

“WORDS OF TRUTH.”

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“THE ENTRANCE OF THY WORDS GIVETH LIGHT; IT GIVETH UNDERSTANDING
TO THE SIMPLE.—Ps. cxix. 130.

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WORDS OF TRUTH.

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WHAT IS GOD'S SALVATION?

LUKE ii.

"Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

I AM connected with a Saviour, then I am no longer connected with that which I am saved from. Simeon having seen Him, says, I can give up everything, I am done with everything, I have seen Thy salvation.

Everything here is contrary to God, His Son comes into the scene, and bears the judgment of the whole thing. If you accept His salvation, how can you cleave to that which is under judgment? If you do, you do violence to the salvation, or you lose the Saviour. The great feebleness in souls is, that they fail to apprehend what God has accomplished.

When Adam sins he must *die*, that is the judgment. But who can surmount *death*, not only to meet the judgment, but to rise out of it? If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, you are yet in your sins. But He is risen from among the dead, and now re-instates man eternally, and in every way according to the mind of God; an eternal, imperishable existence, a new creation. If you are saved from everything contrary to God; you are connected with everything that is according to God. If you are saved from a thing, and have to do with the Saviour, you must be apart from all that which you are saved from, and in the condition of the One who has saved you. Hence, the thief on the cross is told, "this day shalt thou be *with me* in Paradise."

Souls have a very imperfect idea of what they are saved *from*—hence the little practical link with what they are saved *to*. If I know the character of the thing I am saved from, I find myself in the condition of the Saviour. Peter

forsook all and followed Him. Simeon having seen Him, says, I can close my eyes to all else, everything else may go. Have you got Simeon's faith? Paul immediately conferred not with flesh and blood, people do so confer as if they were not saved from flesh and blood. Saints shrink from suffering and death, as if really they were not saved from it at all. Noah was saved from the flood. Did he want to be connected with the waters? Oh, no, he would say, I am shut into the ark—God has shut me in! Are souls shut into Christ thus, now? No—they have not an idea that the waters of judgment press around them. Have I then anything to do with them? Nothing, but to float over them! Peter says, you ought not to suffer for sin. (1 Peter iii.) If Christ died for all, then were all dead. And He died for all, that they which live, should not live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again. Do any of us live unto ourselves, or unto Him who died for us and rose again? Do you take it in that *that* is the salvation of God?

God has judicially dealt with man in the flesh. If I bring the flesh up, I do so illegally. *God* does not bring it up, does not treat with it or recognize it. The judgment now is, not that man fails to act according to God, but that he will not accept what God offers. Light has come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light; *this* is the judgment, therefore all judgment is committed unto the Son; and it is now a savour of death unto death, or of life unto life, there are only the two things. If saved from death, are you living in death? If you know you are delivered, the practical effect is to make your heart cleave to Christ; like Simeon you can abandon the whole thing, you are saved from it. Do you tell me it is no relief? Was it no relief to the thief on the cross to find himself connected with a Saviour, and severed eternally from all else? Oh, if you had but a moment's consciousness of being connected with Christ, *what* would induce you to return? But you do not feel that you yourself are under condemnation; you do not see that all here is contrary to God, and that God's Son has done all that His righteousness required. Every failure of man is repaired by the Son. Even the Church has failed as the vessel of testimony. Christ will yet display it in Himself as the full manifestation of its calling. It failed to be "the light," and He will be the "light thereof." (See Rev. xxi. 23.) What a relief to the soul! There will be

no forfeiture of the divine purpose and counsel. Again, Israel feeding on the lamb roast with fire, is not occupied with or connected with Egypt. It is one taken up with Christ—living by Him. The disciples of John when they saw Him, followed and abode with Him, left their own natural scene, and were connected with One outside it. Souls do not see what they are connected with. A new man in Christ Jesus, sustained by the power of Him who is above it all, you have taken the ground of being set free from all that God has judged. Would you like to come back to it again? Paul says, 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. In the glory he had got a sight of that salvation, and he counts all things but loss for it. What wonderful energy it would diffuse into your soul, to count all things but loss to win the Saviour—you have not realized the force of the action of God's grace, otherwise, you have not found out the excellency of Christ. Stephen got hold of it. His eyes behold the glory and Jesus, and enters on the scene where all is according to God. Is there a bit of link in your soul to Christ? Do you feel the door shut—that you are feeding on the paschal lamb, and satisfied to be there? or do you want to get both, and then you are unhappy and wretched—only saved *from* so much, only saved *to* so much; saved from Pharaoh, you would enjoy Egypt? Do you think Israel could say—the blood is there, I will walk about Egypt? or Noah, I will go out on the waters? Oh, no; if you see it, you will be glad to be shut in, to have the lamb to feed on, clad in all the excellency of Christ, entirely out of the old man, and entirely in the new. A new structure before God, and in the consciousness of your eternal portion in the Son.

Hence, the Lord's Supper is so happy. Saints showing forth in company, in the scene of judgment, that they are entirely separated from it by His death. You see a saint on his death-bed so happy. Why? because he is dropping everything but Christ. Why not do it now? Why be happy on your death-bed and not happy now? If true and happy in a moment of pressure for the soul to drop everything but Christ, why not true and happy for me now? This is why God is obliged to bring people through discipline. He must cut the links which connect them to a scene which He has set aside. Then you say, "I want to be shut in—I

see the great salvation." If you have accepted it, you are connected with the Saviour, and you are bound to accept it; otherwise, you have compromised the salvation of God. Do you know the blessedness of Christ? Have you proved the resources of His heart, that He is better than the husks? Have you associated your heart with the fulness of the everlasting God? Then He says, "follow me;" and your abode is with Him.

The Lord lead your souls to taste of this salvation, to see the blessed character of it, and to have to do with the One who has accomplished it; and who would connect you so entirely with Himself, that with joy and truth you may say, "I long to depart and be Christ, which is far better."

How sweet the plea,
From all to flee,
And shelter in my Saviour.
Oh precious grace,
With Him's my place,
In God's eternal favour.

Jesus the goal
Before my soul,
The One I know in glory.
While I'm on earth,
I'd tell His worth,
A sav'd one's sweetest story.

"LET NOT YOUR HEARTS BE TROUBLED."

JOHN xiv.

It is of importance that we should note the cause of the sorrow to which the Lord Jesus addresses Himself in these precious words for the comfort of the troubled ones; for, as I am persuaded, they will lose their deepest significance and blessing for any who have not known as *their own* the sorrow that is the occasion of them. For it is no ordinary sorrow that is here, such as abounds for every child of God in his path through this evil world. It is not any and every sorrow that here finds itself in the presence of the Lord for sympathy, whose heart has still upon the throne of God its kindred throb for every throb of ours, and comfort, too, to the full: but the very special sorrow of any who *know Jesus well enough to miss Him* in a scene out of which He has been cast by the unanimous consent of man. Brighter and more

blessed things; it is true, have resulted to us from the cross of Christ, in the wondrous grace of God, that could make this culminating point of man's hatred the moment and place of the brightest display of that grace. But this does not lessen the guilt of the world in putting Him there, nor the sense of His rejection by it in our hearts as we pass through it. And so it is that Paul can say, "By the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Beloved, let us put it to our hearts, do we *miss Him*? We have known His work for salvation, but have we gone on to know *Himself* for love? Has His work, with all its known results in our blessing, served in any feeble measure to attach us to Him who has accomplished it, and we do not miss Him in this world? Impossible that it should be so! For us, as for Mary, if *He* is gone, then all is gone that was of any value for our hearts here; and henceforth, in all this world's scene, there is a blank that nothing can fill. It is stained with the blood of our murdered Lord; His cross blights it in our eyes; our hearts can never dissociate the world from His *cross* that judged it, and we only live to show forth His death in it, while, as strangers and pilgrims, we pass on to our home above. Beloved, do your hearts know enough of Jesus to be desolate in a place where He is not? Ah, then, we know the disciples' sorrow, and to us as well as them belongs the comfort of the words of Jesus. And see how He counts upon the disciples' love and consequent sorrow: for He has no sooner broken it to them in gentle words, that only "yet a little while" He can be with them, than He adds, "let not your hearts be troubled." Precious fruit of His own love that, wherever it is known, detaches hearts from the world without Him, by attaching them to Himself. Yes; He whom they had known, and loved, and followed on earth in such precious intimacy was about to return to the Father, and they would now no longer know Him after the flesh; yet He was only going to take the same place as the unseen God, where He would be still known by faith, and in all the deeper revelations of the glory of His Person that would result from that place. So that He will even prove that it is expedient for them that He goes away: "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." And as ye shall see, these deeper revelations of *Himself* will form the very staple of the comfort ministered to us in His words. Where else could comfort be found for

hearts that have known Him ever so feebly? All joy is treasured up for us in the knowledge of Christ. There can be no *different* joy, but only *deeper measures* of the same joy; and this is just what he brings us into by going away.

But will he enter alone into His joy, and *leave* us in our wilderness desolation? No; He only goes to prepare a place for us there too, and to wait for the moment when He can come and fetch us into it. Beloved, He speaks to us of *home*; and if you say it is of His home, I answer, not more His than yours with Him now; for He has never left us until He has accomplished a work in the world on the ground of which he has introduced us into the very same relationship that He Himself stands in to God." "Go to my brethren," says He, from the mouth of His open and empty grave, "and say unto them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." Henceforth, His Father is our Father,—His God, our God,—His home, our home. And if there are in it "many mansions," His love has already set apart the place for each individual object of it; for such I take to be the force of the words, "I go to prepare a place for you." None but *the one* for whom such place has been prepared by Jesus can *fill* it for *His* heart. How precious to be still and ever the objects of such love! Now, in His absence, we need the *assurance* of it, and He gives it to us.

But observe well *where* it is he gives us our home,—“In my Father's house.” Oh, beloved, have our hearts entered into the blessedness of this! The Jewish hopes of the disciples were filled with the displayed glory of the kingdom, as was natural, from prophecy; but the time for that display, depending as it did upon the presence of the Messiah, was not come yet, as was evident from Jesus' words, “Yet a *little* while I am with you.” And when all seemed lost to their disappointed expectations in His going away, He unfolds to their faith what prophecy never thought of—the Father's house,—and gives them and us our home there, in a love that is beyond all the glory, for the glory can be *displayed*—the love, never. What rich comfort for our hearts, troubled in this world at the absence of Jesus.

But there is more; and more there must be to meet the *necessities* of those to whom, by these very revelations, Jesus is becoming more precious every day. Is this separation to last for ever! No; he could not bear it any more than we.

And, coupled with the home presented to our faith to enjoy, He gives us just what He knows hearts that truly love Him could not do without—the promise, “I will come again, and receive you *unto myself*”; precious hope for us, beloved, till hope shall be lost in the consummation of it, and we shall see Him face to face. Nor is it only that we shall all be with Him—for, “to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord,” and thus in death we go to Him—but His word is, “I will *come again* and receive you unto myself,” and the promise is as sure to-day for our hearts as when first he gave it to us.* Beloved brethren, is the coming of our Lord more than a doctrine among us? Is it a deep spring of joy even in hope? Is it a living power in our souls? But the promise goes on, “that where I am there ye may be also;” and this tells us that the necessity of our hearts is His own; that, not for our joy only but for His, we must be where He is. And beloved, that is the heaven of the Christian’s hope. Man’s imagination has a heaven of its own, well suited to it, no doubt; but not the least suited to the desires of Christ for us. Scripture has but little about heaven, for all desire, all joy, all hope, is summed up for any who know *Jesus* ever so feebly, in that “where I am” of His. *His presence* is the very heaven of heaven to us.

But we are only approaching the kernel of joy for us, and comfort, while we wait, in the absence of Jesus, for the fulfilment of such bright hopes. And this is contained in what follows—ushered in by the words, “and whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.” He was going to the Father, of whom on earth He had been personally the full revelation before their eyes: “No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, who *is* in the bosom of the *Father*, He hath declared Him.” So then they knew where He was going, and the way, in the very revelation that He was of the Father—“I am the way.” He is “the truth” also, consequent as truth is on the revelation of God: for the truth about anything is its relation to God, which can only be known as God is known. Thus it was that when Jesus came into the world, all was tested and revealed in its true character. Then it was known that all that is of this world was one vast gigantic lie! Jesus alone, the Truth, who thus testing and judging it, was rejected by it. Men

* His coming for us, I need hardly say, is not the same as our going to Him.

“loved darkness rather than light.” But He is also “the life:” for, if any found in Jesus the full disclosure of their lost condition by nature, they found also in Him the full revelation of God in grace and truth, and “this is eternal life to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent.” Moreover, if God is known *in the Son*, He is known in the character of this relationship—or, in other words, as Father. “If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.” And this is truly blessed. He died “to bring us to God;” but having come by Jesus, the only way (v. 6), we find we know the Father. Thus, we not only know our future place in His Father’s house, but we know His Father; and we know Him as our Father. And this is needed to complete the consciousness that our home is there. Well may Philip say, “Lord, show us the Father, and it *sufficeth* us.” What joy could go beyond the knowledge of the Father? But then Philip ought to have known the Father as manifested in the Son: “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? *He that hath seen me hath seen the Father;*” and “from henceforth,” says Jesus, “ye know Him and have seen Him.” This, beloved, is our portion of blessing in our Lord’s absence. The disciples enjoyed the presence of the Lord Jesus amongst them; in another day the Son of Man will come in His glory, and the blessing of the earth in the kingdom will depend upon the manifestation of His glory. But, oh, beloved, far beyond all in the richness of blessing is the way in which He is revealed to our faith now, as hid in God. Lost to the outward eye, it is only that He has taken His place according to the intimate nearness of His relationship with the Father; and in this wondrous intimacy we are given to know Him: “Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me.” What is the displayed glory of the kingdom to be compared with the home circle of Divine relationship and love into which such words introduce us? And this is our blessing. Power to grasp the full blessedness of such a revelation is another thing, and we are not left without this also, as we shall see. But such is the revelation, which is the strength of our comfort in the absence of Christ, He is not lost to us, blessed be God, but revealed to us, all the more fully, from the place He has taken in His oneness with the Father, so that we know Him in the Father, and the Father in Him, and “our

fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." Surely this is privilege beyond all that was ever heard of before in the wondrous dealings of God in grace with His people,—beyond all that will be enjoyed by Jew or Gentile, blessed in the Millennium in the personal presence and manifested glory of the Messiah; nay, beloved privilege that *depends* upon the very place that the *absent* One has taken with God, having first fully declared Him in the world. Oh, for hearts duly to estimate it, and to take our place accordingly in the sweet and precious fellowship with the Father and the Son to which we are now consciously and intelligently brought as our privilege and joy. Well may the Holy Spirit say, instructing us in these very things, in 1 John i., "These things write we unto you that your joy may be *full*."

Having said this much, beloved brethren, as to the *character* of our blessing in the absence of the Lord Jesus, I pass over intervening verses, however important in their connection, to note next, the *power* by which alone we can *enjoy such a revelation of God*. This is promised us in verse 16, "I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth at that day (namely, when He is come) ye shall know that I am in the Father." Thus has the Holy Spirit been given to dwell within each of us, that by His power we may grasp the present revelation of the Son in the Father—the power by which, though still in the circumstances of the wilderness, we may ever walk above them, in full unclouded fellowship with the Father and the Son. But more than this is known, now that the Spirit has come: for verse 20 goes on to unfold to us (oh, amazing blessedness!) that we are associated with Jesus in all the nearness and intimacy of His place in the Father: "At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you." Beloved, can anything be added to such blessedness. The whole of our position here lies before. While Jesus is withdrawn from the eye of the world that cast Him out, to come back again for the display of His power and glory in the kingdom, the Holy Spirit has come down, sent from the very place the absent One has taken in the Father, to be the power by which our souls are brought into the Divine intimacy and fellowship of such a place, and of our association with the Son in all the wondrous

blessedness of it. It will be easily seen, then, that if our blessing is only to be fully enjoyed by the power of the Spirit of God, it is above all things essential to such enjoyment that nothing should be allowed to grieve Him in our walk. Hence it is that verse 15 occupies the place it does in this instruction: "If ye love me keep my commandments." Nothing grieves the Spirit more than when self-will is allowed to work. Obedience is the very opposite to this. Here, then, comes the third point in the Lord's instruction, as He tells us of *the path and order* in which alone the joy of these wondrous links with heaven and with God can be entered into and maintained. How blessedly the power of an ungrieved Spirit was illustrated for us in the cloudless joy of the desolate path of Jesus on the earth. And the secret of it is unfolded to us in His words, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of . . . my meat is *to do the will* of Him that sent me." Thus it is, only as every thought of our hearts is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, that our portion of divine intimacy be enjoyed by the power of the Spirit. And this is a joy absolutely apart from, and independent of, all earthly circumstances; it springs from the links that connect our hearts with the Father's presence, and the place that the Lord Jesus has taken there in the interval of His rejection by the earth. Oh, that nothing may be tolerated for a moment that would enfeeble the power of such associations in our souls. But the happy spring of this obedience is found in the words of the Lord Jesus, "If we love me." It is as though He said, Dry up your tears at the thought of my leaving you—albeit these tears were precious in His sight,—and prove your love, if it is true and real, by the more practical path of my obedience. And when the heart is taken up with Christ as its object, how easy and natural obedience to His commandments becomes: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." But if Christ is not our simple and all-controlling object, there is nothing that is more distasteful than this obedience. Ah, such is the treachery of these hearts of ours, that we would be serving with unwearied zeal, according to our own thoughts of what He would like, throwing every energy, every power, into such service, rather than yield Him the unreserved obedience that is, for this very reason, the *test* of true love. Not that I would deprecate service in its own place, beloved brethren;

but true service to Christ is rendered in the path of *obedience*, or else it will want, as Martha's did, that which would make it most sweet and acceptable to Him. As the loving eye of the Lord Jesus rests upon each one of His in the earth, it is not they who seem the busiest, and most active and zealous for Him, who most meet His approval, for this suits too well restlessness and pride of nature; but the quiet unobtrusive walk of one, little noticed, it may be by any other, but governed in every detail of it by the commandments of Christ: "he it is that loveth me." And love for Him, thus manifesting itself, becomes, as it were, a fresh bond between us and the Father, for Jesus is the object of the Father's love; and thus we are found to have an object of love in common with the Father. And what a bond is formed between hearts by some common object of love: "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him." Not that there is any difference in the love wherewith all of us are loved. For, as to the Father's love, we are each "accepted in the Beloved," and the world shall know in another day that "thou hast loved them AS thou has loved me; and if we would know the only measure of the love of Jesus for *any* of us, He gives it us in John xv. 9, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you." But the *obedient one* only can *enjoy* this love, which yet knows no change.

The disobedient child misses all the caressings of love; albeit he is not loved the less. But more, "I will *manifest* Myself unto him." Does the Lord call us by his obedience to a path that few have courage for, there—it may be—to walk alone? Not alone, beloved, for HE is with us in it; and will any heart that knows the Lord dare to say that it will be lonely then? To yield up my own will at His command may bring upon me the frown of all, but if I know the smile and approval of Jesus, is it not enough? Are we listening for the voice of the Lord to take us, according to His promise to us in verse 3, to be where He is, and is His presence to us the deepest joy of heaven? What shall we say of these manifestations of Himself to any who will but obey Him? It is heaven's deepest joy in character brought down to my heart below!

But would you ask with Judas (not Iscariot) what this private manifestation of Himself to one, and not to another, means,—so foreign as such a thought was to Jewish expect-

tions, that waited upon the public manifestation of the Messiah to all, and how it is to be enjoyed while He is hidden to the eye of sense? Then you must learn the meaning of the Lord's answer. "If a man love me, he will keep *my words*." This is more, beloved, than keeping the commandments of Jesus. Obedience to his expressed commands leads me into a place of ever-deepening intimacy with Himself. To this place of deeper intimacy belong His "words." I do not command my intimate friend; my mind is expressed in my words, and he knows my mind, and acts accordingly, by the very intimacy and fellowship he enjoys. A little word has ten thousand times greater weight with him, than my command has upon one at a distance. The servant gets his commands, and obeys them, but he knoweth not what his lord doeth; my friend walks with me in intelligence of my deepest thoughts. Oh, beloved, are we walking in *this intimacy with Him who has not called us "servants,"* but "friends," and, hanging upon the precious words of His lips, are we getting into deeper intelligence of His mind? How many at a distance find their excuse for doing their own will, in that they have no express command from the Lord Jesus! Is it thus with us, or has every little word of His its irresistible sway over us? This, again, is the expression of truest love, and what an answer it receives! Is it joy to us to think of being received to Jesus just now in the mansions of the Father's house? But the promise in verse 23, brings the Father and the Son down to make their mansions (for the word is the same) in the path with any who only thus love the Lord.

Beloved, I can say no more. What more could be given to encourage and sustain the heart in faithfulness to our absent Lord? Has God resources beyond what are here revealed for our joy? Oh to be filled with the Spirit that we may comprehend the full blessedness of our portion, and have capacity to enjoy it. Well, well may He say, "I will not leave you comfortless." When He only goes away to reveal Himself from His place in the Father's presence, in oneness with the Father, in the full brightness and joy for our hearts, all that He is, even while we tread the path of this dark world. "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you;" and so faith enjoys His presence still, and knows Him in the Father, as it never could have known Him while He was in the world, by the power of the Holy Spirit

given to us : and all that is wanting to the full consummation of our joy, is to see Him face to face, and be like Him, and with Him for ever.—J. A. T.

THE WARNINGS OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

HEBREWS vi. 4-6.

THE Epistle to the Hebrews deals with all on the broad ground of the profession of Christianity ; and hence we get in it the solemn warnings in chapters vi. and x. These warnings are never given to shake the confidence of the weakest believer, as to the eternal security of those who are truly Christ's. Of this, there need not be the shadow of a doubt entertained by the feeblest child of God. Such would *never* be the suggestion of the Spirit of God, but rather of the "evil heart of unbelief;" and should never for a moment be entertained or admitted into the heart, but rather treated as of the enemy.

In ch. vi. 4-6 of this Epistle, we find enumerated the privileges which Christians enjoy in virtue of the work and glorification of Christ. The things we find there belong to all professors of Christianity, without any question of individual state or conversion. Suppose a person to have been enlightened as to all these blessings, and to have been told of the effect of them on those who accepted them and after all the treasures of grace were thus exhausted, that there was no result, but rather a turning away from them and a holding on to that which could not bestow them—what more could one do? The result is in the hands of God alone.

Stony ground hearers, who heard the word with joy, and in time of temptation, fell away, come under this class. The natural affections are moved, the wondrous story of grace, hearkened to with admiration, and after all, there is no real result, the heart is like the barren ground that drinks the rain, and bears after all, only briars and thorns, and is good for nothing. These are they who had thus "tasted the good word of God."

The personal presence of God the Holy Ghost in the church—who is here consequent on the death and resurrection

of Christ, and His ascension to God's right hand ; renders all who have professed the name of Christ, "partakers" of His presence. (The true *believer* is sealed with the Spirit, and his body the temple of the Holy Ghost—which is quite another thing.) The Holy Ghost is here to testify to Christ's finished work, and bear witness to sinners, that through the work of Christ, God says, "Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more" (Heb. x. 17) ; yet how many thousands never believe His testimony—how many are the forms and systems of religion around that never admit this wondrously blessed truth, and keep their votaries "tied and bound with the chain of their sins," while the Holy Ghost witnesses to us, that God will remember them no more for ever.

"The powers of the world to come," are more the miracles performed by those who were so gifted ; such as healing of sickness, and the casting out of devils—the two characters of miracles which were samples of the powers which, when Satan is bound, and cast into the bottomless pit, and the world filled with blessing, will characterise the millennial kingdom, or "world to come." Many of the Hebrew professors of Christianity had seen these things, or had perhaps been the subjects of them in their own bodies, and yet had no life in the soul. We learn, too, that many believed (by the evidence of their natural senses), when they *saw* the miracles that Jesus did in Jerusalem, and yet were without life. (John ii. 23-25.) See also the case of Simon Magus in Acts viii., who "believed seeing the miracles," and yet "had neither part or lot in the matter."

Surely if those who are enlightened about all these things, turn from them to obtain life or salvation by ordinances, or sacraments, or else ; they are just in the position of a Hebrew who returned to Judaism after the revelation of Christianity. God has, so to speak, exhausted the treasures of heaven, in the blessings He has bestowed, consequent upon the death and resurrection and ascension of His Son ; and if we have not accepted them with a thankful heart, and that we are practically ignoring the effect of His work, through our religion or ordinances, we are in effect "crucifying to ourselves the Son of God," *i.e.*, we are like a Jew who returned to Judaism from the profession of Christianity, and thus identified himself with the sin of his nation, in crucifying Christ, when they said, "His blood be on us, and on our children."

“The prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself.” (Prov. xxii. 3.) He foresees the solemn results there will be to those who have been mere lifeless, fruitless, professors of Christianity, and he sees to it, that it is not so with him. “The simple pass on, and are punished.” (Prov. xxii. 3.) The careless ones hear the warning, and turn a deaf ear to it. They pass on along the “broad road that leadeth to destruction,” unheeding the land marks and finger posts, so to say, that a gracious Lord, whose desire is that none should perish, has so abundantly provided, and they will find when it is too late, where the broad road has conducted them.

How sweetly the Apostle goes on to say, after all this solemn word of warning, “but beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love which you have showed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end.” He saw in the fruitful lives of those amongst them, that which proved that it was more than a mere profession of the lip with them. “The things that accompany salvation” were clearly to be seen. Things that while they are *never a ground of confidence*, never constitute salvation; they are sure to *accompany* a real reception of the “word,” into an “honest and good heart.” (Luke viii. 15.)

The aspect of God’s heart toward a poor sinner, is his confidence. It is His desire that none should perish. He is a Saviour God. The work of Christ is the sinner’s confidence, when he looks outside himself at Him as a Saviour—the testimony of the Holy Ghost, through the Word of God, is the confidence of the poor sinner, who has none in himself. And depend upon it, he will find his life only too short to be a fruitbearing, earnest, devoted saint, when he has accepted this salvation from a Saviour God, whose gift it is—the things that *accompany* this salvation will be seen in his life and ways. “God is *not unrighteous* to forget them”—while He *is righteous* in forgetting his sins and iniquities for ever through the virtues of the finished work of His Son!

A WORD ON THE DAYS WE LIVE IN.

I FULLY believe that a just and divine understanding of the present state of things must be accompanied by this trial of mind—that while the great advance in all the accommodations of life, and in the general refinement and culture of all classes is acknowledged, and the public boast in such things is allowed to have apparently most full warrant; all this is known to be only in progress to a something that is to meet the most awful judgment from the hand of the Lord:—because it is to be a mocking of all that is blessed, and not really blessed—the kingdom of man, and not of “the Lord and His Christ”—the energy of the god of this world; and not of the Spirit of the living God.

This divine intelligence must bring its sorrows. For the saint possessed of it will hear that condition of things continually gloried in, which he knows is most fearful; and the more the ground of this carnal and ignorant boast is day by day unfolding itself, the more does the saint discover the ripening of human pride, and the progress of that fair structure of the enemy’s device, which is to bring the judgment. At mid-day there is to be night in the world’s history. God will turn man’s noon-tide splendour into the shade of night: as touching His own, He will turn the shadow of death into the morning, and at their evening time give them light. (Zech. xiv.)

Such, I doubt not, is the position which the intelligent believer takes at this moment—one of sorrow to his spirit, as he listens to *man* every day—one of joy to his spirit, as he listens to the *promise* that the great redemption is only drawing the nearer, through all this that he looks at and listens to. His security lies in “the love of the truth.” (2 Thess. ii.) He is not to expect that the hand of God will interfere to stop the progress of this fair structure. He is not to commit himself to the *hand*, but to the *word* of the Lord. It is rather of the Lord to allow pride to get food, whereby to nourish and swell itself, and to let the world prosper by its own devices. The soul that looks for providential visitations on all that is, and will be a-doing, is in most imminent hazard. “The love of the truth” is declared to be the soul’s security.

How fair were the deceits practised at Jerusalem in the day of Ezekiel. Paintings on the temple walls, and exquisitely

wrought, I doubt not. Ancient men, men of character and of religion, kindly clouds of incense before them, adopting the delusions! Women melted into tears while occupied with their idols, exhibiting the fine and generous flow of human affections which is so attractive to the heart! And the sun in his beauty and rising at the east worshipped! (Ezek. viii.) What witchery was all this? What fascination for the religious and amiable sentiments of our nature?

What protected the heart of the prophet while surveying it all? The hand of the Lord did not interfere—rain did not come down to quench the cloud of incense. It was allowed to wreath itself upward in lovely forms, as though He who dwelt in the house was accepting it. Another hand did not appear to write on the wall over against the paintings, their judgment.—No—but the word of his divine guide interpreted all these fascinations, and called them abominations! This was the prophet's safety, and it is ours in a like moment. The truth that interprets according to God all that is now going on, must preserve our souls from taking part with this "fair show in the flesh," which is so much apparent comeliness, but real abomination.

FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST.

STAY; choose not rashly, trembling heart:
For know'st thou not how griev'd thou art
If ever called upon to part

E'en with one bound for heav'n!
And, oh, we all are tried full soon;
How many a morn grows dark at noon;
And *Death* must rob of every boon
God hath in mercy giv'n.

Be sure, if thou hast turn'd thy face
Full heav'nward, as thy destin'd place,
God must, in His deliv'ring grace,

Provide a death-scene here!
So surely will the Jordan flow
In on thy heart—on all below;
And with'ring winds around thee blow;
But thou shalt know Him near!

'Twere not *enough*, could we partake
 Thy every thought, or joy, or ache;
 E'en could'st thou bring Him *down* to **make**
 Sweet company with thee;
 He must *away with* all that clings
 Of nature-dust upon thy wings,
 And then the emptied one He brings
 Where none can walk but He.

Then He can call thy heart above,
 And tell thee all His thoughts and love,
 And give to thee—a heav'n-bound dove;
 Blest fellowship *with* Him
 Whence streams of life within thee flow,
 While death close round thee here below,—
Then, and *then only*, shalt thou know
 Devotedness to Him!

SCRIPTURE QUERIES AND ANSWERS.

In reply to "M. S.," Lyndhurst, with reference to John i. 51:—

The first chapter of John's Gospel is a magnificent epitome of the person and titles of Christ, from His existence as the Word of God—the eternal Son—till His millennial glory as Son of Man; His heavenly characters, in the present interval, of High Priest and Head of His Body, being omitted. It begins by showing that He was God, then that He became flesh, and concludes by showing Him the Son of Man—God and Man. Nathanael, at the close of the chapter, gives us a striking figure of the faithful ones of the Jewish nation at the end of this age, before the introduction of the Millennium, who own the Lord Jesus when He appears as the Son of God, and King of Israel, according to His titles and person in the second Psalm, "Thou art my Son," &c. "I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." The Lord Jesus then says, in view of that time, which will be the introduction of the Kingdom, that "henceforth (this is more correctly the force of the word than 'hereafter') ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." In other words, when the Kingdom comes the once slain and rejected Son of Man will be the connecting link between the heavens and the earth; He will

reign in His full Melchisedec character,—“a Priest upon His throne;” and the Lord “will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel.” (Hosea ii. 21-22.)

It is worthy of note that Jacob saw the bottom of the ladder, and heard the voice of the Lord above it, while the angels ascended and descended upon it. (Gen. xxviii.) While Peter, James, and John saw the top of it, as it were, (Matt. xvii.,) when they were on the Mount of Transfiguration, beholding a fore-shadowing of Christ’s coming glory as Son of Man. In the passage before us He is seen as the connecting link between the heavens and the earth, when all things in heaven and earth shall be gathered together in Him. (Eph. i. 10.)

Q.—“In what sense did Christ ‘learn obedience by the things which he suffered?’ (Heb. v. 8.) How is this to be taken?”

A.—It was an entirely *new* thing for the glorious Son of God to *learn obedience*. He who commanded all things from all eternity came into this world of sin, and took the place of obedience, and in a pathway of suffering in which he never yielded to temptation—“He suffered being tempted”—never yielded—He learned what it was in this world to obey. *We* learn obedience by the subjection of our wicked hearts and wills to God. *He* learned it as one with whom it was a new thing, and who had a perfect will, but who laid it aside—(“not my will but thine be done”) who submitted to everything, obeyed in everything, and depended on God for everything. His obedience ended in death rather than fail in faithfulness or obedience to His Father. How contrary to the first Adam was the second in all this! And the Christian is “sanctified unto the obedience . . . of Jesus Christ.” May we have grace to be conformed to him and to obey!

FRAGMENT.

In the gospel, God—perfectly glorified about sin in the death of Christ—rends the vail, and comes out in love to seek the sinner; brings him to His presence in righteousness, within the vail, and as a priest and a worshipper!

THEIR STRENGTH IS TO SIT STILL.

"Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall."
RUTH iii. 18.

"They also serve, who only stand and wait."

"Sit still!" oh, do not grieve thy Lord!
By angry sore complaint;
"Sit still!" and trust that *faithful Word*,
Which says, those shall "not faint."
"Be still!" 'twas but a "little while"
Thou deem'dst His face was hid:
Then, as a good "obedient child,"
Be still, as thou art bid.
Perchance, on bed of sickness, thou
Dost spend the weary day!
"Sit still!" remember He can save,
"In *His own* time and way!"
Or if amongst the household cares,
And troubles of this life,
Thy lot is placed, e'en yet "sit still,"
Nor weary of the strife!
No *great* work is designed for thee;
Not *early* in the day
The Master hires thee to work,
But with the sun's last ray!
Though you may long for more to do
In His great cause and name,
The time and place is not yet come—
"Sit still!" He'll make it plain.
Remember Martha, active one,
To show the Lord her love—
How earnest in the serving work!
How thoughtful she did prove!
But "Mary sat at Jesus' feet,"
With great love in her heart;
She showed it in no other way,
Yet "chose the better part."
So, oh, do thou her copy prove,
If love thy bosom fill:
Ask not for some *great* thing to do,
But as thou'rt bid, "*sit still*."

A. S. L. O.

WORDS OF TRUTH.



NOTHING TO PAY.

LUKE vii. 42.

TRUE, one of them was a debtor for five hundred pence, while the other owed only fifty; but they were alike in this, that neither of them had a farthing with which to meet their claims. Both were debtors, and both *bankrupt* debtors, and by-and-by both forgiving debtors; for if they were to go free at all, it is clear they must both alike be treated simply on the ground of mercy. And so their generous creditor "frankly forgave them both." The one who had owed the smaller amount had nothing to boast of, since he, in common with his fellow-debtor, was *entirely unable, from his own resources to pay his debt, and the only difference between the two men now is, that the one who has been forgiven most, may well be expected to feel and manifest the most gratitude to his benefactor.* Now, my dear reader, you know we all are debtors to the great God, in whom we live, and move, and have our being. I do not know whether your debt has been running for many or few years; whether you have been reckless in your transactions, or have reason to consider yourself more careful than men in general; whether your next door neighbour owes ten times as much as you do, or you owe ten times as much as he. In other words, I do not, of course, know whether your life has been outwardly moral and decent, or immoral and profane, God knoweth. But be assured of one thing, in the sight of Him who is of purer eyes than to behold evil, you are in one common condition with the one now addressing you, and with the very chief of sinners, since He has plainly declared that "there is *no* difference, for *all* have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." I know it is hard to give oneself up as altogether ruined; people don't like to own their bankruptcy, much

rather would they keep the shop open, and their name over the door, and if there be no money to meet the demands of their creditors, they would fain conceal the disgraceful fact, even from themselves, and still more carefully from others. But, my friend, you cannot afford to act thus with regard to *eternal* things. For ought you know, the day of reckoning may be very near at hand, for it is in the Book of Truth declared that "every one of us shall give an account of himself to God," and, dear reader, *is your account ready?* Perhaps you hope it will be before the moment comes for you to render it to God. You know it is not now, for you must be conscious that you have been a sinner all your life, but you think that by-and-by, when you are placed in more favourable circumstances, and surrounded by fewer temptations, you will be able to do better, and may perhaps with God's help, even clear off some of that long score of debts that you know is filed against you. Oh! many a one has fancied this, and so struggled on year after year, only sinking deeper and deeper in the mire, till at last they have given up in despair, and *sunk* to rise no more. You must have found out that your very *nature* is corrupt, and opposed to that which is good, and how can you expect a bad tree ever to bring forth fruit, so good, and sound, and pure as to be acceptable to a thrice holy God? And if you *were* enabled to lead a new life, and never sin any more as long as you live, how could that possibly alter the amount of the debt already standing against you? Did you ever hear of a man in business who forgave old debts simply on the ground of accounts being promptly settled in future? And do you expect the Judge of all the earth to be less just than a failing man? Forgive my pleading thus plainly with you, but it is no subject to trifle with. Satan who seeks your soul to *destroy* it, would beguile your heart with flattering words and fair speeches—he would tell you that you were no worse than other people; you have done the best you could, and as God is merciful you have nothing to fear. But God, who indeed is "rich in mercy," and who seeks your soul to *save* it; yea, who is "not willing that *any* should perish," He sets before you the true state of things, and will you not listen rather to Him? Will you prefer hearkening to the voice of the old serpent who still lies in wait to deceive, as he did in the garden of Eden, where the belief of his vile falsehood was followed by such disastrous results? What if you are no

worse than your neighbours; does *that* make you fit for God's presence? What if you have done the best you could: has not God declared that you were born in sin, and can a clean thing come out of an unclean? Has He not said that "they who are in the flesh cannot please God," and that even all our righteousnesses before Him are only as "filthy rags?" And if He be merciful, as indeed He is, for "He delighteth in mercy," yet, is He not righteous also? Has not His Majesty been offended, and will He exercise mercy at the cost of His infinite justice? By *no* means. But, you will enquire, who then can be saved? Since we *all* are ruined sinners, helpless and undone, unable to clear the smallest of our debts, and God is holy, and by no means clears the guilty, what resource have we? Ah! my dear fellow sinner, the answer is *Jesus*. "*He* took the guilty culprit's *place*, and suffered in His stead." He charged Himself with our liabilities, saying, as it were, to divine justice, "If he have wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that to my account." And it was put to His account, and He paid it all, to the uttermost farthing: He went into the prison-house of death, but it was not possible that He could be detained there. All the debts for which He became responsible, were forever cancelled, and He quickly left the tomb, returning to that home of glory He had left to accomplish salvation for you and me. Yes, He is now on high, the blessed witness that He has fully met the claims that God had against us; and now God can *righteously* in perfect consistency with all His attributes, forgive freely every poor sinner that *believes* in Jesus. Sin has reigned unto death, so that the sentence of death has "passed upon *all* men, for that all have sinned," but now through the blessed work of redemption, that Jesus finished once and for ever on the cross, "*grace* reigns through *righteousness* unto eternal life," so that God, "the high and lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy," can be "just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." I pray that you, my dear reader, may through His grace, discover and fully own the ruin and helplessness of your condition as God's bankrupt debtor, and that you may be led to believe on Jesus, who, "when we were *without strength*, in due time died *for* the ungodly." And having learned to bow before Him as a "Just God and a Saviour," may every act of your life shew that your heart is indeed taken captive by the love of Jesus, as was the case with this poor outcast woman,

who of old, embraced His feet, and washed them with her tears, and loved Him much, for she was much forgiven.

Behold the Lamb ! 'tis He who bore
Thy burden on the tree ;
And paid in blood the dreadful score,
The ransom due for thee.

THOUGHTS ON THE SIMILITUDES OF THE KING- DOM, AS PRESENTED IN THE PARABLES OF THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

No 4.

(Continued from page 233, Vol. I.)

WE have seen how important a thing it is that the soul should judge itself in the presence of God. It is a serious question for each of us. "*Have I been there? Have I been face to face with God about my sins—about my sin?*" Sooner or later, this question must be settled with God. Some go through the question at once, at the beginning of their course, and it is settled once for all in Christ and by Christ; and the consequence is that having so effectually done with self, and being so completely cast upon Jesus, nothing can ever after disturb their peace, or move them from the rock on which they have been so firmly grounded. Others find a measure of peace before getting to the bottom of this question, and it is sometimes years; sometimes not till the end of their Christian life that it is settled. But solid and lasting peace cannot be enjoyed till this question of sin is settled with God in our own souls. For the lost the settlement comes at the judgment. To them it is destruction.

We come now (v. 7, 22) to the third class. It is not said that there was a ready reception of the word as in the stony ground hearer. Nor was there the stupid indifference which marked the first case. Here the word did touch the heart, (I do not say the conscience). We cannot infer from the parable that there was no feeling; perhaps there were even some anxious thoughts, yes, although it was not a stony ground, it was so full of evil roots, that the good seed was choked "and he becometh unfruitful." Here it is a soul preferring the world to the Word of God. Doubtless there were some such among them who listened to our Lord. To give up all for the sake of a rejected Messiah, and to follow Him who had not where to lay His head, was beyond the

power of nature, even though the word was accompanied by miracles, demonstrating the presence and power of God. Had Jesus then taken the kingdom, had He overturned the Roman empire and sat upon the throne of David, there would not, there could not have been any conflict between His word and the cares and riches of the world. For we know when He takes the kingdom, the power and the glory which are his, those who are with Him (that is, His subjects on earth), enter into the full possession of them. No care, no anxiety will disturb those who will at that time, be the first nation in the world. Riches and power will be a blessing, and as such they will have them. But now it is quite a different thing. The Messiah was rejected and this favoured nation, and the whole world besides, was found in antagonism; hence these things good in themselves, became evil through circumstances, and they are found to be only *thorns* which oppose the word, and in this case eventually choke it.

Here, for ourselves, we find an answer to the question which often rises in our heart, what harm is this, in doing that, or going there, or seeking possession of the things of this life? Take care and avoid them—they are thorns—they choke the word. There is harm in every thing that is not of Christ. And when Christians care for this world, their Christianity becomes worldly, and soon, unless God interferes, will be a thing of the world, and then is just fit, as indeed it is at this very moment, to be made one of the “*exhibits*” at the great vanity fair yonder.

But to return to our parable—to be in such a kingdom, when the King Himself was a scorned and rejected Man was too much for man. The desire to stand well with the leaders in Jerusalem, to avoid the cross, and the shame of following Jesus, was stronger than any feeling they had from the word. The young ruler was a sad example of this. He had heard the word of Jesus, and it had produced a certain effect upon him, and he came to know what he must do to have eternal life. Beautiful as his natural character was, he could not stand the test Jesus applied, to give his riches to the poor, to forsake all and follow Christ. His riches choked the word. The desire of eternal life which he wanted to earn, though accompanied with treasure in heaven, was not strong enough to overcome the love of present wealth, and in sorrow he went away from Jesus. Such it was when our Lord was preaching the word of the kingdom. But there is the same opposition

now to the word of his grace; for the same abnegation of the word is as necessary now as then, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches are as much thorns now as then. And mark, it is not the vice and corruption that is here the opposing power. It is the cares, perhaps the necessary cares which hinder the word from taking root. What then? are we to be quite careless as to providing things honest for ourselves and those dependent on us? Nay, we are enjoined to do more than this—not only to provide for *our own* wants, but to meet the necessities of *others*, to lay by as the Lord prospers us to this end. Such a care as this, so far from being a thorn to choke the word, is a display of its power, and shows that the good seed has taken root and bears fruit. The secret is that the care is for the *Lord*, and not for *self*. Nothing for its own sake is desired. When any thing becomes *the object before* the soul, and thus displacing Christ, it immediately becomes a thorn, and the better the thing is in itself, so much the worse does it become. On the other hand, no matter what the trial, or bitterness, or even the riches may be if Christ be the one sole object. These things become the opportunities for God to show out His unfailling and transforming grace.

The king that provided the wedding feast, sent to the invited more than once, to say that all things were ready, and to come to the feast. What hindered their coming? The most legitimate things possible. But these things were in opposition to the word, and they were only thorns. What a malignant influence is that of sin when even a wife, one of the first gifts of God to innocent man, becomes a hindrance to the word taking root. True it is Luke, not Matthew who gives us the particular hindrance, and from him we learn that one has bought ground, another oxen, a third has married a wife. How came these things to be thorns? Because they were the *first* things in the heart, had the highest place, they became *the objects* before the soul to the exclusion of the King, the feast and all. They made light of the Word, and would not come to the feast.

Many a soul now makes the same excuse. There is no active opposition to the word of God's grace, no manifestation of a persecuting spirit; but alas, that which is seen is equally fatal. Through the power of Satan, who acts upon the natural feelings, the present time with all its cares and anxieties engross the whole attention. The family, the business

require that the land should be viewed, that the oxen should be proved. The message of God's love cannot now be attended to. A more convenient season is waited for, which alas, sometimes never comes. There is nothing more dangerous than these very necessary cares, and Satan well knows how to manipulate them for the soul's eternal ruin. The present is made to swell into so much importance that the future is hidden. Suppose all the land, all the oxen, every thing were lost,—nay, suppose the closest ties to be sundered through giving heed to the word of God, what matter? Of what account will any of these things be when we pass away from the present scene? Dear reader, all that is of this world is a hindrance, and if it be true of necessary cases and duties, how much more of the ambition, the covetousness, the pleasure seeking so rife in the present day. These are the means—the thorns—by which means a soul is lost. But even in the soul that is saved, wherever these things are allowed in ever so small a degree it effects injuriously the growth and vigour of the word. Hence the reason of the weakness and the stunted growth of souls who are real children of God. The principles which rule the world, viz., lust of the flesh, lust of the eye, and pride of life, influence them, and though they do bring forth fruit, according with the gracious counsel of our Lord, (John xv.) yet it is little fruit, and as for testimony, it is almost worthless.

Let us beware of excusing ourselves in any thing. All the pleas put forth are but the disguise assumed by these evil principles.

It is the old enmity of the heart showing itself in allowing other things to have a share of the affection which belongs only to Jesus.

The same enemy who directly, and without agency picked up the good seed in the first instance, here works indirectly, as indeed he did in the second case, that of the stony ground hearer.

But they are all fatal; very dissimilar, but like different radii of the same circle, they converge to the same point. The dull, stupid, brutal person, the holy imagination, the intellectual who receive the Word joyfully, and make great show, but have no repentance toward God; and the serious, grave, and thoughtful, who have right thoughts about the Word to a certain extent, but who, nevertheless are so occupied with the anxieties or the pleasures of this life, that the Word is

choked, all these meet together in one common point—one and the same result through different means is produced—they are unsaved.

If an unconverted, unsaved soul is reading this, let me ask such a one in all love, what is the hindrance? Under which of these heads are you? Oh! lay it to heart, the doom of each is the same.

If it be a fellow Christian, my prayer for him, for myself, for all saints, is that all that be found influencing our ways here below other than the Word of God, may be put away, that we may be able to glorify Him, and bring forth fruit to the praise of His name.

GRACE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Rev. iv.

It is a thing we have to remember and pay more attention to than we often do, that we live by faith, and are saved by faith. A great many do not draw their judgments from *faith* but from *reason*. Experience is not faith. Here are thousands trying to get justified by experience—seeking to get some peace by it. They may talk of Christ, but it is not faith, though they would not in terms deny being justified by Him. Many false systems own His work, but the falseness is in the way they apply its power. It is just as false as seeking justification by *experience* as by *works*. Experience never gives *peace*. It may give *joy* for a time, but not settled peace. *Faith is, thinking God's thoughts because He has revealed them.* Does God say, "Your sins and iniquities will I remember no more?"—then, I say, "they are remembered no more." Does He say, "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified?"—then, I say, "I am perfected for ever." Does He say, "The blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth from all sin?"—then I say, "I am cleansed from all sin." Does He say, "We have redemption through His blood?"—then, I say, "I *have* redemption." I don't want to hurry a person to say he *has*, when he hasn't; but if he has not, then *he does not believe what God has said.* It is not, "Do I live up to it?" but "Do I believe?"

His word takes, *past, present, and future* in, just as surely as if I saw it, and more so. My eyes may deceive me, but God can't. I believe His word. I just as much believe I am entirely lost, as that I am entirely saved. I look back at

the *past*, and I see the cross of Christ; then I get the certainty of sin put away. I look at the *present*—no man hath seen God at any time, but I know He loves me perfectly. (1 John iv. 17.) I look *forward*, and I see Christ coming again to receive me to Himself—when He comes I shall be like Him. Now what does all this depend upon? If you begin to look at yourself and your experience, I say, that is *not faith*. You have *not faith* in what God has said. Faith takes up the test of God with regard to conscience, and says, “The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.” The things that God sets before me as true I am bound to believe, or make God a liar.

In the chapter before us we read of things that are yet to come; but when God reveals them it makes them as true as if they were present. If God has revealed what is to come, it is surely that I should believe it and feel its power in my soul. Now here there are two things that blessedly bring out the place of the Christian, inasmuch as we realize by faith what *God has said*. If glory is promised it is *mine*, though I have not got it yet. This is the very way that we are called practically to live in heaven. Of course, if you do not know whether you belong to heaven or not, you cannot live there. The groundwork must be sure.

We do not get the highest relationships in this book at all. The character of the book is prophetic; therefore it is not the Father receiving his children, but God on the throne. It is extremely useful for us all to look judgment in the face, and say, Where am I when it comes? When we speak of Christ coming into the world, there may be happy affections to see Him meeting the vilest in grace. Nothing is so ordered of God to fix the affections. But this does not give me the knowledge of justification. It is done to win the confidence of the heart; but it does not follow, that when I look at the Day of Judgment, I see my sins gone—it is not the knowledge of righteousness. When I look at the Judgment seat, I say, “Have I righteousness?” because, if I have not, mercy will then be over. Then *righteousness* reigns, now *grace*. If I look at mercy, I say it is sweet; it delights my heart and knits me to Him, but it does not purge my conscience. For this I must look at *judgment*. Then I say, “There’s my righteousness on the throne of judgment—sitting on that throne in virtue of having done the work for me; He is my righteousness.” Herein is love made perfect,

that we may have boldness in the day of judgment—not *hopes*. I cannot hope to move the heart of the Judge—that would be corruption. But as He is, so am I; and mark, *in this world*. I have it *now*. If you don't know you have it when you look at judgment, you don't know what it is to be justified.

When the throne of judgment is set in heaven, where do we see the saints? As kings and priests (as we read of them in chap. i.) sitting on thrones (not on seats) round the great throne of judgment; and when the question of judgment is raised, they all sit quiet. It has nothing to do with them—but the moment the glory of God is celebrated, and the beasts cry, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty," they all leave their thrones directly, and they are priests, not kings. There's where I see the Christian. When he thinks of judgment, as quiet as the elders on their thrones; but all adoration before the glory of God. Of course, it is by faith as yet, and, consequently, we need daily grace—grace for what? To act up to your position, you must *know* you are a Christian. You must *be* a child of God before you can act as one. Then, supposing you are a Christian, I must see you live as such.

He that saw these things, saw that "out of the throne (not now a throne of grace, or I should be coming to it as a poor, feeble creature) proceeded lightnings, and thunderings, and voices"—the signs of judgment. When the thunders come, there sit the four and twenty elders—the judgments do not affect them at all. As in a criminal court, I may see a man going to be judged, but it is nothing to me. If this will be true *there*, it is true *now*. God has not revealed it to me that I should believe it *there*—I shall be sitting there I believe it *now*. But the moment the glory of God is spoken of, it does affect them. They have glory themselves, but they cast themselves down at His feet, and say, "It is all due to you." This is worship. That, I say, is the Christian, If I am ungodly before the judgment, I cannot worship. but, like Adam, must hide himself from God.

Now, beloved friends, can you all sit quiet before judgment? When I speak of it, does it bring the certainty of peace, or a cloud of uneasiness? If the latter, I say you do not know what it is to be justified. You may be converted; but if you know that you are justified, you have no fear before judgment. Take the case of the Prodigal Son. The first

two parables in the same chapter speaks of simple, unbounded grace that takes the lost sheep on the shoulder—and very blessed to think it does. Still, God will have a work in the conscience. The young man had run into every excess of riot; and when he comes to himself at last, he says, “Well, every one is happy in my father’s house.” So he sets out on his journey, but he does not know how he will be received; nay, he “takes with him words,” as Hosea says, and he has a great bit of legality too. He would ask his father to make him a servant. What business had he to say that? Was the father going to have his son a servant—a standing witness of degradation in his house? Men call this *humility*, I call it *pride*. What business had he to make terms with his father? If you don’t know that you can’t patch up your rags, you are outside the door, and God is inside. When he gets to his father, then, there is not a word about it. He did say the first two things, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son;” but there was nothing about the servant. It was *too late*, and *too soon*. The father was on his neck, but up to that time he was doubting and hoping. All *reasonings*, but not *faith*, mark him. If you are in that state, you have not met God yet—you may be on the way. The reason I refer to this is, that it is the effect of experience to bring you into the Father’s presence in rags. There, in the best robe, you get what fits you for His presence—a robe that Adam never had. He did not want it. The sinner stands outside the house not fit to enter, except in Christ. The moment I see that the blessed Saviour has come down to give Himself for my sins, I say, that’s another thing—then I shall not be judged for them. Is He going to judge me for what He bore Himself? God has entered into judgment with *Christ*, that He should not enter into judgment with *me*; the question is settled. I’m not surprised to see myself sitting upon the throne while God is judging. I am the fruit of the travail of Christ’s soul, and He is satisfied. Therefore, He says, “I will come again and receive you unto myself.” Now I ask you,—Is Christ your hope? Is that the way you expect to go up before the judgment seat? I say it is a wonderfully happy way. Do you believe it! Or do you think that Christ meant to give you a false confidence? I expect He will do what He said. But don’t you still find yourself a poor, weak creature? To be sure you do. But if measured

in that way, I would have no hope at all. I would not stand a single day if God entered into judgment with me. But if He has washed me, the question is not how *much* filth there was, but has He washed me *well*? Then I'm clean every whit—whiter than snow. Of course my feet need washing every day, but if I believe, I'm whiter than snow. Do you believe it? If not, what did He tell me for? But people think, "Oh, take care." "Of what?" "I'll take care to believe God's word." "Oh, but presumption." "Yes, to be sure, there is presumption enough in our hearts; but if I bring you spotless into the presence of God, there will be no fear of presumption then." When Paul was *in* the third heaven, there was no fear of presumption; it was when he *came out* he might have said, "Ah, Paul, you have been in the third heaven—no one ever was there but yourself."

It is the work of Christ for me, simply having been born again through grace. I find that, having a poor, wretched heart, Christ has done a work for me that leaves me without spot or stain. If you have not the best robe upon you, you won't get into the house. If you believe, you have got it. No soul ever got cloudless peace till it had the settled consciousness that without this robe it would be impossible to stand in the judgment at all.

JOHN'S EPISTLES.

THE house of the elect lady was *the sanctuary* of the truth, and had to *keep outside* all that was not of it; all those that did not bring the doctrine of Christ with them. The house of Gaius on the contrary, was the *guest chamber* of the truth, and had to open *itself* to the witnesses of it. She was to be the guardian of this mystery—He, the fellow-helper of it.

The atmosphere within God's house should be so full of the fragrance of the name of Christ, that all who are of a contrary part should be forced out (1 John ii. 19); the door at the entrance should be so closed, that the same should know that they would be kept out (2 John 10); but the welcome should be so clear and fervent, that all who savour and witness of that name, should feel themselves at home in it. (3 John 8.) Shall we not all join beloved, in such services as these? Surely all this is Kohathite service—this is business with the ark itself. Oxen and waggons could not aid in it. (See Num. vii.) The material of the service

is too delicate for such help. The shoulders of the Levites must do the service, and even their hands must reverently and only reverently handle the sacred deposit committed to them.

NOTE.—“The doctrine of Christ” is the confession of the truth as to His blessed Person—the Christ of God as revealed in Scripture. “This is the true God and eternal life. Little children keep yourself from idols.”

“UNTO HIM.”

“Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.—Amen.”

O Lamb of God! for sinners slain,
Laid low in death, alive again,
As Judah's Lion Thou shalt reign,
In majesty and might!
The wrath of God upon thy head,
Thou stoodest in the sinner's stead,
In darkness here thy blood was shed,
On high art thou the Light.

John i. 29. Rev. v. 1-10. Matt. xxvii. 33-50. Rev. xxi. 23.

The Victim once, the Victor now,
Redemption-glories wreath thy brow,
In vain the builders disallow
The chosen, costly stone.
The sure foundation Thou art laid,
Our surety Thou in death wert made,
Alive, thy word, “Be not afraid,”
Is solace to Thine own.

Hsh. ii. 9. 1 Pet. ii. 4-8. Isa. xxviii. 16. Matt. xxviii. 8-10.

Thou Precious, Holy, Living One!
The Father's well-beloved Son,
Thy great atoning work is done,
And we Thy triumphs share.
Set by our God on Holy ground,
Our centre Thou, we throng around,
In Thee, through grace, our All is found,
Yea, wealth beyond compare.

Rev. i. 18. Eph. ii. 4-7. John, xx. 19. Rev. iii. 15.

We lay in nature's dust a shame,
 The Cross our door of hope became,
 We found salvation in the name
 That none but rebels spurn.
 Thee JESUS, men would crucify!
 We saw them lead Thee forth to die,
 We heard thy groan—thy victor-cry;
 Now wait we thy return.

Rom. v. 1, 2. 1 Cor. 18-24. Matt. xxvii. 46, 50. 1 Thess. 1. 10.

Yes! "Jesus only" would we see,
 Ascribing, Saviour, God, to Thee
 Dominion, power and Majesty
 Both now and evermore.
 Thee JESUS, angel-legions praise,
 Thy glory lights God's hidden ways,
 To thee, with one accord we raise
 Our voices, and adore!

1 John iii. 2. Jude 24, 25. Rev. ii. 14. Heb. i. ii.

NOTES OF A READING ON LUKE IX.

IN Luke viii., Christ Himself preaches the Gospel of the Kingdom. In ch. ix. He sends forth His twelve disciples with the same testimony, and in ch. x., having been rejected as "the Christ," and on the ground of this rejection, and after the declaration of His coming glory as "Son of Man" (seen in the Transfiguration), He sends the Seventy on a wider mission, which the judgment day would vindicate if refused.

Now I find in ch. ix. a remarkable break. The testimony of the Twelve, and Christ's own testimony, had reached far and wide even to king's courts; but what was the result of it? The power of healing the sick and casting out devils, which the Lord gave to His disciples, were samples of the powers of the world to come—the millennial kingdom—but it was all of no avail. In verse 18, the Lord asks His disciples what it had all come to? "Whom say the people that I am?" "They answering said, John the Baptist, but some said Elias; and others that one of the old prophets is risen again." You see it had all come to nothing. "But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, the Christ

of God. And He straitly charged them, and commanded them that they should tell no man *that thing*." Why? Because it was of no use. "The Messiah" had been rejected; and now He speaks of Himself, not as the Christ, or Messiah, But as the "Son of Man," and this wider title characterises the remaining chapters of this Gospel.

You will see a similar transition between the second Psalm and the eighth. In the second Psalm the Lord is spoken of as the Christ, or "Anointed"—in the eighth Psalm as the "Son of Man." All things were once put in subjection to Adam and his wife, but they lost this headship through sin. And now the Lord Jesus—the Son of Man—will not take the inheritance of all things simply as *Heir*, but as *Redeemer Heir*. He has a personal right to it, it is true, but could He take it, polluted with sin as it is, apart from redemption as well?

He never speaks of His sufferings as Son of Man, without speaking of His rising again. It is as the *risen* Son of Man that He takes the headship of creation and all things, as we see in Hebrews ii.

In this passage in Luke ix., the Lord speaks of His sufferings as a martyr under man's hand, not as a victim under the hand of God for sin. You know His death had this double aspect. He suffered as a victim and as a martyr. As a martyr we can have "the fellowship of His sufferings." He tells His disciples then of the path of those who would follow Him in His rejection, but He doesn't speak of the path without showing what the *end* of it will be.

Would you mind a rough thorny path, if you knew surely what the *end* would be? Here is the journey, and the end of it. Paul's desire was that he "might apprehend that for which he was apprehended of Christ Jesus." In the Transfiguration which follows we get the end of the pathway, in a figure of the coming kingdom and glory of the Son of Man, in which those who are His have a share. We see in Moses and Elias the type of the saints raised and changed. How is this? Moses died and was buried. Elias was taken up to heaven without passing through death. These are the heavenly saints. Paul tells us that the dead in Christ shall rise first, and we which are alive and remain when He comes shall be changed, and all caught up to meet the Lord in the air. (1 Cor. xv. 51; 1 Thes. ix. 13—18.)

Peter, James, and John, who were looking on, are typical

of the *earthly* saints in the kingdom, who are looking upon the *heavenly* saints, raised and changed, in the same glory with Christ Himself. There is one glory of the celestial, and another glory of the terrestrial.

“But Peter and they that were with Him were heavy with sleep.” Typical of the spirit of slumber which rests upon the Jewish remnant in the latter day; and who, “when they were awake” saw His glory.

We have, too, what flesh is. It is ever the same—nothing can mend it. The disciples were asleep here in the presence of the Glory, as we afterwards find they were asleep in the presence of the Agony in Gethsemane.

After Peter had made his mistake, “There came a cloud and overshadowed them, and (as it might be more clearly translated) *they* feared as *those* entered into the cloud.” What did the cloud signify? It was the symbol of Jehovah’s presence. Why did the earthly ones fear then? Because nobody had ever “entered into” it before! It had led the Israelites out of Egypt, and through the Red Sea. It became cloud and darkness to the Egyptians, and light to Israel. It spake to Moses face to face. Rebuked them, and led them, and fought for them. But no one had ever *entered into* that which was the unveiled presence of God. Yet Moses and Elias were perfectly at ease there. The earthly ones could not understand this new thing of entering into the cloud. Here we get the end of the journey—the Father’s house—(John xiv. 1—3, xvii. 24), for the voice that came out of the cloud said, “This is *my beloved Son*: hear Him.” Who could say this but the Father?

Is it so much matter that the pathway *is* thorny, when we know it leads there?

Now, the Lord has shown them the journey and the end of it; but He does not have us to tread that way alone. He leaves the glory on the mount, and goes along the path with us, giving us His company to comfort us by the way.

In verse 40, we see their unbelief while He was yet with them, at their very side. “How long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?”

They have His company by the way, but His perfect devotedness exposes their selfishness. In verse 51, we find His intense devotedness, “He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem”—the place where He was to suffer. His was the entire surrender of self—the giving up of self altogether.

The Law only told me to love my neighbour as myself,—the Gospel goes immeasurably beyond. It teaches us to do what Christ did—to give up self altogether for His enemies. We find self exposed in the various traits of selfishness which actuate us, in this portion of the chapter (verses 46—56) and the perfect devotedness of Christ makes this all the more apparent.

The forty-sixth verse shows us *personal selfishness*: “There arose a reasoning among them which of them should be greatest;” and Jesus rebukes them. Perceiving the thought of their heart, he took a child and set him *by Him*. “He that is least among you all the same shall be great.” The true greatness, because most like His own.

Here we have another sort of selfishness in the next verse. The *selfishness of a clique*. They saw one labouring for the Lord, but as he did not go with them in everything, they forbade him.

Then in verse 54 we see *selfishness* under the cloak of *apparent zeal* for the Lord’s honour: they wanted to call down fire from heaven to consume those who would not receive Him. How His presence exposes us!

I find a perfect contrast to all this in that beautiful chapter, the 2d of Philippians. Every one gives up self in that chapter. First we see the Lord Himself emptying Himself of His glory. “He made himself of no reputation.” “Humbled himself and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross.” Then self was nothing to Paul—what he cared for was the state of the Philippians. “Yea, and if I be offered (poured forth) upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all.” Timotheus was like-minded, and would care for their state. Epaphroditus instead of being troubled by his sickness, the only thing that troubled him was that the Philippians had heard of his sickness, and would be anxious about him, he counted on their love.

What we want is *occupation of heart with Christ*. If you have a bad temper, and go on praying about it, and mourning over it, you’ll never get a bit better, or overcome it; but if you are occupied with Him, do you think your temper will rise while He is before you? It is the only way to get the victory.

We get an exposure of *nature* in the 57th verse. One whom the Lord had not called offers to follow Him. “It is

an easy thing to follow Jesus—any one can do it,” he thinks. But the Lord tells him that he had not counted the cost. “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests: but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.”

Next we find one whom the Lord *had* called finding a difficulty in following, and making excuses for delay. It was the effectual call of grace here. But he was not up to the mark, and, as we often do, he found difficulties and hindrances in the way when the call had come. “Let the dead (to God) bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God,” is the Lord’s reply.

There is I think a reference to Elisha in the next passage. You remember that one day when he was ploughing, Elijah cast his mantle over him, and he said, “Let me kiss my father and mother, and then I will follow thee.” The real call had come, but he wasn’t up to the height of the call just then; but Elijah answered, “What have I done unto thee?” And Elisha returned, and after slaying the yoke of oxen, he arose and went after Elijah.

We get a great deal in this chapter:—The rejection of Jesus as the Christ, or Messiah; and then the thorough change in everything which characterises the remaining part of this gospel. Then we have a beautiful line of truth—the Lord shows the *path* of those who would follow Him—a thorny way—a daily taking up of the cross, losing of life here; and He shows the *end* of it—the glory of the kingdom and the Father’s house. Then leaving the glory, He gives his company to cheer and rebuke and comfort His people as needed by them, and He himself being God’s standard for us to aim at and follow, exposes us to ourselves.

FRAGMENTS.

If we have Christ, we have all—without Christ we have nothing. You can be happy without money, without liberty, without parents, without friends, if Christ is yours. If you have not Christ, neither money, nor liberty, nor parents, nor friends, can make you happy. Christ, with a chain, is liberty; liberty without Christ, is a chain. Christ without anything, is riches; all things without Christ, is poverty indeed.

The administration of the fulness of times (Eph. i. 10) is the result of God's ways in government when all things in heaven and earth will be united in perfect peace and union, under the authority of the Son of Man—the Second Adam—the Son of God.

When Christ came, prophecy ceased, because He was there to fulfil all the words that the Prophets had spoken, and all that had been promised to the fathers. Immediately when He was rejected, prophecy was heard again. Prophecy then divided itself into *two* subjects. One, touching His Kingdom and coming glory—"things to come." The other disclosed the secret of God—the Church, Christ's Body—His Bride; not as of the world, but as given to Him out of the world, during His rejection.

The *Law* requires good from a sinner, and as a consequence does not find it, it therefore works wrath, and condemns, and curses the sinner.

Grace works to produce good in the sinner, by imparting something to him; not requiring good where it is not to be found. Consequently, instead of condemning and cursing the sinner, it puts away his sin.

Satan is an accuser of the brethren in heaven. (Job. i.; Rev. xii.; Zech. iii.) He is the accuser of God on earth, (Gen. iii.) and a persecutor of the saints. (Job ii.; Rev. xiii.)

SCRIPTURE QUERIES AND ANSWERS.

Q.—"Eva" writes, "And Zaccheus stood and said unto the Lord, Behold, the half of my goods I give unto the poor: and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." Luke xix. 8, 9.) Do you think this the language of self-righteousness, or of a heart touched by the grace of God?

A.—It is plainly the language of a benevolent and conscientious heart, without the knowledge of salvation, which the Lord brought that day to Zaccheus' house. The tone of Zaccheus is as different as possible from that of the self-righteous Pharisee who "stood and prayed with himself,"

in ch. xviii. 11, 12. Here was the case of a man who was truly in earnest. Neither his diminutive stature nor the crowd around the Lord were suffered to hinder him. (Would that we might see many as truly in earnest as the blind beggar and Zaccheus!) The Lord Jesus, the good Shepherd, calls His own sheep by name. He said, "Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house."

Zaccheus tells the Lord what had been the habitual practice of "an honest and good heart;" but still, however blessed to see human righteousness where it exists, there was no recognition of this when it was the question of bringing salvation to him—"This day is salvation come to this house. . . . For the son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

"JESUS, LORD, I PRAISE THEE."

Jesus, Lord, I praise Thee
 For all that Thou hast done,
 Thy untold acts of graciousness—
 The victory Thou hast won.
 I praise Thee for the bitter cross,
 And the wrath which thou did'st bear;
 From whence all my salvation flows,
 For my sins were on Thee there.
 I praise Thee for the empty grave—
 For the ascension cloud—
 Praise falters on my tongue—I sigh
 For praise more fit, more loud!

But more than all that Thou hast *done*,
 I praise for what Thou *art*—
 The Son of God—the Son of man—
 With a loving, beating heart.
 I praise Thee that thou art my Lord—
 My Saviour also, Thou—
 My head—the object for my heart,
 My everything, I trow!
 And this my greatest joy on earth,
 That *Thou art with me* here.
 My greatest joy in heaven shall be,
 That *I am with Thee* there!—J. W. T.

WORDS OF TRUTH.



“FOR THE WEARY, REST AND BE
THANKFUL.”

SUCH, dear reader, were the words that arrested my attention in travelling through the country some time since. They were written on seats placed by the side of a long road, for the use, as the words expressed, of “*the weary.*” And while considering the great kindness of the person who placed them, I thought, what an exact resemblance the whole subject bore to the blessed “Rest,” eternal and secure, our good and gracious God would have all enjoy by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

He offers it freely to “all who will” on their way through this weary world. Here were those seats open and free for all to use who felt their need of them. He is just as open and willing to receive all who feel their need of Him, and would have them enjoy the perfect rest and peace which He gives. Are you trusting in Him? in His precious blood? then believe that you *are* justified from all things by this simple faith; and “therefore,” have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. v. 1.) This truth is what He would have our souls enter into at this present time. Oh, how many dear children of God still go on “seeking rest and finding none,” while it is already eternally and perfectly made for them, and freely offered to them; therefore it only remains for them to “believe” and enter into it, that they may most truly enjoy it while here. God has most fully shown forth His love toward us in giving His only and dearly beloved Son to die for us; and the Lord Jesus Christ, in His own precious word says, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matt. xi. 28.)

Yes, dear reader, the precious words are, "*I will give you rest.*" Why not take it, then! It is most perfectly in His power to give, for He has wrought out and perfected it by His own death and resurrection, and as the result of this, it is now offered as a free gift to all who seek to have it. Was there ever a "weary" one who came earnestly seeking for this "rest" sent empty away? No, no, it could not be. "Him that cometh to me I will *in no wise* cast out." (John vi. 37.) Why, then, will weary ones still go on trying to make a "rest" for themselves, and through themselves? I pray you to give the effort up *at once*, and "rest and be thankful!" You can never accomplish it; you must *first* give up the trial, and you will then, and *not till then*, enter into the enjoyment of what He freely gives, and would have all now enjoy. No longer then, by your thoughts and actions, if not by your wish, bring dishonour on His finished work by striving to accomplish by your own effort, what *He has already done for you*. However weak and imperfect is your faith and trust in Him, still this "rest" is your portion. Your "rest" and "peace" have been made before God, by the "precious blood of Christ," which has satisfied all His righteous and holy claims against us as sinners, and God has declared Himself fully satisfied.

No longer doubt this, dear reader; believe the precious, peace-giving truth, in simple confidence, and enjoy this "rest." If you were journeying along the road I mention, and felt "weary," you would not hesitate one moment to sit and rest on the seats placed "*for the weary.*" No, nor would a shadow of doubt enter your mind as to your being freely welcome to the use of them, no matter what your condition in this life; and that, not from any merit in yourself, but entirely through the kindness of the person who had placed them. Thus it is with God, and the rest He has provided for the "weary" in His Son. You could not mistake the plain meaning of the simple words on them, why then doubt the truth and meaning of God's eternal and unchangeable words? Their meaning is just as plain, and the words as simple, with this important feature in favour of the latter, that they are God's unchanging words, while the others are man's changeable words which some day are sure to pass away. The latter is *the word of the Lord which endureth for ever*. (1 Pet. i. 25.) Then once more I do pray you, for His glory, and for your own sake.

"REST AND BE THANKFUL."

Reader, are you among those who have never known what it is to be "weary and heavy laden" with the burden of your sins? I beseech you, think of the matter in time—consider it "while it is to-day" and you will find that there is a willing, loving Jesus, ready to give you "rest"—ready to relieve you of the load. "Come" to Him, and He will do it. Believe on Him, and you will *know* that they all have been forgiven. "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man (the risen Jesus) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him *all that believe are justified from all things.* (Acts xiii. 38-39.)

May God, in His great mercy, enlighten your understanding to know your need of Jesus as a Saviour; and teach you to trust in Him as the *only* one who can save; and may you, and every "weary" traveller who reads these lines, be led by His Holy Spirit into the present enjoyment of the truth contained in that simple inscription, "Rest and be thankful," for His name's sake. Amen.

NOAH BUILDING THE ARK, AND NOAH IN THE ARK.

THE TWO-FOLD CHRISTIAN TESTIMONY.

In the sixth and seventh chapters of Genesis we find Noah in two positions. In chapter vi. he is *building* the Ark, and in chapter vii. he is *in* the Ark.

In the first position he was surrounded by a hostile, unbelieving world, to which he was a preacher of righteousness, (2 Peter ii.,) this was his outward testimony towards it; while in his own personal walk, which was also a testimony to it of approaching judgment, he was building an Ark. "By faith, Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an Ark to the saving of his house" (Heb. xi. 7); thus condemning the world. All his expectations, and hopes, and prospects, were centred in this Ark. It was the "one thing" which occupied his hands during that eventful time, when the "long-suffering of God waited" in his days. (1 Peter iii.) Everything around him had its value according as it served his purpose. Nothing was of use but as it helped him on. The world had corrupted itself, and was filled with violence and the end of all flesh in

God's sight had come. Noah waited for the judgment of the world. He knew that nothing else would close the scene, as soon as God's long-suffering had come to an end—the world's iniquity had long since come to the full, nothing now remained but the most dire and disastrous judgment, when the moment had arrived in the counsels of God.

In the second position he was shut in by the Lord's own hand (Gen. vii. 16), and seated in the Ark which floated securely over the waters of judgment, with which the world was enshrouded, as by a funeral pall! For a whole year (ch. vii. 6, ch. viii. 13), while the changes and vicissitudes of season had gone round—storm and calm—sunshine and shower—there he was securely floating over the waves and billows of judgment shut into the Ark. Not a drop of the mighty waters reached him in this secure place, which was pitched within and without with pitch. Ruin and death were all around and under him, the only place where there was life and sustenance of life was in the Ark.

All this speaks to the Christian, with this difference, that he is in a figure in *both* positions at the *same* time; and his testimony is defective when he does not witness to this. In Phil. iii., the Christian is building the Ark, and thus condemning the world which runs on to judgment; Christ is his only object and hope. Everything which does not serve his purpose in the "one thing" which occupies him, is "dross and dung." It is set aside as worthless, savouring of human life and flesh which is about to be engulfed in the mighty waters—or, it is dropped as a hindrance in the testimony of the workman towards a world which Christ has forsaken, and which in rejecting God in Christ, sealed its own doom. The world around is hostile and unbelieving—speaking of progress and improvement, and adornment and beauty; confident in its own powers ("confident in the flesh") to repair the distance between it and God. To remove the sentence of judgment under which it lies, by plucking up its "thorns and thistles," and in "buying and selling, planting and building," ignoring the tide of judgment which has flowed over it at the Cross. The Ark is his object—to "know Him," (Christ) is his aim—human righteousness is cast aside as worthless—confidence in self ignored—"what things" seemed to be gain are counted loss for the Ark; they would not aid in the "one thing" which governed him. "All things" have got their own value—they are as "dross and

ding" to the soul who is thus building an Ark, and by his walk condemning those "whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, who mind earthly things." All his expectations, his hopes, his prospects, are centred in Christ, and in the desire to know Him in the glory, and the power of His resurrection, which works in him to bring him there, he desires fellowship with his sufferings, and conformity to His death, if by whatever means it may be, he might attain to the resurrection from among the dead. Confidence in flesh—birthright—righteousness by the law—worldly things, were loss; while the power of Christ's resurrection—fellowship of His sufferings, and conformity to His death were courted and desired, as helping to build the Ark, as it were, in which all his expectations are centred. Nothing was of use but those things which helped him on. All that could not be brought into the Ark was set aside as a weight—all that could was cultivated and prized.

But while the Christian is thus as it were building an Ark, he is also shut in to Christ, and by His resurrection, and that power that wrought in Him, he is raised up together with Christ, and seated together in heavenly places in Him. (Eph. ii.) God has shut him in. He has a good conscience by the resurrection of Christ (1 Peter iii.); and while the world is shrouded in the waters of a mightier judgment than ever it was in the flood, he is in the secure place; not a drop of its waters can reach him—the vicissitudes of the world, its changes of storm and sunshine—wind and rain, do not affect him, for the entire period, till the judgment is removed. What has he to do with it all around? just to float over it all, enjoying the food and life which is shut into the Ark—"All spiritual blessings in heavenly places" which he possesses in Christ. (Eph. i.) Death and destruction are around him and below him, and in the midst of it all he is floating securely above it, and the mighty waters, the waves and billows, do not affect him at all. He is above all the ruin and death here below, in Christ, and he finds it is infinite gain. Do you suppose Noah lost anything by being shut into the Ark from the scene of desolation around? Do you suppose he found that he was mistaken when he was actually shut into that which had been all his expectation for many a year—for which he had surrendered all his earthly possessions? They were of but little value when they were sunk beneath the waters of death, while that which was his

expectation and hope was riding triumphantly on the waves! Not a single living blessing was wanting in the Ark with him; not a single nourishing thing of "all food that is eaten" was absent. People talk as if they would lose a great deal if they were thus shut up to Christ. Not a beauty in all the creation was outside the Ark: every beautiful living object was shut into it with Noah; while every deathful thing was shut out of it in the flood of waters. People are afraid to drop the things which hinder them enjoying Christ—fearing that after all they would not be recompensed an hundred-fold if they did so. People try too, to realize that they are seated together in Christ in heavenly places, and at the same time hold on to all that savours of that which is under judgment here below. Would you think well of Noah if he had the desire, after God had shut him in, to go out again on the waters, and then try to realize that he was shut in? This is what many are doing. Do you think such people condemn the world by their walk? Do you think they have Noah's faith? People talk of judgment which is hanging over the world as a thunder-cloud, and at the same time they are like Lot who said true things, but who "seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law." (Gen. xix.) You see such persons perhaps preaching and teaching, and at the same time in the world, of the world—ministering, by their position, or rank, or such things, to its moral state. What business have such to preach like Lot of judgment, and at the same time be as he—sitting in the gate—even Lot's own family circle did not believe him.

Can my reader say honestly, "I do want to be shut up to Christ. I want to feed on all the sustenance and life that is there. I want not only to build the Ark, but to be in the Ark—shut into Him, and in Him realizing that all that is not in Him, savours of death and judgment." If the Christian has any object before his soul than seeking to win Christ, he is not in his true place—he is not building the Ark, and condemning the world. On the other hand if he is not plainly showing that he has accepted the fact, that the end of all flesh—his own flesh, too—has come in God's sight, and that he is shut in to Christ—riding triumphantly over the judgment with which the world is shrouded, seeking nothing outside Him; he is not witnessing and walking in the power of that which he has professed. His testimony is defective and comparatively worthless.

May the Lord give this condition of soul to His much loved people, and may they, on the other hand, desire such a condition of soul ; for His name's sake. Amen. [Ed.]

“OUR GREAT WILL CASE.”

“FOR all things are yours ; whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours ; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.” (1 Cor. iii. 22-23.)

Public attention in England has been awakened the last few weeks by an extraordinary Will Case, in which four hundred thousand pounds are involved. The counsel, attornories, and proctors on each side, have pleaded and done their best for the respective claimants. The Judge of the Probate Court takes time to consider the case before giving his decision. What a moment of suspense for all parties !

“The heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ” will do well to turn all this to account, by contrasting the uncertainty which all the contending parties must experience during the interval which the judge claims, and subsequently the dissatisfaction which the decision will occasion to *one class* of those disputants, when judgment is given, with the unchallenged title and undisturbed enjoyment of the believer's portion in and with a risen and glorified Christ and Lord ! Indeed it is well for us as the children of God, not only on an occasion like the present, but at all times, to assure ourselves, by reviewing the way in which all is signed, and sealed, and delivered, and witnessed by “the earnest of the Spirit,” that no disturbing power or voice can ever be raised against us, for who can dispute the title of Christ to be the Head over all things to His body the Church, “the fulness of Him that filleth all in all ?” Nay, in the conscious security in which all is held and kept by the power of God, our fitting acknowledgment is found in thanksgivings and praises. “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ.*” No one “shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect !” is the challenge from the Supreme Judge Himself. “It is God that justifieth,” silences every accuser, and is the warrant for faith's boldest expectations, sustained on the fact, “it is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God,

who also maketh intercession for us." Do "the heirs and joint heirs with Christ" think of the day when the voice which once shook the earth shall once more shake "not only the earth, but also heaven," they are only to be reminded, that they shall be *with the Maker*, and that "the things which cannot be shaken may remain," and that the kingdom which we receive *cannot be moved*. How secure from the top to the bottom, from the highest heavens to the earthly places are all the interests of the people of God as we thus glance over their vast dimensions, or view them more closely in their solid foundations! Do we think, moreover, of our *personal fitness*—we are again put into the place of worship and praise, as we give "thanks to the Father, which *hath made us meet* to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love—in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." It is by these ways that "the heirs and joint heirs with Christ" are *made meet* for the inheritance. Nor shall we forget the new titles and relations by which we come into possession—for we are a "forgiven" people, a "redeemed" people, a "translated" people, a "delivered" people, and we love to insist upon these peculiarities, with ourselves if needs be, through unbelief or misgivings—and with others if occasion require, on account of their being still occupied with flesh and blood, and their supposed moral fitness for the kingdom of God. When most confident of our personal meetness in Christ, and most sure of our heavenly calling through Christ, and of the Spirit sealing—we do well for ourselves and in true love to others to remember that flesh and blood cannot enter within the precincts of these dominions and estates—nor will any pretensions founded on *creature* confidence or attainments be recorded; or the fairest genealogy of mere human descent be accepted—*no, not one!* Most resolutely will every such testimonial be denied, for upon the vestibule of this Probate Court is written, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God," and again, "No flesh should glory in His presence, that, according as it is written, he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord." Creation ground and the creature are now set aside, and afford no warrant for the spiritual confidence. The new genealogies and titles of the children of the Father, "the heirs and joint heirs with Christ," begin their new pedigree

as "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, *but of God.*" Redemption by the precious blood of Christ is their boast, deliverance from the entire sphere where Adam fell, and all its consequences too, by the death and resurrection of Christ is their joy—life, eternal life, in union with the Second Man, the ascended and glorified one, in their new dignity, and quickened with, raised with, seated in Christ in the heavenly places—their new Church position in glory. In this way, and by such means, the sons of God put in their birth qualifications, as born again of the Spirit, *born of God*—and in this manner our redemption standing and title are accredited in the ascended glorified representative forerunner. "We are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ," and, "if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." We thus put in our proofs of "qualification by birth"—of our "redemption by blood"—of our "relationships by life" with the Second Man, the word made flesh, and can say "Blessed by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy *hath begotten us again unto a lively hope* by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to *an inheritance*, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, *reserved in heaven for you* who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." Such an outline is *the Christian's* great Will Case, to be made good in actual manifestation when Christ comes in his glory. "All things are yours—whether the world, or death, or life, or things present or things to come, all are yours; and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's!" Being thus assured on all hands of the validity of our title—and that no adverse claimants can ever put in a plea or demurrer against our undisturbed enjoyment, let us now open "the will itself" as related in the glorious xvii. chapter of John! "*These words spake Jesus*, and lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify Thee, as *thou has given Him power over all flesh that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given Him.*" What would our brightest glories and choicest blessings be worth to us, except given in the power of *a life* which can appreciate and enjoy them, with the Father and the Son? "This is life eternal that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent." Was there ever such a will as this, which *gives* in the first place *a life*,

“eternal life,” the very capacity of holding and knowing all our blessings with the Father and the Son? Another part of this will is, “I have manifested *thy name* unto the men which *thou gavest me out of the world*, thine they were, and *thou gavest them me*, and they have kept thy word.” What grants and interchanges of rights are we introduced to *here*, respecting ourselves! “Now, they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee, for I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them.” Precious deposits these by words and ways and works, Lord Jesus! What son, what heir, what joint heir does not delight in the security of all, as we hear Him further say, “I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine, and all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them.” What words are these, as He lifted up His eyes to heaven, concerning *us* in relation to Himself and to God! What will He say more? Be astonished, ye heavens, and wonder, O earth, as he prays—“Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.” What a will is this in all its parts, and this will *is ours!* The Codicils are equally remarkable (if one may so speak upon such matters) as we hear Jesus say further, “and the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one”—and lastly, “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.” One thing alone remains to be done, which He who alone could do it, has done, and will do in the full performance of every jot and tittle of His own will as He says, “O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me, and I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them!” *Love* is now become our great guarantee for the accomplishment of this will of the Father respecting the many sons, and many brethren, and many heirs and joint heirs! *Power*, Almighty power had done much in this old creation, and will do more in the new creation; but what a ground of confidence is ours, when we see that love has come in, and unites itself with

this Power! The heart and hand of God the Father are *one* in the fulfilment of all that could meet and satisfy the desires of Christ; and we are introduced by grace into these *glories*, and made the third parties in this eternal will of God, and in these everlasting counsels of the Godhead. The undisclosed love and the "hidden wisdom" had originated and planned all in Christ, before ever the world began:—the Son of the Father had in the "due time" of these eternal purposes, made them all know, and put aside all the disqualifications, and secured them all by His work on the Cross—by His triumph over every adverse power in the sepulchre, and by His own glory at the right hand of God. The Holy Ghost has come down at Pentecost as the Paraclete, to seal the Sons of the Father, the heirs of God, and the joint heirs of Christ in undisputed title, to be witness and earnest of all they are to inherit and enjoy when the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and we are caught up to meet the Lord in the air. What a moment! and what a people! "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy—to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen."—J. E. B.

THOUGHTS ON THE SIMILITUDES OF THE KINGDOM AS PRESENTED IN THE PARABLES OF THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

(Continued from Page 28.)

"SOME fell on good ground," &c. (v. 8.) We come now to the bright side of the scene, though not unmingled brightness. There are shadows yet of the old darkness, the effect of this bad ground which in the three former cases hindered all fruit, and which here brings a chequered result, "and brought forth fruit, some an hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold." Why if the ground be good is there such a varied crop?

In the first place, let us enquire what is meant by *good ground*, and without hesitation we answer that it does not mean that any heart is in itself good and capable of bringing forth fruit to God. Every child of Adam is without under-

standing, as Scripture declares, consequently can produce no good fruit, and must be placed in one of the three preceding classes. That is, wherever the word is preached, let it be the word of the kingdom as then, or the word of His grace as now, the hearer will be found in one of them. There is nothing in his nature which, in itself, can be compared to good ground. But our Lord says (ver. 23), that he that received the seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word and understandeth it and bringeth forth fruit. How clearly beside the sowing of the word by the Lord Jesus, there is another work by the Holy Spirit which is not at all alluded to here. Not because it is unimportant, yea, absolutely necessary, but because our Lord is simply giving facts and results which are manifest to all. That which is seen of men—not the internal operations of the Spirit. We have seen how the wicked one (Satan) operated in the first case, and the hindrances in the second and third. In the fourth, while there is no hindering power seen at work, neither is their visible, on the other hand, one to aid in the production of good fruit. It is the external fact—the ground was good. Good seed was sown, and there was good fruit. So a man hears the word, understands it, and produces good fruit, he repents and believes, and lives a godly life. He is likened to good ground. But if we seek to know *how* a soul understands the word and bears fruit, Scripture is plain that it is only by the direct and inward operation of the Holy Spirit—where he acts, and there alone is found the power to understand; and good fruit borne, without Him, whatever the appearance, there is no reality.

This fourth case is the contrast of the others. In the first the hearer does not understand, in this he does understand. In the second and third cases, while it is not said that the hearer does not understand, it is said that he is unfruitful, either dried up by the sun, or choked with thorns. Here he bringeth forth fruit. Even to understand the word without bearing fruit is as fatal as not to understand.

But whence arises the difference in the quantity of fruit borne? We know from the word of God that the heart remains evil to the last, and that kind of hindrance, which is seen in the three former cases respectively, exists in the hearts of the "good ground" hearers, and if not thoroughly watched and judged, will manifest itself, and hence the varied results ever from the good ground. This proves that it is

not the absence of an evil nature which here makes good ground. It is the Spirit who gives the will and the power to understand and to be fruitful. We can in our own souls, conscious of the irreclaimable nature of the soil of our own hearts, bear witness to the sovereign power which produced fruit to God. Yet, alas, it is just here where we can detect so much failure. Our poverty of understanding, our fleshliness, worldliness, are always working against, and hindering the word, and just so far as it is unjudged we fail in fruit-bearing.

This parable shows us that every one who hears the word, whether converted or not, is responsible for bearing fruit. What a solemn thought for those who think they have done their duty, if they attend once or twice a week to hear the gospel, but do not concern themselves about the obedience it requires. When the husbandman sows good seed, he has a right to expect a harvest. When God causes his word to be preached, He, too, has a right to expect and to demand that it be received and obeyed. Therefore we read (Acts xvii.) God now *commandeth* all men every where to repent, and on this account (or for this reason) He has appointed a day in which He will judge the world, and to all them who have heard of Christ, THE question will be how they received Him, how they obeyed Him. All who profess and call themselves Christians are outwardly as branches in the vine. (John xv.) If there be no fruit they are cast forth to be burned. Solemn thoughts for all who bear the name of Christ. Are we bearing fruit? If we are not only by profession branches in the vine, but also members of the body of Christ, through faith in Him, then we have the gracious words of our Lord, so full of comfort to our souls—"I have chosen you and *ordained* you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." If we sincerely desire to be fruitful, we know that the husbandman—the Father—will purge us that we may bring forth more fruit. *More fruit.* How full of meaning are these two words. God's desire, His complacency in the result of His own work. He prizes the fruit, it is sweet to His taste, and He wants *more* fruit. In my garden is a tree, where fruit is always scanty and never seems to ripen, I do not care about *more* fruit from such a tree as this; but there is another, which in its season bears more sweet and pleasant fruit, now about this one I do care, and therefore use all means to make it bring forth more

fruit. So it is with the Father, He prizes the fruit we bear, and He purges us that we may be more fruitful. "Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples."

It is worthy of remark that while there are three cases in which there is no fruit, there is also in the fourth case a threefold division of them who bear fruit. Is this diversity attributable to the three kinds of hindrance? Can it be said that he who brings forth only thirty-fold, is naturally of that dull stupid class portrayed in the first case, that he who brings forth sixty-fold is characterized by that which operated fatally in the second or third case? This I doubt; although it is certain that he who brings forth a hundred-fold is one who stands before the others, yet each one has the seeds of *all* evil within, and it is by the prevalence of one of the evils in the three first cases that he takes his place, for these unfruitful cases take in all men. Therefore the varied result is due to the want of diligence and watchfulness on the believer's part, against the peculiar tendency of his own bad nature. The Christian's failure in fruit-bearing will doubtless be characterized by this or that prevailing evil. But the true cause of the lack of fruit is owing to the want of a self-judging spirit, and prayerful dependence upon God. Where these are lacking, the door is open for the entrance of every kind of evil, whether of the flesh, or of the world.

Yet there is a divine order in the giving of the hindering powers, and the beauty of it would be marred if the order were changed. It seems to give in most souls the successive characters of the warfare we wage. For in the first case it is Satan opposing the life-giving word of the Son, in the second it is the flesh which is always opposed to the spirit, and in the third it is the love of the world which is incompatible with the love of the Father. When a soul is quickened there is life from the Son, but the flesh remains in him, and the spirit lusteth against the flesh. If we daily mortify the flesh, and strive to keep it under, still though there be no craving for ease, or for more than God has given in this world, there may be undue anxiety and fear concerning self, or one's family; cares engrossing too much of one's attention. Now this does really proceed from a love of the world which has unperceivedly hindered us from trusting to, and resting implicitly upon, the love of the Father, and consequently of loving Him fully. The love of the world is a thorn deeply

rooted in our hearts. In many an unsuspected corner we find it ready to spring up. It is only the light of God's word that can make it manifest.

Among those who received the word of the Lord, no doubt this varied result was manifested. For we must remember that the Lord was describing His own work, as well as foreshowing the result of the preached word during the time of His absence, and accordingly we find those who followed and clave close to Him all through His ministry, sharing His shame and reproach; themselves also cast out and despised. Still they were with Him up to the hour when Jesus delivered Himself over to the power of the world and of darkness. Then indeed all forsook Him and fled. In that path where lay wrath, judgment, and death, He alone was, He alone could be; the most loving, the most faithful, could not follow Him then. But he came for the very purpose of treading that path alone, and He went through it alone, as ONE able to bear all the judgment due to sin, and so to deliver His beloved ones from that which would have been, must have been, to them everlasting destruction. But up to this hour, in which he must be alone if He would have companions in glory by and bye, amid all their falterings and failings, they loved and remained with him. We can see and adore the grace which so estimates their faithfulness. But there were others whose love to Him was only seen at the end when they went to beg of Pilate the dead body of Jesus, who were prevented through fear of the Jews from publicly owning Him before. It may be that many received His word whose fruit was only seen when he had ascended to His Father. In the little assembly met together in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost there might have been seen the healed leaper, whose faith scarcely reached to the will of the Lord to heal him; the palsied man whose sins were forgiven; the woman who followed the Lord into the house of Simon the Pharisee whose faith saved her; the man born blind who confessed Jesus to be the Son of God; the woman of Samaria, and others of whom we read, others too not mentioned, who perhaps loved the Lord in secret, but whose faith was not sufficiently strong to break through difficulties till the ascended Lord brought them out in spite of all reproach and persecution, and formed them into one body, one Church, by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. But however weak and fearful, however little the faith, not one such but was

known to and cared for by the Lord. If in many instances the return was only thirty-fold, it was good ground, and as such prized by Him.

May it be our earnest endeavour to render a full return to Him who has caused us to receive His word, so that by bearing much fruit we may glorify the Father.—R. B.

“M A N N A.”

How vain for an Israelite to have searched for a large piece of Manna—and yet when all the small pieces (the “small round thing,”) were put together, they formed a large piece, *quite* sufficient to each man “according to his eating.” While vainly searching for a large piece, he would neglect to gather up the small pieces which were like Coriander Seed, and thus his time was spent, and the large piece not found. Do we keep looking for signal mercies?—for large revelations of Christ? and do we neglect to gather together and to store up and feed upon the little (?) mercies and revelations of Himself which strew our pathway all the day? and in which we learn the heart of Him who has strewed them around us on all sides? Could my eyes be wandering in search of a large piece, when the wilderness is strewed on all sides around me with small pieces? Have I gathered them all up to-day? If so, depend upon it, I have more than my eating—“I have all things and abound”—surely I have enough at any rate.

The soul is on the way to find itself longing for fish, and onions, and garlic, if it is wandering after a large piece of Manna. Life is made up here of little things—and the soul finds Christ in the little things—the (“small round thing,”) so to say,) and finding Him I gather Him up, and feed upon Him, and find myself stronger and stronger.

I am almost afraid to say what I feel about the change in the taste of the Manna from Exodus xvi. 31, to Numbers xi. 8. The colour too was changed from white to the “colour of bdellium.” Does the soul ever recover its first freshness of taste when it has longed after Egypt’s fleshpots? Has Christ the same freshness to the eye when it has been upon the “ends of the earth,” and the soul has been thinking of Egypt and of making a “captain?”

One has said with regard to the above remarks. “How could a soul which has tried again to satisfy itself with

Egypt's food, find Manna the *same* thing after restoration? The pure and sweet Manna which has sustained the *virgin* soul which has unwaveringly followed the guiding pillar, must for the *restored* soul, have its colour changed into that of *tried* gold, and its taste to that of *healing* oil. Nothing else would supply its need now."—Ed.

"REDEMPTION."

GENESIS shows the entrance of sin with intimation of redemption. Exodus expands the view of redemption. Till we are introduced to God as Redeemer, we never know Him. To know Him merely in creation, is now but idolatry. True, we find traces of the Garden everywhere—but to look at creation now as worthy of God—how mistaken! There is a disturbing fire at work, of which God is not the source.

Faith, is answer to God's redemption, as light to His creation. What is grace? God making provision for our condition as sinners, Eden was God's provision for our innocence. He cannot give us back the garden—but faith entertains His new, his unspeakably precious gift.

Adam walked up and down Eden in freedom; it was his obedience to enjoy. And so with us. Adam had no more title to the garden than I have to Christ. The Israelites pleaded the blood outside, and went within to feast, not going outside every moment to see the blood. This is as perfect as Adam; because God provides for both conditions—They ate as departing. Are we to love our life? Where is He who through love put the blood on the door? Shall I abide where he passed through as quickly as possible? There is a sight of the grandest possible magnitude in the creation of God—a people morally incapacitated to enjoy Him in a ruined world. God is faithful and just to forgive, because He owes to the blood remission, and the blessed God delights to pay His own debts. Then Egypt gets rid of the redeemed people. There is a discord between the two—the place of danger and difficulty is left behind. Have we in spirit left behind the fleshpots and taskmasters? Extrication may be of different measures; God has respect to our feebleness, *but measure not his calling by our answer to it!* What shall we say when our neighbours say, why

do ye such things? "I was a poor bond slave in Egypt, and the Lord delivered me!" The heart instinctively knows what it is to have a character formed by the kindnesses of a neighbour. God has done *us* a kindness—let our ways answer to it. Far happier to learn the key to duty from the kindness of God, than from Mount Sinai; so in every duty Paul shows us it is Christ that forms the character.

Outside Egypt "the cloud." I am in a house on fire—the moment I get outside, there is a friend waiting to conduct me. And the cloud can transform itself. Exquisite picture of rising fulness to meet rising necessity. All in the New Testament treats on what treasures there are in Jesus! He is not outdone by the cloud. Are we not ashamed to trick our bodies out while passing by such visions of delight and glory?

JACOB.

JACOB had offended the Lord, having taken the way of nature, listening to the counsels of unbelief, and thus departing from his path and his call as a saint of God. He is therefore put under discipline—for he has to learn the bitterness of his own way.

His place, on that very night on which he left his father's house, witnessed therefore the hand of the Lord, who still loved him. It was, no doubt, the fruit and wages of his own transgression, but it told also that God was his God, for He was visiting him in fatherly chastening. It is, accordingly, such a place as God may own. It was not *sin*, but *discipline*, which marked it. Had it been the tent where he and his mother had dressed the kids for Isaac's feast, God could not have owned it, for deceit and fraud were practised there. But at Luz, where Jacob is under chastening, the Lord can be, and He does come and manifest Himself there.

He comes to make glory a great reality to this poor, solitary, disciplined saint. He does not come to soften his pillow, or to change his condition, or to send him back to the home of his father and the care of his mother. He leaves the present fruit of Jacob's naughtiness just as bitter as He found it. But he does come to make glory and heaven a great reality to him.

Onwards, therefore, Jacob goes, and, as the story tells us, he served twenty years under a certain hard taskmaster in

Padan-aram. But the Lord blesses him there, and he conducts himself in the fear of the Lord there, and all is well.

In due time he is on his way back to Canaan. But, indeed, it is a different Jacob as well as a different journey. He was an *empty* Jacob at Bethel, he is now a *full* Jacob at Peniel. He has become two bands. Flocks and herds, and servants, and wives and children, tell of his prosperity. He had been on that road twenty years before, unprovided and alone, with a staff in his hand; but now we see him thus accompanied and surrounded. He has become a rich man. He has a stake in the world. He has something to lose, and may be a prey to others, as he surely must be an object with them.

We hear of Esau coming and four hundred men with him. He trembles; he fears for his cattle, his people, and his life. He manages as well as he can, and religiously commits all to the Lord; but unbelief has mastered his heart, and he is in fear of Esau.

The Lord comes to him therefore this second time, now on his journey homewards, as He had been with him on his journey out. But it is in a new character. He was only under *discipline* then; he is in the power of *unbelief* now: and the Lord comes not to comfort, but to rebuke and restore him.

"There wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." This was the Lord in controversy with Jacob. His unbelieving fears touching Esau and his four hundred men had provoked the Lord to jealousy, and he withstands him.

But what is the issue of all this? *Grace* is made a great reality to Jacob here, as *glory* had been at Bethel. The wrestling Stranger, in abounding grace, allows Himself to be prevailed on by the weak and timid Jacob, and the Spirit works revival of faith in his soul. "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me," says he. He comes "boldly to the Throne of Grace." Faith is decided, and a blessing *must* be imparted, and Jacob becomes Israel. Grace is now made a great reality to him, as before glory had been. It is now the unbelieving Jacob restored, as then it had been the chastised Jacob comforted. The Gospel is pressed on his soul here; Heaven had been opened to his eye there. There he walked as at the gate of heaven, and in the house of God; here he walks under the shinings of the presence of God. There Christ was making him promises; here Christ is giving him fresh embraces of love.

Such was "Bethel" on his way out. Such is "Peniel" on his way home. Such is God to him according to his need and condition. *Heaven* in its bright enriching glory was shown to him in the day of his sorrow. *Christ* in His precious restoring grace, is given to Him in the day of his failure. And these things are what we want—To have both grace and glory realized to our souls; to walk by Bethel and by Peniel. They sweetly vary the journey; but it is the one unchanging God that opens His house to us, and sheds the light of His face upon us.—J. G. B.

AT REST.

I soon shall be at home—
 For ever there at rest,—
 No sorrow and no sadness
 Shall e'er my heart oppress.

My weary head shall lie
 Upon my Saviour's breast—
 Whilst His loved words supply
 Sweet and unfailing rest.

To know Him—as known there!
 All fear for ever gone—
 Gazing upon the face so fair
 Of him I lean upon.

No curse—no trace of sin—
 His blood from all hath cleared—
 And now I'm safe within
 The home by love prepared.

Then through eternal years
 My joy shall ceaseless flow,
 As I am learning of the love
 I now so feebly know.

But Jesus is its spring—
 God's Christ my boundless joy;
 Of Him I'll ever sing,
 And nought my rest alloy,

—H. W. T.

WORDS OF TRUTH.



SINS FORGIVEN.

DOES the Reader of these pages ever long for the sense of the forgiveness of his sins? I speak to those who are really in earnest in the matter, those who are conscious that they have sins, great and manifold—those who sigh, and long for the sense of being unburthened of the load.

Before the Cross, the consciousness of the forgiveness of sins was a blessing yet to come, but now every Christian ought to know that the present forgiveness of sins is his joyful portion. Not as something to be enjoyed in the future, but *now*. The Apostle John says, "I write unto you little children because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake." (1 John ii. 12.) They had not to wait for this at some future moment. The ground on which he addresses them was that their sins are forgiven. How sweet a rest for the soul. God the Father instructing His children, because He had forgiven their sins for His name's sake.

Up to the Cross of Christ forgiveness of sins was looked forward to: but how could it be a promise any more, once Jesus had borne them in His own body on the tree, and put them away? Hence when Jesus died and rose, the announcement went forth—not that forgiveness of sins was now *promised*, but we read, "Be it known unto you that through this man is *preached* (declared) unto you the forgiveness of sins"—not "promised" but "preached." (See Acts xiii. 38, 39.) This is the one unchanging testimony of the Apostles, and preachers of the word. "We have," says Paul, . . . "the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace." (Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14.)—"Having forgiven you all trespasses." (Col. ii. 13.)—"Even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." (Col. iii. 13.)

Has my reader believed this, and accepted it as his present portion? or has he been taking the ground that they are not

forgiven—that they have not been put away? How dishonouring to Christ's finished work. "Without shedding of blood, is no remission" (Heb ix. 22); but the blood has been shed, and God's righteous claims against poor sinners have been met. He has declared His satisfaction by raising up Jesus and putting Him at His right hand in heaven. Jesus took His seat there "when He had by Himself purged our sins." (Heb. i. 3.) God's thought about us is "that the worshipper once purged, should have no more conscience of sins." (Heb. x. ii.) His testimony by the Holy Ghost to us is, "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. x. 17.) Sweet and glorious news for the poor burdened heart.—God says, "I will remember them no more."—Then faith says, "They *are* remembered no more."—It believes God. Many a time the poor sinner has remembered his sins with an aching heart, ere he has learned this sweet and assuring testimony of God. How is it with my Reader? Is he enjoying this comforting testimony? How sweet to learn that his sins are not passed by, as something carelessly slurred over; but that they are washed away by the "precious blood of Christ." God has not been merciful, at the expense of His justice, as some think He will be; but His mercy is on the ground of His righteous claims having been satisfied by Jesus.

Dear reader, if they are not now washed away, they never will be washed away. But they are washed away—God has declared it, and faith has believed it. Now take care for the future, and believe God, and be happy in the joy of the sweet sense of pardon, forgiveness, and peace. Do not grieve the blessed Spirit of God by taking the ground of unbelief, in asking for the forgiveness of sins; but take the ground of believing that they have been forgiven, because God says so. How could I ask for forgiveness when a gracious God declares that He has forgiven me, and will remember my sins and iniquities no more for ever?

THE CALL OF ABRAHAM.

HIS FOUR ALTARS—HIS SERVICE—HIS COMMUNION.

GENESIS xi.—xviii.

ABRAHAM's call to be a witness of the power of the word, "we walk by faith and not by sight," has a voice for the Christian, as to the character of his pathway in the world. He is termed the father of the faithful, and is a pattern to us of

what the call of God is. It was at a moment when the world was in ruins—everything had failed—man in innocency—man without law—Noah—the nations—idolatry had overspread the face of the world. (Joshua xxiv. 2.) All had gone into failure. *God does not set the world to rights*, but reveals His glory to a man of His choice. The God of glory appears to him, (we are “called by glory and virtue,” *i.e.* courage to sustain us when obeying the call of glory,) and desires him to detach himself from everything here—country—kindred—father’s house—We must be entirely His—breaking *every* link which binds us to this scene. “Except a man forsake all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.” This call out of the world, is in principle its judgment.

Abraham waits in Ur of the Chaldees. He thinks or hopes that his father is included in the call—but no. God waits for Him, He is in no hurry, and waits; but at last has to break the link Himself. This is often the case—we don’t break the links, and God does it, then it often is more painful, because the heart is not prepared for the rupture—while if we had done it ourselves, our heart was prepared. How often we say, “Suffer me *first*”—anything but Christ; and yet in the end it must be so.

¶ We now find (Gen. xii. 4) that he goes out “as the Lord had said unto him;” *i.e.*, he accepts the *full* call of God, and then all goes well. He *went out* (this is the first part of the call) not knowing whether he went. Now the Lord appears to him (v. 7) but the “Canaanite was there.” Is he now to have *nothing*, after giving up *everything*? Surely!—and this because the earth is not his place but heaven. When we accept the call of God we find we have *nothing* here, and having nothing here, what have we elsewhere? Heaven surely; but wicked spirits (the Canaanites) are in the heavenlies. And so we must walk *by* faith, not merely *be saved* by faith.

The Lord now *appears* to him when he had fully accepted the call, and Abraham becomes a worshipper. He builds an altar *there*. (v. 7.) Now there is more than *accepting* the call merely—there is the *practising* of it (v. 8), and this on the ground of having accepted it. Hence he removes his tent—he is a pilgrim as well as a worshipper; and so following the call of God in practice, he again worships—*i.e.*, he builds another altar. There is advance in this.

Now comes another feature. “By faith he *went out*,” that

was the first feature ; now comes another, "by faith he sojourned," and then comes the trial of his faith. There is a famine—all resources to the eye and sense are removed, and the world (Egypt) seeks to prove that it is a better friend than God—it gives all sorts of its goods to Abraham, and thus there is a failure ; and he ceases to follow the call of God, and he cannot be a worshipper and a stranger—he has no altar. At length he is restored (ch. xiii.), and has to go back to the place where he had been at the beginning, and then he again worships—but he has made no progress.

Now comes another trial.—Shall I trust God implicitly to order and guide all for me ; or shall I do so for myself even when it is in my power to do so ? I let *God* choose ! "I'll go right, if you go left ; and I'll go left, if you go right." *He* own this, and reveals to me the full extent of my blessings unasked (v. 14-17) ; and I again worship, and practice my call as a stranger with a tent. (v. 18.)

Ch. xiv.—I can now be of use to others and an instrument fitted for my Lord's use, and deliver those, whether of the world, (v. 11) or the Lord's people who are involved in it, (v. 12) from it ; and even then I will not be enriched by it, (v. 23) ; and now comes the revelation (ch. xv.) of what *God is to me*. Hence I seek Him and ask Him for what I believe meets my thoughts, but I don't rise higher than this. While in ch. xvii. I learn not what *He is for me*, but what *He is Himself* (v. i.), and here I am so filled with the sense of what *He is*, that I don't ask, as in ch. xv., for anything, but I am satisfied by being in the presence of One who has told me what He is, and God talks with me. I now renounce *all* confidence in the flesh (by circumcision) in ch. xvi., I *had* confidence more or less in it ; and I receive a new name which no man knoweth, but he who receiveth it.

Now in (ch. xviii.) I become the friend of God. He confides in me His purposes, first disclosing that my hope is secure in the Heir, although the world is going to be judged. I become earnest for others now, and I *stand* before the Lord with reverence, but boldness, and plead with him for others, and this when others had gone aside. I am alone with Him—this could not be in the presence of others—and the Lord communes with me, as well as confides to me His purposes. (v. 33.) Chapters xii. and xiii. are his worship having accepted the call of God—ch. xiv. his service, and chapters xv.-xviii. his communion with the Lord.

We might go on to ch. xxii., where he learns fully the lesson of resurrection ; but let this suffice for the moment, and may the gracious Lord lead our hearts to a deepening sense of the nature of His call to us, and may we respond with His thoughts, fully accepting all that it involves, and so growing up to Him in all things.

DAVID AND ABIGAIL,

I SAM. XXV.

THE previous chapters give us an account of the establishment and immediate failure of the man after *Israel's* heart—such must be the case—the flesh is unfit for the service of God, try it any way you will, the result is ever the same, it was so here, and the one of whom they said “there is none like him among all the people” had miserably failed, fresh trials only served to bring this out more clearly, till God, ever above these terrible failures of man, having made it fully manifest, comes in on the scene and chooses the one “*after His heart,*” not such a one as the flesh would choose; but a youth, the youngest of eight sons. He takes Him to be His servant from the sheep-folds—“From following the ewes, great with young, He brought him that he might feed Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance.” And this is the one who now comes upon the scene, but not in the possession and enjoyment of his rights as the anointed and chosen one of God; for instead of entering on the inheritance that belongs to him, he has to flee for his life—hunted like a partridge on the mountains, he has to wander in the wilderness, and in all this he is a beautiful type of that blessed One, who without sin, journeyed through far more painful circumstances.

Such is David's position here when he says to the young men, “Go to Nabal, and greet him in my name, and thus shall ye say to him that liveth in prosperity; peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast. . . . We come in a good day.”

Is not this the character of the message that the true David is now sending out to us during the time of His rejection. In Acts x. 36, Peter brings the same message,—“The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ, that word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from

Galilee." God's anointed One, though Creator of all things, and Heir of all things, has been rejected by man; and yet to man He sends this message of peace, a message of pardon and forgiveness. The gospel is the good news to us of the place in the glory, which He who identified Himself with the sinner on the cross, now gives to every one who believes on Him. God has accepted Christ, and thus He can in perfect consistency with Himself, without abating one jot or tittle of His righteous claims, proclaim peace to all, send glad tidings to every house. But how does Nabal receive David's message of peace? His answer is, "Who is the son of Jesse; there be many servants now-a-days that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take *my* bread and *my* water and *my* flesh that I have killed for *my* shearers, and give it unto men whom I know not whence they be?"

What a picture of the world—the claims of God's king were nothing to him compared with *his* things. Self is the one object he has before his eyes. Like the man in Luke xii., he is satisfied with the things around him—with what *he* has got. He little heeds the mind of God about it; but that too is revealed to us. "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." Is not all this the answer man is now giving to the wondrous message of peace and grace, flowing from the opened heavens? When men got the Son of God into their power—they scourged Him—they spit on Him—they crucified Him—when the Son of God has all things given into His hand, what does He? "He commands us," says Peter in Acts x., "to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God, the Judge of quick and dead. To Him give all the prophets witness that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." Such are God's ways, and such are man's ways—what a contrast.

Dear Reader, how is it with you? Is this the answer you are giving? Are you treating God's message like Nabal? Are you satisfied with the things of this world? Do you call them yours? Ah! they may be gone to-morrow—to-day even—it may be with you this night, as with him of whom we have been speaking. May God give you to ask yourself, Am I treating His claims upon me, as Nabal treated David's? It is a solemn question both for the saved and the unsaved. If the latter state is your case, why, then, Nabal's end will be your end. May God give you, dear friend, to lay it to

heart. How am I treating the claims of that One upon me who loves me better than I love myself? Am I contented with this present evil age, like Nabal, who held a feast in his house, as we read, like the feast of a king! Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken. Satiated with the things of this life, he has no ear for the voice of God; it would be in vain to tell it to him. "Ten days afterwards the Lord smote Nabal that he died." For a few days enjoyment of the things of this world, he put away God from his thoughts—refused to acknowledge His claims—he chose darkness rather than light. Such are the ways of all who forget God—of those who mind earthly things—whose end is destruction.

But if that is one side of the picture, we have the other, and a blessed contrast it is—and one that our hearts would do well to study.

Nabal's wife, Abigail, hears of this message of David to her husband, and from that moment he becomes the one object before her eyes. She enters into God's purposes concerning him. 'Tis true, he may be rejected, and is but a wanderer—an outcast in the wilderness—all that is nothing to her, however low his position may be in the eyes of man. She sees in him the one who is anointed of God; set apart by Him for the kingdom, and all other considerations vanish from her eyes. God's king is a "homeless stranger" in the wilderness; my husband has refused him the refreshment that he needed; but I will go and bring it to him. It may cost me dear; but that matters not. Like Mary in John xii., the box of ointment may be very precious, but what is that to what is due to Him—her Lord and Master? So here with Abigail—she made haste and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, &c., and laying them on asses, went out to meet David. But Nabal knows nothing of all this—like Paul, she takes not counsel with flesh and blood; and why should she? How could the man, who had himself rejected the message, give her any help or advice? No; she judges everything that is contrary to the one now become the chief object before her. He takes the first place in her heart. She thinks not what the result of taking this step.

It may entail the loss of her home—it may send her forth as an outcast; she heeds it not. Her eye is single, and her whole body full of light. Nabal becomes to her but as one

of the foolish nation, a man of Belial. "As his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name, and folly is with him." Saul the king of Israel is no more than any other man (verse 29), and Samuel is dead. She sees in the despised an rejected one, the heir of all things, "The soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with Jehovah, thy God, and the souls of thine enemies, them shall He sling out, as out of the middle of a sling"—and therefore, the only one for her.

What a blessed picture for us! may God lay it on our hearts. Abigail thinks as God thinks. She gives David his true place—she owns his title and that which belonged to him according to the counsel of God. What is the result to her in thus acknowledging the Lord's anointed, during the time of his rejection? "David sent, and communed with her, to take her to him to wife, and she hastened and arose, and went after the messengers of David; and became his wife." Blessed result to her, and blessed reward for thus accepting his claims—for thus making *him* her one object. He makes her his. Nothing short of having her to share his throne will satisfy him. For a time he may be in the wilderness—patience will have to be exercised; but the end is sure—God's time came, and David's throne is set up. Her utmost desires are realised, and far more too; all that is asked is to be remembered when he gets his kingdom, verse 31. Little does she know the heart of the one who has so attracted as to separate her from all that nature would hold dear. No other place would do for her than to share along with him the joys of his kingdom—of his crown and glory—but above all, to enter into the thoughts of his heart, have the nearest and dearest place in his affections.

Such, too, is our place. "To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne." Abigail knew not what the result would be to her, of the step she took; but we do know, it is revealed to us, that the best and choicest place in the glory is to be ours—the blessed and ordered home of the heavenly saints is portrayed for us by the *finger of God himself*. "The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it, and the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

Such are the purposes of God for us—those of us who have responded to His claims and accepted His beloved Son.

But we do well to ask—Is He our one object? Have we entirely taken Abigail's place? judged everything around us that is not of Him? Are we prepared to stand with Paul, and count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord? God will be no man's debtor. "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake or the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred-fold. . . . and in the world to come eternal life." O. P.

THE THRONE OF GRACE AND THE THRONE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

REV. iv.

WITHOUT entering fully into the interpretation of this chapter, I desire to notice some points in it, and by grace to apply them to ourselves.

1. The character of the throne which is seen in the chapter.
2. The position of the elders or translated saints.
3. Their attitude when the praises of Him who sat on the throne are celebrated.

The throne here seen is evidently not the "throne of grace"—(Heb. iv.)—which characterises that to which as believers we draw nigh, in the present state of things; here it is plainly one of *judgment* in righteousness—a throne set to judge the *quick*—as that of Rev. xx. 11—to judge the *dead*. This throne is set in heaven, and out of it proceed lightnings, thunderings, and voices, as of old on Mount Sinai. God's power is seen in judgment and government; and there is no altar, no way of approaching to Him now; and the sea of glass is like unto crystal; fixed and immovable; not now as the laver of old, to cleanse practical defilements of those who had passed the altar, as cleansed there by the blood. The imagery is that of the sanctuary, the throne, the candlestick, the laver, *but no altar*. And round about the throne were four beasts (living creatures) full of eyes before and behind; and the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast was like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six

wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

The throne is surrounded by four living creatures, which we find in the Old Testament Scriptures with more or less difference of appearance, accompanying God's judicial acts, and His government of Israel, or of the world. The cherubim held the flaming sword, which turned every way when God in government against Adam's sin thrust him out from the garden of Eden, and shut out his access to the Tree of Life. (Gen. iii.) They were made of one piece with the mercy-seat which was on the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus xxvi.), and were there occupied in gazing downwards upon the blood which besprinkled the mercy seat, on the ground of which God was governing Israel. When Israel, faithless to their trust, were delivered over to the power of the Gentiles for their sins, the living creatures bear away the glory or presence of Jehovah to heaven; which had first gone up from the Cherubim on the Ark, to the threshold of the house (Ezek. ix. 3; x. 1-17); and from the threshold of the house it stood over the Cherubim (Ezek. x. 18), which bore it away from the doomed city to the Mount of Olives, which is on the east side of the city—(Ezek. xi. 22, 23)—God thus leaving His earthly throne before giving up His people to captivity and judgment for their sins. And again we find the Cherubim in the days of the Kingdom (prefigured for a little moment in the reign of Solomon) looking towards the house, or outwards—a figure of that day—when God, having established His throne in righteousness, can then turn towards the world in blessing, in the days of the kingdom, or millennium.

Thus we find them always accompanying the acts of judicial power, or companions of the throne of God's government and His acts of judgment.

But here there is something more, for we find them partaking another character—a character in full keeping with that of Him who sits upon this throne in Rev. iv.; for they are the Seraphim of Isaiah vi.—the Seraphs (or burners) consuming all that answered not to the intense holiness of God. Each one had six wings, with twain of which, when the prophet saw them, he veiled his face; with twain he covered his feet; and with twain did he fly, each one crying to his fellow, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of

hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." The cry, at which the prophet quailed and trembled, for it discovered the inmost recesses of his heart, and laid bare the springs of his nature, and made him exclaim in anguish of soul, "Woe is me, for I am undone." These living creatures, too, of Rev. iv., are "full of eyes *within*," while they display the character of Him who was about to execute the judgments, majesty, patience, intelligence, and swiftness under the similitude of the lion, the ox, the man, and the flying eagle: still the throne that they accompany here is not merely, as of old, taking cognizance of *outward* things in Israel, the living creatures having eyes outside, or round about. (Ezek. x. 12.) These are full of eyes before and behind, and *within*: when judgment is about to be executed according to the *Divine and inward perception* of Him who sits on the throne. The throne is therefore a throne of unmitigated judgment.

But what is the position of the elders or translated saints during all the terrors, and thunderings, and lightnings, and voices? Round about the throne, clothed in priestly garments, and crowned with royal crowns—as kings and priests to God, sitting on thrones round about the throne of judgment, in calm and peaceful security—in perfect communion with Him who sits thereon, as David when he went in and sat before the Lord—(2 Sam. vii.)—no thought of fear or insecurity, but in the enjoyment of unclouded peace.

Now, the throne the Lord's people know at this time is a throne of grace; but they know, too, that there is a time coming when the throne of *grace* will be no more the character of things as a present, but when the throne shall be established in *righteousness*—when "righteousness and judgment will be the habitation of his throne." (Ps. xcvi. 2.)

What, then, is it that gives them "boldness" in contemplating this solemn day of judgment. It is this. They believe and know that the burning holiness of Him who sits upon the throne burst upon the head of One who alone was able to bear it; that the full burst of Divine wrath on account of sin discharged itself on the head of Christ on the cross; the cup filled with unmingled wrath was exhausted by Him—emptied to the dregs—so that none remained; and that by the virtues of His sacrifice, they have "boldness in the day of judgment;" because as He is so now are they, conscious that they never come into judgment; that the question of sin has been gone into thoroughly, according to

the estimate of sin, in view of the burning holiness of God; that it has been entirely and completely settled, and that for ever. They are conscious, too, that they stand in the righteousness of Him who sits on the throne, constituted "kings and priests unto God" as a present thing.

But what is the attitude of these elders when the living creatures "give glory and honour and thanks to Him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever?" They are priests.—They "fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Their worship is occasioned by hearing the living creatures saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." No cry of anguish, as from the soul of the prophet of old, when the Seraphims (or burners)—proclaim, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts" (Isa. vi.); but praise waiting on the Lord in their hearts, to be poured forth in intelligent worship when they hear His name celebrated by the living creatures. *Intelligent*, because they give their *reasons* for their praise—unmoved by the sights and terrors of the throne they are on their faces in happy worship and praise. Most happy when casting their crowns at the feet of Him who had given them; happier far than when wearing them, seated around the throne.

How is it with you, my reader? Have you learned to joy as a present thing in the character of Him who will sit on that throne of righteousness to give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness? To rejoice in His righteousness as well as in His love? And to give the reasons why you do so—happy in intelligent worship and praise. If so, you are happy indeed.

How should it be continually with your heart then! It should be like a well-tuned instrument; praise ever waiting in it upon the Lord; so that when the Spirit of God touches the chord of your heart, it should yield immediate and intelligent praise:—responsive to Him whose praises you celebrate; and intelligent, because you know the grace in which you stand; and the righteousness in which God has acted in putting you there, enabling you to anticipate the praises of the coming day of glory. If their remained one

spot on your conscience you could not worship—impossible, unless the heart and conscience are in perfect rest. The smallest speck would hinder this ; for the conscience would not then be in unclouded peace ; it would be occupied with the stain, and quite right that this should be so. There must be first the enjoyment of unclouded and eternal peace with God before there can be a heart filled with praise ! It is not the question of being a great or a little sinner. “*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*” And it is well to look forward and judge one’s state now in the light of a moment when *grace* will have passed, and *righteousness* will reign. Well to be able to look with boldness at that day. For the title which brings a sinner then to stand with boldness, and in righteousness before the throne, he possesses *now* by faith in Jesus Christ.

NICODEMUS.

WE do not find any miracle in John i. Andrew and his companions, Peter and Philip, and Nathanael, were all brought to Jesus without miracles. The work was in their souls. The word “behold the Lamb of God” had awakened their going to the Lord—and to seek Him as “the Lamb of God” is to seek Him as sinners, as those who have discovered their *moral* condition. This is far different from having been drawn to Him by a wonder (see Acts viii. 13), and the difference that followed was great. The Lord gives Himself to them who seek him and reach Him, in ch. i. ; but He will not commit Himself to those who believe on Him in ch. ii.,—believed on Him because they saw His miracles.

So again we may observe, in ch. iv., there is no miracle under the eye of either the Samaritan woman, or the villagers of Sychar. Conscience was stirred. They receive Him as “the Saviour,” and He is at home with them at once. He commits Himself to them, as He does not to those in ch. ii. ; but as He received Andrew and His companion to His dwelling-place in ch. i., so now He goes to the dwelling-places of the Samaritans in ch. iv.

Such, however, is the beautiful variety of moral illustration in the Book of God, that in ch. iii., in the midst of all this, we get Nicodemus occupying his own peculiar place. He was attracted by the miracles, as those of ch. ii. had been,

but then his *soul* was reached, as their's had not been. It did not end with him as it had begun. He did not merely *wonder and believe*, but he wonders, ponders, is exercised in his soul, and seeks—timidly, indeed—but still he *seeks*, and seeks Jesus. The miracle had put him on a journey to Him who had wrought it *as something more than a mere worker of wonders*, and the result is peculiar as is the thing itself. The Lord does not take him to Himself at once, as he had done those in chs. i. and iv., nor does he refuse to commit Himself to him, as he had refused to do with them in ch. ii. He is patient, and yet decided. He exposes him, forcing him to learn himself; but still he goes on with him, in a measure committing Himself to him.

But here let me ask, as in ch. ii. 24, what is committing Himself to others? It is this—*Forming real, living alliance with them*: consenting to know them as with personal knowledge, and in the bonds of fellowship. Jesus cannot do this with one who believes in him merely historically, as it were, or *by force of evidence*, as the multitude in Jerusalem then did, and as Christendom now does. It is with a *sinner* He has come to form alliance, and friendship, and fellowship for eternity! The fragments of convicted hearts must be the links between man and Him, and the outgoings of divine saving grace. *Our need and his fulness*—we as sinners and He as Saviour—*must form these links*. And such links are, at the end, I judge, formed between Jesus the Saviour and Nicodemus the sinner.

He is seen a second time, in ch. vii., standing for righteousness in the person of Jesus, in the midst of the Jewish Elders. But this seems to me to carry him but a little beyond where he is in ch. iii. He is still the companion of the Jewish rulers, acting with them, though, doubtless, under some misgivings of soul; and timidly still, as the one that had before come to Jesus by night; and in small measure owning the Righteous One. But in ch. xix. he has surely advanced. Here He puts Himself on the side of the world's victim. He stands as with God Himself, in relation to Jesus there. God will provide that blessed Sufferer with a glorious resurrection by-and-bye; Nicodemus and his companion, Joseph, will, in their way, provide Him with a tomb and grave-clothes now. Their spices shall perfume that sepulchre, which ere long divine power shall rend asunder.

Surely Nicodemus was now occupying the place to which

the early word of Jesus in ch. iii. had told him of. Is he not now, in spirit, looking at the uplifted serpent, the crucified, healing Son of Man? And may we not judge that from thenceforth he was one to whom Jesus committed Himself?

Do we know that Jesus has committed Himself to us?

J. G. B.

WORSHIP.

CHAPTERS iii.-vii. of John's Gospel are occupied with "Life," it is the great subject. In John iii., eternal life is acquired in believing, but in chapt. iv. it is more the conscious possession of eternal life, and its activities, as a "well of water springing up" unto its source; hence the Lord Jesus introduces worship; which is the natural outflow of life, and the fruit of its conscious possession.

How the soul must be relieved from every barrier between it and the Father before it can worship in spirit and in truth. The clouds must be dispersed before the soul can be undistractedly occupied with the object before it. In John viii. and ix., we get the two actions of light; (for *light* is the great subject of these two chapters;) first in removing the clouds from the soul, and relieving it from all anxieties and everything which is legally against it; and secondly, engaging the soul with the light itself which Christ is, so as to become a worshipper. Chapter viii. does the former, and chapt. ix. the latter,

In chapt. viii., we find a legally condemned sinner—exposed amongst men—Christ does not condemn her, but relieves her from the burden of felt condemnation. He who was Light itself, and knew all, does so. Like the Thief on the Cross, or Peter in the sinking ship, Light exposes self in either case, but it is the light of life, from One who is this; and who has Himself borne the judgment of God which was due to the sinner. The woman in chapt. viii. remains before Christ, and is conscious of having no other refuge now than that of being in the light of His presence. She finds *the light* her refuge, it is her armour; and she learns in principle that He can be "just and the justifier of him that believes." The light relieves her of what was pressing on her conscience, having first shown her the real nature of her sin—for there is no concealment in light—all is manifested; but at the same time the conscience is relieved of all that bore down

upon it, and by Him who was to bear the judgment of her sin Himself. For us He has borne it.

Now chapt. ix. shows another action of Light—Engaging the soul, which has been relieved of the pressure in chapt. viii. with the Light itself. The blind man illustrates what a sinner is before God—without sight—utterly blind. Christ gives sight to the man.

I must not only be relieved from my burden, but I must have light for my soul. Christ does this too. The soul when first relieved does not all at once become occupied with Christ, who should naturally be the object of this newly given sight. The man whose eyes were opened “came seeing,” but still wanted an object. Light must now effect its second action, and introduce the soul into the region of worship. Many souls when they begin to “see,” become occupied with what they *must do*, (as in chapt. viii. in the woman’s case, the soul was occupied with the evil it *had done*.) Hence we find the man contending with the Scribes and Pharisees. But when he was cast out of systematic religion the Lord of life meets him and reveals Himself to him, and the consequence is immediate worship.—The heart is detained by an object which controls it—this is worship.

The two chapters give us the wonderful action of light on the soul. The clouds are all cleared away, and I am fully occupied with Him who has effected the blessing. The case of the queen of Sheba exemplifies this. (1 Kings x. 1-9.) She first engaged Solomon with hard questions, communing with him of all that was in her heart; and when Solomon had solved all these, and relieved her of all her personal anxieties, she could then look around and fill her soul with the variety and magnificence of his glory, so that there was no more spirit left in her, but to praise and extol him. “When the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon’s wisdom, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit in her. 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.”

THE PARABLES OF THE LOVE OF GOD.

LUKE xv.

THE three parables of Luke xv. are familiar to almost every Christian. They are generally termed, The Parable of the Lost Sheep—the Parable of the Lost Piece of Money—and the Parable of the Prodigal Son. But there is a grand leading thought in the chapter, viz., The manifestation of what God is Himself in the peculiar joy of His heart, in seeking saving and welcoming the sinner to His home of joy. The rather, then, should the Parables be termed, The Parables of the Love of God, whether as Father, Son, or Holy Ghost.

It is often thought that the teaching of the chapter is, restoration from backsliding and alienation in heart of those who are His. There is no doubt at all but that the same gracious God it is who seeks for, saves, and welcomes the sinner, who restores the soul of a wandering child; but I feel that this is *not* the lesson here; and more so, because it would be a positive encouragement to backsliding to find that God loads the returning one with greater blessings than ever he possessed before; and besides, if he sinned away anything it must be that he sinned away *grace*, which is simply impossible.

I do not purpose to enter into the marvellous disquisition of the Love of God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; but merely to notice some of the peculiarities of the parables, with the view of leading others to see that line of truth which our blessed Lord teaches us in them.

The occasion of their delivery was, that some poor publicans and sinners, perceiving that they were welcome, had drawn near to hear Him. This awakened the murmuring of the self-righteous and religious leaders. The Lord then unfolds the wonderful thought (yet not at all wonderful when we know what God is), that He would be God, and thus have his own peculiar joy in receiving sinners, and passing by the pretensions of man. This is the point pressed and taught us. The shepherd had his own desire gratified, that for which he undertook the toil,—when he had the sheep on its shoulder conveying it home. It was what he wanted and desired and toiled for. The purpose of his heart was satisfied. Not a word of upbraiding to the sheep for the trouble it cost. The Shepherd's heart was gratified. Thus it is with Jesus towards those whom He finds.—He came to seek that which was lost.

Again, in the next parable the diligence of the woman—intent upon her object—lights the lamp—sweeps the house—seeks with diligence and perseverance till she is rewarded by finding the piece. The grace of the blessed Spirit of God, in the unwearied light and testimony and diligence which never stays itself till the piece which was lost is found.

But the sheep was passive, as was the money, and these parables did not show the state of conscious misery in which the sinner found himself when grace began to work in his heart; nor did they show the love of God the Father in meeting, receiving, and welcoming the returning one, and the new condition of things to which he was introduced—so much better than those he had sinned away and lost.

We must not suppose that because the figure of a father and his two sons are used by the Lord Jesus, that the relationship as child, by the Spirit of His Son, which is the *believer's* portion, is here intended. In a certain sense Adam was God's son (see Luke iii. 38); and Israel was "His" first-born—His "son" (Ex. iv. 22, &c.); but neither were sons as the believer is now by the Spirit of His Son which is given to us. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," and "because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." (Gal. iii. 26, iv. 6.) The younger son—the Gentile here I believe—man as at the beginning, who in the self-will which he substituted for God's will, chose to have his portion apart from God. Man at the beginning received his portion in creation blessings from God, but soon he sinned them away. Reduced to misery in the land of his alienation, his wretchedness does not drive him to God, but he seeks to relieve it in the land of his degradation. He joins himself to a citizen of *that* country. In the midst of his poverty, the thought of God's goodness is remembered—"he came to Himself"—faith in God's goodness is awakened in his heart—the goodness of God leads him to repentance (Rom. ii. 4); and he judges himself in the light of such a thought,—he says, "I perish with hunger." He then says, "I will arise and go"—he is converted, or his heart turned towards God. He does not say, "I will arise and return," which would be restoration, but "I will arise and go." He "taketh with him words," uncertain as to how he will be received—but he has no peace. Many souls are in this stage, and are seeking to get peace by progress on the journey—

instead of peace by surrender of all pretension. He arranges a confession, and also the *terms* in which he is to be received by the Father—the former was right—we hear no more of the latter when the father met him. It is positively beautiful to see the energy of love which leads the father outside the house even before he came and knocked, to go out and meet him ; and to see the love of God who waits not for the sinner to ask for admission. He must have him in the house worthy of Himself, as it was worthy of Himself to go out to meet and embrace a poor ragged filthy sinner. He directs them to bring forth the first robe, to invest him—the ring to adorn him—and the shoes to give him a sense of at-home-ed-ness in His house, and all came from within—and “all things were ready” for the moment of need. This was the learning of the gospel for the first time. These were not blessings he had sinned away, he could not sin away grace. He is then in the communion of the father’s house, eating the fatted calf with the father. And God does all this because of the perfect work of Christ.

The elder brother is any self-righteous one who cannot bear the thought of the vile ones being the subjects of grace, while his pretensions are passed over. In fact, it was the way in which the poor selfish Jew took the news of God’s grace to the Gentiles when declared by Paul. (Acts xxii. 21, 22 ; 1 Thes. ii. 16.) The first-born was “in the field”—the place where there had been care and culture as to the Jew. The younger son had been in the “far country.” He was nigh to the house—never in the house. He could not abide the thought of grace to one who was far off, and who had nothing but rags and disgrace and penury, getting such a place, and filling the father’s heart with joy. But God went out in grace to him too—His message was always “to the Jew first”—but he would not come in. God told him, through the yearning heart of Paul, that His gifts and callings are without repentance (Rom. xi. 29), and so here the father says, “Thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.” He never has lost his national place, though set aside for the while. But he would not come in, and God has shut him up in unbelief that he may have mercy upon him in like way as upon the poor Gentile.

The words “lost” and “dead” could never be applied to any but a sinner.

May these few remarks lead us into a spiritual under-

standing of what the parables convey, and may we learn the heart of Him who has been thus pleased to reveal Himself in Christ.

“CONSIDER HIM!”

Art thou of the desert weary?
 Weary of the “little while—”
 Weary of the darkness round thee,
 Weary of the night of toil?
 Look up—consider HIM.

Art thou weary of thy sinning
 Against Him who loves thee so?
 Weary of the ceaseless struggle
 With the flesh which drags thee low?
 E'en then, remember HIM.

Remember Him, God's wrath enduring,
 Paying the price which thou didst owe;
 And thus by death, thy life procuring—
 Thy joy—the purchase of His woe:
 Oh! then remember HIM.

What beauty do they see in Jesus,
 As “sitting down they watched Him there?”
 Do they consider His perfection?
 Alas! *they* knew not *He is fair*.
 Let *us* consider HIM.

Ah! let us sit, and see Him bleeding,
 And as we watch, think what we were;
 And what we are, by grace, that saved us,
 And still continue watching there—
 And thus consider HIM.

Consider Him—His body broken—
 His precious blood poured out for thee;
 Consider, in that wondrous token,
 His love—His deep, deep love for thee.
 Amazed! consider HIM.

Consider Him—until beholding
 “Him as He is,” and face to face,
 We'll learn to know His deep perfection,
 And all the fulness of His grace;
 And still consider HIM.

WORDS OF TRUTH.



THE NEW BIRTH.

WHAT IS IT?

(No. 1.)

THE Word of God in the third chapter of the gospel of John, is deeply solemn to every poor sinner in this world. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God!" (John iii. 3.) It cuts at the very roots of all the pretensions, and religion, and self-righteousness of man.

Reader, if ever you would see God, except as a righteous Judge—if ever you would spend an eternity in His presence where is fulness of joy, and would be saved from an eternity of woe with the lost, and with the devil and his angels; you "must be born again." Pause, then, I beseech you, and think of this. It is the root of the matter of your precious soul's eternal history. It meets you in whatever state you may be to-day, amid the varied characters and states of sinners around you, and embraces *all*, as on one footing before God—moral and immoral—honest man and knave—sober man and drunkard—religious and profane—young and old—teacher and taught—noble and ignoble—high, low, rich, and poor, there is not one particle of difference in the sight of God! If you would ever see God in light, and dwell with Him for ever, "ye must be born again!"

The grace of God in the gospel comes now to man as **LOST**! It treats him thus. This is the grand distinction between it and all God's previous dealings—previous dealings did not treat man on this ground. The law, for instance, addressed man as if he were able to help himself. God knew all the while he was not able to do so, but gave it to demonstrate the fact to man's heart and conscience.

The gospel comes in at the "end of the world," *i.e.*, the end of all God's dealings with man, before judgment takes its course, and it proclaims him "LOST!" How many deceive themselves by thinking that he is still in a state of probation, or trial, as before the proclamation of the gospel. But it is not so. His history in probation *closed* with the cross of Christ. It had lasted for over 4000 years. Surely when God drove out Adam from the garden of Eden, *He* knew *what* he was; but it pleased Him to try out, under every dealing of His hand, the fallen race, so as to leave every man without excuse, and to demonstrate distinctly the ruin in which he lay; so that every man's conscience ought to bow, and must bow to the fact that he has been weighed in the balances, re-weighed, and found wanting.

Poor perishing sinner, if you would but bow to God's sentence on you, and accept His remedy; instead of trying the means which your fellow sinner suggests to your acceptance; which flatters your pride of heart by setting you to work, to pray, (?) or to be religious, or ascetic, or what he has so multifariously devised. Perhaps giving you Christ to make up for your failures, or to be a make-weight with what you propose to help you in your salvation. Perhaps telling you, and your poor vanity believes it too, that you can of your own will, become a child of God; can believe if you please, of your own free will. Poor spinings of human brains which never have measured what sin is in the presence of God; or known what man is before Him.

It is a blessing from God to be clear, simple, decided in our acceptance, without qualification, that man is utterly and hopelessly lost; unable to put forth one effort of his own. "Dead in trespasses and sins,"—"without strength," "none that seeketh after God"—without "holiness," apart from which "no man shall see the Lord." May the Lord grant to the reader to learn it now, as from Him, who, that you may learn His remedy, declares it.

We read of those who "believed in His name when they saw the miracles which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man; for He knew what was in man." (John ii. 23-25.) The very same nature that is in your bosom this moment, beheld Jesus doing the mighty works of God, and believed when they saw, and yet *such* belief, never brought one soul from amongst them to heaven.

You say, perhaps, as thousands do, "I believe in Jesus Christ; I know He was more than man, nay, that He was God Himself; I know He died for sinners, and rose again, and ascended into heaven." And it may be after all this you are one to whom Jesus has not committed Himself—one who has no part or lot in the matter.

I write not to discourage, to dishearten souls; especially the souls of those who have the weakest real *faith* in Jesus. God forbid. But with the desire in my heart of bringing the formalist, if this should meet his eyes; the careless; the professor of religion without vitality; to judge their state in view of these solemn truths.

If we see the necessity of this new birth, that man may see God and His kingdom; we then can go on to see how God in loving, living grace, not only reveals his ruin and his fallen condition, but also reveals how He has met this condition, and unfolds His rich mercy to all through His Son.

You will say then, "How am I to be born again? I desire most heartily to have this new birth." Now the Lord gives us to understand how this new birth takes place, in answer to Nicodemus, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" He tells us that this new birth is "of water, and of spirit." This simply means that the word of God, which is the water, by reaching the conscience of the sinner, by the power of the Spirit of God—and received by faith into the soul, produces a nature which *man never had before*. It may be by preaching—reading—or a thousand other ways, or means used of God: the first principle of this new nature is *faith*, and "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," (Rom. x. 17.)

But some may say, "Is it not literal water, or the water of baptism, which is here meant—not the word, as has been stated?" The answer is simply, No! For if so, none of the saints of old could have had this new nature, and none therefore could ever "enter into the kingdom of God."* The water of baptism was not even spoken of before John Baptist's time, and the Lord declares it (*i.e.* the new birth) as a positive necessity for all; and, moreover, that Nicodemus ought to have known this from the prophets which he taught, who did not dream of water baptism. Ezekiel had spoken

* Baptism is the sign of death—born of water and the Spirit, the reception of life.

of Jehovah's promise to Israel, to gather them out of the nations, and bring them into the land of Israel, and there He would sprinkle *clean water* upon them, and put *His Spirit* within them, cleansing them from all their filthiness, &c., (read carefully Ezekiel xxxvi., 24-27.)

The word of God is likened unto water, *i.e.*, that which cleanses morally, in Eph. v. 26, where it is said that Christ sanctifies the Church, and cleanses it with the "*washing of water by the word.*" James (c. i. 18) writes, "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth." Again Peter (c. i. 23) "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." The Lord Himself, (John xv. 3) "Ye are clean through the *word* which I have spoken unto you." These passages show the word and the water as identical.

But, is not the wicked nature which the sinner possesses, and all the sins he has brought forth, to be set aside, and put away, if a new nature is to be bestowed? Surely. The nature which offended God, and the fruits of that nature must be put away out of God's sight—His righteous requirements against it must be met—His justice must be satisfied. All must be swept out of God's sight for ever; that He may be set free, as it were, to bestow this new nature on every poor sinner who believes.

Now, sinners are represented of God as perishing under the effects of sin—under the sentence of death, wielded of Satan by the judgment of God. How then is the curse to be removed? For God does not undo the sentence of death which He has pronounced, as if it were a mistake. Like the Israelites of old who were dying under the bites of the fiery serpents (Numbers xxi.), who cried unto the Lord, and the Lord did not remove the serpents, but provided a remedy which answered His own demands, and the bitten Israelite who looked upon it lived. So now we read that for this end, *i.e.*, to remove the curse under which poor sinners are perishing, the Son of man must be lifted up—must be made sin—and, dying under the judgment of God for sin, be the object of faith for the perishing sinner, in order that whosoever he be of the fallen race, who believes on Him, might not perish, and be lost for ever, but (not merely be born again), have *everlasting life!*

What a grand sight then for a poor perishing soul! The Son of Man bearing in His own spotless body, the curse of a

broken law, the judgment of God on ruined man—the sins—the nature from which the sins had come, and which had offended God. All these for every poor perishing sinner who now gazes with a needy soul upon Jesus on the cross, effectually bearing all away out of God's sight for ever.

This is God's remedy, fellow sinner; look then, and live! Are you conscious you need a Saviour? God has provided one. Was it for you He was provided? Certainly. Why? Because you needed one. Blessed thought, to be able to know by one, simple, needy look of faith, that all that separated you from God, is put away—and that your sins, nay, yourself, root and branch have been atoned for, and put away for ever, and that you have got what you never had before, eternal life! Not merely that you are born again, but that believing in the lifted up and crucified Son of man, you have eternal life!

You see, beloved, that Jesus did not merely die to put your sins and sinful nature away by His death on the cross, but died that you might live—that you might have eternal life as your *present possession*. The double effect of His work is stated in 1 John iv. 9-10, "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might *live* through Him. Here we receive life through and in Him. But more, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the *propitiation of our sins*."

May you know this priceless portion as yours, for His name's sake. AMEN.

NAAMAN: OR GOD GLORIFIED.

2 KINGS, CHAP. V.

GOD cares for His own glory. If those who should have glorified Him fail to do so, He will provide that above all things His glory shall be maintained.

When Israel sought for victory from the Philistines, by bringing, unauthorised, the ark of God into the camp, they had to feel His hand laid heavy on them in chastisement. Defeat was their portion, and the capture of the ark by the Philistines ensued. He "delivered His strength into captivity, and His glory into the enemy's hand." (Psalm,

lxxviii. 61.) Could the enemy then triumph? He might over Israel. He might vaunt of the victory and ascribe it to his god, but the glory of the God of Israel must be manifested and maintained. The ark was taken to Dagon's temple and left alone with the idol. In the morning Dagon was found to have fallen down before the symbol of God's presence. The god of the Philistines is prostrate before the God of the whole earth. Set up again, the same result ensues. Whilst all are asleep the glory of God is vindicated, and this time the idol is broken to pieces. Again, when Judah was led captive, when God's house at Jerusalem had been burnt by the Chaldeans, and the vessels of the sanctuary carried into Babylon, the Lord Jehovah showed to the heathen that he was God alone, though his people had profaned His holy name. Daniel could reveal what the wise men were ignorant of. The three men are preserved in the fiery furnace, and come forth alive, an answer to Nebuchadnezzar's proud boast, "Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" And praise, on both occasions, was given to the God of Heaven. Belshazzar might boast of his grandfather's conquests over the Jews, but the vessels of God's house must not be profaned by being used for his drunken orgies. Daniel might be his servant because Judah had sinned, but Jehovah is God, and will resent any attempt to dishonour him. So in the days of Elisha, for Israel's great wickedness God had chastised them, and let their enemies triumph over them; but He cared for His own glory, and vindicated it, as this the history of Naaham shows in the most marked manner. It was a dark period of Israel's history. Jehoram sat on the throne of his father Ahab. He put away the image of Baal which Ahab had made, "nevertheless he cleaved," we read, "unto the sins of Jereboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom." Though outwardly less bad than his father, he was an idolater. King over the largest portion of God's earthly people, in his heart he knew not God. The king, and the nation which should have glorified Him, did not; so God orders events, that both Israel and the Gentiles should see He was the one true God, who works all things after the counsel of his own will. It is this that the history of Naaman sets forth in which we have (1.) God's counsels, step by step, unfolded: (2.) God's grace, because it is grace, going out to one who could claim nothing on the ground of

covenant or promise: and (3) God's government, because He is holy, in active exercise in the midst of his professing people.

1. God's counsels are unfolded. If the Lord Jehovah was greater than all gods could He not have saved Israel from their enemies? If He was the true God would he have allowed the idol-worshipping Syrians to overcome them in battle. If the God of Israel was omniscient must he not have foreseen all that would happen? Why, then, did He not counteract the plans of the enemy, and thwart the military arrangements of the captain of the hosts of Syria? Such thoughts might have filled men's minds, when they saw the land of Israel at the mercy of a foreign king, and the people of Israel unable to resist the Gentile power. But the God of Israel was the true God. He was greater than all gods. He was omniscient, and He would show it. It was his plan that Naaman was all the time working out, however much he might think it was His own. It was God who was prospering the armies of Syria, though they might ascribe their success to Rimmon. He could have interposed and *have discomfitted the hosts of Syria, as he did shortly before the army of Moab*; but then He was protecting Judah, as yet faithful to Him, now He was chastising Israel, notoriously unfaithful. How changed now was everything in Israel! Naaman was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance to Syria. Often before had the Lord granted deliverance to Israel; now for the first time, we read of his giving the victory to Syria. With the armies of Syria He had now gone forth, who had formerly gone before the hosts of Israel. In the days of Joshua, men had witnessed what the Lord could do for them. In the days of David, the sound of going on the top of the mulberry trees, told of the presence of the Lord preceding the armed hosts of Israel to battle. The stars, in their courses, had fought against Sisera, great hailstones had smitten down the retreating hosts of the Canaanites, and thunder had discomfitted the Philistines in the days of Samuel. Now we read the Lord was found with their enemies, and by Naaman gave them deliverance. This was the first link in the chain of events as set forth in this history.

Next, who was this Naaman. A mighty man of valour, a great man with his master, high in favour at court. What was there in the whole world that he needed? Place, honour, fame, riches, all these were his; all that the world could give,

short of a throne, he had. But one thing he wanted that the world could not supply—health. God had withheld it—he was a leper. All that he possessed, if added together, and sold at the price he put on them, could not have purchased for him the much coveted boon—health. That he was a leper was the one bitter ingredient in his otherwise full cup of happiness. The hand of God was evidently on him, not to debar him this object of desire, but to bestow it. Before, however, it could be bestowed, he must be brought down to supplicate for this blessing, in that land over whose armies he had triumphed, and from the servant of that God whose people he had overcome in battle.

But how should he hear of the prophet who would recover him of his leprosy? Here a third link in the chain is disclosed. In the wars between Syria and Israel a little maid had been taken captive by the Syrians, and she waited on Naaman's wife. A daughter of Israel in captivity in the land of Syria, what could she do there? How could she do service for God? Who would be inclined to hearken to her voice? Her age would not command the attention of others. Her position would not add weight to her words. Looked at outwardly it was not much she could do, but it was all that was required, and she did it. She told her mistress of the prophet in Samaria, and the little maid's speech reached the ears of the King of Syria. Naaman was sent to Samaria to be healed, but as is ever the case, when God deals in grace, to receive much more than he asked for. He sought for health, he got light. He desired healing, and he got, we may well believe, life. He learned who was the true God, and became a worshipper of Jehovah. He reached Samaria with his retinue and his presents, and now, before we get God's grace flowing out to him, we get man, as he is, under various aspects brought before us.

In Naaman we have man as one in need, who keenly feels his want, but cannot by any plan of his own supply it. From the letter of the King of Syria we see man as he is by nature in utter ignorance of God. The little maid had spoken of the prophet of God, he wrote to the King of Israel to recover Naaman of his leprosy. There is not a thought of God in his letter. His ideas, apparently, do not travel beyond the range of the things of sight. "I have sent Naaman my servant unto thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy." God was not in his thoughts when he wrote this

to Jehoram. Well might the latter exclaim, as he read it, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me, to recover a man of his leprosy?" Perfectly true, who can heal the leper but God only. His reasoning was just, but he affords us an instance of man in apostacy. He knows something about God, but he does not know God. A difficulty arises, he cannot meet it. He rent his clothes, he spoke to his counsellors, but did nothing. His hands hung down in feebleness. The only stay of the heart in a day of difficulty, the only source of wisdom, he had forsaken. He sees that ruin may be before him, but cannot avert it. He is utterly helpless, a miserable exhibition, surely, of one of God's professing people. The King of Syria, in nature's darkness, is ignorant about God; the King of Israel, in apostacy, has no stay for his soul, no refuge to which he can turn. How unlike the conduct of Jehoram was the conduct of Hezekiah, when he received a letter from a Gentile sovereign. He read it, and spread it before the Lord, and received an answer. Jehoram read his, reasoned about it, but took it not to God. How could he turn to Him, whose truth he had given up, and whose worship he openly discountenanced? But God has a witness in Samaria, and in the prophet, we see one in communion with God. That, which caused such commotion in the house of Jehoram, affrights him not, he knows how to act. "Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel." Jehoram never spoke about God's prophet. Naaman might learn from the King the sad condition of an apostate; he would learn from Elisha about God, and what He can do.

(To be continued, D.V.) 1137/130.

HAVE YOU SIMEON'S FAITH.

LUKE ii. 25-30.

THERE was no expectation from earth in the word of the thief on the cross when he said, "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." But you will say *he* was *leaving* this world, and therefore it was nothing in his eyes. But here we see that Simeon—Jew as he was, had obtained such a view of Christ that everything in the world went before it *even in life*. "Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have *seen* thy salvation." As though he said, "now everything in this world is as nothing

to me ; I've got a superlative thing, and in its light everything else has *gone out*." In a similar view, but a more exalted one, Paul could say, "I long to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better." Stephen, too, could look up to the opened heavens, indifferent to the cry and rage of the multitude.

Simeon had true ideas as to what this salvation was—He calls it God's salvation—"Thy salvation." Man's idea of this salvation is that it is according to human want—God's idea of it is, His own excellency. To effect it, He sends His Son to be the missionary of His heart—its exponent, The blessed God descends, touches the weakest point in nature, becomes a babe. Let us give God credit for His character—let us have a good opinion of God. Do not let us limit His salvation, although some of us may not enjoy it. He met the penalty for sin, which is death and judgment. If I were to have met it, I should have sunk. If a creature merely human had gone to that cross, there would have been an end of them. They would never have risen out of it again. He connected Himself with us—with flesh and blood—died under the penalty, and rose again out of the judgment.

Now faith sees things which are invisible. Faith believes that God is ; and that he is a rewarder of them that *seek Him out*. (Heb. xi. 6.) The word "diligently" is not a correct expression here. The true idea conveyed, is that of singling out ; for instance, searching among coins for one of special value. He is the rewarder of the one who makes Him their object. Faith, then, has a good opinion of God—faith seeks Him out, and He rewards the one who does so. You never hear of a worldly person rewarding importunity. The nearest simile to the thought of rewarding importunity, is that of a mother detained by her child, rewarding by caresses the love that cannot part with her. Now faith is simply a good opinion of God. *Do you consider God's love to be as great as Himself? If so, then trust His love—rejoice in His love.* For love will do its utmost for its object. Believe His love then to its fullest extent. Love and obstruction cannot exist together. The necessity of love is that it will allow of no obstructions. God's love, which is perfect, allowed of none. Love is stronger than death. Do you believe this! If so, is He then your *supreme* object? Is He far better than the joys of earth. Do you see an excellency in Christ which puts out the lights of earth? God has moved everything

out of the way for you except Christ; and do you want this scene, now that you have got His salvation?

Here I come to deal with the obduracy of the heart—my heart, and your heart. Is it to you (saved people) *nothing* to depart, and to be with Christ? Is all here not counted loss to you, to win Him—to be found in Him. You say, “But am I to have no natural affections?” Yes, you are, but they are put upon quite another ground. You have been taken out of this world by the death of Christ, and sent into it to *live Christ*. Do you indeed realize what you are saved from, and do you really wish to connect yourself with it? It is true that Simeon had no desire to leave this scene until it all at once paled before him on the superior light of a revealed Christ! *With the Christ of God in His arms* he could say, “Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.” We hear of such things at a death-bed—a longing earnest craving to depart for that which is *at length* beheld. Is it then, only when every link on earth is broken, that I can say, “Now I can go to you?” Is this all that is known of the excellency of Christ?

I have seen some people on death-beds. One I remember specially when the only anxiety was the fear of one moment's interruption of what was going on between the soul and Christ. Is it possible that God has to reduce my system—to take away everything from me until I can say, “And *now* that *all is gone*, I can go to you?”

Paul was not on his death-bed when he had a desire to depart and to be with the One with whom he held such unutterable communion. Do not mistake me; I am not preaching that people should long to be out of this world: but I *am* preaching the superlative excellency of the glorious One for whom Paul could count *all* else but dross and dung.

Is it the case with you, that you are so invested with the dross, that until God removes it all, and leaves you like a dismantled tree—flowers gone—leaves gone—divested of everything; that *at last* you perceive the excellency of my blessed God?

As did Hezekiah, do you drive him to this? “Hezekiah,” said the Lord (so to speak) “you must die and come to me.” “I cannot die,” said Hezekiah. Then God made everything die to Hezekiah, as you will observe. Now, do you drive him to do this also? I would rather die to everything than have everything die to me. I would rather

be Paul. Are the joys of death higher, and more real than the joys of life? Do you think that the Prodigal wished to return to the husks? The thief on the cross to the world? Noah out of the Ark? No, never; although the raven might. The Prodigal knew the Father. I'll go to Him, he said; I'll say "*Father*"—I *know Him* now. Do you think that the Israelites saved by blood feasting on the lamb wished to go outside? And the Lamb, is He not enough for you? Suppose you were dying, then Christ would be everything to you: and why should he not be so now? You say, "But if I gave up all like that, then He would take all my Isaacs from me." Then I see you have *not* a good opinion of Him—of that heart which loves in all the might of its strength. You think possibly, that it is dangerous even to desire such things—you think God will do something terrible to you—you fear to trust Him, you don't know what it would come to. Oh! this is stopping the way for you. Surely the saint ought to live in his own native air!

THOUGHTS ON THE SIMILITUDES OF THE KINGDOM, AS PRESENTED IN THE PARABLES OF THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

(Continued from page 56.)

VERSES 24-30.—Here we have a picture of the kingdom of heaven which no doubt surprised those who heard. All that they could have known about the kingdom was from their own Scriptures. But nowhere is such an apparent failure to be found as this parable shows. Enemies are destroyed, rebels are executed, and the king rules in equity. "He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." See, also, the magnificent description of the coming kingdom in Isaiah lxx. 17-25. The sinner, though an hundred years old, will die accursed by direct intervention of justice, as a malefactor now dies by the law, for death will no longer be the natural term of life as now; for in that time, as well as in the resurrection, "He shall swallow up death in victory." But the sinner will be held in detestation; that is, people will be at least outwardly righteous, and the kingdom in appearance will be a field of

wheat. How astonishing then to hear that the field would be full of tares. Apparently it was clean contrary to what the prophets had predicted. The servants of the householder wished to restore it to its moral condition by rooting out the tares. But this could not be. The kingdom, as delineated by the prophets, was deferred, and something far different was to be established for a time, which the Lord calls the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven."

Why "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven?" Because the King would be absent from the scene of government, and instead of ruling in equity and judgment, would manifest the utmost forbearance towards sinners. Both wheat and tares are to grow together until the harvest. Grace would be the dominant principle. The King having been rejected by his rebellious people, retires to his Father's throne, and instead of the kingdom proper, brings in a state and condition which he calls the mysteries of the kingdom, characterized by grace. Hence wicked men increase rapidly, and evil triumph in the very place where good had been sown.

But an interesting question here presents itself. When did the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven begin! It is clear that it is between the first and second parables, for the first is only preparatory, while the second supposes its existence and gives a similitude of it. Now that which makes the present form of the kingdom mysterious is, not only that nominally the authority of the King is acknowledged, but really denied, save by a very small minority who are despised and persecuted, and that evil of the very worst kind is paramount and in power, but chiefly that the King himself is personally absent from the sphere of his authority. Therefore, the time of the Lord's ascension seems to mark definitely the commencement of the kingdom. The *absence* of the King is a chief feature of the mysteries; the *return* and *presence*, of the kingdom proper.

The sphere of the kingdom is on the earth, but it does not include the whole earth. By-and-by, it will be from the rising to the setting of the sun, and from shore to shore. The saints then will shout, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ." All the world will be then included. It is not so now. But what places are included now within the limits of the kingdom? Clearly every place where the name of Jesus

has been preached, or really or nominally believed in. If so, it is evident that many places now given up to Mahomedanism are included. Looking around upon the places where the name of Christ has been preached, what a sad, frightful picture is seen of the terrible effect of the tares sown by the enemy. How small a proportion of wheat! How thoroughly the kingdom takes its appearance from the tares! Ruin is everywhere inscribed upon it. Apparently the labour of the sower who sowed good seed in his field has been profitless and in vain. Let us adore the sovereign grace of our God who of His own will and power has preserved a remnant for Himself.

It is a solemn truth that the kingdom takes its character from the professors of Christianity, and among them the tares so outnumber the wheat that the whole aspect of the kingdom is spoiled. The tares were sowed by the enemy for the express purpose of marring the work of the Lord. They do not represent all the evil that is in the world, but that which is connected with the kingdom. We say the kingdom is marred in its present state, but the purpose of God cannot fail. He will establish it in sovereign grace in His own time. But more than this, God had another purpose, namely, to form his church, and this, humanly speaking, was contingent upon the rejection of the King, and the establishment of the mysteries. So that the triumph of the enemy in the Jew's rejection of the Messiah, and sowing tares in the field was a necessary state of things for the calling of the Church, and its existence here below according to the wisdom of God. Not that this frees man from his responsibility, and judgment for rejecting Christ. But we see in it the wisdom of God, who foresaw all, and moulded all to bring about his own eternal purpose. The enemy only did what he was permitted to do, and God all the time was accomplishing His own will.

But returning to the parable, at first the tares were not visible, "but when the blade was sprung up and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also." The servants are astonished. "Sir, didst thou not sow good seed?" &c. It was the work of an enemy. But how could an enemy get into the field? What were the servants about that they did not prevent it. Alas, they slept. Thus they gave an opportunity to the enemy to enter and sow his tares. But thus it is even when the responsibility of man is in question.

From Adam downwards they failed. There is only One who never failed.

(To be Continued, D. V.)

THE PATHWAY, AND THE END OF IT.

MATTHEW xvi. 21-28.

THE Lord addresses Himself to His journey to Jerusalem in the full recognition of this—that He was there to meet the *enmity of man*. He does not look towards that city in the thought of His being made there the *offering of sin* under the hand of God, but rather, of His being there the *victim of man's hatred*.

His death, of course, had each of these characters in it. It was the death of the Lamb of God for the putting away of sin. It was the death of the righteous witness against the world, whom the world in full enmity slew and crucified. It was, at one and the same moment, the death of the *atoning Lamb*, and the death of the *martyr*. But it is in the second of these characters, the Lord anticipates it here.

His road to Jerusalem was such as that all His saints can be on that same road with Him; and He calls on them to follow Him along it, and this evinces His mind on this occasion, for we could never follow Him as the Lamb or the atoning victim; but we may and should follow Him as the martyr, or Righteous suffering Witness against the world. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." (v. 24.) This makes the *character* of this path of Christ very simple and distinct.

But, there is comfort along that road, if we have but faith to receive it. It is an uneasy and a rough path, such as nature does not like. We do not like to be the companions of an insulted, despised, rejected, suffering martyr. A journey on such a road as that is rough enough, and strength and heart naturally fail. But again I say, there is comfort provided for it, if we have but faith to receive it and drink it in. "Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the son of man coming in his kingdom." (v. 28.)

This is the comfort. The saints are not set on this road to Jerusalem, this path across a world that is at enmity with them, and is preparing death for them, (as men at Jerusalem were then preparing it for Jesus,) till they are given to know what the end of that journey is to be, till they be introduced

to the glory that lies on the other side of the sorrow, and the martyrdom—till they see the mount of transfiguration that is higher, as well as more distant than mount Calvary.

This is the comfort; and this the Lord gives His saints, when He calls them to follow Him on the road to Jerusalem, in v. 28. And in this character of it, let me observe, that that verse is an epitome of that magnificent chapter Acts vii. For one of the purposes of the Spirit in Acts vii. is to tell us this, that from the beginning, and all along the line of Scripture, the Lord has never called His elect into a place of sorrow, without telling them, or giving them some notice of the glory and joy that was to end the sorrow.

Thus, *Abraham* was called from all that nature could value; but it was the God of *glory* that had appeared to him, and spoken to him with words of promise.

Joseph was separated, and in principle was a martyr; but he had *dreams* which already told him of *ultimate exaltation*.

Moses was reviled, refused, exiled; both brethren and strangers, the seed of Abraham and uncircumcised Egyptians, mistaking him and persecuting him, but he already had that *beauty* upon him which faith discovered to be of God, the token of divine favour.

Stephen was hated, like his master, witnessed against and killed; but his face had already *shone like that of an angel*. He was marked as a child of resurrection ere he was hurried as a martyr to death.

And so in Matthew xvi. 28, some were to taste of death; (Peter himself was to be bound and led whither he would not, (Jno. xxi. 18-19), and suffer as a martyr,) but they were to be taken beforehand to the place of the glory, and shown the heavenly blessedness in which all their sorrow was to end. The value of which is such, as the Lord here speaks, that "the whole world" though gained, would be nothing in comparison with the loss of it. If the soul at the end came short of the glory of the Son of Man, all beside, though acquired, would leave the soul a loser.

QUICKENING—SEALING.

SCRIPTURE QUERIES AND ANSWERS.

"J. K. M." asks—What is the difference between being quickened by the Holy Ghost, and being sealed; and when are we sealed?

The difference is very great, and is of immense importance, and will account for the different states of soul one sees around. The difference is, that between the state of a saint before, and the proper state *since* the day of Pentecost, prior to which there was no sealing of the Holy Ghost. The saints, prior to that time, were born again. A saint now, in his normal state as such, is not only quickened, but sealed. Of old, the Holy Ghost was not given; nor was He given until Jesus was glorified. (John vii. 37-39).

Quickening, is the Holy Ghost producing by a new nature, which a man had not before as a sinner, holy desires, hatred of evil, the love of Jesus, the love of all that God is, and of what is due to Him. A soul in being born again, receives a nature that it had not before as a sinner. A soul having this new nature, hating what it finds of the old, and loving the things of God, before deliverance finds itself in the deepest distress—delighting in the law of God after the inward man—consenting to God's requirements in the law—finding to will present, but how to perform that which is good finding not; in the deepest distress of soul because it finds it has no strength to carry out the desires of the new man. Finding another law in the members warring against the aspirations *after holiness of the new man*, and bringing into captivity to the law of sin in its members. All these are the symptoms to be found in a soul born of God, *without* the knowledge of redemption. Sad to say that this is the most general state in which Christians are found. This is not the normal, proper Christian state at all. Many souls in such a state are seeking to get peace by progress and victory over self—that is, trying by suppressing the workings of an evil nature which is found twisted and knotted round the heart, to follow the desires and hopes for which the new man struggles so unsuccessfully against the old.

What then is to bring the sense of deliverance and set the new man free? The knowledge of redemption—of Christ's finished delivering work, must be submitted to, and peace found by the surrender of every pretension to strength; and by being completely cast over upon Him for victory and deliverance. In other words, to find that the new nature has no strength, and cannot get peace or liberty by progress; but that it must get peace by surrender to the work of another. *Then* it is, when at the end of itself, and the thought of strength in itself, that it finds that the work of

Christ applies to its *ungodly*, and not its improved state—that when it was *without strength* Christ died for the ungodly. Thus cast over upon the victory of another, the deliverance is complete and the new nature set free. It can thank God through Jesus Christ, in whom, on the cross, God condemned sin in the flesh, *i.e.*, the evil nature which so harassed and distressed the soul.

This will give some idea of the state of a quickened soul without the sealing of the Spirit. Now we will seek to ascertain what the sealing is and when it comes.

In Eph. i. 13, 14, we read, “In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also after that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest,” &c.

Here we find the sealing of the Holy Ghost the *result* of believing the *gospel of salvation* with which it is intimately connected. The Holy Ghost in sealing, gives the consciousness of deliverance and power, and the joy of His presence in the knowledge of the finished work of Christ. This is the normal and healthy state of a believer; and is the only normal and healthy state of a Christian known in Scripture—the full assurance of faith, and the Spirit of adoption. It is not that a soul has to pray for the Holy Spirit as a seal. Scripture teaches that the reception of the Holy Ghost as a seal, is the result and consequence of having believed the gospel of salvation. This involves a great deal; for here comes in union with Christ—membership of Christ. Union is only by the Holy Ghost. A Christian has life in Christ, but he is united to Christ only by the Holy Ghost—life in itself alone, is not union. “He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.” (1 Cor. vi. 17). It is by the hearing of faith, the Holy Ghost is received. We read in Gal. iii. 2, “Received ye the spirit by the works of the law, or by the *hearing of faith?*”

We find instances which will illustrate these two states of soul in the Acts of the apostles. Cornelius was a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, and gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always. (Acts x.) Here was a soul in which the desires and hopes of the new nature were at work. What he wanted was the knowledge of *salvation* to bring him into the enjoyment of true Christian state and privileges. Peter is to be sent for

that he might hear words of him; (v. 22) who when he comes, preaches salvation, and forgiveness and peace; and the result of the reception of the words of *salvation*, (words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved," Acts xi. 14.) was, that the gift of the Holy Ghost, came upon him and those in his house who believed. Again in Acts xix., Paul finds certain disciples at Ephesus whom he asks, "have ye received the Holy Ghost *since ye believed?*" They were believers of John Baptist's testimony which was the announcement of a Messiah to come, and a Holy Ghost which he would communicate. They wanted the further testimony of the rejection, death, and resurrection of Christ, and the efficacy of His work in salvation, and the consequent gift of the Holy Ghost as a seal on believing. The result of Paul's testimony to them was, that they received the gift of the Holy Ghost. These instances show the difference between saints who had been quickened; and believers who were sealed.

How then do we know when a soul is sealed? when it has got peace with God, not merely a hope of it. When is it sealed? when it has believed the Gospel of salvation.

THE MYSTERY OF GOD.

"For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness: but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."—1 Cor. i. 22-24.

The Holy Mystery of God,
 Outlying reason's furthest range,
 Let babes and sucklings tell abroad,
 For who the Father's will may change?
 The wise and prudent, o'er and o'er,
 May stretch the tether of their mind,
 But Faith on seraph-wings will soar,
 While Reason grovels far behind!
 Rom. xi. 33-36; Ps. viii.; Matt. xi. 25-27.

The truth, confessedly is great,
 'Twas shrouded long, from sight concealed,
 By God, Almighty to create,
 For Faith's reception 'tis revealed.
 God speaketh once, that man may learn,
 Yea, twice His counsels to fulfil
 Vain man to other gods would turn,
 Despising sovereign mercy still.
 1 Tim. iii. 16; Job xxxiii. 14-33; Rom. ii. 1-11.

The God who spake, in divers ways,
 At sundry times by human voice,
 Hath focussed all His glory rays
 In Christ, the Servant of His choice.
 The bruised reed He will not break,
 He heareth e'en the ravens cry,
 But arms against the Truth to take.
 'Tis treason 'gainst the Lord most high
 Heb i. 1-2; Is. xlii., xliii. 10; Ps. i.

God manifested in the flesh,
 And in the Spirit justified;
 Of angels seen; of saints confessed;
 Was preached to Gentiles; glorified;
 Made flesh, He dwelt mid sinners here,
 The Holy, Everlasting Word.
 He veiled the glory brought so near,
 Faith saw it, owned in Him the Lord.
 1 Tim. iii. 16; John i. 14; Heb. x. 10.

Eternal and co-equal Son,
 The servant garb on earth He wore;
 Made like to men, the Blessed One
 All human sorrows meekly bore.
 The King, rejected, scourged, and bound—
 The cross adjudged His rightful place—
 There David's Lord, the Heir, was found,
 Though stripped of all, supreme is grace!
 Prov. viii. 2-8; Phil. ii. 6-8; Matt. xxvii. 22-54

For this, God set Him up on high,
 All dignities, all powers above.
 The living Jesus! who could die
 In witness of the Father's love!
 For this hath God a name conferred
 On Him, that doth all names exceed.
 And God be glorified indeed.
 That every tongue should own him Lord.
 Phil. ii. 9-11; Rev. i. 18; 1 John iv. 9-10.

Effulgence of His glory! yea,
 His very self expressed in grace:
 Of God's wide universe the stay,
 Behold Him in the ordered place!
 Behold the Man Christ Jesus! now
 Ascended, seated on the throne.
 Before His face adoring bow,
 God's Power, His Wisdom, Christ alone!
 Heb. i. 2, 3; 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6; Jer. ix. 23, 24.

WORDS OF TRUTH.



THIS IS THE TIME TO BE SAVED.

"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance." (Eccles. iii. 1-4.)

AND *this is not the time to dance.* No; *it is the time to be saved!* The time to accept that which God is offering "without money and without price." There is a day approaching when it will be "a time to dance," for those who are left upon this scene after God has judged the world, and brought in His kingdom in Zion—when the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped—when "the lame man shall leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing"—when "the mountains and hills shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands"—when "the nations are glad and sing for joy"—when "a King shall reign in righteousness," and "princes decree justice," then, and not till then, will it be "a time to dance." But now, can it be "a time to dance?"—a time to rest in ease, and enjoy life (so called)?

Is this then a time to take one's ease, and say to one's soul—"Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry"—Luke xii. 19)—not knowing but that this night thy soul may be required of thee? "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." (Eccles. viii. 11.) So they put away from their hearts the thought of judgment; but it will surely come, it will not tarry. It has not yet come, for the "longsuffering of our Lord is salvation." (2 Peter iii.)

Surely, then, this is not "a time to dance," with endless destruction coming. "For when they shall say, Peace and safety"—(1 Thes. v.)—then, when least expected, "as a thief

in the night"—“as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.” (Luke xxi. 35).

And even without that, with the wages of sin hanging over every soul; death, from which there is no possible escape, and which may come to-night, as the just and righteous sentence of a holy God; because of what man is by nature, apart even from what he may be in his path through the world—“It is appointed unto men once to die; but after this the judgment.” (Heb. ix. 27.) “Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” (Romans v. 12.) “By one man’s offence death reigned by one. (Romans v.) Again, “the wages of sin is death.” (Romans vi. 23.) And “God is not a man that He should lie; neither the Son of Man that he should repent: hath He said and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?” (Numb. xxiii. 19.)

Is this, then, a time to be taking one’s ease, a time to enjoy the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father but of the world? the world, which passeth away, and the lust thereof. (1 John ii. 16-17). Surely, rather it is a time to be saved; a time to get peace with God; a time to *learn Him*; to know the Father who sent the Son; whom to know is life eternal. (John xvii. 3.) “The whole world lieth in the wicked one.” (1 John v. 19.) Their course is according to the prince of this world—John xii. and Ephesians ii. 2.)—that “old serpent, the devil,” the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of unbelief. If deliverance is to be had, surely this is the time to learn it, and therefore it cannot be *a time to dance*—a time to take one’s rest—to settle down here in the midst of *such a world, and under such a prince*, and with *such a judgment*, that may come at any moment, hanging over it. It is rather a time to “taste and see that the Lord is gracious.” If such a thing can be—if a poor sinner, with this righteous sentence of death hanging over him, can be brought into His presence, can indeed have as his own present possession “that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.” (1 John i. 2.)

Yes; not only is it the time to be saved, but the Son of God has been manifested that we might be saved, not to help us to save ourselves, but Himself to put away sin; to destroy the works of the devil: He has been once offered to bear the sins of many. (Heb. ix. 28.) He came to be a

sacrifice for sin, Himself the source of all life—that eternal life which was with the Father,” to lay it down, to make peace, “through the blood of His cross.” (Col. i.) By becoming Himself the sin-bearer; perfect in Himself as a lamb without blemish, and without spot, while God’s equal, Jehovah’s fellow, He becomes obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; receiving in His own person the judgment of God against sin. He alone could do it; alone could stand in the gap, and He did it. Bad, vile, wretched, worthless, miserable as man is, nothing could stop His love. Inexorable justice must be met. Divine holiness satisfied. Sin judged to its very root, before a holy God could send blessing to *such* a world. But fully, perfectly, completely, has He done the work, so much so that nothing remains to be done—all, all, was finished on the cross at Calvary. God’s Son, in man’s stead *met* and *satisfied* God’s holy and righteous claims; received the sentence in His own person, bowed His head and gave up His spirit to His Father; having made an end of sin, and established the righteousness of God which neither sin, Satan, or the world, can ever touch or defile. And that righteousness he now offers to man as His gift from the place where He is seated in the highest heavens, “far above all things.” It is the best robe from the Father’s house. Who could question the Prodigal’s right—(Luke xv).—to enter and sit down at the feast; once the best robe *from out of the house* was put upon him? None could do so. The eldest son might complain of the grace that gave the robe, but clothed in it he had a right to enter, that his elder brother himself, with all his privileges (and they were many) did not possess.

Such is God’s salvation; such the righteousness that He offers to ruined man.

Surely, then, it is a time to be saved. A time to accept this wondrous grace, and have this *eternal* life, for “whatsoever God doeth it shall be for ever.” Does He give life?—it is “for ever.” Does He condemn?—it is for eternity. The Prodigal came to himself *before* it was too late, and he got the best robe from the father’s house in exchange for his rags, his filth and dirt, as he came from the swine troughs. The rich man—(Luke xvi.)—came to himself *when it was* too late, and found the door shut for ever; a great gulph fixed between him and those in blessing, and not one drop of water to cool his tongue. Truly, this is *a time to be saved*.—O.P.

THE NEW BIRTH.

(No. 2.)

REPENTANCE.

IN the last paper we saw that a man is born from above, or born anew by the reception of the word of God, applied by the Spirit's power to the conscience. In simple words, faith, or belief in the testimony of God by His word, whatever may be the subject He is pleased to use, or the means employed in communicating His word. Faith is the first principle of this new nature. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans x. 17.) And, moreover, that the reception of this new nature by faith in God's testimony is also, for every one who believes, eternal life.

Now, there is that which is an invariable *accompaniment* of the new birth, which troubles many an earnest soul who is looking for peace. I speak of Repentance. There are so many perplexing views of this really important work in a soul that I desire to put it simply before my readers, as the Lord may give grace for it, knowing His love and goodness to souls.

There is one thing I would state, in beginning such a subject, that there is never a real effectual work of God in a soul apart from true repentance. Some have stumbled souls by saying that such a work is a necessary *preparation for faith*, and a reception of the Gospel. That is, that it *goes before* faith, and hence *before* the new birth in a soul. Now, without hesitation, I would say that in *every* instance, in *all* Scripture, where the work of repentance is spoken of as a doctrine, or the fruits of it spoken of in a soul, it *invariably follows* faith. I do not say but that it has gone before *peace*. Peace may not be known for many a day, but the work of repentance has always followed *faith*, and consequently *accompanied the new birth* in every instance.

Many have thought that repentance is sorrow for sin, and that a certain amount of it is necessary before the reception of the Gospel. Others have got into the other extreme and have set aside the thoughts of sorrow for sin altogether, and have thought that it is a change of mind about God. Now, these thoughts are both wrong. No doubt, as the apostle says—"Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of." (2 Cor. vii. 10.) But the Corinthians had been converted long before, and their sorrow of heart for

what he charged them, led to a judgment of self under the power of God's word to them through Paul. He says in another place that "the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." (Romans ii. 4.) One then "works repentance," and the other leads to it, but neither of them are repentance itself. It is the true judgment which I form of myself, and all in myself, in view of what God has revealed and testified to me, whatever may have been the subject He has used.

We will now examine some of the instances in the word of God.

Jonah, the prophet, went to the men of Nineveh, by the command of God, to preach of judgment. He said—"Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." The result of his preaching was, that "the people of Nineveh believed God, . . . and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them." (Jonah iii. 4-5.) Here was a real work of repentance which *followed* faith in the preached word of God by Jonah. And we read, "The men of Nineveh . . . repented at the preaching of Jonah." (Mat. xii. 41.) Here was a real work of self-judgment in view of the testimony of God. For this, simply, is repentance; it is the judgment we form of ourselves, and all in ourselves, under the effect of God's testimony, which we have believed.

Now turn to an example of repentance in the passage in Ezekiel xxxvi., to which we before alluded. It spoke of the new birth to Israel by water and the Spirit which is necessary for them to enter into the earthly blessings of the kingdom. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you and I will put my spirit within you. . . . Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and for your abominations." (ver. 25-31) Here is again a real work of repentance in a soul which has been born again of water and the Spirit.

John Baptist's testimony to Israel was, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Belief in his testimony that the kingdom of heaven was at hand produced the truest repentance in their souls, *i. e.*, they judged themselves and their state as unfit for God's Kingdom, and they did works meet for repentance—works which proved the sincerity of their self-judgment.

The Lord Jesus himself preaches in Galilee, "The time is

fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand ; repent ye and believe the gospel." They could not repent till they believed the good news of the kingdom. Faith in the testimony as to it produced repentance, or the judgment of self in view of such a testimony.

The mission to the disciples, in Luke xxiv. 47, was "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." These things were announced *in His name*, but unless there was *faith in His name* no repentance or remission would follow.

Many instances could be adduced from the word of God to show that true repentance is always preceded by faith, or belief in the testimony of God, and is inseparable from the new nature which is thereby implanted in the soul.

When a soul is born again, and has thereby a new nature which it had not before, it begins to discover the workings of the old. Sometimes this work is very deep and long, and often the most wretched experience are gone through, ere the soul learns peace with God. Tempted perhaps to think betimes that it is not a child of God at all.

Perhaps my reader is one who is in this state of misery and unhappiness of soul. You can look back, it may be, on a time when all went smoothly, and no trouble of soul came in to disturb your life. Then you had but *one nature* as a sinner. Some word of God awakened your conscience, and since then your life has been miserable. You enjoy moments of hopefulness perhaps, in thinking of the love and grace of God, and the tenderness of Christ in dealing with poor, lost souls; and then come the accusings of conscience and a broken law ; things that you know were right have been neglected, and things which were unfit for God's presence practised, and your soul is miserable, and there is no peace. How like your state of soul must have been that of the poor prodigal on his way to his father's house, uncertain how all would end ; at one moment looking at his rags and filth, at another at the fulness and plenty of the father's house. So with you ; the very new nature which you have got is that by which you are discovering the workings of the old. As long as you had no new nature there was no trouble of soul, but now the very trouble is the result of having a new nature which you had not before. It is your new nature which, loving the things of God, and having its source from the Spirit of God, which has learned to loathe what you find in self, and to long

to be right before Him. (See carefully the state of a soul in Rom. vii. 14-25).

How often, in such a case does the soul seek for peace by progress and victory over itself. It thinks, by suppressing this evil desire, and curbing that evil temper or disposition to get peace. In other words, to get peace by endeavouring to get better, *instead of giving up all hopes of getting better and by surrendering every such pretension, and being cast over altogether upon Christ!* To find that Christ has gone down under the waves and billows of judgment, not only for the sins which troubled the conscience before God, but also for that evil nature which so troubles and distresses the heart. When it was proved that you were utterly without strength, unable to do aught to deliver yourself, Jesus bore the judgment of it all before God, and rising out of it God has transferred you to His side of the grave—that you live now by His life in resurrection, and that God sees you standing in redemption, alive in the life of His Son, and that the nature which so troubles you has been condemned and put aside for ever. How sweet to discover this—to find that all God recognises now is the *new* man. That all this terrible experience is but learning what your old nature is in God's sight; that it is a true work of repentance in your soul.

God has given your old nature the place of death in the judgment of the cross of Christ. He does not attempt to *improve* it in any degree. His testimony is, that He has given to you everlasting life in His Son; it is this life and this only, which He owns, and directs, and by which He trains and educates you—never recognising in any measure the old nature. Nevertheless it exists in you, and His spirit, through Christ's advocacy, deals with your conscience about it, never letting you alone about its workings, although never imputing them to you, that you may continue to judge them and keep them in the place of death, which He has given them, by being engaged with Christ who is your life; and thus that the only thing which may be active is the life of Jesus in your body.

We will, in the next paper (Lord willing), look into the fact that God does not change, or remove, or ameliorate, the old nature, in any degree, in imparting a new. Both natures remain as distinct as possible, but there is no necessity whatsoever that a Christian should live in the practice or power of any nature but the new; nay, rather, this is what God looks for in the Christian at all times.

SERVICE.

AS TO WORK FOR THE LORD.—The simple inquiry, and what is recorded in the first utterance of Paul to our Lord, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” is the duty and expression of every one distinctly awakened to the claim Christ has on him. This inquiry cannot be too earnestly instituted, or the reply to it too rigidly attended to. The inquiry is the offspring of a soul sensible that the Lord has entire and full claims on it, without the knowledge which authorises it. The soul feels, “I am taken out of the world, and I am given to Christ; and hence I look to Him for my place and occupation in *future in it.*” If we are given to Christ “out of the world,” it is evident that it is He alone who has the right to determine our way and course *in the world.*

I could not say, if I believe that I am really given to Him “out of the world,” that I have any right to *re-occupy* any place or engagement which I had previously held in the world. True, He does not require, or permit me to infringe on any legal bond under which I was held before I was given to Him; but excepting where the rights of others would be compromised I am Christ’s bondsman. Vested legal rights are not to be compromised because of my being given to Christ—but I am Christ’s bondsman, and necessarily if I am, both from duty and inclination, my inquiry ought to be, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”

The more I own and realise the relationship which now exists through grace between us, the more simply and continuously will this be my whole heart’s cry to Him. Now, if it is, I will, of course, accede to Christ, and attend to whatever He may intimate to me, and this only. That is, the heart true to Him and devotedly making this request will *wait* on Him for guidance and counsel, and would find no real satisfaction in being anywhere, or doing anything which was not according to His mind. Our place, and our occupation here, would be only determined by the pleasure of Him whose we are, and whom we serve; and any departure from the tie or rule of this relationship would sensibly interfere with the mutual satisfaction therein known. There would be a break in on, and a disturbance of, the true orders of life and the blessings connected with it. Nothing so simple, and nothing so important in our walk down here! I belong to Christ, and I find it my happiness, and His pleasure, to do nothing

but as He desires and instructs me. *I live where He likes, and I do what He likes.* If we did this, there would be no mistakes on one side or the other.

But we do make mistakes on both sides—on one side at one time, and on another side at another time. At one time we *plan* work for ourselves, and at another time we do none at all. Now, the first is the most difficult to deal with, simply because the counterfeit deceives one; and hence, while it is comparatively easy to convict the idle or slothful, it is not easy to convince the Martha that she is unwisely occupied. The work seems so right and necessary that it appears almost impossible that there could be any flaw in it. Nothing so deceives and leads astray, as the conscience working at a distance from Christ. For instance, if I feel in my conscience that I ought to be Christ's servant—(true enough, I am His bondsman)—but if I am not near Him, if I am not in His confidence, and I begin to do something to satisfy my conscience there is no doubt I am doing it legally, not as simply unto Him. It is to make *myself* easy and satisfied. Where this is the case I do not consult what He would like me to do, but I do what *I* think best to be done. It is not His pleasure guides me, it is my own mind, as to what is suitable and proper. It may be quite necessary, as Martha's service, but Martha was evidently thinking of the services which were incumbent on her to render, and not governed by the pleasure of Christ. Here it is where we so often fail; undertaking to serve, where it is in a degree creditable to ourselves or incumbent on us. We say we *ought* to do this, and forthwith we undertake it, and we get disappointed (if we are true-hearted) because we have not the acknowledgment of His pleasure.

How can He acknowledge what we have undertaken and done to satisfy our own conscience, and to please ourselves therein? It is evident that when I am occupied with services, however useful and necessary, which I have undertaken of myself, feeling they devolved upon me, that I must lose the sense of His pleasure; sitting at His feet, Mary-like, is lost and neglected. There is no growth of soul in Christ; self is in the service from beginning to end. It is most blessed to work for Christ. It is fruit-bearing. But if my work engrosses me more than Christ then it is a damage to me, and I am not working for Him. "Without me ye can do nothing." If I am really working for Christ, I am acquir-

ing from Christ, and growing up into Him. Sitting at His feet is the natural posture of my soul. Wherever you find any one serving without sitting at His feet, you may be assured they are Martha-like. When they are sitting at His feet, learning His word, they will not be behind in true and pleasing service. If you begin with serving (as many do now-a-days) you will never sit at His feet; whereas if you begin with sitting you will soon serve wisely, well, and acceptably. The serving quiets the conscience, and the sitting is overlooked and neglected. The enemy gains an advantage; for it is at the sitting the conscience is more enlightened, and the pleasure and mind of the Master are better known, and hence there is damage done, and loss sustained by the soul where service pre-occupies one to the exclusion of sitting at His feet, or where it is most prominent.

I never met with any one making service prominent who knew what it was to sit at His feet; but, thank God, I know indefatigable workers who enjoy sitting at His feet above any service, and it is clear that they who sit most at His feet must be most competent to serve and most in His confidence, which, after all, is the clue to all efficient service.

THOUGHTS ON THE SIMILITUDES OF THE KINGDOM, AS PRESENTED IN THE PARABLES OF THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

(Continued from page 95.)

“WHEN the blade was sprung up, then appeared the tares also.” Christianity had not long been established ere evil was found existing in the professing Church (for the kingdom assumed a church-form). The apostles were yet living when the spirit of Antichrist began to work. Not many years after and the profession of Christ’s name ceased in some places. In others a vile superstition, while bearing His name, succeeded. And the tares showed themselves in power, and put to death the faithful few. God will always have a remnant, but the tares will increase in such proportions that the reaping of the field will be much more like a scene of judgment than a joyful *harvest-home*. The wheat will be gathered into the garner, and it will be a *harvest-home* for them. But the special direction to the reapers—the angels—is to bind the tares in bundles and to cast them into the fire.

The servants, discovering the evil, wish at once to remedy the evil in their own way. This is just man again; having committed one fault by his supineness, the flesh would correct it by its own energy. And I know not which is most to be feared, the first fault or the fleshly remedy. In many cases the latter has been productive of more mischief. But the Lord would not permit it,—“Nay, lest ye root up also the wheat.” He well knew what the blind, zealous energy of the flesh would do, and He loved His own wheat too well to trust them even to His servants.

It is His will that both should grow together until the harvest, and then He will separate them. Meantime He is not occupied with judgment. He acts in grace, and calls out from the world. Judgment on the wicked is suspended, nor will it take place till all the wheat is gathered into the garner. To put His own in a place of safety has always been the way of God before He judged the wicked. Noah was shut up in the ark before the deluge came. Lot was in a place of safety before the Cities of the Plain were destroyed. Rahab was taken out of Jericho before it fell. And the Jewish remnant, bye-and-by, are directed to flee away to the mountains before Jerusalem is destroyed.

Jesus said, “Ye are the salt of the earth,” and the world is forborne with because of the righteous that are in it. The wheat must come to maturity before the field is reaped, even if the tares ripen at the same time. But when the wheat is ripe, then judgment comes upon the whole field. The tares will be bound in bundles and cast into the fire. Something like this may be going on now; the different bundles of tares may be now being bound together in the various associations of the men of the world. For every association which has not Christ for its object is a tare-bundle. Now it is possible for an erring child of God to be found mixed up with such an association; but the Lord, when He comes, well knows how to bring them out of the evil.

The Lord, in His explanation, is very precise about the tares. Their origin—sown by the devil; their doom—to be tied in bundles and burnt; the reapers, executioners of His wrath—the angels. It is the Son of Man purging His kingdom. All things that offend are taken out, and then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who are the righteous here! They

include all the Old Testament saints, and all who have followed the king during his rejection; and those are not only the Church, but those also who shall have suffered martyrdom between the rapture of the Church and the appearance of Christ in judgment. The living saints are not among them; they will form the nucleus of the kingdom proper on the earth. The "righteous" here are in the *kingdom of the Father*, a term which is never applied to the kingdom of heaven.

But there is significance in this phrase "kingdom of their Father," and it points out to the disciples then gathered around Jesus that they would not be on the earth to share in the temporal blessing and glory of Messiah's reign; for they will not be there, but gathered into the garner. What then? Is there no blessing or place for them? Yes truly, a higher, better blessing and place. The kingdom of heaven is the rule and reign of Jesus upon the earth. But when this kingdom is set up they will be in the heavenly glory with Jesus. They will shine as the sun, because they will ever reflect Him and His glory—bodies like unto the body of His glory—they will be the companions and personal attendants of Jesus in the kingdom of their Father.

Here was a further insight into the new thing. Not only are the disciples to be sufferers here for the present, but even when the kingdom comes in power and in glory (which they were directed to pray for—"Thy Kingdom come,")—they will be removed from the earthly domain of the king, and brought into the heavenly department which could not properly be called the kingdom of heaven, but the kingdom of their Father.

It is evident that the kingdom of heaven cannot be the church. The servants are not allowed to put away evil men out of the kingdom. This could only be done by putting them to death. For so long as any man, having been baptized, is in the world, he is in the kingdom of heaven; to be a tare is not to be outside; indeed, the only way in which, according to the parable, they are dealt with is the burning of them—this is death. The exercise of discipline in the Church of God is a very different thing from putting men out of the kingdom. We are expressly commanded to put out the evil doer; not to kill him, (as, alas! the professing church has done before now,) but to excommunicate; or if we cannot do that—if the church, so called, refuse to judge, and

allows the individual who has sinned to come to the Lord's table—then we are to separate ourselves from it. In such a case, an assembly ceases to be of the Church of God. Those who are born of God among them of course do not lose their salvation, nor do they cease to be members of *the Church*, but that assembly, as such, ceases to be, in principle, a Church of God, and the real members found in it lose inestimable blessing through being in bad company, and in a false position.

NAAMAN : OR GOD GLORIFIED.

2 KINGS v.

(Continued from page 89.)

2. FROM God's counsels we come to God's grace. The Gentile stands before the prophet's door a leper, a loathsome object, if rightly viewed, yet, in his own country, a person of rank, and highly esteemed. Before grace can flow out, the soul must be in a condition to receive it, for grace is bestowed, not earned; the favour is on God's part in giving, not on man's in receiving. How many have wrong thoughts on this point, which need to be corrected. "The wages of sin is death; but the *gift of God* is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." The Lord *gave Himself* for our sins. Paul *obtained mercy*. (Romans vi. 23, Gal. i. 4, 1st Tim. i. 13.) At the prophet's door, but not admitted into His presence, Naaman learns this. The captain of the hosts of Syria before man; he was a defiling object, which the prophet could not touch, before God. Receiving all honour from His attendants, he received none from Elisha. The prophet will not see him. Whom, before this, had refused to admit Naaman into their presence? Where could any be found in Syria or in Israel who would not have run to Naaman? Elisha, acting for God, and filled with God's thoughts about all things, remains within, whilst Naaman stands with his train without; not that He was unconcerned about all this, for he would have him know that there was a prophet in Israel; nor yet that he would not help him, for He sent a message at once clear in its terms and full of promise for the leper—"Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." This was what he wanted, but he did not want it in this way. He had travelled from Syria to Samaria to be healed, but had never thought of this manner of procedure. Naaman was wroth. How unreasonable. Had he not got,

what the King of Israel had failed to give him, full directions for his cure? "Go, wash in Jordan seven times, and thou shalt be clean." No uncertainty was there in this language. The promise was sure, the message clear—"Thou shalt be clean." But he was wroth, and went away in a rage. Why reject his own mercies? Why refuse to obey? The truth comes out, "*I thought.*" If bidden to do some great thing he would have done it, but this message made nothing of him. Does he stand alone in this? How often have men's thoughts stood in the way of God's grace—*I thought.* But what ground had he for thinking how the prophet would act. "I thought, he will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord His God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper." He was willing to be healed, if he was honoured. How many are willing to be saved if only they may retain a good opinion of themselves? As Naaman acted then many would act in this day. But God acts now in a similar way to what He acted then. He acts in grace, but it is to sinners, to those dead in sins, to those without strength and ungodly, to those who can do nothing for their salvation but receive it, to those who conform to the obedience of faith. The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. This one verse speaks volumes. Men were lost. He came to seek the lost, and to save the lost.

In Naaman's mind all was arranged. He pictured the scene to himself, and made himself the foremost figure in the group. "To me he will surely come out." One might picture the scene as Naaman graphically describes it, the Gentile idolater waited on by the prophet of God. The incongruity of this he did not then see. We see it. God would visit him in grace, but as one who had no ground of his own to stand on. As a sinner He could meet with him. As a leper He could heal him. As the captain of the hosts of the King of Syria He would not receive him. What place has a sinner before God save that of one to whom mercy can be shown? What place is suited for the leper save that outside the camp? Naaman has to learn his place. He may be wroth with the prophet, but he cannot move him. Before him he is only a leper, whatever he may appear before others. Learning his place he has to learn his vileness. He imagined Elisha would have struck his hand over the place, and recovered the leper. A sign—a scene he expected—not a mere word. He did not know what a defiling object he

was. The priest looked on the leper to judge whether he was leprous or not. He touched him only when he was clean. Of Naaman's leprosy there was no doubt, for he had come to be healed of it. To touch him ere he was clean would only have defiled the prophet. But further, if he had been able to touch him, and so have healed him, would not men have thought there was virtue in the prophet? By sending him to the Jordan to wash, it would be clearly seen, the cure was direct from God. Man has no virtue in himself—he can only be the channel of God's grace to others. God must have all the glory of the cure, and Naaman be taught his true condition and vileness. We read of but One who touched the leper, and healed him; for in Him resided the virtue needed for his cure. He could do this, and God be glorified, for honouring Him they honoured the Father. But Elisha being the servant, not the Son, the channel, not the fountain, the instrument, not the worker, could direct, but could not touch.

Another lesson the proud man must learn. "Go wash in Jordan," was the command. "Are not Abana and Pharpar better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them and be clean?" was the proud captain's rejoinder. Better than all the waters of Israel they might be to the natural eye, but they could not help him. He might wash in them seventy times, and at the end he would come out as leprous as he went in. What, then, were the healing properties of the Jordan? It had none, but there only could he be healed. He must learn the "obedience of faith." So to the Jew the preaching of the cross, Christ crucified, was a stumbling block; to the Greeks it was foolishness; but to the saved it was the power of God. Why, it might be asked, could he not go to the Kishon, or the Jabbok, or any other stream? Why must he wend his way to the Jordan? Because the Jordan is the type of death, and by death alone is a soul delivered from the dominion and guilt of sin. By the blood and death of the Lord Jesus Christ our sins are blotted out. By His death sin is put away as before God. As dead and risen with Christ, souls are freed from the dominion of sin. (Heb. ix. 26-28; Rom. vi. 13). What the Jordan was typically, Israel's history shadowed forth when they passed through it dryshod, the ark having gone before them, and remained in the bed of the river till all had passed through. Elisha shows out in his history something

of the typical character of the river, when, with a double portion of Elijah's spirit, he re-crossed the Jordan dryshod, having opened the way with Elijah's mantle, to commence his ministry in Israel. The disciples of John tell us something of the same, when they were baptized of John in Jordan, confessing their sins. In Jordan, then, must the leper wash if he would be clean.

But might not Abana or Pharpar typify death as well as Jordan? They were rivers of Syria, Jordan was a river of Israel, is the simple answer. God could work in grace even for Gentiles, but He who worked thus was the God of Israel. The Gentile could get blessing in that dispensation, but only in a way which established the pre-eminence of Israel. God's name was great in Israel, however much His people had forgotten Him. Naaman had to learn this lesson likewise. He was to be healed, but by the God of Israel, and in the land of Israel. Throughout that dispensation the Gentile was taught that he must receive blessing through the Jew. The woman of Sarepta was preserved alive through the famine, but it was when she received Elijah into her house. The Ninevites were saved from the impending wrath, but it was by the preaching of Jonah. Comparing the Jordan with the Rivers of Syria, Naaman might despise it, but there, and there only, could the cure be effected.

He must stoop to own his vileness in God's appointed way. That was all he had to do. That done in obedience to God, he would be healed. What a lesson was this to be learnt, to confess his uncleanness, and to confess it as uncleanness of no ordinary kind. A garment or the person, slightly soiled, may be cleansed by one washing. He must wash seven times to show his defilement was great; but, when washed seven times his leprosy would be completely and for ever put away. Could he stoop to all this? At first his proud spirit rebelled. The remonstrance, however, of his servants prevailed, he obeyed.

How much then had he to learn? How low had he to come down? He learnt from His visit to Jehoram that a mere man could not help him. He learnt from the prophet's message that he could direct him. He learnt from Elijah's absence what he thought of the leper. He learnt from the mention of the Jordan, that in God's land only could he get what he wanted; and now, by washing seven times in Jordan, he learnt what it was to confess his great uncleanness. Now God could work for him. He has come down to his true

place, seven times has he gone down into the Jordan, and the prophet's words are verified, his flesh has come again like the flesh of a little child, and he is clean.

All is changed. He meets with different treatment. The leper is leprous no more. He had stood before the door of the prophet; now he stands before him, no longer a suppliant whom the prophet could not see, but a voluntary confessor of the one true God. "Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel." This was not the first time surely that he crossed the boundary between Syria and Israel, yet till now he knew not that there was but One God, and that in Israel. God, because Israel had failed to do so, now glorifies Himself, and brings Naaman to enter the land as a suppliant, and to leave it as a confessor of the truth. And now he is taught something more. Having learnt who God is, and where He can be found, he learns too, that, whilst he can receive from God, the prophet will receive nothing from him. God must be glorified in this too. Naaman can receive the blessing, but it is all of grace. When God gives to sinners, He gives freely. So the answer comes, "as the Lord liveth, before whom I stand I will receive none, and he urged him to take it; but he refused." And rightly does he act in refusing it. Could the prophet of God be beholden to a Gentile? Impossible. Knowing the spirit in which he should act, like Abraham before the King of Sodom, he declines the offer. It would have been out of character with the times of Elisha if he had received it. That was the day to show what God could do. By-and-by it will be the day to receive from the Gentiles, according to the glowing prediction of Isaiah ix.

But if Elisha will not take from him, Naaman desires something from the land. The leper lately, now a confessor of the One True God, will not stop short of being a worshipper. To Jehovah alone will he henceforth offer burnt-offerings and sacrifices. All the sacrifices ever offered to Rimmon had not wrought his cure. To the One, whom he had never worshipped, is he indebted for it. To Him alone will he henceforth sacrifice, and for this requests two mules' burden of earth. He brought treasures with him; he carries back what he esteems of value. Full, a short time previous, of the superiority of Syria over Canaan, he now desires earth from the land of Israel. And why? Were there no artificers in Damascus to design for him an altar for his new worship?

Was not this request of his the proof of a perception as a worshipper, faint yet real, of what God is, and what was suited for His worship? Ahaz, years afterwards, finds a pattern for an altar at Damascus; Naaman carries back with him two mules' burden of earth. We can hardly suppose that he was acquainted with God's command to Israel (Exod. xx. 24.) Had he by spiritual instinct a right perception of what was needed; that God required not any ingenuity of man to make an altar, fit to offer sacrifices on to Him; and, that nothing was so suited for the worship of God in an idolatrous country as the altar of earth—a silent, yet solid witness to the immeasurable distance between man and his Maker, who seeks for nothing from man but real worship and heart service, and to whose glory he cannot add a single ray!

Here a difficulty arises. Naaman will worship Jehovah alone, but can he refuse to attend his master the king in the house of Rimmon? "In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, that, when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, . . . the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing." Here again we see surely the spiritual instincts of a new-born soul. Fresh from the Jordan, he learns how incompatible is all other worship with that of the true God. God cannot admit of a rival. He sees something of this; and learns that there cannot be the blending of the false with the true. He cannot worship Jehovah and Rimmon. As a heathen, he might have introduced the worship of Jehovah to his countrymen, as a fresh rite to be practised side by side with the old one. As a new-born soul, this he sees cannot be. What is he to do? Elisha answers "go in peace"—a strange reply at first sight it appears. Is God willing to share his glory with another? Could Elisha have bowed himself in the house of Rimmon, if honoured by being the support of the king of Syria? A wise answer it was, if we reflect on it. He leaves Naaman to be taught of God, as he is able to receive it. He could not sanction what Naaman spoke of. He did not excuse it, nor did he make light of it. He refused to direct him about it. Could Naaman have walked by Elisha's faith? Naaman's words show he saw it was wrong to act as he speaks of, but he did not see how wrong. Could one, who saw it clearly, have said, "the Lord pardon

thy servant in this thing?" When it was a question of teaching Naaman the freeness of grace, Elisha is plain and decided; when it is a question of how Naaman should act, his eyes as yet only half-opened, Elisha leaves him with God. Should we not do well to follow the prophet some times in this? We cannot expect a new-born soul to have the clearness and faith of an aged Christian. How this difficulty of Naaman's forces on the mind the moral state of the world. For no sooner has a soul received from God in grace, than its difficulties begin; and it finds that the ways, and maxims, and habits, and even the religion of the world, is opposed to God. The subject of grace, taught about himself, and brought down to the obedience of faith, and the change in him which was made apparent the moment he submitted to God's words, afford us a clear and simple illustration of the way of salvation, with this difference—Naaman was told to wash; sinners are told to believe. He was to wash in the Jordan; sinners are to believe on one who has died, the Lord Jesus, and has been raised again for our justification. The object of faith is different; but the result, when apprehended, is the same—obedience of faith, and the perfect cleansing from all that defiles. And we have divine warranty for taking up this history in this light, for the Lord Himself referred to it in the synagogue at Nazareth, as an instance of grace, which can go out beyond the narrow bounds of God's earthly people.

(To be Continued, D. V.)

FRAGMENTS.

The Glory is now the scene of God's acting. It is the place the Spirit associates me with in Christ, because it is where He is; thus I find that the *glory is my scene!* the flesh withers there—Is that a loss? No, for you are in the Spirit, which is perfect liberty, and all there is suited to the bright presence of our God. And what is the practical effect on me down here? I am independent of *this* scene. I am not looking for it to minister to me; therefore I can turn round and minister to it. But I am going on through it connecting myself with Christ in glory.

If any soul has tasted of the healing power of Christ's work, and has not yet entered into the assurance of heart

which flows from knowing His feelings towards it, and the close relationships into which it is brought, all it needs is to come to Him and confer with Him; tell Him all that He has done for it; and that soul will be made to rejoice in an unerring consciousness through the Holy Ghost, not only of its adoption, but of the glorious privileges which are its portion through God's gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

The lie of the serpent estranged man from God, and made him at home in the world. The work of the serpent's bruiser (Christ) makes the believer at home in the presence of God, but a stranger in the world.

THE RESTING PLACE.

"Leaning on Jesus' bosom."—JOHN xiii. 23.

"Leaning on Jesus' bosom!" This is the place of rest,
When the trials of life surround us, and the heart is sore opprest;
When the soul is sad and weary, and longing for break of day—
When doubts, and fears and failings for ever will flee away!

"Leaning on Jesus' bosom!" This is the place of peace,
Where trouble cannot reach us, and sorrows all must cease.

"Leaning on Jesus' bosom!" I have no cares or fear—
No danger there can threaten me, no evil venture near.

"Leaning on Jesus' bosom!" These are his words to me.
"As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort thee;"
Though here you may have sorrow, O conquer all your fears,
In the glory over yonder, "God will wipe away your tears!"

"Leaning on Jesus' bosom!" Calmly may I be found
When the silent waves of Jordan encompass me around;
When the shadows have grown much longer, and the days are dark
and cold,
Then I look for my home in Heaven, 'mid the streets of shining gold!

"Leaning on Jesus' bosom!" Oh, Christian, this is your place,
The *only* place of resting amid life's weary race!
Here there is naught but sorrow, sickness, and want, and care;
But sorrow will fade into gladness in the glory over there!

"Leaning on Jesus bosom!" His arms will encircle you round;
List'n'ng His gentle whispers, you'll hear no earth-born sound;
But you'll rest in the light of His beauty, like the ransom'd glorified,
And the smiles of His love will thrill you ere you reach the other side!

A. S. O.

WORDS OF TRUTH.

THE WAY THAT SEEMS RIGHT.

THERE is a way which *seemeth* right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Prov. xiv. 12 and xvi. 25.) Such, dear reader, are the inspired words of the royal preacher, and the statement is so true, and withal so important, that it is twice repeated. It is so common, nay so universal among the erring sons of Adam, for us to leave the good and the right way, the way of truth and peace and happiness, and to run like silly sheep, every one to his own way, just because it *seemeth* right to us, and in entire disregard of what the end thereof shall be, that it surely is not without occasion that we are thus warned to consider what lies before us, at the foot of that way we have chosen, and in which we are so swiftly hastening. It seemeth *right*: it is broader and more pleasant to our feet; there are more to travel with us in it than in that narrow path with the strait gate at the head of it. Most of our companions are with us here and beckon us on, and on, and we follow, but oh whither? The end of these things is.—But never mind the end: that will not come yet; it is not long that we have been in this glittering path, and for awhile at least we will enjoy it. To-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant; and the third day, and the following days, and the *last day!* No, no, we dare not think of that; it is an unpleasant subject, and must not be allowed to intrude upon our mirth. It startles us as the funeral knell of all our pleasures, and its sound must be stifled, or else "even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the *end* of that mirth is heaviness." Ah! dear reader, the end *will* be heaviness, and that so heavy that the soul will sink into endless, *endless* woe. Would you fain forget that it will have an end? Would you fain occupy yourself with the *way* that seemeth right, and with the empty

mirth you love, and banish from your mind the unwelcome truth that the end of one is the "ways of death," and of the other, heaviness with blank despair? I ask you, is this *wise*? Should it not rather be left to witless sheep to wander they know not whither, and should not you, as a rational and responsible being, possessing an undying soul, consider the *end* of the path you take, as well as the path itself? Have you not heard who has said, "O that they were wise, that they understood this; that they would consider their latter end," and will you give no heed to it? Pray do not toss this aside as unworthy your attention: do not treat with indifference or contempt, the words of your Omnipotent Creator. Dear fellow-sinner, He is stronger than thou: oh, beware of trifling with Him. Be wise now, therefore, be instructed from these words; how possible it is for even the way that seems so right in *thine* eyes, to have at its end the ways of eternal misery, the second death.

Thoughtless young man, what is the way you are treading, and what is its end? Does it *seem* right to you? Do you pride yourself upon being a real good fellow, and at any rate doing no harm to any one but yourself? (and why, prithee, shouldst thou be an enemy to thyself?) You spend your money freely, and attend to your business regularly, and keep up a fair character; you do not go to the same excess of riot as some whom you know, and if you are not quite so particular about reading your bible and similar things, you do not openly scoff at religion, or stand in the way of others who wish to improve themselves and lead a religious life. You make no profession yourself, and so nobody can call you a hypocrite; you hate hypocrisy, and this serves you well as an excuse for not confessing the name of the blessed Jesus, and taking up your cross to follow after that lowly Saviour, who as a despised stranger, travelled this weary world: but on the whole you do not feel that you can find *much* fault with yourself, and this is the way that seemeth right unto you. Now my friend, you may be very sincere in thinking yourself right in pursuing the way I have traced, but, I ask you again is it *wise* to rest content with what *seems* right, when the thing in question is one of such infinite importance to you as the eternal welfare of your undying soul? We are told how a young man shall cleanse his way, by taking heed thereto according to the Word of God: are *you* following the infallible directions of that Word? Such, and such only,

is the unerring chart by which to shape our course; have you for yourself consulted it? Have you found from it that you are a sinner, and have urgent, pressing need of a *Saviour*? If you have you will never rest satisfied with the way that seemeth right unto you; you will find it gives you no relief from the burden of your sins; no release from the fear of death; and, although it be a way of seeming happiness and transient pleasure, you must, while in it, number yourself with those of whom it is said, "the *way of peace* have they not known." You may have a treacherous peace with yourself, and the world, and your associates in folly, but "peace with God" you know not, and unless by His mercy arrested, and turned out of the path of darkness into His marvellous light, you *never can* know that rest of heart which attends faith in His beloved Son Jesus Christ. But, oh! if still *content* to tread the path of disobedience and departure from Him, be assured you will find ere long and to your eternal cost, that the end of the way that seemed so right, leads only to endless, hopeless misery.

Dear reader, whoever you may be, old and feeble, or young and vigorous; surrounded by circumstances of ease and comfort, or compelled to labour wearily for the bread that perisheth; be entreated to ponder well the path of thy feet, yea, to examine it in the full blaze of *divine* light, never resting satisfied with the way that *seemeth* right, lest by-and-bye, when too late to retrace thy steps, thou find it as "the way of the wicked, which is as darkness; they know not at what they stumble." There is a way that "leadeth unto life;" that leads to God in whose presence is "*fulness of joy*," and at whose right hand are "pleasures for *evermore*." Jesus is the *Way*: His precious blood "cleanseth from all sin," and makes poor hell-deserving sinners meet to tread that holy path. It is the "way everlasting," and it "shineth more and more unto the perfect day." It is a narrow path now, having been tracked by One "despised and rejected of men," but presently, when He receives His honours, and goes forth, conquering and to conquer, till all in heaven and earth be subdued unto Him, He will not be ashamed to own as His brethren, before assembled worlds, those who have confessed His name in this scene of His humiliation, and then in rapturous joy and bliss unspeakable they shall know how infinitely better it was to take the narrow path that leadeth unto life, and choose to suffer afflictions as followers of Jesus,

than to "enjoy the pleasures of sin for a *season*," in that path which might have seemed right, but the "end of which are the ways of death." W. T.

THOUGHTS ON THE SIMILITUDES OF THE KINGDOM, &c.

(Continued from page 113.)

"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed," &c.

EVER since sin came into the world, the people of God have always been a remnant. A people separated from their fellows according to nature, and in habit, principle, and aim, living apart. I speak here of those who were truly born of God, not of a nation separated from other nations as Israel of old, who were indeed nominally the people of God, but really as regards the majority, not His people. In the antediluvian world the sons of God were distinct from the daughters of men.

After the flood God has handed down to us a few names. Idolatry was mixed up with the knowledge of the true God. And God called out and separated Abram from all else, notwithstanding that Terah appears to have had some knowledge of God. But God would have a testimony outside idolatry, and Abram must be separated from his father. But the line of witnesses for God was always a narrow one. Israel was called the people of God, but how few among them were faithful. In the time of Elijah, out of all the nation then subject to Ahab, God had only a remnant of seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal. (1 Kings xix. 18.)

When the Lord came, how few gathered round Him. And now that the kingdom is set up, we find the same thing. It is but a remnant of those within the kingdom who are found faithful. They are the Church of God. The kingdom itself, through the unwatchfulness of the servants who slept, is become an earthly thing. The tares have completely changed its aspect from what it ought to have been according to the intention of God who set it up. Small in its beginning, as a grain of mustard seed, it has seized the agencies the world afforded, forgetful of its divine origin, to extend itself; courted the world, assimilated itself to the world, in fact

bowed down to it, and eventually succeeded in obtaining its power, and then gave shelter and protection to the world in its bosom.

Such is the picture presented to us in the parable of the great tree, which, "when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." Both symbols, the tree and the birds, are explained in God's word, and thence we learn the meaning.

We find in Ezekiel xxxi. that the Spirit of God likens Assyria to a great tree, which afforded shelter to the fowls of heaven and the beasts of the field. It is a figurative description of the great power of that empire. Its moral character is not in question. It might be good, it might be bad; but the fact was that the surrounding nations enjoyed shelter and protection. So great was it that birds had their nests in its branches, under which the beasts of the field brought forth their young. So towering, so "fair by the multitude of his branches, that all the trees of Eden that were in the garden of God, envied him." In Dan. iv., the same figure is employed concerning Nebuchadnezzar. The reason why he is named and not his empire, is that all the power, legislative and executive, was vested in his own person, which was not the case in the succeeding monarchies. He was the head of *gold*, the rest were inferior. *He is a great tree.*

But even the future kingdom of our Lord is under the same similitude (Ezek. xvii.) and here too is a place for the birds of the air, protection is given them. This is the millennial kingdom where we know that righteousness shall rule the earth. "All the trees of the field shall know that I am the Lord," that is, the kings and princes shall own and bow to the sway of the King of kings. There is no question here of the moral character of the power. So we have Assyria, Babylon, and the millennial kingdom respectively under the figure of a tree giving shelter and protection to others. The proof then is ample that in Scripture language a tree symbolizes a great power whether good or bad, on the earth.

Now, in the parable, we have a tree affording like shelter to the birds of the air, given as the similitude of the kingdom in its present form; and the conclusion is—just, that the kingdom of heaven has assumed the aspect and the position of an

earthly power. Truly it is the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." But it could only be set up in mystery, for Jesus, the King, must retire from the scene. The solemn fact is, that men have availed themselves of the principles of the kingdom while denying the rights of the King, and moulded them to their own purpose, have even dared to use the King's *name* to establish a vast hierarchical power which, as represented by the tree, has shot forth its branches and extended itself far and wide. The birds of the air lodge in the branches thereof; and this system appropriates to itself the name of "the Church of God."

Strange! The Church of God as given in the New Testament is itself rejected and persecuted by the world. Yet these very despisers and persecutors, those who are within the limits of the kingdom, assume the name of that which they despise and reject.

But if a tree is used to denote a power in the earth, whether good or evil, how are we to determine the moral character of the tree in the parable? Look at those who are sheltered and protected by its branches—the birds of the air. But prophecy tells us that the millennial kingdom of the Lord, will be a tree giving protection to the birds of the air, and in this case we know that it will be a righteous kingdom, and according to the mind and will of God. Why should not the same character be borne by it in the parable? Because in immediate connection with the parable the Lord tells us who and what are symbolized by the birds. They are the agencies of Satan. In the first parable they pick up the good seed. And the Lord in explanation says, "then cometh the *wicked one*." There is, then, no doubt as to whom the birds represent. The same chapter gives both the symbol and its meaning, and to interpret them of any thing else is to set aside not only sound principles of interpretation, but also to deny the truth of God.

Here, then, in the parable of the tree, the wicked one and his emissaries are cherished and have their place, their *own* place in the kingdom. "They lodged"—had their nests—"in the branches." What, then, can be the character of that power or system which sustains and protects Satan's evil, but wicked and abominable in God's sight?

(To be continued, D. V.)

THE NEW BIRTH—No. 3.

Two Natures:—The Old not changed or set aside.

IN a former paper we saw that it was a positive necessity that a man should be born again, ere he could even see the Kingdom of God. This grand truth comes out in John iii. It was all over with man's moral history when the Son of God came. If it were possible for man in the flesh, *i.e.* in his state as a sinner, and responsible for it before God—to have been recovered or restored to God, it would have been proved by his receiving Christ when He came. It would have proved that man in the flesh was recoverable, though he had sinned. But no! "He came unto his own, and his own received him not."—"He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not."

How important it is for a sinner to accept this place of total, irrecoverable ruin. This is the state in which God meets him, and discloses the purpose of His heart in His gift "of eternal life which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began." Like Israel in the 21st Chapter of the book of Numbers, who had wandered for thirty-nine years in the wilderness, and in the fortieth year, when they spoke against God, and loathed the light bread, and were dying under the bites of the fiery serpents. There was nothing now to mend in them, when God says, as it were:—"I'll disclose a purpose—*I'll bestow life where there is nothing but death!*"

So in John iii., God discloses His purpose by His Son. He does not mend man as He is—He bestows eternal life! To this end the Son of Man must be lifted up—a rejected Christ on His cross, outside the world, bearing the judgment of God against sin, is the door of exit for the sinner out of a charnel house—a place of death and ruin, where there is nothing to mend, into a new sphere in His resurrection—into eternal life! The Son of Man on His cross must bear the wrath and judgment of God on the old man, setting aside that which offended God, and thus leave God free (so to speak) to bestow eternal life in Christ, as His gift to every one who believes. But if there was this necessity on man's side, there was another feature which came out as well. It was not the need of man merely, which was the occasion of His thus acting. It was to disclose *Himself*. His Son comes down as the missionary of His heart, to ruined man, to reveal that it was the emanation of His own mind—the device of

One whom man maligned, and whom Satan had slandered, to give proof which none could now gainsay, that "God is Love"! Love which gave *unasked*, its most prized and valued possession—the Only begotten of the Father—to reveal Himself—to give man a good opinion of God! It is "God," who "so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John iii. 16.)

This gift of eternal life does not in any way mend or remove the old man. True, the old man is judicially made an end of before God in the cross. Nor is it something in man, apart from Christ. "This is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is *in His Son*." (1 Jno. v.)

Has my reader accepted this? learned that his natural life, as it is now, will never go to the presence of God? If so, have you accepted eternal life in the Son of God? Thus owning as dead, as God has done, your Adam life which you now possess?

This life comes to the sinner, who by faith accepts it, through death. The sinner lies in death;—"You, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh." (Col. ii.) God sends His own Son, a sacrifice for sin—He enters this domain of death.—When entering into it, He bears the judgment of God which was on man, so fully, that God glorified in all His nature and attributes by its perfection, raises Him up from the dead; and every one who believes, "hath He quickened together with Him." The believer now lives in Christ before God—God recognises no other life than this—and "all his trespasses" have been "forgiven." (Col. ii. 13.) All left behind, as it were, in the grave of Christ—the nature atoned for, and set aside judicially in the death of Christ; the believer lives now on the other side of death and judgment, in the life of the risen One, who was dead; while at the same time his old nature remains *in him*. This eternal life is something that he had not before: he is now a compound creature, having in him "the old man," and the "new." (See Eph. iv. 21-24; Col. iii. 9, 10.)

Let us be clear and distinct in our apprehension of this, where so many are at fault. It is true, that for condemnation, and before God, the old nature is set aside—root and branch—tree and its fruits—and is gone for ever: it is not *on* the believer in His sight; and yet, all the while, the old nature

is *in* him—an enemy, and to be treated as such, and overcome. He will bear about this nature till he dies, or is changed.

God had sought fruit from man in the flesh, and had got none. The Lord in His own ministry in the gospels, always addresses man in the flesh, in this state as responsible. When He had tried him out, and had got no fruit in the flesh, we find Him saying of it, “The *spirit* is willing, the *flesh* is weak.” He then charges Himself with the judgment due to it, dies, and rises out of the judgment, imparts, as God’s gift, His own life, as risen, to the believer, who now lives in Him—Christ is His life—his life is hid with Christ in God. (Col. iii. 3, 4.) God never seeks fruit again from the old man—never addresses it, or recognises it in any shape whatsoever. Souls, when they are not in liberty, *do* recognise it, and often with deep sorrow—often seek fruit from it—seek, too, to repress its workings in their own strength, and with the desire and conviction that it should be repressed before God. God addresses the new nature, recognising the Spirit as life, and as making good the life of Christ in the believer. This nature never amalgamates with the flesh. Each has its own distinctive character. “That which is born of the flesh, is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit, is spirit,” *i.e.*, it has its nature from the Spirit of God, who quickens, or gives life; the flesh profits nothing.

Now, although this is so, there is no necessity in any wise that the Christian should walk in the old nature, or practice its outgoings in any sort whatsoever. Nay, rather, God gives grace and power, as we may see in our future meditations, to overcome its workings, and keep it practically in death, where He has placed it—to reckon it dead, as He reckons it.

Paul’s own case is a remarkable one, and illustrates the fact that the old nature, the flesh, is never set aside in the believer, or changed, or improved by the very highest realization of the place he has in Christ. Even then, it needs the dealings of God to correct it, and enable the believer to hold it dead. We find in 2 Cor. xii., that he had been in the third heaven, and could glory as to his being a “man in Christ.” He comes back to the consciousness of his life here below, and the flesh in Paul is so incorrigible, that God is necessitated to send him a thorn in it, to buffet him, lest the old man might be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations. One would have thought, that if ever a

man's evil nature was likely to be removed, or extracted, or changed, it was Paul's. Yet, no. Paul comes back to his conscious existence as a man, and he discovers that God in grace sent the needed corrective, to that which would otherwise have hindered him. Paul thought at first, it was something he had better be rid of, and he prayed thrice for its removal; but when he discovered it was the Lord's grace in supplying that which kept him in the sense of his weakness as a man, that the strength of Christ might be unhindered to act in him, he then says, "I glory in my weakness" (as a man—not infirmities), for "when I am weak, *then* am I strong."

In fine, God does not remove the old nature when He imparts the new,—nor is His working the making better of the old. The believer is a compound creature, having two natures as distinct as possible the one from the other—"The old man which is corrupt, . . . and . . . the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (Eph. iv. 22-24.)

NAAMAN: OR GOD GLORIFIED.

(Concluded from page 119.)

3. From God's grace we are led on to God's government. These two we must never confound. God will show grace to sinners; He will carry on His government among His people. Gehazi is an instance of this. He could not understand the refusal of Elisha. "Behold," he says, "my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian in not receiving at his hands that which he brought; but, as the Lord liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him." It was not to spare Naaman that Elisha refused the present. It was because grace was free, and the time to receive from the Gentile had not arrived. Gehazi could not understand either the one or the other. Had he possessed a right perception of grace, he would have gloried rather in the presents returning home, a witness that the God of Israel could give even to an enemy of Israel without receiving anything from him in return. Had he imbibed the true spirit of the time, he would have learnt the incongruity of their being enriched by the Syrian. But he understood neither. The evil desire stimulated him, and he ran after Naaman till he reached the object of his search. To the salutation "Is all well?" he responds, "All

is well." Why then this haste, why this pursuit? Eager to get something from Naaman, he has a lie ready, which again reveals how he had failed to understand the right adjustment of things. Two children of the sons of the prophets were in want, and Elisha had sent to request something for them. Could not God have provided for His own servants without spoiling a Gentile? Could not Elisha look to God, and not to Naaman, for what they might need? Gehazi sees not the inconsistency of his story. He tells it—he gets what he asks, and more. Naaman is ready to give—that was right. Gehazi was desirous to receive—that was wrong. Bound on two of the young men, the presents are carried back, and Gehazi stores them away. He has perfectly succeeded in his plan, and he stands before his master. Another lie is now told. He forgets now before whom he stands. Could not the prophet search him? Could not he test most severely the accuracy of his statements? Blind to every thing, he utters another lie when questioned, "whence comest thou?" He might deceive Naaman—he cannot deceive Elisha. "Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee." An eye had seen him. The prophet's heart knew everything. Gehazi stood before him convicted, and sentence goes forth: "The leprosy, therefore, of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed, for ever." He should be, and his seed after him, standing witnesses of what it was to forget the character of his day.

"Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and olive yards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and men servants, and maid servants." Gehazi had forgotten the character of his day. Israel had before that time spoiled the Gentiles. They spoiled the Egyptians before they departed from Egypt. They enriched themselves with the spoil of Midian just previous to their entrance of the land. This was in keeping with the times. The jewels of gold were applied to the service of the sanctuary, such of them as had not been used for the golden calf. The plunder of the Midianites was apportioned out as God had directed; but Gehazi had no command to receive from Naaman, and had no intention of enriching the sanctuary with his gifts.

Besides, all this was out of keeping with the character of his day. Elisha's presence in Israel, as prophet, was in consequence of their departure from God. The servant should have discerned this. The prophet's presence was a constant

protest against the condition of the people among whom he dwelt. Were those, who professed to know this, to act as if the time of rest and enjoyment had arrived? It was the day for protesting against the settlement of Israel as wine on the lees, unconcerned about God's glory, and indifferent to the claims of His holiness.

Were the professed servants of Jehovah to act as if the warfare was over? Under an idolatrous king in Samaria there could be no rest for those who had understanding of the times. A king in Samaria, with David's heir sitting on his throne at Jerusalem, showed at once all was not right, nor the time for enjoyment arrived. The condition of things around them, God's servants might not be empowered to alter; but they must not acquiesce in it. Elisha knew this, and acted accordingly. Gehazi was blinded to this, and thus fell under the exercise of God's government. For Israel the day will dawn, when they shall sit each man under his vine and fig tree. But the time for repose, and making themselves at home in the land, was not then. Gehazi forgot all this. Need we show how this has teaching for believers now? May we show that, like Elisha, we have the mind of God, and know the character of our day, and what is suited to it. "There *remaineth* a rest for the people of God." It is future, not present. It will be enjoyed above, not on earth.—C. E. S.

PRAYER.

PRAYER is the suited expression of the heart of the saint, in a fallen world, where men by nature have lost all confidence in God. It is the combination of two principles—*dependence*, and *confidence*. The heart is expressing its dependence on God, else why does it pray? and its confidence in Him, otherwise, wherein would be the use of supplicating Him? It is expressing its dependence on Him, and at the same time assuring itself that it *has* got confidence in God—that it has got a good opinion of Him; and, in the measure it expresses this, the lie of the Serpent has been uprooted in the heart. The absence of these two principles, or either of them, makes prayer defective.

Now, this is the very opposite of the state and principle in which man is found by nature; which is, distrust of God, and distance from Him.—This is the order that the evil state in which he is, took possession of man at the first. Satan

instilled the principle of distrust into Adam's heart, by saying as it were,—“you think God is a benefactor, and yet He is withholding the very thing that He knows will do you good, and make you like Himself.—Do you suppose that is the way to give you confidence in Him?” The consequence was that Adam learned to distrust Him and to substitute his own will for God's, and, under the seduction of Satan, he helped himself to that which God was withholding from him. His conscience, which he thus obtained, told him that there was a distance thus created between him and God, and he went to hide himself as soon as he heard the voice of the Lord God in the garden. Distrust and distance were thus brought in, of which every man is conscious to this hour.

Now, prayer is the very opposite of this. It is the heart which has got confidence; and finding itself dependent on Him, it expresses both its dependence and its confidence in prayer. God recognises this, too, as the evidence and first breathings of the change of heart in the renewed man—“Behold he prayeth,” is His word to Ananias of Saul of Tarsus. (Acts ix.)

In the Lord Jesus we see this fully expressed—He was always the praying,—the dependent, and confident Man. We see Him continuing “all night in prayer to God.” (Luke vi.)—“Rising up a great while before day; he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.” (Mark i.) We hear often the breathing forth of His heart in prayer in the presence of need—and for His people. “I know that thou hearest me always,” expresses the confidence of a heart in God which was limitless and unbounded.

Under the Law there were but two prayers provided—because man under the Law was taken on the ground of having strength in himself; while surely it brought out that he had none. These were, the prayer of innocence, as we may call it, in Deut. xxi., and the prayer of obedience, in Deut. xxvi. The former was the declaration of guiltlessness of a crime—the latter of having been obedient to all the precepts of the law.

When we find the soul, as in Hannah (1 Sam. i.), expressing itself to God in prayer, it was something so much outside all that was recognised, that the High Priest charged her with being drunken with wine. Prayer under the legal dispensation was the fruit of the heart's dependence and confidence in God, outside of what the Law recognised; or when all

established relationships are broken.—Daniel in Babylon—Nehemiah in the Court of Artaxerxes, are examples of this.

When we come to John Baptist's time we find that he taught his disciples to pray. (See Luke. v. and xi.) Now this was clearly in advance of what went before, while not to the level in which we now pray in the name of Jesus, *i. e.*, as in His place on earth; because prayer, when true, properly expresses the relation in which the soul stands at the time with God. Doubtless it was in conformity of thought to what he preached—*i. e.*, the kingdom of heaven which was at hand—the moral unfitness in those whom he addressed to enter it as they were; consequently repentance for the remission of sins; while looking for a Messiah to come, whom he announced, who would baptise with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

Again in the Lord's lifetime we find Him teaching His disciples, at their request, a prayer which suited itself to their spiritual state at the moment: (See Luke xi.), adding the parable of the man whose friend came to him at midnight, and ceased not to importune till he got what he wanted; in this we find the Lord establishing their faith in God alone. It is the prayer of importunity, and is to establish the heart in thorough dependence and confidence in God only. I have a want and I know He can relieve me, and I look to no other. Like the man who knew his friend had the loaves and his own friend needed them.—He came at the unseasonable hour of midnight, and ceased not asking, till he got what he wanted. He does not get what he desired on the ground of his friendship, but on the ground of his *importunity*—his pertinacity which would have no refusal. "I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him *because he is his friend*, yet *because of his importunity* he will rise and give him as many as he needeth." (Luke xi. 8.) This is to establish faith in Him only, that the soul may look to no other.

In Philippians iv. 6, 7, we find a most precious character of prayer. It is not the prayer of importunity of Luke xi., nor yet the prayer of confidence of having what we ask of 1 John v.—It is this *unburthening of the heart to God*—*The making known of our requests* to Him. Is the heart burthened with many a care, so that it knows not what to desire, or if its desires should be in accordance with His will? In the multiplicity of cares, He says "*Be careful for nothing.*" "*Nothing!*" you reply. "*Be careful for nothing,*" is the

answer! Not that the heart is to be *careless* about anything—“But in *everything*, let *your* requests be *made known to God*.” Unburthen your heart, tell all your *cares* to Him—for this does not suppose *sin* in any wise. You have a request, make it known; not that you will move Him from His purpose, but make it known to Him, commit it to Him who knows the end from the beginning, sees it all as you cannot see it. “With thanksgiving.” You have an ear attentive to your story. He is not merely always thinking of us, but He is always attentive to us: and the *positive* result is, that, “The peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

Now all this does not suppose I have come with a desire on my heart and asked Him to fulfil it—to give me what I want. The moment I ask God to fulfil a certain desire, or answer a certain request of mine, *I limit Him!* I limit His answer, even supposing He was about to give me the very thing I did desire. No: rather I unburthen my heart—I *make known my request*, and He assures my heart that He will answer in His own way, far more wonderfully and blessedly than if I had limited Him to the exact fulfilment of my desire.

Suppose He was even to grant me all my requests—suppose when I had made known my requests to Him, that He gave me all my requests, do you suppose my heart and mind would be filled with the peace of God? Not at all! He permits me to unburthen my heart, and in the most superlative way He comes in, and instead of granting all my requests, (this He may do all the while—I limit Him not in any of them) He fills my heart and mind with the peace of God, which passes all understanding.

What is the “peace of God”? It is not “*peace with God*,” as needed by the sinner. It is the calm, unruffled, unchanging peace, in which He dwells; without a disturbing element, without a ripple, on the shoreless ocean of eternity.—Ordering all things with an unerring hand, knowing all things from the beginning to the end. His own peace keeps the heart and mind! Never speak of having prayed to Him, and unburthened your heart, unless you have this peace of God. It is the *result* of having made known all to Him. When it is not so, go again to your knees; for you have *not yet prayed the prayer of Phil. iv. 6!*

In 1 John v. 14, 15, we find the prayer of entire confidence in Him—confidence so full that we know when we

ask that we have the petitions we desired of Him, as according to His will. This is neither the prayer of importunity of Luke xi., or the making known of requests, of Phil. iv.—It supposes entire community of thought—fellowship with the Father and the Son—the issues of that eternal life possessed in the Son of God—“now true in Him and in you.” I do not, would not, desire anything then that is not in accordance with His will—and He is always attentive—unlike man, who has other engagements, is perhaps thinking of himself, so that he cannot listen; or he is careless about my requests—He hears me always; and knowing this, I am then conscious of having the petitions which I desired of Him.

The Lord give His beloved people to know their deep privileges; and the reality of “continuing in prayer, and watching in the same with thanksgiving.” Amen.

THE SHEAF OF FIRSTFRUITS.

Lev. xxiii. 10-14.

THIS sheaf was, typically or mystically, Christ risen. “On the morrow after the Sabbath,” the first day, or resurrection day, it was waved.

In the ordinance of waving we observe these particulars. (Lev. xxiii. 10-14).

1. The Jew was to bring the sheaf.
2. The Priest was to wave it before the Lord, and it would be accepted for Israel.
3. The Jew, or Israel was then to offer a burnt, meat, and drink offering.
4. Israel was not to eat of the new corn in any shape, till this was done.

This is typical of the way of a believer touching the resurrection of Christ—as shown in Luke xxiv. 26-53.

1. The disciples bring the sheaf; *i.e.*, they believe the resurrection of Christ. (36-45).
2. Christ Himself, the true Priest, lets them know that this resurrection was for them, accepted for them. (46-51.)
3. They make their offerings on this ground, offerings of worship and joy. (52.)
4. They know of no eating, no feast, no communion; but in connection with the waved sheaf. The temple to them is only the place of its celebration. They occupy it, as it were, only in company with Jesus risen. (v. 53).

The sweet point of attraction is v. 53. of Luke xxiv. The congregation can do nothing for the moment but rejoice in the wave sheaf. It is the commanding, the absorbing thought. They fill the Temple, not as worshipping Jews, with sacrifices, for the remembrance of sins, but as believing sinners, with thanksgivings for the resurrection, which bears the remission of sins.

It is the first harvest day with them—they had lost sight of all Temple service, but as it witnessed the ordinance of waving the sheaf of firstfruits.

Some may ask, how could they seek the Temple, after they had reached to faith in Jesus risen? They sought it, and used it, and knew it, and as the appointed place for rendering their offerings on the first day of harvest; that harvest which the God of Israel was now giving His land and people.

It is another form of owning like David, Ornan's floor *as the only place of service*. (1 Chron. xxi.) The wave sheaf—Jesus risen—tells us, like that mystic spot, that "Mercy rejoiceth against judgment:" and how can we occupy any other ground? David would not seek the *former* altar, and the disciples forgot the *old* Temple; or the Temple in any of its services but *one*—that which belonged to the first day of harvest.

The resurrection in earlier parts of Luke xxiv. had done its sweet service with the disciples. It had chased away their fears, cleared up their doubts and difficulties, and done the business which their loving splices had proposed to do, and that too in a much better way; but now it had done its service for them. *It changes their religion*—giving them to triumph in the remission of sins, instead of going on as they had been wont to do, to perpetuate the remembrance of sin. *It rebuilds their Temple for them without any cost or trouble to them*, just as it had rolled away the heavy stone for them from the sepulchre, so now it rolls away a yoke which neither they nor their fathers had been able to bear, and calls their spirits forth into the sunshine and liberty of the resurrection morning.

CHRISTIANITY IN THE RELATIONSHIPS OF LIFE.

"AFTER these great and important principles of the new life, the Apostle enters into the diverse relationships of life, giving warnings against that which would endanger them,

by showing what the Christian character of each one of them is:—

To the wife, obedience—affection was natural to her—“Thy desire shall be to thy husband.” To the husband, affection and kindness—his heart may be indifferent and hard. Children are to be obedient; fathers, gentle, in order that the children’s affections may not be estranged from them, and that they may not be induced to seek that happiness in the world which they ought to find in the sanctuary of the domestic circle, which God has formed as a safeguard for those who are growing up in weakness; the precious *home* (if Christ is acknowledged) of kind affections, in which the heart is trained in the ties which God Himself has formed; and, which, by cherishing the affections, preserves from the passions and from self-will; and which, when its strength is rightly developed, has a power that, in spite of sin and disorder, awakens the conscience, and engages the heart, keeping it away from evil, and the direct power of Satan: for it is God’s appointment.

I know, indeed, that another power is required to deliver the heart from sin, and to keep it from sin. Nature, even as God created it, does not give eternal life—does not restore innocence—does not purify the conscience. We may, by the energy of the Spirit, consecrate ourselves to God outside these relationships, renounce them even, if God should call us by more powerful obligations, as Christ teaches in the gospel. The rights of Christ over man, lost by sin, are sovereign, absolute, and complete. He has redeemed him; and the redeemed one is no longer his own, but belongs to Him who gave Himself for them. Where relationships exist, sin has perverted everything, and corrupted the will, passions come in. But the relationships themselves are of God—woe to him who despises them as such. If grace has wrought, and the new life exists, it acknowledges that which God has formed. It well knows that there is no good in man—it knows that sin has marred everything, but that which sin has marred, is not itself sin. And here these relationships exist. The renunciation of self-will, death to sin, and bringing in of Christ, the operation of life in Him, restore their power; and if they cannot give back the character of innocence—lost for ever—can make them a scene for the operations of grace, in which meekness, tenderness, mutual help and self-denial, in the midst of the difficulties and sorrows

which sin has introduced, lend them a charm and a depth, (even as Christ did in every relationship) which innocence itself could not have presented. It is grace, acting in the life of Christ in us, which develops itself in them." (*Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*, vol. v.)

THE OLIVE TREE.

SCRIPTURE QUERIES AND ANSWERS.

"J. K. M."—It may help your understanding of the passages in Rom. xi., to know that the first allusion to the Church, the Body of Christ, in the Epistle to the Romans is in ch. xii. 5. Even there we do not find the doctrine of the Church taught; but the practical walk of the members one with another as "One Body." It is not the subject of the Epistle to the Romans.

The Apostle in beginning his subject of the Olive Tree, writes, "I speak to you Gentiles." He does not speak to the Church *as such*, although his teaching is *for* the Church. It is the Gentile dispensation which he has before him.

The Olive Tree symbolizes the line of the testimony and of the promises of God, under the figure of a tree, of which Abraham was the root, as being the depository of the promises—the nation of Israel—his posterity, the branches—the fatness, the promises of God.

This tree of promise begins in Abraham, and runs on into the Millennium; and God always maintains a stock (*i. e.* Christ), and the faithful of any dispensation, which sustains God's testimony in the line of promise on earth. The Jewish dispensation proved itself a failure. They were the natural branches, and it was their "own Olive Tree." "Because of unbelief they were broken off." The Gentile dispensation commences, and the wild Olive branches are grafted into the stem, and thus brought into the place of testimony and line of promise; (*to them spiritual*) in which they stand "by faith;" and in such a place responsible to continue in the goodness of God, or failing in this to be cut off. God, who did not spare the natural branches, would not much less spare them. The Gentile dispensation not having continued in the goodness of God, will be cut off. Meanwhile God has His own purposes to fulfil, "and the long-suffering of the Lord is salvation." "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." Then the Jews will

be grafted in again, as the natural branches, and thus Israel *nationally* will be saved—not individually as now.

It is not in anywise a question of the Church, as the Body of Christ; or of individual salvation, but of Jewish and Gentile dispensations, and the result of the failure in each of them.

THE SOURCE AND THE STREAMLETS.

“For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.”—Romans xi.

Blessing ebb and flow, the Blessor,
 Dwells eternally the same;
 Of the universe “Possessor”
 “Wonderful” is still His Name.
 O the sweet repose of staying
 With His fulness satisfied.
 Scarce for wanted mercies praying,
 So but He be glorified.

Though the Fig-tree shall not blossom,
 Neither fruit be in the vines;
 Though the stalls be void of oxen,
 Failing corn, and oil, and wines.
 Fore-prepared for tribulation—
 In the Lord will we rejoice;
 To the end of our salvation
 Sing, with steadfast heart and voice.

Far His grace exceeds the proving,
 Here, in time, of hearts like ours;
 Therefore fear we no removing,
 Ev’n through trials darkest hours.
 Riches may take wings and leave us,
 Friendship’s brightest links may break;
 Brethren, faithful once, may grieve us,
 Wisdom’s paths of peace forsake.

Clouds of coming wrath may darken,
 Over every world-pitched tent;
 Sinners may refuse to hearken,
 To the warning God hath sent.
 Wider yet the sheep may wander,
 From the faithful Shepherd’s side.
 Less and less the saints may ponder,
 Truths for which the martyr’s died.

Yet is faith the more attesting,
 Thus, the everlasting Word;
 Every adverse billow breasting,
 With the cry, “It is the Lord.”
 He, of heaven and earth Possessor,
 Verifies His Holy Name:
 Blessings change and die, the Blessor
 Lives, unchangeably the same.

WORDS OF TRUTH.



A PURGED CONSCIENCE.

HAVE you, dear reader, a purged conscience?—a conscience, *once* charged with all the sins of your lifetime, *now* cleansed from all those sins, according to God's estimate of the Blood of Christ? "Ah," you say, "would that such a precious possession as that were mine!" "Well," I reply, "this precious possession *is* yours, if you believe what I am going to tell you."

There was a time when such a thing was unknown, when the sacrifices offered year by year continually, failed to make the comers thereunto perfect as pertaining to the conscience. Their continual repetition was an evident proof of their inability to give this, otherwise they would have ceased to be offered, and the "worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins." (Heb. x. 1, 2.) Under the law there was "a remembrance again made of sins every year." (Lev. xvi.) However valuable those sacrifices (and surely they *had* their value) may have been, as *the* "shadow of good things to come," they never gave those who offered them a purged conscience.

The return of the "fit man" *without* the scape goat, from the wilderness, was the signal to every believing Israelite to rejoice in the happy consciousness that his sins *for a whole year* were ceremonially atoned for. (Lev. xvi.) But beyond this term his pardon did not go; and the tenth day of the seventh month in each year, found the high priest again repeating the same ceremony.

But, blessed be God, we are "not under the law, but under grace;" and we are privileged to read of "better sacrifices than these." We are privileged to know that "burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin," gave God no pleasure; and for this very simple reason, that they continually

brought sin to His remembrance, that hateful thing in His holy eye. Patiently had He forborne with (Rom. iii. 25) the sins of believers of bygone times, until He had variously and thoroughly tested man in the flesh, and proved him utterly irreclaimable. Then at length He reveals his own resources and counsels, and makes known the way by which the vilest sinner may possess a conscience purged from sins, according to His perfect knowledge of good and evil.

Christ entered into *all* His mind concerning this, and having entered into all His mind, devotes Himself to do *all* His will—and who but *God* could offer this? He took the body prepared for Him, and in perfect obedience to His Father, and in perfect love to man, offered Himself as the victim, when other sacrifices had been proved to be utterly unavailing. As a *propitiation*, He “made peace through the blood of His cross (Col. i. 20), or in other words, substantiated every moral attribute of God (and of this the blood of the goat sprinkled seven times on the mercy seat was a figure—Lev. xvi. 15). As a *substitute* He bore, “in His own body on the tree” (1 Peter ii. 24) *all* the sins of His people; (and of this the scapegoat, over whose head the sins of the people were confessed, was the type. Lev. xvi. 21.) Then having thus offered one sacrifice for sins, He for ever *sat down* at the right hand of God, in token that *His* work was over, and that no other sacrifice for sins remained.

But the Persons of the Godhead all have their share in this wondrous work. Christ's presence in heaven becomes the moment for the descent of *the Holy Ghost*, to bear the glad tidings that God is satisfied, in the fullest way, by the death of Jesus—that His precious blood is that by which the vilest sinner may have a *purged conscience*. *His* office is to witness to the perfection of the work of Jesus, and to tell poor sinners that their sins and iniquities God will remember no more!

And now, dear reader, will you receive or reject His witness? Will you believe that the offering of the body of Jesus Christ has once for all met God's righteous claims against *sin*, and that your conscience is thus cleansed from all your sins, according to the value God sets upon the blood of His own Son? As you read this paper, if you in simple faith receive the witness of the Holy Ghost, or in other words, believe His record that the one offering of Christ has put away your sins, a *purged conscience* is yours.

You have the word of the living God for it, that your sins and iniquities He will remember no more. You receive the witness (or record) of men, surely the record of God is greater. (1 John v. 9.) Believe it, then, concerning Christ's work for *you*, and a purged conscience is now yours, and yours for ever!

God's mind is, that the worshipper "*once purged*" should have "no more conscience of sins." Happy, then, to have a heart "sprinkled from an evil conscience" (Heb. x. 22)—and be purged from "dead works to serve (or worship) the living God." (Heb. ix. 14.)

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom. x. 17.) You have heard the word of the Holy Ghost—you believe it, and rest happily and peacefully in the possession of a *purged conscience* before God for ever!

D. T. G.

"AT MIDNIGHT THERE WAS A CRY MADE."

MATTHEW xxiv. 45-51, xxv. 1-13.

As was foretold by the Lord, the evil servant said in his heart, "My Lord delayeth his coming." That is, the true hope of the saints was denied, and other things brought in, as to happen previously to His return; and when the evil servant's teaching had been accepted, the kingdom of heaven assumed the character of things which we find in the parable of the ten virgins. (Matt. xxv. 1-13.) It is connected with the previous parable by the word "Then"! "Then shall the kingdom of heaven* be likened unto ten virgins which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom." This was the attitude of all who had *professed* the name of Christ, at the outset of Christianity; namely, that, having professed to be Christians, as the lamp in hand bespeaks, they had gone forth, or in other words, accepted the hope, of the Lord's return, as the horizon of their sojourn here below. Like the Thessalonians (1 Thess. i. 9, 10), who had "turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven;" those who professed to be Christians, found that conversion to God was intimately connected with the hope of His return to take them away. There were, however, foolish, as well as

* NOTE.—The kingdom of heaven as spoken of after the 13th chapter of Matthew, is "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," and always supposes the *absence* and *rejection* of the king, and the new features it would assume in consequence.

wise virgins amongst those who professed His name. The foolish had no sense of what was really due to Him for whom they professed to wait; their affections were not kindled—their heart was not awakened. It was with them religiousness without vitality—profession without reality, and the lamps had no oil.

Not so, however, with the wise. They were the children of the bridechamber, indeed, who fasted with desire because the bridegroom was away from them. The days had come when they had to fast. (See Luke v. 35.) These took oil in their vessels. There was true vitality in them.

After all, the bridegroom *did* tarry for a while. What a triumph for the evil servant; what a true prophet he seemed to be; how wise his teaching looked in the eyes of men. The very tarrying of the bridegroom confirmed in men's eyes what he said; and wise as well as foolish are caught in the snare. The hope did not suit the evil servant, who liked the world and its projects and its companionship, its gifts and its subjection to his usurped authority. *In his heart* he said, "My lord delays." It ill suits his plans, and he said a thousand things to set the hope aside as an ever present thing. For instance, such things as many say now, that the Jews must be converted—that the world must be overspread by the gospel—that the millennial is a spiritual reign of Christ. Many things have been invented to put off and set aside the hope of the Lord's coming for His own.

How successfully did this evil servant's teaching do Satan's work, and cause even the wise, as the foolish virgins, to get in again, and go to sleep somewhere. They had "gone forth," but they went in again, and all "slumbered and slept." The Church of God has done this for centuries—not only given up the hope, but slumbered and slept.

The watchful bridegroom who loved her and gave himself for her, and watched over her with his tender care, would not, however, allow Himself to find her so, without giving her a warning cry. What superabounding grace; and after all her failure, too. So we read, "At midnight there was a cry made, behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." Mark, beloved reader, that it was *at* the midnight hour, He caused the cry to be made. This is strikingly solemn, and must arrest the attention of the thoughtful mind, as showing us *where* we now are in the history of

things, without a shadow of uncertainty; for the Lord has given the cry! Fifty years ago, it was, we may almost say, unknown, unless as a mere speculation. Who in the professing church, we may ask, has not heard it now? And mark a still more solemn thought in the passage, *He gave but ONE cry! and it was never repeated!* All had to go out again; they had got in somewhere, when they had surrendered the hope; and, when awakened by the cry, they had to accept the hope, and, as at the first, when they had gone forth, they had to go forth again to meet Him.

Now, we find a two-fold state in the wise virgins—1st, They were very peacefully conscious that they had that which would bring them into the wedding; that is, they *knew* they had a title to go in, which none could question.

But, 2nd, We find an *active* state in them. We read, they “*arose and trimmed their lamps.*” The lamp of profession was untrimmed and dim while they slumbered and slept, and the hope of the bridegroom’s return had been lost. But now that the hope had been again revived and accepted, much was due to His grace in giving the cry. Associations had to be judged—the tone of life produced by the surrender of the hope had to be altered, and the true hearted wise ones responded to it and “*arose!*”

Have you done so, my reader? Do your walk and ways correspond with the acceptance of the hope of the coming of the Lord? If not, you have not trimmed your lamp. You may be peacefully conscious, as they were, that you have the title to go into the wedding; but, like them, has this given a spur to your desires to be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless when He comes?

The foolish, and O what numbers there are of such, found that their lamps were “going out”—flickering with the dimness of profession without vitality, which was good enough when all slumbered and slept; but once the cry went forth, discovered its true character—a poor flickering blaze which had no oil within to sustain it. Trimming was no use here, because there was nothing to sustain the light. The wise virgins, each conscious of their own title to go into the marriage, give the others to know, that the title they had, would not do for them; each must have the oil for oneself. The foolish virgins in their confusion, ran to buy the oil—to seek from some other source, a title to go into the marriage. What a scene of confusion and yet

calmness does this post-midnight picture convey of the present hour! On the one hand, the quiet, peaceful consciousness of the title to enter, and the trimmed lamp in the hand of the wise. On the other, the seeking to ordinances and ritualism, and a thousand things to get life and salvation. The confusion all around us tells its own tale.

For what, then, do we wait? Not for the midnight hour, because it has passed. The warning cry was given at that solemn hour. We wait for the dawning of the day—the rising of the Bright and Morning Star, who, unknown to the foolish virgins, will come and take away the wise, and shut to the door, so that it can never, never open to them again!

“They that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut.”

What a deeply solemn moment—what a moment of breathless suspense to all. Oh, the solemnity of the “Afterward” of v. 11. The cry of anguish was of no avail then; “Lord, Lord, open to us,” fell on ears of one whose yearning heart over the sinner speaks in these words now, while the door is still open, “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Rom. x. 13.) The same Blessed One will say when the day of grace is passed and the door is shut, “Verily I say unto you, I know you not.”

He who says, “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear,” will pronounce those solemn words at that day, “I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” (Matt. vii. 23.)

The time for judgment has nearly come, my reader. The grace of Jesus would give us a testimony of its approach. He has done so. If you are still a sinner in your sins, delay not an hour, flee to Him whose open arms are waiting to receive you. If you are a believer, I ask you, how does your lamp of profession burn? Will it be suitable to His thoughts? Does its outward gleam throw back the surrounding gloom, and light your feet on the path to meet Him who is coming? Does it prove the reality of the inward state of your affections—mark the sense of His grace in which you stand, at this moment of deep suspense to all?

“It is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far

spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." (Rom. xiii. 11, 12.)

COLOSSIANS I.

THERE is a great chapter in Colossians i. The apostle contemplates in the saints two characters of knowledge—the knowledge of “the grace of God in truth,” and the “knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” (v. 6-9.) The saints at Colosse had attained the first; he desired for them that they might attain the second.

According to this, he contemplates two characters of ministry in himself—the ministry of “the gospel,” and the ministry of “His body, the church.” (v. 23-25.)

These distinctions should prepare us for much that we see in this day. Saints have commonly attained the knowledge of “the truth,” or of “the grace of God in truth,” that is, of “the gospel”; but they have come short of the knowledge of “His will,” that is, “the mystery.” We are to accept them with all thankfulness, as the apostle accepted the Colossians (v. 3); but we are also to desire, as he did for the Colossians, that they might go on to reach the knowledge of the mystery in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

This is very simple and easy to be understood from this 1st ch. to the Colossians. The humbling thing to us is, that the knowledge of “His will” which we have in measure attained has done so little for our souls; and that others with less attainment that way, may have reached far beyond us in other ways.

But I will touch upon another secret in this chapter. Wherever the eye turns it is filled with one object, and that is “the pre-eminence of Christ.” In the regions of creation, providence, redemption, and glory, this is so, as the 1st chapter of Hebrews tells us in a more succinct form. He made the world; He upholds all things; He has purged our sins, and sat down in the highest place in heaven, and He is appointed heir of all things. So, here, when I look at *creation*, or all things in their original estate, I see Him as their *Creator*, nothing less than that, and that gives Him pre-eminence in the midst of them.

When I look at *Providence*, or all things in their upheld

consistent estate, I see Him as “before” them, and that gives Him pre-eminence there.

When I look at *Redemption*, or at the great scene of reconciliation, I see Him as *the Head* of the body, the first-born from the dead, and that gives Him pre-eminence in the great regions of reconciliation. Nay, *to Himself* it is, that all has returned in the way of reconciliation, and *by Himself*.

And lastly, when I look at *Glory*, or at the time of the inheritance, I see Him as having all things—all things created *for* Him as well as *by* Him: “the first-born of every creature,” or the heir of the whole creation of God, and that gives Him as surely, pre-eminence in the great scene of the glory, or the kingdom. Thus, wherever we look, in whatever direction our eye is turned, backward or forward, upward or around, the pre-eminence of Christ is made to shine before us.

A PILGRIM'S SONG.

CALL me not stranger,
I've a home above,
Speak not of danger,
My refuge is love.

Think me not lonely
With Jesus all day,
He walking with me;
And knows all the way.

A Saviour in heav'n,
Who welcomes me there,
To me He has giv'n
His glory to share.

And while I'm tasting
His company here,
Gladly I'm hasting
To be with Him there.

Then speak not of loss,
My heart's full of gain,
Earth's glory's but dross,
This life only pain.

E'en as I am learning
H's absence below,
Deeper I'm yearning,
His presence to know.

Oh Lord ! I pray thee,
Draw hearts by thy love,
Bid all ENJOY Thee,
E'en HERE as above.

THE NEW BIRTH.

No. 4.

THE NEW MAN—ETERNAL LIFE.

LET us now gather up what we have learned in our former meditations before we pass on.

1st, The absolute necessity that a man should be born

again—that is, born anew—before he could ever see God's kingdom. This new birth is not the putting the *same* nature into another condition, but the impartation of another which is totally distinct from the old. This nature is produced by the Word of God reaching the conscience by the Spirit's power, and thus laying bare the roots and springs of one's being, as unmendable, evil, and bad; and the soul, cast over upon Jesus, and believing in Him, has eternal life. Thus the person who believes in Jesus has received him as their life, having been born again, on the ground of redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ.

2nd, The new birth (*i.e.*, the Word of God reaching the roots and springs of one's nature) has produced such a judgment and a loathing of self, that the soul has been perhaps thrown into the deepest distress before it has got peace. All this was the true and necessary work of repentance, the learning what the old nature is in God's eye, which followed the new birth.

3rd, This new nature is quite distinct from the old—never amalgamates with it, never improves it, and never sets it aside. Both natures remain to the very end until the Christian is changed at the Lord's coming, or until death. Yet he is entitled to recognize only the new nature as *himself*, and the old as an enemy to be overcome.

We will now meditate on the eternal life of the Christian, which he possesses in Christ. The soul is often feeble in this. There are often vague thoughts of what eternal life is. One thinks it is eternal blessedness; another thinks it is heaven when they die; another that it is future bliss, etc. *Eternal life is Christ! He is the life* of every one who has been born again. In God's eye, man—the whole race—lay in moral death. He had a purpose before the world was, to bestow eternal life (Titus i. 2, 3). None had been entrusted of old to make this secret known. It was too glorious a thing for God to tell through man, even though he be a Moses or a David. It was reserved for His Son to disclose! *He is the eternal life*, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us in the Son of His love. (1 John i. 1, 2.) He came down from heaven—became a Man upon earth, and displayed before our eyes the virtues and beauties of eternal life. He was the bread of God which came down from heaven to give life unto the world. When He came, it brought out that, between the lowly Man of Nazareth and sinful man,

there was not a thought in common. His love was straitened—for His love He had hatred and scorn ; a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Yet the mighty love of God was pent up in the heart of that lowly Man ! He found no channel for it to flow in here, and so he was straitened till he poured it out unto death ! God's righteousness required that an end be made before His eye of the first man, that He might, so to speak, be free to treat the race as extinct—gone out of moral existence before Him. The Lord Jesus comes in and enters as the victim, in divine and mighty love and grace, into that scene of death where man lay. The world was shrouded with a pall of judgment, and no effort of man could cast off or break through the pall ! He goes down into the scene. The pall of judgment, like a shroud, enclosed the blessed One. He bears in His soul, on the cross, the judgment of God which enshrouded the race—the first man—and pours out His soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. He rises out of the mighty waters, having exhausted their power, and established the righteousness of God—breaks through the shroud which wrapped itself round Him—annuls death—destroys him who wielded its power ; He emerges from death, and stands in His victory in the majesty of His resurrection, the fountain, and stem, and source of life to every one who believes !

He is the last Adam—the Second Man. The first man in God's eye is judicially set aside for ever. Faith believes this, and lives by the faith of the Son of God. The believer knows he has the old man *in* him, but that in the eye of the Judge it has passed away for ever ! His life is Christ risen out from among the dead. It is hid with Christ in God.

How feeble are our souls in this ! How constant is the recognition of the old man. Some looking for fruit from it still ; some giving it a place in their soul's experience, hearkening to its unbelieving suggestions ; others giving it a place before God in their religion ; others, too, looking for a status, a recognition in the world for it again—reviving the man that God has swept out of His sight for ever.

How glorious to know that there is *but One Man alive* before the living God—One man on whom His eye can rest with full complacency—One life which fills the sphere, to which it belongs with its beauty ; and that He is my life—the One in whom I live for ever ! This life is not in me—

God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is *in His Son!* His Spirit, through whom I am born again, has communicated this life to me, and linked me up with the Son of God for ever! Oh for the eye of the soul to gaze, and gaze, and take in His excellence. To breathe the air, so to speak, where that life alone is. To draw down the supplies from Him. To live this life here below, and thus rise superior to a world and a scene where there is not a breath of air but is detrimental to its display: and yet to be sustained in vigour and power in the midst of it all! To know experimentally the power of the word, "Christ liveth in me."

Do you say, I have never experienced it—never tasted its wondrous power, and yet I see 'tis all true. I have been reviving and recognising the old man—yielding to its dictates—hearkening to its unbelieving suggestions—seeking a place of recognition for it in this evil world—supposing I could serve God with it—giving it a place of recognition in all my practical ways—obeying its lusts—its pride—its vanity—its gratification, and now I find that one throb of its whole being has never had recognition in God's eye. How am I to drink in the excellence of this other life, and live in its power?

Well—this is not learned in a moment—yet it is where God *begins* with me. All my exercises of soul and conscience have been leading up to that glorious level—the new creation in Christ! but *there* it is where I am to begin—it is there where God begins with me. When my soul is consciously there I am in the state in which I should begin to put forth leaves and fruit that Christ may be magnified in my body here below.

Now the great point is this, *Do you accept it fully and wholly; and, by His grace, are you determined to have nothing else?* This is the great thing, the *acceptance* of it! People go to work to curb this propensity, and clip that folly: to give up this lust and that vanity, in order to get into the consciousness of this life. If they but once accepted and tasted it, they would find that the things which minister to the old nature are not looked for in heaven. They would begin to hate the things and dread the things which come in to interrupt the soul's joy of abiding in Christ. They would not be looking for the scene around to minister to them; but they would discern that they are down here, with the sweetness of their own things flowing through their hearts, to minister to it the life of Him who has delivered them from it.

Many a Christian here fails. He knows he is in Christ as a matter of faith, and wonders why he has not the joy of it. Look at him in his daily life, and you will find he is ministering to the old man. Surrounding himself with those things which fill *his* eye. Yielding to those things that belong to *him*. Nurturing those desires and propensities which emanate from the old man. Giving it a place of recognition and revival. Taking it up again out of the death where God has placed it; and all the while wondering why he is not happy in Christ!

Oh for the soul to be peremptory with itself through His grace. To get the eye upon Christ in the sense and acceptance that He is its life. Would it not then be easy? If you have known the joy of this even for a moment—if ever you have tasted its sweetness, you will rise above yourself and everything around which would distract your eye from Him. You would dread the encroachment of ought which would turn your eye from Jesus, or fill your heart and engage your mind to the putting out of Him.

May the Lord give His beloved people to know this—to live, and move, and abide in Christ. To feed upon that death which severed your connection with the whole scene—yourself included—that death which was your deliverance from it, and which—fed upon—sustains the severance, and links up the heart to Him who died, and rose, and ascended into the bright and blessed presence of God. Amen.

FRAGMENT.

One cannot honour Christ in one's walk, and at the same time walk with those who dishonour Him—hence I am told to purge myself from the vessels to dishonour, that I may be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for my Master's use. (2 Tim. ii.)

THOUGHTS ON THE SIMILITUDES OF THE KINGDOM, &c.

(Continued from page 126.)

Now take a glance at the tare field, at Christendom, and observe the place that that system which calls itself the Church has in it. At first small, like a grain of mustard

seed, but increasing until, from being persecuted, it was courted by the world. Then to ingratiate itself with the world, to grasp at its power and influence, to enhance and protect its own interests, and at last to wield and decide the destinies of nations.

Nothing can be a stronger proof of the ruin of the Church, of the abnormal condition of the kingdom. Mysteries truly!

Sad to say, the professing Church is a part of the world. One section of this world-church openly and unblushingly professes to rule the world. But the other sects seek the world's means to propagate what they call Christianity, and go a begging for the world's gold and silver to establish their cause. When the Lord sent His disciples to preach the gospel to every creature, He did not tell them to raise funds from the Gentiles. No doubt it is both a duty and privilege for the Church to maintain the Lord's ambassadors and servants, but to accept from the world is a dishonour to Him, and manifests a want of faith and love.

The kingdom of heaven, through the unfaithfulness of man, has become a power in the earth, has taken the place of the Roman beast. From Daniel we learn that the kingdom of the Son of man will suddenly destroy the Roman power when in the midst of its greatness. The stone will smite the feet of the image, and immediately it will become like the dust of the threshing floor. But the kingdom is deferred, and the "mysteries of the kingdom" are now running their course. Hence the setting aside of the Roman power was gradual, and it existed long after the present form of the kingdom was set up. Yet that power soon began to wane and to fall abroad by internal convulsions. The existence of the early Christian was an element foreign to the power of the empire; hence the extensive persecution of them and the endeavour to extirpate them. The fourth beast as such had passed, or was passing away. The precise moment when it ceased to exist we may not be able to determine. But may not the Roman empire have existed as a mere power in the world after its prophetic character as a "Beast" had ceased?

Be this as it may, it was not necessary, since the kingdom only existed in mystery, that the Roman power should immediately collapse. Several years elapsed while the servants of the King went hither and thither laying the

foundation of the kingdom. By degrees this grew, and that declined.

But while the Roman empire was gradually declining, there was perhaps a quicker growth in power of that which was to take the place of the Beast. The kingdom of heaven in the keeping of man became a world-power as prefigured in the parable, and soon showed its world-character. Not many years after Julian's attempt to restore Paganism, Christianity was established by a decree of the Roman senate. In A. D. 388, Theodorias I. called upon the senate to choose between Paganism and Christianity, and *Christianity was chosen by a large majority*. Here is the patronage of the world, and soon the leaders in the professing Church with rapid strides hastened to seize the power which had just dropped from the enfeebled hand of Paganism ; and when the kingdom had assumed due proportion in power and extent, the Roman power was set aside, and the kingdom of heaven in the form it had taken through the unfaithfulness of man, succeeded it as a power in the earth. Then, if not before, it could be said, as to John in the Apocalypse, "The Beast that *was* and *is not*."

A power like its predecessor ; yet not merely secular, but along with that, yielding a terrific spiritual power over the minds and consciences of men, far more debasing and enslaving than any other tyranny can possibly be.

The Barbarians in Rome held the Ecclesiastics of the day in the utmost reverence ; and thus the kingdom being in appearance a thing of this world, only slid easily into the place of authority, and exercised its power.

Soon it became aware of its influence and power. The branches of the tree spread amazingly, and the birds and the beasts soon reposed under their shadow. Indeed the rapid spread of the profession of Christianity, the complete and sudden subjugation of men's minds to the authority and dictation of the priests, have been the astonishment of historians.

But to require this no art was neglected. Principles of morality were sacrificed, perjury and murder were unscrupulously used by the leaders to extend their power ; and among those who found not only shelter and protection in the so-called Church, but even affluence, honours, and power, may be numbered blasphemers, infidels, fornicators, and murderers. To rule the world by any means was the one sole aim of the rulers in the kingdom of heaven.

O how unlike Him whom they professed to serve. He refused the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them when Satan offered them. He would have nothing from Satan. Of whom have they received their power and influence? It was not God's intention that His kingdom should have such a place as we see the professing Church now has. Alas; the rulers in the kingdom of heaven, those who hold office and exercise sway in the world-Church, have accepted the world, the least considerable among them is covetous of worldly influence, of the world's gold. They have betrayed their trust; have dishonoured the King, their Lord, and must suffer the just punishment of their terrible evil.

This peculiar phase of the kingdom determines in some measure the path of the Christian. To take no part in supporting and helping on this great evil must bring upon us the hatred and persecution of them who uphold it. We by no means assert that no Christian is found aiding and abetting it. There are many who do so, and sincerely believe that they are serving God in so doing. But we know that they are blinded by tradition and prejudice, by worldliness and by dislike of the cross, which the true path of separation lays upon them.

To depart from evil is imperative upon the followers of Jesus, and He has shown us in His word that the whole system is evil in His sight. We are called to be witnesses for Him, and for this it is not enough to be born again, and to rest upon His shed blood for salvation. Testimony requires much more. No one can be a true witness unless he is saved; but a true witness for Christ is outside this world-Church—"outside the camp"—and his position as well as his words bear testimony to the rejected *One*. Few comparatively have sufficient energy of faith to take this step. Now as then, "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." But if by it we are exposed to the hatred of the worldly-minded, it secures to us all the blessings and privileges in sharing in the sufferings of Christ. He was rejected and cast out by His own people; we may be cast out likewise by those who profess faith in His name. But when he comes to take the kingdom, the power, and the glory, He will remember those who partake in His rejection now, and they shall enter into His joy, and sit upon His throne. Let us, then, be content; yea, peaceful and

happy in bearing unmerited scorn and contempt, knowing that our reward is at hand. "Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day and leap for joy, for behold your reward is great in heaven; for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets." Luke vi. 22, 23.

TRUSTING IN JESUS.

SOME years ago, whilst going round with some Tracts in a certain poor district, I knocked at the door of a garret-room in a high back land. As no one opened, and I thought I heard a faint voice within, I raised the latch and entered. In a bed in the wall, supporting himself on one arm, whilst the other hand held back the bed curtain, was a strange weird-looking old man: his eyes gleaming out of an unshaven face, gave him a peculiarly wild look, the effect of which was heightened by the eager gesticulation with which he immediately began to address me, in what at first appeared to be an unknown tongue.

He turned out to be an old Highlander, who could scarcely speak a word of English. With some difficulty I made out that he lived alone in the house, and was not on speaking terms with his neighbours, that he had seen no one since the day before; and having been suddenly taken very ill, had not been able to leave his bed to make his state known, nor to get as much as a drink of water. As I turned to see if I could not supply this want, I was struck with the bare desolate look of everything in the little room. A small pan was on the hob; but only black cinders in the grate; and opening the cupboard, not a particle of food of any kind was there but an old dry crust. He drank the cold water eagerly, and on giving back the cup, laid hold of my hands, with his dry burning ones, as if afraid I would leave him before he had finished all he had to say. He had been long too ill to work, he said, and now "the bawbees were all done," he would have to apply to the parish for assistance; but he had no one to send, and did not know how to set about it. But I had come, as he said, a good Missionary, I would manage the whole thing for him, and with the words, "I'm trusting all to you," he sank down exhausted on his wretched bed. He had thrown

his burden of care upon me, and with this last effort his worn-out mind and body succumbed. He could answer no questions, nor did he understand a word I said, and the only thing for me was to take up the case. So with these words, "I'm trusting all to you," urging me on, I rested not till the poor friendless dying man was cared for.

Many a time since this little incident has recurred to my mind as an illustration of faith. "The poor committeth himself unto Thee."

To a Scotch ear, the old fashioned word "lippen," has a fuller, deeper meaning of trust and confidence, than the word "commit." "I can lippen all to Him now," said one lately, who had been long groaning under his own burden, "and oh, how happy I have been all day long, in the thought of my Saviour's nearness and willingness to supply all my need"—"I, too, will lippen all to Him," said a dying man, to whom was narrated the above little incident, as illustrating the nature of saving faith; and leaning upon One mighty to save, with the everlasting arms beneath him and around him, he was carried through the dark valley, as a little child resting safe and happy in its mother's bosom.

True faith has respect not simply to the truth about Jesus, but to Jesus Himself. It is to a living Person we must "trust," not to a doctrine, a fact, or abstract truth. The knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus is precious, just as it leads to the knowledge of Jesus Himself. When we truly know Him, we cannot but trust Him, knowing ourselves to be lost and perishing, and Jesus to be the only and all-sufficient Saviour.

"I believe that Jesus died for sinners, and that He is the only Saviour, said a wife one day in my hearing, wondering at the new-found "believing" which filled her husband with peace and joy. "O woman," he said, "the devils believe that, and they only tremble." The faith that leads the soul to trust all to Jesus, believes that too, but rests not there: it straightway flees to Him, lays hold on Him; cries, "Lord, save me; undertake for me; say unto my soul, I am thy salvation." Then, in the experimental knowledge of His love and power, of His truth and faithfulness, the believing soul takes up the glad language of assurance, "The Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation." Yes, He whose name is Faithful and True, is One who may indeed be trusted. He has never proved a

broken reed to any fainting soul who leaned upon Him. None were ever ashamed who waited for Him; and no poor lost one who came to Him for salvation was ever cast out.

Dear Reader, come taste and see how good He is, and how blessed is every one that trusts in Him. The woman of Samaria told her fellow-citizens about Jesus, and many of them were thus led to come to Him, and prove Him for themselves; and then they said, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

The faith that leads to appropriating Jesus is the only faith that saves. It is not enough to say, "I believe that He is the only Saviour, and that He is able and willing to save." Have you made Him yours by accepting Him, by committing yourself to Him? The profession of faith that leaves the soul as careless and secure in sin as ever, or as heavily laden and burdened as ever, is no faith at all. In the one case there has been no felt burden to roll upon Him, in the other, no real rolling of the burden which was weighing it down. Just in proportion, as we truly trust all to Him, our souls are filled with joy and peace in believing.

The old man's mind was at rest when he cast his care upon me. He did not wait till he saw all he desired accomplished, before he rested. He trusted simply and was sure that his helpless need would be supplied; and in this he rested. And so the believer trusts Jesus with a faith which is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. He has learned to rest calmly upon Jesus, whom not having seen he loves, and in whom though now he sees Him not, yet believing, he rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of his faith, even the salvation of his soul. (1 Peter i. 8-9.)

STEPHEN AND THE PILGRIM FATHERS.

ACTS vii.

STEPHEN, when about to die for the truth, glances for a moment to this same faith of the Pilgrim Fathers of Genesis, and in an exceedingly interesting manner.

He tells us, which the history did not, that this value for the burying-place in Canaan, animated *all* the Genesis Fathers. Not only was Jacob carried to the cave which

Abraham had bought of Ephron, and Joseph to the parcel of ground which Jacob had bought of Hamor, but the other fathers who died in Egypt, had the same faith, and the same burial. It mattered not whether the spot was near Hebron or near Sychem, north or south, it was still within the borders of the land promised by the God of glory to their nation, and they would lie there, it mattered not in what spot, so it was there, in sure and certain hope of resurrection.

And Stephen, moreover, joins himself with these pilgrim fathers who "died in faith." As the God of glory had called them out from home and kindred, or, as the enmity of their brethren had cast them out from the same, so was he in his day. His brethren were casting Him out, but the "God of glory" had marked him as a child of the resurrection, and put him on his way to the "glory of God" (Acts vi. 15, vii. 55); with this newly developed feature in such a calling, that, in the meanwhile, Jesus would receive his spirit. He thus advances upon them, in the light and understanding of the high calling of God. Till the inheritance in glory comes, he can say, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." But this was beyond the way or hope (at least as far as the record goes) of the Genesis Fathers. "I have waited for thy salvation, O God," was their way; and care about their dead bodies, and the security of their place of sepulture, were the concerns of their faith and hope, looking for resurrection. But in Stephen, faith apprehends another stage in the path to the kingdom; or rather, fills up the interval from tabernacling in the body, to entrance into the "house eternal in the heavens"; and it is blessed to see the calling of the elect, thus progressively disclosing itself in its full beauty and excellence.

FRAGMENT.

We are never on Christian ground in the Psalms. Neither the knowledge of the Father, the indwelling of the Spirit of God, a purged conscience, nor the consciousness of standing in redemption by the Gospel, is known there. All these we possess as Christians. May we remember that we are Christians.

“ Η ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΣΟΥ ΣΕΣΩΚΕ ΣΕ.”

Luke viii. 42-48. Matthew ix. 19-22. Mark v. 24-34.

I pressed among the throng,
I heard His gentle voice,
And listened to its loving tones,
Which made my heart rejoice,
Breathing, “My daughter, comfort thee,
‘ Η πίστις σου σέσωκέ σε.”

She had been sick long while,
Had bowed her load to bear;
But sorrow and disease and pain—
Her burden—she laid *there*,
And in its stead had—“Comfort thee,
‘ Η πίστις σου σέσωκέ σε.”

From earth’s profoundest skill,
From Eastern sages’ lore,
From power of gold relief she sought,
But *yet* her burden bore,
Until *He* said—“I comfort thee,
‘ Η πίστις σου σέσωκέ σε.”

Trembling had she approached,
Fearing his face to meet;
Humble, beside the sinless One,
Her place was at His feet;
And Jesus *answered*—“Comfort thee,
‘ Η πίστις σου σέσωκέ σε.”

No faith to human eye;
Nothing, for man, had she;
To him defilement was her touch—
Unwelcome must she be;
But Him she touched said—“Comfort thee,
‘ Η πίστις σου σέσωκέ σε.”

Thus weary I, and sad;
Sick, for by sin beguiled;
Faint, for all earth’s vain cisterns tried
Had left me still defiled—
Went I for Jesus, “Comfort thee,
‘ Η πίστις σου σέσωκέ σε.”

No merit in my faith,
My touch—a cause of grief;
But virtue *dwells* in Him who said,
“Behold! *I bring* relief;”
And kindly whispered—“Comfort thee,
‘ Η πίστις σου σέσωκέ σε.”

O, Saviour of the lost!
O, “Friend” of sinners vile!
Thy perfect love our hearts would win;
Meeting our need the while.
Thy grace for *all* has—“Comfort thee,
‘ Η πίστις σου σέσωκέ σε.”

NOTE.—The Greek words above are pronounced thus—“Hee pistis sou sesoke se.” The meaning of them is—“Thy faith hath saved thee.”

WORDS OF TRUTH.

ARE YOU IN EARNEST?

THIS question, dear reader, suggests itself on reading the first verse of Luke xv., "THEN drew near all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him." The occasion is remarkable. "Great multitudes" went after Him, we are told, just after the parable of the "great supper." But followers such as these the Lord Jesus did not desire. That each one would have met with an instantaneous and ready reception at His hands, had they been really *in earnest*, there can be no manner of doubt; for "the righteousness of God" is "unto all." (Rom. iii. 22.) But knowing full well that a vast majority were seeking present advantage rather than future blessing, He applied to their consciences the searching words we read in chapter xiv. 26-35—words that well might make the heart of the most "in earnest" quail—"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters; yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you," &c. The mighty work of redemption, with all the fearful "cost" of it, had not stayed *Him* in His career of devotedness. *He* knew full well that Satan's "twenty thousand" would come against Him, but this did not hinder His course of love. *He* had *indeed* forsaken all that He had; for as we read in Phil. ii., He first made Himself of no reputation, taking on Him the form of a servant; and then when found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient even unto *death*. And not only this, but obedient in *life* likewise, He was the perfect "meat offering" from which "the salt" of the covenant of God was never lacking. (Lev. ii. 13.)

To this position of true discipleship He calls on those who

had "an ear to hear" to respond. He was thoroughly rejected of the world. Would they, then, identify themselves with One who, before He gave them a crown, had nothing but a cross to offer? Fully and fairly He opens out to them the consequences of following Him. He throws down the gauntlet, as it were, and challenges them to take it up. Well might the stoutest quail at the prospect. *But*, most blessed is it to observe, that *this* was the very moment that the publicans and sinners selected to draw near to Him. "*Then* drew near all the publicans and sinners." They had heard to the full the terms of discipleship. They were not strangers to the fact, that He to whom they now drew near was "despised and rejected of men." They knew only too well what the religious world would say to them; but in spite of all these obstacles they "drew near," and placed themselves side by side with the rejected Jesus, and found a welcome from Him. "Wisdom's children," surely these were; and *they were* "*in earnest.*" Doubtless, they were thoroughly discontented with their present condition. No doubt, they had tried the "far country," and found nothing but starvation there;—they had had fellowship with its citizen and found him a hard taskmaster. In fact, like the four lepers in 2 Kings vii., they said to themselves, as it were, "Why sit we here until we die? If we say, 'We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city and we shall die there, and if we sit still here we die also: Now therefore come and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians; if they save us alive we shall live, and if they kill us we shall but die.'" Thus with these poor sinners. They, too, were perishing, but they had an ear to hear—(faith comes "by hearing.") They were aware of their wretched, sinful state. They came to Jesus, and found in Him the One whom the Pharisees charged with receiving sinners, and eating with them, causing these self-righteous ones to murmur. They were thoroughly *in earnest*, because they knew their wretched condition, and they found a perfect welcome from Him.

Dear reader, I would ask, Are you *in earnest* on this vital question too? This same Jesus is now in glory, and still invites you to draw near to Him. "This man receiveth sinners" is equally true of Him now as then; and be assured, therefore, there is a welcome for you. The Holy Ghost, with *the candle of the word of God*, is even now seeking diligently in the very corners of the great house of Christen-

dom, to find the lost but precious souls that Satan is seeking to cover with the dust of Antiquity, Legality, Ritualism, and Expediency. Will you not, then, as the light flashes upon you from on high, respond to its summons, and let there be rejoicing amongst the angels of God at the finding of the lost one! Will you not allow yourself to be gathered up to-day, to become the precious possession of Christ? Harken to His voice,—“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.) Can anything speak more plainly than this? You hear His words. You believe in the Father who in gracious love sent His Son, a Saviour, and to give you eternal life: the moment you do this, everlasting life is yours—a life as long and as lasting as that of the blessed God who liveth for ever and ever. Your condemnation has passed away; for Christ bore it all, and now ever liveth to make intercession for you. You have passed from the state of death in which you were, into life, and are introduced into present “fellowship with the Father and the Son.” Could there be higher joy than this? Impossible! “These things,” says the Apostle John, “write I unto you that your joy may be *full*.” (1 John i. 4.)

It is then a question for you, “Will you exchange your present condition as a sinner ‘under judgment’—as ‘all the world’ is declared to be (Rom. iii. 19) in the midst of a scene over which the cloud of retribution is fast thickening—for that of one not only secure from condemnation, but possessed of eternal life in the Son of God?” And although you are passing through a scene on which the cloud of judgment is so soon to burst, yet having for your present portion fellowship with the Father and the Son, and for your hope the return of Him who loved you, and gave Himself for you, you have *fulness of joy*—the foretaste of that which you will have when in your glorified body, you will be enabled through the Holy Ghost, in unhindered accents of praise and worship, to cast your crown before the feet of Him who has done all for you! I pray you, then, dear reader, *be in earnest*, and to-day accept *God’s salvation*, if you have not yet done so. “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” (John vi. 37.)

THE NEW BIRTH.

No. 5.—WALKING IN THE SPIRIT.

WE now come to look at the power of this eternal life in Christ, which is possessed by the believer.

In Gal. ii., we find the language of one who has experimentally accepted this wonderful portion. The apostle writes, "I am crucified with Christ,"—here is the distinct and positive acceptance by faith, that, in God's sight, Paul the sinner existed no longer! The unrighteous being's existence had come to a termination in the Cross of Christ! God's righteousness demands that the whole race of the first Adam, which had revolted from him be ended judicially in his sight. He could no longer allow the unrighteous thing to continue. In love He provided a sacrifice which would satisfy fully His demand. In His gift of His Son, He expressed that love which was without measure or end. "In the end of the world" His own Son comes in—enters in grace, when His hour came, into that terrible judgment to which the first man became subject—He bears its fullest outburst—dies—and is buried. He is then raised up and glorified of God, whose righteousness it was at once to set on His throne, the Man who had done so. He thus brings to a judicial ending the whole race. Until this was done God never gave man the place of *death*—never pronounced the sentence that man was "dead in trespasses and sins." We read, Christ "died for all, then were all dead;" more properly, "have all died?" (2 Cor. v. 14.) This was the state Christ's death proved them to be in. Here, then, is the unspeakable privilege for faith's acceptance, to know that I am *dead!* It is not that God asks me to be *better*, but tells me I am *dead!* "Nevertheless, I live" says Paul, the believer. "Yet not I." No! that sinful "I" is swept away—gone for ever! "But Christ liveth in me." Yes! He has brought to an end, in God's sight and to faith's acceptance, the "I" that broke my heart with its vileness; and rose up out of the judgment having done so, the only life, the life of every one who believes! "And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." Here then is the whole matter out, to the acceptance of faith:—I live by an object—I have my eye upon Him who is my life in heaven; the Holy Ghost has come down and dwells in my body (1 Cor. vi. 19),

linking me up to Christ, and making good His life in me ; so that it is "not I but Christ liveth in me."

The Holy Ghost then, is the power of this life. It is by the Holy Ghost, in the first instance, using the water of the word, that the soul is born again. The word reaching the conscience, made the conscience *bad*. But the water and the blood came out of the side of a dead Saviour. (John xix. 34.) The blood purges the conscience, and makes it *good*. So that he that believes has got life out of the death of the One who had borne, when He died, the judgment of God ; and who has Himself, as risen, become his life. The Holy Ghost then makes good this life—Christ—in the believer ; "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin (its only fruit), but the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (Rom. viii. 10) ; the practical righteousness which flows from this. This life is in resurrection, at the other side of death and judgment. It is *Christ risen* who is the life in which we rejoice and live before God.

Now we have a principle in Scripture, which we but feebly apprehend. It is *Walking in the Spirit*. We read, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." (Gal. v. 16.) "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. viii. 4), &c. If we may characterize one thus walking in the Spirit, it would be by saying that he has got his eye upon Christ. The soul has got the apprehension that Christ is its life, and that it is united to Christ by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost, when ungrieved, keeps the soul engaged with Christ Himself, who is the life ; and the Christian thus walks in the Spirit, outside the flesh, and what his evil nature loves and lives in. The thoughts of Jesus—His lowliness and meekness, gentleness, grace, separation from all evil, while surrounded by it, in this evil world—the tenderness of His gracious heart—the absence of all living to self, which was found in Him—the beauties, and graces, and mind of Christ, thus engage the soul, which adoringly worships in the thought, *that He is my life!* The result of all this is that, the soul thus occupied, is walking outside itself—outside the flesh, in the life of another, by the Spirit. He walks in the Spirit, and no trace of his evil nature appears. It is not that it is removed or changed ; but it is kept in the silence of death, where God has graciously put it. It is not by efforts to reduce it to order, and so to get the victory

—a victory which would only restore the flesh to its own importance and recognition: but by the engrossment and engagement of heart with Him, who is my life, outside of self altogether. Thus the flesh is left in its true place—*dead*, not made *better*.

How frequently does the Christian excuse himself for failure, by pleading the fact that he *has* got another nature; a horrible nature in him! How frequent are the excuses which come up before the soul! because, forsooth, he *has* got two natures, while in practice he should have but one.

The case of Stephen, in Acts vii., gives an example of a man walking in the Spirit. In Acts i. 9, the disciples gazed after the ascending Lord Jesus, till a cloud received him out of their sight; but they saw nothing more. In the second chapter, when the day of Pentecost had come, the Holy Ghost descended, and took up His abode in and amongst the disciples. In the seventh chapter, we find a man “full of the Holy Ghost, who, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.” (v. 55.) Here then is an example of a man living and walking in the Spirit; his eye is upon Christ. His testimony follows, as suited to those around him. (v. 56.) This provokes the enmity of the world, and they stone him with stones; but so completely superior is he to their murderous hate—so engrossed with Him, who is his life in heaven, that he is living as much in the translated state here below as if he were there altogether. He is spending his last moments here for Christ, without an anxiety or troubled thought about himself. He is “delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake,” and the “life of Jesus” is manifested in his body. (2 Cor. iv. 10.) All the passions and resentment of evil in his nature are so completely subdued that they appear no more than if they had no existence whatsoever.

How often we find souls trying to reduce to order their evil nature in their own strength—true souls too—conscious that it should be reduced to order in God’s sight, as before man. Many a long fruitless life is spent thus. Praying, perhaps, and mourning over a nature which distresses and breaks the heart, in the laudable effort to subdue its workings, and quell its risings; but without effect. The soul has not apprehended the power to subdue it in anywise. As one has said, “The flesh of man likes to have some credit: it cannot bear to be treated as vile, and incapable of good—to be

excluded and condemned to nothingness, *not by efforts to annul itself*, which would restore it to all its importance ; but by a work that *leaves* it in its true nothingness, and that has pronounced the absolute judgment of death upon it, so that, convicted of nothing but sin, it has only to be *silent*. If it acts it is only to do evil. Its place is to be *dead*, not *better*. We have both right and power to hold it as such, because Christ has died, and we live in His risen life. He has Himself become our life." Rather should the soul turn away in abhorrence of the evil thing, and get the eye distinctly upon Christ. This is the normal office of the Holy Ghost in the Christian, to keep the soul engaged with Him -- to give thoughts of Jesus, and keep them flowing through the soul. His interests and engagements, aims and ends, become those of the Christian who has His life ; and the result of engagement of heart with Christ is the easy and natural subjugation of the evil thing. It is treated with the non-recognition it deserves: its desires, aims, and lusts are checked; they are held in death and practical subjection ; they are passed by without recognition ; and the soul drops easily and happily into practical life in the Spirit. Members are mortified ; not by trying to mortify them, but by the superior engagement with "things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." (Col. iii.) It is "through the Spirit," we "mortify the deeds of the body" (Rom. viii. 13); and the consequence is that, instead of the continual unhappy strife between the two natures, the flesh "lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh," the Christian walks in the Spirit, and does *not* fulfil them in anywise. Instead of the sad "works of the flesh," the "fruit of the Spirit" is the easy and natural outflow of that life which the believer possesses in Christ—"love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit;" is the exhortation founded on the fact that the Spirit is our life, connecting us with Christ. "And they that are Christ's *have crucified* the flesh with the passions and lusts." The flesh *has been crucified*, and faith acts upon this wondrous privilege and deliverance, and "walks in the Spirit," who is the power of this eternal life. The good Lord give His people to know it, and practise it, for His name's sake. Amen.

CHRIST KNOWN TO THE SOUL.

(Luke v. 1-11.)

THE first thing for a soul to know is that Christ is *absolutely* for it. When it learns that He is absolutely for it, then it learns to be absolutely for Him, and never till then. It is what most people are looking for at the end of their lives, on their death-beds, and so they never really are Christians in the true, full sense, till then. When a person who makes a certain amount of profession is not devoted to Christ, the cause is, they have not yet learned what it is to know Christ in such a state of exigence that none other could avail but He. Christ being absolutely for me means this, that I have learned to realise that He was the only one when the thick darkness of a dread eternity was pressing itself upon my sin-stained soul—when none else could have reached a hand which would then be of any avail but His ; that He stretched out His arm and grasped me in His mighty hand, and brought me to Himself—then I am His, and His for ever ! But souls have not come to that; they are religious and devoted, but they have not learned that Christ is absolutely for them.

It is Peter, the apostle of the circumcision, whose conversion is related here, and who, we find, was so absolutely a debtor to grace. May we learn what grace does. What is the use of looking at a thing, if I do not see what it does for me?

Now, I ask, what has grace done? You may say, it has relieved my conscience of a burden. That is, surely, a *part* of what it has done, but is only a part of the whole. Grace not only relieves me of a burden, but it links me with the Son of God. What love does for me is this—(benevolence does a favour for a person who needs it, and has done with them when the favour is performed); love does a favour, and is more interested in the person than ever ! The very time that love enjoys itself most, is when it has done *all it can do* for its object. Love enjoys itself most when the object wants nothing at all. It only uses need as an opportunity to express itself. A mother is devoted to her sick child, but surely that mother will not enjoy her child less when he is well, and does not need so much. I want to show souls what the grace of God effects for them ; not only does it remove an intolerable burden, but it bestows upon you the life of the One who has relieved you of that intolerable

burden. When you know this, and that the Lord is absolutely for you, you then learn to be absolutely for Him, in this evil world.

Now see what the Lord does here. He sees two ships by the lake, He enters into one of them, and tells Peter to thrust out from the land, and then sat down and taught the people out of the ship. Peter was a well-disposed man, and did much more for the Lord than many of whom there is good hope at the present moment. I think Peter did a good deal—very few would give both their *time* and their *means* to Christ. That was really what Peter did (a fisherman's boat was surely his time and his money); if you did not get the rest of the chapter you would say Peter was a devoted saint. Doubtless, he took a certain interest in Christ, but what I have plainly before me is, that persons may do all this, and yet never have learned that Christ is absolutely for them. Peter had still to find that there was one to stand between him and the living God who could first, having awakened the fear in his heart, take the fear out of that heart for ever! God grant it to be the history of every one of my readers. May every one of them learn to say, "He has taken the fear out of my heart, I know He is absolutely for me, and I am absolutely for Him." Grace takes all the impediments out of the way and brings you into everlasting union with Christ; and the effect of it all is, as we shall presently see, to lead the soul to forsake all and follow Him.

Now, if you had been standing by that lake, and had seen Peter giving up his ship, which was the only means of his support, in pious obedience to the Lord's wishes, you would have said, "Well, that's a true man; he has a heart for Christ." It was as much for Peter to give his time and his ship as for the greatest man in the land to give his money. But what the Lord wants is to bring his soul into the consciousness of its own state before God—to bring it into contact with God Himself, for it will never otherwise understand what God has effected for it.

The Lord is about to teach Peter two things. First—The insufficiency of all *temporal* blessing; and, secondly—What he, as the one sent from God can be to man, in the hour of the sinner's greatest exigence—in that soul-searching moment when the soul first finds itself in the presence of the living God!

Christ brings him into the presence of God, by manifesting

the power of God. While, on the other hand, He had given him the temporal things he desired—he had his ship full of fish—what can all this avail for a sinner before God? What could fish do for him there? What could temporal things do for a soul when it has to look into that interminable night of eternity, and face the living God? Souls have to learn what Christ is to them, when no hand but His, no power but His own, can succour them—when they have no hope from any other quarter whatever. A death-bed brings this truth out beautifully. On a death-bed a saint finds that everything is gone. The ship is gone!—fish gone, as it were, and what remains? *Nothing but Christ!* Oh! what delight if a soul could say, *everything is gone but Christ.* How happy every one of my readers would be, if each could say, “All is gone but Christ!” But, as in the picture before us, you may have got your ship as full of fish as you can; what will you do if your ship *sinks*? What is the state of a person when brought to this? What do we find out now? That while a person can go on in service for Christ, religious, devoted—giving both time and means to the Lord, all the time the soul has never yet learned what it is to face the interminable future—to face God, and know the power of Christ to take away fear from the heart. What then has hindered the soul from learning this? The hindering cause is, that you have not got rid of everything but Christ. You may ask, do I mean you are to lose everything. I say, yes! And will any soul say, “I have lost everything, but I’ve *ONLY got Christ?*” If you lose everything and get Christ, it is *gain*, not *loss*! There is not one soul who will go to glory but must go through it. God gave His Son that He might bring you to Himself! The apostle Paul says, as it were—“I have lost all, and I’m glad of it. I count them but dung!” You perhaps think if you go to these lengths you don’t know what you will come to. I know where you will come to when everything is gone. Even to have nothing but Christ! Do you call that an unhappy position? It is what every soul must come to. He is calling upon us to accept nothing short of it. The Spirit is setting it forth, but people are limiting it to suit themselves.

Many make a fair profession, and give confidence that they are on the Lord’s side, who have not learned Christ in His value. What joy to His heart when a soul finds out His value. There was one spot on earth where His worth *was*

known; one spot to which He could retreat. That spot was Bethany. What joy to Him to feel that there was one little family at Bethany who knew His worth. You do not find them coming to the cross or to the grave. Does your heart thus long to know the worth of Christ?

Take the case of Jonah as an example of how God teaches the soul that He is for it. He was a prophet of God; true, but wilful; but God sees the fact that Jonah had never yet thoroughly learned what it was to have God *for* him. There is no way to bring about devotedness but by learning how fully God is *for* you. When we see a man giving his whole life to Christ, it is not that he is a better man, but it is because he has found out more than others of the worth of Christ! Jonah is cast into the depths. What a mercy of God to put him there, to teach him the worth of His salvation. Who could succour him now? No one but God! Do you think you know the depths to which you have gone down? Has it stung you to the heart that the flesh you bear about in you is what the Son of God agonized for and died to put away? I know for myself nothing that gives me greater pain. Nothing is to me more dreadful than to be conscious that I carry about in me a thing for which the Son of God died. That I have that evil nature about me which the cross of the Son of God could only deliver me from. God lets Jonah go down to the depths of the sea, and he there says, "I will look again toward thy holy temple." Who but God can be for Jonah now? And so he learns it. Some of us have to find this out still. Oh! blessed moment when his soul discovers that it is God's own Son who has liberated him from himself. What does Peter discover? "I am a sinful man, O Lord." "Depart from me, I am not fit for your presence." Peter had not yet learned what it was to be in the presence of God, and to have a Saviour in that presence; but it is the same Saviour who has awakened him by the manifestation of His power, who says, "Fear not!"

Dear friends, are we speaking of these things as a mere form? Is there reality in the things of God? Is it a fact that a soul *must* be brought to find this out? The truth is, not that death has been merely stayed off, that I may go on in the scene. I am delivered out of it altogether. I have got to know that Jesus is "the resurrection and the life;" he that believeth shall never die. Souls never get into true full obedience to Christ till they have learned this. In

reality they have only then discovered the *worth of Christ!* Can anything arouse me to more unmistakeable devotedness than to find I have *nothing but Christ*, and that **HE IS EVERYTHING!** If everything were lost but Himself it would be an easy thing to follow Him; but if a man gives up everything for Christ you hear it said, "What an eccentric man that is!"

Many a one who has a great respect for Christ, and interest and feeling about Him, has not yet learned he has been raised out of the darkness of sin and all about him in the life of the Son of God! The necessary consequence of knowing it would be, that having found Him entirely for you, you would find your easy action would be to be entirely for Him. Like Peter, and those with him, who when they had brought their ships to land *forsook all* and followed Him.

Then, you ask, are we to give up everything to follow Christ? Yes; everything! But you may tell me there are some things you would not have to lose. Well, if you can follow Him with them it is all right. But, unless "a man forsake all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." Then, you say, what a strange world we should have! *We should not have the world at all, we should have Christ and heaven!*

And now, in conclusion, I want to know what souls are going to do. Are you waiting for your deathbeds, till God brings you into some such strait that you *must* learn it? Would you like the glory of God to shake you from everything of earth to bring you to heaven? Where, then, is your love to that blessed One now in heaven? Where is your devotedness? Where is the chivalry of the heart? Have you not yet got such a sense of the loathsomeness of yourselves, and the wonderful work of Christ for you, that you would think nothing too great a sacrifice for Him? If you have learned to know what Christ is for you, you *could* not but follow Him, and find your only joy in giving up all for Him. God never *asks* people to give up for Him; but do I not see every day I live, proofs of love giving up for others? Children giving up for parents, parents for children, wives for husbands, husbands for wives—and does love *think* of the sacrifice it makes? If it *thinks* of it, it is not worth having. I do not believe Peter, and James, and John, thought of what they were doing when they left all and followed Him; they were thinking only of Christ! Do you think—if I have learned that Christ has come to deliver me, when there was

not one who had a pitying eye for me, whose help could avail but His own blessed self, and He has delivered me—that I could be for any one or anything but Himself? Am I going to cling to the paltry things of earth? No; Christ becomes the engrossing object of the heart, and the effect of the grace is, “They brought their ships to land, forsook all and followed Him.”

I press it—if you know He is for you, you *must* be for Him. “A friend in need, is a friend indeed.” I have to learn that in myself I am a poor, wretched loathsome sinner; so much so, that no one would put out a finger to help me, or could, but He, and He alone. He has done so, and how then could I be for anyone or anything but Him, having learned that He is absolutely for me? “We love Him because He first loved us.” We read, “Her sins which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.” This is true devotedness to Christ.

“THE LAST ADAM—A QUICKENING SPIRIT.”

(JOHN XX., 2-23.)

IN the twentieth chapter of John’s Gospel we find the Lord Jesus, in resurrection, consummating all the previous chapters of the Gospel.

He is here making known His resurrection, and the power of it in the midst of the congregation. He is standing in the solitude of resurrection; a solitary Man risen from among the dead. Alone! There is none other such as He. He is fulfilling the 22nd verse of the 22nd Psalm. All the waves and billows of God’s mighty judgment on sin have exhausted their strength on Him. He has endured them in His soul. He is here as having come out from under this judgment which none but He could have risen out of. He has borne the judgment of God upon man, and now stands in the midst of His disciples, and is making known His resurrection, and setting forth the results of His victory in the congregation—consummating all He had declared in the previous chapters of this gospel.

He is standing above the ruin of the first man—on the landing of resurrection. Let us see how He reached it. We must look at Him in other solitudes ere He reached it.

The world, as God made it, was ruined by man—he was

the last thing made. The world is involved in the ruin which came in through man. Man filled it with corruption and violence, and God shrouded it in the judgment of the mighty waters of the flood. (Gen. vi.—viii.) Who is to repair the ruin? Who is to redeem it? Christ, the Son of God comes in, to “make all things new.” The heavens and the earth were the first thing which God had made in the beginning. Now He begins the new creation with man.

He becomes a babe in a manger—touches the weakest point of humanity—“a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.” (Luke ii.) He spends thirty years of His life in retirement, and then enters His ministry as God’s Servant in the midst of a world of sin. Satan then comes to oppose Him.—(Luke iv.)—and He overcomes Satan as God’s servant, and Satan owns Him as Son of God—(ver. 41). For three years he walks in this solitude of power as the Servant, declarative of God. “The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father” declares Him. It is God exhibited in a world of woe. The poor, and the wretched, the sinful, and the vile, find in Him a relief from every burden, every sin; and yet he puts forth no power for Himself. The poor, and the vile ones of the earth, find in Him the heart of God. In all this He is in the midst of men, in a distinct solitude all through. Not the Saviour yet, but the Servant; and so perfectly this, that at the end of His pathway He can say—“He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” (John xiv. 9.)

His hour then comes that He must depart out of this world to be with the Father. (John xiii.) When His hour was come, He enters another solitude, but it is the solitude of misery and suffering. He says, as it were, “I’ll now go where I’ll be the victim.” He had been in the solitude of power, anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, declarative of God, up to this—now, “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.) There, He accepts all that God’s mighty judgment required against the first man—all that His righteousness demanded, to put an end to the offending thing for ever. Satan opposes Him in this, as formerly he had opposed Him as God’s Servant. He now opposes Him as the sacrifice—the Saviour. The Lord accepts the place of victim. He says, “Father, if thou be willing remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine

be done." (Luke xxii. 42.) It was a solitude of suffering in which He sought for comforters and found none. They who had followed Him in the time of His ministry, now "all forsook him and fled." They say, as it were, "We are mistaken in the man." None could be with Him now. He was left alone. Yet not alone, He says, for the Father is with me. Judas intrudes upon this mighty solitude with a betrayer's kiss; and Jesus says, "Good for that man if he had not been born." All combine then and bear down against Him. The world—Satan—religion—all! One of His disciples, too, denies Him to the enemy. He accepts it from the hand of God. He hid not His face from shame and spitting. He comes charged with this cup to the Cross. There He bears the judgment of the sinner from God, and is forsaken of Him. He says, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" He consummates the work by His death. He goes down into death, under which the sinner lay; but rises out of that place, and we find Him in John xx. in the magnificence of His victory. A solitary Man, risen from among the dead. Every enemy gone—occupied in dispensing the spoils of His victory! dispensing His blessings as the Risen One! He had been in the solitude of power—manifesting God. In the solitude of suffering in which he drained the cup of God's judgment on man. He is now in the solitude of resurrection, making good in others the blessings of the victory He had achieved, Saying, as it were, "I will now make it all true in you." "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God."

He does two things, as the Risen One—He pronounces "peace." What does peace mean? It is peace on the other side of judgment. Many have a spurious peace—a satisfied feeling in their own hearts, which will some day pass away. Peace means that there is no hostile element that can ever rise again between the soul of the believer and God. Not peace, because of victories, nor midst enemies, but peace because of their overthrow—their destruction. Like Israel on the shores of the Red Sea, singing the song of triumph after their enemies were drowned in the depths of the sea:—"The Lord hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea." This was the chorus of their song of triumph. Their enemies were defeated and destroyed. The Egyptians which they had seen, they should

see again no more for ever. They were drowned in the depths of the sea. They sank unto the bottom as a stone. They sank as lead in the mighty waters. Every hostile element was gone; to rise up against them no more for ever! Can you say you possess this Peace with God? It is the Peace which Christ pronounces, after He had risen out of the waters of judgment. He dispenses it to His people as the Risen One, pronouncing "Peace"—All your enemies are gone—it is what belongs to you as the new race of which He is the Head—the new creation of God. The old race (the first man) is judicially ended before the eye of the Judge. His righteousness demanded the end of the first Adam race—that His love might, without check or hindrance flow out to those who believe. Every one in Christ is a new creation.

He now does another thing. You will find that the general desire is to get Peace with God, so as to go on with an unburdened conscience in the world—the scene you are in: God does not stop there. This is why the people like to hear of the forgiveness of sins, and peace, and stop there; because this makes no demand upon them. But Christ does not stop after He has pronounced peace. You must now get the life of the Person who has given you peace (He is our peace), the life of the Person who bore the judgment, and triumphed over death. And so "He breathed on them;"—imparting to them His own life.

The Lord God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul; (Gen. ii.) but man fell, and this life was forfeited, and under judgment. Here Jesus Christ "The last Adam—a quickening Spirit," (1 Cor. xv. 45) after bearing judgment, and abolishing death, comes forth and breathes upon them, imparting His own life—eternal life; which makes you free from the law of sin and death. But it connects you with Him who has gone out of this scene altogether—who has no connexion with it whatsoever. He is the *life* of him who believes—consequently it connects the believing one with the *place* where He is, with the Father. "Your life is hid with Christ in God;" therefore He adds, "Seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." (Col. iii. 1.) How then can I connect myself with the place, and the things out of which He has risen? If I have life in Him, and Him for my life, this life will assert its own qualities, and overcome the world. He that "is born of God, overcometh

the world" (1 John v.); rising above the storms, and disturbing elements of flesh and nature, and all out of which Christ has risen, it seeks its own native element springing up into everlasting life. Seeking the level from which it came. The eternal life was with the Father—was manifested to us in the Son—and is now communicated to us by the Holy Ghost. It is thus a well of water—not a stagnant pool—but a springing well, seeking, like water, its own level, and springing up into everlasting life. Like the Frigate bird, which, we are told, when the storms agitate the surface of the ocean, when winds and waves rage in contempt of life on every side, rises aloft into the calm above the storms, and floats securely and tranquilly in that peaceful atmosphere, where it finds itself at home and at rest!

The reason why the saints of God do not enjoy this cloudless peace is, that they are engaging their hearts with the things of earth, and cultivating the nature out of which Christ, their life, has risen; and not cultivating the pursuits, and aims, and interests of that eternal life which is theirs in Christ.

The Lord lead our hearts into the heavenly atmosphere—the proper element in which this life which He has bestowed puts forth its leaves and fruit; and grant that His beloved people may walk in the vigour and power of that word, "Christ in me," through a world where every breath is against them; for His name's sake. Amen.

JESUS MY PORTION.

Lord, Jesus, Thou who only art
 The endless source of purest joy,
 Oh! come and fill this longing heart—
 May nought but Thee my thoughts employ.
 Teach me on Thee to lift my eye,
 For none but Thee can satisfy.

The joys of earth can never fill
 The heart that's tasted of Thy love;
 No portion would I seek until
 I reign with Thee, my Lord, above.
 Where I shall gaze upon Thy face,
 And know more fully all Thy grace.

When from Thy radiant throne on high
 Thou didst my fall and ruin see;
 Thou cam'st on earth for me to die,
 That I might share that throne with Thee.
 Loved with an everlasting love,
 My hopes, my joys are all above.

Oh, what is all that earth can give—
 I'm called to share in God's own joy ;
 Dead to the world, in Thee I live,
 In Thee I've bliss without alloy.
 Well may I earthly joys resign,
 " All things " are mine, and I am Thine.

Till Thou shalt come to take me home,
 Be this my one ambition, Lord—
 Self—sin—the world, to overcome,
 Fast clinging to Thy faithful word.
 More of Thyself each day to know
 And more into Thine image grow. M. E. G.

SCRIPTURE QUERIES AND ANSWERS.

1 Peter i. 1, 2.

Q. What is the general meaning of 1 Peter i. 1, 2; and why is obedience mentioned before blood?—E. C.

A. James, in his Epistle, addresses the scattered twelve tribes, as Israel had still the character of God's people in his eye: and he recognises both the synagogue (ch. ii. 2) and the assembly (ch. v. 14), as before the final separation of the believing remnant from the nation in general had taken place. It was a transitional moment, and he has the nation as a nation, although scattered, before him. Peter, on the other hand, takes up only the elect strangers of the dispersion, who were anywhere but in the land of Israel—Pontus, Galatia, &c.—and sets their eye upon a heavenly hope. Consequently, verse 2 is a complete reversal of the whole hopes of Israel, to this remnant of faithful ones. As to Israel of old, we might read it thus, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of Jehovah, through sanctification of ordinances, unto obedience of the law, and sprinkling of the blood of the old covenant" (Ex. xxiv.), which sealed their condemnation. Now, he can write of the believing ones that they were "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father (the name He reveals Himself to Christians in the Son of His love, as Jehovah was His revealed name to his elect nation—see Ex. vi.), through sanctification of the Spirit, (not ordinances)—who separates us from man, unto the obedience . . . of Jesus Christ"—*i.e.*, to obey according to His order and pattern, who never did even His own perfect will, but the Father's; "unto obedience (of Jesus Christ) and (unto) sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." The Spirit separates us unto both. Thus separated or

sanctified by the Holy Ghost unto His obedience—*i.e.*, unto that end—we come under the efficacy of the blood of sprinkling of the new covenant, which purges the conscience, instead of sealing our condemnation.

Hebrews xiii. 13.

Q. Does Heb. xiii. 13—"Without the camp"—refer to Ex. xxxiii., when Moses pitched the tent "Without the camp, afar off"? or, rather, is there an allusion to it; for I suppose there is no doubt the reference is to Lev. xvi.?

A. In the Gospel narratives we learn that Israel had refused their Messiah—"We have no king but Cæsar," is their word. (John xix.) Jesus said on His cross, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke xxiii.) The answer to this intercession was the offer by the Holy Ghost, who came down at Pentecost (Acts ii.), by Peter in Acts iii., "I wot that through ignorance ye did it," he says, and that if they would now repent, Jesus, whom they slew, would return, and the times of refreshing would come. Their full answer to this offer of grace was at the martyrdom of Stephen (Acts vii.), in which act the citizens who hated the nobleman, who had gone into the far country to receive a kingdom and return, sent a messenger (Stephen), after him, saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us." (See Luke xix.) Stephen sees the Lord Jesus—the Son of man—*standing* at the right hand of God, till then ready to bring in the "sure mercies of David." They had now refused these "sure mercies," and the whole earthly order of things is broken up at Jerusalem, and they were all scattered abroad, except the apostles. Hebrews now come in, and in it we find Jesus *seated* and expecting, till His enemies be made His footstool. (Ch. x. 12, 13.) Till the day when He says, "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." (Luke xix. 27.) In each Scripture it is a characteristic attitude in which He is seen. It characterizes very preciously these Scriptures, to the renewed soul, who is free to learn the beauties of the word of God. In consequence, the Jewish believers are called upon to "go forth therefore unto Him outside the camp." They must come outside the earthly order of things, and everything of a religious character which recognized man in the flesh, and connected itself with the world. (Believers were now "in the Spirit," with a heavenly sanctuary and High Priest.) This was

most distinctly Judaism at all times. This word of the Lord holds good with regard to every religion which connects itself with the world, and recognizes and provides for man in the flesh, or unrenewed. An earthly formulary, which takes in all the nation, or country, or district, is the "camp" now, and the distinct call of God to the believer is uncompromisingly to disconnect himself with such, and take his true place with Jesus—"bearing His reproach"—"outside the camp," or such an order of things.

Thus acting, he recognizes what God requires—separation from evil—in order to walk in fellowship with Him. Moses was quick in apprehension in the mind of God, when he pitched the tent without the camp. (Ex. xxxiii.) He knew that God could not now dwell amid a rebellious and revolted people. Every one that sought the Lord went out to this place of separation to God; and God's presence was found there; and there He spake to His faithful ones.

There is no doubt, as far as the offering went, that Lev. xvi. is alluded to. It was the type.

LINES UPON THE WORD "TRIBULATION,"

BY AN OLD WRITER.

Till from the straw, the flaille the corn doth beat,
 Until the chaffe be purged from the wheat—
 Yea, till the mill the graine in pieces tear,
 The richness of the floure will scarce appear;
 So, till men's persons great afflictions touch,
 If worth be found, their worth is not so much;
 Because, like wheat in straw, they have not yet
 That value which in thrashing they may get.
 For, till the bruising flails of God's corrections
 Have threshed out of us our vain affections—
 Till those corruptions, which doe misbecome us,
 Are by Thy Sacred Spirit winnowed from us.
 Until from us the straw of worldly treasures—
 Till all the dusty chaffe of empty pleasures—
 Yea, till His flaille upon us He doth lay,
 To thrash the husk of this our flesh away,
 And leave the soul uncovered—nay, yet more—
 Till God shall make our very spirit poore,
 We shall not up to highest wealth aspire,
 And then we shall,—and that is my desire.

WORDS OF TRUTH.

CHRIST: THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE.

“**H**OW are you this morning, William?” “Very poorly; I’ve had a bad night; an’ a’ thegither I’m unco dune.” “But I hope you have had Jesus with you, William, giving you ‘songs in the night.’”

The old man was silent for a few moments; then his eyes moistened as he replied. “I’m wonderfu’ dark—wonderfu’ dark. I hardly ever was at this o’t.” “There’s nothing strange in that, William,” I said, “for your disease is depressing, and the want of sleep is depressing. You must, in quiet, simple trust, lay down your head on Christ, and rest on Him in perfect peace.” “I wish that I could, but I canna—I can see naething—I can feel naething—my heart’s hard, and dark, and dead. O, I never was at this o’t.” “How happy is it for us, William, that though we change Jesus never changes. He is always holy, always gracious, always sympathising. And though you cannot help saying just now, ‘I am poor and needy,’ you must go on, and add ‘yet the Lord thinketh on me.’ The Lord is thinking on you, William. Is not that a most comforting thought?” “I dinna ken,” said the old man, “I’m unco sair put about. Last night I dovered a wee and fell into a frightfu’ dream. I thought I was in hell. O, what if I should turn out to be deceiving mysel’ after a’.” And the old man’s voice, which had been growing husky, fairly broke down. “But,” I said, “that was only a dream. Never mind your dreams. God’s word is no dream, nor Christ’s blood, nor Christ’s love. Rest your trust on Him, and remember that it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for the least jot or tittle of His word to fail.” “O, yes; God’s words are true; I hae nae dout about them; its mysel’ that I’m no sure about. I’m sair fear’t that I hae been deceiving mysel’ a’ along. Ye

dinna ken what a desperate battle I hae had wi' a bad, bad unbelieving heart. I aye dreaded, mair or less, that it might come to this; but I ne'er was clean forsaken till noo. To hear Him say, 'Depart from me, ye cursed;' I canna bear to think on't"—and the old man covered his face and sobbed aloud. "But, William," I said, you must not indulge these desponding thoughts. They dishonour the Lord Jesus, and they torment yourself. The Lord, you know, is the very same that He ever was; you must trust Him, and rest on Him." The old man, however, had a "but" to this, and to every other comforting word. The words of Scripture, which are so unspeakably precious to a soul that has appropriated them by faith, were not, he thought, for him. It was manifest, however, that though he continued to defend his position of distrust and self-torment, the simple and powerful words of God were really reaching his heart.

For several reasons this case was a peculiarly distressing one. When all efforts to console him were nearly exhausted a thought occurred to me.

"William," I said, "I have had a letter from ———; she desires to be remembered to you." "Very kind of her; how is she?" he asked. "She has been very sorely tried——, has most cruelly deserted her, after doing all to win her confidence, and leading her to abandon every other earthly hope, has broken his troth with her at the last." "Shame, shame," cried the old man, "it's most awfu." I wonder God bears in patience wi' a world like this." "Yes, it is most wicked. We are fit for anything when left to ourselves. How unsafe it is for us to allow our hearts to rest anywhere but in Jesus. *He* never will deceive a soul that trusts Him in this fashion," I replied. "Never," said the old man, firmly. "His name is faithful and true." "I am glad to hear you say so, William, for I feared you might have been thinking otherwise." "Me, think itherwise o' the Lord Jesus! Na, na; what puts that in your head?" "Simply this," I said—"It seems to me that all your trouble this morning comes from the fear that the holy Lord Jesus, so full of grace and truth, will deal with you in a similar way that that man ——, did with poor ——." "Never, never," cried the old man, with energy; "it's no Him I'm misdooting, it is mysel'. I'm quite sure He'll be true; but its my ain deceitfu' sel' I'm feared for." "I am not quite clear about that, William; I am afraid that you *do* misdoubt Him, and that

your trouble this morning arises very much from a fear that sadly reflects on the truthfulness of the Lord Jesus." I dinna understan' ye ava," said the old man, deeply interested. "Explain your meaning to me, and mak' it as plain as ye can, for I'm unco dull o' the uptak." "Well, then, William," I said, "Has not the Lord Jesus been seeking, for years, to engage your heart with Him? Has he not, in His holy word, been setting Himself out before you, in every attractive way that was fitted to win the heart of a poor sinful soul that needed such a Saviour? Has He not again and again, spoken words which were enough to make your heart leap, and assure you that he desired to have you His for ever? Has He not taken away, one by one, all your earthly ties—your wife, and children—till now you have nothing left you but Himself? In short, has He, so to speak, left any stone unturned to gain your whole heart? Would you not then be everlastingly heart-broken to lose Him now? Are you afraid that He will desert you now at this moment of your greatest need? He knew all your unworthiness before He offered Himself for you, and to you, in the perfect knowledge too, that you were infinitely unworthy. Ah, William, never think that the Lord Jesus is such an one that, after having thus acted, He will at last say to you 'Depart from me, ye cursed.' Never think, that, after you have been led to rest on Him, and His faithfulness and truth, He will deceive you. Can you dare to think that after all this He will now, in your helpless extremity, turn away and coldly leave you to everlasting heartbreak. Never, never! And I protest here, William, against your presuming to suspect so unworthily the perfect faithfulness of the Blessed One, who is Himself love and truth."

The old man made no reply for some time. The thought had fairly got hold of his mind, but it took him a little while to look at it, till he felt its power. When he did so he suddenly lifted himself up, and resting on his elbow, the beaming look in his face showing out the gladness of his soul, as he said, with energy, "Na, na; He'll do naething o' the kind—and it's a shocking thing for me ever to even the like o't till Him. Yes; I can trust Him; and though I be what I am—the very chief o' sinners—He is aye what He is, the Faithfu' and the True! See ye, I widna' hae wanted that bit wordie e'noo for all that's in the hoose. I'll jist lie still in His holy hauns, and rest on Him."

Dear reader, a sorely-tried heart like his can find no true

rest save in "Jesus only." Frames and feelings won't do. The good opinions of others as to our state won't do. The remembrance of past experience won't do. Nothing will calm a restless heart, or give quiet to a troubled spirit but Jesus Himself. The heart may get a false peace for the moment apart from Christ, but a true heart, sorely tried, is like the dove which found no rest till it rested in the Ark with Noah. Therefore, in seeking to have the heart at rest it is idle to turn for it anywhere but to Jesus. Jesus, in His glorious person. Jesus, in His finished work. Jesus, in His faithfulness to Himself and to His word. In the case of this troubled old man, it was rather the *faithfulness* of Jesus than His *graciousness* that was overlooked. How many souls are thus tried. It seems to the burdened heart to be true humility that so looks upon its own exceeding sinfulness, as to feel that it is almost beyond the widest stretch of mercy. Humility! It is but unbelief! But if the soul which is thus tried would but look at the divine truth of Him who has spoken, then the heart would rest.

Look well then, O tried one, to your false humility, if it keeps you from rejoicing in the perfect love of God. True, heaven-born grace it is that thinks little of self and much of Christ. His mercy is not more engaged in pardoning the believing one than are His faithfulness and His truth.

THE VAILING AND THE UNVAILING.

"All these things happened unto them for ensamples (types), and they are written for our admonition." 1 Cor. x. 11.

It must have been a marvellous sight "the congregation of the Lord," led out into the wilderness—an event that occurred once in the world's great history, but never to be repeated!

Look at them as they are come out to their God, without a change of raiment, without bread, and without water; and see them as they leave their tents to gather the manna from heaven morning by morning. See, again, that "pillar of cloud by day," and that "pillar of fire by night," which accompanied them in all their journeyings, and directed them in the path they were to take.

Wonderful as this congregated mass of people is in their dependance upon Jehovah their God for everything, more wonderful still will they appear as we behold them encamped

around "the tabernacle of witness," the token of covenanted blessings to be enjoyed in "a land flowing with milk and honey." Look again, the entire camp is in a stir; all is in motion; tents are being struck; the tabernacle itself, with its splendid hangings, and magnificent veils, and pillars, and boards, is being taken down. Hark! the silver trumpets are sounding, to summon the princes and the priests to their respective places, and appointed services.

Who shall dare to touch those sacred things of the tabernacle, whether of the holy place, or the most holy? All this is under the direction of Moses, "by the word of the Lord," and Aaron and his sons step forward to take down "the covering vail," and cover "the ark of testimony," and put thereon the covering of badger's skins, and spread over it a cloth wholly of blue, and put in the staves thereof; likewise "the table of shew bread," with its cloth of blue; the dishes, and spoons; the bowls and covers, and "the continual bread," overspread with the cloth of scarlet, and the covering of badger's skins, with the staves. These, and "the candlesticks of the light," and two lamps, &c., within a covering of badger's skins, are put upon a bar, and now comes "the golden altar," with its cloth of blue, and the instruments of ministry. (Num. iv.)

All is thus taken down by the hands of Aaron and his sons, and has passed under their priestly inspection. But who are to be the bearers of these holy vessels of most pure gold? "The sons of Kohath" are summoned, and take their places under the appointment of the God of Israel, as the bearers of those costly and precious deposits—but with this injunction, they shall not touch any holy thing, "lest they die."

"The Gershonites" are now commanded to their work, and what is it? They shall bear the curtains of the tabernacle, the coverings, the hangings, and their cords, under the hand of Ithamar, the son of Aaron the high priest.

"The Merarites" are then bidden to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and this is the charge of their burden. The boards and the bars, the pillars, and their sockets, with the pins and their cords, under the hands of Ithamar.

Do any enquire what these three classifications of the parts of the tabernacle meant? What think you they were to the mind and heart of Moses? or what were they to the eyes and hands of Aaron? or what upon the shoulders of those who bore them along? Imperfectly as they were taught by types

(nevertheless types which have almost a tongue) many a one looked by their means through them, and saw "Jesus," just as the burnt-offering, and meat-offering, and sin-offering, had presented Him to their faith in the value of his sacrifice and death.

In later times, and by the scriptures of the New Testament, &c., we may safely ask what the four evangelists were bearing along before our eyes in the Gospels? Is not John, for example, occupied with the person of the Lord in *His divine nature*, as he traces "the word from the beginning"—the Word which was with God, and was God. What is John's office by pen and ink, but the Kohathites work by the staves and the shoulders? Are not, further, the two evangelists, Luke and Matthew, busied with the *human genealogies* of the same person, as born of a woman. And what is this kind of work? Surely they are but doing in their way what the Merarites were charged with, when they bore along the pillars, and sockets, and boards of the tabernacle. So, again, as regards the Gershonites, to whom were committed the curtains and coverings, what is the view of the person of the Lord with which Mark is engaged? Let his opening chapter answer, as it shows us—"The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ," or the perfect character of the Sent One.

True, a practised eye, or a loving heart, may find the blue and the scarlet, and the badger's skin covering of the ark, in its great anti-type in each of these penmen whom the Holy Ghost selected for the especial work of pourtraying, in the moral character of Christ's life and ways, what eclipsed the typical curtains. How could it be otherwise, when each had the same Person before his eyes and heart?—though each, as we have seen, had his own particular work assigned him. Lessons of immense practical value must necessarily attach to the fact that where Christ is known, and held in the soul in the completeness of His person, and offices, and work, there will be confidence before God, and joy and peace in believing. On the other hand, where the Person of the Lord is divided, the most disastrous consequences have followed to the individual, and to the Church of God. We may safely say, that almost every heresy has connected itself, or else sprung from the separation of the Kohathite trust, from the Merarite boards and sockets; or, in plain language, the separation of the natures of Christ, divine, or human, from the one glorious person.

What is Unitarianism, but an acknowledgment of the boards, the pillars, the bars, and the sockets ; or the humanity of the Lord, to the denial of the golden vessels of the Kohathites, which betoken His Deity? In a certain way a Unitarian will allow the Gershonites to speak of the curtains, the hangings, and the coverings, which denote the moral perfectness and beauty of the characters of Christ, but it will be a very poor scarlet, and a very pale blue, and a counterfeit badger's skin, apart from His divine nature.

Turning from these considerations for a while let us look again at this remarkable congregation on their march. They are obediently and safely following the pillar of fire, or the pillar of cloud, by night or by day, according to the appointment of the God of Israel. But see this moving multitude halts ! What has happened to stop their progress? What unforeseen enemy has crossed their path? None ; for who dares to stop the courses of the Omnipotence that conducts them to their resting place? No opposing hosts are seen, not an arm of flesh is in question, but the pillar of cloud stands still. Why is this? It only does its bidding; the mind of the Lord is that the congregation shall halt, and pitch their tents. The Kohathites, the Gershonites, and the Merarites, drop their costly burdens, and rest them on the ground. All is now to be put in place, and put together, by the skill of an Eleazar and an Ithamar, in their varied offices under the oversight of an Aaron and a Moses. The sockets are in the ground, and the pillars are reared up—the boards are in their places—the pins and the hangings, the curtains and their taches, are all in their order—with the vail, the golden altar, the table, and the candlestick, and the instruments of the sanctuary. And now see, over the whole is thrown the coverings of blue, and of scarlet, and upon these the outward covering of the badger's skin. All beautiful within is this tabernacle, as we well know, but why this external and unsightly badger's skin? Can this be a representation of the Lord Jesus—and how? Of whom did the prophet speak when he said—"He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him." And, again—"His visage was so marred, more than any man; and His form more than the sons of men." (Isaiah lii., liii.)

How different when faith penetrates this external, but suited covering of the badger's skin, and takes its title to fold

it back, and sees the heavenly blue; and, further still, the royal majesty which the glorious scarlet displays! What joy, as faith guided by the Spirit, looks deeper, saying—"We have an altar"—as it beholds all that brass, and silver, and pure gold, can tell forth of the inward and hidden value of Him who is "the chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely." What could He present to the world, as it is, but Himself in veiled humanity—this badger's skin? Have we eyes and hearts that can understand and appreciate "Jesus" in this outer covering—the glory of His humiliation? Who does not trace in the descending steps of the Son of God, as described in Phil. ii., the same moral glories as were aforetime pictured forth by these Levites and their respective services of the tabernacle? "Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death: even the death of the cross." What are these steps of Him who descended, but from the scarlet to the blue, and from the blue to the badger's skin? We may further add, that what in this day marked His own person gave its character to His service, as He says to His disciples—"I came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." And, again, "I am among you as he that serveth."

Do not these precious truths find a still wider application, if we think of the "Church of the living God" as the "pillar and ground of the truth?" What was this wondrous Church, the body of Christ, entrusted with; and what did she, in Pentecostal days, bear along on her journey to meet the Lord? In reply to these questions, we may say she was seen as safely guarding the precious doctrines and revelations of the glorified Lord, her Head, as ever were these Kohathites, Gershonites, and Merarites, when the same Christ was brought up to them in other days. Look at the multitudes of them that believed, as represented to us in the Acts—"They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."

Take another view of the Church as she journeyed onward to the glory, and see how she guarded her banner with its inscriptions, and how confidently she unfolded the record of her treasures—"Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, re-

ceived up into glory." What were these triumphant records to the heart of the Bride of the Lamb; what but the scarlet, the blue, and the badger's skin? Dare we, in the presence of such deposits, ask how this church is acquitting herself, and whether she is faithful to the trust which the love of her Lord committed to her? Is she now as jealously holding all the truth of the person of Christ, and does she still sedulously guard every doctrine touching the Deity, and humanity of "the word made flesh?" Will she endure it, that a curtain, or a hanging, or even a cord shall be wanting, of the Gershonite charge? Or that a single socket for the pillars and boards shall be missing of the Merarite trust? Much less the tongs for the golden altar, or the snuffers for the pure candlestick mislaid, of her Kohathite treasure! What enquiries are these, and alas, what will she say?

But, further, as to the character of her own service, does she retain the unostentatious form of her Lord's ministry; and is the first thing that meets the eye of an unbelieving world "the badger skin covering?" Does she treasure in her inmost soul the instructions of Jesus—"The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship, and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors—but ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you let him be as the younger, and he that is chief, as he that doth serve." Alas! alas! what shall be said? Shall we turn to the Apocalypse for a reply to this query? "So He carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness, and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns; and the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand; and upon her forehead was a name written Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." In times past was the Kohathite service under the hand and eye of Eleazar, as the Gershonite and Merarite services were under the oversight of Ithamar. So in these church times, at the very beginning of this dreadful apostasy, as John will say—"Even now are there many anti-christs," and "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." So also Paul will write to Timothy—"I besought thee to abide still in Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach *no other doctrine.*" Eleazar, Ithamar, and their responsible charges are ended

long ago, and since then Paul, and John, and Peter, with other apostles, have acquitted themselves as "good stewards of the mysteries of God."

See how Paul tried with his loved Corinthians to bring them back to conformity with Christ and himself, as he says—"We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise." How he tries to hide the scarlet, as he adds, "*now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us.*" Though owning their right to the scarlet he will tell them—"I would to God ye did *reign*, that we also might reign with you." Look, again, how he desires they should love the glory of the *humbled Christ*; and how he tries to spread the badger's skin covering over all, as suited to the uncongenial clime and undiscerning eyes of the world, from which they were separated—"For I think that God hath *set forth* us, the apostles, last, as it were appointed to *death*, for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men; being defamed we entreat, we are made as the filth of the world, and are the off-scouring of all things unto this day. I write not these things to *shame you*, but as my beloved sons I warn you."

The congregation of Israel dropped, and lost almost all their Kohathite, Gershonite, and Merarite charges whilst on their way to Solomon's glory; and the Church, as a responsible body on the earth, has done what is worse on its way to the heavenly glory. Satan has succeeded in corrupting the truth, and the precious revelations which were committed to her. The Son of Man has walked in "the midst of the seven golden candlesticks," and has said to one of them—"I have against thee because thou hast left thy first love," and to another, "be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die." Do these seven churches prophetically mark the declensions of this corporate witness, and if so what is the last of them but a Laodicea! The word has gone forth, "so, then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

What, then, is left to us, and what is the resource of my faithful soul? "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," is the encouraging word to the individual conscience. "Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me," has been a delivering word to many a troubled heart, awakened up to the discovery and acknowledgment of the ruin of all that was once manifested as the Church.

A word of encouragement will suitably close these meditations—"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne; even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on His throne." Oh! for exercised hearts, that can step outside the constructions of men in this day, and accept the suited remedy, and unfailing resource in the Lord Himself—"where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."—B.

"FOR JOY THEREOF."

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." Matt. xiii. 44.

SUCH is one of the three precious parables addressed to the disciples only, after the multitude had been dismissed—Jesus had retired with them into the house. The Lord had just spoken to the people four other parables, the design of which was evidently to represent, more or less, the outward and visible marks of the kingdom with its subjects. True, the sowing of seed introduces, as it were, a thing of mystery. For a while the seed is entirely hidden from view, and the ground to outward appearance, is much the same as before it was sown, but then the parable does not end with the sowing; the seed springs up or otherwise, and the character of the ground is determined by that which is visible to all. In the following parable also we may observe the sowing the bad seed was in the dark; the servants and their master slept, and were alike unaware of what had been done till the tares springing up made the truth fully manifest. The "greatest among herbs," hidden in "the least of all seeds," and the leaven covered over with the meal, are also mysteries, but the rapid growth of the one, and the silent but certain spread of the other produce results which are seen and known to every observer. These all are things which could, in some measure, be comprehended by the multitude, but, "in the house," surrounded by His own disciples, our Lord communicates secrets of a different nature. He tells them, though here in parables, of His own intense, personal interest in them, His value for them, and the cost at which He would buy them for Himself. This He unfolds to them in the parable above referred to, and much sweetness does it contain for the soul that loves to meditate upon the rich grace of our ever blessed

Lord Jesus. The "field" is the world, doubtless, as in the former parables, but what is the "treasure"? Nothing that man counts treasure was bestowed upon the lowly Jesus during the day of His sojourn in this selfish world. It gave Him nothing it valued for itself; no earthly honours were heaped upon Him though so worthy of all homage, and only a despised handful of heaven-born, heaven-taught souls, sought His company, save from selfish motives. "He was despised and rejected of men," and in such a world, what treasure could He find? Earthly fame and riches He did not seek, or covet; earth's great ones did not know Him, nor did He court their smiles, content in His marvellous humiliation to be unrecognised by them. The kingdoms of this world and the glory of them are all His by inheritance, but *they* are not His heart's treasure, and for the time He waived His title to them, tacitly admitting in the hour of His temptation, that at present it was all delivered unto Satan, and to whom *he* would he would give it. No; it was not the world, nor anything it could afford Him, upon which His heart was set, but He "loved the *Church*, and gave Himself for *it*;" yea "He loved me, and gave Himself for me," and O, wondrous truth, it is the Church which is His treasure! A hidden thing, indeed, in the world; unknown to it, but how precious to His heart! For the *joy* thereof He went and sold *all* He had. He quite emptied Himself that He might buy the treasure!

Thine is a love eternal,
 That found in us its pleasure;
 That brought Thee low, to bear our woe,
 And make us Thine own treasure.

From another precious scripture we learn that in His grace He became poor for *our* sakes, that *we*, through His poverty might be rich, but here a still deeper thing is made known to our hearts, even that Jesus, the appointed heir of all things, would part with all He had, in order, as it were, to enrich *Himself* with what He deemed a treasure! What *marvellous* love! how suited to humble us before Him, beloved Christian reader, as we think of our own utter worthlessness. And it was for the *joy* thereof. It was true we had deep, deep necessities, and Jesus would meet these necessities. The majesty of God had been offended, and His Son would, in the very scene of the rebellion, redeem and establish the honour of His throne. The seed of the serpent, too, must be bruised—that arch-enemy of God and man—and the stronger

than he would come, and having bound him, would spoil his goods; but none of these things is presented to us here as that which moved the blessed Lord Jesus so to lay aside all His wealth that He might buy the field. No, but the delight of His own heart, in the prospect of having for *His* treasure, by right of purchase, the church so loved by Him. Oh, my beloved fellow-believer, if our hearts are possessed of *any* sensibility, will they not be moved to their inmost depths in answer to such incomprehensible love as this? He sold "all that He had" to redeem us for Himself. Should *anything* be counted too costly to lay at His feet? What thing that we really valued have we given up for Him? What pleasure that we knew He could not fully sympathise with, have we foregone for His sake? Oh, let us take ourselves to task in this way, seeking His grace to esteem Himself our choicest treasure, and count all else but loss. And, further, may all we do for Him be done "for the *joy* thereof," not simply as a matter of duty, and still less from a spirit of fear, but from very love to Himself as the blessed object of our hearts' delight, and from overflowing joy in the prospect of soon being *at home* with Him, enjoying the reality of what is now "that blessed hope," the "joy set before us." Our Lord Jesus has made us His own, and reckons us His treasure, and where His treasure is, there are His interests also. If *He is our* treasure, our hearts are with Him where He is, and in nowise set on the world that has disowned Him. May it be manifest to all who observe us that our treasure, as our conversation, is indeed in heaven. "Christ sitteth on the right hand of God; set your minds on things above."

W. T.

THOUGHTS ON THE SIMILITUDES.

"Another parable spake He unto them; the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." Matt. xiii. 33.

As the parable of the tree gives us the power and authority of those who rule in the kingdom, so this sets forth the principle or doctrine which they teach, and which pervades the whole mass. And as leaven would affect a quantity of meal subjected to its influence, so also would this doctrine be received by all within the sphere of the kingdom.

Now, it is not absolutely necessary that the professed principles even of bad men should be evil. Evil principles

invariably produce bad conduct, but the converse has its exceptions. Therefore it would not be logically correct to infer that because evil abounds within the kingdom the grand leading principle is also evil. Proof of this also meets us constantly, we find very bad men holding sound doctrine—nay, even Christians sometimes do that which is opposed to their faith and their conscience. The question therefore—“What does leaven here signify?” is an important one. Many expositions of it have been given, which are not borne out by the word of God. For indisputably it is in *the Word* alone that we shall find the true idea of the symbol.

In general these so-called explanations are the mere working out of a theory already embraced, and which mainly has its foundation in the notion that the world is to be converted by preaching the gospel of the grace of God, and so the millennium brought in. This, as we know, is not founded on the word of God. Indeed the very reverse is foretold. The mystery of iniquity—Satan’s imitation of God’s mystery of godliness—which was working in the days of the apostle, is to increase until it culminates in the full revelation of the Man of Sin, that WICKED “whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.” 2 Thess. ii. 8.

The belief, once more prevalent than it is now, that the world is to be converted by the gospel is contrary even to the parables already looked at. For the whole field becomes in appearance a *tare* field; the tree gives shelter to and harbours the emissaries of Satan. Will any one contend that the tares are true believers, and that when the whole field abounds in them we shall see the blessed results of faith in the Lord Jesus? Are they not the work of “an enemy”? Is not their end to be bound in bundles and burnt? Can the birds of the air, lodging in the branches, represent the incoming of the nations, of souls submitting to the gospel, as is sometimes said, when this same chapter tells us that they are Satan’s agencies? Against all such notions of the world’s conversion no part of God’s book is more opposed than the portion now occupying us. The angels come to purge the kingdom, and to cast them that do iniquity into a furnace of fire; the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. This is the end of the present time, and assuredly the wicked in hell, and the righteous in heaven do not constitute a millennium for the earth.

Now it would be manifestly contrary to sound interpretation if we drew from one parable out of three, a picture the very reverse of the two others; the three parables being given in one discourse and spoken of the same system. And there is one idea marking every picture which the Lord has given of the external condition of the kingdom and for which we are prepared in the first and introductory parable; for out of four casts of good seed, only one brings forth good fruit. We are then to expect the all but universal spread of evil, and, if we may so say, the failure of the crop. This is evident from the tare-field. The husbandman sowed his field with wheat—good seed—but it becomes a tare field. The tree, instead of setting forth the power of the King, is become a habitation for Satan's agents—not a word to intimate that any one branch shelters anything good. Clearly the parable of the leaven must show the same thing, else we should have the incongruity of these parables giving opposite and clashing impressions of the external appearance of the kingdom during the same time. But taking leaven as the symbol of some evil thing pervading the whole mass, we have the same truth taught, that evil of some kind would not only affect the kingdom, but would also subvert the principles originally intended to govern it.

In the Mosaic economy frequent mention is made of leaven. What position then has it in the Law? Generally it is forbidden: "Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven;" "No meat offering which ye shall bring unto the Lord shall be made with leaven." In some cases leaven was allowed (Lev. vii. 11-12, and xxiii. 15-17). But the reason is manifest. In all that which has special and sole reference to the Lord Jesus, no leaven was allowed, while in that which set forth the Church as to its condition or its functions here below, leaven must be present if it would be a true symbol. Perfectness could only be found in Christ. But the absence of it in that which prefigures Him, and the presence of it in that which is the type of our worship and service, prove it to be what pertains to us as men, and therefore "flesh."

Now, although "flesh" in the old dispensation was not authoritatively declared to be evil, it is so declared in the New Testament; and if that which is evil, and that alone characterises anything, we say with truth the whole thing is evil. The New Testament is precise on its character of leaven. In this parable it is rather the process of leavening

that is presented. Other Scriptures, however, give the real meaning of leaven: "Take heed, and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" (Matt. xvi. 6). It is the doctrine of these sects. We read also of the leaven of Herod—the maxims of the world, which prefer present ease and pleasure to God's service. (Mark viii. 15.) When the Church is looked at as being in Christ, it is called unleavened (1 Cor. v. 6-8); but looked at as being here encumbered with the flesh, the saints are directed to purge out the old leaven. Nowhere else is leaven used as a type of anything good, but always denotes evil. Therefore evil must be understood here; and so, not only is the same symbolical meaning attached to leaven throughout Scripture, but the homogeneity of the three parables spoken to the multitude is preserved.

(To be continued, D. V.)

FRAGMENTS.

No one can make an expression of what Christ is, even in language, beyond the impression on his own soul. Nay more, he will never be able to make an expression up to his impression. So that the impression will ever keep ahead of the expression. He might use all the language in the dictionary, and yet he could not by language do more than enforce and depict an idea.

Words do not create ideas—they only clothe and express ideas: for many exaggerate an idea, as children and the empty do. But the idea (as it really is) is after all only communicated language. Like yeast, it may give size to the idea, but it has not increased the idea, no more than the yeast has increased the flour. It is a good thing to make the idea digestible, and suited to ordinary minds, I do not object to this; but I feel that no amount of effort or language can magnify the idea, or change it into a deeper one.

Christians have got on the ground of a judgment to come, and not on the ground of a redemption. Consequently they are not judging of right and wrong, or good and evil, according to a relationship they are in by grace; but according to a possible state they may come into, by a coming judgment.

One of the great secrets of understanding Scripture is, taking out of it what God puts into it; and not to be thinking what it means.

JOB, PSALMS, PROVERBS, CANTICLES.

The Book of *Job* shows the godly man, without law, in nature, learning what he is in that nature, though a model man in amiability, when he comes near God.

The Book of *Psalms*.—Is the godly man under law, and with all the sense of how grievous transgression is, seeking to rise up from his low estate into nearness with God.

The Book of *Proverbs*.—It is the godly man learning wisdom.

The *Canticles*.—It is the heart searching after that rest which can only satisfy true love.

You have the conscience seeking its rest in the Psalms ; and the heart in Canticles. Hence, neither of these two books properly applies to us, as Christians. For, as such, our conscience is *fully* at rest, and we are in the relationship of children in the Father's house ; and our heart is at rest as already united to Christ by the Spirit, bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh. "We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones."—(Eph. v.)

Now, the earthly *Queen*, whose history is presented to us in Canticles, has not yet reached her rest. She comes *from earth*, and necessarily cannot be until there is a *King*, actually. "The Bride, the *Lamb's wife*," comes *from God* ; she is never a Queen, and Christ is not the King in His relationship to her—He is, to the earthly Queen. The Church is the Eve, if you will, of the second Adam, for the Paradise of God.

SCRIPTURE QUERIES AND ANSWERS.

Luke xvi.

Q.—What is the teaching of the Parable of the Unjust Steward ? Why is the Spirit of the world held up for us to follow ?

A.—The principles which governed the Steward, leading him to sacrifice present for future advantages, are commended. He might have kept his master's money ; but instead of this he laid it out in view of the future.—(See 1 Tim vi. 17-19.)

The lesson taught us in the parable is, *The use of riches now that the dispensation is changed*. It is not now one in which earthly blessing and prosperity—the increase of basket and store—is a sign of blessing from the Lord, as once it was to the Jew. The dispensation is that of the grace of

God seeking the lost. Chap. xv. gives us its picture. It shows us that we may turn riches into a means of fulfilling love. The spirit of grace filling our hearts, (ourselves being the objects of grace) exercises itself in temporalities towards those who need.

In chap. xv. we find one who had departed in self-will from God, with the portion of goods which had fallen to him, (the blessings which man received in creation) and had wasted his substance with riotous living. In chap. xvi. man is a steward who had proved himself unfaithful in his stewardship, wasting his master's goods. Fallen man has done both; he has revolted from God, and as a steward, has proved an unfaithful one. God, in his grace, does not canvass our title to the goods we have in our hands, which we hold but on *sufferance*, not certainly as having a *title* to their possession. He does not remove the goods; but speaks of them as "another man's;" and we should use them in view of the future, so that, by and by, we may find we have made a satisfactory use of them, and be enabled to give a satisfactory account of the use we have made of them for Him, who had left them in our hand. If we are faithful in the least, we are faithful in much; and according to the faithful use of that which is in reality "another man's," we get the sense of realization, and the joy of possessing that which is truly "our own;" *i.e.*, heavenly things—the "true riches." We get the consciousness too of having "done wisely" in our use of the master's goods, while we had them in our power.

Verses 4 and 8 may be read thus, "I know what I will do, that when I have been removed from the stewardship I may be received into their houses;" "And I say unto you: make to yourselves friends with the Mammon of Unrighteousness, that when ye fail ye may be received into everlasting dwellings."

PRAYER TO THE HOLY GHOST.

Q. Is prayer to the Holy Ghost a Scriptural thought?

A. The Holy Ghost is God—a Divine person. When *God*, as such, without reference to the persons of the Godhead, is addressed in prayer, it includes the Spirit, with the Father, and the Son. In the New Testament prayer is spoken of, not as "*to*," but "*in*" the Holy Ghost. (See such passages as Eph. vi. 18, Jude 20, Rom. viii. 26-27.)

After redemption was accomplished, and the Lord Jesus in

heaven—a Man in the glory of God, the Holy Ghost was sent down from Heaven, (Acts ii.) The Holy Ghost dwells in the body of the believer individually (1 Cor. vi. 19, &c.), and baptizes all believers collectively, into “one body” here on earth (1 Cor. xii. 12-27), uniting them to Christ, the Head, in heaven. He is spoken of in Eph. ii. 18, as the power of our access to the Father, through Jesus, “For through him (Jesus) we both (believers from Jew and Gentile) have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” As Christians we “live in the Spirit” (Gal. v.), and “walk in the Spirit.” Hence, prayer should be in the Spirit also.

It is not that the Holy Ghost is not worthy of all worship and prayer—He is God. But since redemption has been accomplished, God has been pleased to take a place with us, and in us, through His Spirit, which precludes the thought of the Holy Ghost being made by us the *object* of our prayers. Hence we find the Apostles addressing, under His inspiration, the saints and assemblies of God; saluting them from the Father and the Son—the Spirit Himself, being the one who, dwelling and acting in the Church, sends the salutation. This is the same in principle. It is, therefore, in Christianity, unintelligent to do so. If done in ignorance, it is one thing, but to do so when we have learned the Lord’s mind, and this grand central truth of Christianity, is quite another.

BLESSINGS OF NAPHTALI.

Gen. xlix. 21; Deut. xxxiii. 23; Gal. v. 1.

From bonds which sin and Satan rove,

For evermore by Christ set free;

I stand, rejoicing now to prove

The strength of perfect liberty.

And fast I stand because I have

The power that raised Him from the grave.

’Tis not that I was anything,

Save tree marked out to fall by axe;

’Tis not that I am anything,

Save bruised reed or smoking flax:

It is that He who marked to fall,

Has now become my All in All!

Would’st know how this great change was wrought?

I’m not ashamed to tell thee now;

And when to perfect glory brought,

I’ll wear the motto on my brow.

To Him who died and lives again

Be honor, power, and praise—Amen!

Others abroad may daily roam ;
 Who ? Who will show them any good ?
 But I have found my spirit's home
 'Neath the soft feathers of my God ;
 And there for ever I'll abide,
 With His blest favour satisfied.

It is enough to fill the heart
 To know the blessing of His love ;
 Ah ! restless one, how slow thou art
 The peace of God thyself to prove ;
 'Tis God in Christ ! Art thou so dull ?
 And both in thee ! Art thou not full ?

And some there are of kindred mind.
 First round His empty tomb we met !
 There, He in golden chains did bind
 Our fickle hearts, and keeps them yet ;
 And will, till midst adoring crowds,
 We rise to meet Him in the clouds.

And then "For ever with the Lord"
 We'll sing in perfect liberty ;
 We'll make our boast with one accord,
 How free are those whom Christ makes free ;
 The links which He has rent in twain
 Shall never, never knit again.

Know then, thou fair and glittering earth,
 I do not wait to be in heaven
 To be assured thou'rt nothing worth,
 Thy chains are gone, thy bonds are riven ;
 The land which now by grace is mine,
 Needs not that sun or moon of thine !

'Tis scarcely worth a freedman's while
 To mark the thorns along the way ;
 He often views them with a smile,
 So bright the beams of endless day ;
 And casts away each weight and fear
 As closer still the morn draws near !

Blest Jesus ! Thou, in grace hast shared
 Each thorn that stings this heart of mine ;
 Though none could ever be compared
 To those which pressed Thy brow divine :
 Now in the glory Thou'rt revealed
 To those by Thy bless'd Spirit sealed.

For this Thy love, Thou Holy One
 We bless Thee, and shall ever bless ;
 And, by the deeds which Thou hast done,
 Encouraged, Lord, we onward press.
 The eye that guides along the road
 Beckons to glory and to God !

WORDS OF TRUTH.

“WHO IS THIS?”

(Matt. xxi. 10.)

IT is Jesus entering Jerusalem shortly before His crucifixion. It is the Day-spring from on high; the very Sunrising of heaven; the glorious Son of the Father who has visited us in wondrous grace, garbed in the servant's form, meek and lowly. One whose presence tells out the mighty love of God to this sin-polluted world! He is *unknown* by the people, so that the question has to be asked, “Who is this?” God was unmistakably displayed in His every action down here. He revealed the Father; and made God known as He had never been known before. Up to this time man's little knowledge of God had been that He was a great and awful being, only to be approached at a distance; dwelling in clouds and thick darkness; and to be worshipped “afar off.” One who, at the same time, was demanding from man a righteousness which he never could procure.

Thus the popular thoughts of God *then*, were much the same as they are *now*; amongst those who know not Jesus. People now, as then, look upon God as a hard and angry Judge; reaping where He had not sown, and gathering where He had not strawed. All this time little knowing the grace that is in God's heart toward them; how that He commends His love to sinners, bad people, even the rebellious. He is not now *willing* the death of the sinner, but desiring his salvation; wanting to have such saved from hell, to be happy with Himself for ever; and He has for this object given up His own Son to die. “*God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life*” (John iii. 16).

Do you believe this astounding fact, that *the Son of God* has visited this world? He came uninvited. Nobody prayed God to send Him down from heaven. It was His own

thought—the spontaneous acting of His heart of love towards sinners—God chose to send Jesus. He passed as a stranger in this ungenial world of hatred, finding not so much as where to lay His head. At His birth the manger was the only place to be had for the holy child Jesus. Such was His reception,—there was no place for Him in the Inn of this world; it was already crowded with the sanctimonious Pharisee, the fashionable Herodian, and the infidel Sadducee. The one had his long robes actually decorated with Scriptures of the Old Testament about Christ, and yet, blinded by his very religion, when Christ did present Himself, he would none of Him. With all his professed reverence for God, devotionism in praying at the corners of the streets, and ostentatious benevolence in giving alms with the sounding of a trumpet before him, yet when God's Son is born into this world, such is His reception from the religious people, they would rather have their religion than Jesus. And as for the fashionable world, *they* are as well satisfied with their gaities and pleasures, as the religionist is with his unreal worship; for the stranger babe, born in Bethlehem, to enter their inn, was to burst rudely in upon all their ways; as well as upon the grosser evils of the publicans and sinners. He was uninvited; a stranger in a strange land, an unbidden and unwelcome guest.

This was the manner in which He was received at His birth; and things only grew worse afterwards, for "they hated him without a cause." From a manger at the commencement, He went to the cross at his death, and the whole scene was wound up in a borrowed grave! This was the world's treatment of the Son of God! And that too at a time and by a people who professed to have a zeal for God and to worship Him. Are the people of the present day one bit altered? They know not God now, even as they did not then. If you knew God you would know Jesus, for He is the Son of God; and knowing that the Father sent Him is eternal life! Then there would be no need for the question "Who is this?"

But with all this *talk* about knowing God, what is the way to know Him? It is to believe on His Son Jesus Christ. He has revealed God. He came to this world with the express purpose of making God known. The reality of His having been in this world is an astonishing fact, and surely ought to make a serious man consider that if God were indeed against

him, or seeking his destruction, He never would have *sent* His Son to die for sinners. For though in every act of the Lord Jesus we see the same blessed truth that God is for us and not against us (as Satan is always deluding souls to believe), yet above all we learn it at the cross. *There* He who knew no sin, this blessed One from heaven, was "made sin," and "numbered with the transgressors" (Is. liii. 12); *there* He "bore the sins of many." He died "the just for the unjust," to bring us to God (1 Peter iii. 18), in order that all this blessing of salvation, eternal life, and forgiveness of sins might be ours—that *God might be manifested as "for us,"* He must be against sin when His own Son made Himself chargeable for all that we were, and all that we had done. He was therefore "bruised for our iniquities." "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him: He hath put Him to grief" (Isaiah liii. 5-10). Why was this? Because we deserved to bear the judgment of our sins—and He offered Himself and bore it, that God might be free to deliver us out of it. God now can righteously let His love flow out to all poor sinners; commending His love so fully to them that they may stand before Him perfectly righteous; or, as the Scriptures declare, "all who believe are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 39).

"Ye know that He (the Son of God) was manifested to take away our sins" (1 John iii. 5)—believing this you are saved! How then do we know that God has accepted His work, and that it has really satisfied Him? We know it, in that He hath raised Him from the dead, and exalted Him to His own right hand in heaven. So that not all the power of hell can alter or shake our salvation in Christ; it depends on nothing *in* oneself, or *of* ourselves, but simply on Him; and He who put us in it, keeps us in it to the end.

But howsoever full and free are these glad tidings of God's love to sinners, the time is fast drawing on when this One of whom the multitude once spake saying, "Who is this?" will be seen to have exchanged the meek and lowly form for that of the kingly and judicial; and then again it shall be said, "*Who is this?*" (Is. lxiii. 1.) His garments shall be dyed red with the blood of the slain, for He will tread in His anger the unbelievers, His rejecters, and trample them in His fury (Is. lxiii. 3). As to preach the "acceptable year of the Lord" is now His mission, so then will He say, "the day of vengeance is in Mine heart" (v. 4). "See then that ye refuse not Him that speaketh," but heed the warning

voice, for "now is the accepted time, behold *now* is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

Jesus said, "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 (judgment), but is passed from death unto life" (John v. 24). "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 9, 10). He was manifested that we might have both life and forgiveness of sins!—H. W. T.

A THREEFOLD CORD OF CONSOLATION.

"WE had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: who *delivered* us from so great a death, and *doth deliver*: in whom we trust that he *will yet deliver* us" (2 Cor. i. 9, 10).

The *past*, the *present*, and the *future* are here united with steadfast confidence by the apostle. It surely is a threefold cord of mercy, love, and faithfulness: "Who *delivered* . . . *doth deliver* . . . *will yet deliver!*"

These are precious words for those who with anxious hearts, it may be, are looking on to the future. A joyous strain of confidence and trust, bursting forth from the heart and pen of the apostle, by the Spirit of God. May we learn it as our own! May it be the song of our hearts as we look back and think of how the Lord carried us through the sorrows, and sufferings, the trials and temptations of the past; how, indeed, "He hath delivered" us: causing us to triumph in them all, and be more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

How prone is the heart, while passing through its daily duties, and converse with things around it, to be so engaged with the circumstance, or the trial, or the sorrow; as to forget or overlook the benefits received, and deliverances it had experienced by the way. It proves, however, that the experience of yesterday won't do for to-day. The "manna" of yesterday won't feed the soul to-day. It has so far become useless. Yet the food and the strength which supplied yesterday's need, should leave this lesson behind it—an increasing

confidence in the heart who gave it, and the hand who supplied. Many a time the heart can truly say "who am I, O Lord God, . . . that Thou hast brought *me* hitherto?"

Many and many an anxious fear had thrown a dark shadow across our path, has proved to be but an occasion for the display of the Lord's perfect love. A sickness which might have ended in the death of a loved one. Some commercial crash which might have carried ruin and desolation to our doors. The loved one was given back perhaps from the brink of, or perhaps we may even say, almost out of the grave. The sorrow has perhaps been permitted to some, and yet the heart would not now have lost its precious lessons; its fresh discoveries of the fulness of Christ: so that it has learned this lesson—"out of the eater came forth meat." These, dear reader, are the waymarks of the past—the living monuments of God's loving-kindness and pitying tender care! He led us by a "way we knew not"—alternate sunshine and shade—chastisement and mercy—but now as we glance backward and view it, we find it was all "the right way!" We can now perhaps recall how He counselled, guided, and upheld us. How in perplexity, He directed—in want, He supplied—in sorrow, supported us. How in many a trying hour His mercy upheld us, and from "seeming evil" He produced "positive good." In slippery paths His goodness upheld our footsteps—and with a strong and loving hand, lifted us out of the mire, and ordered our goings.

Can we not then echo with the apostle, He "delivered us." "Hitherto *hath* the Lord helped us," can we not then trust Him still? Can we not look up to Him with child-like confidence, and say "I will trust and not be afraid." For

"He who hath helped us hitherto,
Will help us all our journey through;
And give us daily cause to raise
New Ebenezers to His praise."

Here again the same thought comes in—"hath helped;" "who delivered;" "kept by the power of God through faith" from day to day, and hour to hour. Delivered from the thousand pitfalls and snares which encompass our daily path. Can we not then raise our song into a shout of praise; "In whom we trust (yea, we *know!*) that He will yet deliver us." His own precious words are—"Call upon Me in the day of trouble, and I *will deliver thee;*" not "remove the trial," but "*deliver thee.*" "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee;"

and His "hand is not shortened that it cannot save." He "delivered, . . . doth deliver, . . . in whom we trust He will yet deliver us."

Reader, do you know anything of this happy confidence in Christ, expressed by the apostle in these words? Are you allowing the supposed and anticipated evils of the future to come in amongst those of to-day? Do not forget His word, "the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Mat. vi. 34). Leave the morrow with Him who has said, "As thy day, so shall thy strength be." How often is His voice heard by the attentive ear; whispering from out the threatening cloud, "Be still and know that I am God;" and the heart is thus sustained through it all, by Him who is mindful of our every sorrow. He who orders all things, and in whose sight a sparrow does not fall unknown to the ground, is He who cares for us. He not only knows the care, but is active in His knowledge of it, and "careth for you." He will not leave you to travel through this wild wilderness alone, unsupported, uncheered. *Himself* will be with you. He says, "When thou passest through the waters, *I* will be *with thee*." The trial of faith may be very deep—so deep that death seems the only issue, in resisting unto blood. Like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who, with the burning, fiery furnace in view, swerved not in faithfulness to the Lord; answering the king in unswerving confidence, "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us, . . . and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king" (Dan. iii. 17). "But if not," they were willing to abide the consequences of their faith, and trust Him still. This is the faith to be desired in the saint of God: which can calmly say, "The God whom we serve is able to deliver us, . . . and he will deliver us." To say it when trials and sorrows are marshalling themselves around. But there is a step beyond; a higher summit for the pinnacle of faith to reach unto. These three saints of old reached it when they exclaimed, "but if not!" If He saw best, and was most glorified in their enduring unto death, they were satisfied! This is the standard, the plumb-line with which to fathom our hearts. It was the faithfulness unto death of Him who said, "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless (but if not!), not My will, but Thine be done" (Luke xxii. 42). He accepted the cup of wrath from the Father's hands: would accept it from none other.

Satan might press it upon His acceptance—He receives it from no other hand but the Father's!

Thrice blessed faith which enables us to raise our eyes calmly, and see the dark cloud of sorrow; the storm of affliction hanging overhead, and threatening destruction to all around, and say, "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us, . . . and He will deliver us. . . . *But if not!*" Still, "it is well." "It is the Lord, let Him do as seemeth Him good."

No fearing or doubting, with Christ by our side,
In death, as while living, "*The Lord will provide!*"—O.

THE NEARNESS OF THE GLORY.

THE thought of the nearness of the glory should be deeply cherished by the heart. And we need be at no effort to persuade ourselves of it. It is taught us richly in the Word. The place of the glory is near us, and the path by which it can either come to us, or we go to it is short and simple, and the moment for the taking of the journey may be present in the twinkling of an eye.

"Whom He justified, them He also glorified," is a sentence which tells us of the path, or title to the glory. We need nothing but the justifying faith of Jesus. When by faith we stand washed and sanctified through the blood, we are at once made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Our persons need no further adorning. We are clean every whit. Presentable without fault before the presence of the glory, whether that glory be still hid within its veil, or to be manifested to-morrow.

Nor can we say, *when* it may please the Lord of the glory to appear. But this we know that He is ever near, and can show Himself in all that His high and bright estate in a moment.

The Congregation were set at the door of the tabernacle to acquaint themselves with their High Priest. They did so. They took knowledge of the consecration and services of Aaron, and on the accomplishing of these services, the glory appeared. It was waiting at the door within its proper veil, to do this, and show itself. All it needed was *title* to take its little journey, finding an object worthy of its visitation. And as soon as the Congregation stood in the value of the blood, or appeared in that character which the priestly services

and sacrifices impart to it; then the glory reading its title to appear in finding an object worthy of its visitation, makes its short journey, and shines around the Camp. And it shines around to gladden them—not to alarm, but to gladden. They were entitled and prepared to be gladdened by it, for they stood in the value and cleansing of the blood. Its place was theirs, and the atmosphere it brought with it, their native air.

But there is another witness to the nearness of the glory.

A light surprised the persecutor as he journeyed from Jerusalem to Damascus. (Acts ix.) It was above the brightness of the sun at noon-day. And well it might have been, for it was a beam from the land of the glory, and it bore the Lord of the glory upon it. (See Isaiah xxiv. 23.)

Happy to know from such a witness how near that place of glory is to us. For as in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, that glory was here! Jesus purposed, and it came—He commanded, and it was here.

But it did not come to display itself. It came for other business, on another errand altogether. It came to make the persecutor of the suffering members of Christ, a native of that very land where this glory dwelt.

It begins therefore by laying the persecutor himself in ruins. It shines around him, and he falls to the earth. It is like the light of Gideon's pitchers confounding the armies of the uncircumcised. Saul takes the sentence of death to himself. With a vengeance he learns that he had been kicking against the pricks, madly destroying *himself*; in all his enmity against Jesus, for that Jesus was the Lord of the glory. But the One that wounds can heal—the One that kills can make alive. "Rise and stand upon thy feet," says the Lord of this glory. Life comes from Him who could wield the power of death—life infallible, and indestructible, life too with inheritance of this very glory. And he is made (as fittest to tell of it,) the witness of the same life and inheritance to all kinds of sinners—Kings, Gentiles, and people of Israel.

What a business is this! the glory and the Lord of the glory comes to do it. Never had such points in the furthest distance met before. The persecutor of the flock, and the Saviour of the flock are beside each other. The Lord of the glory, and the sinner whom the glory was consuming are here.

Can we trust all this, and be glad in it? Is it pleasant to

us to think that the glory is thus near us, that at the bidding of its Lord, or to carry as a chariot its Lord, it could be here in a moment? Stephen saw it thus, as by an upward glance of his closing eye. And when the voice of the Archangel heralds it, and the trump of God summons it, it will be here again to enfold us, and bear us up to its native land! (1 Thess. iv., 1 Cor. xv.)

It visited Saul, but left him as its heir and expectant, to travel and toil down here for his appointed day. But when it visits *us*, it will not leave us here any longer as its expectant, for a while strangers and foreigners in the earth, but to take us home with itself, ever to be with the Lord—"The Lord of the glory." (1 Cor. ii. 8., Jas. ii. 1.)

Till then, like Paul, we may "obtain help of the Lord," and testify of what we are, and of what we shall be. But it is all service in a foreign land, with the cherishing, gladdening thought, that the native land is near us, and our translation asks but for a moment, for the "twinkling of an eye." The title is simple—the path is short—and the journey soon taken. "Whom He justified, them He also glorified."

Note.—It is sweetly characteristic of the present age, that the hand of a fellow-disciple, Ananias, is used in the strengthening of Paul to bear the glory. The Seraphim alone do that for Isaiah. (chapter vi.) The Spirit does it for Ezekiel. (chapter ii.) The hand of the Son of man does it for Daniel. (chapter x.) But Ananias is made to do it for Paul.—J. G. B.

THOUGHTS ON THE SIMILITUDES OF THE KINGDOM, &c.

(Continued from page 196.)

Two very important questions, and which we by no means pretend to answer, arise, namely—What is the leaven? and what is the leavening process? A few suggestions is all we can give. Evidently the parable sets forth some doctrine or principle which obtains universally within the sphere of the kingdom; just as the tree typified power and dominion. When, however, we get the idea of doctrine, it is confined to a Church point of view, and we forget that it is a similitude of the kingdom. Manifestly the kingdom has assumed a Church or ecclesiastical form, and this parable has a special reference

to this form. Profession at one time or other was made in every part of the kingdom; the leaven that has infected it has produced results of varied appearance, till all is leavened; infidelity and superstition, corruption and formality, are alike the effects of the leaven; and in every place there is what we may call a religious element, even though it be a denial of all God's truth. This will take in a larger circuit than the *professing* Church. As a Church there are many things predicated of it which could not be if simply viewed as a kingdom. Take, for instance, the doctrine of the Holy Ghost's presence in the Church: the waiting for the coming of the Son from heaven. How soon after the Apostles' departure they were denied! The presence of God's Spirit in the Church soon came to be regarded as a mere influence. Jesus said, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that *he may abide with you for ever: even the Spirit of Truth, &c.*" (John xiv. 16.) This abiding was ignored practically. He was grieved and hindered. It is His work to lead us into the patient waiting for Christ. If worldliness and love of power lead men to deny His presence, as ruling and guiding the destinies of the Church here below, that they may themselves reign as kings, what wonder if the daily expectation of the Lord's coming, be considered as contrary to the teaching of the Word, as only a figurative expression for death? For nothing could so materially interfere with their power as the habitual expectation of the Lord's coming. The seeking the power of the world made them deny the Lord's coming for His Church, ignore the presence of the Spirit who alone can maintain that truth vitally in the Church; and this spread through all the mass. Differences here and there have existed on many points, but there has been unity of sentiment and feeling in this, In whatever else the Church has disagreed, on this point it has been of one mind.

But yet the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church is no feature of the kingdom as such, nor the return of the Lord for His saints.

The return of Jesus, as King to execute judgment upon His enemies, to assert His rights, to take His own power and glory, to show Himself the only true Potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, are essential characteristics of the kingdom. True and loyal subjects always remember the rights of their absent king. And we, as members of the

Church, raised above the mere condition of subjects, rejoice in asserting and maintaining the claims of Jesus, the King. But this has been denied. Jesus, as priest and prophet is freely confessed, but as king denied, save as reigning over the affections, a sort of spiritual king; an expression by the way not easy to understand, as the honest adherents of the Pope show when they contend for the necessity of the temporal power as a support to his spiritual functions. I repeat the true and rightful claims of the KING have been denied, and those who have usurped authority in the Church of God claim power over the world, and even in our day a dignitary of this huge system has not shrunk from declaring that all kings and emperors should bow to the authority of the Pope. Now, from the kingdom point of view, may not this, with all its resultant evils, be the leaven here meant? If not this only, yet is it not a chief ingredient? For the denial of His right, as King, has always characterised the mysteries of the kingdom ever since it assumed the form and place of a great tree. And the order of these two parables—first the tree, then the leaven—suggests the thought that the obtaining of power in the world caused the evil doctrine of denying the rights of the Lord over His own kingdom, and of denying the true position in which the world, as a whole, stood towards the rightful king, namely, the rejectors of Him.

This is not the same thing as a man rejecting Christ as Saviour. But a position in which, alas, some Christians have been found; and which although there may be faith in the blood of Jesus for salvation, is yet more dishonouring to the Lord Jesus. And all who set aside the plain teaching of the word of God, and assert that the millennium, or the reign of righteousness, is to be brought in by the means and appliances used by the religious world, do virtually deny the scriptural and proper Kingship of our Lord. Of course, in the Christian it is rather the denial of the doctrine than of the person. But in the case of the sinner, sooner or later personal hatred is manifested against the Lord Jesus.

Looking on Christendom we find it just as these parables foreshowed. The kingdom has become quite different from what was apparently the Lord's intention. It is now a world-power, or world-powers, if we look at the several parts of the kingdom. There are the Latin, and the Greek, and

the mixed Protestant mass; and whatever may be said of the last confessedly the first and the second aim at and possess worldly power. So completely is the Lord Jesus shut out from His own kingdom that infidels of various shades hold positions of authority and emolument in that which calls itself by His name. Nay, we find not only His rights denied but the Deity of His person attacked. Soon they will deny Him come in flesh, and bow down to anti-Christ.

To him Infidels, Mahomedans, and all, but the Church of God, will submit. Then come judgment and eternal death upon those who would not have the man, Christ Jesus, to reign over them. All this evil has come into the field because the servants slept.

What is to keep us from being affected in any way with this terrible evil? Waiting for the Son from heaven. May we be ever in the attitude of looking for Him. To such He will appear, "without sin, unto salvation."

Note.—In page 154, line 9, for "Theodorias" read "Theodosius." Line 35, for "require" read "acquire."

THE NEW BIRTH.

No. 6. "IN THE LIGHT."—CONFESSION.

THE question remains, what is the sphere and measure of walk for the new man? It is a deeply interesting one. May the Lord give us to apprehend it?

The blow of judgment which fell on God's dear Son on the cross, rent the veil which was between God and the sinner. The same blow which disclosed and expressed, at the same moment, the love and the righteousness of God, removed for ever the sins and sinful condition which shut out His people from His presence. Thus the christian who possesses eternal life in Christ, has been introduced into the presence of God in Light!

The sphere of his walk then is the *light of the presence of God!* God has cleansed him, and begotten him anew for such a sphere; and now the standard and measure of his ways is nothing less than the *Light—within the veil!* Every thing inconsistent with God's presence in the light is judged as of the "old man;" thus the "new man" rejoices in liberty, in the presence of God. He was "once darkness;" now he is "light in the Lord;" and the exhortation is, "walk as children of light." The light makes manifest all that is not of God in his ways.

What a wondrous measure is this? Yet the new man rejoices that no less a standard is given of God. Called into fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ, how could there be this fellowship, except in the power of eternal life? Impossible. Fellowship is the property and outgoings of eternal life. The christian can walk in no other place; he can have no other standard than this. The life he possesses in Christ brings him to the presence of God in light. The light does not judge him, as questioning his title to be there. The brighter the light the clearer the title is seen to be. But the light makes him judge himself for all that is inconsistent with it. When the flesh is at work in one way or another (even if the action is purely inward), if there is anything whatever that the conscience ought to be exercised about; the soul is not, cannot be, in the enjoyment of communion with God in the light, because the effect of the light is to bring the conscience into exercise. But when the conscience has nothing that is not already judged in the light, the new man is in action with regard to God.

The possession of an evil nature never makes the conscience bad in God's presence. It is only when it is at work in any way, that then the conscience becomes defiled. The cloud is felt, preventing the soul's enjoyment of communion in the light. Here then comes in God's blessed provision for that which is made manifest in His presence, where there is failure in our ways as christians. It is, *Confession of sins*. Just as a man with his dress soiled or in disarray, enters a room full of light and mirrors, instinctively arranges his dress—the light discovers whatever was astray; so, one cannot help confessing when, in the light, there is the slightest soil; anything which the light reveals: "for whatsoever doth make manifest is light;" and God is "faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John i. 9).

Alas, when the sinful nature is yielded to, and permitted to appear in the shape of "sins;" the conscience is defiled and unhappy; the Spirit is grieved; and the more sensitive the conscience, the more keenly it feels the stain. Here it is that we learn what has produced this bowing of the heart and conscience before God about the sin. The *Advocacy of Christ has been in exercise*. Not because I have repented of the sin, and judged myself about it; but because I had sinned, and it needed that my soul should be bowed for the failure before the Lord. A living person—Jesus—deals by

His word and His spirit with my heart and conscience, makes me feel the sin, and bows my heart in confession to Him who is "faithful and just to forgive," and "to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." It is, "If any man *sin* (not "repent of his sin"), we have an Advocate with the Father" (1 John ii. 2). He forgives the sin, and cleanses the heart from the remembrance of that which had caused the sorrow and distress of soul.

True confession is a deep, deep, painful work in the soul. It has not merely to do with the actual failure, but with the root of the matter, which, unjudged, had produced the sin. Peter's case, in John xxi., gives an illustration of this dealing of Christ, when he needed a sense of his sin, not heretofore possessed. Peter had "wept bitterly" over the sin (his denial of Christ), yet the roots were unreached, and liable to break forth again. The Lord deals with him—not charging him with the sin, or even making mention of it. "Lovest thou me more than these?" Hast thou still that overweening confidence in thyself? For he had boasted that if all the others would deny Him, yet he would not. The Lord did not look to the stream, but to the source; He laid it bare, exposed it to Peter's heart and conscience. The root was reached, and all was out before His eye. The spring was laid open, judged, and dried up. Blessed dealing of One who loves us perfectly, and cares too much for us to spare us when we need to learn ourselves. Nothing charged upon us, as imputed to us, but nothing allowed—to allow it, were not love—were not God. The heart adores Him where it sees His ways. But O, how little do souls profit by His ways! By and bye it will be seen how He had vindicated His own care—and how the exercised souls profited by them, and the careless ones lost by the way.

How wonderful is the place, the calling, the sphere of walk, of the christian! Walking in the Spirit, outside flesh and self, in and by the life of Jesus. The light of God's presence its sphere, where no soil of sin, no spirit of the world can ever come. His whole being is open and simple in His presence; finding no motive for concealment from Him now, even if such were possible. God Himself the resource of the heart, against all that is within. Thus the "light" is "armour" to the soul. It learns to be peremptory with itself, in refusing all that is not of God: it thus walks in the joy of uninterrupted fellowship with Him. It has the consciousness too

of being well-pleasing to Him. The eye is not turned inward to look for fruits there, but outward and upward to Him. It lives by another. Christ is before the soul distinctly and undistractedly. Flesh is detected in its roots—the fruits need not appear to learn what it is. It is seen as that which would break the communion and separate the heart from the joy of walking with God, and is refused. Things around are seen in their true value. The soul grows in His presence—not as contemplating its growth, but as not having yet attained, or being already perfected, in full and actual conformity to Christ in glory, it presses on towards the mark for the prize of its high calling of God in Christ.

Beloved christian reader, we have got a life which connects us with heaven *now*, but which is to be displayed while we are here on earth. We have members to mortify but no recognized life below. (Col. iii.) It is fashioned in us *by the putting off of self*—living in the denial and non-recognition of ourselves. *Its* issues and outgoings are only those which God can own. The life of Jesus here was a life of perfect obedience; His perfect will was surrendered—“not My will, but Thine be done.” He is our life—“He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.” His words tell us what He was when here—they were *Himself!* They are they by which we live; they form and fashion us in conformity to Him. When we are not formed by them, *we are checking the outgoings of our life!* stunting our growth up to, and in Christ!

The Lord give us, with steady growth, to go on from day to day, growing in grace and in the knowledge of Him. The life within us springing up to its source, in the brightness of the Father's presence where He is, until we are fully conformed to Him, and with Him for ever! Amen.

FRAGMENT.

There is no more common or surer evidence that the soul has been led, by influx of light from above, into acquaintance *with the mind of God*, as revealed on any given matter, than the power which puts facts, previously disjointed in texts of Scripture, into order and clearness as a living whole.

THOUGHTS ON VARIOUS PASSAGES.

1 CORINTHIANS xi. 23-32.

THE perfect grace in which we stand is wondrous. There is no condemnation for us;—we are not to be condemned with the world. The bread and wine is the symbol and pledge of this—the memorial of the love of Christ who took the condemnation on Himself and left not a particle for us. He died for us—our sins and ourselves.

But, on the other hand, will God make light of the sins of His people? If they are *not to be condemned for sin*, won't they be apt to think lightly of it? God's sense of sin, the bread and wine shew forth—the bruising of His beloved One, that we might not be under the weight of it; but He has the means of making us feel that it is an evil and a bitter thing not to depart from iniquity, if we name the name of Christ. I am not now speaking of the intercession of Christ which restores us, but of the holy discipline of the Lord—the chastening of the Lord—just because we are NEVER to be condemned. It is a solemn thing, but a blessed thing. In Him is "*no darkness at all.*" In us there is darkness—although we ourselves are not darkness, but "*light in the Lord.*" Well, we are to judge this darkness in us—to "*judge ourselves*"—to deny ourselves first, and failing that in anything, to judge ourselves. If we do so, we judge the evil and are cleansed from it, and the claims of holiness and love are satisfied. But if we do not judge ourselves, then the Lord must; but not in wrath or condemnation. Oh, no; *that could not be*; but in love. It is chastening that we may not be condemned with the world. Why should we not then be always in the light and in the joy of heaven?

Acts ii. 42.

I would note how little of this "*fellowship*" has survived, or is reproduced, even where the other three things have place. But, in truth, it is the sphere in which the life of Christ is to develope itself, and if it is not there, if there is no home or family feeling in the church, and not that merely, no common devotedness to a paramount object, even the person of Christ and His glory, then the saint is in danger of falling back into the world in his affections and substantial citizenship.

SCRIPTURE QUERIES AND ANSWERS.

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST. (2 Cor. v. 10.)

“A. B.”—“C.” ask:—Does the Scripture—2 Cor. v. 10—contemplate believers and unbelievers? Will the sins of believers, previous to their conversion, be manifested at the judgment seat of Christ? Will this manifestation be to the praise of divine grace? Will it be only the *service* of Christians which will then be brought out? If the sins of believers, as well as the deeds which God can accept of, be manifested there, how does this agree with, “their sins and iniquities will I remember no more?” (Heb. x.) Is not judgment past for the believer?

A.—2 Cor. v. 10 is a broad general principle, which is applicable to all mankind, irrespective of what grace has accomplished in, and for, those who believe. It is however to be remarked, that when the apostle has before his mind both saints and sinners, he does not speak of *persons being judged*, but of their *receiving for things done in the body—retribution* is his thought. Because, for the saint, judgment is past—Christ has borne it for him: he does not come into judgment. (John v. 24.) “Condemnation” there is incorrect. All must be *manifested* before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive of the things done in the body, whether they be good or bad. The thought is, the perfect manifestation of all that a person is, and has been, before a throne characterized by judgment, yet without the *judgment* of the *person* being in question. It does not say “judged,” for then even the saints would be condemned. Yet, when the wicked “receive the things done in the body,” they must be condemned.

The apostle has no sort of anxiety for himself as to this solemn thought of a judgment seat; instead of that, it has a sanctifying and practical effect upon him, as one now manifested to God (v. 11). While, when he thinks of the wicked, and knows that for such it is the “terror of the Lord,” it is an incentive to him to “persuade men.”

God, who has wrought us for the glory and assimilation to Christ, works morally in our souls, preparing the vessel by a moral dealing thus for glory. When man fell he came to know good and evil for the first time. Good which he had no power to practise—evil that he had no power to avoid. God works in the sinner, convincing him of, and cleansing him from the guilt—whether of nature or practice,

according to His knowledge of it, and through the work of Christ. He reveals Christ as one in whom was perfect good, outside and above the evil, as the light by which the Christian thus purged may judge all within Himself. *Without* the knowledge of grace, the soul fears the light. *With it*—it rejoices to have a perfect standard whereby to judge all in itself that is inconsistent with the light. God works by His Spirit in the conscience which He has purged, to produce this entire and unsparing judgment of self; those who have benefited by His working thus in them, will have gained. If they have not, and that the fruits which God would have produced in them, have been turned aside, they will bear the consequences of the neglect, and lose what they might have gained; and which, if gained, although produced by Him, is counted in grace to them.

When manifested before the judgment seat of Christ they will then be enabled fully to judge according to God's judgment, as being then divested of the flesh that hindered, all their past career. On one side will be seen all God's gracious care and painstaking wisdom, with which He deigned to deal with them all through their course; on the other, all their own frowardness and wilfulness—how here they lost by not hearkening to Him; and there they gained and grew in stature by profiting by His ways. Here, capacity, which they might there have had, was stunted to the measure they will have then attained. There, the soul, exercised by His workings, had grown in a capacity for enjoying heaven and Christ, which it never then can recover or regain.

When the sense of this tribunal is kept in the soul, which has been established in grace (for without it none could for one instant bear the thought of receiving of the things done in the body), it has a present sanctifying effect upon the Christian. He rejoices to judge himself, in the thought that one day he will be able to do so perfectly, in the full blaze of God's presence in the light. What he failed to do now, he will be enabled to do perfectly then. He thus keeps his conscience in the light; maintaining its rights and authority against all the subtle encroachments of the flesh. Holiness due to God governs his heart. The inward energy of holy grace which separates from all the evil within, connects the soul with God—binds the heart to Him, and rejects everything which is contrary to Him. When manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, the full sense of the divine

grace, but imperfectly learned here below at best, will then be seen. Grace as immeasurable and as perfect as the God Himself whom it reveals. It will be to the praise of divine grace in the believer indeed.

The statement, "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more," has reference only to condemnation. Christ having done a work which purges the conscience, and has perfected the believer for ever, God righteously remits his sins; He calls them to mind no more for ever. Divine working in the soul enables *us* to call them to mind, and produces that moral judgment of ourselves about them, which deepens as we know Him the more. This work of manifestation is true now, as far as we have realized the light. Having learned divine grace, cannot I look back upon my whole course now, in perfect peace with God; and wonder and adore my God? Cannot I look back at what I was before my conversion, and, while abhorring myself, adore His grace to me? Cannot I look back at my failures since my conversion—be humbled about them—and worship Him, as to how I have learned Him in His patient grace with me; convicting, rebuking, chastening, and restoring my soul; and thus permitting me to grow in the knowledge of Himself and His ways? God be thanked for the grace that enables us to do so in unhindered liberty, and in the unsparing scrutiny and judgment of self. I do not suppose that a *period of time* is the thought of this judgment seat. Certainly not an indiscriminate huddling together of righteous and wicked; than which no thought is more foreign to Scripture.* It is, as I have said, a broad general principle applicable to saints of all times and dispensations to the end; and embracing sinners as well.

I trust, beloved friends, that what I have said, may lead into some apprehension of its great principles, and have a present sanctifying effect upon the lives of my readers. While, also, that it may prove a spur to the energies of those who know the true grace of God in which they stand, to persuade men—the thought, that for sinners, it is the terror of the Lord, weighing upon the heart; and the

* NOTE.—Matt. xxv. 31, &c., is the judgment of the *quick or living* nations—not dead sinners who have been raised. It happens at the opening of the millennial kingdom, "when the King sits upon the throne of His glory." The judgment of the wicked dead (Rev. xx.) is after the 1000 years of millennial glory, when the heavens and the earth as they are now, have fled away from before the face of Him that sat upon the great white throne.

deep, deep love of Christ constraining us to make known Him who died in grace for all!

There is no doubt but that ministerial service will be the subject of divine scrutiny. You have this distinctly taught in 1 Cor. iii. 8-15. The subject there is "work"—(ministerial labour); not "works." The subject of 2 Cor. v. is "things done in the body"; and thus far more general.

God be thanked we go there in the likeness of Him who sits upon that judgment seat. He has come there and received us to Himself as He has said. (Jno. xiv.) He has changed our vile bodies, and fashioned them like His own glorious body. (Phil. iii.) He who sits there is the righteousness of those (believers) who are manifested before Him. (2 Cor. v. 21.)

DEAD AND RISEN WITH CHRIST.

"Buried" in the grave of Jesus,
 I believe what God has said;
 Faith, His judgment acquiescing,
 "Reckons" now that *I* am dead.
 Death and Judgment are behind me,
 Grace and Glory are before—
 All the billows rolled o'er Jesus,
 There, exhausted all their power.
 "First-fruits" of the resurrection,
 He is risen from the tomb;
 Now I stand in new creation,
 Free, because beyond my doom.
 Jesus died, and I died with Him,
 "Buried" in His grave I lie,
 One with Him in resurrection,
 "Seated" now "in Him" on high.
 I await the full redemption,
 When the risen One shall come;
 And my mortal body changed
 Shall be "fashioned" like His own.
 Precious and once bleeding Surety,
 Nothing would I know but Thee—
 Nothing would my heart desire,
 But, my Lord, Thy face to see.
 Here I share in Thy rejection—
 Thy reproach and cross I love;
 Here I stand in Thine acceptance
 In the Father's sight above.
 Grant me here to walk obedient,
 To Thy holy will and word;
 Counting all my joy to please Thee;
 Owning Thee, alone, my Lord!

WORDS OF TRUTH.

ARE YOU READY?

A REMARKABLE incident was related to the writer the other day, which suggests the question at the head of this paper. It may be, in the hands of a gracious Lord, used in evoking a reply from those of my readers who have never honestly asked themselves the question in the light of God, or had a satisfactory reply.

I write from memory the circumstance as narrated to me. Two men, — and —, were employed in some part of England, in sinking the shaft of a deep well. They had found, in their progress, a large rock which required blasting to permit a further sinking of the shaft. The hole was bored in the rock, and all in readiness—the blasting powder tamped in—the fuze attached—and all was now in readiness to blow up the rock. All that remained was to cut the fuze off to the proper length, and send up by — the remainder of the coil, with the powder case, tools, &c., in the bucket. This was usually done by the man who ascended, getting into the bucket, and being drawn up to the surface of the ground by a windlass. It was necessary to remove everything out of the shaft before the blast took place; otherwise they would be buried in the rubbish, or ignited, or otherwise destroyed. Everything had now been collected, and transferred to the bucket before — got in. — was always obliged to remain to ignite the fuze after the bucket had been lowered for him the second time, as it could not contain the two men, nor could the rope bear the strain of more than one. J— took hold of the hatchet to cut the fuze, and hand it to T—. He laid the fuze on the rock and struck the blow, and severed the fuze from the coil. When, horror of horrors, *the stroke of the steel face of the hatchet upon the rock produced a spark, which ignited the few inches of fuze!* A

few moments more seemed to be all that remained before the two men were blown to atoms in the bottom of the deep shaft, and their souls launched into an eternity of misery or joy! The thought now occurred to the men for both of them to get into the bucket, and give the signal to be hoisted up. They did so, and gave the signal to draw up, and all began slowly to ascend. When, another horror, they found the rope giving way under the over strain of the weight of the two men. The men above were labouring to hoist them up but the strain was too great.

"T——," said J——, "I'll get out, and let you go up; you are not ready to meet God, but *I am ready.*" J—— firmly insisted on his comrade going up, and himself getting out; persisting that he was fully ready, while he knew the other was not. J—— then got out and remained below, and the other was hoisted up to the mouth of the shaft, and got out safely. In a few seconds the blast went off and the smoke ascended to the surface. There was not even a groan heard below. As soon as the smoke cleared away T—— went down to pick up, as he thought, the mangled remains of his friend. When it was discovered that the God whom J—— trusted, and was ready to meet, had come in at the last moment, and what seldom could have happened in the annals of mining, the rock, instead of exploding asunder by the blast, in the ordinary way, split asunder, discharging the force of the blast against the opposite side to that where J—— stood, and upheaved a large portion of the rock in an almost perpendicular position; thus forming a shield which sheltered J—— from the explosion, leaving him perfectly unscathed!

Now, my reader, think of your precious soul being placed in such a position—the living God, and an interminable future to face—and ask yourself, "How would it be with me?" Would it be like the noble-hearted Christian, J——? calm in the consciousness of his Saviour's love, and in the truth of his God—stepping into eternity without a cloud? The calm, peaceful, wondrous beauty of his peace with God, and his self-forgetfulness fills the heart, and his love for the unsaved soul of his comrade, T——. If you were, in a moment of pressure, like this, how would it be with you?

When J—— came up he was asked, why it was he could be insane enough to do this? He told them that he knew the blessed Son of God had come down from heaven, and died for him in love, washing away his sins in His own blood

—and he knew that when he was blown to pieces (as he thought he should have been) he would go to heaven to be with Him for ever! He knew, too, that poor T——, who was with him, if he was blown to pieces, would be lost for ever in hell, and he could lay down his life happily for his comrade's sake, and in the consciousness of what his God was to him as a Saviour.

Dear reader, let me ask you, ARE YOU READY? A moment like that tests the foundation on which a man is resting; whether he is resting on his works, or efforts, his religion and its ordinances, *or on Christ!* All else is rubbish in a moment like that. The grace of God in Christ is all. The precious blood of Christ, the only foundation. God's perfect love to your soul flows out in unhindered blessedness, because that precious blood was shed.

SUBSTANCE OF A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

You ask me to say something regarding your duty as a Christian. But before we tell about *duty* the first thing is to be *thoroughly established in the grace of God*—for I gather that it is here you are wanting. You are mourning over failure, so should we all, but I do not think you look at it in the right light. It is right to feel our ingratitude and unworthiness, and as the soul grows in its apprehension of the marvellous grace and love of God, it will feel this the more. But there is something very far wrong when your letter says that you have only “intervals of happiness,” and that you lack power to keep you steady. Why are there so many ups and downs in your spiritual history? Because you have not apprehended fully what God has done for you—where He has placed you, and what His thoughts are about you. In short you are deficient in the knowledge of *His grace*.

There is a verse in the 6th of Romans which bears me out in this, “Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under law but under grace.” That is, if the soul apprehends what grace is, he has got hold of something which gives him power to overcome sin, so that it ceases to have dominion over him; but if the soul is in the least degree under “law,” in the same measure will it find itself the servant of sin. Why? “Law”—(not merely “the law” which we usually apply to the ten commandments, but) the principle of law-keeping, which brings you in responsible, and which requires

you to do something, and is of far wider application. It recognises and addresses man in the flesh, *i. e.*, in his sinful condition; and discovers it. Grace, on the other hand, takes man up where law leaves him, *viz.*, when he can do *nothing*. It *requires nothing*, and *expects nothing* from him; but does *everything* for him. If you view yourself as connected with law at all you immediately find that *you are weak, and sin is strong*. This is why the law was given, "that the offence might abound." "The strength of sin is the law." But if you see yourself, as God has taken you up, purely on the ground of grace, you find that He looks upon you as one that cannot do anything at all; that you are absolutely "without strength." Hence, instead of mourning over your weakness, and the sinfulness of "the flesh" you should learn God's thoughts about it, and "reckon" it "dead;" while, on the other hand, you go forward in the power and energy of a new and endless life—the life which you possess in Christ Himself, made good in you by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Again, you would have no difficulty, which you have now, about the eternal safety and final perseverance, as it is called, of every one who believes. And this brings us back again to the old question. Will you bear with me while I set a few of the scriptures bearing on the subject again before you. This matter is, indeed, of so great importance that your whole Christian course is influenced by it. If you were only clean off the ground of law in every shape and form (except of course as "under the law* to Christ" which is a very different thing), you would think very differently than you do. So important did Paul hold this question of law to be that, when the Galatians sought to bring in a little of it, he actually said, "I stand in doubt of you." "O, senseless Galatians, who hath bewitched you." He feared they had got off the ground of Christianity altogether.

But, you ask, how am I on the ground of law in regard to this question of final perseverance?" Well, you are supposing that man has the *ability* to hold fast to the end, and, in fact, that he must do so in order to be saved. Now, that is just the law again, and all it can do is to prove that he cannot do this, or anything else. Grace, as we have seen,

* The writer, probably, here has 1 Cor. ix. 21 before his mind. It should rather be "rightly subject to Christ," than "under the law to Christ." The two phrases are as different as possible.—Ed.

coming in at this point, does everything for you. Instead of telling you (as law would do, and as you are maintaining), that *you must hold on to God* in order to be saved, grace tells you that it is *God that has laid hold on you* in your utter helplessness, and the whole thing lies here. Moreover, if to endure to the end is a condition of salvation, then is it not clear that those who do endure to the end are saved partly because they have endured, that is, partly on the ground of their doing; which entirely excludes grace!

If, then, it is true that God has made salvation sure to every one who believes, do you suppose that He will lose one single soul He has ever taken hold of? His "gifts and calling are without repentance." (Rom. xi.) It is written, "I give unto them eternal life, and *they shall never perish*, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father who gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." (John x.) Now, do not try to qualify, or modify these statements by introducing an "if," and saying "they are true," *if* we do this thing or the other. They stand in all their naked, absolute, unconditional strength, and I do beseech you to honour God by believing what He says. There are many more passages equally strong, but we cannot consider them now. Suffice it to say, that they all set forth this same precious soul-comforting truth, that the believer, once in Christ, can never be lost. Oh see that you are not robbing yourself of any portion of what God, in His marvellous grace, has given you. May He deliver us from our narrow, unjust thoughts of Himself, and enable us to enter into all the magnificence of His grace! To think that a child of God can ever cease to be a child is the dishonouring thought of poor human hearts towards a God who cannot lie; and who are forced to *explain away* passages which state the truth with undeniable clearness to support the thought. Even nature teaches that a child can never get out of the relationship it holds to its father. A son may behave unworthily towards a kind father, or he may be a dutiful, obedient son, but he never can cease to be a son. And God has taken up this natural relationship in order to express how, in His matchless grace, He has linked up every believer with Himself. "Ye are all the children of God by faith of Jesus Christ," and by the spirit of His Son, giving us to cry, Abba Father.

Allow me to say that these views on the question of per-

severance are most dishonouring to God, because they limit and obscure His grace. Their effect, too, on the soul is very serious. They prevent it enjoying that profound undisturbed peace and joy which God designs it should have; they mar and hinder its progress in the knowledge of God; produce leanness, barrenness, and unsteadiness in the practical walk; instead of rising superior to earthly things, and enjoying, day by day, the calmness of a heavenly atmosphere occupied with Christ Himself. The soul is ever troubled about itself, sometimes happy, often unhappy, groaning and burdened, which is surely not the normal condition of a Christian.

Be assured, too, that scripture never contradicts itself. The enemy often uses passages which are clear enough when rightly understood, to disturb a soul previous to being fully established in the full grace of God. When you have bowed to the grace of God, and are settled simply on this firm footing, you will find out the mind of God as to those passages which seem to you to speak otherwise; you will find they form a harmonious whole; not one line or thought interfering with another from end to end. Yours, &c., C.

JESUS WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET.

JOHN XIII.

IN Chapter xii. the Lord had closed His public testimony. "He departed and did hide himself from them." From this chapter on to the end of chapter xvii., we find Him alone with His disciples, free to make known to them the full depth of the place they had in His love, now that He was about to leave them and go back to the Father, and how that love would be in exercise about them. This is what makes these chapters so peculiarly precious to us, beloved; for we have all our part in what is unfolded in them, as surely as we are His.

Mark the opening words of the Holy Ghost, for they are the key to all that follows. They give us the new position of things on which depends the action of Jesus in this chapter, in all its full significance. "Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father"—such is the place He now takes anticipatively—"having loved His own which were in the world He loves them to the end." He is gone to the Father; we are left in the world without Him! But this is just the moment that Jesus chooses to tell us what we are to Him. How sweet

for us below to hear Him call us "His own!" Who does not know the delight of being able to call something one's own? It is not so much the value of what is possessed, but the simple consciousness that it is mine! Thus the heart of Jesus speaks out in the term of His love. It is not with our poor estimation of Him, nor still less with ourselves, He would occupy us. He would have us to lose all thoughts of ourselves, and listen to His thoughts about us. Are you prepared for this, beloved? But listen—"having loved His own which were in the world He loved them unto the end." It is not merely that we are His, but He *cares* for us. He loved us, and He loves us to the end. But look—"He loved them unto the end." The end of what? The end of the time we *need the assurance* of His love—the end of the path of His own in the world. We shall not need to be assured of His love when we see Him face to face, and know as we are known. We *do* need it now. What a resting place for our hearts in this desolated world—the bosom of Jesus! It is where John leant (v. 23), and it is open to each of us still to lean there. Nay, it is to secure and maintain us in unhindered enjoyment of our place there, that the Lord Jesus enters upon the loving service of this chapter for us. And His is not love that changes. That is what gives one such rest in His love. He knows my whole path through to the end. He knows all my failure and coldness of heart. He knows it all beforehand. There was one in that loved circle round Him. He knew (v. 38) that before the night was out, he would, at the taunt of a girl, deny with cursings and oaths that he ever knew Him. And yet in spite of all, and through all, He loves us to the end. We can but feebly understand such love, but we must believe it.

Now, this love of Christ must be in exercise about its objects, and this is what we get in the action before us. If we delight to dwell upon the love that led Him to lay down His life for us in the past, we must not overlook its *present* deeply precious activities—those alone which can meet the very real present necessities of our condition.

Verse 3.—"Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God and *went to God*, He riseth from supper and laid aside His garments, and took a towel and girded Himself: after that He poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet." Merely to gather from all this a lesson of

humility is sadly to miss the instruction unfolded in the symbolic action. It is in type the Lord's present service for us. We see that it must have this deeper character by v. 7, and again by v. 8, which shows it is essential to having part with Christ, and v. 10, to which I would call special attention. What must be the need that can only be met by the Son of God girding Himself in the glory for the work, and stooping low, even to His people's feet? We shall see.

Water is the well-known symbol of the word of God applied by the Spirit. Here we find a double application of it, the force of which is much obscured in our translation, but which you will understand better if we read, observing a distinction of the Spirit of God, "He that is *bathed* needeth not save to *wash* his feet, but is clean every whit." What, then, is this first application of the water of the word that needs never to be repeated? It is that spoken of in John iii. 5, "Except a man be *born* of *water* and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." It is the word of God brought home by the Spirit to the conscience in that moment when, for the first time, we have rested on a word from God for our salvation. Thus were we "born of God," "begotten of the incorruptible seed of the word," and made possessors of eternal life in Christ. All previous remedial measures have but revealed more fully the extent of man's fall and ruin. But now, what man could never do—that is, cleanse himself—God has done by His word received into the soul. We are clean in His sight—aye, clean every whit. Sins and the nature of sin within us have received their doom in the cross of Him in whom we have believed, and we have thus received a life beyond the reach of judgment and of death—eternal life in Christ. In the meanwhile we are found in a sin-polluted world; *One* only ever passed through it without contamination. Temptation abounds on every side, and finds too ready an answer in the nature within us.

Just as the feet contract uncleanness in a dirty path, so are our consciences liable to contract defilement at every moment as we pass through this evil world. Sin never again can come *upon* us in judgment and wrath; but it can and must necessarily, if allowed, cloud enjoyment of the love of Jesus, break up communion, and keep us in a place of distance from Him. This is what He cannot allow. We must remember that there is nothing that the eye can rest on, or the imagination be occupied with in the things of

nature, that has not this tendency. For all that is in the world is not of the Father, and all that is of the flesh—of the nature and life of the first Adam—is that that God has had to exterminate in the judgment of the cross of Christ.

How great and real, then, is our need, beloved! How sweetly the love of Jesus engages Him in this service for us suited to it! For this is what is symbolized in the washing of the feet. It is the second application of the word given us in v. 10. We find it again in Eph. v. 26, "Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word," preparatory to presenting it to Himself a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. As surely, then, as we have part with Jesus, He must apply the water of the word to detach us from all that would hinder communion with Himself. Note well, that it is not something He leaves us to do, or it would never be done. It is, "If I wash thee not, thou has no part with me." He discerns, as we could not, what is tending to keep us at a distance, or what has come in to hinder enjoyment of His presence, and He applies His word from the glory to us. Gradually He unfolds His mind to us in the truth—ever seeking to conform us to Himself, judging by it, and bringing us to judge in communion with Him, all that is unlike Him. If we will only yield ourselves to the power of the truth, Jesus will lead us on with wondrous patience and grace into a deeper knowledge of Himself. Thus, by attaching us more closely to Himself, He detaches us from all that enfeebles our joy in the fellowship that is at once precious to Him and *necessary* to us, now that we have once tasted of its joy! It is not that He would, as it were, tear from us all that is of present interest to us. He knows that *nothing can satisfy* our new nature now, at a distance from Him. He enables us to judge what would keep up and maintain this distance, and He does it in His own sweet way, *i.e.*, by the truth of what *He is in Himself* for us, until our hearts get so taken up with Him, that easily and of necessity, we drop what was incompatible with His fellowship. But what sluggish hearts we have! He has only left it to us to bow to His Word, when He applies it to us. But how often, like Peter, we *refuse* to let the Lord wash our feet, by resisting the application of His truth to our consciences. Yet there is nothing

that He teaches that will not have this cleansing and separating effect, introducing us into more full communion with Himself, if we will only bow to it. Thus it is that the clouds come—we *refuse* the word, and our consciences get defiled. Peter refused, for he had yet to learn his need of the Lord's loving service. How soon and terribly he made experience of it! Before the night was out, he was tempted to deny his blessed Master, and he fell.

What a look was that, which fell on Peter, telling of the Lord's unchanged love. No wonder it broke his heart. He was forgiven and loved the same, and he knew it. But ah! distance had come in between Peter and the Lord. "I go a-fishing," was the witness that his poor heart was trying, by a return to his old interests, to fill up the void, that nothing *could* fill up but restored communion. Forgiveness is one thing beloved, but communion is altogether another. Many a one knows that they are forgiven, and are so far happy, but they have never known (or if they have, they are not now enjoying) communion with Christ. But if Peter will try and get on as well as he can away from the Lord, Jesus will not suffer this to be, He proceeds to wash His feet. What a word for Peter's conscience, after all his boasting, was that, "*Lovest thou me more than do these?*"—that thrice repeated "*Lovest Thou me,*" probing the root of his failure, his *self-confidence*, and leading him to judge it, while at the same time it forced him to confide in Christ as he could not in another beside. John and the rest could only know he had basely denied his Lord—"Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee!" Now the cloud is dispelled—distance is gone—and in the power of communion with Christ, Peter is given the Lord's pathway of death as his own; one which he sought to take once in the energy of the flesh, but in which he so miserably failed.

Thus it is that so often when the heart is heavy, because of distance from Christ, some little word is borne to the heart or conscience. It just meets your need, and restores you to your joy in the Lord. You say how strange that I should have just thought of that word, when it was exactly what I needed.

Ah beloved, it was Jesus that stooped thus to wash thy feet: and you perhaps discerned not that it was He!

How terrible the character of the carelessness, failures and sin of his own that needs *such a stoop* of the *Son of God*, to

succour the soul! Do we not loathe ourselves for it? Oh to cultivate the tenderness of heart and conscience, that will yield to each slightest pressure of His truth, that we may spare His loving heart and ourselves the sorrow and darkness of getting away from Him!

But perhaps you say "John's place on the bosom of the Lord never could be mine. He was a special favourite. Such nearness is not given to all." You are wronging Christ's love by such thoughts as these, beloved. Partiality is a defect of human love. There is none in divine love. Jesus gives us in chap. xv., the one measure of His love for each of us and for all. "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you." There is no room for degrees here, for the love of each is infinite and cannot be exceeded. Truly the love of Christ passeth knowledge. Besides, if He loves one more than another, it is to say that He has found something *in that one* to love. Whereas there was nothing in any of us to draw forth His love. Human love is called forth by something worthy of love in its object, but this is the bright distinguishing characteristic of divine love, that its objects are alike unworthy. The source of Jesus' love is in itself—deep, deep in the secrets of His own heart. Nothing is so sad than if, after all, you will insist on maintaining the place of distance. Love is gratified by having its object near to itself. It delights in the confidence it has begotten, that will quietly take the place of nearness—nor fear that it should be counted intrusion. It is the response His love looks for from us. John knew it, and took the place that Jesus gave him, and all of us alike. So he writes himself down, "the disciple whom Jesus loved!" It is but the style and signature of faith, that makes nothing of self, but everything of the love of Christ! Will you not adopt it, excluding as it does all human merit and worthiness?

Do you think you cannot be so near now that Jesus has gone back to the Father. Ah beloved, He has sent down the Holy Ghost that you may be brought into far deeper intimacy with Himself, than ever they could have enjoyed while He was still on earth. "*At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in ME, and I in you.*" What could be nearer than this? And it is just the object of Jesus in His Service, that we have been considering to maintain us in the enjoyment of this deeper intimacy, without a cloud of moral distance to mar it.

I can only note further that the Lord commits to us a very sweet participation in this service of love. Ver. 34 gives us His new commandment, "that ye love one another *as* I have loved you," and we have had both the measure and sample of the exercise of his love. So he says in verse 15, "I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you." If you only love me my brother, as Jesus commands, you will not be able to bear that there should be ought upon me to keep me at a distance from the Lord, but you will never rest until you have, by the ministry of some word from Christ, washed my feet (having first borne it on your heart before Him), and led me into the place of my privilege and joy, and this, notwithstanding my pride that may resent your interference.

The Lord give us the needed grace for this, as we see it so preciously illustrated in Him; and, above all, give us sensitive hearts to discover the first declining of heart from fellowship with Him and enjoyment of His presence, so that we may be brought to confession and self-judgment, and be maintained where only our heart can rest, in nearness to Him. Amen.—J. A. T.

THE TWO SUPPERS.

1 COR. xi. REV. xix.

THE supper at which we now sit is called "The Lord's Supper." The supper at which we shall sit, is called "The Supper of the Lamb." There is beautiful fitness in this; for we do not need to be reminded now that Christ is the Lamb, our standing in grace tells us that. But we have need to be reminded, that He who established us in grace through His rejection and death here, *is the Lord*; so in the kingdom we shall not need to be reminded that Christ is the Lord—our standing in glory will tell us that every tongue is then confessing it. (Phil. ii.) But we shall have need to be reminded that He who has established us in glory *is the Lamb*, and this eating of the two suppers expresses the saint's communion with *grace* and *glory*. Eating is the constant symbol in Scripture of communion. "Know ye not that they which eat of the sacrifice are partakers of the altar," and so we now feed in grace, we shall feed in glory, we are now learning the one, and we shall learn the other.

THE LORD'S RESURRECTION IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

THE resurrection of the Lord is, we know, a grand central mystery. It bespeaks the end of the old creation, and begins the sure, immoveable foundations of the new. It has, however, its various results. Some of its power will display itself in heavenly places—some in earthly—some of it will be known in the power that sets the enemy aside—some in the grace that saves the lost, and brings them to God for ever.

It is differently presented at the close of each of the gospels.

In Matthew (ch. xxviii.) we have the resurrection in its power over the adversary. The sealed stone, and the set watch, represent the power and enmity of the world—but the angel that witnessed the risen Jesus, as it were, laughs them to scorn, puts the sentence of death upon them, letting them know that it was hard for them to kick against the pricks; self-destruction for them to resist the Son of God in power.

And this is one great result of the resurrection. It is *judgment* against the world. It shows that there is direct collision between God and the world, and that God is the stronger—for that the world had put Jesus to death, and God had raised Him from the dead—two simple facts which indicate the entire collision between God and man, and that the strength and victory were with God, the result of which facts must be the judgment or doom of the world, and such judgment is here expressed by the angel rolling away the sealed stone, and putting the sentence of death on the keepers of it.

But this same chapter shows the resurrection in its results *on earth*. It puts Jesus in possession of all power, and gives him a claim upon the discipleship and obedience of all the nations.

This claim I know is not now made good, nor is this power now exercised. But they are His, and in the coming millennial days of the kingdom they will be realized. Power which is His by right as the Risen One, will be exercised by His hand then, and the nations of the earth, from the rising to the setting sun, will own Him.

This is very distinct and very characteristic of Matthew's

gospe so perfect are the oracles of God in their variousness as in their unity. But here you have nothing of the effects of the resurrection upon heaven, no peopling of heavenly places with the redemption and grace which the resurrection has sealed and accomplished.—J. G. B.

THOUGHTS ON VARIOUS PASSAGES.

JNO. xiv. 3-18.

How much blessing is lost by souls from being occupied with some action, or blessing, from Christ, instead of making *Himself* the aim and object of the heart. Now, in John xiv., in a striking and beautiful way, he pre-supposes that nothing can cheer the heart here during His absence but Himself—that the blank caused by it never can otherwise be filled. He therefore promises to *come for us!* No sweeter word in parting could be than this, “I will come again!” It was a promise pregnant with every joy to the widowed hearts of those he was leaving behind. But there is more—He adds (v. 18), “I will not *leave* you comfortless, I will come *to you.*” He promises to come *for us*; and while we await this moment He will come *to us*. What more could the heart desire? It is very precious—“I will come for you,” and, “I will come to you.” One in person, the other by the Holy Ghost He was about to send. But “*Come*” is the word by which he would cheer and sustain the heart. The heart which knows most of His coming to us, will most truly desire and look out for His coming *for us*.

O, for more personal affection for Him. One may admire and feel their need of Him without the sense of leaving everything here, out of personal love to Christ Himself. This is devotedness—it is the heart seeing such worth in Christ, that it lays aside as weights those things which hinder the soul’s enjoyment of Him.

EXODUS xvi. 14.

There was no *strength* necessary in gathering the manna. A strong right arm was of no use—the thing was too delicate for man’s strength to come in and destroy. To gather it delicately, with the *weakness* of man, was needed. So that the soul can say, That which I have gathered up of Christ to-day, I found it to be strength made perfect in my weakness. It was, “when I am weak, then I am strong.”

"WHOM SAY YE THAT I AM?"

Son of the living God !
 In whom, by whom we live,
 Whom to redeem a ruined world
 The Father's love could give;
 Thou art, revealed, the Rock
 Whereon Thy church is built;
 The faithful Guardian of the flock
 For whom Thy blood was spilt.

 All power to Thee belongs
 In heaven and on earth,
 And thou couldst bear unnumbered wrongs
 In silence from Thy birth!
 Thou, who in weakness here,
 Didst condescend to be,
 In garb of toil who didst appear,
 Thou Christ! we worship Thee.

 Oh! 'tis our joy to trace
 The glory of that light,
 That overcame supreme in grace,
 The chaos of our night.
 The glory that transforms
 Our darkness into day,
 And vessels for Thy pleasure forms
 From Egypt's worthless clay.

 Created, Lord, by Thee
 Are all things, and Thine own;
 The First, eternally, we see,
 Thou rulest from the Throne.
 Thou breathest, as the Head,
 The Body acts for Thee,
 Thou art the quickener of the dead,
 The judge Thou, too, shalt be.

 The Sure Foundation Thou,
 The once rejected Stone,
 The Chief stone; yea, the Centre now,
 Exalted o'er Thine own.
 The Counsellor Thou art,
 By whom dissensions cease;
 Exponent of the Father's heart,
 The King, the Prince of Peace.

 Thou art the Prophet, heard
 Through Israel's darkest night;
 Almighty Thou, in deed and word,
 Effulgent as the light.
 Sent of the Father, Thou
 Who camest forth to save,
 Found man Thy claims could disallow,
 And hew for Thee a grave!

Lord Jesus! Thou alone
 The resurrection art;
 Thy welling tears for death make known
 Depths in a Saviour's heart.
 The Way, the Truth, the Life,
 The first-born from the dead,
 God's Isaac, Thou, beneath the knife
 Unbound, couldst bow the head.

Our Passover art Thou,
 By Israel blindly slain;
 Without their hope they wander now,
 Till Thou return again.
 Thou art gone up on high
 For us to intercede,
 Melchisedek, not born to die,
 For Israel Thou dost plead.

Thou art our Great High Priest,
 The sinner's constant friend,
 Thy royal grace, to meet the least,
 The lowest loves to bend.
 How blest, how rich are they
 Thee, Jesus Christ, that know;
 'Tis in Thy praise, day after day,
 Their tiny cups o'erflow.

Devoted to Thy God,
 Thou evermore hast been;
 Yea, Thou, His wisdom and His word,
 Set up of old wert seen.
 And Thine it was in time,
 His counsels to declare,
 Thine to atone for Adam's crime.
 And Israel's sorrows bear.

Thou, in the dust of death,
 Didst agonize alone;
 Victorious, didst yield Thy breath,
 In peace none else had known.
 Thou art the only Lord,
 The God-provided Lamb,
 Thou art the self-existent Word,
 The wonderful I AM!

Thy glories all transcend
 What words have e'er expressed,
 Thou the Beginning, Thou the End,
 In whom our God doth rest.
 The Life Eternal Thou,
 Will soon shine forth again,
 Within the veil we see Thee now,
 Adore Thee, the AMEN!