9.

“WHO shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.” In the next chapter we find these persons associated with the wicked one, the man of sin or lawless one: “whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy [or annul] with the brightness of his coming.” And because they receive not the truth in the love of it, “God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” These are evidently the same persons who are punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord at His coming.

We find both the wicked one, and these same persons with him in Revelation xiii. 11-17. There he has power to cause all who refuse the mark of the beast, or to worship him, to be killed. Then in chapter xiv. 9-12, we have the judgment of these very persons. “If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his

mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is 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: and they have no rest day nor night," &c. Could any words be found to teach more distinctly than these, that to be punished with everlasting destruction means everlasting torment, in fire and brimstone, of every one who shall be thus judged? But there is still further evidence: turn to Revelation xix. 19, 20. Here we have these two persons again, the beast or head of the restored and Satanic empire of Rome, and this wicked one, the false prophet. "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

Nothing can be more certain then than this, that these two men are cast into the most dreadful torment in fire and brimstone. The question is this, does that mean destruction in the sense of annihilation, ceasing to exist: or continuance in torment thus described?

In chapter xx. we learn Satan will be bound

in the bottomless pit for a thousand years. Those who have refused to worship the beast reign with Christ a thousand years. Afterwards Satan is let loose out of his prison. Then he is "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, AND SHALL BE TORMENTED DAY AND NIGHT FOR EVER AND EVER." This, too, is the certain doom of all that are judged before the great white throne, at the resurrection of the wicked dead. (Vers. 11-15.) It is then certain that everlasting destruction, means everlasting torment in the lake of fire. "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Take care, my reader, that you are not deceived. Satan and his ministers would tell you, that there is no such everlasting torment in the lake of fire. They would even persuade you that God has not said there is. That all the human race will be restored, or saved hereafter; or be annihilated. That sin in God's sight is a small matter; that you may reject the precious Saviour and yet be saved some other way. Well, we have seen your certain doom if you reject the truth of God, whether you die and stand at the great judgment of the dead, or you are alive at the coming of Christ, to judge the quick.

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." These are the words of Him who is the truth.

Do you believe Him? or in your heart think Him a deceiver? There is no standing-point between these two things. It is no use saying that you believe the word of God to be inspired, and then only bow to what you like. The simple reader will notice, that the meaning of the scriptures we have pointed out does not depend on the meaning of a word: but taking them all together they do mean, and cannot mean anything else, that to be punished with everlasting destruction, &c., is everlasting torment without remission. Such is sin in the sight of God. And to think how soon all who believe not may be given up to strong delusion. And then no hope. There is no salvation beyond the grave, or the coming of Christ in judgment. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life: BUT THE WRATH OF GOD ABIDETH ON HIM." (John iii. 36.)

We would not deny the possibility of a Christian being led into the error of denying everlasting punishment for sin, but may it not be a clinging to sin that inclines to that sad delusion? Think of the terrible discovery when a soul awakes up in hell! It may be cut off in a moment of time. Or the church of God may be taken away from this scene any day, or hour, and if left behind as a rejecter of Christ, these scriptures assure us that such will be given up to strong delusion. They will receive the

authority of the wicked one, and the mark of the beast; finally to be tormented day and night for ever and ever. "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." And what a contrast "When he shall come to be glorified in his saints." (2 Thess. i. 9, 10.) What a change, and so soon.

It is the special effort of Satan at present to deny the rapture of the saints, the special truth set before us, revealed to us, as we have seen in 1 Thessalonians iv. The apostle now puts this matter so plainly that none need be deceived. "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand [or, is come]." (Chap. ii. 1, 2.) Could anything be more certain than that before the day of the Lord comes, these two things must take place: first, "The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," and then we, that is the whole church, will be "gathered together unto him"? Therefore if any one told them, or tells us, that the day of the Lord can come whilst the church is on earth, he must be a deceiver. Here the youngest babes in Christ may take their stand, with certainty, that the very next and first events are just these stupendous facts; the

coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him. Put then away from you as delusion, that the Christian can be left to pass through the tribulation that will follow in the day of the Lord.

Let us then see what will follow the taking of the church to be with Christ. The *day* of Christ will not come "except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." We have not then to look for the man of sin, or lawless one, but for Christ to take us first. Then there will be a fearful apostasy, or utter falling away from all true Christianity—that Babylon or mystery of wickedness, more fully described in Revelation xvii., xviii.

We see Christendom fast getting ready for this. But these final scenes of apostasy will not come until the church is taken to be with the Lord. Then at the revelation of this son of perdition will be heard his fearful blasphemy. Yet this is the one, as we learn elsewhere, which the Jews will receive until his real character becomes fully manifest. "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth, as God, in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." Human wickedness cannot go beyond this. And this is the end of human progress. Poor world, is it for this that thou art being educated? You may read the

further deeds of this *wicked one* in Revelation xiii. 11-18. Mark, he is not the head of the restored empire (the beast to whom the dragon gives his power), but he who boycotts and kills all that refuse to worship the Satanic beast.

Such things are certainly coming on this earth, and Paul says to these young converts, "Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?" and shall we dare to say that he told them of things that were no profit to know? If we do not know them, we shall be deceived by the politics of this world. We are in a scene that is assuredly to be judged, and that is what the youngest believer needs to know. We are not of it, even as Christ is not of it.

"And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth, will let, until he be taken out of the way." And now ye know what withholdeth. Having in this letter shewn them that the coming of the Lord, and our gathering to Him, must take place first, that event would withhold or prevent the revelation of the man of sin. The mystery of lawlessness was even then working; but a Person is hindering the final apostasy, and the man of sin. For until the church is taken to be with Christ, the Holy Ghost is here completing the church; and until this is done He is acting, and over-ruling government in the world, so

as to let, or hinder, those final scenes of cruelty and wickedness. Even government in the hands of a Nero would hinder the development of the future Satanic empire of Rome! What will it be then?

There is no difficulty in this passage, when we bear in mind the church must be taken first, and that is the point here. When that has taken place, then the Holy Spirit ceases to act in the apostate Christendom, and then every restraint will be gone for the moment, to the development of the empire of Satan and the beast, culminating in the wicked one. That the pope is not the man of sin is evident; for the church has not been taken yet to Christ; and the Holy Ghost is still here; and the governments of the earth keep the pope in check. There will be no check or hindrance to the man of sin. He is destroyed by the coming of the Lord. Whereas popery in its last development will be destroyed by the ten kings, or kingdoms of the Roman empire. (Rev. xvii. 12-18.)

It might be asked how is it that men will be given up to such delusion in the last days? The answer is very plain: "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be judged, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Is it not the case now? For the last fifty years the truth has been made known, as it never had been since the days of the apostles. And will men receive it? They will have anything else, even the working of Satan with all lying wonders, but not the truth in the love of it. By millions they are rushing into intercourse with demons, or spiritualism; and the hundreds of millions will accept and spread Buddhism, Theosophy and Mahometanism, and thousands of clergymen will seek to enthrall this and other lands in the darkness of popery. Only the truth will men refuse. And on the other hand, where we might have hoped to find truth, there is the ever downward grade of undermining unbelief; and if a feeble protest is raised, that voice can propose no remedy. No, there is no remedy to such as turn a deaf ear to the truth of these epistles—the coming of the Lord. This Babel around us is like a house on fire. There is no remedy but escaping out of it, to wait for the Lord from heaven.

We have nearly closed our meditations on the coming of the Lord, as made known to the assembly of young converts at Thessalonica. Surely the order is most instructive.

In their very conversion, they were turned to God from idols to wait for His Son from heaven. The apostle had no other hope, but the saints in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at

His coming. (Chap. i. 1; ii. 19.) The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ at His appearing with all His saints. (Chap. iii. 13.) Then the exact order of events. (Chap. iv. 13-18.) Then follows the day of the Lord (Chap. v.), more fully explained in 2 Thessalonians i, ii. Well, fellow believers, as it was then so now, "we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, BECAUSE God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." (Chap. ii. 13.) And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ.

C. S.



MAN'S CONDITION ; AND WHAT IS THE REMEDY.

IF it be asked, "What is man's condition?" the question at once becomes individual and personal, and practically means, "What is *my* condition?" "What is *your* condition?" And it is a question affecting not only the temporal, but the eternal well-being of men. It involves the question, "Where shall I spend eternity?" In glory, with God, and Christ, and holy angels, and redeemed men? or in the lake of fire, with Satan, and demons, and wicked men? How important then the question! Let us honestly meet it. What is man's condition? Is he *lost*, or only in *danger*

of being lost? Is he *under the curse*, or only in *danger* of the curse? Is he *dead*, or only *sick*? God's word says:

He is *lost*. (Luke xix. 10.)

He is *under the curse*. (Gal. iii. 10.)

He is *dead*. (2 Cor. v. 14; Eph. ii. 1.)

How solemn the verdict! Lost! cursed! dead! And what a helpless condition! As helpless as a poor silly sheep, lost on the dark mountains, where wild beasts have their lair, and watch for their prey! As helpless as the condemned criminal in his cell, awaiting the day of execution, when he must yield his life under the curse of the law he has broken! As helpless as Lazarus, dead, and four days in the grave! Oh! what an utterly helpless condition! Reader, is it *your* condition? It *is* your condition unless you have believed the gospel, which is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

But who can save from such a condition? Can man recover himself from his ruin? The awakened sinner attempts this, only to find it a hopeless task, every effort only serving to increase his misery. Tears and prayers and efforts at repentance will not do. Moral reform, church-going and church-joining will not do. Can the bleating of the sheep, lost on the mountains, save it from the wolf, or the lion, or the bear? Can the pleadings for mercy, and pro-

mises of reform, save the criminal just being led to the gallows? Need we write the answer, No? Ah! reader, it is too plain; you know it is impossible.

Is there, then, no help? Is there no remedy? Yes, thank God, there is. God has laid help upon ONE MIGHTY TO SAVE. He has said: "Deliver him from going down to the pit; I HAVE FOUND A RANSOM." (Job xxxiii. 24.) JESUS is the mighty SAVIOUR, and His BLOOD the divine RANSOM.

If the sheep is *lost*, the Son of man came to *seek* and to *save* that which was lost.

If the sinner is *cursed* under a broken law, Christ was made a curse, in order to *redeem* from the curse of the law.

If the sinner is *dead*—dead to God as the body in the grave is dead to the world in which it once lived—it is now the hour in which the dead *hear the voice of the Son of God, and live*.

God is now revealed in Christ as a Seeker, a Saviour, a Life-giver; and in Him, thus revealed, there is a perfect and divine answer to all man's need.

Let me ask the unsaved reader, Have you found out your real condition in the sight of God? It is easy to assent to the statement of scripture, "All we, like sheep, have gone astray;" but do you realise in your own soul that *you* are like a *strayed* and *lost* sheep on the dark

mountains, exposed to danger and death every moment? Has God's truth shone into your soul and revealed this to you? You are not happy. You have been treading the slippery paths of sin, and are far from God, far from Christ, far from home. Have you learnt this in your own soul? Have you been groaning under the burden of your guilt? Have you been sighing for rest? Have you been crying to God in your misery? Ah! He has heard you. His ear is not dull of hearing, nor His hand shortened that it cannot save. The good Shepherd has heard the bleating of His sheep, and will not leave it to the mercy of the wolves. "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost." What a picture of the divine compassion for the lost, and of the divine joy over their recovery! The Shepherd *seeks till He finds*. He lays it on His shoulders, *rejoicing*. He brings it home, and calls friends and neighbours to rejoice *with Him*. This is the divine joy. There is joy in heaven—joy in the presence of the angels of God—over one sinner that repenteth.

You are weary of your wandering; you are weary of your sin; you are weary of serving at the swine-trough; you are perishing—perishing in the far country; in your misery your thoughts turn to the very God you have sinned against; you think of His grace, and you say, I will arise, and go to my Father. Blessed moment! a sinner is turning to God, and this will move all heaven to sing! The Shepherd has been seeking you; the light from heaven has been shining on you; the lost sheep is found; the Shepherd lays you on His shoulders, rejoicing, and will never put you down till He has brought you safe home!

But perhaps you say: “I have not only gone astray like a sheep, but I have sinned, and am worthy of death. How can I escape the curse of the broken law?” The answer is simple. The One who *sought* you has also *died to redeem* you. “It pleased the Lord to bruise him.” “He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.” This is the language of faith—what every believing sinner is entitled to say.

Can you put yourself in the company of those who confess their sins? If so, you will find yourself in the company of those whose sins Jesus bore on the accursed tree, the company whom God pardons and saves. David, guilty of adultery and

murder, when his sin was brought home to him by the parable of the prophet, said, "I have sinned against the Lord." Clear and unmistakeable was the answer: "The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die." (2 Sam. xii. 13.) The prodigal said, "I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." What was the father's answer? The command to the servants, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." Blessed answer to all the prodigal's need!

Can *you* join company with David, and say, "I have sinned against the Lord"? Then with David also you may hear the words of the prophet, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die."

Can you join company with the prodigal, and say, "I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight"? Then robe and ring and royal sandals are yours also.

Can you join company with those who confess, "All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way"? Then with them also you can add to your confession the peace-giving words, "And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Is. liii. 6.)

Weary and heavy-laden—borne down with a sense of guilt—have you heard, and responded to, the call of Jesus, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest”? Then with the apostle, and with all who believe the gospel, you can say of Jesus, “Who was delivered for *our* offences, and was raised again for our justification,” “who his own self bare *our* sins in his own body on the tree.”

Yes, *your* sins were borne by Jesus ; for *your* offences He was delivered ; for *your* justification He was raised again. Oh, what peace this brings ! “Being justified by faith, we have *peace with God*, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

But now a question. *Who* laid your sins on Jesus ? *Who* delivered Him for your offences ? *Who* raised Him again for your justification ? It was GOD—the God of ALL GRACE—the God who is LOVE—the SAVIOUR-GOD.

But is there not a hymn which says,

“I lay my sins on Jesus” ?

and must not I bring my sins to Jesus, and lay them on Him ? Ah ! but this is not the gospel ; it is not according to the truth. How could you lay your sins on Jesus ? They are more than the hairs of your head. How could you ever count them ? How remember them—the sins of youth—of the past year—of the past week, perhaps ? How many have been forgotten ? How many things were sin you never thought

of? "The thought of foolishness is sin," "idle words." How many foolish thoughts and idle words have been long forgotten? How then lay them on Jesus?

But where *is* Jesus now? On the Father's throne. Can you take your sins up to the Father's throne, and lay them on Him there? Could He have sins on Him there? Impossible!

What then? You say you believe in Jesus. You may then be assured by the word of God, that more than 1800 years ago—before your sins were committed—before you were born—God knew all about your sins, laid them all on Jesus, delivered Him up to death for them, and raised Him again for your justification. Where then are your sins? Gone—gone in the blood that was shed for them on the cross—gone for ever. Jesus risen is the proof that they are gone, and that you, as a believing sinner, are justified from them all—justified through faith in Jesus. GOD is your JUSTIFIER; *who shall condemn?* Blessed be God, there is none to answer the challenge. "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. viii. 38, 39.)

(To be continued.)

EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT.

YES, everlasting punishment is indeed "an awful affair," and many are trying to disbelieve it. But does that alter the fact? When Noah preached the coming flood of universal destruction, some one might have said, "What an awful affair," but who believed him? But did that alter the fact? And when God announced the destruction of Sodom, that was an awful affair. Lot himself scarcely believed it. But it came.

A guilty murderer is taken: he is guilty; he is condemned to death. He may think of the last hour, the ghastly preparations, the last walk to the scaffold and . . . stop, he may say that is an awful affair. Oh, he may say, "I won't believe it. Her Majesty the Queen is too kind to allow me to come to that." But every moment brings him nearer to that dread reality.

But you may say, "Think how many learned men are denying eternal punishment, and maintain that the soul is not immortal." Were there not many mighty men, men of renown, all of whom rejected the preaching of Noah, or the warning of God? (Gen. vi. 4.) Have you weighed the alternative? If you say that the soul of man is not immortal; that is, that man ceases to exist at death; then you must give up the whole word of God as false, and thus be left in outer

darkness even now. You must take your place with the Know Nothings and Darwinians. You say, "Surely this cannot be true." Let us see. If man was not created with an immortal soul, that is, to exist for ever, what was he? Simply a slightly superior beast. Here a little while, and then off the scene. Now there is no sin in a beast; there is no conscience of sin in a mere animal. There is no responsibility toward God in an animal. There would be no need for, or sense in, an atonement. An animal has no nature, no capacity to know God or the things of God.

But in contrast with the formation of all mere cattle, beasts, birds, or fishes, we read, "God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Here was a totally different creature from the beasts and cattle of the field. Here was a living soul, capable of conversing with God, and was placed both as head of creation, and under responsibility. And mark, whilst a beast could not be so placed, man was so placed as a living soul, and one sin has involved the whole race in ruin and misery. And what we read in the word of God we find around us to-day. There is the same distinction between

man and the animals around, as there was when he came out of the hands of God. Not another creature is there on earth to which you can communicate the idea of God, or a future existence. Take away man's immortality, reduce him to a mere beast, though a superior beast, and then we must allow you overthrow everything revealed in the word of God.

That man as to his bodily existence is mortal, liable to death, like the beasts, is clearly revealed, but that is not our question. And that the Old Testament is chiefly occupied with the body and the things of the body, we do not dispute for a moment. That the word soul is used to denote man in the body, or *persons*, as we say, is frequently the case,—as “The soul that sinneth shall die.” The person under the government of God would be put to death. The context will make this plain.

But now we have the complete revelation of God in the New Testament. What is the certain teaching of the complete word of God? Is there such a thought as that at death man, like the beast, ceases to exist? Far from it. Is there then distinct teaching that as to the wicked, rejectors of the gospel, they do not cease to exist at death? Could anything be more certain than the following? “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” (Heb. ix. 27.) Can there be judgment after

ceasing to exist? If man ceases to exist, there is nothing to judge. You may say, They will be raised again to be judged. True, they will, the word says so. (Rev. xx. 11-15.) And they are cast into the lake of fire; and they shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. Now that torment is declared to be for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night. (See Rev. xiv. 10, 11.) Now honestly, is this ceasing to exist at death? Infidels may teach so, but not the word of God. And that word never contradicts itself.

Does the Lord Jesus teach that going into hell fire is ceasing to exist? No, over and over again He declares it is fire that never shall be quenched. (Read Mark ix. 43-48.)

Did He teach that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob ceased to exist? No. "For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for *all* live unto him." (Luke xx. 38.) It may be objected that they were saved men, and therefore existed after death. Now as to this the Lord makes no difference whatever: He teaches that both the saved and lost live after death as to the soul; and that they are equally conscious as if they were alive in the body.

The rich man died; and in hell did he cease to exist? Not a bit more than Abraham. He lifted up his eyes, being *in torments*. Did he

cease to exist? Oh hear his dreadful cry for a drop of water to cool his tongue. Oh reader, will this ever be your case? You say, That is only a figure. But a figure of what? If death is ceasing to exist, then it was a figure for the very purpose of deception. Yes, if you embrace this doctrine of demons, that death is ceasing to exist, you make the Holy Son of God a deceiver. The rich man no more ceased to exist at death than Lazarus the saved beggar. The one was comforted and the other tormented. Say that you deny the scripture, then we understand you. But do not pretend to be a Christian, and all the while teach doctrines that would make Christ a deceiver.

He is the truth, and could teach only the truth. In the plainest possible language He tells us, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment [or torment]: but the righteous into life everlasting." (Matt. xxv. 46.) He uses the same word to denote the everlasting existence of both. Many may not be aware how Satan is leading them on into this debasing error that man is not an immortal soul and will not exist for ever and ever. But it is a direct attack on Christ, as a deceiver, and an attempt to overthrow all scripture. Prove it false in one part, and all true faith is destroyed in every other part. It must lead practically to infidelity on every subject. Already its dire effects are seen.

The progress of darkness and lawlessness has set in and advances with rapid strides.

No one can deny that, wherever this doctrine of non-eternity of torment has got a footing, reasoning and doubt on all scripture truths is following. Let us pause. Abundance of scripture might be brought to shew that death is not ceasing to exist. How could the soul of the dead child have returned into it, if it had ceased to exist? yet it was dead and was restored to life. (2 Kings iv. 32-36.) And so of the son of the widow of Nain. (Luke vii.) There was a dead man. Yet at the word of Jesus the dead arose, sat up, and began to speak. No, beloved reader, if we give up the immortality of the soul we give up everything, and reduce man to a mere beast. There is no real sin, and no need of true expiation, if man, before the new birth, is a mere intelligent beast, has the soul of a beast or mere animal, and when he dies he ceases to exist. Is it not astonishing that man can shut his eyes to the scriptures as the revelation of God and become so dark?

Oh, young men, shun these damning doctrines with horror. Crafty men will pervert the scriptures to deceive you. You may secretly wish it to be so, that you may indulge in sin, and see no judgment before you. But remember these solemn words, "It is appointed to men once to die, but *after this* the judgment." "Know

thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." "So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God." "For we must all appear (or be made manifest) before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we persuade men." "And I saw the dead small and great stand before God: and the books were opened and they were judged every man according to their works." "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers [called now Spiritualists], and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

All this would be utterly false if the wicked ceased to exist at death. We cease to exist here in this state as to the body; but if the soul ceases to exist what is there to be judged? How can there be a second death of that which does not exist? Be warned in time. Let God be true, though every man be a liar. We repeat, if you give up the immortality of the soul, you give up the whole Bible. If we own the mortality of the body and the immortality of the soul, and the future resurrection, and judgment of all rejectors of the glad tidings of God, then all

is clear. You and I must be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, either justified from all things through the death and resurrection of the very One before whom we are manifested: or we must be judged for our sins. And if thus judged, be cast into the lake of fire—into torment that never ends.

Oh think of the terror of that day. Think of the wrath of God: for ever and ever. And think of God now, with arms of mercy ready to receive and pardon the vilest that comes to Him, that believes Him. Surely God has shewn His estimate of sin by the death of Christ, His only begotten Son. Yes, God so loved. Will you reject His love? Will you reject His pardon freely proclaimed through Jesus? C. S.



MAN'S CONDITION; AND WHAT IS THE REMEDY.

II.

LET us now look a little further at man's condition as ruined in his *nature*, and *dead* in his trespasses and sins; and let us see how God in His grace answers this need.

"If one died for all, then were all dead."
(2 Cor. v. 14.) "Who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that

now worketh in the children of disobedience." (Eph. ii. 1, 2.) "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. v. 12.) "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Rom. viii. 7.) "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." (John iii. 6.)

Such is man's condition as described by the Spirit of truth. What a deplorable condition! Spiritually dead—dead in trespasses and sins! Not a pulsation of life—not a movement of the heart—toward God! The nature incorrigible enmity against God, and unchangeable as the leopard's spots, or the Ethiopian's skin!

The cross brings all this fully to light; and in the cross, too, is found the remedy for the evil. In the cross man's enmity and God's love meet together—man's enmity in putting God's Son to death, and God's love in giving His Son to die as a sacrifice to meet man's need. What a meeting between God and man! What an unfolding of the character of each! All the dark hatred and malignity of the human heart exposed, but exposed in the presence of infinite Love itself providing a sacrifice to put it away! "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

Let us notice a little the two expressions, "enmity against God," and "dead in trespasses and sins." They express two different aspects

of man's hopelessly ruined condition. The former is the disposition towards God, or the state of the nature, looked at in its activity. It is "enmity"—incurable, unchangeable enmity. For this, there is no remedy but DEATH. Thank God, it is found in the death of another, the death of Jesus on the cross.

"Dead in trespasses and sins" expresses the fact that, while alive to sin, and walking in lusts, under the power of Satan, there is no life toward God. This is the condition of all who are connected with the old creation. "If one died for *all*, then were *all* dead." To meet this need there must be a new creation.

In Romans and Ephesians the truth as to these two points is developed.

In Romans the sinner is viewed as *alive* in his *sins*, and in *bondage* to *sin*, and needing *justification* and *deliverance*.

In Ephesians the sinner is viewed as *dead* in his sins—that is, dead to God,—and needing to *be made alive*.

In both it is the absolute grace of God that meets the need. "Where sin abounded, *grace* did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might *grace* reign, through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. v. 20, 21.) "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." (Eph. ii. 8.)

As has already been stated, it is the cross that has brought fully to light man's condition. He was never declared to be dead till after the cross. The incorrigible evil of his heart was being brought out in one way and another, all through the ages, under the dealings of God ; but it was in the cross that all was brought to a final issue, and God's irrevocable judgment on the flesh pronounced. Man's condition was bad enough before, but not declared hopeless. Near eight hundred years before the cross we see a sad enough picture of man's condition in Israel ; they are declared rebellious ; more stupid than the ox or the ass, laden with iniquity, corrupt, sick and faint, but not yet *dead*. "Hear, O heavens ; and give ear, O earth ; for the Lord hath spoken ; I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib : but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah ! sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters ! They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more ? Ye will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it ; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores :

they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." (Is. i. 2-6.) Sad and pitiable condition indeed! wounds and putrifying sores from head to foot, stupid, sick, and faint, but not yet dead; and still called on to recover themselves by ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well! But this is all over now. Man's true state has been brought to light by the cross. He is now declared *dead in trespasses and sins*. The cross is morally and judicially the *end* of the old creation; and *redemption* and a *new creation* are needed. Thank God, *in Christ* we have both.

"Being justified freely by his grace, through *the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*." (Rom. iii. 24.)

"If any man be *in Christ* *he is a new creature* [or, it is a new creation]: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. v. 17.)

In these scriptures, then, we have the statement of God's remedy for the terrible condition into which man has been plunged by sin. The remedy is in *Christ*. But it is in Christ as having accomplished redemption through His death—Christ crucified, risen, glorified. In His death on the cross all the evil was met in the presence of God, and judged and put away from before Him; and in Him risen and glorified the new place and condition of blessing for man are

found. In His death sins were borne, the flesh judged, the old creation ended. "Old things are passed away." Risen from the dead, Christ has left sins, sin, death and judgment, behind for ever, and has entered a new and eternal scene of blessing and glory, where sin and death can never enter.

A. H. R.

(To be continued.)

A LETTER ON WHAT CONSTITUTES THE ATONING SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I was glad to hear from you again, and only want of time has hindered me from replying sooner.

The main point which seems to be between us is, as you say, the sufferings of Christ; and this is really the most important of all subjects, because it is the foundation of all our blessings.

Now I will drop the word "substitute," and the expression "in our stead," for the present; because we shall never help each other by discussing these words. I believe they express certain phases of truth correctly enough; but the main thing is to understand the doctrine as taught in the word of God. What was the character of the sufferings of Christ by which He made atonement, or made propitiation for our sins? The word "atonement" is used in the Old Testament, and "propitiation" in the

New Testament. But I am not concerned about words, if we get God's thoughts about the death of Jesus. We want His thoughts, His mind, His truth ; and we must get these from the words He uses. And when we have got these, it will be much more easy to find words to express ourselves when speaking of these things. But the first thing is to understand God—to understand His word to us. And then, if I can use words or illustrations to help another to understand God's word, surely it is all right ; for you may have a person using the very words of scripture, when he has altogether a wrong thought in his mind.

Now, if I have understood your letter, well, I think the great question is: Did Christ, when suffering on the cross in atonement for sin, suffer *directly at the hand of God*? Did He drink a cup of judicial wrath, which God, and not man, poured out for Him? Or were all the sufferings which He endured inflicted on Him by man? or by man and Satan?

I suppose we are agreed on this point, that He did suffer from both man and Satan ; that Satan, the prince of this world, came and pressed Him, but found nothing in Him ; that, as its prince, he led the world against Christ, uniting Jews and Gentiles against Him, both rulers and people ; and that thus Christ suffered from man under Satan's power. There were His physical sufferings from the nails piercing His hands and feet, and

His hanging on the cross. There was bodily weakness, too; so that He could say: "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death." Then there were sufferings of another class, such as reproach, and mockery, and opposition of men: "I am a worm, and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord, that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him." "Bulls of Bashan" (the leaders of the people) encompassed Him, and roared upon Him, as lions on their prey; He became a stranger to His brethren, an alien to His mother's children; when eaten up with the zeal of Jehovah's house, the reproaches of those who reproached Jehovah fell upon Him; when He wept and chastened His soul with fasting, *this* was to His reproach; when He made sackcloth His garment, He became a proverb to them; those who sat in the gate (the rulers) spoke against Him, and He was the song of the drunkards. (Ps. xxii. and lxix.)

These scriptures express something of the sufferings He endured at the hand of man.

Now the question is: Were these His *atoning* sufferings? Was it by these sufferings that He made propitiation for our sins? Or was there another class of sufferings outside of all these, which was the result of sin-bearing? Take the class of sufferings just referred to. Are they not sufferings such as any martyr might be called upon to pass through? Have not thousands of God's servants endured just such sufferings—and endured them joyfully, too? What was it, then, that wrung that cry of anguish from the Saviour's lips, when on the cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Was it not something more than what He had endured from man? Did any christian martyr ever utter such a cry? Did Stephen, when they were battering his body with stones? On the contrary, these men felt the presence of God with them, and sustaining them in the hour of their trial. Did Jesus realise this support at the cross? Assuredly not. Ever before He had realised God's presence with Him, sustaining Him in His path of suffering as the Man of sorrows, while fulfilling His will. Tempted by the devil in the wilderness, and an hungered, an angel was sent to minister to Him; at the Jordan, when taking His place with the repentant remnant of Israel, the heavens opened over Him, and a voice from the glory saluted Him, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" so also on the

mount of transfiguration, when Peter would have put Him on a level with Moses and Elias, that same voice again proclaimed His true glory; and in Gethsemane, when He was exceeding sorrowful even unto death, and was sweating as it were great drops of blood, an angel was sent to strengthen Him. Thus it was all along the path. But how was it during those hours of darkness on the cross? Was there any ministering or strengthening angel? Was there any voice from the excellent glory expressing untold delight in His blessed Person? Was there any ray of light from that glory to relieve the awful gloom? No, God had abandoned the Man Christ Jesus. This is an hour that stands alone. There is none like it in the annals of eternity.

But why? God's word answers: "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." "He bare our sins in his own body on the tree." "He was delivered for our offences." "He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities." "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." This, then, is the reason. Christ was made sin for us—a sin-offering. "Our sins," "our iniquities," were laid on Him, and He bore them on the tree. When we were under condemnation, He was "made a curse for us," to redeem us from the condemnation.

Now, who "made him to be sin"? Who made Him to be "a curse for us"? Who laid our

iniquities on Him? Who smote Him? Who bruised Him? Was it man, or was it God? Of course, scripture must answer. Let us, then see if scripture furnishes an answer to these questions.

It will be seen that it is all connected with the question of sin. I might ask, then, in the first place, Who could deal with the question of sin? Of course, God alone could do this. Man neither could nor would. Blessed be God He Himself has dealt with it in the Person of Christ, when He made Him to be a sin-offering on the cross.

It was *Jehovah* that laid out sins on Jesus. *He* bruised Him, *He* smote Him.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord [Jehovah] hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isa. liii. 6.)

"It pleased the Lord [Jehovah] to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin," &c. (Isa. liii. 10.)

"Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord [Jehovah] of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." (Zech. xiii. 7.)

Compare also Matthew xxvi. 31 and Mark xiv. 7. "Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad."

You will see from this that Jesus interpreted

the smiting of Zechariah xiii. 7 as Jehovah's own smiting: "I will smite the shepherd." It is not man, nor Satan, but Jehovah Himself who smites. So in Isaiah liii. 10, it is Jehovah who bruises the Messiah. I know you say some professor translates it, "It pleased Jehovah to let him be bruised." Dear brother, have you looked at the Hebrew of this yourself? You will find that the Hebrew, Septuagint, and Vulgate all give the verb in the active infinitive, "*to bruise him*," not "to let him *be* bruised." On what pretext could this professor change it thus? What, unless to get rid of something that stood in his way? And what are we to think of such a course? Suppose I should say to you that, "to bruise him" means "to let him be bruised," and then ask you to shew that it does not! What would you say to me? Would you not say to me, "Shew that it does"? Or, perhaps you would say I had lost my senses, and very rightly, too! No, my brother; the passage is plain—as plain in Hebrew as in English—"It pleased Jehovah [or, Jehovah was pleased] to bruise him." The wounding, the bruising, the chastisement, the stripes, the smiting, the forsaking, and, I may add, the indignation and wrath (Ps. cii. 10), were all from Jehovah—from God who was dealing with sin as having been laid on Christ at the cross.

You say, "Think of a father who pleased

to bruise his own only son." But, dear brother, we must not set scripture aside by our feelings and reasonings. It is in this way that an infidel or universalist reasons against the doctrine of eternal punishment.

But I do not think that this expression of yours illustrates truly God's bruising of Christ. It does not say, "The Father was pleased to bruise His Son." And Jesus did not say, "My Father, my Father, why hast thou forsaken me?" He said, "My God." And is it not remarkable that this is the only time mentioned in the gospels where He addresses Him as "God"? Always before it was "Father." This is not without instruction. When you say, "Father," there is the thought and feeling of relationship. When Jesus uttered the cry on the cross, it was not this. At the cross He took the place of a victim—a sacrifice for sin—to meet the claims of God. And in John iii. 14, Jesus says, "The Son of man must be lifted up;" while, when it is a question of God's love to the world, it is said: "He gave his only begotten Son." (Ver. 16.) On the cross, Jesus was forsaken of God, and that on account of sins, not His own sins, but ours, which had been laid on Him, in order that at once God's majesty and holiness in dealing with sin, and His great love to the world, might be displayed in consistency with His own character

I trust I need hardly say that I believe God was infinitely delighted with His own Son, when, as Man, He hung upon the cross, because it was there, more than anywhere else, that the sweet savour of His perfect obedience was displayed. But the cross was the awful expression of God's judgment against sin, and that was the reason of the untimely "darkness," and His forsaking of Christ. Sin was so horrible in God's sight, that even when it was laid sacrificially on Christ, He had to withdraw the light of His face, and command the sword to awake. As in the flood in Noah's day, "all the fountains of the great deep were broken open, and the windows [floodgates] of heaven were opened ;" so, one may say, at the cross there were waves from beneath, and waves from above, meeting and rolling in upon the holy soul of our blessed Saviour. The floods of the ungodly were there, and all God's waves and billows, in judgment against sin, were there also.

But it was just here that the perfection of Jesus was displayed, and the moral value of His sacrifice. In His sacrifice—in His holy obedience unto death—the sweet savour of what He was in His own personal perfection ascended as a cloud of incense to God. This we see in type in Leviticus xvi. 12, 13. Here there was first the killing of the bullock; then the burning of the incense; and then the sprinkling of the

blood. Now, the burning incense and the sprinkled blood both express what was presented to God in the death of Jesus; the incense expressing the personal glory and moral perfection displayed in His death, and the blood, the value of His death for the putting away of sin. Both of these in the type are connected with death. As I have said, the first thing was the killing of the bullock. There must be death. Without it there could be no atonement. But the burning incense, and the blood sprinkled on the mercy-seat, tell what was presented to God in that death. There must be that which answered to His glory, and which could meet the claims of His glorious majesty. In the type, the incense was burnt on the censer of the high priest with fire from the altar before the Lord. Out of this burning a cloud arose, and covered the mercy-seat. It was a cloud of glory rising up and meeting the cloud of glory between the cherubims—glory answering to glory. And then the blood was sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat by the high priest under the cover of this cloud of glory which rose out of the fire.

Does not this burning incense, then, typify the sweet savour and personal glory of Jesus ascending up to God in connection with His death on the cross? The holy fire—the fire of God's judgment—that which tried Him to the uttermost—fell upon Him there. The effect of the testing

of that fire was the bringing out of the intrinsic glory and moral worth of the Person of Jesus—the bursting forth, as it were, of an incense-cloud of glory, answering to the glory and majesty of Him who was there dealing with sin according to the necessity of His own nature and holiness.

Now compare Psalm xxii. There we see Christ suffering on the cross. And, as we have seen, our iniquities were laid upon Him then, and He suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. There was smiting, wounding, bruising, chastisement, stripes, and waves and billows of wrath, because of sins—sins not His own, but ours—laid upon Him by Jehovah Himself. Who can tell what the feelings of that blessed One were at that moment, as stroke after stroke fell upon Him, and wave after wave of judgment rolled over His soul? It wrung from His lips the cry that opens the psalm: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” But is there nothing beside this cry of sorrow? Look at the third verse. He, the pure, the holy, the undefiled, the spotless One, is abandoned of God; waves and billows encompass Him; stroke after stroke falls upon Him; wounded, and bruised, and smitten, He cries and is not heard, until, as transfixed on the horns of the unicorn (see ver. 21), He is heard and answered in resurrection. What was the utterance of His holy soul amid all this sorrow?

Did He condemn God because of the smiting and bruising and forsaking? No. "But thou art holy, O thou, that inhabitest the praises of Israel," were His words. "BUT THOU ART HOLY"! Such was His utterance under those terrible, atoning sufferings, when forsaken of God, and the iron entered His soul. This was the incense cloud of glory ascending up to God out of His death, from the testing by fire under God's judgment. The testing of that fire brought out just what He was in Himself in all the moral perfections of His being; and God was glorified in Him.

How different with sinful man, when given up to suffer the judgment of God for his own sins, as we see in Revelation xvi. 8-11. They blaspheme God, and repent not of their deeds. God's judgment brings out what is in their hearts, too; but how infinitely different from what was in the heart of Christ! These blaspheme when smitten for their own sins: Christ, when smitten for sins of others, acknowledged the holiness of the hand that smote.

Could, then, God smite this blessed One for ever? Could He keep on smiting when every stroke only brought out the absolute perfection of the smitten One?—when the burning caused a cloud of glory to ascend in His own presence, answering to His own glory, and when His infinitely precious blood had met the holy claims

of His insulted Majesty? Impossible! "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him." (John xiii. 31, 32.)

If you ask *what* death Jesus died "in our stead," I only answer, *Death under the judgment of God*. This was the death He suffered for me, and, as a consequence, I shall never suffer *that* death. For me to suffer that would be death eternal, because I never could expiate my guilt; and, as we have seen from Revelation xvi., judgment never changes the heart of man. He goes on blaspheming God still. But Christ drank the cup on the cross; and when those hours of darkness were ended, the work was done, the cup empty, the judgment exhausted, God glorified. In those hours of sorrow on the cross, Jesus accomplished what you and I and all the millions of the human race could never have done through all eternity. He drank the cup for me; and if you will now pardon the expression, I will say, He drank it "instead" of me—drank it that I might not drink it; and I never shall drink it, just because He has done so in my stead.

The idea that this leads to the thought of His "praying in our stead," &c., is simply nonsense. What truth will not men pervert? But shall we give up truth because people pervert it, or

turn it into nonsense? Christ was a substitute only on the cross, and in one phase of His sufferings. We must not confound this with something else. He was an "example" to us, as well as a Substitute for us. (See 1 Pet. ii. 20.) In all that He suffered from man, and in all His holy obedience, and prayerful dependence on God, He was an "example" to us. But He was not an example in what He suffered in atonement for our sins. That character of sufferings we shall never enter into. That was judgment from God, and He bore it, that we might not—bore it in our stead, or as our Substitute, not as our Example.

But, as I said in the beginning, it is not mere words, but truth that I am contending for. What I am contending for, is not what I have learnt from the word "Substitute," but what I have learned from the word of God about the sufferings of my blessed Redeemer. And you will see from this letter, that what I hold is, that, while He suffered from man and Satan He also suffered in atonement directly from God; that He suffered stripes and bruising and smiting and judicial wrath; that He drank the cup that God—not man—filled up for Him; drank it, that I might not drink it; bore the judgment of God against sin, that I might not bear it; took my place substitutionally to bear my sins, and the judgment due to them, that I might be released for ever from

those sins and that judgment; and so in this sense died as my "Substitute."

Substitution expresses only one phase of Christ's death for us. There is much else connected with His death which is not expressed by that word. But I speak of this only by way of explanation. What we need to contend for is the blessed truth taught in God's word, not mere uninspired words. If the truth as to Christ's sufferings under judicial wrath and judgment from God is clearly held, according to scripture, I have nothing to press as to mere words not found there. But if Christ's sufferings are reduced to His being bruised only under man's hand, I could only reject this with abhorrence, as undermining the value of His sufferings, and doing away with their really atoning character; as it would also enfeeble our apprehension of what sin is, and of God's abhorrence of it as expressed in the cross, and of the greatness of His love in providing for our deliverance from the guilt and dominion of sin.

May the Lord remove every film from our eyes, that we may see clearly all that He has revealed to us in the Person and work of His beloved Son, our blessed, adorable Saviour, who has loved us, and given Himself for us.

Yours affectionately in Him.

A. H. R.

March, 1888.

“DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN
VICTORY.”

THE following motto was sent to Rotherham by our departed brother, H. M. HOOKE. Was it not prophetic? Dear servant of Christ; his labours are over! He rests in perfect peace, “absent from the body, present with the Lord.”

MY MOTTO FOR 1888.

“Victory”

OVER DEATH,

OVER THE GRAVE,

OVER SIN, AND

OVER THE WORLD.

(1 Cor. xv. ; 1 John v.)

“Everlasting love” within.

“Everlasting life” in the Son of God.

“Everlasting arms” underneath.

“Everlasting glory” in front.



“JOY COMETH IN THE MORNING.”

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I have often thought of you and the children, since I saw you, and we have asked the Lord to sustain and comfort you in this hour of deep trial and sorrow.

This, I am sure, He is able to do. There is no sorrow He has not passed through. As High Priest He was perfected through suffering (Heb. v. 7-9), and thus is able to sympathise with us, and sustain us, and bring us through to the end of our sorrows.

What an unspeakable comfort it is to know Him in the hour of sorrow! We sorrow not as those who have no hope. We do indeed sorrow, but it is sorrow of another sort, and even unspeakable joy mingles with it. And in our sorrow we know the power of a sympathy to which the world is an utter stranger. We know Him who wept with the weeping sisters at the grave of Lazarus; and who, at the same time, could say, “I am the Resurrection and the Life.”

What an unfolding of divine affections and sympathies we get in that scene! Sin was there, and death was there as the result, and man powerless—able only to weep, in the presence of

human misery. Jesus had healed the sick, made the lame to walk, opened the eyes of the blind, unstopped the ears of the deaf, unloosed the tongues of the dumb. Must He stop here? Was this as far as He could go? No, blessed be God, even the grave must give up its dead. Lazarus, given back that day to his bereaved sisters, was the proof that One was there present who had power to abolish death and the grave. The resurrection of Lazarus was at once the proof of this power, and the revealing of a heart that feels all the sorrows of His own in this scene of suffering and death.

But where sin had come in, bringing death with it, something more was needed than mere power. Power was there to bring back the dead one; but death was not abolished, and sin was still there. Lazarus came back from the tomb at the bidding of Jesus, but he came "bound hand and foot with grave-clothes." The emblems of death were still about him. He was brought back into the same condition he was in before he died, and was still subject to death. He had gone into the river, but came out on the same side as he had entered. He was still in the old creation. He had not passed over.

Why was this? Why did not Lazarus, when raised up from the dead, at once pass into the eternal state of the blessed beyond death? Just because of this: The waters of the swelling

Jordan must first be dried up. The Ark must enter the river, and stay the floods, before the people could pass over. The Lord said to Peter, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards." (John xiii. 36.) So Jesus must first enter into death, and bear the judgment of God against sin, before any could pass over. This was why He groaned at the grave of Lazarus; for He not only wept in sympathy, but "He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled." This was more than mere sympathy. He was in the presence of death, but it was death as that which sin had brought in. How was this to be met? Mere power would not do. There was a moral question—a question of the divine glory in the presence of man's sin and Satan's power. Mere power could not meet this. Jesus Himself must undergo death—the death of the cross—death under the awful weight of God's judgment against sin. This He anticipated, and He groaned in spirit. Nothing short of this could take away sin. Would He meet the issue? Would He undergo the forsaking of God? Would He bow under the stroke of righteous judgment that was to atone for sin, so that God could deliver and bring His people to Himself? Blessed be God, He did. Nothing could turn Him back in the path of fulfilling His Father's will. His Father's glory, and the salvation of all the Father gave Him

were before Him, and He would go on to the end. No storm could turn Him back. Human hatred and Satanic malice were alike powerless. Even through the storm of God's wrath and judgment on sin He pressed forward. Such His devotedness to His Father's glory ; such His love to us. "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." (John xiii. 1.)

What was the result ? He rose from the dead ; not bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, like Lazarus, but witnessing His eternal victory over sin, Satan, death, and the grave. Risen from the dead, He has entered a new order of things, into which He also brings His own people, even now. His relationships and associations are ours. "My Father and your Father ; my God and your God," He could say. Though our bodies still link us with a groaning creation, to faith, and in spirit, we have crossed the river. We are risen with Him, and even seated in Him in the heavenly places, and, in spirit, live in the eternal scene of blessedness He, as man, has entered. We still wait for the redemption of our bodies, but that will come ere long ; and when it does come, it will not be bringing them back into the old scene of sin and death, like Lazarus, but raising them up into the eternal scene beyond, fashioned into the likeness of Christ's body of glory.

Thus, dear brother, we know Jesus, not only as One whose sympathy is perfect, but as One who is able to bring us out of this scene of sorrow altogether, and give us a place with Himself in a scene of divine joy and blessedness, where no tear shall ever be shed, and where no sorrow shall ever darken the eternal brightness. He has told His Father He wants us there: "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.) And in order that He may take us there, He has dried up the waters of the Jordan, so that death cannot touch us. And, what is more, He is coming to complete the exhibition of His love—love surpassing all other loves—by taking us home to the place His love has prepared for us in the Father's house: "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also!"

How perfect, how infinite, is His love! Not a tear is unnoticed; not a sigh or groan of a wounded or broken heart is unheard. He sees all, hears all, feels all; and, blessed be His name, He pours into the sorrowing heart His own sympathy. This He does *now*, while we are here in the midst of the sorrow, and sustains us by His own blessed presence. But in a little while He will dry our tears for ever, and turn

our night of weeping into one long, bright, eternal day of joy.

Even now there is joy and blessing in the midst of the sorrow. Links are broken here; but fresh links are formed above. Strong ties of nature are severed, and the heart bleeds, and feels its own desolateness; but Jesus Himself comes to fill the void, and bind up the wounds He has made; and He does it so tenderly, and in such love! He wants the whole heart—wants to live in it—and will fill it with the brightness of His own presence, and make the desolate sing with a new joy.

And then it is only a moment, as it were, until we meet again those we loved so well. And what a meeting that will be! The parting was amid blinding tears, and with breaking hearts; the meeting will be in eternal sunshine, in the presence of Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us, where parting will be no more.

The natural ties, indeed, are broken, and that for ever, but the spiritual ties—the ties that are in Christ—abide; and all that we have been to each other *spiritually* will have place there. Paul could tell the Thessalonian saints, that they would be his “joy” and “crown of rejoicing,” “in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming.” (1 Thess. ii. 19.) The relationships of husband and wife, parents and children, &c., will have no place there. But

those who have been in these relationships here, and have helped each other *spiritually*, will have the result of it there, and rejoice together, while owning only the links that are in Christ.

How blessed, then, to meet again those with whom we have walked here in the fear of the Lord, and whose spiritual conflicts, labours and trials we have shared ! Only we must remember, that Christ will be all the glory in that eternal scene of blessedness.

How soon we may see His face ! "We shall see him as he is," and then we shall be *like* Him. We shall hear His voice, and behold His glory. It may be to-day, or it may be to-morrow. It *must be soon*. At the most, only a few more tears, a few more weary sighs, a few more steps in the desert sands, and the end will be reached, the longings of the heart all satisfied in the presence of Him who loves us, and whose love never changes. His companions in the joy and glory of the Father's house, never more to be separated from Him, or from each other—"For ever with the Lord !"

Let us then have good courage, and press on to the goal of all our hopes—that meeting in the air, when raised dead and changed living shall once more meet one another, in the presence of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He will shorten our pilgrim journey by coming to meet us on the way.

With kindest love to yourself and all the children,

Your affectionate brother,



MAN'S CONDITION; AND WHAT IS THE REMEDY?

III.

ALL this *as man*, and *for man*, so that those who, through grace, are *in* Him have their place and relationship and eternal portion with God, and in the new creation. Such is God's super-abounding grace to us through our Lord Jesus Christ.

In Romans this grace is developed in connection with justification and deliverance. And it is not merely that we are "justified *from* all things"—"justified by his *blood*;"—we have "justification of life" as well. This involves having our life in Christ risen. He died for us, not only as bearing our sins, but that He might also bring us, through His death, out of the whole condition we were in as children of Adam. "Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed [justified] from sin." (Rom. vi. 6, 7.) "Ye also are become dead to the law by the body of

Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." (Rom. vii. 4.) Thus all that judgment could lay hold of, all that in which sin could wield its power, all that the law could address itself to, has come to an end before God, for faith, in the death of Christ; and now in Christ risen we have our life—a life beyond judgment, beyond condemnation—a life of which the blessed Spirit of God is the spring and power. This is the life in which we stand before God. Christ Himself is our life—Christ risen—and thus we have "justification of life," because we have a life to which no sin can attach, and which, in resurrection and glory, is for ever beyond the reach of judgment. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." (Rom. viii. 1.)

And here, too, we have a positive delivering power—not only a new position, but a power adequate to the new place in which we are set by grace—"the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus." Not only have we life in Christ, but it is life characterised by the power of the Spirit, and makes *free* from "the law of sin and death." The believer has the life in which Jesus was raised from the dead, and he has also the Spirit which raised up Jesus, as the power of this life. It is a delivering power which sets the believer free from bondage to sin, through the death

of Jesus as the door of escape from the house of bondage, and the life of Jesus risen realised as the life we now live in the flesh by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us. Oh! to realise the blessed character of this life in the power of the Spirit, through communion with our risen Lord and Saviour!

Reader are you "*free*"? I do not ask if you are converted, or if your sins are forgiven; but are you *free*? Has the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made you free from the law of sin and death? Are you walking after the Spirit, and not after the flesh? The Spirit glorifies Christ. Is Christ *your* object? Is Christ ALL?

If we now turn to Ephesians, we shall see the way in which God meets man's need as dead in his sins. It is not the subject of justification and deliverance that is developed, but *a new creation*, in connection with God's eternal counsels.

And here God begins with Christ. There was "His eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus"—counsels before the foundation of the world—but when He began to bring this into view, He began by raising up Christ from the dead. Man in Adam was *dead*—dead in trespasses and sins—the old creation a hopeless ruin, and this proved by the death of Christ. Christ's death on the cross was, so to speak, the end of the old creation before God. All was

brought under God's judgment, and done with before Him—man dead *in* sins, and Christ dead *for* sins and sin, *all* was death. Here God begins by raising up Christ from the dead, and setting Him “at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.” Nor is this all: He “put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” (Eph. i.)

This is a new creation. Christ is the Head; and now that the old creation is gone in death, and under judgment, Christ is “the beginning of the creation of God,” just as if the old had never existed. But Christ is not alone. “God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace are ye saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that, in the ages to come, he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” (Chap. ii. 4–7.) Thus, in the counsels of God, and to faith and in spirit now, we are seated in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus; and our associations are with Him in that new creation scene,

of which He is the head and the beginning. God, by the mighty operation of His power, has set us in Him. The same power that wrought in raising up Christ from the dead, setting Him above all thrones and dominions, and all created intelligences of all ages, has wrought in us who believe, quickening us with Christ, raising us up, and seating us in Him. And, blessed be God, the same power works in us to lead us into the apprehension of it in our souls.

This power is by the Spirit who dwells in us, as the blessed answer to all that Christ is and has entered into for us, making it all good in us, in the apprehension of our souls, strengthening us with might in the inner man, according to the riches of God's glory; that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith; that, being rooted and grounded in love, we may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that we might be filled with all the fulness of God. (Chap. iii. 16-19.) Oh! what grace. Can it be possible? Yes, fellow-believer, it is possible. It is God's own word. It is not a question of what *we* are, or what *we* can do. God is revealing the glory of His grace according to His eternal purpose in Christ, and it is wholly a question of what *He* can do, according to the power by which He raised up Christ from the dead, and set Him in

the highest glory. It is a question of His mighty power operating in us by His Spirit. And who shall set limits to this ?

What is the result of this inward strengthening ? Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, and we get rooted and grounded in love. The Spirit dwells in us, and strengthens us inwardly ; and our hearts open to the Object that is before the Spirit—Christ in glory—Christ, the head of the Church, His body, and the centre of the new creation scene, and this Christ dwells in our hearts by faith. This is what we have been brought into through grace, and what has got a place in our hearts by faith, and through the operation of the Spirit. But being there we do not find ourselves alone ; in the counsels of God we find ourselves in the company of “ all saints,” that with them we may look out on the scene of heavenly blessing, and comprehend it all, and, at the same time, drink in the knowledge of Christ's love—the love which, through suffering and death, and the bearing of divine wrath and judgment, has brought us into all the blessing.

This, fellow-believer, is not something to be known afar off, as a tale that is told, in which we have no personal interest. The *heart* of believers is the sphere in which is developed, by the Spirit, this wondrous scene, this limitless expanse of glory—“ breadth, length, depth, height ;” this ocean of love—love fathomless, shoreless—

“the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.”

Is this the scene in which your soul now lives—from which it draws its life, and nourishment? Do you know it as your commonwealth, your home, that into which grace has introduced you in Christ for eternity? Then may you and I, and all who have tasted the blessedness, walk in the power of this truth, and learn its breadth, and length, and depth, and height, more and more. “We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them.” Sin, death, judgment, the world, are all left behind, and we belong to a scene in which the surpassing riches of God’s grace and glory are displayed, and will be displayed through all eternity. We are in this now in Christ, and have the Spirit in us as the blessed answer to it all, to make it good in our hearts, according to the power of God.

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”

(To be continued.)



“FOLLOW ME.”

READ MATTHEW VIII. 18-34.

IN Matthew viii. we have three cases, one of *purposing* to follow the Lord, one of *drawing back* from so doing, and one of *genuine discipleship*. Let us look a little into the details of each.

The Lord had just previously been engaged in acts of mercy and acts of power. Great multitudes had followed Him (ver. 1), attracted by His teaching, and the miracles which He did. But the Lord did not seek for such followers as these, for when He saw the multitudes He gave commandment to depart to the other side. (Ver. 18.)

It is now, after that the curious throng of followers (after their fashion) had been disposed of, that the Lord is open to deal with the truer and more real thing. In order to be a *real* follower, one had to leave the multitude and seek the *Person* he desired to follow. So it is here.

“A certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.” Bold words these, and confident. They remind us of Peter, as he declared, “Lord, I am ready to go with thee both into prison and to

death." (Luke xxii. 33.) Well we know the end of Peter's promise!

But how does the Lord meet this scribe? Does He reject his offer on account of his self-confidence, or does He at once accept him as a follower? Ah, no! The Lord Jesus was infinite wisdom, and He replied, in words that suited the scribe's case, and would suit many a case to-day.

Dear child of God, does your heart long to follow the Lord Jesus? Do you desire to shew your love for Him by casting in your lot with Him, down here? If these be your thoughts, He has precious words of encouragement for you. Search for yourself, and see how often He lovingly invites souls to follow Him.

But He is faithful and true in His love, and would not have you follow Him without knowing what such discipleship involves. True it is, that in casting in your lot with Him, you cast it in with the Son of God, the Anointed One, the One to whom alone belongs all power and glory. We shall see this brought out as we get further on in the chapter. But He is also the Son of man, the One acquainted with grief, the One who had not where to lay His head, the One than whom even the foxes and birds were better off. It is as such that He presents Himself to this scribe. (Ver. 20.)

Can you take your place with such an One? Do you see such beauty in Christ that, for His

sake, you could share His rejection? He *is* in rejection now, and it is one of the gracious GIFTS of our God and Father, the privilege of being identified with Him at the present time, as we shall be, when the time comes for Him to be manifested in glory. (Phil. i. 29.) And how will it reward us for any loss we may have to bear down here for His sake, to see the Lord's approving smile, and to hear Him say, "Well done!"

But let us pass on and see what we may learn from the next case. One comes to Him who was in a way a follower of the Lord (for he was one of His "disciples," see verse 21), and makes a proposal: "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father."

It was as though he had said, "Lord, let me wait till my father is dead; till all that connects me to the earth is gone, and *then* I will come and follow thee."

Again I address you, dear child of God. You have been redeemed at infinite cost by the blood of Christ; everything binding you to the earth and to this scene has been eternally severed by the death of the Saviour. And you have died with Him. Buried with Him in baptism, you are risen again with Him, and are seated with Him in the heavenlies. As such you are in the world, in order to manifest to others what you actually are—a heavenly being. You are called

to follow Him with whom you are associated. Will you not do so? Oh, my reader, is there anything in this poor world that keeps you back from doing so? Are you in any way fostering a link between yourself and the world that has cast out your Lord? If so, hear the Lord's words: "Follow me, and let *the dead* bury their dead."

The world all around us is dead in trespasses and sins. You were once so yourself. (Eph. ii. 1.) Through God's grace you have heard the voice of God's Son, and have been awakened to life. (John v. 25.) Do not then, I beseech you, seek a place among the dead ones. Do not cling to what you have been saved from. Let the dead bury their dead, and come, follow Him who has given you life. Some of the results of following Him are to be found in the latter part of chapter viii., to which we will now pass on.

The Lord leads the way into a ship, and His disciples follow. This is true discipleship. Let us ever bear in mind what it is we have to follow. Not our own inclinations, not our own thoughts, nor even our consciences, but a divine Person, Christ. When He leads, let us not be slow to follow.

Thus the disciples did. In following the Lord into the ship, they took upon themselves all the consequences of being with Him. And what could result from that but their own blessing?

Let us now see what some of the consequences were.

There arose a great tempest in the sea. The waters on which they had hitherto been sailing so smoothly, became rough and adverse; and of such magnitude was this storm that the ship was covered with the waves. Did they repent of ever having entered that vessel? Ah, if they did, there was no cause for it! For with them was the Lord, and if they had sunk, He would have sunk. They were in the same ship. The winds and the waves were completely under His control. Why then did He not coerce them? Why did He not heed the fear of His companions? He was asleep! Had He forgotten? Was He not faithful?

In alarm, His disciples come to Him with "Lord, save us: we perish." *Had* He forgotten? Hear His words, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm."

Faithfulness to Christ will involve stormy waves and tempestuous winds. But remember, dear child of God, that though He seems to be asleep, though you seem left alone, yet He is in the very same ship as yourself, and that when you sink, He sinks! What security His presence gives! The Lord, awaked by the distrustful cry of His disciples, arises, rebukes the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.

Now a "great calm" is not conducive to progress. See that vessel which was just now sailing along before the wind so swiftly, why is it so still? Why does it remain for days in one spot? Ask the captain of any of our large sailing vessels the reason, and he will tell you it is because the wind has dropped, and a great calm has taken its place.

Depend upon it, my reader, while you are going on with Jesus, however rough and stormy your way may be, there will be sure progress; but as soon as distrust comes in, and you become fearful and lose faith, though the Lord may smooth your troubled waters, yet progress comes to an end.

The disciples could only marvel at the power of the One who had done this, yet they did not recognise in Him the divine Son of God. Their thoughts did not rise beyond "What manner of *man* is this!" and, consequently, the Lord had to teach them a lesson. He suffers them to learn that He is Son of God from demon lips. (Ver. 29.) How humbling is this! Yet the disciples evidently learnt their lesson, for when they found themselves in similar circumstances on another occasion, they, on witnessing His power, "Came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God." (Chap. xiv. 33.)

Thus in Matthew viii. we get the Lord pre-

sented, as an object to be followed, both as Son of Man (ver. 20), and as such, subject to every hostile circumstance; and as Son of God, above all such circumstances. How blessed for us to know Him in each of these characters! Looking at Him thus, we behold a Person to whom every influence in this world is opposed; and, at the same time, One who has complete control over every circumstance down here. He calls us to share His path as the despised One, as we shall surely share His glory by-and-by. The question for each one of us is, "How am *I* responding to that call?"

In conclusion, I ask you, dear reader, to prayerfully weigh the following words of the Lord Jesus: "He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." (Matt. x. 38.)

"Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, *cannot* be my disciple." (Luke xiv. 27.)

"Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not *all* that he hath, he *cannot* be my disciple." (Luke xiv. 33.)

May the Lord find in you, dear friend, a faithful follower, so that He may be able to say to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

E. V. G.



HE BEGAN TO BE IN WANT.

“Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me.”—LUKE XV. 12.

“GIVE *me*.” We get here an example of what is called in James (chap. iv. 3), asking amiss. “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, 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.” The secret of the younger son’s desire comes out in these two words, “Give *me*,” and the sequel soon proved it was that he might consume it upon his lusts. For not many days after, “he gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.” (Ver. 13.) His desire was to make himself happy away from his father. The natural desire in each of our hearts, using all the benefits God gives to this end, like Cain, who “went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod” (that is, a wandering), &c. (Gen. iv. 16–24.) So whether it is Cain, or this younger son, or ourselves, we prove ourselves “the enemies of God.”

It is well that we should challenge our hearts, whatever we are, saved or unsaved, as to the

motives of our prayers. For though often we ask, through mercy we receive not, because we ask amiss, for our own selfish ends. Yet sometimes, as in Israel's case when they "lusted exceedingly in the wilderness," God "gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul." (Ps. cvi. 14, 15.) And so it was in our parable. And though God knows beforehand the use men will make of His gifts, how lavish He is with them. "He divided unto them his living." (Ver. 12.) Does not God make "His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust"? (Matt. v. 45.) And if His gifts are thus a witness to the very heathen (Acts xiv. 17), what effect have they had on you, my reader?

"And he began to be in want." (Ver. 14.) As we trace the downward course of this young man, we find that he receives the first check "when he had spent all." It was a sad history, but a very common one in this world of ours. He had accepted all that he could get; spent it in self-gratification; used it to place distance between himself and his father, and never turned one thought of love or gratitude towards that father who had dealt so indulgently with him. And oh, my unconverted reader, is it not thus that you have treated God? Do you not owe Him life, and breath, and all things? And to what purpose have you used them?

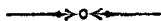
It was just at this point, "when he had spent all," that "there arose a mighty famine in that land." "How unfortunate! What an unlucky fellow I am," perhaps he said, "I could have borne this when I had plenty of money, but just to happen when I have spent my last penny!" But how truly can we, who know Him, say, "Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living." Prosperity has but been used to sever us further from Him. He will try adversity. "And he began to be in want." Have us He will, cost what it may to Him or to us. God has set His heart on rebel, wandering sinners.

But instead of turning to his father, the prodigal turns to the world for relief, the world over which he had spent his all. And so he is allowed to learn what the world is: "And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine." What an occupation for a well-born Jew! The most loathsome and degrading. How low he had sunk, for "he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him." He discovers the hollowness of the world's friendship now.

A young Frenchman of property, who led a gay, spendthrift life, had cause to suspect his butler of stealing his wine, and, to keep a check

upon its use, marked each cork with the date when the bottle was drunk, and the initials of the friends who had partaken of it. At last the end came. He had "spent all," became bankrupt, and was sold up. From the wreck of his once considerable estate, only a few worthless odds and ends, in some old boxes, remained to him. One day he bethought him to examine the contents of them. On opening one he found it full of the corks which he had marked. He looked them over, and read the initials of friend after friend, and amongst them all there was *not one* who would do him a good turn, or say a good word for him now. And this is but a too faithful picture of the world, to which so many cling. My reader, are you "in want"? In soul-want?

"None but Jesus that can give
Peace and safety while we live;
None but Jesus can supply
Comfort, when we come to die."



OUTCAST FROM MAN—ACCEPTED OF GOD.

LET us connect the Lord's being sanctified and sent into the world, and sealed, and the revelation (at His sealing) of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God, and every believer's connection

in Him and association in Him—all together, with God, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The Lord's perfect subjection Godward, and perfect compassion manward, and power too, and our consequent following Him in both directions—subjection Godward, and grace and power (that is, in His strength made perfect in weakness) manward. And our sharing results with Him too. That is, to become outcasts from man, accepted of God, in the beloved. And look for the reward of grace. To share, that is, His reward. "The glory which thou hast given me," He says, "I have given them." We baptised unto this name, that is, unto the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

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

Whom He sanctified and sent into the world. (John i. Luke i. 26; ii. 14. Matt. iii. 16; xvii. 22. John vi. 27.) Him hath the Father sealed. Accredited (Matt. xvii.) in *life*, in *death*. (Heb. i.) In resurrection. (Matt. xxvii. 52, 53. Heb. xiii. 20, 21.)

G. J.



CORRESPONDENCE.

5. W. C., Castle Eden. The rapid increase of exhibitions, flower shows, bazaars, sports, and amusements, at which crowds of professing christians are found, is certainly one of the signs of the last days. The warning of the apostle is quite clear, as to the path of the true Christian. "Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: FROM SUCH TURN AWAY." (Read 2 Tim. iii. 1-5.) A Christian, if a manufacturer, may shew his samples at an exhibition, as he might shew patterns to a shopkeeper. I would, however, much commend the path of faith, rather than mixing with the world's show. Your question has, however, to do with pleasure seekers—"Lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God."

The great probability is that many of those calling themselves Christians, who seek their pleasure in such places, are empty lamps without oil: and will soon be for ever shut out of His presence so little valued now. How terrible it will be to hear those words, "I never knew you." Is it not written, "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," &c. (1 John ii. 15.) What will it avail to such to say, "Lord, Lord, open unto us, we were in fellowship with those gone in." Then will they see that their formal fellowship was all a delusion, a lie. May the feet of the true saints of God be kept from these paths of the world.

You also ask what are the heavenly things of

Hebrews ix. 23. These are heavenly realities, in contrast with the earthly shadows of the law. There was the worldly sanctuary with its service and many sacrifices, which made nothing perfect, and never opened the way into the presence of God. "But Christ BEING COME an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle," &c. (Read carefully vers. 11, 12.) Now Christ has come, everything is in contrast with the first tabernacle — earthly shadows of heavenly realities, not the very image of the things. Mark, what characterised the *coming* of Christ was the infinite value of His one offering—His own blood, its value before God. Yes, God's estimate of His blood characterised His coming. "Christ being come. . . . 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." In another place the Spirit beareth witness. "This is he that CAME by water and blood, even Jesus Christ." (1 John v. 6.)

The whole work of purification and atonement was founded, or accomplished, when Christ offered Himself on the cross. The results of that one offering have not fully come; but there shall be "a new heaven and a new earth;" and the holy city shall descend out of heaven from God. Even now we have boldness to enter the holiest.

THE FIRST YEARS OF CHRISTIANITY.

“That which was from the beginning.”

FROM the holy inspired writings of John we see the vast importance of holding fast that which was from the beginning. He says, “Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.”

These words do not refer to the past eternity, but the beginning of Christianity—to the manifestation of eternal life, the Incarnate Son of God in this world. If we go back to the beginning of all things, of the universe, that blessed Person was ever there. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.” Distinct in Person, in eternity, yet truly God: with God, and was God. Ever *in* the beginning. Never made or created; for “all things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.” Life was not communicated to Him. “In him was life; and the life was the light of men.” (John i.)

He then created the universe, “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers:

all things were created by him, and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." (Col. i. 16, 17.) Such is He of whom we now speak, brightness of the glory of God.

He was in His own Person the beginning of Christianity; but Christianity did not truly begin until He died and rose from among the dead. This will be evident if we trace His wondrous history in the four gospels. He was truly man; but oh, how different His holy sinless humanity from our sinful fallen nature. "Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke i. 35.) According to the prophecies, which holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, He was announced at His birth as the Messiah, yet as Saviour, Emmanuel, God with us. "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke i. 32.) We shall find, however, that this forms no part of Christianity, and that His kingdom and earthly glory is yet future.

It is, however, important to see Him come in flesh, truly Man, and presented to Israel as the Saviour-Messiah—Jesus Christ. Let us be assured that not one jot or tittle of God's word shall fail. As the Messiah, the wise men from the east came

to worship Him, "Saying, Where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

But how contrary to Jewish thoughts: He came in deepest humility. See the Creator of all things laid in a manger. Yes, and we will bow with those divinely guided strangers from the east, and worship Him. Whether laid in the manger, or nailed to the cross, or seated on the throne of glory, worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou, that every knee to Thee should bow.

And when He was born, the glory could return to this earth. It was not in a palace, but in a stable, for there was no room for Thee, dear Lord, in this world's inn. This event was not made known by angels to kings or princes; but to those humble shepherds abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. It was to them the angel of the Lord came, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them. Yes, to these poor fearful shepherds did the angel say, "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Heaven bore witness to the birth of the Messiah: "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men."

Born of a woman, under the law, the holy child Jesus, when the appointed day came, was presented to Jehovah in the temple. And the Holy Ghost had prepared a godly remnant to welcome Him, and own Him. "It was revealed unto him [Simeon] by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ." Hear the witness of this Israelite brought by the Spirit at that very moment: "Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." (Luke ii. 26-32.)

But if heaven rang with praises, and the godly Simeons, and the Annas gave this precious witness to the child Jesus, what a contrast in the growl of hatred from the powers of darkness. "And the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born." (Rev. xii. 4.) The court of Herod is troubled at the tidings of the birth of the King, the Messiah. As the agent of Satan, Herod will surely seek to destroy the young child. The angel of the Lord directs the wise men to depart, and Joseph to arise and take the young child and His mother and flee into Egypt. "Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked

of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth and slew all the children in Bethlehem," &c.

Such are a few of the circumstances attending this great wonder, the incarnation of the Son of God. "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him." He was the light of men. "That was the true light, which coming into the world lighteth every man." "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not."

Behold Him "in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions," at the age of twelve, "and all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers." Yet they knew Him not. Even His mother understood Him not, nor knew that He must be about His Father's business. Nothing more is recorded by the Holy Ghost for many years of His holy life except that He was subject unto His mother and Joseph; and that He increased in wisdom and stature (or age) and in favour with God and man. (Luke ii. 51, 52.)

And here may we be kept from all the deadly error as to His being the sin-bearer during those years, and obnoxious to the wrath of God. All this is blasphemy against the Holy One of God, whose favour ever rested upon Him. He must be proved to be the perfect One, who knew no sin,

before He could be made sin for us on the cross. This was proved whether in the lowly place of retirement as the son of the carpenter, in sinless, perfect subjection, or, as afterwards, when presented to Israel.

Well might John the Baptist be surprised when the Son came to him to be baptised. "John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptised of thee, and comest thou to me?" Yes, it was consistent for Him in deepest humiliation to identify Himself with the godly baptised remnant of Israel. We must notice, that this was Jewish and not Christian baptism. "And Jesus answering, said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him."

But had He sins to confess? Was He the sin-bearer then, bowed beneath the wrath of God? Such a thought destroys the true character of His future atonement for sins: no: "Jesus when he was baptised, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Such was He to whom John pointed and said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which beareth away the sin of the world." He was spotless purity itself, the Lamb without blemish. The heavens were not more

holy than He: they were open unto Him. The Holy Spirit of God could descend on Him. No spot or stain could the eye of God see in Him. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I AM WELL PLEASED." Blessed Jesus! may we share the delight of the Father in Thee.

The three temptations of the devil could find no response in Him. The Trinity, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is for the first time fully revealed at the baptism of Jesus, the Incarnate Son, anointed with the Holy Ghost. He is now led forth to meet the power of the devil. Let us never go forth to meet that fallen one, without the fullest dependence on the same Holy Spirit. It may be observed here, that all error is a denial, or an attack on the truth; yea, on Him who is the truth. To say that the devil is a mere evil principle, or our evil nature, would be to attack Christ, and make Him a fallen being with an evil nature like ourselves. No, the devil is clearly a real person, of great power and subtlety.

How distinctly truth is manifested in the word of God. We have the heavens opened to a man, and that man the Son, the beloved Son. The Father speaks from heaven to Him. The Spirit descends on Him. Behold the second Adam. The devil overthrew the first Adam in paradise: he has no power to overcome the last Adam in the wilderness. Yes, truly man, and in

grace entering into human circumstances of fasting and hunger for forty days and nights.

With a *doubt* the devil attacked the woman, and a presentation of something good to the eye. Very similar the first temptation to our Lord. "If thou be the Son of God command that these stones be made bread." Is it possible, canst thou be the Son of God, and in such circumstances as these? so faint and hungry? Put forth Thy power, and at my bidding command these stones to be made bread. The devil pretends to seek the good of this hungry sufferer. Alas, we might have suspected no devil, and no sin behind this plausible temptation. Yes, we might say, That is a good thing, let us use our power to turn stones into bread, and thus relieve our sufferings. Mark, this was not a question of the ten commandments. The obedience of Christ consisted in only doing the Father's bidding, He must have, as the obedient man, a word from God His Father for all He did. The holy scriptures of God have now their place. Jesus answered the devil, "*It is written*, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Yes, the devil may tempt Jesus, to meet His need by His own will and power; or to do some great thing to become popular, and to shew Himself the Son of God, at the devil's bidding: or he may present the world to Him; but "*It is written*" is the answer of

the Lord to every temptation. What an amazement would Christendom be in to-day, if even every Christian was to inquire if it be written, for everything he is doing. Suppose we try it, beginning on a Lord's day and look to Him, that we may do nothing for which we cannot find an "*It is written.*" Now as this stands so prominent in the very opening of His ministry, let us next inquire how the Lord regarded the holy scriptures.

(*To be continued, if the Lord will.*)

MAN'S CONDITION; AND WHAT IS THE REMEDY?

IV.

MAN being utterly ruined in himself, we have seen that all blessing must come through another. God, moreover, has been revealed as a Seeker, a Saviour, a Life-giver. It is all in Christ. The cross of Christ is the foundation of all blessing now. In it God has been glorified in His whole nature and character in the putting away of sin; and man 'as in the flesh has been set aside altogether, and a new man brought in in resurrection, the man Christ Jesus. In this second Man, risen and glorified, all blessing is final.

This brings in *faith* as the principle of blessing and of relationship with God—*faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*. No matter whether it be the salvation of the soul, or whether it be the

christian walk, it is by *faith*. We are justified by faith, saved by faith, have eternal life by faith; and we live by faith, and walk by faith. This is the principle of our whole relationship with God, in marked contrast with the principle of works under the law.

Now there are two ways by which the enemy has sought to corrupt this truth, or annul it altogether. One is by the principle of Antinomianism; the other, Legalism. The former says: "If you are saved by grace, through faith, and without works, then you can do as you please—give loose rein to the flesh with all its lusts and passions, provided only you believe." The latter says: "You must be made perfect by the flesh, under the law." It may admit and hold that you are justified by faith, but also insist on your being at least under the law as a rule of life.

Both of these systems are antagonistic to the gospel. Both give the flesh a place, an allowed standing. The one would give the flesh full liberty, and thus turn the grace of God into lasciviousness; the other would *regulate* the flesh by putting it under a system of commands and restraints, forgetting that the mind of the flesh is enmity against God, and not subject to the law of God, nor can be. (Rom. viii. 7.)

To one who has known true liberty—the liberty which the gospel gives—both of these

systems are utterly repulsive. The horrible wickedness of the former must be felt by every one who has ever in truth had to do with God about sin. The latter is more subtle, but not less dangerous, and is what the apostle Paul in Galatians calls "another gospel," or "a different gospel."

It may be said that no one could soberly hold such a doctrine as that the flesh is to be allowed full liberty. Perhaps not. But it matters little whether soberly, or otherwise, if it be held at all. No man could hold such a doctrine in the presence of God. But when man gets away from God in his soul, or has never known Him, and is given up to the foolish wanderings of his own depraved mind, who can tell what the end will be? One has heard in connection with the holiness doctrines of the present day, such a thing as that the believer may be in the enjoyment of the most blessed communion with God in the *new* nature, while indulging the *old* nature in the grossest sins. The godly soul recoils with horror from such a thought. Yet how much of this very thing there has been! Who has not heard of the doctrine of Indulgences promulgated before and at the time of the Reformation, according to which, indulgence in the grossest sins was granted for so much money? It may be said, We do not live in such times. This may be true in a sense; but let it not be forgotten

that the heart of man is just the same now as then, and that under the cover of a fair outward profession every kind of wickedness may go on. 2 Timothy iii. is positive proof of this. And it is there added, "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."

The reader may say: "But this is not among Christians." Very likely they are not true Christians, but at any rate they bear the christian name. They have the *form* of godliness, but deny the power thereof.

And do you think the true Christian is not capable of falling into such evils? "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." You tell me you are a child of God, and you could not do such things; but let me ask you a plain question: Did you never yield to some sin—some temptation—with the secret feeling in your heart, "Well, I am saved anyway, and I cannot be lost," while, if you had felt that your eternal destiny depended on that act, you would have recoiled from it with horror? Tell me now, is not this the same thing? Is not this abusing the grace of God? It may be some little thing, but it shews the principle, and shews, too, the lightness of our wretched hearts in the presence of what it cost God to put away sin. Let the sin be little or great, as man estimates it, it required the untold agonies of Jesus, the Son of

God on the cross, to put it away. Oh! what grace on the part of the blessed God to give His Son to be lifted up on that cross. And how light and frivolous our poor hearts often are in the presence of such grace! We would, perhaps, turn away with horror from some great sin which would bring us into public disgrace, while going on complacently enough with other things condemned of God, but allowed of men, just because they minister to "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." Alas! where is Christ in all this? Have the sorrows of His cross passed from our minds? Or has that cross ceased to express to us God's thoughts of sin?

I am persuaded that Antinomian principles often operate in the hearts of Christians when, perhaps, they are little aware. If the flesh is allowed at all it is sin. If its lusts are allowed on the plea of being under grace, it is what Jude calls, "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness," and probably the same thing as the Nicolaitanism mentioned in Revelation ii., God's hatred of which is declared in the plainest terms.

But what is the remedy? **THE CROSS.** God has condemned sin in the flesh in the sacrifice of His Son, so that now it has no recognised place before Him. He has done with it for ever; and we are to own His judgment of the flesh which

is in us, so that with us, as with Him, it may have no recognised standing whatever. We are, in virtue of the cross, entitled to account ourselves dead to sin, and alive to God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, because His death was for us, and sets us free, so that we may refuse our old master. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace." (Rom. vi. 12-14.)

But we have to learn what we are, and what is in our poor wretched hearts. We have to prove the wretchedness of being in bondage, before we can know the joy of liberty. And even when we are free, we still have within us the flesh which lusts against the Spirit; and it is only as we walk in the Spirit, with exercised hearts, and in humble, prayerful dependence on God, that we have practical power against the flesh. The flesh never changes; it is always evil. And painful though the lesson be, we have to learn that there is nothing for it but death. And even when we have learned this, there is constant need for watchfulness and prayer, lest

we be betrayed by the deceitfulness of our own hearts. Our only safety is in abiding nearness to Christ.



"WHEN HE CAME TO HIMSELF."

(LUKE XV. 17.)

THIS was the real crisis in this young man's history, and it is the crisis in the history of every soul. He had reached a turning-point before, when he "began to be in want"; but that in itself did not turn him to his father, the only source of real relief. It is when a soul is in want, and a man comes to himself, that he turns to God. A sense of need is not in itself sufficient. How many who feel a sense of need seek to drown it in dissipation. Or, on the other hand, to allay it by "turning over a new leaf," that is, leading a more moral life; or even quiet it with outward religious observances.

No, a man must "come to himself," that is, be brought to feel his helpless and destitute condition, and that with a sense of the goodness there is with God to meet it. "When he came to himself he said . . . I perish with hunger," and that while in his father's house there was bread enough and to spare for hired servants even.

Have you, my reader, ever been thus "in want," and "brought to thyself?" Depend upon

it, the time will come when you will feel your need and come to yourself; if not in this world, in the next. If not in time, it will be in eternity, when it will be too late. The difference between the younger son in Luke xv., and the rich man in Luke xvi., is that the first came to himself when mercy was to be had; the latter, when he was beyond the reach of it, even to obtain a drop of water to cool his tongue in his torments. But he felt his need. "Have mercy on me," he cried. He had come to himself, he felt his condition to the full; "I am tormented in this flame," he said. But it was too late. Awful, awful, solemn words, "TOO LATE." Oh reader, dear unsaved reader, pause! Turn before it is too late with you for ever. Turn to Him who will have mercy, "to our God, for he will *abundantly* pardon."

See how earnest the rich man becomes. How he intercedes not only for himself, but for others. (Luke xvi. 27.) How he values the gospel message, its messengers, and its warnings then, for others, when he realises that it is all too late for himself, and he settles down in eternal remorse. That was the effect of "coming to himself" when too late. But repentance is the result of "coming to himself" in time, for we find the younger son say, "I will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and

am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants."

A young man, the possessor of ample fortune and estate, lay on his couch dying. A wild course of dissipation had thus early ruined his constitution, and brought on a fatal malady. Beside him sat his uncle, a christian man, earnestly pleading with him and setting forth the freeness of God's grace. The young man held the remains of an orange, which he had just sucked, in his hand. "What," he said, "uncle, do you mean to say that God will receive *me*, a sinner like me, as empty and valueless to Him as this orange? Why it would be ungentlemanly, as it were, to offer myself to Him in such a worthless plight. Do you mean to say He would take me as I am?" "Yes, I do." "Then," said the dying man, as he let the empty orange skin drop to the floor, "I will let Him take me."

This, then, is repentance, and it is "the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." (Rom. ii. 4.) The evidence of it was the profligate's confession, "Father, I have sinned."

I wish to call your earnest attention to the fact, that he went as he was. He had said, "I will arise and go to my father," and he went. Unlike many who follow these words in church, Sunday after Sunday, but never go—have no desire to go—have not "come to themselves;" in fact, do not feel the misery of their condition—

have not even "begun to be in want," that is, to feel the vanity, the emptiness of everything here to satisfy the cravings of an immortal soul.

And not only did he arise and go, but he went *as he was*, and owned what he had done and what he was. He had "sinned," and was unworthy. The fatal mistake which so many make of trying to make themselves better, more fit for God, before going, is well illustrated by the following story of the beggar and the painter :

A celebrated painter was engaged on a great picture of "The Prodigal Son," a picture which he intended to be a masterpiece, and to establish his reputation. He had already painted in all the subsidiary objects. The father's house was seen in the background, with the calf in the stall. The servants had the robe and ring and sandals in readiness, even to the father running forth with outstretched arms to embrace his long lost son. But the son, the central object of his picture, was lacking. A blank occupied the place where he should have stood, for the painter had never yet seen a subject sufficiently destitute and degraded to sit for a model of what he considered his prodigal should be. One day when walking the streets of London his eye lighted on a broken down, dishevelled, ragged, filthy creature. He thought he had never seen such a wretched object in his whole life before. He was filled with delight. "Here," thought he, "is the very

thing I want. At last I have found a model that will come up even to my idea of what the prodigal was like." He went up to the man, and, accosting him, told him he could offer him a sum of money which would be a prize to such as he, provided he would do exactly what he told him, and sit as a model for a picture he was painting. And as an evidence of his good faith he produced a sovereign, and gave it to the man, who, as may be supposed, readily consented. "But," said the painter, "*mind you come to me just as you are*, do not alter or improve your appearance in the smallest particular. I want you just as you are." Having laid these strict injunctions upon him, and appointed the time for his first sitting, he gave him a card with his name and address. No sooner had the gentleman left him, amazed at such a piece of luck falling to him, and gazing at the sovereign in his hand—he had not possessed such a sum all at once for years, if ever, and then so much more in prospect; no sooner was he alone than he began to think what he should do. First of all, he would go and have his fill at a cook shop. Having done this, and feeling somewhat easier and on better terms with himself, he began to consider his condition. A mirror, hanging on the wall, reflected his dirty face and unkempt hair. Why, even he was shocked at the filthiness of his appearance. "This would never do,"

thought he. "What, go to a gentleman's house in such a state as this!" And then his garments! He began to examine them one by one. The coat was out at the elbows, patched and torn and greased all over, and held together over his naked chest by some odd pieces of string. His trousers broken at the knees, frayed out at the bottoms, and two odd boots, through various rents in which his crippled feet protruded. "This would never do." He must rig himself up a bit to make himself fit for a gentleman's house. So off he went and got a piece of soap, and at the nearest pump he washed off as much of his dirt as he could. At a barber's he had his long, matted hair and beard cut and made decent-looking. And with the remainder of the sovereign he procured a suit of clothes and boots at a slop shop. When arrayed in these, and having duly admired himself, in a condition in which he had not seen himself for years, he awaited the time appointed for going to the artist's studio. He presented himself at the address he had received in due time, and rang the bell. A footman answered the door, and asked his business. "Please sir, the gentleman as lives here told me to come to sit for he to paint." "*You* are not the man," replied the servant." "Yes, I be," responded the beggar. "No, you are not," replied the servant, "you cannot be the man. My master told me to expect a dirty beggar in rags

and tatters." "I *be* the man," asserted the other, and produced the artist's card in proof. "But I thought it would never do to come to a gentleman's house without cleaning myself up a bit." "That is just what my master did not want you to do," answered the servant. "But I will tell him you are here, and see what he says." When the servant announced the model's arrival to the expectant artist, he rushed out, without hearing more, to bring in the object he had so long sought, and had found at last—the model which would enable him to paint in the prodigal in his great picture. What was his dismay when his eyes fell on the made up man before him. He had lost his ideal. "You have spoilt it all, you have spoilt it all. I told you to come *just as you were*," he exclaimed, and without waiting to hear the wretched man's explanations he ordered his servant to thrust him out of doors.

How many make this grave mistake. They go to the pump of morality, temperance or legality to cleanse their ways, or to the slop shop of religious observances—religion without Christ—to fit themselves for God. These things only spoil them for God and for His grace. The more unworthy the objects, the more their salvation brings glory to God. The chief of sinners will be the brightest trophy of grace for eternity. Not that I would say one word against temperance, morality, or religion in their proper

place, but that is after and not before salvation. (See Eph. ii. 8-10.) Not to procure salvation but the proofs and fruits of grace already received.

"Confession is good for the soul," is a true proverb. It is the invariable accompaniment of real repentance. It is due to God. Paul preached "repentance toward God," as well as faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And it is the forerunner of forgiveness. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i. 9.) And again, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." (Prov. xxviii. 13.)

WAITING FOR THE BELOVED.

JOHN XIV. 2, 3; 1 THESS. I. 10; REV. XXII. 16, 17.

THERE are three things that come before my mind, and I do not question for a moment that the Holy Ghost brought these three distinct scriptures vividly before me, in connection with the thought of being for ever with the Lord.

What a wonderful thought it is for our hearts, that we are waiting for the One who has promised to fetch us, to take us out of this scene of trial and temptation and rejection, and to take us home to Himself: to go in with Himself, and not to go out again.

It seems to me that these three scriptures bring before us three distinct things. Firstly, the One that loves us and who hath made us His own with the price of His own precious blood, says He is coming again to receive us to Himself. Secondly, that we, as having heard His voice, anticipating His return, must be in a waiting position. We are waiting for God's Son from heaven; and I am sure if it is really true of us, if we are really in a practically waiting position for God's Son from heaven, everything that we do will be characterised by it. It will be manifest that our citizenship is not here, that it is somewhere else, just where the word says it is—in heaven.

Though with regard to our sins, and ourselves, we are at rest, and there must of necessity be rest before we can be with Him. We must fully understand that everything has been cleared away, and that we are brought nigh to God by virtue of that work, which was accomplished on the cross before we can be in a position for the waiting.

It is a thing between our own souls and God Himself; and the only way we get this is by being under the power of the precious word of God, that we may hear what God says about His Son: that there is nothing at all of a barrier, because everything has been removed by that sacrifice when He by the eternal Spirit offered

Himself without spot to God. He made a way for us to get into the very presence of God, and we are left here only to wait for the coming of Him who has said, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself."

And that really leads us on to Revelation xxii., there you see it is as we get under the sanctifying power of the word of God we get in unison with the Spirit of God. There we find the Holy Ghost brings before us the bright and morning Star. And it is not only the Spirit says, Come, but the Spirit and the bride say Come. How sweet and blessed to be in unison with the Spirit, who delights to make Christ precious to our hearts now, and who is waiting for Him to come. Blessed to be in a position in unison with the Spirit: "the Spirit and the bride say, Come." Oh, beloved, may we know what it is to be so occupied with Himself, where He is, that it may be the very joy of our hearts in His personal absence to minister joy to the heart that has endured so much for us. It is our privilege to do so now. How may we do so? By hearing His voice, and being obedient to what He says.

May it be ours, beloved, to know more of what it is to be hearing His voice, just as He says in John x., "My sheep hear my voice," and He adds, "they follow me."

L. T.



TRUST IN THE LORD.

PSALM IX. 10.

- How sweet the peace of a perfect trust Isa. xxvi. 3.
 In God's sure love to me ! 1 John iv. 16.
 I cannot harbour any doubt 1 John iv. 18.
 Since Jesus died for me ! Gal. ii. 20.
- The love that "spared not His Son" !
 Will *with* Him freely give Rom. viii. 32.
 All that is needful for me here ;
 And bids me ask and have. Phil. iv. 6, 7, 19.
- God must be true to His own word, John iii. 33.
 Though I may failing be ; 2 Tim. ii. 13.
 And so I know whate'er betide, Heb. xiii. 5.
 " He chooseth best for me." 2 Sam. xxii. 31.
- 'Tis by His grace I have believed, Eph. ii. 8.
 On His Belovèd Son ! Col. i. 12, 13.
 The One who suffer'd on the tree, 1 Pet. ii. 24.
 Now seated on the throne ! Rev. iii. 21.
- My trust is in the living God, 1 Tim. iv. 10.
 His written word is mine : John xvii. 14.
 Begone ! ungrateful doubts and fears, Isa. xii. 2.
 My heart will here recline. Ps. cxix. 111.
- "All things are yours," for "ye are Christ's,"
 What joy these words afford ! Rom. xv. 13.
 Not what I am, but, what *He* is,
 Makes faith and hope so bold. 1 John iv. 17.
- While faith obeys the gracious word, Ps. lxii. 5.
 "Cast all your care on Me." 1 Pet. v. 7.
 Hope brightens with expectancy, Rom. viii. 25.
 Because "He cares for thee." Rom. v. 2-5.
- Then will I trust and never fear, Hab. iii. 17, 18.
 Since love so great and free ! Eph. ii. 19.
 Is unto me most surely given : John xviii. 27.
 "He chooseth best for me." Ps. lxxiii. 24.
 E. W.

CORRESPONDENCE.

6. M. H., Acton. There are times when *we cannot see* what we ought to do. At such times how precious is that word, "I will guide thee *with mine eye*." It is not what we see, but what our divine Shepherd sees. It seems to me such is the case you bring before us. The Baptists have, as a union, adopted the worst principle possible: a compromise with evil, similar to that which took place forty years ago, and which is bearing its sad fruits. Those who adopt it seem given up to judicial blindness, and views on baptism are used by the enemy of souls to hide the awful principle of allowing false doctrine as to Christ Himself. It may be said that to deny everlasting punishment, which is so distinctly taught in the scriptures, is not a doctrine against Christ. Did He not distinctly teach everlasting punishment to the rejectors of salvation? Certainly: then to say that solemn fact is not true, is to make Christ a deceiver. If this is not against Christ, what can be?

It does seem to us then, that the late decision of the Baptist Union has altered entirely their position. No doubt there are many dear Christians amongst them: may we seek in every way to deliver such, and He who sees the matter more fully than we do, will guide the sister you name with His eye. May she, and all, look to the Lord for His guidance. We are persuaded where that error of non-eternity of punishment takes root, it is the prelude of all other false doctrine.

There are relationships in life which must be

observed: husband and wife, children and parents, &c., and we need the guidance of the Holy Ghost how to act in faithfulness, and love, when any related to us are entangled in error. And no doubt the path will become increasingly narrowed, as false doctrine is held, and compromise goes on. We must not by a light and careless manner even, seem to be indifferent about Christ. What solemn instruction is given to the elect lady, as to all this in 2 John. "For he that biddeth him God speed (or saluteth him) is partaker of his evil deeds." Only this does not dissolve relationships or alter our responsibilities.

Fellowship in the Spirit is impossible with the holders or abettors of false doctrine, "And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." (2 Tim. ii. 19-22.) May our hearts bow to the word of God.

7. B. S., Bristol. If you turn to 1 Peter i. 10-12, it is evident the sufferings of Christ (that is, Messiah), were the theme of the Spirit of Christ in the prophets; and also the glory that should follow. Yet it was revealed to them, that they thus ministered unto us, not to themselves. All is now clear to us, that they distinctly wrote of Messiah in such scriptures as Isaiah liii., Psalm xxii., Daniel ix. 26, and many other scriptures. These speak of His sufferings, and of His being cut off, and having nothing. How far the prophets understood it, we cannot tell. His disciples evidently did not, and were greatly surprised when He spake of His sufferings. They did not understand that He must needs suffer,

until after He arose from the dead, and the Holy Ghost had come down. He was in the world, and the world knew Him not. The world knew not its need of His atoning death.

The Holy Ghost presents Him in the Psalms and elsewhere as Son of God—even as man, as Messiah. "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me," &c. (Ps. ii.) And as to His eternal Sonship, we know it from Hebrews i. "But unto the Son, he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." And again, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands." (Ps. cii. 25.)

Yet from Matthew xvi. we see it required a revelation from the Father to know Jesus and confess Him, the Son of the living God. We judge then, that these things were only known divinely by the saints of the Old Testament. What a revelation it will be when Israel is born again. And what a revelation to every soul now born of God.

What could be plainer than these words? "They shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek. But thou, Beth-le-hem 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 DAYS OF ETERNITY." (Micah v. 1, 2.) And yet the Jews to this day have no idea of whom the prophet thus speaks. Very soon God will say to them, "Arise shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

MAN'S CONDITION; AND WHAT IS THE REMEDY?

V.

WE have already remarked that legalism says: "You must be made perfect by the flesh under the law," for the law addresses itself to man as in the flesh.

The early Judaizers insisted on circumcision in order to salvation. They said: "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." (Acts xv. 1.) Modern law-teachers say we have nothing to do with the "ceremonial law," but we are under the "moral law," and must keep it, if not for justification, at least as a "rule of life."

Now the law *was* a "rule of life" to the Jew, or to man as in the flesh, when he stood responsible before God on that ground. But man failed under this rule, as in everything else; and, if he was to be saved at all, it must be by grace, through faith, and even that the gift of God.

But we have seen that God's salvation takes man out of that standing altogether, and puts him in Christ, and in the Spirit. This is a new standing and state altogether, where there is no flesh, and where the law can have nothing to say. The flesh, as to its standing, came to an end before God at the cross; and if you are in Christ Jesus risen from the dead, that is not the stand-

ing of a natural man in the flesh, even though the flesh be still in you.

In Christ all is a new creation. There is nothing of the old thing there at all. And if you will have a law, the new life has its own law—"the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus"—forming, characterising and governing the new man. The new life has its source and flowing stream in the Spirit; and in the Spirit in this connection is called "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." (Rom. viii. 2.)

As to the old man, we are crucified with Christ, that the body of sin should be annulled, that henceforth we should not serve sin. (Rom. vi. 6.) "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. ii. 20.) What a change! The sentence of death executed, yet the believer lives! But it is no longer the old life. He lives, but it is Christ—a risen, glorified Christ—who lives in him. Christ is his life.

Does this life need an external law imposed to command, or to prohibit, pronouncing a curse on disobedience? It would be to deny the true character of this life; to put life in Christ on a level with the life of the old man; and to put Christ on a level with sinful flesh.

But I have the flesh in me: do I not need the law to regulate that, to direct it in what is good, and to restrain it from evil? No. God's word

says the mind of the flesh is not subject to the law, and *cannot* be; and the only effect of applying the law is to provoke the evil that is there. "I had not known sin but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin taking occasion by the commandment wrought in me all manner of concupiscence." Such is the effect of the law on the flesh. It only provokes it. This, then, is not the remedy.

I repeat, there is no remedy for the flesh but death; "*I am crucified with Christ.*" You do not apply a law to a dead man. So, if we account ourselves dead with Christ, law is not needed to restrain the evil of the flesh. If we hold ourselves dead, the flesh does not act. What then? "*Christ liveth in me.*" And as we have seen, this life has its own law, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus."

What, then, is the mode of this new life? "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.) The mode of its subsistence is *by faith of the Son of God*. It is not the eye turned inwardly on self, to find something there answering to the demands of an external law; but the eye of faith is lifted upward to Christ, as the One in whom, and by whom we live. By faith we live of His life, and this in the power of the Spirit who dwells in us,

and is the Spirit of life in Christ. It is "by faith of the Son of God," faith which takes its character from Him as an object, through the operation of the Spirit who opens the eyes of our hearts to behold Him, the One "altogether lovely;" One who has loved us, and given Himself for us, redeemed us from death and judgment, and brought us to God, and into His own blessed relationship with the Father, as well as eternal union with Himself; who, moreover, by the Spirit reveals Himself in our hearts, producing in us His own affections and desires and thoughts, so that we live of what He is, as thus revealed to faith.

Who can over-estimate the importance of understanding this clearly? Not as a doctrine merely, but as a living reality, known experimentally in the soul, as it was with him who said, "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." It is just thus that real power is known and realised in the Christian life, because it brings in Christ into everything, and all the power of the Spirit, who delights in Christ, and whose mission is to glorify Christ, and take His things, and shew them unto us.

And it is just this mode of life that the enemy hates, and seeks to annul by corrupting the minds of God's people "from the simplicity that is in Christ." It may be in a very pious

way that he comes ; as " an angel of light," it may be, and seeks to impose a law on those who are in Christ ; but just in the measure in which this is done, the cross is denied, and Christ and the Spirit are set aside. For if you bring in the law, you set up the flesh again as responsible before God. It is no more grace ; faith as a principle of relationship with God is given up ; Christ has died in vain ; and the liberty of the Spirit is unknown. Such is the sorrowful effect of law-teaching upon souls who fall under its power. The whole system from beginning to end is destructive to Christianity and the truth of the gospel.

One who is under law measures God's thoughts and feelings about himself by his own faithfulness to the law's requirements. If he is faithful, God will think well of him ; if unfaithful, God will think ill of him. Thus, if he is honest, he can only be miserable, since he must ever realise that he comes short of the law's requirements. Under grace it is quite otherwise. Instead of God's state and feelings toward us being the result of our state toward Him, our state and feelings towards Him are the result of His state toward us as revealed in Christ. God has revealed Himself in absolute grace. He has given Jesus, His eternal Son, as a Saviour ; delivered Him up for our offences, and raised Him again for our justi-

fication; chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, and accepted us in the Beloved. God has thus revealed Himself in grace, when there was not one redeeming feature in man's condition or character; when he had been proved lawless, a transgressor, a God-hater, a murderer of God's Son. According to this grace, God has taken man up to bring him into eternal glory and blessedness with Himself, through the death and resurrection of Christ. It is grace from first to last, grace superabounding over man's sin, and grace reigning through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. Thus the believer has a constant, unfailing resource in God as revealed in Christ, without being thrown back upon his own resources under the law.

Let it be remarked, too, that when God is not thus known, all kinds of human appliances are resorted to in connection with matters of salvation, service and worship. In fact, salvation comes to depend on faithfulness in going through mere routines of service, and forms of worship, instead of service and worship flowing out of the knowledge of a present and eternal salvation founded on Christ and His finished work, together with the knowledge of our relationship with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as the fruit of accomplished redemption.

When redemption is known, and our place in

Christ, and the liberty of the Spirit, these human appliances are not needed. There is conscious acceptance with God; we enjoy the place of children with the Father; and if it is a question of drawing near to God as worshippers, as priests, we have boldness to enter the holiest in virtue of the blood of Jesus. (Heb. x.) But when these are not known, legal ordinances are put in the place of Christ, and cumbersome rules of worship are introduced for the guidance of the flesh, while a human system of ministry or priesthood is set up between God and His people, as if God could only be approached through a kind of priestly order. This is practically setting up Judaism again, and denying the effect of the atoning death of the Son of God, which has rent the veil, and given the believer access to God without a veil. Is it only of minor importance? The apostle calls it "another [or different] gospel," and anathematises its propagators, even though it were himself, or an angel from heaven. How serious, then, for any one to trench upon the simplicity and purity of the gospel!

The gospel of Jesus Christ brings men to God in all the value of Christ's atoning sacrifice, and in all the acceptableness of His blessed Person, in perfect and eternal peace; God's love is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost which is given; God's presence is enjoyed in the soul; and Christ, in the power of the Spirit, leads the

saints in priestly service in the sanctuary of God's unveiled presence. Why then impose rules for the flesh, or institute a priestly order to stand between the people and God? The flesh, having been condemned in the cross, can have no place in these things; and eternal redemption through the blood of Christ having been brought in, the saints are *all* priests, "a holy priesthood" (1 Pet. ii. 15), and have access into the holiest of all, where they have an High Priest over them, Jesus the Son of God, who raises the censer on their behalf, and presents their worship as incense before God, according to the value of His own Person and work. But how little of all this is known in these days! All around us we see magnificent buildings for worship, gorgeously furnished, splendid rituals, priestly orders, and imposing services rendered according to human rules; and all this for the flesh. Alas! alas! Where does all this come from? Is it found in the word of God, or in connection with Christianity as found there? We are compelled to answer, No. The enemy has brought it in. It is a legal system for the flesh, a system of works which practically replaces faith, and does away with grace. The gospel is corrupted, or set aside altogether; Christ and His blessed work are replaced by fleshly ordinances; and the place and functions of the Holy Ghost are usurped by priestly orders, or human leaders.

Is it any wonder that the apostle appealed to the saints in such words as these? "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified and slain?" (Gal. iii. 1.)

But do you ask, "What is the remedy?" Again I must answer THE CROSS. It is only the flesh that desires these things, and if God's judgment of the flesh in the cross of His Son is bowed to, it will give deliverance from all that the flesh feeds on, and lives in. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to *this* rule, peace be on them." (Gal. vi. 14-16.)

And now, reader, have you tasted the blessedness of that redemption which brings a poor vile sinner to God, through faith in Jesus Christ, and sets him in His presence in conscious peace and liberty as a son and heir, not in Adam, but in Christ, not in the flesh, but in the Spirit? If so, let me with the apostle entreat you to "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not

liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." (Gal. v. 1, 13, 16, 25.) A. H. R.

FIRST YEARS OF CHRISTIANITY.

II.

HOW THE LORD JESUS REGARDED THE SCRIPTURES.

WE have seen how the Lord answered the devil's common temptations entirely by the scriptures as the word of God. And it is striking that as to these three attacks of the devil, men generally use their own reason, power, and will, and never think of turning to the word of God for an "It is written." It is also further remarkable that in each of these cases the Lord turns to the writings of Moses, as the word of God—the very writings especially attacked by modern ignorant infidels. These far-seeing men in darkness tell us they are not the writings of Moses, but were written hundreds of years after him. Let us hear Him of whom God said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" He who alone could say, "I am the truth."

To the healed leper He said, "Go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded." (Matt. viii. 4.) He appeals also to the words of Moses in the matter of

divorce: "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning, made them male and female for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh?" And what these words of Moses teach He regards as of God. "What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder," &c. The whole context proves that the Lord owned the words to be of, and by Moses. And the Pharisees acknowledged the truth of this, Matthew xix. 3-8. See also, Mark i. 44, "And offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them." "For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother," &c. This Jesus regarded as the commandment of God. (Mark vii. 9, 10.) To the Pharisees on another occasion He said, "What did Moses command you?" (Mark x. 3.) "Have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham," &c. (Mark xii. 26-31.) "They have Moses and the prophets If they hear not Moses and the prophets," &c. (Luke xvi. 29-31.) "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." Thus Moses and all the prophets are declared to be the scriptures by the risen Son of God. "And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must

be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures." (Luke xxiv. 27-45.) Do we need any clearer proof than the plain teaching of Christ? "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John i. 17.) Let us agree with Philip, "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write." (Ver. 45.)

Jesus constantly refers to facts recorded in the books of Moses. He says, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." (John iii. 14.) "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: *for he wrote of me*. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (John v. 45-47.) "Did not Moses give you the law? Moses therefore gave you circumcision," &c. (John vii. 22.) Such is the uniform teaching of Christ. Thus the puerile attempt to repudiate the true authorship of Moses, or the inspiration of Moses (the law), the psalms, and the prophets—as God truly speaking to us by them—is a wicked attempt to make Jesus a liar and a deceiver. My soul, be thou found with Him, the light and life and the truth; and not lost in the wanderings of modern thought.

The teaching of the Holy Ghost, in the Acts and the epistles, is equally decisive. "For Moses truly said unto the fathers" and the words of Moses are the covenant which God made with those fathers. (Acts iii. 21-26.) "Which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

Can we say of any other writings that God hath spoken to us by those writings? No, assuredly no! This is the true sense of inspiration. God hath spoken to us in the holy scriptures—and Moses is spoken of first. "For Moses truly said unto the fathers," &c. This is what we must understand by inspiration: God using men to convey His very words to us. What a privilege to be thus brought into direct contact with God.

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers, by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by [or in] his Son." (Heb. i. 1, 2.) Thus all scripture was in the beginning owned as the very word of God; as such it was quoted by the Son of God; and as such was always regarded by the inspired apostles. Hearken to Paul, "But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak: not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye

heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." (1 Thess. ii. 4-13.) So he exhorts Timothy to continue in the things which he had learned. "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Therefore the closing words of Paul to Timothy are these, "Preach the word." For the time would come, and now is, when they will not endure sound doctrine.

Peter also says, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation." It is not merely of man's ability. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter i. 20, 21.) Oh how dignified then was the Lord's answer to the devil, "IT IS WRITTEN."

Let us then beware of appealing to any authority, but to the word of God. Now, as God did not speak to us in our own tongue, it is of the utmost importance that we should have the best and most literal translation—and that we should not add, or take from, for even one word would often alter the entire sense. There can be no

compromise on this question. To give up one verse, or one thought, which God has spoken to us, is to give up all, and set up ourselves as God. In no other way can we meet the attacks of the devil than by appealing by faith to "It is written," in the word of God.

It is also important to remember, that the New Testament is regarded equally as the word of God with the Old. (See 2 Peter iii. 16; Rev. xxii. 18, 19.) Also Paul says to the Corinthians, "What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that *I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.*" Where can our souls rest with calm certainty amid the confusion, and contradictions of these last days, if we could not go back to that which was in the beginning, to the very words of God to our souls?

To bring down the inspiration of the scriptures then, to the level of Milton, or Shakespeare, or any mere man, is to reject the revelation, which God in richest grace has been pleased to give us. Our Lord Jesus Christ and the apostles quote the whole Old Testament, as the word of God. And as to themselves, the inspired writers of the New Testament, John sums all up in a few words, "We are of God: he that knoweth God, heareth us: he that is not of God, heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth,

and the spirit of error." (1 John v. 6.) However men may in these days of "development" reject the word of God, or treat it as a mere human imperfect book, or books, it is most certain that in the beginning every Christian received it, as it is the very word of God. If a man did not, he was not of God, but of the spirit of error. Is it not so now? By this simple test then we know, that whoever questions the divine inspiration of holy scripture, is himself assuredly in error. All this may seem a long digression, but since our only appeal will be to "It is written," how vast is the importance of being well grounded in the fact, that what is written, is the sure word of God.

Now let us for a moment suppose the Bible to be withdrawn from this world, and every ray of light borrowed from the Bible. If such a thing were possible, what would be the condition of mankind? How would you answer the thousand questions that rise in your mind? How came this world, or this universe into existence? We see in its existence proofs of infinite wisdom and power: but how came the things we see to exist?

Then all this contradiction to that wisdom, and power, in the overwhelming scene of misery, and death which covers the globe on which we live? How came this to be so? What could man say, except "I don't know!" What means, and what is that terrible thing we call conscience?—that terrible remorse of the human mind, for having

done the things it hates, or loves, which leave such a poisoned sting? And what is the remedy, and where is it to be found? The poor dark mind could only reply, "I don't know." Will death end it? "I don't know." Is there a future after death? "I don't know." What is the future of this world even here? What is your future? On all these subjects, and thousands more, take away the holy scriptures, and man is left in total darkness. No God of love to speak to him. No Saviour from the terrible despair. No comfort, no help here, or heaven hereafter. The only thing such a man could do, would be to say with Voltaire, "I wish I had never been born." Nevertheless, God did not leave the heathen without a manifestation of Himself, as we learn from Romans i.

Oh young man, think of the end and aim and development of modern thought. Let it once get possession of you, and in the wretchedness of despair, as I have seen it, you may long in vain to be delivered from the poison you have imbibed, in the writings of modern unbelief, which after all is not modern. No, it is as ancient as the words of the tempter, "Yea, hath God said?"

God hath spoken in His holiness, we will rejoice. Yes, He who said, let there be light, hath spoken. What would this globe have been without light? Just what it would have been morally if God had not spoken. Oh the mighty

power, oh the eternal blessedness of the word of God. I have known a dying man, by five words of Jesus, turned from a blaspheming infidel, to a happy believing child of God here, and in a few hours in heaven. Those words were, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." God grant that the reader may never reject that book of books, that treasure of all treasures. Well do I remember singing, when a youth fifty years ago—

"The word of God, the word of truth,
Instruct our childhood, guide our youth,
Uphold us through life's middle stage,
And be the comfort of our age."

Praise be to God I have found it so. No, fellow believers, let us earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. It may possibly be asked, How am I to know what was the faith once delivered to the saints? Let us then turn to the sure word of God. May He grant us grace to reject everything concerning which we cannot, with our Jesus, say, "It is written." What is written then let us turn and see.

LETTERS FROM THE EAST.

Beyrout, Syria,

April 4th, 1888.

I RETURNED from Egypt a good deal run down in strength, but, thank God, my health remained very good. Often my voice was well-nigh gone, from having to speak constantly and often

when the fine dust was blowing about and filling the throat and lungs. But the work goes on very quietly, and the brethren there hold all their meetings, even where the Table has not been set up, in connection with the one body and the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Their custom is to meet every night; and this is adapted to the habits of the people. And whether they be few or many in a place they come together every evening to worship, as they say; although they clearly recognise the special character of the meeting to break bread on Lord's Day, or a meeting for discipline. So the first thing in all hearts in every meeting is to wait on the Lord in recognition of His presence, and the presence and guidance of the Holy Ghost. And generally half an hour, at least, is spent in prayer and praise, as those present are guided and enabled. Then comes the ministry of the word according to the present need and the ability given. And after that, all join again in prayer and praise. This is generally the course the meetings take without any human attempt to order them.

Three or four years ago, after the awakening had been going on for a little, some labourers were inclined to conduct preaching meetings on individual responsibility; but it was not viewed favourably by the brethren, who said it reminded

them of system. Hence it was not insisted on. I said at the time, that a labourer might if so inclined, conduct a teaching or preaching on his own responsibility; but for my own part I had always preferred to have every meeting in the unity of the body where there were as many as two or three present to take part, as enabled by the Holy Spirit. When this is possible even in meetings, where the gospel is primarily needed, I have invariably found it for the greater edification of all present. I am aware that this same question was raised years ago in the West, and some labourers preferred to have meetings for the exercise of gift, on their own responsibility; and perhaps rightly enough in the circumstances where they were called to labour. But, as I said, the brethren in Egypt viewed this with disfavour, and I think all the labourers are fully convinced that the present course is fully in the current of the Spirit's guidance for them. They never fail to find plenty of time to exercise whatever gift they may have. So, too, I have always found it for myself. In fact, if it was necessary, I would prefer to sit silent during the entire meeting, rather than to have it all thrown on me. In opening up new places where as yet not one is known to have been converted, a labourer is generally accompanied by a companion in labour, or by some brethren, one or more, and as soon as the

Lord begins to open some hearts to the word, they are instructed as to the presence and guidance of the Spirit in prayer, and it is remarkable how soon their mouths are opened in prayer. But converts are generally brought right into the unity of the body, as to the spirit of it. Hence when the Lord begins to bless in a place, a meeting is set up at once; but not the Table, that is the breaking of bread. Those blessed are gathered at once, and continue to meet even when the labourer goes on to another field, and these are known and cared for as brethren gathered, and so recognise themselves. Hence when there, you will hear of many such meetings. They are visited and helped with a view to setting up the Table among them. And they do so understand it. Then when some of them have become established in grace and walk, some labourers or brethren in the neighbourhood go and help them to set up the Table, and that is generally a day of power and joy. I must say that I never have seen such care in setting up the Table and in receiving into fellowship generally, as is there exercised. There is usually an immense concourse of people when the Table is set up in a place. Nearly all the Christians in the neighbourhood come, and experienced brethren have told me that the ever-faithful Lord never fails to render a most manifest testimony to His own

Table. Often the vast congregation will be bathed in tears. Whatever may be the habitual state of the on-lookers, they are made to feel that God is there in their midst, and their hearts are humbled and bowed as they hear the name of the Lord Jesus, the ever blessed Son of God, exalted.

You are aware that the Copts have been long distinguished for their tenacious clinging to the truth that Jesus Christ is God. When the whole weight of the empire was against Athanasius, in his testimony against Arius and his deadly heresies, the Egyptian Christians on the whole firmly stood with him. Afterwards came the scourge of Islam; and the Copts who maintained their integrity, became despised and downtrodden, and so remained till the present day. We know that a dark night of ignorance settled down over them, but they held on to the foundation truth that Jesus is God. And to this day if you exalt that blessed One, you scarcely ever fail to meet a response in the heart of a Copt. I have no doubt that God has remembered their sorrows during ages of oppression, and has not forgotten that they held on through it all to the confession of His Son. He has visited them in these last days in His grace, and they feel it. You feel when labouring among them that it is a distinct visitation of grace. I may remark that all the old brethren had been well grounded in grace,

and in a measure in the whole range of truth, before separation began. They have progressed immensely since; but there had been a good foundation. And hence one has the feeling that the work is solid. And so they also feel; although we all know well, that the Lord alone can keep them or any of us walking in His path a single day. And their confidence in Him and in His grace is simple and fresh. There is much brotherly love and care for one another. Many not devoted wholly to ministry find time to visit assemblies, and such visits are much owned of the Lord for mutual joy and comfort. And generally in places where an unusual work is going on, you will constantly see brethren from assemblies elsewhere coming and going, and thus help in the work without any human arrangement. This also reflects on their own assemblies, for they carry back with them the cheering news of the Lord's work. I was present when the Table was set up at three new places last winter. A great revival had been going on there for four or five months, and many souls had been blessed. Those labouring there had felt the need of much help at the setting up of the Table, and it came at the right time, without any attempt to arrange for it. In the first of the places, I think there were about fourteen of us, labourers and other brethren, who were present on that occasion

from other places. And they were days and nights of unusual power; and especially on Lord's day, there was not an available spot inside the building (without any roof) or outside in the street and on the walls and roofs of adjoining houses that was not occupied, wherever there was a prospect of seeing or hearing. We all felt the exceeding pressure of the occasion, but looked to the Lord for help and He did help us. All hearts were bowed and a deep solemnity was manifested in all countenances. Such a great concourse of people was not new, for crowds had been coming nightly for weeks and months; but the presence of so many in suspense and expectation, was not, as we know, suited to the exercise of worship in those gathered around the Table. Some twenty-five new ones had been received into fellowship. And we began in the early morning and did not get through with the Table until about noon. But the Lord helped us in a marked manner. And the prayers and praises shewed that hearts were more occupied with the Lord than with the sight of so many people. I was led to speak at some length on Isaiah liii. and later on was helped in giving thanks at the Table. We all came together again at 3 p.m. and one of the labourers and I were helped in the ministry of the word. It is remarkable the new character the ministry of the word takes as soon as the Table is set up. We observed it

on that occasion; the gospel continues to go out as sweetly and fully as ever to the impenitent; but we address the saints differently. The following week most of the labourers went elsewhere, some of us to two places about an hour's distance, where the Table was also set up with much blessing. Fifteen were received at one place, and forty-one at the other. Some of the labourers were led to a new place distant about three hours' southwards, where a marked awakening began, as we afterwards heard, and was going on when I last heard; and some others of us came a short distance to the north, and the awakening began in another place, where there were already a few souls that had got blessing, but had not yet begun to meet in separation. But they got a room ready and invited us to come to them at once, and the very first night the place was filled, with perhaps as many more outside. By last accounts there were about five hundred coming every night to hear the word. There is of course blessing in many villages where no such marked awakenings have occurred. It often occurs that a man gets blessing when present at a meeting in a place where he has come on business; and on his return home communicates his new found joy to his neighbours, and thus a work begins. Simple brethren also often take the light to new villages where darkness has reigned for ages.

I have not spoken of the difficulties and the opposition which is often encountered. There is and has been plenty of all that, as must be the case when God is working. But opposition from without is easily met, when God is working, and the saints themselves are walking together in unity and love.

Love to all saints with you.

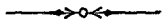
Your brother in Christ,

B. F. PINKERTON.

BELOVED BRETHREN, is not the above letter a direct word from the Lord to us all? Are we not in danger of falling into the groove of human arrangement? Let us not forget those words, "Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." Oh let us prove the faithfulness of our God and Father. We would ask ALL who profess to be gathered to the Lord, to come together, for prayer, at least half an hour before the usual time of preaching the word on a Lord's day evening. Both brethren and sisters. Let every heart be lifted up to the Lord for His blessing, whomsoever He may use to preach the gospel. Let it be felt that the absence of every one able to be there, is an evidence of indifference as to the Lord's honour, and the conversion of precious souls. We feel led to make this solemn call, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, with the

fullest assurance that if we thus honour the Lord, and look to Him, the "pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb," shall flow forth with life-giving power.

C. S.



CORRESPONDENCE.

8. J. L., Coatbridge. Isaiah lxvi. 7, shews that before the travail of Zion, or Israel, the man child, or Christ, would be born. "Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man-child." Then verse 8 as distinctly foretold, "As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." This also will come to pass. When Christ was born there was no particular travail or trouble to Israel or Zion. But when the time of tribulation shall come, such as never was, then the remnant of Israel will appear.

Compare Micah iv. The chief dominion shall come to Zion. (Ver. 8.) This does not hinder the previous travail of the daughter of Zion. (Vers. 9, 10.) In chapter v. it is foretold that Messiah shall be born in Bethlehem, that He would be caught up to God; and that He is from the days of eternity. "Therefore will he give them up [Israel], until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel." Then, as in Isaiah, follows the time of Israel's blessing.

Christ was born in Bethlehem: He was re-

jected by the nation, crucified, dead and buried: but raised up from the dead, and received up to God. Israel then was given up to the Romans and scattered amongst all nations. "Therefore will he give them up until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth," &c. (Micah v. 3.) They are thus given up, and will be, as a nation, until the time of the end shall come.

If we now turn to Revelation xii., verse 1 gives us the woman, the Jewish nation, which is to have the first dominion in this world. Verse 2: her future travail when she bringeth forth the remnant.

Verses 3, 4, 5: the birth of the man-child, Jesus the Christ—Satan's opposition as leading Herod to destroy Him—the man-child, as Christ, including His body, the church, caught up to God. (Ver. 6.) Israel flee into the wilderness, as in Micah iv. 10. The dragon then persecutes the remnant. (Rev. xii. 13–17.) The quotations as above from Isaiah lxvi. 7 and Micah make the subject quite clear, and all the politics of this world are tending to that time of the end: Israel's travail or tribulation; and then the supremacy of Zion over the whole earth. Such will be the end of the Eastern question. Men may forget God in all this, but God will not forget His ancient people Israel. To this also agree the words of Jesus in Luke xxi. 20–27, with the certainty of His return. The Lord lift up our hearts; soon we shall be caught up to meet Him in the air, before He comes to judge the quick.

FIRST YEARS OF CHRISTIANITY.

III.

THAT WHICH WAS FROM THE BEGINNING.

WE have already dwelt a little on the incarnation, baptism, and temptation of Jesus, the Son of God. What then is the character and teaching of the four gospels? And what is not the scope of their teaching? Four persons are used by the Holy Ghost to relate the life, words, and miracles of the incarnate Holy One. These four gospels do not present Christianity fully, but the Person and work of Jesus Christ our Lord, the foundation of Christianity. It is important to see this. Take the ministry of John the Baptist. He is the forerunner of the Messiah, and yet points Him out as the Lamb of God; and as the Lamb of God He is the foundation of all blessing. But mark, John does not say one word about the church (the assembly of God). He came as a Jewish prophet, preaching only to the Jews, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. But not because the assembly was at hand; that great truth was not revealed to John, but "For the kingdom of God is at hand."

The kingdom of heaven, the reign of Messiah, was the burden of the Old Testament prophecies; but they never once named the church. That

mystery was hid from them, and hid from John. No doubt repentance was requisite, equally for the foretold kingdom (Ezek. xxxvi.); and also, as we shall see, for the forming of the church. (Acts ii.) But what was the teaching or preaching of Christ? Most profitable would it be to study the four gospels in their distinctive character. But this would fill a volume. Whether as the righteous Jew, in Matthew; or the Servant, in Mark; or as the Son of man, in Luke; and still more wondrous, as Son of God, in John—perfect in each, perfect in the whole. If you will examine each, you will find in the first three Jesus preaches the coming kingdom of heaven, or kingdom of God. He does twice name the church, or assembly, but only as a future thing, “I will build my church.” (Matt. xvi., xviii.)

In the word of God everything is found in its place and time. The presence and teaching of Jesus on this earth, is the last trial of man. God, who had sent His prophets, had now sent His Son—God manifest in flesh. He came to His own people, the Jews, and His own received Him not. To them there was no beauty in Him that they should desire Him. He was truly God, yet perfect man; absolutely perfect in every relation, whether to man or to God. John says, “We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Oh how wondrous to have in these gospels the

invisible God revealed. Surely every word demands our study with profound reverence. We cannot conceive the profit, and deep untold joy we should have in becoming more thoroughly acquainted with each gospel, in its own peculiar character.

All is pure grace, yet there is truth in every line. Man's true condition is set forth in each gospel. The presence of Jesus amongst men is like the rising of the sun on a dark world. Take just a little sample of man's need and condition as illustrated in Mark i., ii. Jesus enters a meeting-room of religious men, the synagogue of the Jews, at Capernaum. What does His presence reveal? Man under the power of an unclean spirit! The demon is in the synagogue. But here is One with power to deliver; and all that were brought to Him were healed. "And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out demons."

Then there came a poor leper to Him, the very picture of sin in the flesh. Does He spurn him? No, with tender compassion He heals him. Then a helpless man, sick of the palsy, let down to His feet. He saw their faith; and now hear strange words from the lips of a Man, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." To scribes this was blasphemy. Yes, that which man needs first, above all things, the forgiveness of sins, was blasphemy to them! But He who forgave sins

had power to say, "Arise, take up thy bed and walk." Whether man knows it or not, these miracles truthfully set forth man's real condition. He is under the power of demons, and cannot free himself; he is full of the leprosy of sin, and cannot heal himself; he is utterly without power to walk in the holy commandments of God; he needs forgiveness and power to walk, and there is only One can meet his manifold need, and that One is Jesus. Has He met yours? None other can.

Take one other parable, Luke xv. Man is lost. The blessed Shepherd seeks the lost until He finds: and takes the lost sheep safely home. Then the lost piece of silver is sought until it is found. This gives joy. Then the lost son comes to himself, repents in the confession of sin. But oh, the joy of the Father! His great delight to receive, forgive, clothe, bring into His own presence! The work of the Son in redemption; the work of the Holy Ghost in seeking the redeemed; the unspeakable joy of God the Father in receiving the redeemed sinner—what a revelation of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!

We might dwell for ever on the life, teaching, and miracles of the Lord Jesus, as a Jew in the midst of His Jewish disciples. But the time drew near when the passover must be killed. He set His face for the last time to go

up to Jerusalem. He must needs suffer and rise again, or Christianity could never begin, or the kingdom be hereafter set up.

He fully exposed the wickedness and hypocrisy of the priests and Pharisees, who were pretending to righteousness by the law. God had provided a great supper, but men made light of it, and rejected it. (Matt. xxii., xxiii.) He then spoke of the immense change close at hand. Their house was left desolate, and would be destroyed; and Jerusalem, the future metropolis of the earth, would be destroyed, and long trampled under foot. (Luke xxi.) Very strange was all this to Jewish ears. All this implied a total change, and an entire setting aside of the ancient religion of the Jew, with all his privileges; and all of which came to pass. He was presented to the Jewish nation for the last time in the flesh as Messiah, and utterly rejected. His last passover came. See Him sitting with His disciples, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." After the supper He took the place of the paschal lamb. "This is my body, which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. . . . This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." Yes, a far greater redemption was about to be accomplished than the redemption from Egypt, which they had just commemorated. But as yet they understood not. He was about to be "reckoned among

transgressors, for the things concerning me have an end." (Luke xxii.)

What a night was that! What words did Jesus speak to His beloved disciples. "Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." We must, however, remember that as yet they were only disciples, just as John had had disciples. They had been drawn to Him as a centre, and yet He was alone; they could not be members of His body, neither was that wondrous truth as yet revealed. Wondrous was the truth He had revealed to them, for He had shewn them, under the figure of the corn of wheat, that He must die or remain alone. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (John xii. 24.) No words can express the importance of this great truth, that until He should have died, been buried, and had risen from the dead, Christianity could not begin. He, until then, must remain alone. Nothing then could be more false than the error that the incarnation of Christ is salvation, or the improvement of man. His holy life and heavenly teachings could not have imparted full help to man, lost man. He must needs suffer the atoning death of the cross; and even that death is not the

improvement of man, but the end of man in death.

But all this was evidently utterly unknown to His disciples; and how little known now. What God had made known by all the holy prophets was, that one like the Son of man should come in the clouds of heaven, deliver His people, and reign over the whole world. This the disciples expected just as they were. There were also other prophecies which spoke of the sufferings of Messiah; of His bearing the sins of His people; and of His awful death, forsaken of God. (Isa. liii.; Ps. xxii.; and many others.) And had not every sacrifice, with all the blood of beasts, shed from the days of Abel, pointed on to Him, the Lamb of God? But as yet they knew not and felt not the need of this. Never had it dawned on their minds that He must bear the wrath, and be forsaken of God for their sins. And how few really know this now. Do you?

Well, the time had come that instead of receiving the long foretold kingdom, He must suffer such treatment from man, and bear the whole weight of God's wrath against sin, as never was, and never can be borne again. And thus He must be turned out of, and depart from, the world He had made.

We must then read this wondrous discourse, John xiii. to xvii., as anticipating the very period of His rejection on earth, and His presence in

glory above all heavens. He knew it all, all we should need. "Clean every whit," as born of God, and as a new creation in Him; yet we have still to contend with an evil world, and the flesh in us, though reckoned dead. It is His blessed service to wash our feet, to restore our souls to communion by the word, during His absence, exalted as He is above all heavens. (John xiii.)

He knows all the sore difficulties of the path during His absence. We shall not see Him now; but we may believe in Him, as we believe in God. Could He have said this if He had been only a man? He is as truly the object of faith as God the Father. And now, being so near His departure, He tells them that of which no man had ever heard before. He lifts up their thoughts far above the earthly kingdom of Israel, and He says, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." They do not seem to have understood this in the least. Do we? What would a place in this world be to us, if we really grasped the wondrous grace revealed to us in these words, that He who loved us, and gave Himself for us, is gone to prepare a place for us in the glory; and will come Himself for the one special purpose, to take and have us with Himself? Is this

the love of that Man in the glory, at the right hand of God? Oh, child of God, canst thou say He loved me, and is coming for me, to have me with Himself? Does He not thus say to us, "Let not your heart be troubled"? Remember, there had not been a word of all this in the Old Testament, or in His teaching, until the night of His betrayal. The nearer He approached the terrible hour of darkness and wrath, the sweeter the savour of Jesus, as the meat-offering. In all things, and in every way, He was only proved to be a sweet savour to God: without spot, blameless. Holy, holy One of God. How well did He know the need of His church during the long period of His absence. Let us inquire whom did He appoint and promise to take care of her until His return?



"BUT WHEN HE WAS YET A GREAT
WAY OFF, HIS FATHER SAW HIM."

LUKE XV. 20.

How every word in this wondrous parable brings out the fulness and freeness of grace. Nor is it to be wondered at, for God is the God of *all* grace, and the *Father* of mercies. So that we might expect the unfolding of God's heart, by the Son of His bosom, which this parable is, to abound and overflow with grace. How that father's heart yearned over that son! How

God's heart yearns over poor sinners, little as they think it. How can they when law is deeply imbedded in all our hearts? That is, that God will be to us in accordance with what we are to Him. Grace acts from itself. It is not called forth by any worthiness in its object. God finds the motive for His grace in His own heart. How that father's heart went out towards that son, and welcomed the first approach to a return! How God's heart goes out towards the poor sinner, and fosters and strengthens, then welcomes the faintest drawings towards Himself!

What riches of grace are contained in that single expression, "*a great way off*," his father saw him." How it speaks of God being on the look out, as it were, for the sinner's approach. Not the trembling sinner on the look out for a kindly glance of His eye, a favourable moment to draw nigh, but the other way round altogether; God on the look out for the first motion in a sinner's heart towards Himself. With what interest He watches the effect of all His agents: the famine, the treatment of the "citizen," of the rest ("and no man gave unto him"), of the want, &c. If such His interest in His "banished;" if He thus "devises means that his banished be not expelled from him" (2 Sam. xiv. 14); small wonder that He should, as it were, "make merry and be glad," when He gets the sinner home; or that His Son should inform us, "There is joy

in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

But not only did he see him a great way off, but he "had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him." Dear unsaved reader, I would ask you, What do you think fills the heart of God towards sinners, towards you? Is it anger, or is it pity? True, He is "angry with the wicked every day." He hates his sins, but nothing but pity fills His heart towards the poor slaves of sin and Satan.

And what is this "running and falling on his neck, and kissing him," intended to represent? The willingness, the alacrity of God to receive and to forgive the repentant sinner.

What a moment, what a meeting for both, the father and the son, God and the sinner, whilst all heaven rings again with responsive joy! May it be yours to cause heaven and the heart of God this joy, and to receive for yourself this welcome, ere you lay this paper down, dear unsaved reader, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

"BUT THE FATHER SAID."

(Ver. 22.) All hung on that. What would his father say? It was of comparatively little importance what the son said, or what place he would ask for. Very right that he should confess his sin; for "if we confess our sins, he is

faithful and just to forgive us our sins." Confession is the evidence of repentance.

But the son could not finish what he had intended to say. How could he? For his father had seen him when he was yet a great way off; had had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him. Was that the way servants were hired? No, he must let his father have his own way, and give in accordance with the dictates of his own heart. "Bring forth the *best* robe, and put it on him," &c.

And what is all this intended to represent? The way that God receives sinners.

The Pharisees and scribes had murmured against the blessed Lord, saying, "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them." And so the Son, of God's bosom, the declarer of the Father, draws this picture to shew not only that God receives sinners, but the way in which He does it. For grace asks for nothing and gives all, and the best of everything too.

Dear reader, do you believe that God is thus waiting to receive sinners, and to bless them? That He has everything in readiness for them? Even the calf fatted for the feast; joys ready prepared.

On the rugged Yorkshire coast stood a little cottage, inhabited by a poor widow. Her only child, a son, the hope of her old age for comfort and support, had forsaken her years ago. In his

hard-heartedness he had followed his own will, and run away to sea. But that mother's heart never gave him up. Many a prayer had gone up from her lonely bed, on windy nights, as she lay awake, and listened for his hand upon the latch; for she never locked her door, but left it on the latch, "for," said she, "he may come back some night, and I would not have him find my door closed against him. And if he only comes back to die, I'll gladly nurse him."

One night, she heard a hand upon the latch, and a footstep on the floor below. "Charlie, is that you?" she said. "Yes, mother, I've come home to die. Will you have me?" "Yes, Charlie, and welcome."

That mother's love is but a faint reflection of God's yearning over sinners. Will you test it, dear reader?

"BRING FORTH," AND "BRING HITHER."

(Luke xv. 22, 23.) "Bring *forth* the best robe, and put it on him," the father had said. The son was still *outside*. He needed fitness for his father's house. Though his kiss had betokened forgiveness, that in itself did not constitute him fit for the house. Grace could meet him in his rags, but grace would fit him for the house as well.

Not only did Christ die for our sins, but God "hath made him to be sin for us, who knew

no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." And not only is this the righteousness which fits the thief on the cross for paradise, but it is the very same for the apostle Paul, with all his years of untiring devotedness. "That I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through *the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.*" (Phil. iii. 9.) The believer says at the end of his course,

"Jesus the Lord our righteousness,
Our beauty Thou, our glorious dress.
'Midst flaming worlds in this arrayed,
With joy shall we lift up the head."

But when thus clad, with the token of His Father's eternal love on his hand, and shoes on his feet, a standing in grace, the next command is, "Bring *hither* the fatted calf, and kill it." This shews that his *position* is changed. "Bring *forth*," shews that he was *outside*. "Bring *hither*," that he is *inside*. And this takes place *now*. The believer receives this position *now*; not when he dies. He is "blessed with all spiritual blessings *in heavenly places*, in Christ Jesus."

Is the language of your soul, dear reader, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"? If a believer, it should be so.

God give us to know our blessings and position better, and to enjoy them more.

“LET US EAT AND BE MERRY.”

(Ver. 23.) How clearly this brings out *God's* joy in saving sinners. Of Jerusalem it is said, “The Lord thy God will save; he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing.” (Zeph. iii. 17.) It is not that Jerusalem would rejoice, that is true; but it is *God's* joy. So in the parable, the recovered son rejoices undoubtedly; but it is the *Father's* joy that is spoken of. “Let us be merry.” The son's happiness is so complete that scripture says no more about him; it can add no more. It is the *Father's* satisfaction, the *Father's* joy, that is spoken of. “Let us be merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.” It is the Saviour's full vindication. The accusation of the Pharisees and scribes had been, “This *man* receiveth sinners, and *eateth with them.*” (Ver. 2.) The Lord shews that this is how *God* deals with sinners. He makes them at home with Himself. He brings them to share His joys. It is not the sinner introduced into these joys when he gets to heaven, but the *joys* of heaven brought down to the sinner *now*, by the Holy Ghost; or the saved sinner carried up to participate in the joys of heaven now. For it says, “They *began* to be

merry." The joy will go on in heaven for all eternity, surely. But it has commenced now. It is the *same* joy which we shall share there; we shall enter into it more fully then, but God will not.

"It is *the Father's* joy to bless,
His love has found for me a dress;
A robe of spotless righteousness,
Oh, Lamb of God, in Thee."

May your soul and mine, dear fellow believer, know more of this joy, enter into it more fully. Not only God's joy in saving ourselves, but to be sharers of His joy in saving others also, to be abettors of His joy.

W. G. B.

A FURTHER WORD ON THE ATONING SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Your letter shews that I had judged correctly as to the difference between us in regard to the sufferings of Christ. And the latter part shews that in your own soul you feel and realise that there was something more in the sufferings of Christ than merely what He suffered at the hands of men and of Satan; that there was suffering of a deeper and more awful character. I might ask, then, Whence was this

last character of suffering? It was not from man; it was not from Satan. Was it not, then, from God? And was it not in divine judgment and judicial wrath because of sin? This is just the point. You realise that the death of Christ was not the death of a mere martyr. A martyr suffers from man and Satan; but instead of suffering *from God*, he is *sustained* of God, and kept joyful in soul, even amid the most excruciating physical sufferings. Many who have suffered for Christ's sake have witnessed to this truth, as I am sure you know as well as I.

These martyrs were smitten. Did *God* smite them? They were forsaken. Did *God* forsake them? Did they ever utter the cry that Jesus uttered in that hour of sorrow which no martyr could ever fathom? God "permitted" them to suffer every torture that human ingenuity could devise, but instead of forsaking them, He stood by them, and they bore their sufferings with a fortitude that God alone could give. They were forsaken in the sense that God left them in the hands of their enemies, to do with them as they pleased; that is, He *allowed* their enemies to carry out all their wicked designs against them, and to inflict upon them all the sufferings their wicked hearts could conceive. And yet, while God "permitted" all this, He never left them to themselves, but sustained and comforted them, and strengthened them with might by His

Spirit in the inner man, so that they suffered joyfully.

Is there no difference between this and the forsaking of Christ on the cross? He was left in the hands of His enemies, and not delivered; but was this all? Did God stand by Him to comfort and support Him in the hour of His deep sorrow? And when Christ cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" was it only an appeal to be delivered from His enemies?

I think you will see it was more than this. Not only did God permit His enemies to do as they would, but He Himself abandoned that blessed One on the cross, and the darkness was but the expression of that abandonment. He looked for comforters, but found none. He cried to God, and was not heard. The floods came into His soul, and He sank in the deep mire where there was no standing. He came into deep waters, and the floods overwhelmed Him. All was darkness amid the overwhelming floods. There was not one ray from God's face to lighten the gloom, He was truly abandoned of God.

How immensely different from, and how infinitely beyond, the sufferings of martyred saints! But *why* was this? In the deep anguish of His holy soul He appealed to God with the question, "*Why?*" God helped the

martyrs in the agonies of death, but He was *far* from helping Jesus in His sorrow on the cross. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou *so far from helping me*, and from the words of my roaring?" Here there was something between Him and God, so that God had forsaken Him. What was it? Was it not sin? Had not our iniquities been laid upon Him? Why did God forsake Him? Why did He not help Him? Why did He not hear Him? Does not your heart and mine join with the word of God, and say, It was because He was bearing our sins? Do you question that the sins of His people were laid on Him, and that God dealt with those sins judicially on the cross? God's word is plain: "He hath made him to be sin for us." "The Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all." "Who his own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." "He was delivered for our offences." The sins, then, of His own people were laid upon Him, and He bore them. What was this for? Was it not that they might be dealt with in righteous judgment, and put away through His sacrifice?

But *who* could do this? Who could measure the just desert of sin? God alone. None else could lay it on Jesus. None else could deal with it. None else could judge it and put it away. And this is what He has done through the sacrifice of Christ. In virtue of that

sacrifice, God is just, and the Justifier. Because He has dealt with my sins righteously in the Person of Christ, He righteously justifies me from my sins when I believe in Jesus. It was *God* that *judged* sin, and it is God that *justifies* the believing sinner. But God's judgment of His people's sins on the Person of Christ as a sacrifice, involved judicial wrath *from God*, when our sins were on Him.

I know that God "permitted" Christ to suffer from His enemies; and I know that they were the instruments of His death; that "by wicked hands" He was "crucified and slain," having been "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God;" but behind all these instruments *God* was dealing with sin, bruising, smiting, forsaking, and Jesus took all from *His* hand. In obedience to His Father's will, He drank the dreadful cup, and in the unfathomable sorrows of that hour, all that was merely from man's hand was lost, as it were in the floods of judicial wrath which came from God, just as the rivulet on the sea shore is lost in the great tide that rolls in from the sea.

You think that when it speaks of God smiting, bruising, &c., it does not mean "the doing" of it, but "the permitting it." As to the actual infliction of physical suffering, heaping reproaches on Him, &c., this might be so; but the thing to see is, that behind all this, was God's

judicial wrath against sin—God dealing with sin in judgment according to the requirements of His own holiness and majesty. And all this Christ took, not from the hand of man, but of God. This is the foundation of eternal redemption. Leave it out, and atonement is gone, and salvation is gone too. All the requirements of God's majesty and holiness were righteously met by that blessed sacrifice. On this our salvation is founded, and on this alone. In virtue of this sacrifice God is satisfied, and so are we. On this ground God and the believing sinner meet. God has provided the sacrifice, and dealt with the sin, and thus reveals Himself, and reconciles us to Himself through the death of Jesus. And here our souls have rest, as it is said in the hymn:—

“ The storm that bow'd Thy blessèd head,
Is hush'd for ever now,
And *rest divine* is ours instead,
Whilst glory crowns Thy brow.”

You ask if He cried to God for help against God, or against His enemies, and you think it was the latter. No doubt, when the bulls of Bashan roared upon Him as a ravening and a roaring lion, and the dogs were piercing His hands and feet, He appealed unto God, committing His soul to Him who judges righteously, though this was not all. When you ask if He

cried to God for help against God, this is not putting the matter fairly, for no one so speaks. When forsaken of God, the burden of His cry was, "WHY?" He did not ask for help against God, but His holy soul asked, "*Why hast thou forsaken me?*" Need I say more as to this? Surely it is plain that it was not merely a question of His enemies, but of *why* God had abandoned Him, was far from helping Him, and did not hear the words of His roaring. He was not heard until transfixed on the horns of the unicorns—death wielded by Satan's power—when, atonement having been accomplished, and God glorified about sin, He was answered in resurrection, and gathering the scattered flock, He declared His Father's name in the midst of His brethren. The battle was fought, the victory was won, and the divine Conqueror gathered His ransomed ones, and made His victory theirs, and set them in His own position and relationships before the Father. Blessed and Almighty Redeemer! May our souls adore Him as the One who is worthy!

I beg you again to read Matthew xxvi. 31, "For it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." You say, Jesus did not say it was God who smites, but "I will smite." Does this mean that Jesus was to smite the shepherd? or what? The reference is to Zechariah xiii. 7, where it is

said, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." Here it is plainly Jehovah who speaks, He commands *His* sword to awake. I would ask, Who wields Jehovah's sword? Was He not there Himself with His sword to smite the Shepherd? Again, I would ask, Whom does Jesus mean by "the shepherd"? Does He not mean Himself? Was not He the Shepherd of Jehovah's sheep? And whom does He mean, when He says, "*I* will smite"? Does He not mean Jehovah, who commanded His sword to awake? Surely all this is plain. Learned professors may try to change the plain reading of Isaiah liii. I confess I cannot tell why; but I apprehend the words, "It pleased the Lord to bruise him," will stand when all the wisdom of the wise shall have perished in the grave. The plain teaching of scripture is that Jesus, when on the cross, and under the weight of our sins, was *bruised by Jehovah, and smitten by the sword of Jehovah.*

You say you do not find in scripture the expression, "He made propitiation," but always, "*He is the propitiation.*" It is not found in the common translation, but it is in the Greek. The word "propitiation" occurs twice: in 1 John ii. 2; iv. 10, "He is the propitiation for our sins"; "Sent his Son [to be] the propitiation for

our sins." In Romans iii. 25, it should be a "propitiatory" or "mercy-seat." In Hebrews ii. 17, however, we have the verb "to make propitiation," wrongly translated, "to make reconciliation." It should read "to make propitiation for the sins of the people." (Compare Greek, and also the Revised Translation.)

In Hebrews ii. 17, it is what the Lord Jesus, our "merciful and faithful high priest" accomplished on the cross, in presenting Himself a propitiatory offering to God. He made propitiation for the sins of the people. In 1 John the value of this work is connected with the *Person* of the Son of God who was sent to accomplish it, and who now, in the presence of God, as risen and glorified, is the abiding Witness of that propitiatory work by which He glorified God. The glorified Son of God is the One who was offered as a propitiatory sacrifice. "He is the propitiation for our sins."

You represent me as saying, "the death of Christ was the death under God's judgment." I do not think you quite understood the force of my statement. What I said was this, "If you ask *what* death Jesus died 'in our stead,' I only answer, *Death under the judgment of God*. This was the death He suffered for me, and as a consequence I shall never suffer that death." I was not speaking of the death of Jesus for *all* men, but for His own people. No doubt His

death for all was under judgment, though you could not say He bore the judgment of all. He was made sin, and glorified God about sin as a whole by the sacrifice He offered. He died for all, for the whole world, is the propitiation for the whole world; but it is never said He bore the sins of the whole world. Where the bearing of sin is in question, it is always limited in its application. He "bare *our* sins;" that is, of believers. "He was once offered to bear the sins of *many*." (Heb. ix. 28.) It does not say *all*. You say He died for the "ungodly," for "sinners," for "enemies," and ask if He died *that* death for them too. Well, we were all "ungodly," "sinners," and "enemies." In this respect, there was no difference; and He died for all, and gave Himself a ransom for all; but it never says He bore the *sins* of all. Had He done so, all would be saved; but we know this is not the case. He bore the sins of *His own people*, of all who through grace would repent and believe the gospel; and because He bore their sins under God's judgment, they do not come into judgment. (John v. 24.) They get the remission of their sins when they believe, and God remembers sins against them no more. "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord will not impute sin. (Rom. iv.) He is a propitiation for the world (1 John ii. 3), but that is a different thought. By His propitiatory offering

He has glorified God about sin, and on the ground of this, salvation is offered to all. The gospel goes out to all the world, and God beseeches all to be reconciled on the ground of the death of Christ, and thus, all are without excuse; yet only those who believe are entitled to say that Christ has borne their sins. Thank God, they *can* say it, and rejoice in the sovereign grace that has met their need. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." (1 Pet. ii. 24, 25.)

I think I have noticed all the points. May God in His grace clear away all the difficulties. I am sure of this, that when you see the true character of the atoning work of Christ, and fully bow to it in your soul, it will give you a sense of sin, and God's awful hatred of it, such as you never could have otherwise, and also of the magnitude of God's grace in meeting our guilty need at such cost to Himself; and, I may add, of His unsullied holiness and majesty displayed in dealing with sin according to His own character and glory.

Your affectionate brother in the Lord,

A. H. R.

CORRESPONDENCE.

9. W. M., Clapham. A life that can be forfeited is not *eternal*, but temporal. Eternal life is the life of the eternal One, Christ, and therefore can neither be forfeited, nor cease to be. Abiding in the love of Christ, or in communion with God, is not the same, as the witness of God—that he that believeth on the Son of God hath eternal life. “And this is the witness, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” (Read 1 John v. 7–13.) Here it is not our abiding, but the witness of God, and believing Him, or making Him a liar. John v. 24, is true to the end. Love to the brethren is one effect of having eternal life; and hatred to them shews we have not got it.

Colossians i. 19, is the opposite of ancient and modern Pantheism, God in everything, or everything God. In the blessed Person of Christ “all the fulness [of the Godhead] was pleased to dwell.” Thus the incarnate Son is presented to us. Let us not add a word, but adore Him evermore. Marvellous mystery, “God was manifest in the flesh.” In John i. 14, 18, it is the Son in the bosom of *the Father*.

1 Corinthians xv. 28, carries us on to that period when there is no further need of the mediatorial, or Messiahship of the Son: no more reign of righteousness, but when righteousness shall *dwell*, and God be all in all. He may be still to us, and to the universe, God manifest in the Son; and be ever known, and enjoyed by the Spirit.

No doubt, whatever is not in accordance with

God's word is harmful: thus the whole lump of modern Christendom is a leavened lump, and there is no remedy but purging ourselves from it, according to 2 Timothy ii. 21; iii. 1-5. "From such turn away."

Ephesians i. 6. "Accepted" is not quite the meaning of the word "Wherein he has taken us into favour in the beloved." It is what God has done according to His eternal purpose, rather than what Christ has done. God has brought us into the same favour *in* Christ, as the place that Christ has in the glory to the Father; so that in this chapter Christ is seen subject to the Father, and accomplishing His purpose of grace to us. Oh the riches of the glory of His grace!

We can only speak with holy reverence of the blessed Trinity; and it is always well to just limit our thoughts to the word of God—the Son, the object of the Father's love. God is love. The Holy Ghost is God. We cannot doubt then, that He is love.

Matthew xviii. 20, is surely much more than "the assertion of his divinity" (Sadler, as you quote). He is present with the few now, and when gathered to His name, as He is not, with those who still remain in the organisations of men, and refuse to hear His voice, and to be gathered to Him alone. (1 Sam. ii. 30.) See on this subject tracts just published: "From Egypt to Shiloh," and sequel "Samuel," G. Morrish, London.

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

"THE queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here." (Matt. xii. 42.)

In this chapter we see how the greater than Solomon, the Lord Jesus, was treated. He was the wisdom of God, and the power of God in perfect goodness—God revealed in love. How did His own nation treat Him? Did they own Him as the Son of David, the true Solomon? They said, "This fellow doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils." Could human wickedness go beyond this? Yes, it did; Jews and Gentiles combined to spit upon Him, and put Him to a cruel, and shameful death.

What a witness then against them is this Queen of Sheba. Our object is, however, to turn to the inspired history of this person—and examine its deeply instructive details, lest she should also be found to be a witness against us. For these things are written for our instruction.

We turn then to 1 Kings x.

The first thing we find is this. "And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to prove him with hard questions." No doubt this may be used in the sense of the first awakening

of a sinner; but let us rather at this time examine it as testing, and instruction for Christians.

Are you, reader, a Christian in the full, real sense—one whose sins are forgiven—one who has eternal life? Have you heard of the fame of the heavenly Solomon? Have you heard that He has said, "For where two or three are gathered together to my name, there am I in the midst of them"? Yes, we have heard the report of this wonderful fact; what is our real experience in this matter? It is a fact; as surely as Solomon was at Jerusalem, so surely Christ is in the midst of Christians gathered to His name. Have we, like the queen, come to *Him* to prove Him with hard questions? The Jews would not come to Him when in the flesh. They said He did good by the prince of the devils. Do we come to Him now in spirit? Or do we treat Him now as a sheep-stealer, if souls come from far-off lands to Him?

Yes, let us be clear about this. It is not, have we to come to learned men—to doctors of divinity, or sects, or churches of men. But have we come to Him? Have we brought every hard question of the conscience, or of the heart to Him, to Christ? Are you resting on what man has told you, or on what He has unfolded to you, by the Holy Ghost in the word of God? We may bring every question of the past, the present, and the future to Him.

Verse 2. She came to the place where Solomon was, to Jerusalem, with great abundance; but mark she gives nothing to Solomon before she has communed with him of all in her heart. Jonathan also was a rich young man, the king's son, yet there was a fitting moment to strip himself, and give all to David. Do not be in a hurry, dear reader, wait the right moment. For Solomon wants the heart first. "She communed with him of all that was in her heart." What a privilege! Have you done it? Have you communed with Christ of all that is in your heart? Perhaps we could not do this with any other person. We may with the heavenly Solomon. Yes, *all*. Have we really opened our whole heart to Solomon? Tender, gracious, loving, heavenly Solomon: is there any wisdom to compare to Him?

"And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not anything hid from the king, which he told her not." There is nothing hid from Christ. If we really come to Him every difficulty is solved. And the Queen of Sheba saw all Solomon's wisdom. It is one thing to have heard about Christ, it is quite another to have the eyes open to see Him, the wisdom of God. What a change from darkness to light!

Let us notice carefully what she saw. "The house that he had built." Glorious as it was, it was but a figure of the assembly. Have you

seen the house that Christ has built? He said, "On this rock will I build my assembly." What a heavenly building of living stones—great stones and costly; "Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." The apostle could say to all believers, "In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. ii. 19–22.) Have we seen the house that He has built? Are we quite sure we are thus builded by, and in, Christ? There is no other habitation of God; no other building of Christ. Have you seen it? Many professing the name of Christ have never seen it.

And the queen saw "the sitting of his servants." Sitting is expressive of rest and peace; yes, peaceful rest in the presence of the king, beautifully expressed in the Song of Solomon. "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love." Here we have not only the house that He has built, but He has brought me there. Can you say this? Have you any taste for Christ? Have you ceased from yourself and sat down amongst the servants of Christ, to be served first, and then to serve? Under His shadow: are you there? There is a storm of sorrow about to sweep this poor guilty

world. Are you sheltered "under his shadow"? Can you say, "with great delight"? The children of this world are seeking delight in pleasure, and only find in the end wormwood and death. Oh there is the house, can you see it? The house that our heavenly Solomon has built, and there are the true pleasures for evermore. There His servants sit under His shadow with great delight: His fruit is sweet to their new taste. Can you say, I did not come of my own free choice; no, He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner over me is love, Have you seen it? And more.

The queen saw "their apparel:" Have you seen the best robe, the apparel, on every one sitting at the banquet of Christ—"Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe"? Surely there should be also practical righteousness that all who come may see. Oh, the great banquet above, when He shall have come for His saints, there will not be a guest that is not whiter than snow—presented glorious, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing: but that it should be holy and without blemish. Is it not blessed to be now made meet to be partakers of the inheritance? In favour in the beloved? Do you see the apparel? Is it on you? Are you a happy guest thus meet for the banquet?

But there was not only the sitting of the servants at his table ; there was also the attendance or standing of his ministers or servants. Yes, there is the sitting at the table of the Lord in perfect rest, in perfect peace with God—announcing that, through which THEY HAVE eternal redemption ; but there is also the scene of fierce conflict with the world, the flesh, and the devil. And here we need to stand, and having done all to stand. Stand, therefore, having on the whole armour of God. (See Eph. vi. 10–18.) In this war it will not do to have one part of the armour of God wanting. Do you see this, and have you got it on ?

And when the queen saw his “cup bearers,” or butlers. (Margin.) There are many butlers of Sàtan dressed up as angels of light. See their description in 2 Corinthians xi. 13–15: false apostles, deceitful workers, &c. Beware of these for they are legion in our day. But have you seen the butlers of Christ ? He says of them, “Peace unto you ; as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.” (John xx. 21.) What a cup-bearer, to bear the message of salvation to a lost and guilty world. Have you seen the butlers of Christ ? Are you quite sure you know them from the butlers of Satan ? What did she see more ? Ah, that which surpassed all beside.

When the queen saw “his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord, there was

no more spirit in her." Have you seen the ascent by which the heavenly Solomon has gone up above all heavens? "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." When as man "he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men." "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens that he might fill all things." See that once humbled, hated, crucified Jesus, now crowned with glory: seated at the right hand of the majesty on high. If you see that man in the glory, you will see it is all over with the first man. "There was no more spirit in her." Now what was the glory of Solomon compared with the glory of Christ?

Do you see the risen Christ? Now is the stripping time. Now you may give all to Him. She did not give a threepenny piece: but let her tell her story first. "And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts, and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard." No doubt this is a vivid picture of the remnant of Israel when they shall come from the ends of the earth, and of their glad surprise at the glories of their Messiah; or of

the untold ecstasy and surprise of the church, when taken to meet, and for ever be with the Lord.

But does it not describe the surprise and joy of many a weary child of God now? They heard the report when far off in Christendom, of the presence of the Lord, and the blessedness of the few really gathered to sit beneath His shadow. They were everywhere, and by everybody spoken against; still they heard the report. There was a report of the person of the true Solomon, and they came, and what have they found? Let us compare the report and the reality as illustrated by this beautiful history of the Queen of Sheba.



“HOW THEN CAN MAN BE JUSTIFIED WITH GOD?”

THIS is the great question still for many a soul. How can man be justified with God? There is not so much difficulty as to how a man can be justified with men, or before men. That must be by works—what men can *see*, as is very fully brought out in the epistle of James. But how to be righteous before God, that is a very different matter, and that was Bildad the Shuhite's difficulty.

This question is illustrated by the history of a remarkable man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job. This man was the most religious man on the earth at that time. “And that man was

perfect [or sincere] and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil." "And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?" Had he lived in the days of the law, he might have said with Saul, "Touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless." Before men and in his own eyes, he was the fairest specimen of man in the flesh on record. Surely it was for our instruction, that this man was allowed to be so severely tested by Satan. Patiently he bore much, enough, we might say, to crush any man: Loss of children, and all his property. Then smitten with a loathsome disease. Then harassed by his wife; and lastly by his three friends. They do their utmost to prove that God is against him, because of his wickedness. And the verses we have read, are amongst their last words. "How then can man be justified with God?" Job is now in great distress and perplexity, and the gloomy thought took hold of him that God must be against him: he says: "As God liveth, who hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty who hath vexed my soul: My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit. . . . My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live." (Job xxvii. 2-6.)

Now if you would see how a truly upright religious man would struggle to hold fast his own righteousness, read chapters xxvi. to the end of xxxi. All this time he was suffering from a most loathsome disease, like leprosy—a most striking figure of sin in the flesh, the loathsome condition of the old man. To a man born of God, an upright sincere man, nothing could be more loathsome.

You may go on for years, and never know, or even suspect that you have a nature so utterly vile. You say, I have given my heart to God, and see how useful I have been to others in the Sunday school, or the pulpit; how I have been respected and looked up to by my fellow professors. But now to find that I have a nature worse than a beast. The thing I feared has touched me. What awful thoughts of God. Is He, must He not be against me? What darkness, what doubt! When I think of my present state, what *I am*, I say surely God is against me; yet all the while struggling desperately to hold fast my own righteousness.

Still this awful, sinful flesh! Now you know it, once you did not. Now you groan, "Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me. When his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness; as I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my

tabernacle," &c. (Job xxix. 2-4.) Did you ever say, "Oh that it was with me as when I was first converted"? Job tried to remember everything that he had done that would give him comfort—and at last in desperation he says, "Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley. The words of Job are ended." (Job xxxi. 40.) It is quite clear Job had not yet learned, How man can be justified with God. It is further manifest that his three friends could not tell him.

It may be just so with the reader. And if looking for the solution in your own experience, however sincere and upright before men, however devoted in doing good to your fellows, as Job was; yet you say, It is not with you as it once was. You cannot clearly understand how you can be justified, reckoned righteous, before God; and none of your friends can help you. Such is the case so long as we are occupied with ourselves. And the more sincere and upright we are—the more earnestly we desire to be righteous before God, the more miserable we are, and the poor wearied soul is ready to say, I can do and say no more. The words of Job are ended. Yes, this is man's, Job's, extremity. It may be yours. Thank God if it is. Can you say another word for *yourself*? Do you say, How can you describe my experience like this? Nay, God has described it in this book of Job.

If any man could be justified before God by

works, was not dear old Job that man? You and I, dear reader, are not fit to hold the candle to Job; but after five chapters of determined effort to justify himself, he is done. And so are we if we spend fifty years to do the same thing. You notice every word was about what he had been, what he had done; and what he had not done. Is it so with you? Then on that ground you never can understand how man, ungodly sinner as he is, can be justified with God.

We now come to the explanation. Another person appears on the scene—Elihu—(My God Himself). Yes, God will be His own interpreter. He will make it all plain to you. Elihu is angry with Job, “because he justified himself rather than God.” (Job xxxii.) He was also angry with Job’s friends, “because they found no answer, and yet had condemned Job.” God does not want to condemn us, but to justify us; but the question is, how is this to be done? One thing is very remarkable and little understood to this day after thousands of years, that to struggle as Job did to be justified by our works, and doings, is to strive against God—to make our righteousness to be more than God’s righteousness.

Elihu says, “Surely thou hast spoken in mine hearing, and I have heard the voice of thy words saying: I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me. Behold, he findeth occasions against me, he counteth

me for his enemy; he putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths. Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man. *Why dost thou strive against him?*" Is it possible for a religious man to strive against God by thus seeking to attain to justification by his works? And the most terrible thing is, that a man may be so deceived as to say he is without sin, that he has not sinned for years. And all this is found to be striving against God. And the man may be sincere all the time, as sincere as Saul of Tarsus, or Job of old, or as the Jews when they cried, "Crucify him."

You may ask, How is it when I have spent a religious life in seeking to do good, that I find no rest or peace to my soul or body? I am so troubled, because of the chastening hand of God. I lose my sleep, and lose my appetite, and seem ready to die in despair. All this is exactly described in chapter xxxiii. 14-22. And in it all God has a gracious purpose of love "That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. He keepeth back his soul from the pit." What can be the meaning of all this? Ah, God has sent One from heaven to explain it all.

"If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness; then he is gracious unto him

and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I HAVE FOUND A RANSOM." It is very humbling to think amongst those that profess to be the messengers of God, and teachers, it is most probable that you will be deceived. But there is a Friend that never deceives. Now where is the point of uprightness where God thus can meet a soul that takes the place of self-judgment? "He looketh upon men; and if any say, I HAVE SINNED, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; he will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light. Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living." The meeting-point then is, first, on God's part: "I have found a ransom." Secondly, on man's part: "I have sinned." The order is most remarkable. It is the grace of God that bringeth salvation. When God reveals Himself in having found a ransom, having provided an atoning Lamb—when thus revealed to the soul, the effect is that man can say, (in the original it is "he sings"), I have sinned; but God hath redeemed me, delivered my soul from going down into the pit. This is the only true meeting-point between God and man. It is not, I have given up my sins, or I am better than others, or I am righteous, clean without transgression, or without sin. How

many, like Job, try to meet God on that ground, or in that way.

Has the one Interpreter met you and led you honestly, and in deep reality, to come to God just as the prodigal with "I have sinned"? God says first, "Deliver him from going down into the pit, I have found a ransom." "If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

How beautifully the new creation is shadowed forth in the words of Elihu: "His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth: he shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him; and *he shall see his face with joy.*" Oh, mark the sure result of thus meeting God in truth: "I have sinned." The prodigal saw his Father's face with joy—and so shall we, for God hath found a ransom. Not only delivered us from going down to the pit; but we shall see His face with joy. Yes, and the Father saw the face of His lost one with joy. And oh, the joy of God when He shall see the face of His ransomed one in glory. Poor weary soul, long hast thou sought in vain to meet God in thine own righteousness: thou canst only meet Him in the full confession of thy sins before Him. "Hold thy peace, and I will speak. If thou hast anything to say, answer me: speak, for I desire to justify thee."

Did not Cain say, as it were, I am righteous;

here I bring the fruits of the earth, results of my labour? Did not Job say, "I am righteous? Every thought centred in himself—what he was, or what he had been. Is not this the human heart? Oh, how many thousands around us are seeking to be righteous, and to establish their own righteousness before God, like Job. What is so tenacious as self-righteousness? Job did not give in, and change his mind yet. Many a religious reader may not give in, and give up all hope of being better and more fit for God, and thus take the counsel of the Interpreter, and come at once with those three words, "I have sinned." Oh how ready God is to meet us! Oh, my soul, think how God found, provided, sent the ransom first. Yes, He gave His only begotten Son—the holy, holy, holy One. He who dwells in the bosom of the Father; He who created this vast universe, was given a ransom for me, a poor, vile sinner! And how long did I spurn the proclaimed redemption, by seeking to work out a righteousness of my own, like Job?

How long have we said, like Job, "My righteousness is more than God's"? (Job xxxv. 2.) Surely, you say, I never said or thought that. God's righteousness is unto all through the death of the ransom. But have you not made more of your own doings, or feelings, and works? Have you not thought much more about these, about your righteousness, than God's? Have you, or

can you, find peace in that way? Never. Did Job find peace by being thus occupied with himself? No: it is a hard struggle to give up self. Hard for Job, and hard for you. Very striking, and most true, the teaching or preaching of Elihu: but still Job was not brought to the end of Job. You, too, may have met the "one in a thousand" of Teachers among men: and still you may not have come to the end of yourself. What had to be done in Job's case. We will next inquire. It may be blest to you.



THE FIRST YEARS OF CHRISTIANITY.

IV.

THAT WHICH WAS FROM THE BEGINNING.

IN departing from this world, how tender Christ's care and love for the church. He says, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter [or one who shall take the entire charge of you], that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. . . . But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." The world, not knowing the Spirit,

may appoint its emperors, kings, queens, and its high dignitaries, to take the place of head and caretaker of a church. But our blessed Lord named none of these. No, the world would persecute His church, or those who were His. In the world they should have tribulation, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me : and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." (John xiv., xv.)

And still more fully, instead of setting up the long-promised kingdom on earth, He says, "I tell you the truth ; it is expedient for you that I go away ; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." Then He fully describes His work.

His presence will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: "of sin, because they believe not on me." There needs no further trial of man ; the world has rejected and killed the Prince of Life. It is proved and concluded under sin.

"Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more." If the world is proved under sin, there is righteousness in heaven. The righteous Father hath received His Son.

"Of judgment, because the prince of this

world is judged." This world's very prince and god is judged. Execution then of judgment is sure to him, and all that are his, though God's long-suffering tarries still.

Now mark the work of the Spirit during the absence of Christ. "Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." Such is the infinite provision Jesus promised before He departed from them: for the whole period of His absence. We shall see shortly how all was fulfilled. He then opens His heart to them, and tells them of His departure. (John xvi.)

Surely He felt His rejection; did He not weep over Jerusalem? Though just about to be cut off, and have nothing of His earthly kingdom and glory, He could now lift up His eyes to heaven and say, "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." Though He well knew the extent of the world's rejection, yet His tender heart felt its deep joy in those whom the Father gave to Him. How much He gives them, how much He asks for them! Seven times He names to the Father those whom the Father had given to Him, and all on the ground of His finished work. Yes,

this was His full blessed title, as man, He had finished the work which was given Him to do. "And now, O Father, glorify thou me, with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Yes, in the beginning, in eternity, however many myriads of ages this world may have been hung upon nothing, and rolled in space—yet, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was WITH God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning WITH God." Truly God; He WAS GOD: distinct in Person, WITH GOD; in eternity, the eternal now. Yes, immediately before He crossed the brook Cedron to offer Himself the infinite sacrifice for sins, He could thus look up to heaven, though rejected and cut off on earth, with the righteous claim as man to be WITH God, as He had been with Him in eternity. Could any created being claim such a place? This scripture, with many others, affords absolute proof that He was very God, and truly man.

Now see Him humbling Himself, and voluntarily giving Himself up into the hands of sinful men. All power in heaven and on earth was in His hands. They were made to feel it and fall to the ground. But He who made all things, gave Himself to be bound, to be mocked, to be scourged, to be crucified. A robber was preferred to Him in whom was no fault. The wicked representative of Gentile power was compelled

to say, as judge, "I find no fault in him." He was made a curse, hanging on the accursed tree, for the very people that gnashed their teeth with rage as they watched Him die.

It was in the end of the ages, every age of the trial of man, that He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. (Heb. ix. 26.) Then "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever [or in continuance] sat down on the right hand of God . . . for by one offering he hath perfected for ever [in continuance] them that are sanctified." "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." (1 Peter ii. 24 ; iii. 18.) All scripture from Genesis to Revelation bears witness to the true propitiation, the bearing and meeting the wrath of God against sin, and the true substitution of Christ for His people's sins. We need no learned and profane theory of the atonement, but with adoring hearts worship God for His great love to us in thus giving His Son to be lifted up. It is only on that cross we learn what our sin really is in the sight of God. Blessed Jesus ! it was for me Thou sufferedst thus.

"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 scrip-

tures." (1 Cor. xv. 1-15.) We shall see more of this when we come to the faith held in the beginning.

Christ died for our sins, and was buried. But then all appeared to be lost. The disciples were filled with sadness. They had looked for very different things, even the redemption of Israel from the Roman yoke. The only righteous One was laid in the grave—the end of all hope for man as a child of Adam—the end of man. The only righteous Man had died the accursed death of the cross, and was laid dead in the grave. Now just suppose this were all, then every ray of hope is extinguished. All is under death and judgment. If Christ is not risen there is no hope, and no good news possible for man. That high-day sabbath, when Jesus lay dead in the grave, was the end of Judaism, with all its sacrifices and temple service. The veil was rent; what a change!

How blessed to dwell on that resurrection morn, that first Lord's day, the first day of the week. If we may use such words, one eternity ended when He lay in the grave, the other began when He rose from the dead. Judaism was left desolate—the new creation began. Who can tell the exceeding greatness of the power of God to usward, when He raised Jesus from the dead? (See Eph. i. 19-23.) The consequences to us of that resurrection are infinite and eternal.

We cannot but linger over the results of His resurrection, even before we go on to the forming of the church or assembly of Christ. "For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise from the dead." Very blessed the instruction, whether in reference to the future kingdom as in Matthew and Mark, or as preparatory to the formation of the church as in Luke xxiv. and John xx. What a change, and the disciples knew it not. There was the proof that He had risen from the dead; but the disciples, even Peter and John, went away to their own home.

Not so Mary Magdalene. She had already been delivered from great misery; for seven demons had been cast out of her. She has little intelligence; indeed, she seems to think He is still dead. But she lingers at the sepulchre as if He were gone: she had nothing left. There she lingered, her heart deeply attached to Jesus. And is the tender love of Jesus changed to His sheep now He is risen from the dead? He is close to the weeper, and asks, "Woman, why weepest thou? She supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus said [one word], Mary." O what a thrill of joy to that desolate heart! "She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master." He was, how-

ever, no more to be held or known as Messiah. "Touch me not." He must go to the Father to receive the kingdom and return. He sends her with the joyful news of Christianity begun.

"Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." He had wrought redemption. They were no longer merely Jewish disciples, but for the first time He calls them His brethren. They were in the same relation to His Father and God in which He stood Himself—one with Him in resurrection. These were their true christian privileges, the true standing now of every believer, whether he knows it or not, for they knew it not. At that moment they had very sad hearts. Mary came and told the glad news. They were gathered together the same day at evening. They did not yet form the church, but they were the persons, and were together a striking figure of the church, as we shall soon see.

Being together, the doors being shut for fear of the Jews, "came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." What a picture of the assembly, as Jesus had said, "For where two or three are gathered together to my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. xviii. 20.) He had made peace by the blood of the cross—peace now flowed to them from the heart of God, from the lips of Jesus.

Let us not forget this, the first word of resurrection, "Peace." This characterises Christianity—peace with God, through the finished work of Christ. "He shewed unto them his hands and his side." "It is finished," He had said, and died. "Peace unto you." He is risen from the dead. "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." There could be no question as to whether it was the same Jesus. His hands and His side proved that. If we know how much was involved in His resurrection, surely we may well be glad also. Oh blessed beginning of Christianity! First words of the risen Saviour, "Peace be unto you." Still He speaks. Do you hear Him? Do you believe Him? Are you glad?

But mark, He speaks again. "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." As His missionaries, His servants sent forth, the very first qualification is "Peace." This is a true mark of one sent of Christ, "Peace"—the peace of God, even as Jesus served and suffered in perfect peace, peace with God, and the peace of God. Thousands of ministers made by men are strangers to "peace;" but no man is a true minister of Christ without it. And as the new creation had now begun, "he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Another qualification in order to go and proclaim the forgiveness of sins.



CORRESPONDENCE.

10. W. J., Bangor. There is no direct scripture, that we are aware of, for the thought that the millennium will take place at the end of the 6,000 years from Adam. The seventh-day, sabbath, or rest, seems to indicate this, and has given rise to the common thought that it will be so. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (2 Pet. iii. 8.) This, however, it may be, has nothing to say to the coming of Christ to take the church, as that is a distinct matter. A literal statement to the effect that the millennium would come at the end of 6,000 years, and the judgment that introduces it at the appearing of Christ, as judge, would have of course determined the time, and thus contradicted the Lord's words, Matthew xxiv. 42, "Watch therefore, for ye know not the hour your Lord doth come."

In like manner if the Lord had said there will be seven successive stages of the church's history, and then cometh the end, that would have taken away the waiting expectation of the early church. Yet *now* we perceive that though the addresses to the seven assemblies in Asia, had a literal application to them as they existed, they had also a most instructive voice to the churches during the seven successive stages of the history of Christendom. No intelligent student of scripture doubts this.

Matthew xxiv. refers *mainly* to the Jews, see verses 15-31, but ver. 32 to the end, has a solemn voice to Christendom. Is it not a mistake to say, that the Book of Revelation was written

only to the churches, and, therefore, of what use are the signs of Matthew xxiv. and the Book of Revelation, if the church has nothing to do with signs? That which applies specially to the churches in Revelation is chapters ii., iii., and in those chapters there are no signs. The church is in heaven before a seal is broken, or a sign given. Thus the signs of Matthew xxiv. and Revelation have reference to God's dealings with His people Israel, and the earth.

As to the seals, the trumpets, and bowls, they are successional, one after another, just as the seven addresses to the churches. Three sets of successional stages of judgments on this earth, after the church is gone. The seventh seal introduces the seven trumpets, and the seventh trumpet brings in the final result. (Chap. xi. 15.) The seven events of chapter xiv., and the seven vials, or bowls of chapter xvi., are distinct in character. There is no reference in the seals, and the trumpets, to the last days of Daniel: unless it be the seventh trumpet, in chapter xi. as the last days or dates of Daniel are there named—that is Jewish history properly begins in chapter xi. 3. These and the dates of chapters xii., xiii., as the events shew, do not belong to the present period of Christendom. God has been pleased to make known to us the things that will take place after we are gone. We must, however, remember that the Revelation is to His servants. (Chap. i. 1–3.)

11. B. H., Grimsby. The women were to be silent in the assembly. "Let your women keep silence in the assemblies: for it is not permitted unto them to speak. . . . for it is a shame for women to speak in the assembly." (1 Cor. xiv.

34, 35.) It is evident, then, that to pray, or prophesy with uncovered head, does not refer to the assembly; but to that modesty that becometh women at all times. The order is this: The head of the woman is the man; the head of man is Christ; the head of Christ is God. The woman is in subjection to man, as Christ, as man, was subject to God the Father in all things. No doubt, the god of this world is leading the universal rebellion against God and His word. The angels look on. For this cause the woman ought to have covering on her head, as a sign of her subjection to man.

God has marked the distinction in the difference of the long hair of the woman, as a veil or covering. The woman, being in rebellion against God, tries to please Satan's fashion, in altering this, even if it makes her look frightful, and without shame. Read carefully 1 Corinthians xi. 3-15. Could anything be more unseemly, or more contrary to God's word, than for a woman to stand up and preach to men in the streets, and then beg for money as a reward for such a breach of the commands of Christ? For immediately after forbidding women to speak in the assemblies, the apostle says, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." (1 Cor. xiv. 34-37.) Thus to deliberately disobey the commandments of Christ the Lord, is rebellion against Him. These are serious questions for this day; but the path of the Christian who loves the word of God is plain enough.



“HOW THEN CAN MAN BE JUSTIFIED WITH GOD?”

II.

AFTER the speech of Elihu, Job had to have personal dealings with God. “Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.” This is a serious matter, to have to do with God alone. Job had said his words were ended. Not so. What is his answer to God—to all the demands of God? What is your answer? What is mine? If we get before God in His majesty and glory, and hear His demands on us as creatures of His hand, how have we answered those demands? What then was Job’s answer?

“Then Job answered the Lord and said, Behold I am vile: what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea twice; yet I will proceed no further.” Oh what amazement of soul, the true sense of the vileness of sin puts a man into. You may have felt this amazement; you may have said with Job, I will proceed no further: he did go much further, and so may you.

Before we look at God's answer to Job, let us recall Elihu's interpretation of the grace of God. When man is seen in self-judgment and deep distress (chap. xxxiii. 17-28), then God is gracious to him. Does the reader know what real soul distress is? Is it after weary years of seeking to attain to righteousness by the law, or still more earnest seeking to attain to a sinless state of perfection? and after all to be only able to say truthfully, "I am vile." Yes, and that sense of vileness is overwhelming.

Do you notice Job is only occupied with himself, "I am vile"? Elihu had said that God was gracious; that God had said, "Deliver that poor wretched man from going down to the pit; I have found an atonement." Elihu had brought out what God is. This was the glad tidings. But Job had not seen this yet. Have you?

Let us then fix our thoughts on this revelation of God—God, who knows all our vileness, and wretchedness, and all we have done. Here is a fact, God is gracious. How far has He shewn that free favour? He has decided to deliver the poor sin-burdened soul from going down into the pit. Man deserves to go into the pit—you, I—ah, most truly—but God says, "Deliver him from going down to the pit." Oh, what a fact! What a God of grace! But how shall the sinner be delivered from going down to deserved darkness and everlasting despair? Blessed reply of

God to that question. "I have found a ransom"—an atonement.

Mark, the righteousness of God is in this very thing. He has found an atonement. God has provided Himself a Lamb. He has sent the Lamb of God. All is of God. And the love of God, the free grace of God, is first. The very character of God shines out in this: as it is written, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "Christ died for the ungodly." "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Yes, God's judgment of our need and lost condition was shadowed forth in this most ancient book of Job. The only true interpretation of how man can be justified before God is this, the pure grace of God come down to deliver the hell-deserving sinner from going down into the pit; and He says, "I have found a ransom."

Job does not yet understand: he is still occupied with vile Job—the vile Job that longs to be righteous. He says, "Behold, I am vile: what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I

will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further."

Dear old Job! The knowledge of what you are will never save you—never enable you to see you are justified from all things. Whilst we are occupied even with our vileness, we have not submitted to the judgment of God—the righteousness of God. As yet, Job's eyes seem fast closed as to what God is to the ungodly sinner. Are your eyes open to what God is in grace to you? When your eyes are open to what God is, you will very likely see your deepest sin is in rejecting the grace of God, and the infinite provision He has found for you in the atoning death of Christ. As God says to Job, "Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?" (Job xl. 8.) Can Job meet this demand of God? Can we meet it?

You may say, Oh that I could be better by sacraments, and fastings; by prayers; by punishing my body; by holy days; by good works; by sinless purity; by vows and pledges; by sorrow for sin; by keeping the law of God: but after all, I am vile. Now, poor striving Job, if you could possibly be justified before God, by all these, would it not disannul the judgment of God? He judged far otherwise. He says to all such, "Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?" Oh,

that the Romanist, the Ritualist, nay, that man in his blind pursuit of righteousness by works, might just see how he strives against God; how he condemns God, that he might by all these, or any other means, be righteous.

But, you say, Must we not say, "I am vile"? Surely; but you may say that, and all the while have a secret hope that *you* will be better and more fit for God. Self can never be really given up, until God is known in Christ, the Justifier of the ungodly. You say, Hold! that is dangerous doctrine. HOW CAN GOD DO THAT, and maintain His own righteousness? Ah, Job, you must now learn that God can do everything. You ought to have learnt this from Elihu, but you did not.

God now shews Job his utter helplessness, even by the things of creation. He brings before him a few of the works of His own hands. Light now breaks in upon Job. (Chap. xlii.) He turns to God; it is now what God is: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." He had said, "I know that thou canst do everything." He now sees God. All is perfectly clear. He changes his mind, in dust and ashes. Now, Job, how can man be justified with God? God can do it. I see God: He has done it; He has found a ransom. Then your mind is entirely

changed about God. Entirely changed; I repent.

Now, Job, further; what about Job? What is old Job now? Dust and ashes. What do you mean? I mean that old Job is dead. I abhor him; dust and ashes to him. I have no further hope or need in him. All is new. "And it was so."

Elihu had said, "Then he [God] is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom. His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth; he shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him; and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness." "And it was so." I see it now, says Job: "Now mine eye seeth thee." God is seen first, then Job repents. This is the true order. Beautifully, now, is resurrection shadowed forth. Job has far more in the new place than he had lost in the old.

The revelation of God in grace and righteousness, produces true repentance. What deep self-judgment! "Now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." No longer the cry, "Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me," &c. There was, then, the earnest desire that he might be righteous, so that God

could shine upon him, because of his own righteousness. Every effort after such a thing is now gone, and seen to be rebellion against God. Man cannot look at himself and at God at the same time. Whilst Job looked at himself, he did not apprehend the favour of God in providing a ransom.

Must it not be so with us? Whilst we are seeking to attain to righteousness by works, we neither know God nor the value of that atonement which He has found and provided.

How then can man be justified with God—with God in righteousness? Man is a sinner, guilty before God: how then can he be accounted righteous? The book of Job proves that by works this is impossible. As we have seen, Job was the most religious man on earth. There was none like him; upright and sincere before God and man: when he was tried he was found to maintain his own righteousness; yea, he made the most desperate efforts to maintain that he was righteous, exactly like Israel in an after day. He was completely ignorant of God's righteousness; and when that righteousness was put before him by Elihu, he did not understand it. God revealed to him "a ransom," but he did not understand God or the ransom God had provided, until light broke into his soul, and then he saw it all, and repented, entirely changed his mind, abhorring himself in dust and ashes.

How is it with the reader? You may not have sought to be justified by works, as Job did. Indeed, careless indifference rather marks this Laodicean period in which we live. Still, the question has forced itself on you, *How then* can man, can I, be justified with God? It is quite true that you have failed to satisfy your conscience; yet, you have tried a little, a very little, to be religious, far behind Job in that race. You hope to be more in earnest yet; you do not think of going down to hell; you never intend to lift up your eyes there in torment; you intend to turn over a fresh leaf; you hope to be truly religious. But if Job's race was striving against God, what is yours, or what will it be? Job had never seen or understood "the gift of righteousness." (Rom. v. 17.) No, as we have said, he was just like Israel when they were put under law. "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. (Rom. x. 3.) Read that verse again. Does it not exactly describe Job of old? Do you know any other Jobs? Is it not an exact picture of Christendom? It may be of your very self.

At all events it is a striking fact, that man, as Job, before the law was given, to convince man of his sin—yes, even back to the first man born of a woman—then Israel under the law—and now,

Christendom for centuries—the universal state of man is described in this, the oldest of books. Yes, it is the universal ignorance of the righteousness of God, and man striving against God to maintain his own righteousness, and condemn God; and also, we may say, how wonderfully in those early days, how clearly the glad tidings were announced, how God has met the question, How then can man be justified with God? Has this question been fully revealed? Let us turn to the New Testament and see.



THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

II.

1 KINGS X.

WE must not forget that the queen came not only to Jerusalem, but she came to Solomon to prove him. The great mistake that so many make in this day is this, they come to the place, to Jerusalem, so to speak; and they come to the servants of Solomon, but not to Solomon. Such are sure to be, in the end, disappointed.

In themselves the servants of Solomon may have been no better than other men, but she did not come to them. She saw Solomon; and she saw every thing and every body in relation to Solomon. Let us only do likewise. Take the Lord's Table. What is it without the presence

of Christ the Lord? To the natural man it is so unmeaning that he would not have the least interest in it; he would not care to be present. Hence, to suit his taste he has turned it into a gorgeous idolatrous Mass, or he must have a priest to administer a sacrament!

But take it just as we see it in the scripture. The disciples of Christ gathered together to break bread and drink wine, sitting in His presence. There was no priest over the rest, and no minister to administer a sacrament. The disciples, as such, came to break bread. If a servant of the Lord Jesus was there, he might teach the gathered disciples. (See Acts xx.) But it was an act of communion with the Lord. As the queen of Sheba came to the place, and to commune with the person of Solomon, so the disciples came to the place to commune with the Lord, the True Solomon. (Compare 1 Cor. x. 16, 17; xi. 23-32.) And let us remember the words of Jesus: "For where two or three are gathered together to my name, there am I in the midst of them." How few believe this; how few now really come to Him, as the queen came to Solomon! Many, as we have said, may come to the disciples thus gathered, and never see Solomon. They will soon see defects in the gathered disciples, and on the first occasion turn aside, and soon will be found again in the world, and its various systems, or worse.

But all this does not, for a moment, alter the fact of the unspeakable blessedness of those who have come from afar to see Solomon. We may not know exactly how far she had come, perhaps 2000 miles; and men little think how far they are from the blessed reality of being simply and truly gathered to Christ. Let us take such a case; and here we would speak experimentally. You hear that in a certain place there are a few Christians gathered to break bread. You come from afar to see *them* do so. Nothing can appear more weak and foolish. They have no music, no grand building, no printed prayers to repeat time after time. As to place, it is perhaps a large room in a house, or over a stable. No visible priest to intercede for the rest, and no minister to preside over the others. Are these a company of imbeciles, or what can it mean? If you are not a Christian, you will take your hat and be off to scenes more in keeping with modern thought; you will say, There is nothing here for me.

Let us now suppose you are a Christian. You are weary and sick of what is called the Christian world. Like the queen of Sheba you long to commune with the true Solomon. You do not take your hat, but you take your seat. At first you also are greatly perplexed. You recognise that this is really like what you have read of in scripture, just like it. Yet you have never seen

anything like it on earth. But your heart longs for Christ, and you find there is nothing here but Christ. Your eyes are opened to see Solomon. Christ is revealed to your spiritual gaze. Yes, you see Him present to faith. You commune with Him. And you declare "It was a true report that I heard . . . Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen; and behold, the half was not told me." You can now truly say, "Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom." Every word is true of such as are truly gathered to Christ, whether as assemblies or individuals gathered to Him. There is no real happiness to be compared to this. Or, as a servant of the Lord used by the Holy Ghost, there is no ministry so blessed. If once enjoyed, no other humanly appointed minister can be trusted. We say this, after long years of experience, and where once truly known, it is continuous.

She said further, "Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel; because the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice." This is a faint picture of the delight of the Father in the Son, raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name," how-

ever despised of men at present. Is it a light thing to be in the presence of Him in whom is all the Father's delight? If God set Solomon on the throne of Israel, has He not set Christ as Head of the church, "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion"? (See Eph. i. 21-23.) How strange that men, even such as profess to be Christians, should put a man, and often a wicked man, in the place of Christ; and would utterly despise a little company truly gathered to Christ, as the whole church was in the beginning.

But you may say, Think what I should have to give up, if I were thus to honour Christ, as the queen of Sheba honoured Solomon. I begin to see I should have to give all up. Thus some draw back and continue no more. Ah, how many have done so, and gone back to a modern Christendom, filled to overflowing with superstition, and modern thought, or in other words infidelity. You love your property; you love your world; and you say, He who died for me is not worthy that I should really give anything up for Him. Will not the queen of Sheba rise up in judgment against you also? Does she not even now condemn you?

"And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold." Over five tons of gold. In value more than £600,000; or, at present purchasing value, three times that amount.

“And of spices very great store, and precious stones.” And is not our Solomon worthy of all we have and are? Remember, we may give for the various religious schemes of men, and if we examined those schemes, we might find them utterly contrary to the word of God and this period of our Solomon’s rejection. Did you ever give a shilling to Christ? Did you ever give it to a member of His body, simply and only because he was a member of the body of Christ, knowing that what you did to him you did to Christ?

Mark, she came straight to Solomon. She gave all to him. “There came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon.”

Surely we may say, “Awake, O north wind; and come thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.” (Cant. iv. 16.) How we do forget the love of the Bridegroom to the bride. It is sad to disappoint our Eternal Lover. Sweet to Him are the gifts of love. He wants no servile gifts, He asks no legal works from the church He loves. It is as the bride giveth to her Beloved; and, in return, the Bridegroom to the bride. And thus it was in the scene before us.

“And king Solomon gave unto the queen of

Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants." Oh, how she would display the riches and glories of Solomon in her own country! How she would tell of his wisdom, and all she had seen! How she would value and declare all his priceless gifts!

Soon we shall be with Him in His country, in the place prepared. Then the eternal joy of His blessed presence! presented to Himself unblameable in holiness, where all is suited in perfect correspondence with Himself. With Him, like Him, evermore. Oh the height, the depth, the breadth, the length! The happy companions of Him to whom every knee shall bow—King of kings and Lord of lords. There is our home, our everlasting abode.

But for the present, our privilege is like the queen of Sheba to come into His presence, even wherever two or three are gathered to His blessed name. There He is. Yes, we come to Himself, not to His servants; not to doctrines, or forms of church government; but direct to Himself, to commune with Him, to worship Him, to lay all at His blest feet; and to have every desire of our heart fully answered in Him. And then, after we have thus assembled together, we have individually, or with our households, to return, for the time being, to our

own country ; for we are still in the midst of our own country, and race. We have been with our Solomon ; we have received all that the new nature can desire. Oh how few understand these things !

The queen of Sheba would never cease to tell of the glory of Solomon. What have we to tell of the glory, and wisdom, and riches of our Solomon ? For where two or three are gathered to Christ, a greater than Solomon is there. Do your neighbours know you have been to see your Solomon ? Oh, Lord, grant that we may tell out the glories of our Solomon. If we have seen Him, there will be no more spirit in us : nothing of ourselves worth telling. No longer I, but Christ. If her Majesty the Queen were to come to a little town, and invite the inhabitants to meet her in the assembly room ; how long would it take before the whole town knew the time and the place ? How many would wish to be five minutes too late ? Might you not go into many a town, and could not possibly find the place, where the Lord of Glory meets His redeemed ones gathered in assembly to Him, to His name ? If a Christian, is that place, is His presence nothing to you ? Is HE nothing to you ? The Lord awake His church ! As it is written, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee." (Eph. iv. 14, literal translation.)

Yes, we need awaking; we need to arise from among the dead; we need the full shining of Christ upon us, and then we shall declare, one half had not been told us.

C. S.



WORDS OF JESUS AS TO ETERNAL LIFE

“Thou hast the words of eternal life.

(JOHN VI. 68.)

WE propose to examine the words of Jesus Himself, in this short paper on the deeply interesting subject of eternal life.

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” (John iii. 14, 15.) In the outset, then, it is something far beyond believing on Him as a prophet because of His miracles; or believing in the coming kingdom; or as the Messiah. The very deepest aspect of atonement is here implied, His being lifted up, as the serpent was in the wilderness. His atonement, to be lifted up, was absolutely necessary.

But then in all this it was the very thought and purpose of God, that the believer should not perish, but have eternal life. “For God so loved the world [not merely Israel] that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

What words of Jesus! What a revelation of God! Dwell on them, oh my soul. How often repeated is that blessed truth, "He that believeth on the Son HATH eternal life." (John iii. 36.) This is not mere continuity of existence. The unbeliever clearly has that in the same verse. "And he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." He never knows or sees the eternal life in the Son; but he will continue to exist, or the wrath of God could not abide on him.

Eternal life then is the eternal Son. "In him was life;" eternal, self-existent.

We will now look at those words of Jesus in John v. 24. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me hath eternal life, and shall not come into judgment; but is passed from death unto life." Now it is remarkable, that these words of Jesus were spoken to His very enemies. To such as sought to slay Him; yes, to those that *sought* to kill Him. (Vers. 16, 18.)

The occasion was remarkable. The impotent man had heard the words of Jesus, as to his poor infirm body, and was immediately made whole. That was not life to the dead, but healing for the infirm. Something far more wonderful than this would take place, to those who are dead—to man, as God sees him, dead in trespasses and sins. "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son

of God ; and they that hear shall live." And on the assurance of Christ, this life shall not be temporal, that which may cease, or exist for a time only, but eternal. This was beyond all Jewish ideas or thoughts, for they knew not the eternal One in their midst. But the fact, the result, of hearing the word of Jesus is as sure and immediate in one case as in the other. Thousands could bear witness, though they might not be able to explain it, that no sooner had they heard the word of Jesus speaking to them—that so soon as they believed God, that sent Him—immediately they had eternal life. And they rest in the certainty, that into judgment for sins, they can never come. That they are passed from death unto life. Yes, they have passed from the old to the new creation. Do you believe these words of Jesus ?

If you never have believed, remember these words were spoken to His greatest enemies, such as thirsted for His death : yea, to those who did not believe on Him. (Vers. 38-47.) Yes, they are the words of Jesus to unbelievers. Oh, what riches of grace !

Now we will look at the explanation of this subject in the words of Jesus, chapter vi.

As in chapter v., so here, a miracle is the occasion of all the teaching of Jesus on eternal life in chapter vi. Jesus had compassion on the great multitude faint in the mountain. He gave

them bread, and about 5,000 were filled. Jesus said, "Verily verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."

This brings out a very important question from the multitude: "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" This is the question of the multitude still, and oh, what answers men do give; but what is the answer of Jesus? "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." So far, then, the answer is most clear, it is faith, to believe on Jesus the sent one of the Father, just as in chapter iii. 16, 17; and chapter v. 24. And the miracle of the loaves serves for further illustration. They say, "Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat." Jesus continues the figure and says, "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."

How far beyond all human thought or Jewish hopes is this! The loaves they had eaten refreshed and satisfied for a time, but Jesus said, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh unto

me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." They did not understand Him. They had seen Him, but believed not. Their thoughts were carnal, and only dwelt on temporal things. Jesus spoke of that which is eternal. And of that life that would be fully manifested in resurrection. Again He repeats the all important truth: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath eternal life. I am that bread of life." They had eaten the loaves which He had given them. Their fathers had eaten the manna and were dead. He was about to give that which would not be for a time, but eternal life.

We now come to those words of Jesus which have been so strangely perverted for centuries. He presents Himself the living bread that came down from heaven. "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." The poor dark Jews thought in their ignorance, that He meant His literal flesh; but what He did mean was of such importance, that He presses them still more closely.

"Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, HATH ETERNAL LIFE; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat

indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him."

Now first a few words on the awful perversion of these words of Jesus. That which is called Christendom, nay, calls itself "the church," has sunk so low in superstition, as to suppose, that Jesus meant to teach by these words, a literal eating of human flesh, and drinking human blood. And a priesthood has been invented, which would make men believe that they have some mystic power to change bread, or wine, into the very flesh and blood of Jesus. And this bit of baked bread, they say, is God ; and it is worshipped by millions with the deepest idolatry. The highest dignitaries of this world fall down before it in adoration. And this delusion is held out as the salvation of dying men !

Now let us suppose that the priest had power to change the bread or wine into the very flesh of Jesus, true human flesh, and that a poor dying man could actually eat this human flesh before he dies, what would it profit him ? "Nothing." This is the reply of Jesus to these poor deceived men. Jesus said "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before ? It is the Spirit that quickeneth ; **THE FLESH PROFITETH NOTHING :** the WORDS that I speak unto you they are spirit and they are life."

Does not the Lord Jesus then say here that all who are trusting in masses, or sacraments, for eternal life, are deceived? For if even the priest could turn the bread into flesh, it would profit them nothing. Sacramental salvation then is all a delusion.

What then do these words of Jesus mean? "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." Most surely the whole teaching of scripture shews, that "his flesh" means His incarnation. The eternal Son of God. "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.) It is then he that believeth the great truth of the incarnation, God manifest in the flesh.

And there could be no doubt that the blood points to the atonement of Jesus, Son of man, on the cross. But why *eat* His flesh, and *drink* His blood? Because, that merely to assent to these great truths will not meet the case. One of the 5,000 might have believed, *that* was fish and *this* was bread, but would this have satisfied, and refreshed him for a time? Would this have filled him? Clearly not, he must eat. This is a very striking illustration. To merely say, I do not doubt that Jesus was the incarnate Son from heaven; I do not doubt He

made atonement for everybody on the cross ; nay, many do say so, and yet are not saved and have not eternal life. I must personally receive these two facts for my own life : eternal life. As Jeremiah says, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them ; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." (Jer. xv. 16.)

The great lesson then is that it is not the mere assent to these truths, or the believing in Jesus as a prophet, or as Messiah ; neither is it true that going to mass, or taking the sacrament will give eternal life ; but the receiving of Him who came down from heaven, became man that He might make full atonement for my sins believing His word as to this, in faith, and repentance, an entire change of mind. We are thus assured by His words, we have eternal life. Peter did not say, Thou hast the flesh of eternal life. May we, with Peter, say, "Lord to whom shall we go ? thou hast the WORDS of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ the Son of the living God."

C. S.

