

# “WORDS OF TRUTH,”

Eccl. xii. 10.

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

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VOL. VI.

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# CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Colossians compared with Romans and Ephesians, - - - - -	1
The Way we now know Christ, - - - - -	10
Notes of a Reading on the Psalms, - - - - -	13, 36, 52
Canaan first; then the Lessons of the Wilderness, - - - - -	21
Scripture Biography: Timothy, - - - - -	25
Thoughts on Sacrifices: No. 9, - - - - -	30
Thoughts on Sacrifices: No. 10, - - - - -	47
Occupation with Self, - - - - -	35
The "Bunch of Hyssop," - - - - -	41
2 Cor. xii., - - - - -	46
The Family Vault, - - - - -	51
Hebrews x., - - - - -	60
Matthew xiii., - - - - -	60
Redemption, - - - - -	61
"The Potter's House," - - - - -	66, 86
The Kohathites, - - - - -	72
Righteousness and Peace, - - - - -	79
The Nail, - - - - -	79
What Characterises the Christian, and Secures his Blessing, - - - - -	81, 112
Notes on 1 John iii. 4, - - - - -	90, 190, 206
The Preserving Power of the Word, - - - - -	95
"My Delights were with the Sons of Men," - - - - -	101
"Do the Work of an Evangelist," - - - - -	116
Positional and Moral Perfection, - - - - -	120
"What is His Name, and what is His Son's Name"? - - - - -	121
God's "Good Pleasure," - - - - -	127
Christian Position, Service, and Worship, - - - - -	133
How do you Worship? - - - - -	136
Reformation is <i>not</i> Cure, - - - - -	137
David: 1 Chron. xvii., - - - - -	141
David: 1 Chron. xxi., - - - - -	161
A Lecture on the Sprinkling of Blood, - - - - -	146
Faith, Hope, and Love, - - - - -	150
John, - - - - -	154
Value of Meditation, - - - - -	157
Outline of the Book of Genesis, - - - - -	163
"The Coat of Many Colours," - - - - -	172
"Between the Two Evenings," - - - - -	178
Remarks on the Epistle of Jude, - - - - -	179
The Temple, - - - - -	181
A Christian's Conformity to Christ, - - - - -	186
"The Desires of the Heart," - - - - -	195
"As I have Loved you," - - - - -	197
The Religionist, the Sinner, and the "Man in Christ," - - - - -	201
The Reward of Confidence, - - - - -	205
The Unity of the Spirit, - - - - -	210
Effect of being in the Lord's Presence, - - - - -	212
"Obey your Parents in the Lord," - - - - -	213
Christ for my Sins, and Christ for my Cares, - - - - -	221
Supplication and Prayer, - - - - -	230

## SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

The Character of Christ's Priesthood now; Aaronic, or Melchisedec? &c., - - - - -	17
When is a Person Sprinkled with the Blood? &c., - - - - -	37
What is meant by their "Robes," in Rev. vii. 14, and xxii. 14? - - - - -	55

What does "Washing their Robes" signify? - - - - -	55
Why are <i>They</i> said to do it? &c., - - - - -	55
What is the Precise Meaning of 2 Cor. iii. 12, 13? &c., - - - - -	55
Why the Difference in 2 Sam. xxiv. 9, and 1 Chron. xxi. 5, in the Numbering of Israel and Judah? - - - - -	56
Why are " <i>Seven</i> " Years' Famine Proposed to David, in 2 Sam. xxiv. 13, and " <i>Three</i> " Years, in 1 Chron. xxi. 12? - - - - -	56
Why is David said to give "Fifty Shekels of Silver" to Ornan, in 2 Sam. xxiv., and "Six Hundred Shekels of Gold," in 1 Chron. xxi? - - - - -	57
The Expediency and Usefulness of "Brothers' Meetings," - - - - -	57
Is God's First Action on the Soul produced by His Word and Spirit? Is the Life then Everlasting? &c., - - - - -	80
Is the Expression, " <i>Linked with Christ</i> ," a true, divine thought? - - - - -	96
Has the First Half of the Seventieth Week of Dan, ix. 4-27, had any fulfilment? - - - - -	98
Does Phil. ii. 7 (first two clauses) apply in any way to the Lord before He became a man? - - - - -	118
Does the testimony of the Two Witnesses commence with the last half week? and, if so, When do the "Three days and a half" of Rev. xi. 9-11 come in? - - - - -	119
Why is the "Great multitude," &c., said to come out of "the great tribulation?" &c., - - - - -	139
Are those described in Rev. xiv. 6, and xiii. 8, &c., the same class? &c., - - - - -	139
How do you reconcile Heb. ii. 17 with Heb. viii. 4? What is meant by "Reconciling sins?" Is not John xvii. the High Priest's prayer? - - - - -	158
Why was the Lord Jesus called the "Word"? - - - - -	159
Can you prove that the "Body of Christ" and the "Bride" are the same thing? - - - - -	159
Please Explain 1 Cor. x. 31. How is this precept to be obeyed? - - - - -	198
Is the "Cup of Wrath" a Scriptural term? - - - - -	199
When the Church is taken away, will the Holy Ghost also be taken away? Who is the Restrainer of 2 Thess. ii. 7? - - - - -	215
Will sin cease when the Enemy is bound? - - - - -	216
What is the "Living Sacrifice" of Rom. xii. 1? - - - - -	217
What is the difference between "the earnest of the Spirit" and "the earnest of the inheritance?" - - - - -	218
Angels: Elect or Fallen, - - - - -	219
What is the difference between the mission of the "Twelve" and of the "Seventy," in Luke ix. and x. ? - - - - -	219
Who are the "Two Witnesses," Rev. xi. ? - - - - -	220
Is there any direct reference to the Church in the opening verses of Eph. i. ? - - - - -	232
Why is "Dan" not included in Rev. vii. ? - - - - -	232
Does Rev. xi. 1 suppose the people in the land? &c., - - - - -	233

## FRAGMENTS.

Fragments, &c., - - - - -	99, 160, 231, 233, 234, 235
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## POETRY.

Thanksgiving, - - - - -	20
Praise, - - - - -	34
" <i>I can do all things</i> ," - - - - -	59
" <i>He calleth Thee</i> ," - - - - -	100
" <i>Mine eye seeth Thee</i> ," - - - - -	140
" <i>Life's Answer</i> ," - - - - -	171
" <i>The Lord Jesus Christ</i> ," - - - - -	214
Disappointment, - - - - -	234

# WORDS OF TRUTH.

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## COLOSSIANS COMPARED WITH ROMANS AND EPHESIANS.\*

IN taking up Colossians, I will begin by comparing it with the Epistles to the Ephesians and Romans, in order to help us in understanding the different ways in which the condition of souls is treated. The chapter I have read (c. i.) connects itself too, in a remarkable way, with the counsels of God, as well as containing some of the more elementary truths, such as our hope of glory and our responsibility, which makes it practical to all our souls. You will never rightly connect the doctrines of man's responsibility and God's free grace, until you see them united in Christ. From Paradise and onwards you find these very questions proposed by God Himself in the Tree of life, and the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But man broke down in his responsibility, and was shut out from the Tree of life. Thus there were the two sides of the question from the very starting-point of God's ways. The same question was raised by the law. The two things were there, and by satisfying the responsibility, man was to find the way to life. Then came Christ, who did satisfy the responsibility, and is the life. Grace, which bestows the life, gave Christ, who met the responsibility. I receive eternal life through the righteousness of God when I have none, and I have to glorify Him in exhibiting this life in my body.

In divine things people forget (what they see every day and which is as simple as possible in human things), that duties flow always from the relationship in which we are already placed; putting a person into a relationship, puts him as naturally as possible into the duties belonging to that relationship. If the place is a constant one, the duty is a constant one, as with parents and children, husband and wife. The

\* Belfast Conference, Sept., 1870.



statement often made, that if I am saved I may do as I like, is thus disposed of. Can my child say, that because he is my child he may do as he likes? No; the duty flows from the relationship. If I am a child of God, duty is always there; I may fail in it, and be chastened as a naughty child—quite true; but the duty is there. That is what redemption does; on the total failure of man under responsibility, it brings me the gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus. Thus praise, service, obedience—whatever belongs to the child of God—flows from it.

Now the Epistle to the Ephesians gives us the counsels of God, while Romans takes up the responsibility of man, and his failure in it; then his justification from this state. These are connected with two aspects of sin; first, in its lusts and passions, in which man lives in sin; then, its aspect as towards God, in which he is dead in sin. On the one hand I find him alive in sin, away from God, seeking to gratify his lusts. Then, I ask, what is the state of this soul towards God? He is dead. Scripture speaks of both states. In Romans man is alive in sins, in Ephesians, as towards God, he is dead. If looked at as alive in sins, it is a question of putting them away and justification. If looked at as towards God, dead, there is nothing of this; it is his being quickened out of that state—and, therefore, life, and a new creation; all that side is connected with the counsels of God. Taking man as dead, there is nothing to be got out of him, he has not a feeling or a thought towards God; evil goes out towards evil, but not a feeling stirs towards God. When Christ is brought in he sees no beauty in Him that he should desire Him; that is man.

In Colossians you find both states: ch. iii. 7, "In the which ye also walked sometime when ye lived in them" (that is Romans); and ch. ii. 13, "You being dead in your sins"—which takes in Ephesians. This Epistle then (Col.) comes between Romans and Ephesians, and takes up both sides.

When we come to Ephesians we find the counsels of God, the sealing of the Spirit, the inheritance, and then our being made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Consequently, in the conduct of the Christian, it is God Himself who is given as the pattern of it: "be ye imitators of God as dear children"; and we get the truth in Jesus, which is, you have put off the old man, and have put on the new. It is not a system of doctrine, but that I have done with the one, and have passed into the other. In Colossians

you never find the Holy Ghost mentioned, except incidentally and exceptionally, as, "love in the Spirit," but life is the great subject. In Ephesians, the old man having been put off, and the new man put on, the Holy Ghost is in the Christian, as the power to manifest God in his ways, and thus be the expression of God in a man. God is love, and God is light; "walk in love," and "now are ye light in the Lord;" Christ is the pattern for light, and the pattern for love. There are two ways in which love is manifested; first, the divine love, which shows its greatness in having to do with the vilest, in rising above the evil, and putting it away; secondly, where the object characterizes the affections in giving oneself up in devotedness to Him who has so loved us. If I love what is base, it is a base affection, and so on; the affection corresponds with the object on which it fixes itself. I find both these characters of love in Christ, in Eph. v. 2, and it is the path for us. "He loved us," answers to the first, "to God for a sweet smelling savour," answers to the second. Love going out *to us* in every need, but *to God* as its constant object. It is so with us; we must have *God* always before the soul to keep up the character of our love. Here, then, I find the fullest description of what the walk of the Christian is; I am sitting in heavenly places in Christ, not in Adam at all. The works are suitable, and, moreover, foreordained. They are suited to the place we are in. If the position is Jewish, the works are legal; but the child is not a servant, nor the servant a child. We are called to walk in works as new in kind, as our position. There (in Eph.) I find the Holy Ghost consequently, as the link to connect me with Christ.

Now, in Romans I find the responsibility and failure of man thoroughly examined and proved. Among the Gentiles there were things too horrible to mention; among the Jews the law broken; in result, "every mouth is stopped." The judgment of God is in the simplest and most absolute way revealed. Sentence is pronounced "there is none righteous, no, not one."

The apostle is not ashamed of the gospel, because "therein is the righteousness of God revealed." Why? Because "the *wrath* of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." Whatever is inconsistent with God's presence He will not have. Mark, the wrath is revealed, not hidden, and

the revelation is just as complete as if He were sitting on the great white throne.

In the second part of the epistle (chap. v. 12—viii), he turns to the nature that produced the fruit. It is not *guilt*, but *state*. The *guilt* is met by *Christ dying for our sins*, and we have redemption through His blood. The *state* is met by *our being crucified with Him*. Then “the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us,” but it is not bringing back the law to give us a rule for right conduct; (it required righteousness, but never produced it); but by our walking in the Spirit, *He* produces the righteousness which the law required. Christ is my righteousness, and the Spirit is the power of life in us, producing righteousness. The law produced nothing but condemnation, provoking the sin. Life and the Spirit of Christ give us the path of godliness in contrast to law, beyond which the epistle does not go as to practical righteousness. Then having been justified by the blood of Christ, and brought to God through Christ, the hope is fully given of being like Christ in glory.

The three following chapters (ix, x, xi,) are to reconcile the unconditional promises to the Jews, with the declaration “there is no difference.” They might ask, what will you make of the promises to Abraham? He shows they could not take the ground of promise at all, and shuts up all to mercy.

In Romans, redemption meets the whole case *I* am in: Ephesians is the answer to the counsels and purposes of *God*. In Colossians *both* are found, and as between the two; you have not the full consequences of Ephesians, but you have more than in the Romans: you find in Colossians “risen with Christ;” which is an immense thing for the soul, as all other things are left behind. If merely quickened, I cannot say that. I was lying dead in sins, Christ comes down in grace to where I was, clearing away, as He comes down, all that belongs to sin. Then God comes in and raises Him and us up together. This involves union, I do not say more, because union is actually by the Holy Ghost. Romans does not give that, for this reason; he takes up an individual and says, you have been living in sins—you must personally be justified. Each has to answer for himself; “*I* am carnal,” not “*we*” are—that would take in all. The moment I find that *we* are all dead together in sins, *we* are all brought together out of death, God has quickened *us* together with Christ;

wherever you find death and resurrection, it is a *step towards* union, and involves "one body."

If you are *dead* with Christ, I have it in Romans ; if you are *risen* with Christ, I have it in Colossians ; but I do not go to sit in heavenly places—that is Ephesians. Consequently (in Col.) I am *seeking* the things that are above, not *sitting* there. I am here—not as alive in the world but risen—and my affections set there, occupied with Christ, going up after Him. If I speak of the Holy Ghost, I must have *union*. In Colossians it is *life*, not the Holy Ghost uniting in one body in the heavenlies in Christ. Heavenly things are our hope (c. i. 5). Instead of beginning in Colossians with the counsels of God, as in Ephesians, we have a long preface of the Apostle's desire for the saints to set them thoroughly in this hope of heavenly things. Both aspects of the truth are important. It is most important that we should learn in Ephesians "to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus"—most important, too, that my heart and affections should be set there ; this Colossians does. My hope is laid up in heaven, but I am not sitting there.

We will now look at the prayer of the Apostle (vv. 9, 10), which comes instead of our calling, as in Ephesians. There you get the blessings and the privileges of the Church—the whole *body*; in Colossians the value and fulness of the *Head*. It is well for us to see where He sets us. How often we find ourselves doubting about the will of God, and it is always because we have not a single eye. Perhaps we have never thought of the thing before ; still if there is doubt, the eye is not single. God puts us through all sorts of things to test the state of the soul. If you do not see, the eye is not clear—the *thing* is clear. It is the condition of the soul that is tested by all these spiritual exercises. I may think I require wisdom, while all the time it is God testing me. The measure and character of the Apostle's desire is that we should "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing" ; nothing short of this. Here again, the state is tested. I must know the Lord to know what is worthy of Him. I must know His mind and feelings—must be spiritually minded. It is increasing in the knowledge of Him, and thus we know how to walk. "Strengthened with all might according to the power of his glory." To what? Oh! how different are God's ways and man's. What a poor kind of result it seems! "Unto all patience and long suffering with joyfulness!"

but nothing tests the state of the heart more. "Patience"—that is just what characterised the Lord's path. Had He a *will*? Never! He came to do the Father's will; He was patient right on to the Cross, and nothing else. In Phil. ii.—emptying Himself He only goes lower and lower—He is the first example of "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." "With joyfulness"—that too, was seen in Him, therefore He could say "that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." *Will* does not connect us with God; *broken will* leaves us free to enjoy Him, and I find the very thing that breaks my will in fellowship with Him, and thus it gives me joy.

Now, having this growth, what do we find? Why the man *was* meet to be partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light all the time (v. 12), so that after pressing this "growing by the knowledge of God," he can give thanks to the Father for having made us meet. Am I going to be with saints in light? Then I must get all the sanctity and light I can have here. If I am looking for holiness in view of *acceptance*, it is not really *holiness* I want but *righteousness*. People call it holiness, but it is not really so. There is no proper holiness until there is certainty of salvation. A child has a nature capable of filial feelings, but he may be an orphan and cannot have them, because he has neither father nor mother. So one born of God cannot have holy affections as such. He wants the Spirit of adoption, "whereby we cry Abba, Father," before there can be true holiness. You have been washed clean in the blood of Christ. Have you been allowing in yourself anything contrary to that? It will not do. The blood has been put upon your ear, and upon your hand, and upon your foot. Nothing must be let into the head or done by the hand or foot that is not fit for the blood of Christ. This is how sin becomes so exceedingly hateful. You have gone and found pleasure, if only for five minutes, in that which gave Christ His agony. It is horrible! We have it in the case of the Red Heifer, in Num. xix, whose blood had been sprinkled seven times before God. Sins had been consumed when the heifer was killed. But the ashes of the heifer bring *me* back to the sufferings of Christ, and show me the horribleness of sin by the very place I am in. This is for holiness and not a question of acceptance. It is the place we are in that gives the measure of the evil.

Now He comes to look at the double character of Christ's

glory, and of the reconciliation, unfolding specially the glory of the Head, not of the Body. In *vv.* 16, 17, He takes His place as Head of creation—of course because He is Creator. Then he comes to resurrection from the dead and Headship of the Body (*v.* 18). Here He is not “first-born of creation” as man, but “first-born from the dead.” Then you get all the fulness pleased to dwell in Him. It is not in *v.* 19, “it pleased *the Father*,” for given Godhead would be nonsense; but as in *e.* ii. 9 : it is the glory of His Person.

Now we go back to get everything brought into order by reconciliation, and this has also a double character. “By him to reconcile all things unto himself” is not yet accomplished. “You . . . hath he reconciled”—that is done. We are a reconciled people in the midst of an unreconciled world. There is no such thing as an unreconciled Christian. But our bodies are not yet reconciled: they belong to the old creation. There is not a thing between us and God, unless you put Christ. If there is the least thing between us we are not reconciled—“to present you holy and unblameable and unrepvable” in God’s own sight! (*v.* 22).

“If ye continue in the faith.” The moment you find saints on earth you get “if.” Now we have the double ministry—“the gospel which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven,” not like Peter’s to the circumcision. And “the church, whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to complete the word of God.” The moment the Church was revealed the whole circle of the testimony of God was complete. Verse 27 gives us “Christ among you the hope of glory.” The Christ of the Jews was not “the hope of glory,” but “a crown of glory” when He came, and not among the Gentiles at all. But now Gentiles who have no title to glory have Him as “the *hope* of glory.” The Epistle to the Colossians is a word on the way, in which you get between the two.

Then I have all the fulness of the Godhead revealed to me in Christ, “for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily.” When Christ came there was nothing more to be revealed. To preserve the connection of *vv.* 9, 10 (*c.* ii.) read “all the completeness of the Godhead,” and “ye are complete in him.” The completeness of the Godhead is brought to us, and we are complete before the Godhead in

Him. Thus we have real circumcision of heart. But what becomes of "the principles of the world?" They are all put away—"Ye are complete in him," and do not want any of these things. First, I go to death as a living sinner, and have the truth of Romans (v. 12). Then I am dead in sins and quickened, and have that in Ephesians (v. 13), in an entirely new creation. He put away my trespasses coming into death, and now He raises me up without them. He does not take the Christian to the heavens, but gets hold of the conscience as to where they are. Ritualism and all the rest of it is smashed. Put a gold leaf between the Head and body, and all is gone, it is death! I can have nothing before God but that I am complete in Him. All these things were but "a shadow of things to come."

What do you know about angels? (v. 18). How do you know they can hear you? Do you know they care for you? Will you say, It is a great thing to have a friend at court—denying you are in Christ? We have Him as a mediator for our weakness, and I trust His heart more than I do an angel's. He has been a man in my circumstances, and knows what I feel. Angels have not.

Here we are in Romans again (v. 20). "Why as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances." You have died with Christ, and you have done with the whole position in that respect. It was only a satisfying of the flesh. We have come to the practical application of it all. Here we are risen with Christ (c. iii), and so far on Ephesian ground, only that we are not *sitting* in heavenly places; we *seek* them. You have Him in your heart here that your *affections* may be where He is. Having died with Him, if He is hid we are hid, if He appears we appear. Then we have the most complete statement of what Christian life is, that we find anywhere in the Epistles. He will not own any other life, but speaks of "*when ye lived in them.*" First you find the gross sins spoken of in v. 5; then in v. 8, no great lust, but the will not broken, and v. 9, untruth. You are to put off all these. They combine the two great characters of sin, *violence* and *corruption*. We are never told in Scripture to put off the old man, nor to die to sin. Tell the new man to die? I hope not! Tell the old man to die, and he says, Indeed I will not, I will live as long as I can! "They that are Christ's have *crucified* the flesh," not have *mortified* it. I am an active person in putting all these

things to death ; to mortify is to put practically to death, supposes power—the power of life. Dying is not power. So we read “seeing that ye *have put off* the old man with his deeds.”

Now I find the knowledge of holiness according to the nature of God, “renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.” This goes far beyond the mere absence of sin like innocent Adam. “Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind,” &c. “Holy and beloved ;” I am that ; he puts them into their place always. This is not what I am to put on, but I am to put on what suits this character and relationship ; *v.* 16, looks for the heart being enlarged in the knowledge of divine things. *Ver.* 17, “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.” This gives us a rule that goes far beyond—what is the harm of this or that ? and is so simple. It comes into any common thing in the day, such as buying a dress. Are you doing it in the name of the Lord Jesus ? Can you go to a concert in His name ? Of course not. The thing may not be wrong, but it settles everything—hundreds of questions that might arise. It gives me as my measure and rule to be walking in Christ, and living for Christ. I have Christ as my life, and He cannot do it. Then I have got away from Him, I leave Him to do it. If I am in earnest, it is the most comfortable rule possible, but if I am not, it pinches dreadfully ; because you may say, Am I never to do anything to please myself ? Ah, you betray *yourself* ! What a comfort it is to know what *He* likes ! In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, we know perfectly well if we are doing things in the name of Christ. It goes through the whole character of life in Christ, this “putting off,” and “putting on.” It does not bring in the Holy Ghost, but *life* in us—what life is—He is the power of the life, but it is the life of Christ that is in me.

To speak of the Holy Ghost dwelling in me as my life, would be an *incarnation* of the Holy Ghost, which is nonsense. Christ is my life ; but it is by the Holy Ghost on the other hand, that I get life and liberty, power and conscious union with Christ.

And now in closing, let me ask, if you can say you have the consciousness of the place you are set in, as made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light ? Can you honestly



say, as to the purpose of your heart, I do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus? Are you conscious of having that as the bent, and aim, and settled principle of your life? I may fail in it, but, Is that my object? If I am going one way, I may trip, or go slowly, but I am not going the opposite way. I know you may trip, but I ask, is it the principle of your life to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus? It is an immense privilege. In the commonest things we are able to bring in Christ. The apostle cannot tell the servant in the house not to purloin without going through the whole scheme of Christianity; "that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, for the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared," &c. (Titus ii). When the heart is set upon an object, it judges of everything according to it. I do a thing because He likes it; this shows I care for Him. If my heart is set upon pleasing Him, I shall have things *as* He likes it, and simply *because* He likes it. If we have our hearts filled with Christ, we shall count it no great sacrifice to do without the dross for His sake!

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## THE WAY WE NOW KNOW CHRIST.

IN 2 Cor. v. 16, we have a very clear statement of the way in which we now know Christ. We read, "Wherefore, henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." That is, Christ had been known as a Man in flesh down here; but now that was ended. He had gone into heaven, and henceforth He was to be known as a living Messiah no more. Yet not unknown, but living in a more wonderful way than before. His death was the closing of man's history in responsibility; but as risen from the dead He is Head of the new creation, as well as Head of His body the church.

In that relationship we know Him now. Christ the Head is in glory, unseen and unknown by man in the flesh; we, the members of His body, are on earth, and the Spirit of God has been sent down, and He unites us to the Head in glory, giving us the *consciousness* of our relationship. What a wondrous place is ours; but how feebly it is apprehended by us.

To know Christ after the flesh, is a Jewish position. We

have an illustration of it in Thomas (John xx); Jesus (*v.* 29) says, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." This points to a much more blessed way of knowing Christ; "Whom having *not seen* ye love, in whom, though now *ye see him not, yet believing*, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Peter i. 8). It is interesting to mark how the Lord prepared His disciples for this change. In John xiv, He tells them that He is going away. All their hopes were centered in Him as Messiah *on earth*. His death would crush all these, and, lest these might think that all had been a mistake and a delusion, He says, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, *believe also in me*." Then He tells of the Comforter who would be given consequent on His going away. That His disciples understood little of this is apparent; still, Jesus places them morally in the position which they were to occupy afterwards: in the world, their hopes connected with an *absent Christ*, and the Comforter sent down to dwell in them and with them for ever. In keeping with this, when He rises from the dead, He says to Mary, "*Touch me not*." Mysterious change, one would say, in the One who never discouraged the advances of a single true heart. But He was gently teaching Mary the truth that she was to know Him no more after the flesh; she *had* known Him thus.

It is very touching to see how that, even after He had risen from the dead, the disciples still clung to Him as an earthly deliverer, their thoughts never rising beyond earthly position. The two disciples going to Emmaus, speaking of their disappointed hopes, say, "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel" (Luke xxiv. 21); and at the very last, the disciples say, "Lord, will thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts i. 6.)

But there was to be something far higher and more wonderful than this—they were to be witnesses for an *absent Christ* whom the world had cast out. He was going up into heaven, and they were to know Him no more after the flesh. The Holy Ghost was to be sent down to dwell in them, the power for the testimony committed to them, and, as we find elsewhere, to connect them with Him in glory and give them the knowledge of Himself there. This could never be while He was on earth. In His life, and in His death, He was emphatically and absolutely *alone*, but as risen from the

dead and gone on high, we are associated with Him by the power of the Holy Ghost sent down. Hence Jesus says, "It is *expedient for you* that I go away ; because if I go not away the Comforter will not come." Expedient, because they would know Him in a far closer way, and as brought into union with Himself.

Let us look for a moment at the practical effect of this. We get an illustration of it in Peter. With his eye on Christ he could walk over the stormy billows. Stephen, "looked stedfastly up into heaven," sees Jesus there, and forgetting his own troubles, he thinks of his enemies : "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." What a beautiful manifestation of the Spirit of Christ. The manner of this conformity is doctrinally stated in 2 Cor. iii. 18, "We all with open face beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord." We thus see that there is transforming *power* in the knowledge of Christ in glory, and we do not get this by looking at His lowly path on earth, but at what He is now.

It is our place to know Him where He is. We can know Him no where else, just as a friend is known in the place where he is for the time being. What a wondrous thing is this intimacy with the Lord Jesus. How little we know of it, yet it is the secret of power. See the effect it had on Paul: "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord," and as if he were just commencing to sound the depths that are in Himself, he goes on, "That I may know him."

Ah, if we only knew a little more of Him, how the world would lose its attractions—how self and the flesh would be denied—how we should surmount trials and difficulties. In short, the deeper our knowledge of Christ the more power there will be for worship, for service, and for walk. Have we not to mourn over weakness and failure and poverty of soul? The cause of it is here,—we are not sufficiently occupied with Christ on high. Do we often mourn the low tone of our worship? It is because Christ is not fully engaging our hearts ; for just in proportion as we know Him there, shall we delight to think of Him as He was down here. As we gather around the symbols of His broken body and shed blood, the deeper our practical knowledge of Himself in glory, the more true and real will be our remembrance of Him in the times of His suffering and death.

Another practical effect is that we prove this world to be "a dry and thirsty land, where no water is," because the only One that satisfies our affections is absent, and is disowned and cast out. Thus the blessed hope of His return is kept clear and bright. We long to see Him. The two things are connected. We *remember* Him till *He come*, but the measure in which we do so depends on our *knowledge* of Himself where He is now.

Let us judge ourselves as to these things. I believe there never was a time when a growing personal knowledge of Christ was more needed. The tide of indifferentism has set in, and mere intelligence will not give us power to stand against it. Christ, as the known and loved object of our hearts, will alone preserve us. What an instance of intelligence without faith we find in Matt. ii. 3-6. The Chief Priests and Scribes had a perfectly correct knowledge of the prophecy concerning the birth of Jesus, yet so far as we know, it never took them out of the Court of Herod. The Wise Men from the East were left to seek out the Child.

May the Lord have the supreme place in our hearts, so that we may be kept true to Him. C.

## NOTES OF A READING ON THE PSALMS.

### BOOK V.—PSALMS CVII.—CL.

IN the fifth book we have the ways and dealings of God recounted by the people as brought back; with a divine commentary, as it were, on it all, ending in praise. The book is supplementary in its character.

Psalm cvii. gives, in *vv.* 1, 2, the general character of the book. It is the song of the redeemed, as such, recounting all the vicissitudes of their return, and how in it all, mercy has triumphed over judgment. This testimony to Jehovah's mercy enduring for ever, connects them in principle with the ark when it was brought back by David after "Ichabod" had been written on the people, for there it was that Israel first sang "His mercy endureth for ever." Though they are the redeemed, and brought back in this Psalm, they are still in trouble, and in *v.* 39 they are brought low, even after being in the land. As in Isaiah xviii. 2, ambassadors sent by sea bring them back to their land; but in *v.* 5 they are all cut down, and in *v.* 7 the Lord gathers them and establishes them in blessing.

Psalm cviii. God is in the land, and claims it as His own. See *v.* 8.

In Psalm cix. we have Judas, the son of perdition, but running on into the plural, and thus a type of the apostate Jews in the end.

Psalm cx. Christ is exalted. He is seated at Jehovah's right hand until His enemies are made His footstool. He must be there to deliver them.

Psalm cxi. The works of Jehovah are celebrated. This and the two following Psalms go together as a "Hallelujah" in reference to Jehovah's ways with Israel in their deliverance. Each Psalm begins with "Hallelujah."

Psalm cxii. The character here of those who are to be blessed on the earth. The fear of the Lord is that which characterises them especially.

Psalm cxiii. goes back a little to His mercy. Jehovah is to be exalted. It takes up the poor, and the barren woman. He comes in in delivering power when man has failed altogether. They are not facts but moral principles in these Psalms.

Psalm cxiv. The question is raised, What is the meaning of the earth trembling and the sea fleeing? The answer is, It is the same power as of old in the deliverance of Israel, as it says in Deut. xxxii. 36, "The Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left."

Psalm cxv. Praises to His name, in contrast with idols, for their deliverance from death. The dead praise not the Lord (they say), but we do.

Psalm cxvi. is the cry in the depth of distress to Jehovah, and he is heard. He will pay his vows unto the Lord in the presence of all His people. The effect of the trouble was to drive him to Jehovah, and the deliverance calls forth his praise.

Psalm cxvii. The title they have to call upon all nations to join in praising Jehovah, because His merciful kindness is great towards them, and the truth of the Lord, in His faithfulness to Israel, who has fulfilled all His promises towards them, "endureth for ever."

Psalm cxviii. This Psalm brings out in a remarkable way the whole dealings of God with Israel on the ground of His mercy. In *vv.* 10-12 we have the power of man all against the godly; in *v.* 13, the adversary, and in *v.* 18, he sees himself

the subject of the chastenings of Jehovah. In *v.* 22 is what Christ quoted of Himself; it is His rejection; *v.* 25 is the hosannah the children cried in the temple; *v.* 26 is what the Lord told the Jews, that until they said that they should never see Him again; *v.* 24 is the true Sabbath for Israel. The night is past with them, so they can say, "This is the day the Lord hath made: we will rejoice and be glad in it." The Psalm is summed up with "His mercy endureth for ever." It is a summary of all that is going on then until the Millennial day.

*Q.* Do we not have the sufferings of Christ in *v.* 18?

No doubt Christ entered into it, but the chastening was upon Israel.

Psalm *cix.* is writing the law upon their hearts according to the promise of the new covenant.

We come now with Psalm *cxx.* to the songs of degrees. Some have thought they were written on the occasion of the bringing back of the ark; but be that as it may, I doubt not that they depict the process that goes on until they get to the full blessing of unity in Psalm *cxxxiii.*

The series begins with—"In my distress I cried unto the Lord;" and it ends with "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity," and their praising Jehovah in the temple.

Psalm *cxxx.*—They are not in the depths in this Psalm, but it speaks of their having been in them.

Psalm *cxxxii.* is a plea for the Lord to remember David and all his afflictions. In *v.* 8 we have a contrast with Num. *x.* There Jehovah arose to scatter Israel's enemies, and then He returned to the many thousands in Israel; but now the enemies are scattered, and the prayer is that Jehovah with the ark of His strength shall arise and take His rest in Israel. In *v.* 14 Jehovah says, "This is my rest for ever." It is the restoration of the Ark of the Covenant to its resting-place, and the promises of Jehovah in answer to the supplication of His servant. In each point you find the answer is greater than the request. In *v.* 8 it is, "Arise, O Lord, into thy rest." In *v.* 13, 14 the Lord hath "desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell, for I have desired it." Then in *v.* 9 the prayer is, "Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness, and let thy saints shout aloud for joy." Then comes the answer, "I will clothe her priests with salvation, and her saints shall shout aloud for joy." Then in

v. 10 we have the prayer, "For thy servant David's sake turn not away the face of thine anointed;" and then the answer comes, "There will I make the horn of David to bud; I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed, His enemies will I clothe with shame, but upon himself shall his crown flourish."

Psalm cxxxv. is praise to Jehovah. We have His name here in connection with Israel, and in contrast with idols. In v. 13, Ex. iii. 15 is quoted, where we have Jehovah, the name He takes to stand by Israel for ever; in v. 14 you find a quotation from Deut. xxxii. 36 in the prophetic song of Moses, when He has unfolded to them their picture as apostate, their spot not the spot of His children, &c.; and then when they should be helpless and hopeless in themselves, Jehovah would judge His people, and would repent Himself concerning His servants. So that these two verses give us the first deliverance and purpose of God, and the judgment and ways of God, in the last days, which afford the key to the interpretation of the Psalms.

Psalm cxxxvi. takes up these things much in the same manner, but with the addition of mercy enduring for ever with each statement; the lesson *we* are learning here.

Psalm cxxxvii. We have had the Assyrian, now we get Babylon, which we have not had before. Babylon lasts on in prophecy to the beast. We have Edom too, the old rival of Israel. Obadiah prophesies largely of Edom's judgment, for its perpetual hatred to Israel. When Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem captive, Edom stood in the way to cut them off lest any of them should escape. The Roman Beast is Babylon in the end. Assyria is the enemy, when Israel is owned as God's people, and Babylon when Israel is not owned.

Psalm cxxxviii. In spite of all this the remnant praises God in spirit, though in the presence of the power of Babylon. We have God's word and the cry of faith in this Psalm; the same principle as in Heb. iv. where we have the word of God laying bare the heart and the conscience, and the Priest on high, so that we can come boldly to the throne of grace; just as in Luke x. we have Mary hearing Christ's words, and in chap. xi. the disciples say, "Lord teach us to pray." The word of God and prayer are the two channels of communication between God and man.

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

## SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

"INA: KENT," asks—1, What is the character of Christ's priesthood *now*; Aaronic or Melchisedec?

2. Is Aaronic priesthood, intercessory? and Melchizedec, blessing? If so, can Christ assume the latter order of priesthood until the millennium?

3. When did Christ assume His priesthood? Was it not after His ascension? (Heb. viii. 4.)

A:—1. As a rule, Aaronic priesthood is characterised by *atonement* and *intercession*; that of Melchisedec by *power* and *blessing*. He is "the high priest of our profession," as Christians: He will be in result "priest of the Most High God"—God's millennial name.

The order of His priesthood is (as ever) that of Melchisedec—its *exercise* at present after the pattern or character of Aaron, *i.e.*, intercessional. He was "called" to the priesthood by the word of Him that said unto Him, "Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee." (Heb. v. 5.) This has reference to His being the Son of God, as born of a woman, and born in time on earth. Compare Psalm ii. 7, and Luke i. 35. This is distinct from His being God's eternal Son.

He is installed in His priesthood after the order of Melchisedec, as having gone on high when he had been rejected on earth, had died and risen, and had ascended to heaven. Compare Heb. v. 6, and Psalm cx. 4.

He was perfected for His priesthood (especially for its present *exercise*), "in the days of his flesh," through strong crying and tears, and His pathway of sorrow and suffering, and then He went on high. Heb. v. 7-9; Mark xiv. 33-40; Luke xxii. 40-53.

Having gone through all this, He was "saluted of God an High priest after the order of Melchisedec," (Heb. v. 10), when He ascended into the heavens. There and then He first practically exercised His priesthood. (See query 3.) When He comes forth again He will exercise it after its true order, as Melchisedec.

There was an action done on the cross by Him as priest before He took His seat on high. It is noticed in Heb. ii. 17. But strictly speaking it was *not a priestly act*, though it was the *act of a priest*. I allude to His making propitiation for the sins of the people. In Scripture you will find that priesthood in its true character *follows* the work of redemption. As



*sinner*s the people needed a *sacrifice*, but as *saints* they need a *priest*. The High Priest standing confessing the sins of the people, was not, in this act, in his normal place as standing between a reconciled people and God. Christ was both priest and sacrifice to make propitiation for the sins of the people; but having done this as a priest He enters on the exercise of His priesthood, standing between a people who have been reconciled to God, and a God who has reconciled them to Himself.

Then follows an immense heavenly interval, characterised by the presence of the Holy Ghost dwelling on earth, before Christ comes forth to minister joy and strength and blessing as Melchisedec, in the age to come. Here then, is where Christianity comes in. In the epistle to the Hebrews, He is only known as *gone in*, never as *come out*: though there is a promise that He will. This stamps the primary application of the epistle to Christians in the most characteristic manner. For, as *Christians*, we have to do with a Priest who is *gone in* to the holiest; *Israel* has to do with a priest who has *come out*!

No doubt, His priesthood in the holiest now sustains His people Israel as a separate people on earth, till the morning of their history arrives. They are apparently lost to man's eyes, but the true Priest orders a light for this people "before the Lord continually," "from the evening unto the morning" of their history: the twelve loaves on the pure table in their two rows, with the frankincense put on them, in type shows how He maintains them in a perpetual memorial before the Lord. (See Lev. xxiv. 1-9.)

The typical exercise of the Melchisedec priesthood is seen in Gen. xiv. 18-20. Abram returns from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer and the confederate Kings in Shaveh, and Melchisedec comes forth in connection with the name of the "Most High," God's millennial name—then, in millennial day, "*possessor*," manifestly, "of heaven and earth." He deals strength and joy (bread and wine) to the victorious Hebrew—blesses him, and blesses the God of Abram who had delivered him from his foes.

Thus, in the opening of the age to come, when the great confederate battle of the kings of the earth is fought, and the seed of Abraham delivered from their foes, Christ appears, introducing joy and strength, and as Priest of the Most High God—then manifestly *possessor of heaven and*

*earth*—the one now the abode of evil spirits, and the other the scene of man's evil and Satan's lie. He sits as a Priest on His throne (Zech. vi. 13), the link between the then cleansed heavens, and the renewed earth, and Jehovah 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" (the seed of God), "*and I will sow her unto me in the earth*"—i.e., the restored and delivered people, which He never yet has done (Hos. ii. 21-23). A stream of full blessing then flows from God in that day through Melchisedec.

Thus this priesthood is all blessing, after He has come forth, at a future day. This answers much of query 2.

At present we only know Him as *gone in* to the heavens, ever living (there) to make intercession for those that come unto God by Him (Heb. vii. 25). His order of priesthood never changes. His exercise of it is certainly *not* after its true order; but the activities of intercession constantly exercised to reconcile the condition of a poor, failing, feeble people on earth whom He has redeemed, with the perfection of the place of glory in which He has set them on high.

Ready on the one side to give loose rein to all that is in our hearts, in a scene of corruption suited to its evil; capable on the other hand of enjoying God in all His holiness in the light of heaven; the priesthood of Christ supports our weakness in the divine desires, and all that God has caused to spring up in our hearts, and sustains us against the encroachments of the flesh and the world—ministering to us the grace we need here below, which He learned in His own path; because He has seen to the righteousness we did need on high before God; and thus we find from our God (not as it is translated "help in time of need" but,) "opportune succour" (*εὐκαιρον βοήθειαν*) to prevent failure, and falling by the way. To pick us up when we have fallen, might be, indeed, "help in time of need"; but to minister "opportune succour", supposes that we have discovered our constant need of it, and that we are in the place of danger and liability to fail. Thus prevention is better than cure. His present intercessional priesthood is active to sustain us before God by the way.

Advocacy and washing of our feet come in as actions which flow from priesthood, while not themselves strictly so.

## THANKSGIVING.

Abba, Father, we adore Thee,  
As Thy saints before Thy throne ;  
Sweet it is to praise and bless Thee,  
For thy love in Christ made known.  
Feeding on His broken body,  
We behold the wondrous price  
That Thou gavest for our ransom,  
Nought could else for sin suffice.

Thus alone, Thy love eternal  
Can to us, as sinners, flow ;  
He who took our guilt upon Him,  
Bore away our sin and woe.  
He has shed His blood most precious,  
Pouring out His soul to death ;  
“ For my life that death He suffered ”  
Every ransomed sinner saith.

Of our guilt His cross the measure,  
Then our sins’ desert we learn :  
In this precious cup partaking,  
We Thy love, our God, discern.  
Through His blood, redeemed, forgiven,  
Title to draw near the throne,—  
How complete its perfect cleansing,  
Thy unsullied light makes known.

Therefore, to Thee, God and Father  
Of our Saviour, and our Lord,  
Prostrate bow our thankful spirits—  
Worshipping with one accord.  
As we take the sacred emblems,  
Guide, our God, each heart aright,  
That Thy children’s adoration  
May be pleasing in Thy sight.

R. W.

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“ But the end of all things is at hand : be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves : for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.” (1 Pet. iv. 7, 8.)

“ Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us hold fast grace (*marg.*), whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear : for our God is a consuming fire.” (Heb. xii. 28, 29.)

## CANAAN FIRST: THEN THE LESSONS OF THE WILDERNESS.

THE people of God are a heavenly people—they are already “in the heavenlies in Christ.” We require no experience in learning this blessed truth—nothing but simple faith. Very many experiences are passed through at times in accepting the truth of being dead with Christ to our whole sinful state as children of Adam ; the more so when experience contradicts faith, and we find that we are, if we look at ourselves, still alive. The evil nature is still ready to lend itself to everything contrary to God ; but for faith, and for God, it is dead, and the only thing which lives in us in His sight, is that new nature which He has given us. Its feeblest throb is fragrant before Him, because it is the exhibition of the life of Jesus—in whom was all His delight—in our mortal bodies.

We have thus been introduced into a *life* the other side of death and judgment. The very life that we have in Christ is a witness that our sins are all put away ; before He bestowed it upon us, He first bore the sins which He found in the way, as He passed down in holy love, into the depths in which we lay—“dead in sins.” Then He rose, leaving them all behind Him in His grave. He introduces us into a *place* on high with God, a fitting sphere for that life to grow and flourish. He gives us the glory He has as a Man, and the *possession* of all He will inherit. Then He looks for the works and fruits suited to that new scene, which God had foreordained for us to walk in. (Eph. ii. 10.)

Thus, in this new place, having this new life, and being already in possession of all things in Christ, we are not in Egypt. We *did* walk according to the course of this world. Nor are we in the wilderness, but in heavenly places which are our Canaan. “We are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.” And here comes in the paradox of the Christian state. A Christian looks on high and sees Christ in the glory, and is conscious that he is in Him. He looks below, and he sees himself traversing a world under Satan’s power, in which there is not a breath that is not noxious to the new and heavenly life within. But having first begun in the glory, with the consciousness of His place there, he is in the race which leads to the attainment of the goal—the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus. He looks at himself, and he can say, “as having nothing.” He looks at Christ, and says, “yet possessing all things.”

Now, there is no place like the wilderness for learning the tender sympathy of Christ and the blessing of a Father's love and patience, and care. True, he must first know the Canaan to which he has already come in Christ. Then he sees that this scene is not the sphere in which God can bless him fully, and that there is no place like the wilderness for thoroughly learning his own heart and the heart of Christ.

In Deuteronomy viii. 2, &c., we read—"And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna (which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know), that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell these forty years. Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee."

The wilderness is the place of education for our warfare in the land—the place where faith and patience are tried and tested, and where the ultimate thought of God in the training is, that obedience may be perfect and our wills broken, by learning to live by every word of God.

The first stage in the wilderness journey gives a character to the whole. We find it in Exodus xv., just after the song went up to the Lord. The *first* thing we have to do is to give thanks unto 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, the forgiveness of sins." (Col. i. 12-14.) This takes in the whole range of what God wrought from the night of the passover, until the morning when the note of praise ascended to Him from the hearts of His redeemed people, on the shores of the Red Sea, in which the hosts of Pharaoh had sunk to the bottom as a stone. Then we need to be strengthened according to the power of His glory unto patience by the way.

The salt or bitter waters of death have delivered us, because they have been borne by Jesus. But now we must taste them because we have been delivered. We must find

that death is in the scene. Tribulation is our portion in this world—but in Christ, peace. What must we learn then? That we are crucified with Him; that the cross, in which we can glory, when put into the trial makes it sweet indeed. Take reproach—how bitter to endure; but let it be the reproach of Christ, and how different is the taste. Take the needed discipline of His hand in correcting that which is evil in us, or likely to spring up in our hearts—how hard to be borne, how hard to be continually humbled. Now if we were thoroughly humble we should not need to be humbled, but because we are not, we must be broken down. See the thorn given to Paul. He goes to the third heaven, where no one had ever been before and returned again, but Paul, and now he must have his thorn. What trying work thus to be humbled before others, just because he had been in the heights! He did not need it there, but he did when he returned, and lest he should boast of having been there, he must have a thorn in his flesh. He prays thrice that it may depart from him. It was the bitter water to Paul. But no! The Lord knew better than Paul what was needed, and he must have the thorn. Very well, says Paul, “most gladly;” “I glory in it.” Ah, Paul, now you are at Elim! You have made an Elim of the trial, and you can sit under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit be sweet to your taste.

There are three sorts of tribulation or dealings of God in the way of discipline in the wilderness for us. First—*Tribulation in which we may glory*; for instance, suffering *for* Christ in this evil world. This is different from suffering *with* Christ. All Christians suffer with Him, because they possess Him for life, and that life must necessarily suffer in a scene which was all suffering to Him. If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him. But to some the suffering comes for faithfulness to Christ; it is also looked upon as a *gift*. “Unto you it is *given* in the behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer *for* his sake.” (Phil. i. 29.) In this we can indeed make our boast. How far this goes beyond suffering for conscience sake. A man to suffer for it may be a loser, because he does his business conscientiously: perhaps his profits may not be as large as those who have no conscience in the matter. But the same man may find the pathway of a rejected Christ in this evil world, have grace to turn his feet into the track, the result

may be that he loses his business altogether. The mistake is in judging things merely as right and wrong by conscience. Conscience is never a guide. Paul followed his conscience, and persecuted Christ and wasted the Church of God. Following Christ is the only pathway, and it is a Christ whom the world has cast out, and whom God has set in glory. Can I have better treatment from the world than He had? "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but *because* ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, *therefore* the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me;" that is the Father. (John xv. 19-21.)

There is a second kind of *suffering under which I must humble myself*, and in which I cannot boast. I mean suffering of various kinds which comes under God's righteous government, and from Him as a Father, for evil allowed and unjudged in our ways. The Father, without respect of persons, judgeth according to each one's work, therefore we have to pass the time of our *sojourning here* (to which this judgment applies) in fear; there is no fear in heaven. (1 Peter i. 17.) How much these retributive dealings of a Holy Father with us are forgotten.

Then there is another tender and merciful order of chastening or discipline, which is more what Paul also had to endure. It is a *preventive discipline, because of a tendency to be puffed up*. The Lord knows our hearts well; who knows them better? And His dealings are suited to the temperament of each, and to the tendency to get away from Christ, to which each is most liable. "He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous;" His eyes are on them for their good, and the righteous have no business to withdraw their eyes from Him!

A striking fact comes out now. I mean when the Marah bitterness is approved of as God's true and loving yet firm dealing with us. The sorrow and bitterness become but the occasion for the next step; the cross sweetens the cup. It brings to mind that murmuring self has been dealt with on the cross, and when self is gone, then the bitterness that self tasted is gone with the self that tasted it. Then the

soul is at Elim with its wells and palm trees, its refreshment and shelter. But I allude to something else which is not told us in Exodus. They return to the Red Sea again. How strange to go back to that through which they had but just passed.

If we turn to Numbers xxxiii. we find the interesting itinerary of the journey, step by step, and stage by stage, marked and registered under God's eye. From Pi-hahiroth to Marah, from Marah to Elim, and from Elim, with its fountains and palm trees, back again to the Red Sea! (*vv.* 8-10). What do we learn from this? I believe a blessed lesson. We can turn now without a quiver in our hearts, and calmly survey that death by which we have been delivered—the death of Him who passed through its dark raging flood for us. We can contemplate it as that which silenced every foe; “The waters covered their enemies; there was not one of them left” (Psalm cvi. 11).

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## SCRIPTURE BIOGRAPHY.

### TIMOTHY.

THE most trusted and the most endeared to his heart among all the Apostle Paul's yoke-fellows was Timothy. “I have no man like minded” with Timothy. A Jew by his mother's side, both she and his grandmother Lois were of that faithful remnant who were waiting, amid the general apostasy of the nation, for the hope of Israel. Had they been resident at Jerusalem they would have been found, like Simeon and Anna in the temple, to await and welcome the infant Saviour. They had “unfeigned faith,” and accordingly the youthful Timothy was trained up in the knowledge of the Scriptures. “From a child thou has known the holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. iii. 15). If this were more perseveringly done by parents, how much oftener would the conversion of their offspring be the reward of their assiduity. It is likely that he received the truth at the first visit of Paul with Barnabas to Lystra and Derbe (Acts xiv. 6, 20, 21). A youth so trained, would imbibe the truth of a crucified Messiah by the mouth of such an one as Paul with great fervour and delight. There was time between Acts xiv. and xvi. for the word to have taken root, so that the depth and solidity of his character could be wit-



nessed to and well reported of by "the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium" (xvi. 2). The Apostle warned Timothy afterwards that a bishop was not to be "a novice, lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil" (1 Tim. iii. 6). "Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded" (Titus ii. 6). Before they go out towards others, they need to be deepened and exercised in their own souls. Whilst in prison at Rome one of Paul's sorrows arose from those who preached "Christ even of envy and strife" (Phil. i. 15).

Disappointed as to Barnabas, his heart found a solace in Timothy. The Lord here gave him a young man whom he could train after his own thoughts, and send forth as his accredited agent upon any mission which required judgment. It may be that his "often infirmities" ballasted the precocity of his mind, and produced in him a depth of reflection, a quietness of manner, and a discrimination of character—qualities so often found where there is weakness of body. The personal affection of the Apostle for him breaks out continually. It is really like that of a father for a most loved child who reciprocates that attachment. More especially does it appear in the 2d Epistle, after a long course of fellowship in service had proved his worth (2 Tim. i. 3, 4). He seems completely to identify himself with him (2 Tim. i. 6, 7, 8; ii. 1, 2), and to suppose that he alone was capable of carrying on the work after his own death (2 Tim. iv. 3-8). So also he introduces him to the Churches without fear, as an example, and as one in whom they could confide. Not only in the Epistles does his name often appear with Paul's in the address, but he was frequently commending him as having the same single-eyed purpose with himself. Thus, "I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state, for all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's; but ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel" (Phil. ii. 19-23). This love, then, was not only a liking for the qualities in the man. No. He loved in this way, but he loved also in Christ, and he loved, too, because their views were thoroughly in accord on the service and faith of Christ. And here it may be well to allude to a guard which he had in the choice of such an instrument as Timothy. There are always two sides in Scripture—the human and

the divine. "The Lord knoweth them that are his," is the divine side; and "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity," is the human. When Paul went up with Barnabas to the council, "they (that is, the brethren) determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question." This was the human side. But Paul had another resource; he "went up by revelation and communicated unto them that gospel (said he) which I preach among the Gentiles." (Gal. ii. 2.) This was the divine side. And so with Timothy—much as he liked him, and preferred him, perhaps, to Titus, Silas, or Luke, yet he was divinely bound to employ him. "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee" (1 Tim. i. 18); and thus it became known in a public way, as it were, that he was not only the beloved and trusted friend of the Apostle, but had a kind of public service committed to him by the voice of prophecy. Thus there could have been no jealousy of his position. Meeting with him at Lystra, he makes him the companion of all his purposes and thoughts. "Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith." He is with him in all the journey through Phrygia and Galatia, until the vision of Paul at Troas. (Acts xvi. 9.) Here Timothy appears for the first time to have quitted him—the narrative being taken up by Luke (as we may suppose) in the first person plural, "we." Some think that he was despatched to Ephesus (1 Tim. i. 3), but it is not likely. We do not find his name mentioned during Paul's stay at Philippi, where it is possible Luke was left on the departure of Paul, as Acts xvii. takes the narrative up again in the third person. At Thessalonica Timothy is again his companion (Acts xvii. 14), and at Corinth (Acts xviii. 5), and also at Ephesus (Acts xix. 22), whence he was sent into Macedonia. In Acts xx. 4, we find his name among those who accompanied our apostle into Asia,\* and the narrative is resumed by Luke. We have several notices of him during the Apostle's detention at Rome, as he is conjoined in the address

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\* It is asserted by competent scholars that Acts xx. 4 should be translated—"And of the Babylonians, Aristarchus, and Secundus, and Gaius (comp. Acts xix. 29), and Timotheus of Derbe." If this be true, does it not look as if Luke had never met with Timothy before, for if he had, what need to particularise so celebrated a person, unless, indeed, there were two of the same name?

to the Philippians with the hope, too, of sending him speedily to them (ii. 19). His name also appears in the Epistle to the Colossians and to Philemon, and he is mentioned to the Hebrews (xiii. 23) as having been lately loosed from prison, but not at that time with the Apostle.

Many interesting questions arise in connection with these two epistles. The date of the first may be put (although on all such points we must speak hesitatingly) soon after Acts xx. 1. (Comp. 1 Tim. i. 3). It appears to be a filling-up or expansion of that to Titus—there being a greater breadth in the details, but also a new feature in the shape of a warning as to an impending apostasy. “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith.” It all looks very like Romanism. There is an injunction to put “the brethren in remembrance of these things.” Otherwise there might still be correction, amendment, and growth—the house of God is still recognized as “the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” In the 2d Epistle—the last he ever wrote—there had been a present departure as far as the Church went, for he says, “All they which are in Asia (as we understand all the recognised teachers) be turned away from me” (2 Tim. i. 15), whilst the impending apostasy was more fearful in his apprehension. “This know that in the last days perilous times shall come,” and then follows a catalogue of vices identical with those of Rom. i., with the addition of “a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” The house of 1 Tim. iii. is likened to “a great house,” with vessels “of wood and of earth” (2 Tim. ii. 20). Meanwhile the Scriptures are given their true and immense value (2 Tim. iii. 15, 17), as at all times where there is a failure in living men. (Comp. Ezra and Nehemiah.) In both Epistles it is certain that the Apostle puts a just value upon his own position as “set for the defence and confirmation of the gospel,” but more especially in the second, where his only hope seems to be in the steadfastness of Timothy, “Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, . . . for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine” (2 Tim. iv. 2, 3). He sees that everything had, or was to fail. But, as before hinted, part of this seeming egotism is connected with a reciprocity of interests and the most intense affection. He is relating his testimony, his treatment, and his prospects to a beloved friend.

Two things are very remarkable as to Timothy's position. 1st, Prophecies going before on him (1 Tim. i. 18); 2ndly, Neglect not the gift that is in thee (*χάρισμα*) which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery" (1 Tim. iv. 14); 3rdly, "I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God (*χάρισμα*) which is in thee by the putting on of my hands" (2 Tim. i. 6). Passing over any question of progress in the Apostolic powers of Paul, do these notices indicate progress in Timothy's life? Was it in principle? "They that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus" 1 Tim. iii. 13? Whatever be the suffrages on such points, one fact is palpable, that gifts (*χαρίσματα*) are to be waited upon, and may be strengthened by use. They are solemn responsibilities. "Say to Archippus, take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it" (Col. iv., Rom. xii. 6, 7). The Epistles to Timothy and Titus are surely intended to balance the truths in 1 Cor. xii. xiv. Divines, since the Reformation, and indeed long before, *ignored or forgot these two chapters, and formed their systems upon Timothy and Titus.* Still, let us beware how we make light of this side of the question. Far be it from any to disparage the place which the Holy Ghost authoratively holds in the Church, but impulse is not the commanding thought of ministry. "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all." "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." (1 Tim. iv. 15, 16.) "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Tim. ii. 15.) Nothing is to hinder the freest development of life in the body, but also "God hath set some in the church: first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers . . . are all teachers?" (1 Cor. xii. 28-29), and the instructions for such permanent gifts (persons *δόματα*, Eph. iv. 8-11) as to their general conduct, behaviour, and manner of life are largely found in these pastoral epistles.—W.

## THOUGHTS ON SACRIFICES.—No. 9.

THE FIRST SAINT IN ISRAEL WHO OFFERED NO SACRIFICE FOR HIS SINS.  
LUKE XXIII. 34-46.

IN the history of the crucifixion as given by Matthew all is dark—unrelieved by the faintest streak of light—till after the Lord Jesus had given up the ghost. In the history of what then took place as revealed by Luke, there are rays of brightness at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of that wondrous hour.

In Matthew we have no utterance of our blessed Lord recorded, from the time that He stood before Pilate and acknowledged that He was the King of the Jews till He cried with a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani.” But in Luke we read of what He said to His Father, and the words which He addressed to the thief, and these sayings it is which shed a gleam of light and sunshine on what is otherwise a picture of midnight darkness, enwrapped in the murky clouds of human wickedness and brutality. In Matthew, as Emmanuel and as Messiah, He is seen rejected but suffering for men; in Luke, as Son of Man, He is presented, suffering as Man, yet caring for men. Thus we read in Luke, how on His way to the cross, He took notice of the company of the women which bewailed and lamented Him, and bid them not weep for Him but for themselves and their children, for the consequences which would follow His cutting off as Messiah. With the cross before Him He was concerned for the sufferings, justly deserved indeed, of those who would be visited for the great crime about to be perpetrated. For, if such things were done in the green tree (Himself), what would be done in the dry (the Jewish nation, fruitless, sapless, fit only for the burning).

On the cross the same spirit was displayed when He interceded with His Father for His murderers, and assured the penitent thief of the immediate future before him. It was others He thought of, commiserated, prayed for; or announced the welcome news of companionship with Himself in paradise. From Matthew we learn what God thought of the sacrifice; in Luke we discern who it is that suffered, for He could speak to God as His Father, and yet hold intercourse with the convicted thief. Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, yet one with whom the thief would be that day in paradise. He accepted the prayer of the man dying by His side, and granted him more than he had asked. He prayed,

and yet answered prayer. He prayed to the Father as the Son, and answered prayer as God. He prayed for others, "Father, forgive them," and spoke to the Father about Himself, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." God and yet man, the Son from all eternity having life in Himself, yet surrendering up life on the cross, in obedience to the Father's will, He died in love for sinners—He entreated for them forgiveness. Where before had such language been used?—where had such a spirit been manifested? The Jews might righteously ask for judgment on their enemies—He sought divine forgiveness for His, for a new epoch had commenced on earth, and a spirit very different to that which was consistent with Judaism was now displayed.

If anything could have softened man's heart, or stopped him in his mad career, surely we might have thought that this prayer for His murderers would have had such an effect. But they gave Him hatred for His good will, hating Him without a cause.

They heard His prayer, yet paused not in their course, for we read in the sentence following it, "and they parted His raiment, and cast lots." The evangelist, by this manner of telling what took place, brings out, in striking contrast, the difference between His spirit and theirs. He had thought of others; the soldiers, intent only on gain, concerned themselves with their share of His garments; and the chief priests and people availed themselves of the opportunity to display the bitter enmity of their hearts.

They were ignorant of the heinousness of their guilt; but He interceded for them, and by His intercession showed His sense of the enormity of their crime. For why ask forgiveness if they had never needed it, why pray for them if they could have procured it for themselves? His act testified of their sin, and His words told of His relationship to God, against whom they had offended.

They were ignorant of what they were doing, therefore He prayed for them; yet their ignorance was no solid plea for acquittal in God's sight, so that the Lord's intercession was needful: God does show mercy to those who sin grievously in ignorance of that which is pleasing in His sight. Witness Paul, who thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. "I obtained mercy," he writes, "because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." God could be gracious, but He could not gloss over his

iniquity ; so with them who crucified His Son. And the Lord, by His prayer, showed what their guilt was, whilst He offered up Himself as the true sacrifice, and petitioned the Father for their forgiveness.

Besides addressing His Father, He gave ear to the penitent thief. Had we only His communication to the thief apart from all else, the grace He therein manifested must have struck the most cursory reader ; but, reading it in close connection with His prayer to His Father, its value is enhanced. He had rightly gauged the measure of their sin who then took part against Him, amongst whom must be classed the thief, now penitent, but lately a reviler, for which, as for his lawless acts, he had need of divine forgiveness. A trophy of grace, when the chief priests and people were still deriding the Lord, and the other thief reviling Him, he stood out before all, in the very agonies of death, as a disciple of the crucified and rejected One, by his side. He rebuked his companion, acknowledged the justice of their sentence, but fully justified the Lord. "We receive the due reward of our deeds, but this man hath done nothing amiss." And turning to Him, he owned Him as no common man, even the only One who had a kingdom on earth, of which death could never deprive Him. "Lord, remember me, when thou comest in thy kingdom."

What words were that day uttered at the cross ! The Lord interceded for His persecutors, and the dying thief acknowledged his sin, yet desired to be remembered by the King in His Kingdom. Had he been innocent, such words would have been natural, but being guilty they must have sounded strange to any who heard them, for in the presence of his future judge he was not afraid to confess his guilt, nor desirous that it should lie in merited oblivion. How completely was he at ease with the Lord, of whom naturally he had every reason to be afraid. He was a sinner, and he acknowledged it. Where, then, was the sin-offering which, according to the law, he ought to have offered up to have his sins forgiven ? Not a hint have we that he thought of it, and under the circumstances a sacrifice was impossible ; for he could not have taken the offering to the altar, nor laid his hand on its head. And this service none could discharge in his stead. The sinner's hand itself must be laid on the victim's head. There was something, however, in the Lord which gave the thief unbounded confidence in His presence. He did not ask

for any sacrifice to be offered upon his behalf, his prayer tells us that he did not feel the want of it, and the Lord's answer shows us there was no need of it, "Remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom," not *into*, but *in* it—i.e., in the royal pomp and power which belonged to Him who was then and is still the King. The thief looked on to a future day, and assuredly that prayer will be manifestly fulfilled; but the Lord, in answer, spoke to him of that day. "Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Nothing had been done by the dying man to put his sins away. On the cross he had added to the sins of his past life by reviling God's well-beloved Son. But ere he breathed his last, and indeed immediately after he had given utterance to that petition, the communication was made to him to set at rest for ever all doubts about the future, for the real sacrifice was being offered up by his side, and the effect of it to himself the Lord made known to his heart. "To-day shalt thou be with me." The convicted thief was in the company of the Saviour, and never should they part. But observe the language. There was a difference between them, and He would have the man know it. He did not say, "We shall be together," but "Thou shalt be with me." *With Him* was the portion of the converted soul, and in paradise. Here, then, we meet with the earliest possible example of the fruit of the atoning work applied to an individual, and the example is a fine one. Of the man's guilt there was no doubt, of his everlasting blessing there can be no two opinions. His confession tells us of the one, the Lord's words assure us of the other. In Genesis iv. we have the earliest possible teaching as to the standing before God of one born in sin; in Luke xxiii. we have the earliest possible proof of the value of the sacrifice to a sinner, of which Abel's lambs were types. So perfect was the work, so all-sufficient the sacrifice, that for ever and ever this converted thief shall know companionship with the righteous One then by his side. What a public testimony this history is to the sufficiency of the Lord's atoning work to make a sinner meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light "with me." Not merely saved, not simply a hope of heaven, but with Christ the Holy One of God.

"In Paradise." There had been one on earth, and Adam had walked in it. In the Old Testament, however, it is spoken of as connected only with what is past; in the New



Testament we read of it as present and future. "With me in paradise," were the words of the Lord to the thief that day; "To eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of my God," is the same gracious Saviour's promise to those who shall overcome now. Ceasing to be found on earth, there is a paradise elsewhere, and the redeemed,—not the innocent—shall enjoy it for ever, eating of that tree in its midst which would have entailed everlasting misery on Adam and his descendants had he partaken of it after the fall. The dying man was to enter it that day—Paul has been caught up into it, and the heavenly saints will one day be in it. Forfeited for himself and his descendants by the first Adam, it has been won, and is for ever secured to the saints above by the obedience unto death of the last Adam.

Are we wrong in saying, for ever secured? It is true that the Lord did not say this to the thief. He spoke of the end of that day, but did not speak of the morrow. "To-day," were His words. He told him when that blessed condition would begin, for it must have had a beginning, but He spoke not of a time when it was to end. Cannot each one who reads that history draw the conclusion? He spoke not of its ending, for it never will end;—for ever and ever will that believer be with His Lord, a witness of the exceeding riches of His grace, a vessel fitted to tell out His praise.

Singular must this soul ever be as the one who was converted when crucified by the side of the Lord. Yet his portion with Him is not peculiar to himself, it is for all, and will be shared by all, who, like him shall have confessed God's Son during the time of His rejection on earth.

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#### PRAISE.

JESUS, before Thy face  
We lowly bow;  
Others shall own Thee LORD:  
We crown Thee now.

We bless Thee and adore  
Thy matchless love—  
Love stronger than the grave,  
All thought above.

Our Saviour and our Lord,  
We worship Thee,  
Awaiting the glad hour  
Thyself to see.

Jesus, we'll give Thee then  
Praises more meet—  
Hearts adoration!—low  
Before Thy feet.

Praise, never-ceasing praise,  
To Thy dear name;  
For Thou hast won our hearts,  
Thou spotless Lamb!

Praise, never-ceasing praise,  
For what Thou art!  
Praise for the depths of *grace*  
That fill Thy heart!

J. W. T.

## OCCUPATION WITH SELF.

IF I am occupied with myself, it must be either with my badness or my goodness. The more conscientious I am the more I am occupied with my badness, and in a peculiar and fatal way; it is more engrossing than occupation with my goodness. There is at all times very little in this, but in my badness there are the windings, the twistings, the accountings for this thing, the vexation at the other, the way I was tempted, how I yielded, the shame, the contrition, the purpose to amend; each doing its part like a professed company of *dramatis personæ*, and thus I am engrossed with self, and my conscience cannot reprove me for it, for it is avowedly to condemn myself. But it being an engrossment of the most exhausting nature to both heart and mind, warns us sedulously to avoid it. One looks at, and pores over one's prostrate self, horror-stricken, and yet provoked the more to look by that which deepens the pain. What is the good, what is the gain, from this engagement? None whatever. It engrosses and occupies the mind exclusively with visions of what *de facto* constitute self, an absorbing object by which the heart is corroded, and the mind wasted.

It is not simply evil which is before you, it is yourself placed before your own tribunal, and there is the prosecution and defence, and though always the verdict is against you, you still like to linger there, as I have said.

If I see myself as Christ sees me, I am made to feel that whatever is seen is necessarily excluded if not of Him, because *He is light*, not law, which exacts from me; the good of light is to expose things as they are, and hence a very different action goes on when I see myself in the light; I am then sensible of the high and blessed deliverance vouchsafed to me; Christ is made more precious than ever to me; my heart turns to Him, rests in Him, dwells on Him more fixedly than ever, because I see what I am, and it is by Him who exposes me that I know that I am set *free* from everything exposed. As I feel the smallest atom in my eye, so do I feel my least evils before Him, but He shows me where it is, and seeing it—it is gone—it is refused, and condemned, and I am liberated, and I rejoice in Him; I know better than ever the righteousness of God to forgive and cleanse me.

In the other case, it was seeing, exploring, and deepening

one's mind in all the tortuous workings of oneself, seeking exculpation, but only partially or occasionally finding any, in order to keep up the detention with self.

When I see with the Lord I see without any questioning, and am at the same time relieved by Him, and He, therefore, engages my heart more deeply than ever. My own badness even fades in the distance, and I delight to dwell on, and abide with Him, whom, as I follow, is to me the Light of Life.

## NOTES OF A READING ON THE PSALMS.

BOOK V. PSALMS CVII.-CL.

*(Continued from page 16.)*

Psalm cxxxix.—The Spirit of God is here searching out the heart, and faith looks to God's creation, although with Israel, they are restored in the flesh. At first he cannot get out of God's hand, and cannot stand before Him in the searching out of flesh, but afterwards he sees he is God's handiwork, and that he is His creation, and now he can ask to be searched out. The principles of the new creation are here without revealing it. Verse 16, in principle, applies to the church, but there is no direct allusion to it.

*Q.* What are the lower parts of the earth?

*A.* His mother's womb. It is curious how in the Old Testament they speak of their mother's womb as the earth. As we read in Job, "Wilt thou bring me into the dust again?" And in Eccles. iii. 20, "All are of the dust, and all return to dust again." Man comes out of the dust of death really, and returns there again. We have God's thoughts and purposes of grace brought out in the close of the psalm towards Israel.

Psalm cxl.—He finds himself in the presence of the evil man, and is looking for deliverance, and counts on Jehovah. In these Psalms it is always the remnant, and sometimes a positive promise about Christ.

Psalm cxli.—Looking for deliverance, but asking to be kept, both as to heart and lips in the midst of distress. Crying to the Lord in the place of testimony in the midst of judgment and trials.

## SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

SEVERAL questions have come to hand, and as it seems that some have had difficulties about the reply in the December number of *Words of Truth*, to the question, "*When is a person sprinkled with the blood of Christ?*"—I will take up the remarks and questions of correspondents in detail.

"Then the veil will not be rent for them" (*i.e.*, the Jew). What Scripture can be given for this? &c.

I believe that the want of understanding as to the place and standing of a *heavenly* people with God, in contrast with an earthly people before God, is at the root of this question about the veil. We need *two* things as Christians, in order to stand in the presence of God in the light: 1st, To know how what we have *done* has been met; 2nd, To know how what we *are* has been dealt with. The first thing that troubles the conscience is the former; a person finds that his *sins* are on his conscience, and then that they have been met by Christ bearing them and putting them away; the conscience knows it, when it believes in Him. But this does not meet what I *am*—for I am still a sinner in nature. Then I am told that I am dead to this sinful nature—or "*sin*," and alive to God through Christ (Rom. vi). Thus both acts and nature, tree and fruit, are met; I can now stand in the light of God's presence, or within the veil if you please. Hence you will find that Paul, who alone teaches the doctrine of the Church of God, treats of this double dealing of God with the tree and the fruit—because he sets us in God's immediate presence. This is needed for the status of a heavenly people.

Now an earthly people, *i.e.*, the Jew, will not need this as we do; they need to know remission of their "*sins*," so as to walk happily before God. But they are never called to stand within the veil as we are. Consequently, you find in the close of the book of Ezekiel, the priesthood is again established, between the Lord and His people (c. xliv. 15, 16). The sacrifices are all renewed, and the Feasts, with the exception of Pentecost, which had "*fully come*," and had expended all its antitypical blessing on the Church formed at Pentecost. The Passover and the Atonement are renewed (c. xlv. 18-25), and the Tabernacles (Zech. xiv.), &c., &c.

Thus you have a nation, with a priesthood between it and God, with a divinely ordered ceremonial; but, as I gather,

*commemorative* in its character, because the cross work of the Lord Jesus is past; rather than *anticipative*, or *typical*, which was the character of the ritual in the Old Testament.

There is a gate "shut" continually, by which even the earthly prince of the house of David may not enter; "because the Lord, the God of Israel, hath entered by it." I should mention that there is a prince of David's house, the Lord's vicerent upon the throne in the kingdom of Israel, by and by. The Lord Jesus has appeared and set all to rights, but His place is rather on high, in the glorified church; though there may be divine visitations.

Moreover, if you examine 2 Chron. iii., you will find a "veil" characterising Solomon's typical reign. It will be the same in the Lord's during the kingdom.

An earthly people with a priesthood and ritual do not need the truth of "dead and risen with Christ"; but they do need forgiveness of sins—the law written upon their hearts, &c., and this they will have. A heavenly people need much more, and they have it too. The total ignorance in most Christians of these things produces the kind of spurious Christianity you see around, which even at its best, only admits remission of sins and a purged conscience. Consequently, its followers walk as earthly men, as pious Jews would do, and take part with the powers that be, the wars and fightings, the politics, &c., which the least understanding of the place and standing of the heavenly calling of the church would judge in a moment.

The veil was rent at the crucifixion of the Lord. Its rending marked—first, that Judaism of the past was over; secondly, that man had consummated his guilt, and stood face to face with God; thirdly, that God had disclosed Himself in perfect grace; and fourthly, that the sins of His people were swept away by the same stroke for ever. God and man are now face to face. For a saint, he is as white as snow; for a sinner, there he is in the presence of the richest grace of God, convicted by the light of God which reveals it, while it exposes him.

But we must distinguish all these moral truths and facts from a dispensational order of things on earth, to be again set up on the basis of Christ's accomplished work. Still, I believe a godly Jew will draw near "by faith" into the presence of God, as a saint consciously does now when he knows his sins are forgiven.

You say again, "The paragraph on 1 Peter i. 2, tacitly excludes all believers (except) out of the nation of Israel," &c. So it does. It is addressed to the elect strangers of the dispersion, and to no one else. But they are now Christians, and occupying the same platform before God as those of the Gentiles who had been called into Christianity, consequently, all the blessings of the Epistle are to be appropriated by the faith of those who are Christians now; while several passages would only be thoroughly appreciable by one who had been a Jew.

Again, "It is said, the blood is always presented to God. Is there no application of the blood to us in Heb. x. 22?" &c.

I have already spoken of Heb. x. 22. I believe it to be a reference—though not solely—to the consecration of the priests of old. Now the consecration of a priest is not the cleansing of a sinner. Besides, "blood" is not named in the passage at all, though doubtless alluded to, and, as I have noticed, the anointing with oil is passed over in silence. The priest was first washed with water—typical of the new birth of the word and Spirit of God; secondly, he was sprinkled with blood to consecrate him; and lastly, anointed with oil—typical of the Holy Ghost's anointing.

The blood has been presented to God by His Son. We may appropriate its value in any way that faith lays hold on Christ. But it would be absurd to say that it was literally sprinkled on any one, and I am sure it is not. Faith sings, "unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." Scripture also tells us that our consciences are purged through it. But all that is faith entering on the value of the once shed blood of Jesus?

Blood was *literally* sprinkled on people and things in the Old Testament—never in the New. I have named the case of the leper, and the seal of the Old Covenant when the blood was sprinkled on the people, but certainly it was not for cleansing.

I do say, "because of its value He sends out the water," and rightly. For all the testimony of Scripture—the word, or water, and the gospel of God's grace is founded on, and sent out because of the value of the blood in the sight of God.

You say, "suppose there had been no blood-shedding, might there not have been the blood (*gy*. water,) for condemnation?" This I pass, because it is based on a supposition.

“We often see the conscience aroused without any results following. Would it then be correct to say, that “the moment the water of the word has reached the conscience of a sinner he is clean?” Is it not when the sinner looks to the blood that he is clean, although he may not know full redemption?

*Natural* conscience is often aroused without any results—most surely. But I do not term this what you have quoted here. If the Spirit of God, in working by the Word, has reached the conscience, and has implanted the Word there, a quickening or new birth has taken place, and in God’s sight that soul is clean; but the very fact of his being quickened is to make him cry out “unclean”! Subsequently the soul is led to look at Christ and His work and blood-shedding for peace, and then he *knows* he is clean. The sins that troubled him were all borne away long before, and he was clean in God’s sight from them, but his eyes opened upon the fact when he believed in Christ for peace.

I would not term the arousing of a natural conscience through fear, or the like, “the water of the word (reaching) the conscience.” Far from it. I believe in much of the Revival preaching that goes on, such cases are frequently taken for conversions, and mistakenly so.

Another correspondent would kindly request the Editor, if time permits, to answer if Heb. x. 22—“sprinkled from an evil conscience,” is not sprinkling of blood upon *persons*, and for *sins*? &c.

I have already spoken as to this. Blood is not mentioned in the passage at all, though I dare say alluded to. Nor is it so much a question of *sins*, as of consecration, as I have said.

I have read the article in question, and regret that some have found so much difficulty in what seems so perfectly plain. I invite those who have any difficulty to communicate freely in the matter, as the very presentation of their difficulty will, through mercy, serve to bring out the truth.

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### FRAGMENTS.

Whatever removes the film off my eye that I may see more clearly; removes it off Christ, that I may see Him more clearly.

The moment I do a right thing because it is right—I come short. I must have a positive command—God’s authority, for what I do.

## THE "BUNCH OF HYSSOP."

WITH the message of the fullest and richest grace of the Gospel, comes the most solemn and final revelation of a Judgment to come; as final as it is solemn and searching to the soul. No threat—no language of denunciation or declamation, but the terribly calm, clear statement of the utter ruin, after every trial and test, of man's estate; of the sure and certain perdition and eternal ruin of every soul with whom God will enter into judgment, according to his works. The truth has come, and disclosed all: it has shown what God is, what man is, what Satan is, what the world is, what judgment is—all things are laid bare. He does not *threaten*; but has *revealed* a judgment to come as the solemn result of grace despised.

There is a marked and striking analogy between the present revelation of God's grace by the Gospel, before the judgment falls upon this evil world, and the message by Moses to Pharaoh, before the Passover, through which Israel was spared.

"And Moses said, Thus saith the Lord, about midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt." When all were asleep and apparently secure, the judgment would fall: "And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more." A cry when the blow had fallen. Signs and wonders had produced no contrition of heart: Pharaoh had hardened himself still more. Threatenings of judgment were of no avail. The plan of deliverance was unfolded by Him who knew His own requirements, and who was about to enter upon the scene as a relentless, righteous Judge. The *supper-time* was the time to hear and to act; when the *midnight* came the blow had fallen, and then it was too late. The procrastinator might plead how well he understood the plan of deliverance; but he had folded his arms and judgment had overtaken him. He might cry, "Lord, Lord, open," but the door of mercy had closed for ever!

If we examine the parable of the Great Supper in Luke xiv., we find that it was not those who were living in open sin who refused this final call of grace. I say final, because you will note that the Gospel Feast is set forth as the final meal of the day of God's dealings with men. The Lord was at dinner in the house of this Pharisee at the time. The



*supper* is the last meal of the day before *midnight* comes. This is very significant and striking. The gospel comes after all God's previous ways of testing and trial have passed.

The *morning* of innocence, with its lovely moments of freshness, when God came down to visit His creatures, and when His creation was unsoiled with sin, soon passed away and man fell, never to return to this state of creature blessedness.

Then came His *noon-day* dealings with man, now with a conscience obtained when he fell. During their continuance came the frightful wickedness of men and angels; the earth was filled with corruption and violence; and God had to wash the polluted earth with the mighty baptism of the flood. Then men set up the devil for God in the renewed earth, and the whole world was worshipping him, in the passions and corruptions of their evil hearts.

The *afternoon* testing of the Law followed. It told man what his duty was, both positively and negatively—its "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not," taught him what he ought to be. But it never disclosed what *he was*, utterly and hopelessly ruined. Nor did it tell him what *God was*, with a heart full of tender pity and perfect love. Then the prophets were sent to recall him to its observance lest judgment should overtake him, and these they stoned.

It was in the *evening* that at last God revealed Himself in Christ. Would man now be won? Alas, no! Not one single heart was of itself attracted to Christ. They saw no beauty in Him that they should desire Him. It was a lovely evening, after a day of storm and evil, which was ushered in so brightly; but how soon to close in around the darkness of the cross, where men quenched (as far as they could) the light of heaven.

God had another moment of mercy. The *supper-time* of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, with the message that "All things are now ready;" "Come," for the *midnight* of judgment was about to fall. But "*All with one consent* began to make excuse." Men who were not living in sin, but who were doing lawful and right things—attending to the farm, the merchandize, or their family affairs—even they also refused the gift of God.

I know nothing more solemn than the fact that when the Lord lifts the veil and points to the awful judgment of a future scene, in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus

(Luke xvi.), we learn there the *compelled remembrance* (the deathless sting of remorse) of times gone by, and advantages lost for ever, in this present day of grace. How dreadful then for the professor, the procrastinator, the careless man. "*Son, remember*"! tells its own tale more truly than the many words which might be used to paint the scene. But it is not my present task to dwell on this side of the picture. I desire rather to unfold in some measure the certain way of escape from this judgment to come. The one is as certain as the other.

God had a serious question with Israel on the night of the passover. They were sinners, and sin had constituted Him a Judge. He had come down to deliver them and to bring them to the land. He appoints a way in which He can righteously pass over us as sinners when judging the world. The blood of a spotless lamb was to be taken, and placed upon the two side posts and lintel of the doors of their houses, which were to be closed, and none of the people were to leave their houses till the morning.

I do not propose dwelling lengthily on this well-known scene, which has been such a fruitful theme to others. But I would press a few points which may not have been fully noticed. In the evening the lamb was to be slain, and its blood sprinkled by the believing Israelite in the "obedience of faith." This was done by means of a "bunch of hyssop." Now this points to a most significant and important thought in connection with the Gospel. Many know the plan of salvation, as it is termed; they are as clear as possible on the truth that salvation is by faith alone, and that the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it only, is that by which security from judgment to come depends. They know well these words, that "without shedding of blood is no remission." Yet they never have had, so to speak, the bunch of hyssop in their hands, though this is the real link between their souls and the Gospel. This is the point concerning which so many are ignorant.

A bunch of hyssop is used in Scripture on two occasions. (I do not now refer to its typical import in the offerings: see Lev. xiv., &c.) On one occasion it is used *by* an Israelite with blood (Ex xii). On the other it is used by the hand of a clean person, *for* an Israelite, with water (Num. xix). In both cases it signifies *humiliation*. The Psalmist refers to it in this way in Psalm li. 7, where he

cries, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean." This was the moral cleansing of his soul by complete humiliation.

An Israelite who believed Moses concerning the plan of deliverance on that "night to be remembered," did not fold his arms quietly as many, and do nothing. No; he was up and doing, in "the obedience of faith." (Rom i. 5; xvi. 26.) "Believing in his heart" the glad tidings by Moses, he was seen outside the door of his house, before the world "confessing with his mouth" the acceptance of this message, and thus appropriating his personal share in the efficacy of the blood of the lamb. It was truly humiliating for him to go outside before a world of idolatry, into whose sins he had sunk (Ezek. xx. 6—8), and confess that, although he was one of God's chosen people, he could claim no immunity from judgment but by the shelter of the blood of the lamb. He thus justified God and condemned himself. It was humiliating, but right to do so. "Let God be true, and every man a liar." Here is the link between the soul and Christ, which so many need. The bunch of hyssop has never been grasped; the soul has never bowed in the obedience of faith, and in the reality of its state, and not only believed the gospel in the heart, but confessed it with the mouth to salvation.

How many are the dealings of God with souls to awaken them to the sense of their need, that His heart may thus be free to pour its love into theirs! How varied are His ways to bring them down to the point of blessing—even the sense of their own ruin in His sight! Once there, there is no hindrance; how simple, then, becomes the story of His grace! "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. x. 8, 9.)

The poor thief was there in conscience, when he rebuked his fellow, and said, "We indeed justly." He had the bunch of hyssop in his hand at that moment. No claiming superiority over the railing robber; no excusing himself. He justified God, and condemned himself; *now* there was no hindrance to the love of Christ making itself known to him. He believed in his heart, and he confessed with his mouth, and went to paradise with Jesus that day.

So with the woman of Syrophenicia; "Truth, Lord," confessed the fact that she could claim nothing from Him

who was there before her, with His heart full of grace. "Yet the dogs eat of the crumbs"—told that her heart had penetrated God's, and knew and believed that there was a blessing there even for one who had neither promise nor right to claim His grace. It was the bowing of conscience before the Lord in the obedience of faith; and the moment she is there the spring is touched—His heart is free to give the blessing He had come down to reveal and bestow. "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt;" you cannot think too well of God! Like Jehovah of old wrestling with Jacob until He brought him to the point where He might bless him, Jesus, as it were, wrestles with her till she has a sense of her true state, and then the blessing comes.

An Israelite on the evening of the Passover, with the bunch of hyssop in his hand, conveys this truth to our souls. The blood he sprinkled was to meet and satisfy the eye of God. It was to present a righteous ground to Him in judgment, for passing over a man whose sins deserved that the blow should descend on him, even more righteously than on his Egyptian neighbour next door.

The midnight of judgment came, but all was settled beforehand, as it must be for us. Our sins cannot be worse in the day of judgment than now. God's way of escape from judgment then will not *have changed*. It is as certain now as then. His love has anticipated that day in giving His Son. His Son has come, and has presented His blood before God's eye. God has pronounced on our state as sinners already; and the day of judgment cannot speak more plainly than "There is none righteous; no, not one"! Christ has borne our sins and put them away before that day comes, and God has sent the news of His having done so. "He that believeth not is judged already (*ἡδὴ κέκριται*), because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John iii. 18). But you may say, I know it all. I ask then, Are you forgiven? Are you safe under the shelter of the blood of Christ? I do not ask, Do you *hope* to be so? I ask, *Are you safe?* If you believe God, you are. If you believe your own heart you are deceived: "He that trusteth in his own heart, is a fool" (Prov. xxviii. 26).

May you know what it is to have had the bunch of hyssop in your hand, your heart confessing that your only security is, that God, against whom you have sinned, has looked upon that precious blood of Jesus, that he has accepted it already,

and that the day of judgment will not change its value, nor make it less precious in His sight. In virtue of it He has declared "I will pass over you." Do you dare to doubt that He has accepted it? You could not, for you know that He has. I do not ask, have *you* accepted it, but do you believe that *He* has done so? The proof that He has, is that Jesus is at God's right hand. "When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. i. 3). He has by Himself purged the sins, and he who believes has his conscience purged of them. Suppose some one has *paid* a debt which I owed and could not discharge; well, I cannot be sued for it, but I shall be afraid to meet my creditor. To be happy in his presence, I must *know* that some one has been kind enough to do it: so God declares that it is done. Then my conscience is free, and I can afford to look now into my heart, into which I dare not look before.

The question of all our sins has thus been settled before the day of judgment, and according to God's mind. If not, we never can put them away. Christ cannot die again: "death hath no more dominion over him." He "was once offered to bear the sins of many." I say "all our sins;" for all were future when that precious blood was shed—when Jesus bore them in His own body on the tree. If all were not there, if all were not borne and put away, they will most surely come up again at the day of judgment, and that will be eternal ruin. Thank God He has borne ours who believe. Others may reject it and perish, but there the love is, and there is the work of Christ to save all who will believe in Him.

## 2 COR. XII.

"THE flesh" is seen here in three ways:—

1. Where a man is in the third heaven, and there is no consciousness of it at all (*vv.* 1-6).

2. In the activities of its own will in sin (*vv.* 20, 21).

3. In conflict, but disallowed. The saint made to feel it as a real hindrance, because of its tendency to self-confidence, and that the Lord alone can do the work Himself—in his weakness (*vv.* 7-10).

## THOUGHTS ON SACRIFICES.—No. 10. THE ONE ALTERNATIVE,

WHEN Christianity first claimed man's attention, and asserted its divine origin, there was another system of religion indisputably of divine appointment, and confessedly of great antiquity.

Before Romulus had laid the foundation of Rome, and the era of Nabonasser of Babylon commenced, and centuries before the Trojan war, a people had been brought out of Egypt to whom God gave a ritual in the wilderness at Mount Sinai. Miracles, which the Egyptian magicians rightly ascribed to the finger of God, were wrought by Moses, as a witness that Jehovah had sent him to lead forth His people from Egypt. Miracles which the Jews were unable to deny were done by the apostles of the Lord Jesus—proofs of their divine mission. In the presence, then, of these two systems of religion—the one inaugurated in the wilderness, the other in an upper room in Jerusalem, the former claiming attention by its imposing display, and acknowledged antiquity; the latter demanding the obedience of all men to its teaching as God's provision for the salvation of Jew and Gentile, which, were men to follow, to which were even the Jews to be conformed? He who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working, was pleased to allow both to exist for a time together, that the superiority of Christianity over Judaism might be seen; and what the Mosaic ritual pointed to as man's requirement, he found supplied in the one sacrifice of which the first teachers of Christianity had to speak.

Between these two creeds there were truths in common, and characteristics somewhat similar. Repentance from dead works, faith in God, the doctrine of baptisms, laying on of hands, and resurrection of the dead were acknowledged and taught when the Lord appeared on earth. Both, too, spoke of a sanctuary, a sacrifice, and an high priest. The Jews had a sanctuary on earth, receiving sacrifices, and a priesthood, which by reason of death was transmitted from father to son. The followers of the Lord Jesus spoke of a sanctuary in heaven, of one, and only one sacrifice, which had been offered up on earth, and the unchanging priesthood of the Lord Jesus who ever liveth to make intercession for all who come unto God by Him. (Heb. vii. 24, 25.) Thus the followers of the Mosaic ritual of necessity took the place

of expectants. The sacrifices which were offered up year by year, proved by their recurrence never to have made the comers perfect. They told of a want, but confessed they *could not meet it*. The disciples of the Lord, on the other hand, looked back to His sacrifice as all that was needed, and to which no addition could ever be made. They, too, waited, it is true, but not for an effective sacrifice; they waited only for complete salvation to be fully known when He shall appear the second time. (Heb. ix. 28.) So to turn back from Christianity to Judaism was to take a retrograde step, and in renouncing it, souls were taught that they renounced the only hope of escaping the wrath to come.

For men then, when once the truth had reached them, there was really no choice. If they left Judaism, they confessed by their very act that it could not provide what they needed; if they remained in it, they owned by the recurring sacrifices that it had not procured what they wanted. If they left Christianity, what other divine provision was there which could avail them before the throne of God? This the word of God makes very clear. "If we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth (and what is sinning wilfully, verse 29 tells us), there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." Outside of Christianity, then, there was nothing for the sinner. "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins"—a solemn statement, which shuts the door against everything beside the sacrifice of Christ, and tells at the same time what that claimed to effect. How decided is the language, that none should be mistaken as to the future—"no more sacrifice for sins"—then a sacrifice was required. For, why speak of none remaining, if men could get to heaven without one? But, if the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus could not put away sin, nothing else would—the last, the only resource was gone if that had failed. So if men rejected it, they rejected the only sacrifice of divine appointment which ever professed to put away sin, to embrace a future of despair, and the certainty of divine judgment. "There remaineth . . . . . but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."

With such an alternative, the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, or nothing, to stand between the soul and the outpouring of God's wrath, the question might arise—is it sufficient for this end? In trusting to it do I trust to that

which can do what I need? Have I in it an effectual shelter from a future of divine vengeance? How full, how clear is the answer! "No more sacrifice for sins," is the statement of God's word, if the atonement made on the cross is rejected. "No more conscience of sins," if that sacrifice be accepted. Without it the worshipper can never be purged; by it he is purged once for all. Imperfection was stamped on the Mosaic ritual; hopeless despair is attached to the final surrender of Christianity, whilst perfection, as to the believers standing, is ensured by the true reception of it. For, as before the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus on the cross, none, which could put away sins, had ever been offered up; so, since that sacrifice has been accomplished, none can be substituted for it. And do we not trace the same hand, and discern the same mind, as we read the ritual of Leviticus, and peruse this portion of the epistle to the Hebrews? At the altar of burnt-offering the sinner could know of his forgiveness; and God desired he should be assured of it. Turning to the cross the sinner can rest satisfied of the complete and everlasting remission of his sins, and the Holy Ghost is a witness of it: "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now, where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin;" no uncertainty, as far as God is concerned, shall cloud the sinner's prospect. The one meditating apostasy is warned; the believer is assured.

How secure is the basis on which all now rests! The sacrificial ritual in which man could take part could never purge the conscience. The one sacrifice, in the offering of which man could take no part, is the only one which can. The priests offered, and that rightly, many sacrifices—the Lord Jesus offered up Himself. And now statements are made concerning believers which were never made before. Sanctified by God's will through the offering of the body of Jesus once, by that same offering they are perfected for a continuance, and find a way new and living into the holy of holies, which He has consecrated for us by His blood through the veil—that is through His flesh. All is ascribed to His sacrifice and work, who is the One in whom the Father is well pleased. All is done for us by a man it is true, but it is the Man Christ Jesus. Sanctified, perfected, forgiven, with boldness, to enter the holiest—such is the order traced out. Sanctified, set apart for God; perfected, so complete in standing before Him; forgiven, so at rest about sins; what



could follow but the free right of entry into the innermost chamber of the sanctuary?

How the spirit delights to dwell on the perfectness of the sacrifice! Of the sacrifices according to the law, and of the priests that offered them, we learn the hopelessness of trusting to the one or of looking to the other. "Can never" is spoken of them; "once for all" and "for ever" is spoken of the sacrifices of Christ. To him who turns from this sacrifice there remained no more offering for sins, for him who accepts it really there can be no more remembrance of his iniquities. What need, then, is there of any other? It has done all we want, yet we stop not there. It has done far more than we could have thought of, and procures all that the creature can for ever take in and enjoy.

Abel outside the garden offered up the lambs, and received witness that he was righteous, yet never re-entered paradise. Outside the gate Jesus died, and the holiest is in consequence opened to the believer for ever. Aaron entered the holiest on earth and found it an unpeopled place, for none could remain in the presence of the Divine Majesty. Believers enter by faith the holiest in heaven, and know it is their place for evermore. At Sinai, when God appeared in majesty, the people retreated from the place assigned them, and stood afar off (Exod. xx. 18-21; Deut. v. 5-27). Now we read different language. Bounds were set round the mount, which they were not to overstep, lest death should overtake them. We are invited to draw near with true heart, in full assurance of faith, having the heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, and the body washed with pure water. And, as the words of the exhortation remind us of what we are in ourselves, they disclose to us what that one offering has done for us who believe. Where man never was before, there we can be, and what he never could have done for himself that we are made through the work of the Lord Jesus once for all on the cross.

From Abel to the cross the different aspects of a sacrifice, such as the sinner needs, have been traced out in the Word of God; but whilst each fresh sacrifice told of the want, by none were the requirements of God's justice and man's need met, till once in the end of the ages God's well-beloved Son appeared to put away sin. Then each offering found its anti-type in the sacrifice of Himself, and offering a sacrifice for sin ceased, not because the case was hopeless, and nothing

could be found to meet the sinner's need; but because the full atonement had been made, and the value of that sacrifice then offered up remains ever the same in the presence of His Father and our God.

C. E. S.

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### THE FAMILY VAULT.

It was sometime after I had been born of God that I learned to draw the line between confessing my *sins* and reckoning *myself* dead. I used to search and search my own heart in the presence of the Lord, and bring to light everything that I could think of that I had thought, or said, or done amiss; own it all to Him, and rest upon His promise—"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John i. 9). Had I stopped there all would have been well, but still *feeling* the root of evil within, though I could remember no more offences, I used to own it, too, before the Lord in all its vileness; and a sad trouble and constant source of annoyance it was to me, seeing that it never changed, and therefore always kept me on my knees confessing it.

At length the truth dawned on me that I was *dead*: that I had died at the cross (Rom. vi. 6; Gal. ii. 20; Col. ii. 20), and that therefore all I had got to do was to think God's thoughts about myself, and hold, reckon, or account myself to be dead before Him.

Oh! what rest this was to my soul. Instead of probing and probing at this vile, this incorrigible heart, this fruitful source of iniquity, to look upon it as a dead thing that had no existence before God, and therefore no existence before me.

I remembered that the Israelites "saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore," but I could not recollect that they ever even turned the bodies over to make assurance doubly sure; so I determined to follow their example, and to look upon myself as one that had died at the cross with Jesus, and had been consigned with Him to the tomb, where I was resolved I would lie in faith until the Lord Himself should come to change my vile body into the likeness of His glorious body.

*The tomb* of Jesus, then, is my Family Vault.—There I, as I am by nature, repose, and the key is turned in the lock! I grant you, that ever and anon (for "we all often

offend") there arises a foetid odour, telling of corruption within, and reminding me that faith must not go to sleep, but ever be on the watch lest the walls of this family vault should become impaired, and let still fouler vapours out; but I have a precious corrective for this—my new man created after God in righteousness and true holiness, "not I" "but Christ," who "liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 20), in whom I stand before God, and walk before the world, with its sweet breath soon purifies the tainted atmosphere, telling out to the Lord, to whom the effluvia has been more offensive than to any, the failure; and then rejoicing in the fact that He has been faithful to His word, forgiven the sin, and cleansed away the unrighteousness. This is not realisation but reckoning; but, precisely in proportion as I reckon, realisation follows.

What a place we have, to be sure! To walk through the world *yielding* ourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

## NOTES OF A READING ON THE PSALMS.

BOOK V.—PSALMS CVII.—CL.

(*Concluded*).

Psalm cxlii.—This has a special character. "I cried unto God with *my voice*," not merely with the heart, but an expression of it with his voice. He cries openly to God, and makes confession of Jehovah in his supplications, as his refuge and his portion in the land of the living.

Psalm cxliii.—Here we are fully in the distress, but still crying and praying for deliverance.

It is one of the striking things in the Psalms, that all through them the power of evil is rampant. Even when God is praised, and He gives songs of "hallelujahs" to His people, evil is there. It supposes all the evil to be in power unto the end. It is the power of good in the midst of evil, and not the reign of good, and is analogous to our own position. It is the same with us. "I have overcome the world," yet still the world goes on, and we have the power of Christ in the midst of it. The Assyrian is destroyed after the man of sin. Western Europe is the territory of the Beast, and Russia of Gog or Assyria.

The Lord has come in these Psalms and destroyed the Beast and the false Prophet (the Man of Sin), and then the Assyrian comes up again and finds the Lord there, and is destroyed by the Lord Himself in Idumea.

Isaiah xxiv. and lxiii. are the same time. We find it distinctly stated in Micah v. 5, "This man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land."

*Q.* Who is the King of the North in Daniel xi.?

*A.* He is the Assyrian. There we find that he shall "plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas *and* (it should be, not "in") the glorious holy mountain"—i.e., between the Mediterranean and Jerusalem. Gog and Magog in Revelation refer to *all* the nations; they come up on the breadth of the whole earth.

Isaiah xxx. 33, and lvii. 9, are the only places in that prophet which refer to the antichrist. It is Assyria we have in Isaiah; whereas in Daniel we have the Gentile Beasts, and Assyria only comes in to complete the scene in Daniel xi. In Isaiah xxx. 32 the decreed rod of God (not "grounded staff") falls upon the Assyrian.

Psalm cxliv.—We have three times the question, What is man? raised in Scripture. Job asks it in a complaining, haughty spirit, (Job. vii. 17,) "How long wilt Thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle?" It is why should He make so much of him, following him up in every detail of his life to persecute him? Here, on the contrary, the Psalmist says, what is man, so wicked as he is, that the Lord should think so much of him and not cut him off directly?—why should he be spared, and the Lord be so patient with these wicked people? In Psa. viii., the question is raised, why is he so exalted?—and answered by His making His own Son a man, and setting Him in glory as man, over all the works of His hands.

Psalm cxlv.—We have here the intercourse between Christ and His people, during the millennium, celebrating Jehovah's praise. It is "I" and "they." "And *men* shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts, and *I* will declare Thy greatness. *They* shall abundantly utter the memory of Thy great goodness, and shall sing of Thy righteousness."

Psalm cxlvi.—The concluding psalms form what is called the "great Hallel."

Psalm cxlvi.—Here we have God, the Creator, who has executed judgment, and delivered His people.

Psalms cxlvii.—His mercy and goodness are celebrated in building up Jerusalem.

Psalms cxlviii.—The angels are called upon to join the praises of Jehovah, until praise goes out to all creation.

Psalms cxlix.—Here the call is to Israel to praise.

Q. Are we in the millennium in these psalms?

A. No; it is still the spirit of prophecy—see v. 6. The praises of God are in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hands. The psalms only take you up to the time of blessing. Prophecy will not be needed when that time is arrived. The psalms never go on into the millennium, but only up to it.

Psalms cl. is the general closing summons to praise Jehovah.

Q. Did not the disciples sing one of the psalms of the hallel at the Passover?

A. A Jewish tradition is the ground for believing they did.

Q. Do we have the righteousness of God in the psalms, as in Romans?

It is more looked at—as in 2 Pet. i. 1.—“Through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ”—His righteous dealings.

Q. Which psalms give us the sufferings of Christ?

Psalms xxii., the Cross; lxi., Gethsemane; cii., in a certain sense, only the strain there is more poetical; xl., partly, only there He is more undertaking to do it.

Q. Do we not have them in the lxxxviii.?

A. Only in sympathy. It is the Remnant there, under the anguish of a broken law.

Christians are expected to be their own psalmists. Therefore hymn books are right, and Presbyterians are wrong in keeping to the book of Psalms. “Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs.”

Q. What is the distinction between them?

A. “Hymns” are more ascriptions of praise; “Psalms” celebrations of God’s praise. “Spiritual songs” are more speaking to one another about Him. “O Lord! how blest our journey,” is a spiritual song. We are thinking of the journey, but we say, “Oh Lord!” ascribing praise to Him for it; but when we sing, “Lord Jesus, when I think of Thee,” it is higher. *It is better to be thinking of Christ than of the journey; but both are right, and they are wrong who would only have direct addresses in the Hymn-book!*

# SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

“P. J. F.”—(1.) What is meant by their “robes,” in Rev. vii. 14, and xxii. 14? (2.) What does washing their robes signify? (3.) Why are *they* said to do it, or to have done it, rather than having it done for them?

A. (1.) Their “robes” is a figure of speech to express that in which a man appears before God. (2.) Washing their robes signifies that they have cleansed them before God, by washing them in the blood of the Lamb. (3.) There is no special force in their having done it themselves. They have gone by faith and appropriated the value of the blood of Him by whom, and in virtue of which they have been washed. It is man’s side, so to say—the subjective. You find in chapter i. 5, 6, the Lord’s side, or objective, and most certainly in their case, as for all, it is done by Him, however faith may appropriate the action. But faith having done so, He counts in tender grace the action to the person who by faith laid hold of His work. All the sufferings were His, by which we are saved; yet He delights to say, “*Thy faith hath saved thee*”! Not, My blood hath saved thee; though that is blessedly true: but the faith in the sinner who read His heart, and trusted the love which He came to make known.

Q. What is the precise meaning of 2 Cor. iii. 12, 13; with particular reference to the latter part of v. 13? “Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: and not as Moses, *which* put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished.”

A. The Apostle having now the key to all God’s ways then with Israel, in Christ, he can tell it all out with full freedom of speech, as one who had no vail on his face as Moses. All was now open and unveiled; all ambiguity was gone—the vail was off, and the whole truth out; while the vail was on the heart of the Jew.

They “could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished.” For, when Moses came down from the mountain the *second* time, the skin of his face shone, reflecting the glory of the Lord, who had just revealed himself in long-suffering, mercy, and grace. But this had not removed the law with its exaction, and matters were thus made worse. For it was bad enough to have broken the pure law

of God ; but when its claim still remained, and the Lord had thus revealed Himself—the law's claims alongside the perfect goodness of the Lord made matters worse if it was broken ; because it was now broken in the face of this revelation of goodness in Him who claimed it. Thus it was the law brought down the *second* time by Moses, whose face then shone with the goodness of the Lord, which is termed by Paul the “ministration of condemnation.”

This glory the children of Israel shrank from, and could not look at ; for they did not apprehend the mind of the Spirit in what was coming by Christ, and thus could not see to the end of that which is abolished, *i.e.*, the whole Jewish system. “He taketh away the first that he may establish the second” (Heb. x. 9).

“K. W. B.”—Q. In 2 Sam. xxiv. 9, the census of Israel and Judah was 800,000 and 500,000. In 1 Chron. xxi. 5, it was 1,100,000 and 470,000. Why the difference?

A. In 2 Sam. xxiv. 9, you have the “*valiant* men”—formed men of war, numbering 800,000, In 1 Chron. xxi., you have the males generally, who were grown men, capable of drawing the sword ; but not designated the “*valiant*”—*i.e.*, trained men of war.

In 2 Sam. xxiv. you find the males of Judah generally numbered at 500,000 men ; but in 1 Chron. xxi. 470,000, they are specifically named, who “drew sword.”

Most probably the standing legions given in detail in 2 Chron. xxvii. 1-15, were not mentioned in 2 Sam. ; they were very well known. Of these, there were 24,000 for each month, with probably not less than 1,000 officers to every 24,000 men. If this 25,000 be multiplied by twelve, as each legion had to serve for a month, it will amount to exactly 300,000, and if this be added to the 800,000 mentioned in 2 Sam., it will be exactly the 1,100,000 mentioned in 1 Chron.

The census of Israel, if this proposition be true, is plain enough. That of Judah not so much on the surface, but in the text giving quite enough to show, that males capable of drawing sword are noted specially in contradistinction to “men of Judah” merely.

Q. Why, in 2 Sam. xxiv. 13, does God propose to David that *seven* years famine should be sent upon him, while in 1 Chron. xxi. 12, only *three* years are named?

A. The Septuagint, or Greek version of the Hebrew scriptures, which was translated some 200 years before Christ, is constantly quoted by the Lord and the apostles in the New Testament, and thus in measure authorised by Him. It gives in 2 Sam. xxiv. "three years," the same reading as 1 Chronicles.

Q. In 2 Sam. David is said to have given fifty shekels of *silver* for the threshing floor and the oxen, but 1 Chron. records that he paid Ornan six hundred shekels of *gold* by weight.

A. The word "silver" in 2 Samuel (in the Hebrew, *Kehseph*) is constantly used in the Old Testament for "money," just as the French use the word "*argent*" (silver), technically for "money." In 2 Sam. you probably have the *value* of what David gave; in 1 Chron. the "*weight*," as it states. The weight of the six hundred shekels of gold being in value equal to fifty shekels of money.

There is, it is said, a good deal of difficulty in settling numbers in the Hebrew, owing to marks and figures. But the use of "silver" for "money" makes the matter simple. See Gen. xliv. 1-8, where you have, in v. 1, money, in v. 2, "silver," in v. 8 "money" and "silver," in same verse all the same word (*Kehseph*) throughout. This will show its general usage.

J. H. We have long had the practice amongst us, for those who take an interest in the affairs of the Assembly, to come together to confer and deliberate on things brought before them prior to submitting such things to the gathered Assembly. Some few altogether object to "brothers meetings." They say that everything should go before the Assembly without any preliminary meeting.

Experience has taught us that we have been preserved from trouble and sorrow by having had certain matters discussed by brothers alone before laying them before the Assembly.

Some insist on the presence of sisters at such preliminary meetings, or that they be set entirely aside by having everything done at the Lord's table after the breaking of bread.

Our desire is to be guided by the Word of God, and I shall feel obliged if you would favour me with your judgment on this question.

A. I believe your practice to be a right one, as to the



gathering together of those who care for the Church of God, to look into cases of discipline, and of those seeking fellowship, cases of need, and the various matters in which godly care and oversight is needed.

In scripture I find that there was a *body* technically called the elderhood, or presbytery (*πρεσβυτέριον*), within the assembly. No doubt, in apostolic days, those composing this body may have been appointed by apostles, or their representatives; but still their was a recognized *body*—not merely men or elders individually, who acted in concert; but a body so named. See 1 Tim. iv. 14. Such a body was known amongst the Jews. See Luke xxii. 66. “The elderhood of the people,” “The estate of the elders,” Acts xxii. 5; both having the same meaning as elderhood or presbytery, while, of course, differing in constitution.

I believe there is a great deal done by such meetings now, composed of those who have a care for the church, and who possess the confidence of the saints, and an aptitude for such care. Many cases, details of which would be hurtful if spoken of before the young, and females, have there been discussed before the Lord; the case carefully examined on all sides, and while no *action* of discipline or reception is taken, or could be, apart from the assembled saints, still the case is matured, and so brought forward, in a way that delicacy is not shocked, where such a case might exist.

It may turn out, too, that many a case need go no further; the personal rebuke of the “spiritual.” The interference of the two or three may save all this, and save the Lord’s name from reproach, as well as the Assembly from that most painful of all actions—the exercise of discipline and excision from its midst. Cases, too, of need, where that can be ministered to, with the quiet grace of the Lord, are saved from a parade and the like.

“Sisters” have nothing whatever to do with such meetings. They have their own place defined fully in scripture, and are not to exercise authority. But no action, I repeat, can be taken by such a meeting apart from the assembled saints.

The cases are looked into, and the Assembly—having confidence in those who thus love the care of the Church—receive their testimony, and act upon their evidence and wisdom, and the matter, requiring only adequate testimony from two or three faithful witnesses as to the true bearings of the case,

"I CAN DO ALL THINGS."

PHIL. IV. 13.

Strong in this power of Thine, blest LORD,

I cross life's troubled sea,

I do not fear its waves or storms,

But fix my eye on Thee :

The winds may roar, the waters rage,

I soar above them all,

They can't o'erwhelm me with their might,

My soul has heard Thy call.

I dare not look at them alone,

My spirit soon would faint,

And then, my SAVIOUR, Thou would'st have

For child, a careworn saint ;

But I can meet them *all* with Thee—

Oh ! wondrous, ceaseless love !—

Look down on them from where Thou art,

For I'm "in Christ" above.

How glorious ! LORD, to walk with Thee,

In calm, and conscious strength,

From wave to wave, thro' wind and storm,

Till Home is reached at length.

Here in the body, yet *not* here,

My heart, my hopes, my love,

Thou'st snapped the chain which bound them fast,

They've soared, Thy worth to prove.

They daily prove it, Blessed One,

In precious rest and joys ;

My heart has got an object now ;

Before, it clung to toys ;

Still to the end I shall endure,

Because *Thou* art, *I* am ;

Yes, Thou art all, and I am nought ;

Vast truth, *Thy* gift to man.

"I can do all things," for Thy strength

Is freely mine to use,

And if I do not live in it,

My life its power would lose.

Do not permit Thy feeble child

To seek to walk alone,

Lest Thou be forced to let me fall,

That I Thy might may own.

When Thou dost come, then shall I see

The beauty of Thy face,

And wonder and adore, for all

The glories of Thy grace.

Then I shall bless Thee for the arm

I leant on here below,

And for the love, *so* great, *so* free,

Thou giv'st me now to know.

## HEBREWS X.

There is a blessed secret in Heb. x. The divine argument there, seems to me to be an enlargement on the words in Exod. xii., "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." And Israel was all the time within, feeding upon the lamb.

The secret is this. The conscience follows the throne. If God's demand or will be unanswered, the conscience is not perfected. If God's will be answered, the conscience is purged, and we are sanctified.

The blood of bulls and goats did not satisfy the throne of God, or answer His will. The proof was this, that the same offering went on day by day—year after year. But the blood of Christ once offered, was never offered again. Jesus "sat down" instead of going out again. God saw the blood and passed over, as One that had said, "Judgment shall not come nigh you." The Israelite—the believer—may feed on the Lamb inside. God entitles him to be "*bold*"—to stand in His presence like a priest, fresh under the washing of the Sanctuary. The throne is satisfied, and so is the conscience.

Sin is not an offence against ourselves; it is a damage, a mischief, a ruin on ourselves: but it is against God; it is an offence; and if God be satisfied\* that it is put away, so are our hearts to be. We are thus to stand as sprinkled from an evil conscience.

## MATT. XIII.

The parable of the "tares and the wheat" introduces the *two seeds*—the good and the bad—the diverse contents of the present "age," or world—Christendom.

The parables of the "mustard seed" and the "leaven," take up the "tares," presenting them, the *bad* thing of Christendom, in its *two* forms of outward secular greatness, and of internal spiritual corruption.

The parables of the "treasure" and the "pearl," in like manner, take up the wheat, presenting it, the *good* thing of Christendom, in its *two* characters, as being set for Christ's *glory*, and for Christ's *joy* or delight.

The parable of the "drag net" shows the separating, judicial action that is to close the age.

[No doubt when "the kingdom of heaven" when set up hereafter (*i.e.* in millennial day), will comprise Jews, Gentiles, and church of God (1 Cor. x. 32); this last in heavenly glory.]

The tares and the wheat are *generating*, so to speak, the rest. For it includes the *bad* thing, and the *good* thing, and the *judgment* that finally separates these two things. And thus the remaining five arables are only an enlarged view of the contents of this parent-arable, giving us what was in the womb there, in deeply affecting, lemn, and precious characteristics.

## REDEMPTION.

To know and enjoy the forgiveness of our sins, is the portion of every child of God. An unforgiven child of God is unknown in Scripture. False theology may and has darkened the souls of His people; or they may never have known the light. Still, forgiveness is their portion, they *are* forgiven, whether they know it or not; but God would have them *know* it as well, and when they receive forgiveness, He gives them the Holy Ghost. It is no matter of attainment, but of simple faith, taking God's thoughts and giving up our own. "Abraham believed God;" that was faith. Experience will often contradict what God says, but faith is not experience, and we are saved by faith, and not by experience. "The full assurance of faith" is the only normal Christian state. It rests upon what Christ has accomplished; what the Holy Ghost declares in the word of God. Unbelief may reject it and be lost; but faith—childlike, Christian faith—believes God; it "sets to its seal that God is true," and God, too, sets His seal (the Holy Ghost) on him who believes.

But to know forgiveness is not to know redemption. A man may know his sins are forgiven for which he would have been judged, and in conscience still be in Egypt. He may think himself merely "a sinner" still. He may suppose he is still a child of fallen Adam, and, therefore, he may have no sense of deliverance from that state at all. Now it is one thing to know that I had *sins*, and that I had earned judgment for those sins, and that grace stepped in and sheltered me by the blood of Christ, both blotting out the sins for ever, and delivering me from a judgment to come; but it is quite another thing to know that I have been wholly delivered from a present *state* before God—that of a responsible and sinful child of Adam, and that I am now a forgiven child of God, and never can be a child of Adam any more!

Here the truth of redemption comes in, and we have both. "We have redemption through his blood, (and) the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of his grace' (Eph. i. 7).

It was one thing for Israel to know that they had been *safe* from judgment on the night of the Passover, and quite another to have been *saved* out of Egypt. They *had been* slaves there, making bricks without straw. They *are* God's freed-men, as they sing the song of Moses on the wilderness

side of the Red Sea! Here is where so many err. They are trusting in Christ, as their only hope; they may know too, that their sins are pardoned, but they go on all their lives through, perhaps, crying out "miserable sinners," or "sinners." Plainly they do not know where redemption has set them, or they could not do this.

Suppose that an Israelite, instead of singing Moses' song of redemption, was crying out (because he found himself the same person still when he looked at himself), "a poor slave in Egypt;" what would you have thought of his folly? Yet there are plenty of the people of God in no better a state. How thoroughly dishonouring to the work of Christ! But it satisfies systematic religion, and ministers to it. Redemption is ignored in its true force; I do not say in words, for alas, that is one of the most successful plans of the enemy, to use orthodox words without their true import, and thus blind the souls of the people of God as to their real meaning, keeping them in darkness and uncertainty all their lives.

An Israelite who was redeemed was dealt with from that moment on an entirely new footing. Never as a slave in Egypt again, but according to the new place and relationship in which he now stood with God, and so it is with the Christian.

And now comes another thing altogether: not merely have we to learn what we have *done*, and the *forgiveness* we need for this, but we have to learn a far more trying lesson — what we *are*, and the *deliverance* we have in Christ. We never get thorough deliverance from what we are until we are forced to cry out, "O wretched man that *I am*, who shall *deliver me*." Forgiveness may be known at the same time, as we have seen.

This is unfolded in Exodus xiv. They started to leave Egypt, but the bitter lesson was then learned that they could not deliver themselves. Forgiveness does not give strength, nor does the possession of life. And here comes in *experience*, but experience before deliverance, and therefore not yet on proper Christian ground. Experience will never give deliverance; it will "bring me into captivity," but it will never set me free (see Rom. vii. 14-24)—that must be the work of another.

On the night of the *Passover* it was a question between God and Israel: on the day of the *Red Sea*, between God

and the enemy. Was God or the enemy to have those whom blood had purchased? In the salvation of the Red Sea we learn in type the efficacy of Christ's *death* and *resurrection* in delivering from the world, and Satan's power who had formed it as a sphere in which to please the flesh in man. The blood of Jesus answered for our sins before God as a Judge. His death and resurrection takes us clean out by redemption into a new place, delivering us for ever from the attacks and accusations of the enemy. God counts to us in grace, and we possess by faith the efficacy of what Christ has passed through for us.

The children of Israel had encamped at Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea. Pi-hahiroth bears the significant meaning of *The opening of liberty*. Here Satan's power is put forth in a final effort to frustrate "The salvation of the Lord." All his hosts are marshalled against the people, who are "sore afraid." But the Lord permits this pressure which eventuates in their learning Him in a far more blessed way than as a Judge. They experience what souls do who find that a day of quiet slavery to Satan was more easy to be endured than the pressure of his power against them in their first efforts to escape. They may have dreamed of escape in days gone by; but now the trial comes, Will Satan permit it? The bondage of the Egyptians was preferable to this trying moment: "For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness" (*v. 12*). Death was before them, and up to death Satan wields his power. Once that death is past, Satan's power is over.

Now God's resources are seen; the blood which had answered for our sins has come from the side of a dead Christ, but He has risen, and left the whole domain of Satan's power—nullifying death for him who believes. "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord . . . The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace" (*vv. 13, 14*). And Moses lifted up the rod of judgment, and divided the waters of death; and the people passed over to the other side through death, which stood before them a moment before. The Lord has gone into the last stronghold of Satan's power, and wrought complete salvation for His people. A very real work may have to be done in them, that they may know themselves, and that when put into the pressure of such a moment they may be forced to find that all must be of God. But the Lord has

wrought the work of salvation *for* us, and what He has passed through is counted to us in grace. It is not merely that His blood has cleansed us from every sin and saved us from judgment to come, but He has died and risen, and left the whole sphere into which He entered; we have died also to the sin and sinful state for which He died in putting it away before God, and now He liveth unto God. "Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also (*i.e.*, count it true in faith, what God has counted to you in grace) yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vi. 9—11).

How then can Satan touch or accuse? If we have died with Christ, out of the scene into which He entered in divine love, we have died to it for ever. Satan may try to follow (as Pharaoh and his hosts), and find that there is his ruin. He put forth his worst, in leading on the whole world against Christ to drive Him out of it; but therein Christ destroyed his power. His accusations are over; his attacks frustrated. He might accuse and attack one who is alive; but we have died with Christ, and this he can do no more.

If we were simple, this truth of deliverance would be simple too. But alas, we are not simple, and hence the bitter experiences we have to pass through, till we cry out, "Who shall deliver?" Then all is clear. We have been translated completely out of the place and condition in which we committed the sins, and as cleansed from them, put into a new place "in Christ" risen from the dead. By no efforts of our own could we ever reach this place. It is by complete surrender, and by giving up every effort, that we get this deliverance in Christ, who has accomplished it all, and who now stands in this new place Himself.

You find this experimentally described at length in Rom. vii. 14—24. Not that these verses give you the experience of any person at the time they were spoken. They are the *past* experiences of a *delivered* man, who had struggled for freedom until he found he was rather getting further from *deliverance* than nearer the goal. He is now standing on dry ground, so to speak, and describing what he experienced before he was free.

You see a remarkable illustration of this in Jonah (*c.* ii).

He is put into the place where none could avail to deliver him but God alone. In the "belly of hell"—as he describes it. Three times over he promised what he would do, if he only could get out; "I will look again toward thy holy temple." No; vows and resolutions will not do. "But," he cries, "I will sacrifice to thee with the voice of thanksgiving." Will this set him free? No. Again he cries "I will pay that I have vowed." All in vain! Promises and vows, efforts and resolves which are made in such a state will not do; they all come from "I," and as long as "I" is recognized you have not given up "I" as one in whose flesh "dwelleth no good thing," and turned the eye upon Christ.

Well, said Jonah, "*Salvation is of the Lord*"! Ah, Jonah, you have found out the secret; you have touched the spring of the lock, and you are standing on dry ground the next moment! How simple, and yet how blessed to find the eye removed from self—hopeless self—and turned in the sense of utter, helpless weakness upon God. Then all is done, and we are free!

There are three steps in learning the bitter experience of Rom. vii. 14-24. First, the hopeless evil of the nature of the flesh, in which is *no* good: not merely that the tree has produced evil *fruit*, but that the *tree* itself is corrupt. Then, secondly, it begins to dawn upon the soul that, after all, there are good desires, and earnest longings to do the right thing for God. The very aspirations of a new nature, which is sanctified to the obedience of Jesus Christ, are there. The first cry of the quickened soul is "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" But O, what distress of soul, to find that even with good desires and earnest aspirations after God the evil nature is stronger than the good, and leads me captive, so that I do the thing I hate, and I detest and abhor the thing I do. Bitter lesson, but useful to learn. Lastly, then, I learn that I have no power over it, and some one else must come and set me free. Sad enough to find its total evil; sadder still to find that it is not myself, and yet I am captive to its desires. But the moment I give up "I," and cry, "Who shall deliver?" my eye has turned away from all the efforts of "I," and I am free. The Lord has been there in the depths, and the evil nature has been completely condemned in Him, so that I can reckon myself dead by *faith* and for deliverance; though in *fact* and *experience* I find the nature alive, and its ten-



dencies unchanged, still am entitled to treat it as "not I," but as an enemy to overcome and subdue.

Thus we are "in Christ"—not "in Adam" at all, and *now*, for the *first* time, God will have fruit from us. All this work of redemption (Ex. xii.—xiv.) is what God has done *for* us. The experience we pass through is a work *in* us, that we may enter upon what He has accomplished. Now, for the first time, the mouths of those who in solemn silence ate the paschal lamb on the night of judgment, whose cries of fear had been silenced at the Red Sea by a God of salvation, are opened in a rich song of praise for what the Lord has accomplished in His delivering grace.

*Sins*, and *death*, and *judgment*, are all behind the delivered soul. The sins are gone—for Christ has borne them. Death is past for us in Him. Through it we pass (if we have to die physically) into the presence of the Lord, and "death is ours:" not now the wages of sin—but Christ having taken its wages, we are free, and instead of sinful man's portion, "after this (death) the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27), it leads us to the glory where Jesus is. Judgment is past, for He has borne it, and he that believeth "hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment; but is passed from death unto life" (John v. 24).

And "The waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. There remained not so much as one of them." "Thus the Lord saved Israel"! (vv. 28-30). The same waters that silenced the foe, flowed back into their mighty channel; there was no retrogression—no return. Redemption once accomplished is accomplished for ever! The waters, flowing back in the channel, precluded the possibility of returning by that pathway into the land of slavery and sin!

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## "THE POTTER'S HOUSE."

JER. XVIII. 1-6.

THE direction given to Jeremiah, "to arise and go down to the potter's house," seemed to be in the common order of things—but "the words which he heard from the Lord;" when *there*—and "the work which he saw wrought upon the wheels," were most important in their nature, and are of general application.

As the prophet of the Lord to His people, Jeremiah had to say to *them*, “O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are ye in mine hand.” Indeed, a prominent feature of the prophecy by this son of Hilkiab, is the declaration of the state of the people and the city of Jerusalem, as seen under the *old* covenant of works; and in the latter part, a glowing description of the future condition of the city and the nation when brought under the *new* covenant of grace, at the second coming of their Messiah. In fact, God dispensationally does with them what the potter did in type before the eyes of Jeremiah—“the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.”

Have we never read—“If that *first* covenant had been *faultless*, then should no place have been sought for the *second*. For finding fault with them he saith, Behold the days come saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.” The first vessel that he made of clay was marred, for “in that he saith a new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.” This same principle is of equal force as applied to ritualistic and sacerdotal ordinances of worship. “In burnt offerings, and sacrifices for sin, thou hast had *no pleasure*; then said I, Lo I come (in the volume of the book it is written of *me*), to do thy will O God. He taketh away *the first*, that he may establish *the second*.” Thus, the lesson which Jeremiah learnt of “the marred vessel” is true, between Jehovah and Israel as regards the nation dispensationally, broken out of their olive tree, or as respects the old covenant of law and works, or as regards sacrifices, successional ministry and worship, “For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment *going before*, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.” Indeed, the whole of that economy is summed up in these ominous words, “For the law made *nothing* perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope, by the which *we* draw nigh unto God.” Such are “the words” proclaimed to us by the Holy Ghost in the house of the Son, and the Colossians tells us “the work” by which the first vessel was marred, “blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which

was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to *his cross*."

But this principle, which the potter's work on the wheels supplies, is of far wider application than Israel's history, whether under the old covenant in Jeremiah's time, or when under the new covenant of blessing with their Messiah in their coming millennial times; indeed, those who know what the difference is between the outward historical order of God's actings, and His hidden but divine counsels in Christ, will remember "*That* was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual." All such will be prepared to see, not the application of a principle merely, but an established rule arising from the nature of God and what He is, and what man has been proved to be as a responsible creature; "And so it is written—the first man, Adam, was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." If we consider this world as the house of the potter, there were indeed in it "The first man who is of the earth, earthy, and the second man is the Lord from heaven." We know, too, who He was "That was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was; then I was by him as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight." Creation produced the first man; but the mystery of the incarnation introduced the Second—the Word made flesh, who dwelt amongst us. Looked at from everlasting to everlasting, Adam, though first in time, and in the world's history, was but an image man, "A figure of him that was to come;" so that it can now be said—"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new, and all things are of God who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ."

"Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels; and the vessel that he made was of *clay*." "And God said, let us make man in our image—and the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul"—this was the creature God had formed. But sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, because that all had sinned—and so the vessel that he made of clay was marred. "God drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword which

turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.” It was not, however, till the cross, that man had done his worst, and declared himself an enemy to God by the crucifixion of Christ; so that there was *no* remedy where man was, as the betrayer and murderer of the Son of His love. In the secret of God there was another vessel to be wrought, “As it seemed good to the potter to make it;” and it was by this last Adam (the second Man) that the first was to be superseded and marred—“For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.”

The words by the Holy Ghost in “the house of God” are very explicit upon the fact, that man “in the flesh” has been marred and set aside by the judgment of God at the cross for the believer; and that our old man has been crucified with Christ that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. Like the first vessel that was made and broken in the potter’s house, so the first man, who lost the image in which he was created, has been judicially put to death in the broken body of Christ; and we are consequently *not* in the flesh but in the Spirit. Like the second vessel that was made, “As seemed good to the potter to make it,” so by incarnation, resurrection and ascension, this mighty power which was wrought in Christ, when God raised Him from the dead, has set Him far above every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come—He is the beginning of the new creation of God.

This divine order of God as regards Adam and Christ, or the first man and the second Man, is likewise the rule by which *we* learn the lessons of grace and truth which came to us by Jesus Christ. It is of great interest to notice *this*, in His intercourse with Nicodemus, the master of Israel, by the the words which He spoke and the work to which He pointed him—“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee ye must be born again.” Nicodemus will not do—he must be born of water and of the Spirit. And what is this teaching from a greater than Jeremiah but the story of the potter’s house and the vessel that was marred—only with divine love and grace, when Jesus said—“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the

Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life."

So, likewise, in the Lord's intercourse with the woman of Samaria at the well, when He tells her all that ever she did—what is it in result but marring the vessel of clay, and forming another on the wheel as seemed good to the potter to make it? "He taketh away the first that he may establish the second." She, in the state in which she came to Jesus, is set aside, as in truth every believer in Christ knows, and is connected with Christ as the well-spring of life and the giver of the living water. How exactly she sets her seal to his marring and to this fashioning power of God; for henceforth Jacob's well is to her a deserted one, and her forsaken water-pot tells plainly enough, to all who still go there to draw, that the woman who once carried it has found in Christ "A well of water, springing up into everlasting life." She thirsts no more, and her Saviour and Lord has found meat to eat, that others knew not of! The words of the Lord in the potter's house to Nicodemus taught the master of Israel the necessity of his being born again—born of the Spirit—and then showed him the mighty work by which this was to be accomplished, in the lifted-up Son of man. Just as at the well where He sat, He took a place not in death (as the antitype of the brazen serpent) but in the power of life, and giving it, that she who received it should never thirst. "Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." Redemption, by the work on the cross, has been communicated to the Israelite, and life in Christ has been opened out in living streams to the woman of Samaria. Precious lessons these are for the marred vessels of clay to learn from the lips and under the hand of Him who is wonderful in counsel, and mighty in operation!

This divine order which we are tracing, is further to be displayed in the resurrection of our mortal body, as taught by words and work in 1 Cor. xv., "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" Nicodemus had said, "How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" The woman of Samaria said, "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep:

from whence, then, hast thou that living water?" As Jesus replied in His day, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth;" so Paul answers, "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die." If we refer to these three examples upon another point, it is to remark how easily every difficulty is solved by the bringing in of God, as above all the questionings of the natural heart and conscience. In John iii., the enquiry, "How can these things be?" was answered from the heart of God—"For *God so loved the world*, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." In John iv., the demand, "Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?" was met, too, from *above*—"If thou knewest the *gift of God*, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink." So in this, 1 Cor. xv., "How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" gets its unanswerable reply from the almighty power of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will—"God giveth it a body, as it hath pleased him." Faith's way of keeping out of all such reasonings and difficulties is by the knowledge of God, and so never entering into them. All things are possible with God; and thus in our measure, as walking with Him, all things are possible to him that believeth. We shall find it of the greatest moment to remember the lesson in the potter's house, that the vessel he *first made* of clay was marred; otherwise the sophistry of man, and the "cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive," may carry many away by the idea of human improvement and the world's progress. In this magnificent resurrection chapter the most advanced reason will stumble at every step, and, because of its so-called development, nothing but faith and the knowledge of the power of God can get out upon incorruption. What can reason say to the fact in v. 44—"It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body"? Faith's answer is triumphant—"God giveth it a body, as it hath pleased him." Reason, in this dilemma, must either sink itself to scepticism, or else give place to faith. But to return. God's rule of condemning sin in the flesh at the cross, where it was judicially set aside, is now actually carried out in resurrection—for "flesh and blood cannot

inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." These are the words of the Lord, which we have gone down to the house of the potter to hear. Nor shall we find the mighty power of God less remarkable in operation, when put forth for the resurrection of the body, than when displayed in righteous judgment on our Substitute, when our redemption was secured to us by the blood of the Lamb. "Buried by baptism (with Him) into death"—or the first vessel marred—was not more true than "that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life"—or made again, another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.

*(To be continued.)*

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## THE KOHATHITES.

NUMBERS IV. 1-15.

WALK and service are the characteristic features of the Book of Numbers; access and worship those of the Book of Leviticus. In the former the instructions are given "in the wilderness" (c. i. 1). In the latter "out of the tabernacle of the congregation" (c. i. 1). The place is suited to the subject. Again, in Leviticus the Priests are especially in prominence; in Numbers the Levites take the lead.

Of these, the family of Kohath come first in order; but before drawing attention to their special line of service, it may be well to notice the peculiar place given to the family of Levi amongst the children of Israel.

When the other tribes were numbered they were omitted, but appointed "over the tabernacle of testimony, and over all the vessels thereof, and over all things that belong to it: they shall bear the tabernacle and all the vessels thereof; and they shall minister unto it, and shall encamp round about the tabernacle" (c. i. 50). And again—"Bring the tribe of Levi near and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him. And they shall keep his charge and the charge of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle. And they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle. And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons: they shall be

wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel." And again—"I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the first-born that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be mine; because all the first-born are mine; for on the day that I smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt I halloed unto me all the first-born in Israel, both man and beast: mine shall they be: I am the Lord" (c. iii. 6-13).

Thus the Levites had certain things in common with the children of Israel their brethren, and certain peculiar and especial privileges entrusted to them. With the children of Israel they had been redeemed by blood and by power—the blood of the paschal lamb had sheltered them—the "crystal walls" of the Red Sea had been their safeguard; but distinct from them they are *especially* the Lord's, being taken instead of the first-born of Israel whom He had spared, and unlike them also they are *wholly* given to Aaron, the High Priest, to minister to him, and to exercise their service in dependence on him. In the accomplishment of their service they were nearest to the tabernacle, and the tabernacle and its contents were their peculiar charge. Are there not even now amongst the Lord's people, all of whom have part in the death and resurrection of Jesus, those whom God has especially selected for Himself to be near Him, to be "wholly given" to Christ, and to exercise their service in dependence on Him alone?

To return to the family of Kohath: "Their charge shall be the ark, and the table, and the candlestick, and the altars, and the vessels of the sanctuary wherewith they minister, and the hanging, and all the service thereof" (c. iii. 31). And again, "take the sum of the sons of Kohath . . . from thirty years old and upward, even until fifty years old; . . . this shall be the service of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation about the most holy things" (c. iv. 2, 3, 4). The Gershonites had the charge of the tent with its coverings and the hangings for the doors. To the Merarites were entrusted the boards, the bars, the pillars, and the sockets; the one bearing the framework, the other the covering of it; but to the sons of Kohath alone was it given to carry "the most holy things"—all the inner furniture of the tabernacle. And thus their trust, in all its beautiful detail, is mentioned first as of first importance. And we may here remark that when the princes make their



offering in c. vii., whereas two waggons and their oxen are given to the sons of Gershon, and four waggons and their oxen are assigned to the sons of Merari, *none at all* are allotted to the Kohathites, "Because the service of the sanctuary belonging unto them was that that they should bear upon their shoulders" (v. 9). Too precious were "the most holy things" to be exposed to the rude shaking of the waggons. The gentle, steady shoulders of the sons of Kohath, from thirty to fifty years old, men of maturity, must bear them with all the delicacy of which they were masters. (See 1 Chron. xiii.-xv. 2).

May we not say that even now, not only amongst the people of God, the whole company of the redeemed, but also amongst those whom He has drawn apart in special nearness to Himself, there is an inner circle to whom the Kohathite service has been entrusted—those of decision, those of maturity, those to whom the Lord can commit that which most concerns Himself—the glory of the person of His Son? Not that the sons of Gershon and Merari have not posts of honour too, and work that required activity and intelligence, as the one set up the framework and the other covered it over; but to the Kohathites alone belonged, as we have seen, this inner line of service, the charge of these "most holy things."

"And when the camp setteth forward, Aaron shall come, and his sons, and they shall take down the covering vail, and cover the ark of testimony with it, and shall put thereon the covering of badgers' skins, and shall spread over it a cloth wholly of blue, and shall put in the staves thereof" (c. iv. 5, 6).

It was *on the journey* that their services came into requisition, for we know from c. ix. 17, it was "When the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents." And Aaron was the one at whose hands they received their charge. He took down the vail, he covered the ark therewith, he laid over it the badger's skins and cloth wholly of blue, and he put in the staves thereof. It remained for them to carry through the wilderness what he entrusted to them. The same order is observable with the table, the candlestick, and all the other objects of their charge. This has all its precious and peculiar signification. God's saints are on the journey now, labouring to enter into His rest—

the "rest that remaineth" (Heb. iv. 11). Jesus guides them in their pathway (Ps. xxxii. 8); and as they travel on, He who is their High Priest above commits to them what He would have them carry for Him through the wilderness. What this burden is, this precious Scripture tells us.

The *Ark* comes first in order, made, as we know from Exodus xxv. 10—22, of shittim wood and gold, and covered over with the mercy seat and cherubims of glory. Here Jehovah dwelt: as He says Himself, "There I will meet with thee and I will commune with thee" (v. 22)—a fitting type of the One in whom God should yet draw nigh to man, and through whom He should reveal Himself (John i. 14—18). *Jesus the Son of God* is here before us, God manifest in the flesh; and thus the veil is next referred to as the covering that immediately enveloped the Ark. Of its materials Ex. xxvi. 31, informs us, and Heb. x. 20, as to its signification. The *human form* of Jesus is by this unfolded in all its varied beauty—heavenly origin, kingly position, human glory, personal righteousness, and the One to whom all judgment has been committed—being depicted by the blue, the purple, the scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work, with cherubims. Next to this the badger's skin is placed; and knowing, as we do, how often animals in Scripture are used to represent *character* (Matt. x. 16), we have no difficulty in seeing that the Spirit of God would bring before us here the watchfulness of Him who, by the word of Jehovah's lips, ever kept Himself from the paths of the destroyer (Ps. xvii. 4). Although the Son of God in all the fulness of His glory, He was not unmindful that the prince of this world stalked abroad, and therefore was always on the watch to baffle his designs. But over all we find "a cloth wholly of blue," and sweetly are we here reminded that although the utmost vigilance was necessary in the presence of the evil one, yet before the Father He was ever "the Son of Man which is in Heaven" (John iii. 13), the celestial colour evidencing this more eloquently than words.

But this was not the only trust of the sons of Kohath. "And upon the *table of shewbread* they shall spread a cloth of blue, and put thereon the dishes and the spoons and the bowls, and covers to cover withal: and the continual bread shall be thereon: and they shall spread upon them a cloth of scarlet, and cover the same with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put in the staves thereof" (vv. 6, 7). The *structure*

of this table we learn from Ex. xxv. 23-30; its *freight* from Lev. xxiv. 5-9. Formed of gold and shittim wood, before the Lord it ever bore the memorial of the chosen nation in all its primal order. They might fail and did, until "the name of God was blasphemed among the gentiles through them;" but still the twelve cakes of two tenth deals remained, with pure frankincense, before the Lord, the special portion, too, of Aaron and his sons. •

What that table did for Israel, Jesus does on high for us and humbling as it is to contrast the so-called Church of the present day with that set up on earth at Pentecost, still we can rejoice to think that the Son of God ever maintains before His Father a memorial of that "one pearl of great price" for which He stripped Himself of His Messianic glory. Twelve was the symbolic number for Israel; "one loaf" expresses the unity of the Church of God (1 Cor. x. 17). The heavenly covering enshrouds the table, fitly pointing to His personal glory; on this was placed the "continual bread," with its accompanying utensils, and then the *scarlet* covering, to tell of glory in connection with man (2 Sam. i. 24), the people of His choice, and over all the *badgers' skins*, as suited to the character of Him who knew so well the craft of Satan and the way to meet it (Luke iv. 1-13). The exceeding fitness of the cloth of blue between the table and its freight cannot fail to strike the reader, as well as the difference of the order of the coverings when the ark was in question; the *special* place occupied by the ark as the throne of God will at once account for the difference.

The *Candlestick* comes next. "And they shall take a cloth of blue and cover the candlestick of the light, and his lamps and his tongs and his snuff-dishes, and all the oil-vessels thereof wherewith they minister unto it; and they shall put it and all the vessels thereof within a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put it upon a bar." Of the form of this we read in Ex. xxv. 31-40, of its use in Lev. xxiv. 2-4. Of purest gold, and with branches perfect as to their number, from evening unto morning did Aaron order the light of it before the Lord continually—as if to tell us that from the evening of this world's darkness to the morning of the day of glory, a Priest after another order sustains in His own person a light for His people, the espoused ones of His choice, in the presence of His Father's throne above. The Son of God, then, the light of His

people, is before us, and the clothing is of blue and badger's skin—to shew that, heavenly to God and to faith, to man and to Satan He is vigilant and wary.

“And upon the golden altar they shall spread a cloth of blue, and cover it with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put to the staves thereof.” As to the construction of this and its special use, Ex. xxx. 1-10 gives us ample information. Formed of gold and shittim wood, it stood before the vail, and morning and evening it sent up its cloud of incense in the presence of the Lord, attended to by the same one that dressed the lamps of the golden candlestick—a beautiful and simple figure (see Rev. viii. 3-4) of Him who, lifting up His hands like the evening sacrifice (Ps. cxli. 2), “ever liveth to make intercession for us.” The Lord Jesus is depicted to us here, and still heavenliness within and watchfulness without characterise Him.

“And they shall take all the *instruments of ministry* wherewith they minister in the sanctuary, and put them in a cloth of blue, and cover them with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put them on a bar.” What these “instruments of ministry” were the Holy Ghost has not been pleased to particularise, but we have sufficient before us to lead our thoughts to Him who “came not to be ministered unto but to minister.” As the eternal Word, His ear was opened ere He left the glory to do the will of God (Ps. xl. 6-8). As Man He took a servant's form (Phil. ii. 7). As a Servant, He spoke of Him who “wakeneth morning by morning, who wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned” (Isaiah l. 4). And when His time of earthly service was completed “they seemed unto him but a few days for the love he had to her” (Gen. xxix. 20). Like the slave of Ex. xxi. 5, 6, He becomes our servant for ever. He serves us now, according to John xiii. He will serve us, according to Luke xii. 37. The instruments of ministry give us then the thought of the Son of God in His *servant* character; and, again, the glory of the heavens and vigilance for earth in figure envelopes Him.

“And they shall take away the ashes from the altar and spread a purple cloth thereon, and they shall put upon it all the vessels thereof, wherewith they minister about it, even the censers, the flesh-hooks, and the shovels and the basons, all the vessels of the altar, and they shall spread upon it a covering of badgers' skins, and put to the staves of it.” The

description of this we find in Ex. xxvii. 1-8, the use of it the following chapter, *vv.* 38-43, with other passages, teaches us. Morning and evening throughout the year did the sweet savour of the lambs of the first year ascend before the Lord, a continual burnt offering—so evidently designating the lasting character of the sacrifice of the “Lamb without blemish and without spot,” “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.” The Son of God, God’s Lamb, is here before us, and enshrouding that which points Him out to us a *purple* covering—as if to say that at the moment when He was most contemptible in the eyes of man, before God and to faith He shone out in all the brightness of His kingly glory. Well chosen, though done in unbelief, was the inscription of Pilate; blessed was the testimony of the dying thief—“*Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom.*” The offering, and yet the King is set before our gaze, but covered over to the eyes of man with that which tells of how, while *rejoicing*, he knew how to *beware* (Phil. iii. 1, 2).

Such was “the burden of the sons of Kohath,” and we can well conceive with what solemn care they received their charge at the hands of Aaron, and the honour they felt was conferred upon them in their being allowed to act for him in the charge of the most holy of all the holy things. And what a strange sight must it have been, and one so incomprehensible, save to all that were in the secret, to behold this company of men, bearing through the wilderness what was so glorious within but so repulsive without, and yet withal of such deep significance.

May it be ours to seek to qualify ourselves for this Kohathite service. The mere fact that we are saved is not sufficient, for all Israel was redeemed, as we have seen; neither is it enough to be wholly the Lord’s, for the Gershonites and Merarites, as we have noticed, were this. Those only are represented by the Kohathites who “set the Lord always before” them, whose appreciation of the Lord in all His varied excellence is such that they desire none else but Him: their hearts are satisfied with Him. He is the one delight of their souls. Their one thought is to please Him until they are with Him where He is, beholding His glory, and precisely as their joy in Him increases their representation of Him here will be manifest to all.

D. T. G.

## RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE.

2 SAM. xiv. 14.

IT is only God Himself who could bring home a banished one, or provide salvation for a sinner: for to accomplish this, there must be a ransom, a price adequate to the redemption. God alone could furnish that. All the angels in heaven would fail in the attempt, an *eternal* value must go for an offence against God. God alone can yield an offering which shall carry infinite value in it, like that, and such as sin demands. Power cannot supply it; love cannot supply it; it is God Himself, whose Person has infinite value, that can alone supply it. Power once attempted this, and failed awfully. David on the throne of Israel undertook, by a simple word or decree of power such as his throne carried, to bring back a banished one. But this ended in greater mischief; and the throne that had attempted this, was as it were forfeited by the act.

God has, however, done it—because He can sprinkle blood on the throne, such as the throne can accept. He can, and has allied righteousness with peace in this great matter, and His banished are brought home under sure and clear title to see His face, and to walk in His presence; and His own throne is not only guiltless but glorified. New powers array it. Mercy and truth with their several glories, and that too in their brightest shining, adorn it; they have met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

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## THE NAIL.

THERE is one Nail fastened in a sure place, and there the flagons hang and the cups too. “Oh,” says one of the little cups, “I am so little and so black, suppose I should drop.” The flagon says, “I am so heavy, so weighty, suppose I should drop.” One cup says “Oh, if I felt like that golden cup, I should never fear falling.” And the gold cup answers, “It is not my being a gold cup keeps me, but it is *all by the Nail!* If the Nail comes down, we all go! gold cup or pewter cup; but so long as the Nail remains the cups all hang safely.” (See Isaiah xxii. 23, 24.)

## SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

T. T. E., LEDBURY.—1. Am I right in believing that God's *first* action in the soul of the sinner is, by His word and Spirit, to beget a new nature?

2. If so, is the life the soul *then* receives everlasting?

3. That being the case, how would you reconcile it with those passages that put everlasting life as the result of believing?

4. In Acts x. 43, forgiveness of sins is said to *follow* believing. Would that be in its application to the sinner, or a fact as it stands *before God*?

A.—1. I believe that the thought is correct. God's *first* action in the soul of a sinner is the application of His word by the Spirit to the conscience. This action produces faith in the soul; as we have it in Rom. x. 17, "So, then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Faith is the first principle of this new nature. 2. The life thus imparted is, most surely, eternal. 3. But God's impartation of eternal life is never separated in Scripture from our reception of Christ by faith; thus, to believing in Him is attributed the reception of eternal life in Him. 4. I believe that Cornelius was born of God *before* Peter preached salvation, peace, and forgiveness of sins to him and his house. Verse 2 is a description of him; in it the Holy Ghost calls him a "devout man," who prayed to God always. His knowledge extended only so far as that which could be known of Christ amongst the Jews, but with no thought of its application to a Gentile. Like the centurion in Luke vii. he owned, as faith ever does, those who were in external relationship with the Lord, and through whom the blessing to a Gentile must then flow; consequently he "gave much alms to the people," *i.e.* Israel. Peter appeals to him in v. 37, "That word, ye know"; "the word which was sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ." But he needed the comprehensive "whosoever" of v. 43, for his faith to claim the blessing. This God presented to him through Peter, and having received it by faith, the Holy Ghost at once sealed his reception of forgiveness of sins. The new nature was there before; *now* the Holy Ghost, in power and liberty. Forgiveness of sins thus followed believing in Christ and His finished work, and was the *application* to the sinner of that which was previously a fact before God.

## WHAT CHARACTERISES THE CHRISTIAN, AND SECURES HIS BLESSING.

ROM. VIII.

It cannot but be remarked how that, in this chapter, the whole condition of a Christian is identified with the Holy Ghost. What constitutes him a Christian is the sealing of the Holy Ghost—and this really characterises him as such. The first part of the chapter gives us the Spirit in life-giving power; then, secondly, God in us; and in the close we find the security of the blessing, "God for us." What gives us our character is *God in us*; what secures us is *God for us*. It is entirely individual, for here we have not the Church formed by the presence of the Holy Ghost. The first four verses form a summary of the earlier part of the epistle.

In chap. v. we are shown how God in grace had made peace for us, justified and brought us forgiveness of *sins*; and then the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. There alone He had been spoken of previous to chap. viii. This answers to v. 1.

In the subsequent part (chaps. vi., vii.) we have the way in which we find deliverance from our *state* as children of Adam, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Then (v. 3) "sin in the flesh" is "condemned" in the cross. Forgiveness and justification are thus founded on Christ having been delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification; thus as regards deliverance from a sinful nature, by its being condemned in the cross: "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." As regards power "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Then the practical result, in virtue of not being under the law, is "that the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us," by walking "after the Spirit." There is a great deal more in this than in walking right according to the law. We have Christ as our righteousness: "Who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness," in contrast to law, which would be our own righteousness. Then we have walk manifesting the life of Christ, the Spirit of God as power for this, in contrast to the law. The law did not give the righteousness it required, and gave no power over sin. In contrast with the righteousness of the law, I have Christ as my righteousness, and consequently, in



contrast with sin dwelling in me, I get the power of the life of Christ by the Holy Ghost dwelling in me, and now am to walk, "not after the flesh."

The law condemned what was evil, but left me walking in it. But now I walk after something else, "the Spirit." And what is of the last importance to us is that we have an object for our hearts. The law gives no life, no strength, no object. It tells me I must love God. What is He? Perfect silence! It tells me nothing of the God I am to love. It is His perfect, just claim of obedience. That is all it can tell me of God—that He claims obedience. It was an obliged obedience, and a curse in case of failure. It judges me if I do not obey, but gives me no object. The heart must have some object—either a good object or a bad one. Now I get the Spirit's object—Christ. He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto me. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." There people generally stop. It is a reference to Isaiah lxiv., and what the Apostle is stating is that it is *not* true now: "but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." That is just the opposite; for "we have not received the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." I have not only got life, as born of God, but I have got one who (through this blessed Word as the means) reveals things suited to this life. It is the Holy Ghost who takes these things and gives them to me as the objects for the new nature to live and feed upon. God has revealed them *to* us by His Spirit, *for* the Spirit searches all things.

Of course, *life* must be there first. It supposes this, but is more. Suppose I am born of God, that does not reveal anything to me. But every nature feeds on that which belongs to it, and is suited to it: as animal nature, for example. Here I find, not a law to me as man in the flesh, but a new nature and new life, the life of Christ in us, which has certain desires, affections, and hopes. But where are the things that answer to them?

Then the Holy Ghost is given as the revealer of the things that belongs to the new nature. Whatever a father has belongs in a certain sense to his child; the child talks naturally of "our" house, "our" carriage, and the like: yet he has nothing of his own. This is all quite right.

Thus we have been brought as children to the Father, and have the Holy Ghost dwelling in us that we may enjoy the things which belong to the relationship.

This is a wonderful thing to say, and is a different thing from being born of God; it is more than the possession of life. Each has its place, and a different way in which it works. The Spirit is the spring and source of life, and then dwells in us. I get the truth itself from Scripture: we are all the sons of God, as born of God, by faith in Christ Jesus: then, "having believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit." We become sons by believing, and then after believing are sealed. God cannot seal an unbeliever. Seal sin and wickedness! It cannot be. He seals a believer. "He that believeth on me . . . out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet (given), because that Jesus was not yet glorified." We find the secret here of how and why we get the Holy Ghost, and why He gives liberty and joy too. "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you, but if I depart I will send him unto you." The coming of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost is a distinct and definite thing, and must not be confounded with His working in a divine way previously. The Son created the world, but did not *come into* the world till incarnation. The Holy Ghost *wrought*, but did not come to take a place in the world until Pentecost. This depended on the Lord going away and being glorified. What was His being glorified? An immense thing! It was God taking man, the being that deserved being cast out of the presence of God, into the glory of God, in Christ Himself, and those that believe on Him. After the accomplishment of the perfect work of redemption, then He can send the Holy Ghost down as a witness that the thing is done. The moment Christ has gone up and taken His place, in righteousness, in the presence of the Father, the Holy Ghost comes down here as the consequence of Man being in the glory of God. Why is He there? Because the work of putting away sin was perfectly accomplished, and He sat down, having Himself purged our sins. Now the Holy Ghost can come down to make us sure of it. The place where He leads to is evidently the glory, because Christ is there. Christ and the saints get their portion in the same way, one after another. He whom the world rejected, God has set there; and He says, "Father, I

will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am." "Ye are all the sons 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."

In the Old Testament type the man was first washed with water, then sprinkled with blood, and then anointed with oil. This is the way in which we get the Spirit of God. The Comforter comes down when the whole thing is accomplished; Christ having gone up on high, when He had purged our sins. Of this the Spirit is the seal,—being in us the revealer and earnest of all that Christ has gone into. When I have found the work of Christ as an effectual work of deliverance, being made white as snow, I am sealed by the Holy Ghost, who has borne witness to me of the blood of Christ, and is then the power of life in Christ dwelling in me, for liberty and joy.

Then the Spirit is the power of life because of righteousness. You get this unfolded till we come to verse 11 of this chapter, where He is also the power of our final deliverance,—the body being renewed for the glory. You have the Spirit first as giving the objects of this life. The law tells me what is right, as far as it goes, but the Holy Ghost gives me objects to satisfy and fill the new man. He produces righteousness, for "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace," &c. He does it by taking of the things of Christ and showing them to me, thus giving me a divine object, so that I live by the faith of the Son of God, "who loved me and gave himself for me." "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they may be sanctified through the truth." All the things that are true I get in the person that I love, and I am attached to them. There are qualities that I may admire. When I find them in my father or my mother, do I coldly estimate them? No, I delight in them, because they are in my father or my mother. So with the things of Christ. I find the qualities in the person that I love. The Spirit takes of them and shows them to me, and I am changed into the same image, growing up into Him in all things, whom the Spirit keeps before me. So the Apostle was labouring to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Taking of what is in Christ and planting it in my heart, that Christ may be formed in me, —to make me grow up to Him in everything.

What are "the things of the Spirit?" Could the Holy Ghost take the things of the world and make them objects

for you? It would be blasphemy to say so. "To be carnally minded" is not a state of mind, but the nature. "To be spiritually minded is life and peace." There is joy and delight in these things of the Spirit; the conscience has nothing to say against them, and the heart delights in them: and the character of the Christian is formed by them. All these traits in Christ become objects on which the heart lives, and thus become characteristic of the Christian.

This is what James calls the law of liberty. Supposing my child wanted to run into the town, and I tell him to stay and do his lessons instead. He obeys; but this is not the law of liberty: that would be to tell him to go into the town. The law says, Do your lessons, instead of what you like. Grace says, Go to heaven, and gives me power to go! The heart and the commandment go the same road. This is the Christian in his path. As far as he is governed and ruled by the Spirit of Christ he has this perfect law of liberty to walk in: his desires are not according to the flesh.

There are three ways in which the Spirit is presented in connection with the Christian. Though born of God, until I know the completeness of redemption I have the thought of meeting requirements, and looking at what my state will be. This is not liberty, but bondage. But I have been redeemed by Christ out of that condition, and through grace have got into this place of liberty. I have learned that I am not in the flesh at all, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in me. I am in Christ, and in the Spirit, and there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. You are in what is perfectly contrary to the flesh in your position before God,—in the spirit, not in the flesh at all. What is of God is in contrast with the flesh; hence "*the Spirit of God.*"

The second way in which He is spoken of is as the Spirit of Christ: "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." This is not purpose or election, but character. We are brought *into* Christ. You cannot say a man is a Christian until Christ dwells in him. Till the prodigal came to the father he had not the robe—did not belong to the house, but was on the road to it. So in Egypt; when the blood was on the door-post they were sure to get out, but they were not out, and were frightened out of their lives! They had not salvation till they were clean out of Egypt. They were afraid of death and judgment, the very

things that brought them out. But when they had passed the Red Sea into a new condition, delivered by God, they sing of the "salvation" of Jehovah. This is complete deliverance, and I have found this new place; I am in Christ, or rather "of" Christ. And if Christ be in me the body is not allowed to live. I say to the flesh, I have nothing to say to you; the body is dead. If it moves it is sin. What life is there then? The "Spirit is life," as that which will produce righteousness—the formative power of it.

Then, thirdly, as "the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead." It is the same Spirit always, but with different results. Here my resurrection is a consequence of the Holy Ghost dwelling in me: the actual body is delivered. We have had, first, the nature of God in contrast with the flesh. Secondly, as forming Christ in me. Thirdly, for final deliverance—not short of the body being glorified. The cry, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" is all answered; delivered in spiritual power; then we are given objects belonging and suited to it; and, lastly, completely and finally in a body of glory.

*(To be continued.)*

## THE POTTER'S HOUSE.

(JER. xviii.)

*(Concluded.)*

AND now that the time is come for us to go up to Him that made us, how are the redeemed to be presented *there*; and in what image and likeness are the raised and changed ones to stand eternally before Him? The word of the Lord which Jeremiah heard in the house of the potter, about Israel broken off and grafted in again, was wonderful. The word of God, spoken to us by the Son of the Father, and confirmed to us by the Holy Ghost, in the Church of the living God, is yet more marvellous:—"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." The word of the Lord in this chapter, or as Paul writes, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand . . . how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day." The

new work wrought upon the wheel is, so to speak, here before us—the second Man in resurrection—for, “as in Adam, all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive; for since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that sleep.” The last Adam, the quickening spirit, takes the place of the first; and the second Man, the Lord from heaven, supersedes the man of the earth, earthy. Persons and things are now as they should be: and there is another vessel made, as seemed good to the Father’s mind and heart to fashion it. By the judicial death of Christ all has been dealt with and marred, that else we must have been judged for. And *now* man, in the person of the Christ, is beyond it by redemption, and with the Lord of life and glory in resurrection. Believers only wait for divine power to make this actually true in us, which is the truth in Christ about us. We who have “the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of *our body*.” And this *power* is what our chapter displays in all its necessary operations. “It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.” The sufficiency of the divine power is evident by which the dead are raised up. And now, as to the question with what body do they come, and in what likeness do they appear? This chapter gives us the words of the Lord, and shows us the works in resurrection, by which all is made plain. “As is the earthy, such are they also that *are* earthy.” Solemn words. “And as the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly; and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” “Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?” Adam, the flesh, sin, and transgression, were all condemned, and set aside (as we have seen) by the death of Christ; and now death itself, the grave and corruption, do their work in marring the first vessel made of clay. Besides these inflictions and penalties from God, and the causes that produced them, we shall find the sting of death, and the strength of sin, brought into this triumphant chapter. Indeed, we may say, it stands as a companion, and a very necessary one, to Rom. viii., where there is neither condemnation nor separa-

tion, because the love of God has got us for itself in Christ, and challenges any and every creature to lay anything against God's elect. "It is God that justifieth," silences every foe and fear; "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," gives assurance to every hope of glory. If Romans viii. is the great charter of our emancipation by grace and redemption, so the 1st Cor. xv. is our final and complete deliverance by resurrection power from death and the grave. In the former we are more than conquerors through him that loved us; and in the latter we are victors, and thank God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Again, in the former there was no separation from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord; in the latter there is nothing but separation by judicial power in judgment at the Cross, and by actual power in resurrection, from all that as a man in the flesh with the fallen Adam, once separated me from God, and from that very love of God in Christ, which now nothing can separate me from. The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law—but the sting and the strength have no longer a claim to enforce—on the contrary faith and hope and love wrap themselves up in the mystery, which carries us up and changes us in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, while we put on immortality, and become the witness of death swallowed up in victory. "And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it."

Lastly, this order of God's actings gets a further fulfilment in the history of the material heavens and the earth, as described in 2 Peter iii. It is not so much dispensational truth, or what is measured by a dispensation that this chapter contains—but rather an outline of these heavens and this earth, with which we are made acquainted—in answer to the scoffers of the last days, who say, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the foundation of the world. The six days work of Creation was marred, and they were willingly ignorant, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water, and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished. Intermediately, he

adds, "the heavens and the earth which are *now*, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." But creation work is subjected to the same rule of the potter, as was the case with the first man Adam, and with Israel under the first covenant, and for the same reasons. If there be a question as to the secret of the marring and the making another vessel to honour, the 13th verse of this chapter in Peter will answer it—"Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth *righteousness*." Before the flood God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt, and the earth also was filled with violence, and God said unto Noah, the end of all flesh is come before me, and I will destroy them with the earth, so the vessel was marred. Since the deluge, and consequent upon man's attempt at Babel to unite the heavens and the earth by the city and the tower, God called out Abraham, and imputed righteousness to him by faith. This was the only principle on which God could walk with a man upon this earth. At the incarnation of Christ righteousness came in with the righteous One, but by His rejection and crucifixion, righteousness and love too, were refused by mankind. By resurrection and ascension, righteousness in the person of Christ went away to the Father, where it still is—the Holy Ghost being sent to convict the world of the absent righteous One, whom they slew and hanged on a tree; of present sin, because they believe not on me; and of a coming judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

God takes the part of suffering righteousness in the righteous Lord, and will execute judgment when He comes in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and they shall be broken in pieces like a potter's vessel. In the meanwhile, righteousness being with God, and having when on earth put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, God can declare His righteousness in justifying the ungodly that believeth in Jesus. The secret of God's action in thus taking away the first that He may establish the second, or rather the proclaimed rule in the gospel for this order is, that life, righteousness, and glory are with the second Man; whereas, sin in the flesh, condemnation, and the second death, were with the first man Adam. In conclusion, we may press on



one another the importance of taking part with the potter against ourselves, in the condemnation of the first vessel, and knowing it in *no* other way than as marred. The importance, too, is equal of taking sides with God, not only against the flesh in us, but of "Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith," that we may be rooted and grounded in love; strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, according to the riches of His glory, that we might be filled with all the fulness of God.

J. E. B.

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### NOTES ON 1 JOHN III. 10—24.

THE way in which the Apostle brings out the contrast between the two families in the world is very striking—the children of God and the children of the devil. It is a great point for intelligence of the subject unfolded in this Epistle, and helps us greatly to understand it. The characters of these two families are given according to the nature of their birth. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." "He that is born of God doth not commit sin." It is not a question of the two natures; Christ really becomes our life, just as Adam was our life. The Apostle does not speak of another life at all, nor here of modifying circumstances; it is not the point he is on. He insists that there is this nature; "he cannot sin, he is born of God." Christ is our life; he does not look at another life. It is not duty or progress here, though both are right in their place; it is *life*, and a babe has life as much as an older person. "*Whosoever* is born of God doth not commit sin." It is not he *ought not* to sin, nor that if you attain to a certain point you will stop sinning; no, it is the positive communication of *nature*, it is not his nature to do it. "His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." That was the proof that he had Christ's nature. "Therefore that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." The flesh is not born of God, *we* are born of God; that which is born has that character. He is testing these two natures; what they are, and how they are shown.

The subject of the Epistle is this life in us. In the Gospel it is the life come into this world in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Coming into the world as a man, He was the light of men; light to show them the path, and

light to lead them, adapted to them in that way, and so we read, "His delights were with the sons of men."

In 1 John i. 1 you get the word of life, the life in *Him*; in ch. ii., "which thing is true, *in him and in you.*" It is now communicated to the believer; we have received it through faith. "In him and in you," that is the great subject of the Epistle; the divine life of Christ and in Christ, and Christ in us. "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you" (John xiv. 20), is our conscious condition. When He goes up on high He says, I am in my Father, then it is that we are in Him, and then He is in us; it is that last fact which comes out here. The Holy Ghost is brought in at the end of the chapter, and we see the action and character of that life.

Christ was infinitely more than a man too—you could not talk of a man being in the Father, but in glory it is so. When He is in glory we are in Him, and He is in us. It is the life of Christ in us, the life of Jesus in our mortal body. The Son of God first, then *children* of God; for that is the word John uses for those who are of the family. His godhead always remains distinct. If I speak of His own person He is "the first-begotten," and in resurrection with us He is "the first-born among many brethren."

In Matt. iii. heaven is opened, the Holy Ghost rests on Him, and the Father says, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." That place is for us, but after redemption; in John it is especially by the communication of life, that Christ has become our life—"Christ liveth in me." It is not here that I am crucified with Christ, though that is a fact; but it is a nature born of God—he is looking at a man as born of God; that is what you *are*, and nothing else. It is a real manifestation and communication of life through the Son: He becomes our life, and then it is in us, and then manifested to others.

"In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil" (v. 10). I do not know what they are till they are manifested. God may be working in their hearts, so I cannot call them children of the devil; but if I see open enmity, then I know a child of the devil is under the power of Satan. If I had God's mind of course I should know what would become of him, but I have not. The Jews were Abraham's children, but not morally so. Jesus says, "Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye

cannot hear my word"—*i.e.*, you must have the divine thought in order to understand the divine speech, which was but the utterance of it.

The traits of life are these—righteousness and love to the brethren (*vv.* 7, 10). I may be kind to a stranger—that is not family affection, nor *relationship*, which we find here. You never see it said that God so loved the *church*, nor that Christ loved the *world*. It is really so, only wrong verbiage. Christ loved the *church*, it is a specific relationship, and that is where love shows itself. I cannot have the same relationship to everybody as I have to my father and mother. Christ loves the church—His body and His bride. I have certain characteristics of affection which flow from relationship. Life shows itself in these two characteristics—obedience (righteousness) and love to the brethren. We see both in Christ. If His life is in me, these two things come out ; many details come in, but these are the characteristic traits of God's children, and this is what we have here. "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil ; whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother" (*v.* 10).

In the beginning of the Epistle we are brought into the highest blessing, into a state in which we have common joys and feelings with the Son. A person may say, oh, that is too high for me—but if you are not in that state you are all wrong ; if the Holy Ghost is in you He cannot give you other thoughts, for He is the spring of all. Of course, I have conflict to keep myself in that state, consistently in it. Fellowship must be according to God's nature—we walk in the light as God is in it. Why, people are pretending to great love, and here they do not love the brethren! Satan can change himself to an angel of light. If it is not the Spirit of *truth* it is not the Holy Ghost, for the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of holiness, and if you are not walking in holiness that will not do. And a man may be stern for the truth but not in the Spirit of Christ, just as he may talk of love, and not have the truth. You find Christ sometimes severe, because it was necessary. There was no individual character in Christ, He is perfection. Man is always yielding or firm. We see in Christ perfect *obedience* to the Father, and He has given us His own will, and given us commandments—"Commandments," do not shrink from the word. It must be obedience to be righteous.

If it is a commandment, I do it as obedience. Supposing that you could have hindered Christ's obedience, it would have been hindering His perfection. Authority over one is the essence of obedience. Righteousness is displayed in obedience and love to the brethren. Now that we have a conscience we see the rightness of it, and we have a new nature—and we delight in it, we are sanctified unto obedience. It is called the "law of liberty," because my nature delights in the thing I am commanded to do. There are three laws in James—The whole law, the royal law, and the law of liberty. Though the divine nature makes it liberty, it still makes it obedience. Christ never had a nature that wanted to go its own way. God's will was the spring of His actions. A man who has no will exhibits real practical lowliness in walk—Christ was that. The character of this righteousness is not merely conscience, for a natural man has that. It is not law, that addressed itself to the nature which was lost, but the obedience of the Christian is of such a character that its delight is to obey, because it is in direct communication with God. The obedience of a Christian is a nature that delights to obey.

Christ takes His place as a Man in absolute obedience to His Father, and in positive love to those who were given Him out of the world. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." The disciples are His friends, not He His disciples' friend—"I have called you friends." I have relationship with Christ, and it is exceedingly important to know that there is a love that Christ has for His friends, and to be consciously in that place. "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God:" you are *in* that place, as *in* that place let us see the things that belong to it. Those two things are never separated; if I am one of the family, love to the brethren and obedience to the Father all go together, all goes on within this circle. It is important to walk in the consciousness of this relationship. Those who are Christ's should, along with the preaching of forgiveness, understand that He brings us into this place, and that we walk according to it. We must behave like children in the father's house. If I love a person very much, I love his children; if I go with them where the father has forbidden them, that is not loving them as children who have to obey their father, but amusing myself. I cannot love my brethren for my Father's sake, if it is not in obedience.

The characteristic of Christ's love was service—selfishness likes to be served, love likes to serve. Christ took the lowest place—"I am among you as one that serveth." Divine love delights to *serve*. Another thing, His was *companionable* love: look at Him going about among His disciples, (and how stupid they were!) He was affable in all His ways. Notice, too, that it is *above all the evil* that it has to go on with, but it is *above it all in patience*. Look at the Lord with His disciples—He is a servant, His love has its spring from a source which does not depend on anything in us, so it goes on and *abides*; its spring is in God, and, therefore, it is *thoughtful* and *considerate*.

It is a great thing, when walking in the Church of God, if you cannot think *with* people, to think *for* them. The love will suit and adapt itself, because it is from above. You have that which is always in service unless in communion, and that is the highest thing, not sentiment, and there is danger lest it should be that. Paul picked out every bit of good he could in the saints to whom he wrote, and *then* he rebukes them—he opens their hearts to receive the rebuke of love. We cannot always go on without the *anxiety* of love, as Christ could. Anxiety draws out love, still "be careful for nothing," not even for the Church. Love must always have its anxieties, but it has the grace and love of Christ to resort to. If you separate obedience and love, one or the other is false—if I am a child, I have my brethren to love.

There is another mark of a child of God at the end of the chapter (v. 24). "And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us." We are made partakers of the divine nature, and these are the three tests:

"Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you" (v. 13). You are to expect that; there were many heretics at that time, and he is guarding them against them.

"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (v. 16). I have learned this love in Christ laying down His life—there is no limit to it. If you want to learn its measure, give up yourself. There is no measure short of what Christ did. It is the same principle in Eph. iv.: "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God *in Christ* hath forgiven you." You are God's children; now walk in love, as Christ did.

I want a love above all the evil of the world, not loving my neighbour as myself, but giving myself up as Christ did. He gave Himself to God—there is perfectness of motive—the more unworthy the object, the greater the love. He gives Himself up *for us*, perfectly worthless ones, but *to God*, who is a worthy object. We have learnt love in “He laid down his life for us,” now we ought to do it for the brethren.

“And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him”—assurance of heart, not for us but God—it is intercourse and fellowship with the Father: you must have a good conscience and a free heart. It is the same with a child and his father; in order to have confidence in God, you must have your heart not condemning you. If my heart condemns me, I may be sure of His mercy and the advocacy of Christ, but my heart is not assured before Him; it will not do to say I am saved only—here is a person with relationships, and if my heart condemns me, there is no confidence; it is of all moment that our souls should have the distinct consciousness, and walk in the relationships in which God has set us. May the Lord give us to be diligent in heart, to know what Christ was—to be before God, and serve Him as He did.

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## THE PRESERVING POWER OF THE WORD.

THE Word of God should not only be a check on our thoughts, but the source of them, which is a far deeper thing. We see it in Christ, the only Perfect One. He only could say, “By the word of thy lips have I kept me from the paths of the destroyer.” “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”

There is a preserving power in the Word to keep the feet from sliding, which those only know who receive the truth in the *love of it*. Merely having the Word hid in the memory and mind will not do. There is no preserving power in that. There must be the action of the truth on the heart and conscience separating from all defilement, otherwise its preserving power cannot be experienced.

Whenever there is a surrender of what the flesh holds dear and cleaves to, for *Christ's* sake, there is blessing; and the soul that dares to mortify the flesh and resist its claims is ever rewarded by a clearer revelation of the Lord Himself. As it were, the displacing of the lower makes

room for the development of the higher and purer affection.

The reason why there is often so much darkness and uncertainty as to God's will among us, is that the flesh gets leave to work, and the result is dimness of spiritual vision. It costs us too dear when we cannot say "No" to the clamorous demands of our fleshy natures. Never till we see it in the light of the judgment-seat of Christ shall we know how much we have suffered in soul, and how much we have lost of eternal reward, by our weakness and cowardice in resisting the flesh and its claims. People complain of weak *faith*; they would speak far more truly if they complained of their weak *obedience*. "Light is sown for the righteous." "If any man will *do* his will, he shall know of the doctrine." See in Christ our heavenly pattern, the path of the just, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The perfectly dependent, perfectly obedient One. How little we are *like Him*—independent, disobedient, turning naturally every one to his *own way*!

### SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

E. C., GUELPH.—Does the expression, "*linked* with Christ," convey the truth taught in John xiv. 20?

A.—If union with Christ is meant by the phrase, the word "*linked*" does not express it; for while the portions of a chain are linked together, and the chain is one, still it is a unity composed of many separate links, which are not united the one to the other.

The thought in John xiv. 20, is not exactly union, while it approximates closely to it in many ways. Paul alone teaches the union of the members to Christ in one body by the Holy Ghost. John treats more of nature and relationship to the Father, and in the passage alluded to I believe it is oneness of nature and life which is the Lord's thought. The Holy Ghost would be given in answer to His prayer to the Father (v. 16), and when He came He would give the consciousness of v. 20. They would know, in the oneness of nature and life with Him who had gone away, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, that Jesus was in the Father, they in Him and He in them. It is a consciousness produced by the Holy Ghost acting in the life they possessed in the Son. I do not believe it goes as far as the unity of the body, to which the Lord never alluded; it was only taught by Paul,

Union with Christ as a member of His body is a very real thing. It is not faith which unites to Him. Faith is the first principle of the new nature bestowed when the sinner is born of God. The Word of God has reached his conscience by the Holy Ghost's application, and he is convicted of sin. Many exercises of heart may have to be learned until forgiveness of sins is known, and peace, but the life has been there. As a rule the Spirit of God seals the soul who has believed in Christ *for remission of sins*. It has set to its seal that God is true—this is what faith does, and God has set His seal on the soul that has believed. The Holy Ghost thus dwelling in the believer unites him to Christ in the heavenly places. This is as real as the union of a human body with its head (if not more so, for it is divine), all being vitalised by the same blood and soul. It does not depend on any amount of inward experiences, but on having received the Holy Ghost. This latter is a *consequence* on believing in Christ for remission of sins.

*Typically*, you find that the pillar of cloud and fire descended and took its place to lead Israel *after* the blood of the paschal lamb had been shed, and the question of sins and their judgment had been settled, and *before* they were out of Egypt by the redemption of the Red Sea (Ex. xiii.)

*Historically*, you find that forgiveness of sins would be followed by the gift of the Holy Ghost in Acts ii. 38. Such came to pass in Acts x. 43, 44. The moment the words "*remission of sins*" passed Peter's lips, the Holy Ghost fell on those who heard. Acts xi. 17, shows that it was the *gift* of the Holy Ghost—in contradistinction to the *gifts* or signs which then and frequently accompanied it. He was given to believers—not to sinners to make them believers: "Forasmuch, then, as God gave them the like gift, as he did unto us who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ," &c.

*Doctrinally*, you find in Rom. iii.-v., that after *remission of sins* is known (c. iv. 5, 6), and peace (c. v. 1), we find the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given unto us (c. v. 5), and this even perhaps before deliverance from a state is experimentally learned (chs. vi., vii.)

I may be sure that if I have received remission of my sins by believing in Christ, I have, as a consequence, received the Holy Ghost. This being so, I need no further experience to know that I am united to Christ, for it is the Holy Ghost dwelling in me who effects this. The experience



will follow the consciousness of relationship, and will be enjoyed in the cultivation of the things suited to it.

Put the thickness of a gold leaf between the body and the head and it is a corpse; and such is the union with Christ and His Church, that it is as real as that subsisting between the human body and its head! This union is by the Spirit of God. He unites living members in one body to Christ. "Linking" is a poor word, though a right thing may be meant.

"G."—Has the first part of the seventieth week of Daniel ix. 24-27 had any fulfilment?

A.—The seventy weeks are divided as follow. They refer to the period which was to elapse—taking the weeks as weeks of years—*i.e.*, 490 years= $7 \times 70$ —from the time noted in the prophecy until the full blessing of the people of Israel, at the close of their striking and eventful history, in which they have been (as in time to come they will be), the display of the Divine Government of God on earth.

From the decree to rebuild Jerusalem by	
Artaxerxes, in the twentieth year of his	
reign, and embracing the troublous times in	
which the wall was re-building ( $7 \times 7$ weeks),	49 years.
From the building of the wall until Messiah	
( $7 \times 62$ weeks),      ...      ...      ...      ...	434      „

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Total number of years accomplished,      483

This leaves one week (seven years) still to come. But in v. 26 we read:—"And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, and shall have nothing" (*marg.*).

This leaves the moment of His cutting off vague—*i.e.*, it does not confine it to the moment of the conclusion of the sixty-ninth week (*i.e.*,  $62 + 7$ ) of years, but "after" it. This being so, the Lord's ministry of about three and a half years, when He gathered a remnant of the people to Himself, ran on and was counted for those who received Him; while the nation refused Him, and thus the cutting off would have been for the former the middle of the seventieth week, leaving only half the week to come; but all is left vague, and purposely so. I believe that, for the remnant who were gathered, the first half of the seventieth week has gone by, while for the apostate Jews it has yet to come. Consequently, it has a double fulfilment. Just as John Baptist

was Elijah for those who had faith for it, yet Elijah has yet to come for fact (see Matt. xvii. 10-13 ; Mal. iv.); so the first half for faith was fulfilled, while in fact it would still have to come.

All comes to this. The "cutting off" is left vague, so that it may be at the end of the half of the seventieth week, or not. But when you come to counting out of days, &c., in Scripture, *only* the *last* half of the seventieth week is ever named. The Lord's coming for the saints may happen at any moment ; and, the first half-week being thus left vague, any period necessary (longer or shorter, as the case may be) for what has to be accomplished, may take place between the rapture of the saints and the commencement of the final events of the period of tribulation, during the three and a-half years or last half-week ; at its close the Lord will appear for the deliverance of His people.

The passages of Scripture where it is counted are Dan. vii. 25, xii. 7 ; Rev. xi. 2, 3, 14 ; xii. 6 ; xiii. 5, 11.

When Messiah was cut off at the Cross and got no kingdom, sixty-nine and a-half weeks were gone for the true saints, sixty-nine weeks only for the apostates. Then comes in the great heavenly Church parenthesis, when all *time* has ceased to be counted ; because the Jews are set aside, and God is gathering a heavenly Church—the body of Christ—to which times and seasons do not belong. When that is accomplished He turns again to time, the earth, and the Jew. Half a week only then has to come, the last of the seventieth, for those who had received Him ; a whole week for those who did not. The conclusion of it will bring in the full blessing of Israel.

## FRAGMENT.

MEN divide between watching and prayer ; and so use and rely upon the duties separately, which can do nothing but in conjunction. For watchfulness without prayer is presumption, and prayer without watchfulness is mockery : by the first a man invades God's part in this great work, and by the latter he neglects his own. Prayer not assisted by practice is laziness, and contradicted by practice is hypocrisy.

## "HE CALLETH THEE."

"Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee."—*Mark* x. 49.

They spake of old to him who sat,  
 In blindness by the way,  
 Of Christ the Lord, who drawing near,  
 Could turn his night to day.  
 But still he lingered, trembling there,  
 Till o'er that living sea,  
 The words of welcome reached his ear,  
 "Arise! He calleth thee."

And still those words from heaven fall,  
 On every sinner's ear;  
 And still the Lord delights to bid  
 The trembling soul "draw near."  
 The old, the young, the rich, the poor,  
 He calls from wrath to flee,  
 And from the death-like sleep of sin,  
 "Arise! He calleth *thee*."

He saw thee when "a great way off,"  
 Thou had'st no thought of Him;  
 And the door of mercy open threw,  
 And gently called thee in.  
 As a child, within its father's home,  
 As happy and as free,  
 He longed to have you with Himself,  
 "Arise! He calleth thee!"

From all the joys this world affords,  
 Which perish in a day;  
 The gilded snares which Satan spreads  
 To lead your steps astray.  
 From sin, from guilt—however great—  
 From want, from misery;  
 From all the sorrows of your life,  
 'Arise! He calleth thee."

From the want, which urges on your feet  
 In sin's dark paths to roam;  
 To the feast of love His hand has spread  
 And the endless joys of *home*!  
 From the memory of your bye-past life,  
 However dark it be;  
 To the future fields of heavenly light,  
 "Arise! He calleth thee."

## “MY DELIGHTS WERE WITH THE SONS OF MEN.”

§

Notes of a Lecture on Luke ii.\*

FAMILIAR as we are with the thought, beloved friends, it is after all a wonderful thing that the Son of God should *come into* this world of sinners, and still more wonderful that He should die for them. Into this world the Son of God came, fully bringing out what *we are* by the way in which He was received; but at the same time full of joy and blessing for us. *He* was the immediate object of the express delight of the Father; then He died and rose again, and so brought us into the same place, into light and blessing with Himself.

It is a wonderful thing, in the first place, to have *God* come into the world, *grace* and *truth* in the world, and that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not a question of our duties, or of future judgment; but it is into the midst of this world of defilement, violence, corruption, evil, and enmity against God—*into the midst of it He came*. What makes it so especially wonderful is, that He came as a babe, (though miraculously born), as one of ourselves, a real true man in this world of woe. Still there was more: for it is a totally different thing for God to deal with men as children of Adam—as to what they are—and what they can bring to God—and what their righteousness is; there is a great difference between looking at man as responsible to God, and God dealing with him according to His own thoughts. This is the *truth*, when *grace* is rejected. It is not that God overlooks our responsibility; but it is a totally distinct thing for God to *reveal and fulfil the thoughts of His own heart*, and for Him to *investigate those of ours*. Dealing with man on the ground of what he *is* and what he has done, goes on to *judgment*. In Christ He is revealing the *thoughts* of His heart.

Thus we get His own intentions before ever the world was; the purposes and counsels of God which were not in the first Adam at all, but in the last. That runs through the whole of Scripture from the very beginning, as soon as ever man had sinned, grace opens the door to reveal it. It was the seed of the woman that was to bruise the serpent's head. Adam was not the seed of the woman. The promise did not refer to the first man at all, nor was it a promise *to him*; but it was a revelation that there was One coming—the seed

\* Cheltenham Conference, 10th April, 1871.

of the woman, who should bruise the serpent's head and destroy his power. Therefore there was ground for faith to lay hold upon; promises and prophets were always referring to the same thing. "In *thee* shall all families of the earth be blessed:" "To *Him* give all the prophets witness." Prophets had to deal with men and bring the law to their consciences, but here is One in whom all the thoughts and counsels of God rest, and in grace to poor sinners—"All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." "All things are for your sakes," though all surely for God's glory!

Another thing in connection with it is, that it is only when we come to *Christ*, that we can reconcile the purposes of God in the full blessing of life, and man's responsibility. Heathens and Christians have disputed over it. In the garden of Eden there was the tree of life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil: life on the one side, responsibility on the other. Man failed, eat of the tree of knowledge, and could not get to the tree of life. Now the law took up the same principle—here again you have responsibility and life—and said "*do this and live.*" The Lord Jesus Christ, the Second Man comes, does His Father's will in everything, and sovereign grace takes up our responsibilities; He takes the consequences of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and He is the life. He bears this in His own body on the tree, and a great deal more—*God is perfectly glorified!*

It perfectly meets all our need, and we get eternal life in Him, and the joy and blessing of it all in the full result of all these counsels of God—nothing short of this! Though the responsibility is proved, yet to be like the Son of God in glory has nothing to do with my responsibility! No man could have dared to think of such a thing; but it was the mind and counsel of God in Christ. It did not come out till after the cross, for we could not have had any part in it but by the cross. Before ever the world was, it was the thought of God to have a saved and redeemed people brought into the same place as, and associated with Christ. Of course the pre-eminence is His. "Thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness *above thy fellows.*" Who could pretend to be the "fellow" of the Son of God, if it were not the fruit of the *work* of the Son of God? The mind of God rested on Him in connection with man.

The first Adam is totally set aside, tested, tried, proved, up to the cross; then the Second Man is brought in. God never would set up the last Adam along with the first: the first Adam was a fallen man, the last was the man of God's counsels, and He sets Him up instead, when we had failed in our responsibility. Titus lays down (Titus i. 1, 2, 3) the other principle. "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised *before the world began.*" Then it was the *hope* of eternal life. 2 Tim. i. 9 gives the same truth; "Who hath saved us . . . not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus *before the world began.*" These thoughts and purposes of God were given us in Christ Jesus before ever the world was.

Now if you look for a moment at Proverbs viii. you find a remarkable passage connected with this. There I see that before the world was created, Christ there was as Wisdom, daily the Father's delight, and having His delights in the sons of men ("delight," same thought as "good pleasure.") Then, beloved friends, we get man put on his responsibility, and the first thing he does is to fall—he *distrusts* God, and that before there was a lust. He listens to Satan, he questions the love of God, he eats the fruit, and he falls. Then comes the law, man sets up the golden calf and broke it, and responsibility is ended. Last of all God sends His Son—"It may be they will reverence my Son;" but "now have they both seen and *hated* both *me* and my Father;" "they cast him out." That closed the history of responsibility. It was when man was a sinner and had broken the law, that the Son of man came into this world of grace. "Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." He calls it the "end of the world" because man's moral history is entirely ended—*grace* is not ended—man is not less intellectual than before; he can invent railroads, telegraphs, and I know not what; but what have these things to do with the moral character of God or man, or with heaven? *Death* has come in, and this is all over. Why, there are no telegraphs in heaven! Men are blinding themselves; there is not one single link with God of thought or feeling or heart, but plenty with this other world. Remarkable persons there are, but all belongs to the "fashion of this world" that passes away, and when man's breath goes forth his thoughts

perish. You may put up a monument to him, but it speaks of *death*!

God has put this world into man's power and He has invented much, but, are children more obedient—wives more faithful—servants more honest? And since we have had all these developments of intellectual capacity, taking it even on the lowest level, are people happier—more to be trusted? A world in which people cannot trust each other is a *miserable* world! What is called progress, does not give more *confidence* from man to man, to say nothing of God. There is not a single thing in it connected with the soul. Man's history was thus closed at the cross. First, lawlessness, then law breaking, and then enmity to God; then comes that blessed perfect work of the second Adam, who met the need in His own person and brought in the full accomplishment of the purposes of God. He has brought man into an entirely new sphere by death and resurrection, and eventually glory, and has settled the whole question of responsibility.

But God speaks to our hearts, and says—and I desire that you should take this to your hearts—"Now you must understand what I am doing. I want to get your hearts into perfect confidence with mine by the testimony of what is in my heart, and as to your sins *I* have settled that!" This is the blessed truth, that when God could not bear my sins, instead of putting *me* away, He has put my *sins* away, and I stand before Him according to the value of that which was done in putting them away.

What I have on my heart to show you is, how God brings us into the consciousness that when this work is done, the bad tree is done with. Not only had I sinned, but I was a sinner, and the question of what I am is perfectly settled. It is not character, for there are no two alike; each one of us has a different character. I may say, that is a humble trait in me; so I may say of a crab tree, the flowers are more beautiful than those on an apple tree—but what do I care for the pretty flowers when *the fruit is bad*? *I cut the whole thing down!* That is what God has done. When I have a spiritual judgment of the thing in my mind, I do not think of the pretty flowers on the wild tree, but of the fruit. So with man: God has sentenced the whole thing entirely; it is all cut down and grafted with Christ, and then I expect fruit.

When I turn to look at the thoughts and counsels of God,

I see His “delights were with the sons of men.” His “good pleasure” was not in angels; they are witnesses of His *keeping* a creature unfallen, but we as witnesses of His *redeeming* a creature who has fallen. There is no purpose about angels; He did not take them up, but He became a *man*. Now we get the moral character of the world tested by Christ. He came in goodness, not requiring anything from men, but bringing goodness to them. If you look at His life, He came in a power which removed all the present effects of sin. Death disappeared before Him; devils, disease, sickness, all fled away. He comes in a power sufficient to remove all the effects of Satan’s power, and He does it in *grace*. That is the character of Christ’s work. There was no miracle that was not the expression of meeting a need in man, or of setting aside Satan’s power. The cursing of the fig tree is the only exception—there responsibility was in question; He cursed the fig tree, and it is the judgment of man. Israel was under the culture of God. He looks for fruit, finds none, and says, “Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever.” The flesh is judged—set aside, and my heart is brought to own it—brought to the acknowledgment of its sentence at the cross.

Let us look at the Lord, the second man, coming into the world. I see the place that He gets in this world; but when the angels begin to celebrate His praises they go much further. What is the sign of the Son of man coming into this world? First, of course, but on which I do not now dwell, the promises to Israel must be fulfilled; but this is the sign (Luke ii. 12), “Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.” An inn is the place where a man is measured—it touches the pride of man. The first floor for the rich—the garret for the poor—there was no room for Him! No room in the great inn of this world! He could go into the manger when He was born—to the cross at the end—and meanwhile have not where to lay His head. Is that the way you estimate the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, beloved friends? We are accustomed from education to exalt Him, but that is the world’s estimate still, there is no room for Him! The world is never changed till the heart is changed, it is just what it was then, with the addition since of the rejection of Christ.

Suppose the case of a man from China coming into this town and saying, “I want to see Christianity—epistles of grace



and truth." He would say "Why, this we do in China—You are seeking pleasure, money, cultivating the fine arts, &c." Is your moral estimate of the world this—that *there the Son of God got no place in it*? That here He began with the manger and ended with the cross, with meanwhile no place to lay His head? The Son of God comes in *grace*, and that is what sounds from heaven when the angels praise. It is beautiful to see them delighting in man's blessing though they themselves were passed by. They are celebrating *His* praise—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men." Do our hearts, beloved friends, understand this estimate, that God's heart was delighting in the sons of men, not by a general mercy, but by His being a man? There I have the object, the Person before God's eye. He has come down into such scenes as these, and God says—Sinner though you are, I want your heart to trust me; and that you may do so, there is my Son come down, and as a babe. God's love was beyond a human thought. Why do they say, "Glory to God in the *highest*?" It is because His Son has become a *man*! There was not in the fact of *angels* "glory," but when I get this lowly babe, that had not a place in the world, then the angels come out with this song. There is nothing like this wonderful fact—"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." I get the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, present with me—a poor sinful man—that I may know how God reached me first *where I was*. He has come down to me as a man, and to prove God's "good pleasure in men." The result—"Peace on earth"—is not seen yet, but you have "glory to God in the *highest*." I have now this blessed truth, I have learnt *where* and *how* God has met me. If a man was a leper, He touched Him, when another would have been defiled. He used His holiness in grace to reach the most defiled.

At the end of Matthew iii., He takes up this wondrous place for us: Jesus comes to be baptized of John, and says, "Thus it becometh *us* to fulfil all righteousness." He takes His place the moment the Word of God had met the heart of these poor sinners, and He says, I must go with them, because the Spirit of God has wrought in their hearts. It is that which defines the place of the Person. He takes His place amongst us, and mark, beloved friends, He was always the same Person from the manger—from twelve years old, and all along His path; but He cannot let His people take one step in what God

had wrought in their hearts without saying, I go before, I go with you. The Christ that could tell the woman all that ever she did was not there for judgment. If a person was convicted of sin, the Lord had been there. What for? To judge me? No, to bring me to Himself in grace.

Now mark the wondrous bringing out of this place: "Lo the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The heaven opened! There was never a person there before on whom heaven could be opened, and to whom a voice—the Father's voice—could say, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (good pleasure). There was not a thing in Him but what heaven could delight in. This is to me a wondrously blessed truth. In this world is the Lord Jesus Christ, the man in whom is the Father's necessary, perfect delight, and He owns Him as His beloved Son, and then the *Holy Ghost comes down* to seal and anoint Him. I have the *place* man must have, and heaven is opened on the world.

Another thing comes out, if possible, still more wonderful—*man* gets into this place, which is in the thoughts and counsels of God for him, and it is then that Satan is fully manifested. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts." I have man in this place of blessedness put into in connection with God. And here I get the first revelation of the Trinity; but it is when man gets into this relationship, with the thoughts and actions of God—God, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—all in connection with man, and heaven opened—that all the counsels of God might not only be in counsel, but in fulfilment and manifestation. To think that Christ, the Son of God, should thus come, not for a judgment on sinners, but to open heaven for sons! It is the pattern place of the saints. When He had thus publicly taken His place in grace with us, then God says, I will own you as my Son, and the Holy Ghost comes down and seals and anoints Him.

But whatever the grace, you will always find that the person of Christ is maintained secure. Heaven is opened to Stephen, and he looks up and sees Christ there. He is full of the Holy Ghost, and he looks *up* to heaven; but heaven looks *down* on Christ. Stephen had an object, but Christ was the object of heaven. His person is always maintained

and secure. Thus we are brought into the same wondrous place as this wonderful One. We always find the person of Christ pre-eminent, but we find the saints brought into a place where He can take us, and call us the "fellows" of the Son of God with whom we are brought into fellowship.

Take another case—the mount of transfiguration. Moses and Elias are shown in exactly the same glory as Christ, but the person and place of the Son of God are most fully maintained. Peter thought it a great thing for his master to be like Moses and Elias, but when he says, "Let us make three tabernacles," the voice from the cloud says, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: *hear ye him.*" Again, in the case of the tribute money, Jesus says to Peter, "Of whom do the kings of the earth take tribute: of their own children or strangers?" "Of strangers." He was the great king of the temple, and yet lest He should offend them He disposed of creation to find money to give, and says, "for *me* and *thee*," thus bringing man into association with Himself. His person is maintained, but this blessed Son of God cares to win the confidence of our hearts.

But though in association with man He was there *alone*. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth *alone*." There are three glories that are His. He is *Son of God*; He is owned as *Son of David* riding upon an ass; then the Greeks come up, and the *Son of Man* must be glorified; that is the revelation of the Eighth Psalm. But if He was to be the Son of Man, He was to be over all the works of God as man—"Nothing that is not put under him." As yet He is seated on his Father's throne, not on His own—He is Son and heir. What He is doing now is gathering out the joint-heirs. He is only waiting for that, and when they are all gathered He will come. There is nothing necessarily to happen before Christ comes to take us to Himself; we are to wait for God's Son from heaven. "I will come again and receive you unto myself," He says. The virgins that went to sleep allowed the thought of an interval. But some one may say, It all happened 1800 years ago. "Where is the promise of his coming?" It is a moral expectancy for the soul—it is not a calculation of events—and meanwhile the "long suffering of our Lord is salvation." The thing that we are all waiting for is that He should come, then we shall be like Him, and with Him in glory.

But He was alone until, as "A corn of wheat" He fell

into the ground, and died. The Holy Ghost could not put His seal on a soul who was not absolutely redeemed. The thing was not accomplished. But the moment redemption is accomplished He can say, "Go to my *brethren*." "I ascend unto my Father and your Father." Mary Magdalene was watching at the sepulchre. She was so near to the heart of Christ that all the world to her was but an empty tomb—Christ was not there. Her heart was right though her intelligence and her place were wrong. Why she was seeking the living among the dead! The disciples went to their own home—sad work! So Mary gets the message, "Go, to my brethren." He had called His own sheep by name—"Mary." Then she thought she had Him back again, but He says to her, "Touch me not."—You cannot have me back for the kingdom yet. He lets Thomas touch Him, but He was telling *more* to Her. (See also Matt. xxviii. 10; and mark the Son of Man in Ps. viii.)

Now the moment that redemption is accomplished, that the work is done, according to Ps. xxii. He can say, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren." Having been heard from "the horns of the unicorns" (a figure of speech of course of impalement—intense suffering), I must have my brethren in the same place. I was alone till I died, now I am risen into the new place, and my God is their God, my Father their Father. "In the midst of the church will *I* sing praise unto thee." It is the song of perfect redemption, and *He* leads the praises. He puts them into the relationship, and when thus brought and gathered together, *He sings in their midst*. All this is fulfilled in John xx. Now if Christ is leading our praises, is redemption uncertain? I should be out of tune if I were not joining. Is He to sing one song of praise and I another? That would be discord, not harmony. He has brought us into the same place as Himself, and triumphantly He leads our hearts to join in the song He sings.

Let us see the full and blessed perfectness of that work. We were under the power of sin and Satan, and God's wrath had come in. What do I see this blessed One doing? Displaying God. He puts Himself *alone* in our place, to finish and complete that work where God must be glorified on account of sin, and man brought to be saved. If God had passed over the sin of Adam and Eve in the garden, I should have been able to say, Sin is no matter; but when I

look at the cross I cannot. There I see God perfectly glorified in every respect by a man, and so much the more because sin was there. If God had cut off Adam and Eve, it would have been righteous, but no declaration of His love. So it was not possible for the cup to pass from Him; and at the cross I get the full dealing with sin in righteousness, but with infinite love. It is *beyond our need*. God's majesty was maintained where all had been trampled in the dust, and now the Son of Man is gone into the glory of God, and is sitting on the Father's throne, the witness that love has had its way—that grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. I get the *pattern* then, when the Lord was upon earth, of my place with Him. I see the *work* done on the Cross, and then I learn what the work is *worth*—it is *worth the glory of God in Heaven*. And now I have the *place* before God, which is the consequence of that. I can "Rejoice in hope of the glory of God," and I have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby I cry, "Abba, Father." He has brought us into the place that the counsels of God required—we are in relationship to God as a Father, and Christ is the first-born among many brethren. He brings us into this in John xvii., "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them . . . that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me." Then speaking of the present state, He says, "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." The Holy Ghost thus conducts down the fulness of the Father's love to the Son into our hearts. It is perfect. It is all unutterable grace, and therefore humbles us to the dust. But, beloved, has not God a right to have thoughts for Himself? Surely He has. He is going to show "The exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us by Christ Jesus," and if so, nothing is too good for me. Can you think of that? What else can I think? Shall I think my own thoughts when He has sent His Son to die for me? The poor prodigal thought, "Make me as one of thy hired servants," but never says it when he comes to his father. He confesses his sins of course, but when he has had the kiss and has been clothed, there are no more thoughts of the son, all of the Father, so that even the servants are rejoicing that the son is brought back. What the *Father* thinks has come out.

I can now say, with a purged conscience, I am nothing, but I am loved as Jesus is loved; not only saved *by* Him, but blest *with* Him; "Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me." Is this where our thoughts are? He passes everything on to us, though it may be we are toiling along down here. If I walk in the Spirit, if my mind is full of Christ, I have no occasion to think of myself at all. If I have not to judge myself, I can think of Him; but if I fail then I have to humble and judge myself.

The normal state of a Christian is to do *all* "in the name of the Lord Jesus." It may be the commonest affairs of daily life, buying and selling, furnishing my house, or dressing my body, but it is a very simple rule and cuts away a great deal.

Let me say one word on obedience—I say of my child who wants to go another way, but who yields to me. It is very pleasant to see such obedience, but not so with Christ; *He never had a will to wish to go the other way.* "If thou be the Son of God, *command* that these stones be made bread"—Nay, I am a servant, I cannot command, I *obey*; "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by *every word of God*," that is the obedience of Christ! The Father's will was the motive for everything. There are thousands of things we do from habit, and we say we must do them, there is no "must" for me but Christ's will! I have to learn what His will is, for we are made epistles of Christ, and the path we are to walk in is to manifest the life of Jesus in our bodies. *Everything I do should be the expression of the alliance of my heart to Christ, and the manifestation of Him to others.* The standard of walk is, "walk worthy of the Lord," not of a man. Sometimes it is very difficult to be peaceful, patient, gentle when a man wrongs and insults one; but were you not the enemy of God, and did not God forgive you when you were His enemy? Well, you forgive your enemy.

I quite understand the difficulties, but we have the blessed privilege of walking as He walked. If you want to do this, go and study Christ, learn what His place was down here, (after you have learned your place in Him on high). Learn how He said to Peter, "for *me* and *thee*." Wonderful thing! It is a great comfort that in looking at Christ I not only *see* the thing I ought to be, but I *get* the thing I ought to be, "grace for grace;" "we all with open face, beholding,

are changed." There is real growth there, not in fitness and acceptance, but in likeness to Christ, and it ought to be growth every instant.

We are in this place, and what I would press upon you is to *study Christ*, so that we may be like Him here. There is nothing that so fills the soul with blessing and encouragement, or that so sanctifies us: nothing which so gives the quick sense of divine love that gives us courage.

The Lord give us this courage, and enable us to study Him. "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me."

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## WHAT CHARACTERISES THE CHRISTIAN, AND SECURES HIS BLESSING.

*(Concluded from page 86.)*

Now comes another thing, the second part of the chapter. It is my personal condition; but in that condition personal relationship that is treated of now; still founded on the Spirit. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God; for ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father." It is not that you are to see *whether* you are sons by the Spirit; but "we are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus." The Old Testament saints had not this, though as faithful as we are. "The heir as long as he is a child differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all—till the time appointed of the Father—but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." So here we are sons of God, as many as are led by the Spirit of God—and if sons then heirs. Of whom? of God, and joint heirs with Christ. We have not received the spirit of bondage to fear—like the Old Testament saints dreading death. We are sons and know our place as such, according to the word of the Lord, "my Father and your Father, my God and your God."—and the Holy Ghost now becomes the earnest of the inheritance.

What is the consequence of this? "We suffer with him." We cannot have the Spirit of Christ without suffering. I must in my measure have the thoughts and feelings of Christ. He could not be in the world and see sin and

misery, and not suffer. We cannot but suffer. It is not suffering *for* Christ, that is a privilege given us; for "unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." It is *with* Him. We cannot but sorrow, if there is any heart, as the consequence of the consciousness of sonship. Yet we reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed to us. This is the time of the "earnest expectation of the creature," not yet the "manifestation of the sons of God."

Just see now what the consequences are. First, relationship with God is settled; secondly, I am an heir in whom the glory is to be revealed; I am a son, I am an heir, I am going to have all that Christ has: not only the Father's house, but the kingdom, the inheritance in heaven of all things. They are revealed to my heart now, and they are His; there is the great and blessed thing.

Take the Mount of Transfiguration, the New Jerusalem, the Father's House, all these things tell me what I have got, and my heart is bounding onward in the power of the Holy Ghost, rejoicing in the Lord always. The Spirit of adoption shows me all the blessed things Christ brings me into: they are not manifested yet. I belong to heaven, and am yet in a body that belongs to earth, so that I must and ought to feel things here. What brought the creature into the bondage of corruption? How did it get in? Through us. And how will it get out? Through us, when the glory comes! It is a beautiful thought! The effect of the glory of the new creation is to make me feel what the old creation is. We brought them into it, and shall bring them out of it (*vv.* 20-22). We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, waiting for the liberty of the glory of the children of God. It cannot get into the liberty of grace—the body cannot; I have to keep it down. But when the deliverance of glory comes this is all over. We get the glory, but creation gets deliverance. This body connects me with all the sorrows of this world (*v.* 23); "Ourselves also which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of our body." We are not wishing for the soul to be saved, but for the body to be delivered.

Meanwhile, what does the Spirit do? He helps our infir-



mities. We groan within ourselves. It is not selfishness : it is the Holy Ghost puts us into it. It is the Spirit of love, of God, that feels the evil in the way of love. Is it merely selfishness to feel what it is to be in a world like this? Not a bit. Christ sorrowed in love. In virtue of the very joy and glory as the first fruits of the Spirit, I groan. What is that groan? It is the Spirit of God. Our hearts become the voice of a groaning creation going up to God. And He that searches the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit? What a word is this! What does He find? Does He find sin in it? No; but the mind of God : that is like Christ. He comes and searches my heart, and there He finds the mind of God—what is “according to God”! It is the Spirit of God in me feeling things in divine love as in Christ, and He carries up the groan to God. Where does it come from? From the Spirit of God. While I am waiting for the redemption I have got the relative condition of son and heir, which makes me the vessel of the sympathies of God, having a link to connect me with it all. The very consciousness and knowledge of all this blessedness makes me conscious of the state of the groaning creation till the power of God delivers it. I do not know what to ask for, or how to ask, but I do know this, that God makes all things work together for good to them that love Him, to them who are the called according to His purpose. I cannot pierce through the trammels of evil in the world, but God holds the thread. I have got the Master of the whole scene, although I have a heart that cannot enter into all, and He makes everything work for good.

Now God is *for* me. This is not a work in me, but for me : not God in me, but God for me. What shall we say to these things? When Paul has considered the whole case, felt the joy and felt the evil, well, he says, I know through the Holy Ghost that He has given His Son for me when a sinner; and the conclusion is, God is for me. There may be plenty of adversaries, but what of that? God is for me.

One word for the closing part, to point out that what we get in it is good for us, and nothing of the work in us. It is the gift of the blessed Son of God. “How shall he not with him also freely give us all things”? In the gift of His Son God gave the very best thing in heaven already, and of course He will give me everything else that is good for me. Do I want a proof that He loves me in something

less? He freely gives me all things. That is all very well ; but what about sin? Here God is not giving, but it is God that justifies ; who shall condemn ? Thus I have learnt it all. There is an end to that question. All is well. But death is in the way, and life is awfully dangerous. Death? Christ died ; O then death is the very best thing for me. Life? He is my life. Height? Christ is on the right hand of God, the very place where I learn all the blessing. Depth? He has descended into it for me. What shall separate me from the love of Christ ! “ Of Christ,” because He is a man. The moment I say *Christ*, I take it from the throne of God to the depths of earth, and from the earth up again to the throne, and I find nothing but Christ !

Further, nothing can separate me from the love of *God*. All else is a creature, and God is necessarily stronger than that which He has created. It is divine love. Though Christ as man was in all my circumstances passing through the power of evil—all I might think would separate me from His love. He has come into and triumphed over everything that might be against me.

Thus we have had the Spirit as the power of life to walk in righteousness ; then taking part with me in all the sorrows of the path here ; and, finally, we have been brought to “ God for us.” What I specially desire is that our hearts should apprehend what it is to have the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, because we are washed by the blood of Christ. Are you going to use your body for sin, if it is the temple of the Holy Ghost ? There are a thousand things flowing from it. Even the resurrection of the body is because of His dwelling in me. This is what characterises Christianity. “ If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his.” May we abide in the consciousness of this, knowing that Christ dwells in us, and we in Him.

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“ And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof : for thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation : and hast made us unto our God kings and priests : and we shall reign on the earth.”  
Rev. v. 9, 10.

## "DO THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST."

2 Tim. iv. 5.

I DESIRE to present what has struck me as to the passage quoted at the head of this paper. One constantly finds when there is controversy current on any subject, that those whose hearts are true, or seek that they should be so, are benefitted, and things find their own place in the circle of God's workings.

I do not propose to enter upon the subject of the Evangelist's service, as a gift of Christ, for the gathering in of those who are His for the glory to come. Another has examined the service of an Evangelist, in its nature and character, and has given examples of his work with individuals or the crowd, drawn from the *Acts of the Apostles*, which gives us the history of the planting of Christianity on earth. The book being *history* (inspired of course), we cannot find any *doctrine* on it, although we find that which blessedly confirms doctrines given elsewhere, and this is as it should be, and as we should expect.

That no such state of things is now before us as in the planting of Christianity, is very plainly to be seen; the Church of God, formed by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, was then a thing to which the Lord added such as were being saved. On one side, God had quickened members and sealed them with the Holy Ghost, thus uniting them to Christ, and all were seen as "seated together in heavenly places in" Him—His body. On the other, God was dwelling by His Spirit in a house on earth, the saints being builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit. For the former see Eph i., 1 Cor. xii.: for the latter see Eph. ii., 1 Tim. iii., &c.

To this real thing God added those who were being saved. The *work* of the Evangelist was necessarily *outside* this sphere. He had the heathen or the Jew as his sphere of labour, and those who accepted his testimony were introduced or received into this place of blessing, that its privileges might be theirs, through baptism. All this was the normal state of things then before the eye. To reach those outside, whether in the mass, or individually, was his aim; and he used the synagogue, where he could reach the Jew with his Scriptures and orthodoxy; or the market-place or elsewhere, and the inscription on the altar, or man's knowledge of a Creator, to reach the individual or the crowd in Heathendom, with its heterodoxy.

Such was his normal place. But all this, let me repeat, was outside the Church of God. At the same time, I would add, that he who thus became all things unto all that he might gain the more, and did so for the Gospel's sake of which he was the herald and messenger—was glad to teach those who had accepted the glad tidings, the way of God and liberty of grace more perfectly (Rom. i. 15).

These details are (as "all Scripture") most valuable in the instructions they convey to us. But that such a normal state of things, and field for his labour, is not now before the Evangelist, as contemplated in 2 Tim., is plain. They were not before the mind of the Spirit of God in the Apostle, when he wrote this Epistle; nor even before him in his own service, ere he left the sphere of his labours.

In his second letter to Timothy, a totally different state of things had come in. What we may term the abnormal state is there dealt with. In it I find the direction, "Do the work of an Evangelist"—a sentence, the meaning of which I never understood (even in the measure in which I now do so) until some difficulties arose with others as to the *modus operandi*, in the details of ministering the word, and preaching the Gospel.

The masses had embraced Christianity in name. The Lord knew them that were His, in a vast professing sphere which the apostle likens to "a great house." Evil men and seducers were there, and would wax worse and worse. Heresies were abundant; worldliness characterized those who were called Christians, as well as the world around them. There was a form of godliness without the power. All were seeking their own, not the things of Jesus Christ. Others were enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end was destruction, yet in name Christians. Some would depart from the faith, giving heed to doctrines of demons; men of corrupt minds, and reprobate, were creeping into houses, leading captive those of effeminate minds. The people were seeking teachers who ministered to their lusts, and would be turned to fables. All this was before his eye; and all nominally Christian.

*In the midst of all this*, Timothy is exhorted not only to "preach the word," using every energy, in season and out of season, in every legitimate way (as one taught in the truth) to gain an entrance for it where heresies abounded; but he was to "do the work of an Evangelist!"

Now normally, as we have seen, this was done *outside* the

Church. Heathendom or Judaism was its sphere. Abnormally, "the work of an Evangelist" was now *within*! It was *in* the professing church he was now to evangelize, and its sphere was *Christians*! not heathen or Jews. In name Christians, they were worse than heathens or Jews, for while named after a rejected Saviour, they were unbelievers—rejectors of the power of that name!

In all this I do not limit the sentence in any wise.

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I'll bide with Jesus yonder,  
Upon His throne of light,  
And on His grace I'll ponder  
With rapturous delight.

Then from my starry tower  
I'll issue forth to tell  
The *Heavenly* grace, and ponder  
Of Christ—Emmanuel.

I'll bear to men the story  
Of pard'ning love and grace,  
And far proclaim the glory  
That shines in Jesus' face.

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## SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

"J.W.P."—I was lately somewhat startled to hear the first two clauses of ver. 7 of Phil. ii. applied to the Lord previous to His becoming man. I cannot myself find anything in Scripture to sanction such a thought.

On the contrary, to my own mind (so far as I have light—although yet a learner) to attribute such an application to any part of the statement of those verses, seems to involve not only the marring the truth of the solemn and blessed instruction of the chapter, but to deprive it of sense and meaning. It is urged that the Lord "emptied himself" by His ministrations and appearances to, and on behalf of Old Testament saints, &c. But how is "emptying" Himself involved hereby? Neither can I see the object of the Lord's doing so *before* He became man. Does not the force of the whole passage connect itself with the exhortation in ver. 5?

A.—The passage in Phil. ii. refers to the Lord's pathway of

obedience as a man here below, resulting in death, without which all was incomplete. It was the perfect contrast to the path of the first Adam, and accomplished in the voluntary humiliation of Jesus—thesecond Adam. There was no “emptying himself” in the Lord’s ministrations and appearances before His incarnation; to act divinely in these things was not to empty Himself. But as the first Adam, when in the form of a man, grasped at the idea of being a god, that he might command, and left his first estate, under the temptation of the devil; so the second—existing ever in the form of God—emptied Himself of His glory (never ceasing to be God, which He could not do), and took upon Him the form of a servant that He might obey. The only one who could leave his first estate without sinning was God Himself. Having thus emptied Himself and become a man, He humbled Himself—a second step in His pathway—not merely patiently enduring all that came upon Him in it, but humbling himself, and going lower and lower until He consummated His obedience by death—the death of the cross. It was the last point of obedience, for in death there is no will. A *man* might humble himself in pride; he will not do so “to death.” With the first Adam death was the penalty for his disobedience; with the last Adam it was the perfection of His obedience—“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him.” The first Adam was the great example of “He that exalteth himself shall be abased”—the last Adam of “He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” The first man was driven out of the Paradise of Eden when he had consummated his disobedience. The last was highly exalted and set on the throne of glory when He had consummated His obedience. And at His name every knee must bow of the created intelligences in Heaven, Earth, and Hell. Angels, men, and devils must own the person of Him who trod this path, from the throne of glory in divine love in humble obedience on earth, until He completed the orbit of His pathway in being placed on high, as man in righteousness. Every tongue must confess Him Lord, to the glory of Him who made Him so—God the Father. Verse 10 gives His personal glory; ver. 11 His official. (See Acts ii. 36.)

“G.”—Does the testimony of the two witnesses commence with the last half-week; and, if so, when do the “three days and a-half” of Rev. xi. 9-11 come in?

A.—I judge that there is but one “half-week” counted in the Revelation, while in the symbolic part of the book there may be allusion to much that is antecedent to it. But the “Beast” has power for “forty-two months”—not for eighty-four. During that “forty-two months” the witnesses prophesy, or, as it is written, “a thousand two hundred and threescore days,” during the raging of the Beast, who slays them in the end. This is, I judge, the last half-week. If you seek to put into the Apocalypse two half weeks in detail, you have the difficulty of placing the last half-week first in order, and the active before the passive testimony, and thus reversing the whole succession of events.

The “three days and a-half” affect both interpretations. By seeking to put in two half-weeks in Revelation you must allow the three and a-half days to run into the second half-week. By allowing only one half-week you have the same difficulty at the end. These days may come in at the close of the last half-week, and may be embraced in their “testimony.”

## POSITIONAL AND MORAL PERFECTION.

THE standing and place in Christ of a believer now is termed “perfection,” as dispensationally distinguished from that of a Jewish believer under the law, which “made nothing perfect.” To this Paul refers when he says that he laboured that he “might present every man *perfect* in Christ” (Col. i. 27). This I would term *positional perfection*.

There is, however, a perfection to which even the established believer is urged to press on. But it is what may be termed a *moral perfection*; his positional perfection and completeness in Christ being the point from which he starts—likeness to Christ, even in body, being the goal towards which he runs and will eventually reach.

Surely it is but meet and right, in seeking this moral state, that he who is perfected for ever as to his conscience—cleansed from all his guilt, and saved from wrath to come by the blood of Jesus—should cleanse himself from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. Surely, for him whose sins are put away by the sacrifice of Jesus, it is but reasonable service that he should present his body a living sacrifice, in order that in him might be seen the reflex to the glory of Christ on high, produced by the Spirit of God which dwells in him.

## “WHAT IS HIS NAME, AND WHAT IS HIS SON’S NAME?”

THE last two chapters of the Proverbs are remarkable as giving us the words of Agur, the son of Jakeh, in a prophecy; and thus fitly closing up the proverbial wisdom of Solomon to his son according to the flesh. Historically, God was in the end displeased with this wisest of men; and the king in Jerusalem, the glory of whose person and throne had won the heart of the Queen of Sheba, became an idolator. Solomon was turned aside by “the strange woman,” against whom he had warned his son Rehoboam; and Rehoboam was led away by false counsellors, notwithstanding the proverbs of his father. A wise king, a righteous throne, and a prosperous nation governed in the fear of the Lord, in which all true greatness consists, was not found in Solomon’s successor. Rehoboam forsook the counsel of the old men, and answered the people after the advice of the young men, saying—“My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add thereto; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.”

Agur (a stranger), the son of Jakeh, who is ungenealogized—without father and without mother, so to speak—gathers together the words of this chapter, and, like Elihu to Job, takes the place of God. As Melchisedek displaced Abraham, so that the less was blessed of the better, so this unknown Agur utters his prophecy, and in this sense supersedes Solomon and the Proverbs. This stranger (Agur) spake unto Ithiel (or God with me), even unto Ithiel, and Ucal (or the Mighty One—God for me), and these two persons, with their respective names and characters, as they pass out of prophecy and the book of Proverbs, become to us in New Testament revelation none other than Jesus—Immanuel, or the Saviour—Ithiel; while God for us, or the Ucal—the Mighty One—who can be against us?—takes this place after the death and resurrection of Christ as His lamb and our substitute.

The incarnation of Jesus introduced our mystery, the Ithiel, or God manifest in the flesh, and His resurrection from the dead made the Mighty God known as the Ucal, or God for us, against all that was against us, consummated by the mighty power which He wrought in Christ, the ascended One, now sitting on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens.



This Agur (the stranger), son of Jakeh, at once takes the place of nothingness in the presence of this twofold acknowledgment of Christ and of God, the Ithiel and the Ucal. "Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man; I neither learned wisdom nor have the knowledge of the holy." He that knows his own heart knows more evil of himself than of any other, and this is only found out in secret, when in the presence of God, like the man Agur, "who spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal."

The natural mind at its greatest elevation perceiveth not, neither understandeth who and what God is, in His holiness and majesty. "Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth?" asks this stranger, the son of Jakeh. Nor can His works reveal His Person, though they may and do declare the Almighty; but "What is *his name*, and what is *his son's name*, if thou canst tell?" remains unanswered. In this way the man Agur challenges all around him to make this God known by ascending up to heaven, or by descending to the lower parts of the earth. But these are the steps which the real Ithiel (the Word made flesh) could alone walk in, to make God known to us—"the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him"—first, by incarnation, as born of the Virgin, and then by revelation in the Scriptures, that make His glories known. "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." He accepted the body prepared for Him, that He might assume the nature of man, and do the work upon the cross, by which He glorified God, and redeemed and saved the ruined and the undone. "We beheld his glory, the glory as of an only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Come down from heaven in the mysterious union of God and man, He has gone up again to unite in His Person the earth and the heavens. He sits on the throne, in the centre of principalities and powers, as the Son of Man, crowned with glory and honour—into whose hands the Father hath given all things—that all men should honour the Son as they honour the Father.

The man Agur, who spake in prophecy unto Ithiel and Ucal, must needs have the anointed ear to hear of the new and hidden wisdom of Solomon's greater son—the true and divine source of life and light. This stranger (the son of Jakeh), who demanded "What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?" must in spirit sit at the feet of Jesus—Ithiel—to hear the descended One from heaven say, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." And again, "No man knoweth who the Son is but the Father, and who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him."

Our Ithiel-Jesus, when on earth, in the midst of His Agur disciples, and before the gift of the Holy Ghost, had also His own proverbs and prophecies, as, for example, in John xvi, "These things have I spoken to you in proverbs, but the time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father." Nor was it till, as the descended One, and the ascending One, He said to them, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; and again, I leave the world, and go to the Father," that the disciples said unto Him, "Lo! now speaketh thou plainly, and speaketh no proverb." He had spoken to them also in parables; but the time was then come for the true Ithiel, and the one living and true Ucal, to pass out of parables and proverbs; so that in the full disclosure of the Father's name, and the Son's name, the disciples said, "Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee; by this we believe that thou camest forth from God." On their part, too, they drop the proverbs and parables, which concealed the Father and the Son's names, and tarry in Jerusalem for the descent of the Holy Ghost from heaven, under whose anointing they passed into the higher mysteries which mark our present fellowship in the light where God dwells with the Father and the Son!

This Agur, who had no understanding, and was in his own eyes more brutish than any one, yea, who had neither wisdom nor knowledge, when he viewed himself in the presence of the Creator God, turns from all else to the revelation that makes Him known by the Holy Spirit, and says, "Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their

trust in him. Add thou not unto his *words*, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."

Thus the word of God, and its authority over us, comes into its proper place after the declaration of the Father's name and the Son's name have been made known and accepted. Then follows the true acknowledgment by Agur of dependence, and yet the fullest confidence uttered in the prayer, "Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die. Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me, lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain." In these desires we find another proof that the stranger, Agur, is a man of different mould from Solomon, and the power, wealth, and glory that were given to him; and thus his sayings become a sort of moral to the book of Proverbs.

He will not accuse even a servant to his master. And passing from what is merely individual to take a bird's-eye view of the races of men under the sun, he classes them into four generations, which remain unchanged. 1. There is "a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother." A generation that is not true to their natural relations; for, as we find in 2nd Timothy, "Men shall be lovers of their own selves . . . disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy." 2. There is "a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness;" and this is but an early sketch of those in these last perilous times, who have "a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof." 3. There is "a generation, O how lofty are their eyes, and their eyelids are lifted up." And so Paul wrote to his son in the faith, of some who were "proud . . . heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." 4. There is "a generation whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men." Paul speaks of a similar generation, and directs Titus to put them in mind, "to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness to all men;" for some were living in malice, hateful, and hating one another.

After these four classifications of the human race comes the horse-leech, which hath two daughters, crying, "Give, give," who are as truly a power in this present age, and as familiar to the instructed heart, as is the right hand and its cunning

to every individual in it. This horse-leech, by its own habits of ferocious cruelty to the animal on which it fastens, and by its greediness for the life-blood which it draws out, presents to us in figure “the murderer from the beginning,” who, in his untiring enmity, walks up and down through the earth, seeking whom he may devour. The two daughters are plainly enough discerned in the midst of these four generations of men, by the selfishness and covetousness that mark their ways while living in this present world; and, afterwards, by hell and destruction, which are never full, and are impatient to swallow up the generations of the wicked.

Beyond these two daughters lie three things that are never satisfied, yea, four, that say not, “It is enough;” and these, though in their nature clamorously receptive, are alike non-productive—the grave, which swallows all up; the barren womb, which gives birth to nothing; the earth, that is not filled with water; and the devouring fire, which consumes whatever it can reach. It is the blessing of God that alone maketh rich, and where this is not, there can be neither safety nor increase, life nor continuance; so that man becomes a prey, in his turn, to the disappointments which spring up from within him, or to the encroaching powers that surround him.

Nothing can extricate the soul from what it discovers itself to be, or from what gapes upon it with open mouth, crying, “Give, give,” and which knows not how to say “It is enough,” but its complete deliverance by the Ithiel and this Ucal, with whom the son of Jakeh spoke. In other words, where Christ and the Saviour and the God of all grace are known and rested in by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, the believer can look round on all these gaunt and giant powers that would else swallow him up and eternally separate him from God, and challenge them all by this Ucal, or God for us, and say, Who can be against us? “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

These were some of the lessons which Agur, the man who spoke unto Ithiel and Ucal, learnt by proverbs, in his day; and which the man of God, in these last perilous times, is taught by the Spirit and the Word of God to see personified in these closing scenes of this dark world’s history, before the coming of the Lord, and the casting of Satan into the

bottomless pit, with the horse-leech and his daughters, and the generations of the wicked.

In conclusion, we may observe, as regards these two last chapters of this wonderful book, that they introduce to us the man and the woman of old in new forms. The Agur of chapter xxx, and the virtuous woman of chapter xxxi, whose price is "far above rubies," and in whom "the heart of her husband doth safely trust," are more familiar to our minds when they pass out of the obscurity of a proverb, and its mystic language, into the Song of Songs which is Solomon's, where they are recognised as the bridegroom and the bride in the intimacies of living thoughts and loving affections, which all can understand. The Adam and Eve of Eden, or the first man and the first woman, have given place to this Agur (or stranger in this world), and the virtuous woman, who "will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life."

In the Song of Solomon these are seen in "a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon. Awake, O north wind, and come thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits. Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense. Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee."

We, whose happy lot it is to be waiting for the Lord's coming and the day of His espousals, and this marriage of the Lamb, can see how these bridal celebrations have but cast their shadows before them, whether in the Canticles, or, as in Proverbs, where the illustrious, though hidden stranger Agur, came to seek the virtuous woman, "whose candle goeth not out by night."

The unveiled mystery in the Ephesians gives us, in complete revelation, the chaste virgin espoused to one husband, or the Eve that is being formed, passing out of type and figure, Proverbs or Canticles, into the living reality of Christ, as the Head of the Church, and the Saviour of the body.

The Lord give us entire satisfaction and rest of heart, in the known revelation in which His love has set us, till the glory and the nuptial day shall make manifest that Christ "loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish."

B,

## GOD'S "GOOD PLEASURE."

It is very striking—and the more striking as we study it—how the thoughts of God's heart which were before the foundation of the world, come out in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ as a man. He who shared His Father's heart and the secrets of His bosom, came down to earth in the power of divine love, to accomplish all His thoughts and purposes. Not merely had God these thoughts, nor was it enough to reveal them; but Jesus has accomplished them in the midst of sin and ruin, and God has set us in all the delights of His purposes and counsels, which were before the world was.

It is striking, too, that in the New Testament we find the history of the first Adam is completely dropped out. He has had his day, and his day is past. And while the New Testament notices this fact, it connects what God is, and His eternal thoughts and purposes, with Christ, and passes over the history of the first Adam with a brief notice of what it has been, and that God has done with him. Tried in innocence, he fails; sins without the law; transgresses the law when given; the revelation of judgment by John the Baptist affects him not; the piping strains of grace in Jesus are unnoticed and his heart unmoved; the Holy Ghost, sent down from heaven with the message of pardon, is resisted; the saints are slain in proclaiming the love which rose above all man's sin; and the Church of God is wasted and persecuted. Such is man! No reciprocity in his heart to the pleadings of Divine affection; no receptivity of the truth which proves its power by reaching his conscience, and its fitness for his state by touching his heart. He must be born again!

Now, in Proverbs viii. 22-31, we find a passage of exceeding beauty, which tells us of the thoughts which were in God's heart, and His purposes in connection with His Son, before the world was. Before the foundations of the mountains and hills—before all things which had a beginning, even "from everlasting"—the Son was there. He is presented here as "wisdom," and Christ is the "wisdom of God." (1 Cor. i. 24.) He was rejoicing always before Him—rejoicing in the habitable parts of His earth before it came into being by the *fiat* of the Son—and His good pleasure (or delight) was in the sons of men.

I will now trace how this wondrous seeking heart of God

has had, and has, its eternal satisfaction conceived, made good, revealed, and accomplished in Jesus; and, more wondrous still, to God's glory by us, for all things are for our sakes, and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

In Bethlehem of Judea, one night, nearly nineteen hundred years ago, the glory of Jehovah shone out from heaven on the darkness which really and morally enveloped the earth, and night was turned into day. The Angel of Jehovah appeared to some poor shepherds in the fields, to tell them of the birth of a Saviour, Christ the Lord. And suddenly the hosts of heaven joined the Angel of the Lord, and proclaimed with bursts of praise, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men!"

How rightly rose the praises  
Of heaven that wondrous night,  
When shepherds hid their faces  
In brightest angel light!  
More just those acclamations  
Than when the glorious band  
Chanted earth's deep foundations,  
Just laid by God's right hand!

The world had come forth from God, in all the harmony and beauty of creation, and "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God (angels) had shouted for joy" (Job xxxviii. 7), and now its Creator had become a man. Adam had been set at the head of creation, and had fallen, and his history was past. Another Adam appeared—the "last"—and the "day-spring" dawned upon the darkened, ruined earth. God's glory now has its highest expression, for His Son has become a babe. Peace was proposed to the ruined earth, and it was refused. Still God has His "glory" in the highest, and His "good pleasure" is now to have its fruition; and the angels praise with unselfish hearts, happy that God is about to have His way. Then they go back to heaven, to ascend and descend upon this Son of Man.

Thirty years pass on, and a lowly Man, in whom all the fulness of the Godhead bodily was pleased to dwell, passed along His lowly path of obedience. A sinless Man was before God's eye on earth, and the sweet savour of Jesus refreshed His heart. Thirty years were over, and John the Baptist had thundered out his declamations against ungodly sinners; declaring that God had now the axe in His hand, that He would clear the field of unfruitful trees, no matter what were their pretensions. Some hearts are touched, and

consciences convicted, and they pass down to the waters of Jordan, with the only fruit in their hand which God ever did or ever will accept from the hands of a sinner—that is, the confession of their sins. And He at once accepts the man who produces it.

Amongst the crowd appears Jesus! He had patiently waited God's time, and He recognizes that God is now at work in men; and He who knew the secrets of His Father's heart above, and the secrets of men's hearts below, at once identifies Himself with this movement of grace in the hearts of repentant sinners, and passes down in tenderest love and lowliness into the waters of Jordan. But His delight (or "good pleasure") was to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to finish His work; and so He says, "My goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all *my delight*!" (Ps. xvi.) The lines had fallen unto Him in pleasant places indeed; His goodly heritage was filling His heart in the foretaste of God's good pleasure or delight being fulfilled.

The instant He is there according to God's thought, the heaven is opened on Him—fit object of heaven, as of God. The Holy Ghost descends and seals Him for His service here. And now the Father must have His word; He cannot (so to speak) withhold His satisfaction, and His voice is heard proclaiming, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I have *good pleasure*.\* And here, as has been remarked, we find the first revelation of the Trinity, when a man takes His place as the pattern according to God's counsels before His eye. The Son is there, and the Holy Ghost seals Him as a man, and the Father's voice proclaims His good pleasure in Him.

Time passes on; and after confronting the devil, and binding the strong man in obedience, He comes forth to serve in obedience still, but with a power that could remove every ill that had entered the world, and brought man into misery. If they are sick, He heals; if dead, he raises them; if afflicted, He comforts; if hungry, he feeds; if possessed, He breaks the chains in which the strong man bound his victims, and sets them free. He reveals the Father's heart

\* I may remark that the word is really or substantially the same all the way through, in the passages I quote in this paper from the N. Test. The verbal or the noun form of the same word being used in them all, and the literal translation given.



on earth in grace—brings the *light* of God to detect the *conscience* of sinners, and yet with a *love* which attracts their *heart*. But man would not have Him. He might feed the hungry, heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, drive out Satan from man; but it brought God too near to men for them to enjoy their own wills and their own ways; they will not have God on any terms, but beseech Him to depart from their midst.

At last comes the inquiry, "Whom say the people that I am?" The answer discloses that "None cared His name to know." Men speculated; some said one thing, and some another; but a few hearts confess Him as "the Christ of God." (See Matt. xvi. 13-16; Mark viii. 27-29; Luke ix. 18-20.) But this was no more to be preached, for the "Son of Man" was now about to suffer; and here He first speaks definitely of His death. Then, in each Gospel which gives the scene, He goes to the Mount of Transfiguration, and while transfigured before His wondering disciples, the Father's voice is again heard through the stillness of the night, which is again, as at the Incarnation, turned into day. (*cf.* Luke ix. 37.) "This is my beloved Son, in whom I have *good pleasure*." As if to say, Men have refused My heart and My Son, when I have spent it, and given Him in seeking theirs; but My heart has not changed in Him; and a rejected Christ receives His Father's heart's expression, "In thee I have *good pleasure*."

He leaves the mountain and turns to meet the cross and shame which awaited Him at the end of His pathway, with "not where to lay his head." (Luke ix. 58.) His heart thinks afresh of the deeper need of man, and He sends out the Seventy on this last journey. When they return (ch. x. 17, &c.), with the news that to their faith even the power of casting out devils through His name was given, He bids them "rejoice not," for another thought presses itself from His heart, their "names are written in heaven." God was writing down in heaven the names of those who followed Him in whom was all His "good pleasure," and Jesus was revealing to them the Father. "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for thus was (the) *good pleasure* before thee." No purpose of His heart would be frustrated, or turned aside, and while

blinding and darkness was coming on the earth and man, the light of these eternal counsels was falling on the hearts of the babes by the Father's "good pleasure" to reveal them.

We still follow this unfrustrated purpose of His heart, and in the midst of Luke xii. we find these "babes" instructed for their pathway while passing through an adverse world with girded loins, like men that wait for their Lord. To them He says, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's *good pleasure* to give you the kingdom." There is no change in His love, and He will act as a Father. He will not merely put you into it, but He will give it to you.

But in all this pathway He was alone. The corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die, or He would abide alone; and so He passes down to the cross, meets His people's need as to their sins, Satan's power of death, and the judgment of God. He takes up our sins and bears them as His own, and blots them out for ever. He meets and destroys Satan's power of death by death, and bears the judgment, and all the demands of God's righteousness as to sin. Sins, death, and judgment are past for him who believes His testimony, and sets to his seal that God is true. And God seals with His Spirit him who does so.

Then He bows the head for which He had no place here below, and gives up the ghost. He dies and rises again—tells His disciples that His Father is now their Father, and His God their God, and ascends as man to glory. Then come out all those wonderful counsels and purposes of God's heart. The orbit of the "good pleasure" of God is described, and His people are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world" (Prov. viii), "that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the *good pleasure* of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." (Eph. i. 3-6.) The circle is complete, and we are brought into all these delights of God's eternal purposes, and the thoughts of His heart which were before the foundation of the world!

Thus we have the eternal bosom revealing this "good pleasure," which was there before the world was made. (Prov. viii.) The angels praising, as in the manger at Bethlehem was laid the infant Jesus—the first expression

of this wondrous "good pleasure" in the sons of men. (Luke ii.)

The Father's voice expressing His "good pleasure" as Jesus enters His path of service, at the Jordan, at the moment when He was working in the hearts of men. (Luke iii.)

In the mountain of Transfiguration again is heard this "good pleasure" expressed, as Jesus, rejected by men, unveils His glory before the eyes of Peter, James, and John. (Matt. xvii; Luke ix.)

His own voice tells us, raised in thanksgiving, of the Father's purposes in revealing Him to the babes, according to the "good pleasure" which was ever before Him. (Luke x.)

And, again, He teaches to this "little flock" the purposes of the Father's heart concerning them, in giving them the kingdom; but a work was yet to be accomplished before all could be made known, and the saints set in all these delights of God; and His heart was straightened until it was accomplished. (Luke xii. 56.)

But this work is over, and the "good pleasure of his will" is brought to fruition, and we are set in its fullest expression in heavenly places in Christ. (Eph. i.)

But there is an age to come in which the preface of this eternal purpose is seen—the millennial glory. And still the "good pleasure" is expressed. He unfolds to us "the mystery of his will, according to his *good pleasure*, which he hath purposed in himself" to gather all things in heaven and earth in one in Christ; and in Him we have also obtained this inheritance in the age to come, where we shall reign with Him until He puts down all authority and power. Then He gives up the kingdom after the perfection of His administration, and becomes, in the eternal age, in the new heavens and the new earth, the Son, subject as man again to His Father, and we with Him in that scene, where God's delights are fully expressed and fulfilled according to His good pleasure in the sons of men for ever.

But between this calling into the orbit of the good pleasure of God, and its fruition in the ages to come, Is God to have no "good pleasure"? We turn to Philippians ii. 13, and we find a feeble people "always obedient" when the Church had apostolic care, but now when it was gone, "much more in its absence;" and God

was working in them "to will and to do of his *good pleasure*" still.

If the broad line of unsullied light tracked itself before God's eye in Jesus' path on earth, a tiny streak of light is found in the path of those who have, with broken wills and hearts subject to Him, sought and found in the obedient, willess footprints of Jesus the "*good pleasure*" expressed in doing the will of His Father, in those who seek to yield themselves to Him who works in their weakness to will and to do of that good pleasure.

What can we say then, beloved, to these things? Shall we not say "Amen" to the apostle's prayer in 2 Thess. i. 11, 12. "Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the *good pleasure* of his goodness, and the work of faith with power,—that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ." P.

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## CHRISTIAN POSITION, SERVICE, AND WORSHIP.

JOHN xii.

THE memories of Bethany cannot fail to touch a chord in the heart of everyone who loves the Lord Jesus. We naturally find pleasure in lingering over any spot that was dear to one we love—how much more when that One is the Lord Jesus Christ, the One to whom we owe everything. We love to think of anything associated with His blessed name; but what makes Bethany peculiarly interesting, is, that He seemed to find in the society of that little company a resting place in His toilsome path. How sweet to think that He, "who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself," such hatred and antagonism from man, had one little spot where He could find those, who, although they knew but little, were truly attached to Himself.

The result of such intercourse is seen in the *confidence* of love which that message of Martha and Mary reveals, "Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick." They *knew* He loved their brother as well as they, and it is not *their* love but *His* love that is uppermost in their minds. It is to this spot that Jesus turns on His last journey to Jerusalem. "And they made him a supper." There is no formal invitation, as with Simon the Pharisee—none was needed, for there was the ease, and as we have said, the confidence

of known love. What a supper it was! Who was there? The Son of God—"God manifested in flesh." Who were around Him? A company of poor sinners, attracted by perfect grace, and for whom He—the Son of Man—was soon to lay down His life.

There is significance in the way the Bethany family is introduced. Jesus came to Bethany, "where Lazarus was, which had been dead whom he raised from the dead." "Martha served," and "Mary took a pound of ointment, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair." In this we have an illustration of Christian position, service, and worship.

Lazarus had been dead; but now, alive from the dead, he is seated in company with Jesus. So with the believer. He is alive from the dead, and that in the power of an endless life. We cannot be too clear as to this. Weakness and a troubled conscience is the result of imperfectly apprehending it. If we look to ourselves we find failure to the very end—if we look to God's side we find nothing but perfection. Christ is our life. The Father "*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." "And *hath* raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things *are* passed away; behold all things are become new; *and all things are of God.*"

Such is the character of our standing. We shall not be more meet for heaven when we get there than we are now, nor will our heaven be more secure. The title is perfect. True, if I look at myself I see nothing of all this, but I am not called upon to look at myself, but to *judge* myself. That is what God has done with nature, "condemned sin in the flesh," and I am to reckon myself dead to sin and alive unto God. True self-judgment, however, we must remember, proceeds from being in the presence of the Lord. The light exposes self in its true colours, and puts an end to all thought of improvement. We get the principle in Job's case, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself." But the same light that exposes self manifests the unalterable grace in which we stand; and the desires of the new nature being strengthened, we get power to keep the old in check. We leave it behind in all its badness, and going on in the

power of the new nature its energies are displayed. That is the principle of over-coming, as we read in Gal. v. 16—“*Walk in the Spirit*, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.”

A word as to Martha. It is the Lord's presence that calls forth her service. She does not lose the opportunity of ministering to Him. In this we learn a lesson. We ought not to seek to get through this world as comfortably as possible, because our consciences are set at rest. It is not in keeping with the activities of Divine love to feast on our own blessings, in the midst of a groaning creation. Where these are in proper exercise the saint is a channel of blessing to all around. “Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” O, how our selfish hearts are exposed when we think of the pathway of the Lord Jesus on earth, or even of the unceasing care and bowels of compassion that animated such an one as Paul. But it is important to note that Martha's service is connected with the Lord. It must ever be so, where there is true service. We are always apt to imitate others, or work for the sake of a place or a name. But this will never do. The Lord has work for each of us—for each his own work—and the test of its being rightly done is, whether it has been done *as for Him*. Of course, in order to know what the Lord has for me to do, and to have Him as the object in doing it, there must be the broken will and the single eye.

Mary figures prominently in this scene. The appropriateness of her action is apparent from verse 7—“Against the day of my burying hath she *kept* this.” Jesus was soon to leave them. “Me ye have not always.” In view of his approaching death, Mary esteems nothing too costly to spend, and pours out the precious ointment which she had kept up for this purpose, as the answer of a loving heart to the love of His. It is the spirit of worship. In the eyes of man it was waste and occasioned grumbling. But who can estimate its value in the sight of God? Man valued the Son of God's love at thirty pieces of silver. To faith He is the most glorious object that mortal eyes could behold. Set down with purged consciences in the presence of God, within the holiest, our eyes behold that worthy One, who, by His shameful cross has brought us there. What else can we do but worship, and what more delightful than the sweet odour of a heart doing homage to that glorious One in whom all fulness dwells, and in whom the Father finds infinite delight?

A practical word on the thought with which we started. It is sweet to think that there was one spot on earth where Jesus could meet loving hearts. But have you ever thought that He seeks the same still? We sometimes sing:—

“Who find in Abba’s favour  
Our spirit’s present home.”

And this is blessedly true. But there is another side—“If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our *abode* with him.”

May it be ours to have his love so filling our hearts, and every word of His so attended to, that He may find a dwelling-place in us and with us here! C.

## HOW DO YOU WORSHIP?

JOHN xii. 1-11.

SHE came not to hear a sermon, although the first of Teachers was there; but to sit at His feet and hear His word (Luke x. 39) was not her purpose now, blessed as that was in its proper place. She came not to make her requests known to Him. Time was, when, in deepest submission to His will, she had fallen at His feet, saying, “Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died” (John xi. 32); but to pour out her supplications to Him, as her only resource, was not now her thought, for her brother was seated at the table. She came not to meet the saints, though precious saints were there, for it says, “Jesus loved Martha . . . and Lazarus.” (John xi. 5.) Fellowship with them was blessed likewise, and, doubtless, of frequent occurrence; but fellowship was not her object now. She came not after the weariness and toil of a week’s battling with the world to be refreshed from Him, though, surely she, like every saint, had learned the trials of the wilderness; and none more than she, probably, knew the blessed springs of refreshment that were in Him. But she came, and that, too, at the moment when the world was expressing its deepest hatred of Him, to pour out what she long had treasured up (v. 7), that which was most valuable to her, all she had upon earth, upon the person of the One whose love had made her heart captive, and absorbed her affections. She thought not of Simon the leper—she passed the disciples by—her brother and her sister in the flesh and in the Lord engaged not her attention then—“Jesus only” filled her soul—her eye was on *Him*—

her heart beat true to *Him*—her hands and feet were subservient to her eye and to her heart, as she “anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair.”

Adoration, homage, worship, blessing, was her one thought, and that in honour of the One who was “all in all” to her; and surely *such* worship was most refreshing to Him.

The unspiritual (*v.* 4) might murmur, but He upheld her cause, and shewed how he could appreciate and value the grateful tribute of a heart that knew His worth and preciousness, and could not be silent as to it. A lasting record is preserved of what worship really is by the One who accepted it, and of the one who rendered it.

And now, dear reader, is this your mode of worship, or do you on the Lord's day go to hear a sermon, say your prayers, meet the saints, or be refreshed after your six days' toil? Oh! if every eye was on the Lord alone, if every heart were true to Him; if we were each determined to see “no man . . . save Jesus only,” what full praise there would be! Not with alabaster boxes now, but our bodies filled with the Holy Ghost—a stream of thanksgiving, of worship of the highest character would ascend in honour of the blessed One that now adorns the glory as He once adorned the earth. Be it ours thus to worship Him in Spirit and in truth. Amen!

D. T. G.

## REFORMATION IS NOT CURE.

You will find that man *changes his way*, but never *cures himself*. This truth has had abundant illustration in the progress of the world's history, and may be a seasonable warning to us just at this moment.

Israel in the wilderness showed this. They made a calf first; afterwards they made a captain. The unclean idol, Vanity, was left for the presumptuous thought of setting up one of themselves; but this was only change, and not cure.

Israel in the land did the same again. They had the gods of the nations as their gods, till Babylon became the place of their captivity and judgment. But when returned to the land, though they did not return to their idols, they became infidel and presumptuous. Read their ways in Ezra and Nehemiah, and very specially in Malachi. Again it was change, and not cure.

The Lord in His teaching contemplates this. (See Mat t xi. and Luke xi.) It was first the *unclean* house, and then



the *swept and garnished* house. But this was no cure. Some say the Lord did His works by Beelzebub, and others challenged Him for a sign. They may vary in the form of their enmity, but it is enmity still. And instead of all this change and variousness working a cure, the last state is worse than the first. What transpires in the swept house is still worse than what had been witnessed and practised in the unclean house.

This, beloved, is serious truth, but it is seasonable. The nations are now *hailing a change*. The war is over, and peace is proclaimed. Men's hearts are beating high, and promising them great things. But it is well to remember that man may change his way, but he never can cure himself. The change only ends in something worse. In the "latter times" of Christendom we get certain forms of evil (1 Tim. iv.); but when we read "the last days," it is only a change of the former we get. (2 Tim. iii.) It is evil still, and no cure.

In the awful disclosures of the Apocalypse we find this. It is change and not cure. The woman that corrupted the earth is removed, but the beast and his army takes the lead, and conducts his strength against the Lord. (ch. xix.) The kings of the earth may hate the whore and put her down, but then this is only to give their power to the beast and put him up (ch. xvii).

Thus changes are witnessed. One form of evil gives place (in the course of the dispensations, whether in Israel or in Christendom, but then it is only giving place) to another form of evil. There is no cure. Judgment must be executed, and that is not cure, but the making way for something new. The judgment will displace man and corruption, and make room for Christ and His power and righteousness.

The evil is incurable, and must be displaced by judgment. And just as man's change of his ways did not work a cure, so the Lord's different dealings with him has not worked correction. His piping has not led to dancing, nor His mourning to lamentation. "Let favour be shown to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness." All tells us that nothing remains but judgment. As says the same prophet, "When thy *judgments* are in the earth the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Is. xxvi. 9, 10). And again, "All nations shall come to worship before thee, for thy judgments are made manifest" (Rev. xv. 4).

The Reformation was a *change*, but *no cure*; and judgment awaits Christendom.

# SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

“G.”—Why is “the great multitude which no man could number” said to come out of “the great tribulation” (Rev. vii. 14), seeing that it would seem to be drawn from among the heathen, to whom the widest of the three circles of tribulation (“the hour of temptation,” Rev. iii. 10) applies?

A.—I judge the great tribulation here spoken of to be a general expression for the period of judgment which passes over the earth in the interval between the taking away of the saints to heaven and the appearing of the Lord in judgment with them. It is not the definite tribulation which falls on the Jews in Judea, as given in Matt. xxiv. 15-31. It is a comprehensive and technical expression for the interval or crisis of the world’s history preparatory to the millennium.

Q.—Are the dwellers on the earth, of Rev. xiv. 6, the same class as those thus described in *ch.* xiii. 8, and other passages? If so, would it be correct to assume that the “everlasting gospel” is *not* confined to those nations that are not now under testimony?

A.—They that dwell on the earth are they who accept this scene as their portion, like Cain. It is an expression characterising this class of persons in the Apocalypse.

The “everlasting gospel” is a general and final testimony, of a providential character, sent out of God at the time of the end, just before the establishment of the kingdom for a thousand years. I believe its testimony will be very wide in character, embracing all who had not been shut up to judicial blindness, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. (2 Thess. ii. 10-12.) To such no testimony will be given; it will be sent to all who had not thus been given up of God.

It may be well to mention that the “everlasting gospel” is a warning to the whole world to flee from idolatry and idols, and fear the one God who created all things. It was the general testimony of the Old Testament, and will be the general testimony then, until one God is known from sea to sea, and to the ends of the earth; idols and false worship then are gone for ever. From this we must distinguish the parenthesis in time, from Pentecost till the rapture of the saints, wherein we have the Church called out by the glad tidings, or *gospel of His grace*, which was not proclaimed before this interval, and will not be in that day.

## "MINE EYE SEETH THEE."

JOB xlii. 5.

I HEARD of Thee, Lord Jesus!  
 Of Thy beauty, and Thy worth;  
 And yet this foolish soul, enslaved,  
 Still worshipp'd things of earth.  
 I heard of Thy self-sacrifice,  
 Thy death, in matchless love!  
 But all was pow'rless till Thy look  
 Melted me from above.

I met Thy gaze, Lord Jesus!  
 As it linger'd o'er my soul;  
 It shed a flood of peace and joy  
 No doubting could control.  
 Such was the depth of tenderness  
 In that blest look of love,—  
 It charmed my eye from things beneath,  
 And now *I* look above.

I see Thee *now*, my Saviour!  
 I but *heard* of Thee before;  
 And this enraptur'd eye would rest  
 On Thee for evermore,—  
 Would kindle with Thy beauties, as  
 It dwells upon thy face;  
 And this full soul would overflow  
 With thoughts of Thy sweet grace.

I see Thee now, Lord Jesus!  
 Lo! all other objects fade!  
 It is Thy peerless presence that  
 Has thrown them in the shade.  
 My heart was bound in things of earth,  
 But Thou hast set it free,—  
 Hast burst the gilded, galling chains:  
 Giv'n me to live for Thee.

I see Thee now, Lord Jesus!  
 As Thou waitest for Thine own;  
 Sitting beside Thy Father, at  
 His right hand, on the throne.  
 Down here Thou art rejected! but  
*We* view Thee, Lord, on high;  
 And, strengthen'd by the wondrous sight,  
 Can suffer—yea, can die!

I see Thee now, Lord Jesus!  
 Yet, a brighter morn is nigh;  
 When Thou shalt call God's children to  
 Their Father's house on high.  
 The sweet anticipation of  
 That blessed, longed-for day,  
 Does much to cheer the lonely hours  
 While *Thou* art still away.

## D A V I D .

## I CHRONICLES XVII.

THE mistake which David made in the removal of the Ark arose from carelessness of the Scriptures. David forgot the orders which God had given about the carrying of the Ark (Numbers), and therefore, in the 13th chap. of 1st Chronicles, we find him carelessly hazarding the life of his friend Uzza, who no doubt was a true Israelite, by giving him charge of the cart which bore the Ark. The death of Uzza was simply judicial, as in the case of Achan and of Ananias and Sapphira. Paul speaks of such like deaths—"Many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." Eternal death is not contemplated here. We do not raise that question. It is ecclesiastical death. The mistake which we have to deal with does not arise from neglect of *the Word*, but of Divine principles. We shall read the 17th chapter. You cannot here charge David with any moral obliquity, or carelessness of Scripture; his fault arises from ignorance of the Divine mind. You will ask, Is not Scripture the only standard? Most jealously I adhere to it: Scripture *is* the only standard. There are no true weights and measures but those of the Sanctuary. O! but there is an acquaintance with the ways of God that lies hid from the eyes of many of His saints, yet is open to others. Many a saint may be a diligent student of Scripture, and yet make great mistakes: his heart may be with God all the time. The Lord said, that David's heart was right, but his mind, his understanding, was wrong. This is often to be seen, especially at the present time; loving saints, most acceptable to God, making great mistakes by not knowing the Divine mind and ways. So it was with David. He was comfortably settled in his house of cedar, ornamented, no doubt, in the eastern mode; and looking around, he said to his friend Nathan, "Think of me living in a house of cedar, and the Ark of God under curtains!" This was a most beautiful meditation of David's heart. No sooner was he in possession of the throne than he made it subservient to the glory of God. The first thought was, "How shall I bring back the ark?" Now, do you make your circumstances subservient to the glory of God? How often are they made to serve the ends of your own vain desires? Not such was David. No sooner was he settled in his house of cedar than

he bethought himself of the Ark of God. Well, we sometimes see this still. There are saints met with here and there who make their circumstances the servants of God! Nathan, seeing that David's heart was right with God, concluded that all was well, and answered at once, "Do all that is in thine heart, for God is with thee." But that same night God entered the scene, and corrected the mistake of David and his seer:—"Go and tell David, my servant, Thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not build me an house to dwell in." Do not think of it! Why should God forbid this? Was there any charge against David's heart? No, there was no pravity to be corrected; nor, as in the case of Uzza, was there any neglect of Scripture, but there was deep misunderstanding of *the mind of God*. Does David know Me so little, said God, as to suppose that I will dwell in a house, until he and My people Israel are at peace? Does he think to out-do Me in goodness? This is but a paraphrase of the message of God to David. *Am I* to let you be first, David; and shall I take a dwelling from you before I make you one? Shall I dwell under cedars while you are in battle? Nay, in *all* things, God must have the pre-eminence. (Col. i. 18.) Where sin abounds grace abounds still more, and where faith abounds grace goes beyond it. This was the word by Nathan to David—I *cannot* rest, while you are a man of war. We see this again in the New Testament. When Stephen was stoned he looked up to heaven, and saw Jesus *standing*, not seated, which is His usual and proper attitude, as having *finished* the work of salvation. But could Jesus sit to see Stephen stoned? Nay, Stephen *saw Him standing* on the right hand of God. So, in David's case, were not the Ammonites and Philistines around him? Think no more about My dwelling, said God, until I give you rest. Ah! is it not God who has said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive"? The blessed sympathy of Christ with His people! "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of mine eye." Old and New Testament concur to show the heart of God. Could we have a more rich example than the present. Never forget that precious sentiment, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Now, if you do not acknowledge this, you have not got the inlet into the mind of God. In the Gospel God satisfies Himself; under law He was the receiver; man was working

and bringing the result to God, and God remained quiet, and accepted the offering. But, in the Gospel God and man change places. In the activities of grace God comes forward and sets his seal to the saying of Christ, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Now, this is just what David did not understand. The heart was right in the desire to build God's house, but the understanding was ignorant of the secret that lay on the bosom of God. Now, I say it boldly, *you ought* to know the pulses of the Divine affections. Nathan is sent to stop David's hand, not to correct his heart. Quite otherwise. Indeed, his heart is commended; but then he must be taught to understand the heart of God. And this is what the Gospel does for you; it lets you into the secret of the heart of God, and the more you interpret that secret the happier will your heart be. This is the preaching of God to Nathan. It is the Gospel that explains God to you, and shows you how He has devised a way whereby He may be just, and yet be the justifier of the sinner. "Mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." The Gospel is a communication of God to the sinner. God reminds David of His grace. I brought you from the sheepfold, where even your father despised you. It was wretched to see a father forgetting his child, but that despised child was God's elect. What is the music of "the spheres" to that of the grace of God? Grace had elected David, grace had called him, and grace is about to lead him into glory. The issue of grace was glory (verse 13). O for an ear to hear the tale of grace! How charming is the sound of harmony floating on the air, and falling on the enchanted ear; but, O for an ear to hear the tale of grace! This is the song to which the harps of God are strung; they are attuned to celebrate the one only story. Their music is the grace of God—and this should be *our* music now. I have often wondered what Nathan thought of this message. He would naturally say, It was only yesterday I told him to go and prosper. If my king has made a mistake, so have I. Well, surely David never meant it, but this thought of his was a gross slander of God's love. It reminds me of the dear women at the sepulchre; their hearts were right, but if their act were analyzed, it would be found a slander on the Prince of Life. They never meant it, but they should have known that the sepulchre would be empty.

Now God has a controversy with David about this misunderstanding; not, indeed, such as He had later, in the matter of Uriah, when there was moral obliquity. Still there is controversy. We must now look at David's answer when he received the tale of grace. David the king, came and sat before the Lord (16th verse to the end). How precious the communion between grace and faith! Into this fallen world God comes and communicates His purposes. We hear them, and sit down and render back our thanks. Give Him what you will, praise must be your greatest gift. Nothing is so sweet to God as praise. But, first, there *must be confidence*. If you do not first know He loves you, you cannot love Him. David expresses this confidence by going in and sitting before the Lord. Could he have fallen upon his face? He could not have done it. It is a poor business when saints are asking God to pardon and accept them, while listening to the tale of grace. They should be rejoicing in the blessed sense of sin pardoned and put away for ever! There are very proper occasions for falling on the face. In the matter of Uriah, David had occasion to be there; but when he listened to the story of God's love to him he could not take the place of a criminal. There are seasons for all these things. It is beautiful when saints know the season to sit or stand—to laugh or weep. David goes in and sits before the Lord, and when he opens his mouth, it is to say that he is “lost in wonder, love, and praise.”

Beautiful expression of faith! The soul listens to the story of God's love, and loses itself in wonder, love, and praise. You may say, “This is not my attitude.” That may be; but surely it is the proper attitude of the saved soul! “*Who am I, O Lord?*” Well said. Surely we can join in this language of David, the servant of the Lord! All that Thou hast done is little in Thine eyes, compared with Thy purposes for the future (verse 17). *According to Thine own heart* Thou hast done it (verse 19). I pause here to ask you if you can trace the Gospel to the heart of God? If not, you have not reached the source. Is the cross the source of blessing? No, the cross stands a long way down the story. If you had not the love of God, you could never have had the cross of Christ. The blood is your only title to blessing. But how did you get the blood? “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have

everlasting life." Your response to the Gospel is "Out of thine own heart thou didst it. Thy bosom was the birthplace of this grace, the birthplace of all blessing." Thus David responds to grace, "O Lord, there is none like thee! And what one nation in the earth is like thy people Israel?" Would to God we knew something of this spirit! Would that our experience were more the joy of what *God is*, than of what we are in ourselves! In books of saints' experience what miserable strivings we find! The Lord bears with all this, but the normal character of the saved soul is *praise*. This is true Christian experience. Now David has but to say, "Thou hast promised, now therefore perform it." Nothing remains but for God to make good *His own word*.

In the 24th verse David says, "The Lord of Hosts is the God of *Israel*, even a God *to Israel*." Perhaps you think of God as God *of you*, and not God *to you*. You know He has authority over you, but doubt his love to you. God has authority over you, and Christ is "Head over *all things* to the Church." And there is more than one Headship. But in Ephesians i. He is Head of His body, the Church. He seats the Church in His own place of authority above principalities and powers. Jesus is your Lord; but besides that, He is watching your soul in love. Angelic communion is not to be compared to that of the believing sinner! There is nothing more lovely than the outgoings of faith met by the inworking witness of grace. David rose from his seat of communion and went forth to battle. He let go the trowel and took up the sword. He goes out against the Philistines and finds fruit of restoration—finds victory! He is now in the light of God, and Nathan may say, "Go and prosper, for God is with thee." It is the sword of the Lord and of David. Wonderful testimonies! At midnight will I arise and bless Thee, because of Thy righteous judgments.

While *the world* is trimming *its* midnight lamps to scoff at the Word of God, may *saints* be found rising up early and blessing Him because of His righteous judgments!

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"The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat." (Prov. xiii. 4.)



## A LETTER ON THE SPRINKLING OF BLOOD.\*

DEAR BROTHER,—Allow me to say a few words on the sprinkling of blood. Precious and undeserved as every mercy is to us, our being sprinkled with blood is the lowest in the series; still it seems to me to have its place. It is most true that the blood is presented to God, and that this goes a vast deal further than our being sprinkled with it. Not only it was sprinkled before the mercy-seat as well as on it, but Christ is entered in not without blood; the efficacy of His work and blood-shedding is presented to God. In every case it has this character; I mean of being presented to the eye of God. But this may have a double aspect—meeting the eye of God in respect of its own intrinsic value and character as perfectly glorifying God, or as meeting the responsibility and need of those for whom it is shed. Christ (John xiii.) as Son of man has perfectly glorified God, and as Man is in the glory of God now, having glorified the Father upon earth, and finished the work which He gave Him to do. In the Son of man's glorifying God the ground was laid for man being in the glory of God, and the counsels of God being accomplished. Man is reconciled to God Himself, and walks in the light as God is in the light: the veil is rent from top to bottom. This is the fullest character and effect of the work of Christ. God is glorified in Him, and, in result, man is with Him. But besides this there was the positive responsibility of man to be met; guilt, uncleanness, and offence were all under God's eye, in those whom He would take to Himself. I do not speak now of renewal of heart and moral cleansing—that is figured by the washing of water. But Christ came not by water only, but by water and blood. Nor is guilt alone put away and offence forgiven; there is a judicial purgation or cleansing of sins—a *καθαρismus*; the † כֹּפֶר or כִּפּוּרִים (Kopher or Kippooreem), was made or offered, death coming in, expiation, and so propitiation blood being shed, God's character in righteousness, supreme claim, and holiness being perfectly met and even glorified. Further, our sins borne and sent away on the scape goat, never to be found; or met in an ordinary sin offering which

\* Difficulties having presented themselves to some, in the articles on the "Sprinkling of blood," in December 1870, and February 1871, Nos. of *Words of Truth*, this letter was written at the request of the Editor.

† The כֹּפֶר was the "expiation"; כִּפּוּרִים is the plural form of the same word.—ED.

in Christ was once for all, who bore our sins in His own body on the tree. Thus the atonement, expiation and propitiation are perfect, and we are forgiven. Redemption too, was accomplished.

Forgiveness is expressed in Hebrew by נָסָא—nasa, to lift up, or take away ; קָסָה—kasah, to cover, as in the first verse of Psalm xxxii., and continually elsewhere. The word כִּפֶּה—kipper, the form of the verb כָּפַר—kapphar, used for making atonement, is used for appeasing or propitiating ; as Jacob says, “I will appease him with the present” (Gen. xxxii. 20), speaking of Esau. In this sense it is clearly presented to God.

But then, besides this, the blood was sprinkled on what was defiled. This was still presented to the eye of God ; but to God looked at us judging, taking notice of iniquity according to righteous requirement. In the simple presenting it to God, *He* was perfectly glorified. In the antitype it had the worth of heavenly glory and perfect divine favour. We are in the light as God is in the light, without a veil, in joy, and have boldness to enter into the holiest. As regards the sins, they are all borne and put away, never to be remembered.

Now comes another thought. I am unclean, defiled by them. Here I get cleansing, not in my inward disposition, but judicially, God being viewed as Judge, and my conscience purged—not my heart and state. The blood is presented to God, but presented to Him as on that which had been unclean. This meets His eye when looking judicially at us, and He holds for perfectly clean that on which the blood is. Thus when the blood was put on the lintel and the two door-posts in Egypt, God saw the blood and passed over. He was passing through the land judicially ; where the blood was He passed over, His judgment did not apply ; otherwise He reckoned the blood a perfect answer to its requirements. So with things that were sprinkled in the Tabernacle ; the blood was put there because of the iniquities of the children of Israel, amongst whom Jehovah dwelt. They were thus cleansed and fit for His presence and use.

The cases in which there was sprinkling on persons were those of the leper and the sons of Aaron.\* In the former

\* Aaron was anointed alone without blood as representing Christ, and then he and his sons taken together as representing the priesthood of Christians connected with Christ.

case the practical cleansing belonging to the camp began by water, and was followed by blood put on the right ear, thumb, and toe, giving cleanness and the judgment and disallowance of evil, according to the blood of Christ, in every thought and act, and all the walk of the cleansed one; and that followed by oil, or the Spirit, on each same part. But before this, which made the blood and death of Christ the measure of every evil, and shut out all that we might be engaged in which did not suit it, two clean birds had been taken, and one killed and the other dipped in its blood, and the man to be cleansed sprinkled with it. This was not the inward work—sanctification—which followed in the camp; it was done outside. It was the proper efficacy of Christ's work; and the blood being sprinkled on the man he was pronounced clean—judicially clean in God's sight—though more had to be done to bring him into communion and the condition of a worshipper. But he was clean (Lev. xiv. 7).

The case of the priest's consecration was more peculiar. They do not stand in the place of transgressors outside, as the leper. But they are washed with water, and the blood of the ram of consecration is put on their ear and hand and foot, as in the leper. So far the fitting them by water and blood is the same in consecrating the priest and cleansing the leper; and in truth what does one does the other. He has loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us kings and priests. But after this some of the blood on the altar was put with the oil, and all sprinkled together. The power of the Holy Ghost is effectual in making good in us, as dead to sin and alive to God in Him, the consecration to God manifested in Christ's death in giving Himself a sacrifice to God. So only are we cleansed in God's judgment according to the judicial estimate of God in Christ's death. "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (Rom. viii. 10). "The law of the Spirit of life . . . has made me free." "For what the law could not do" God has done, when Christ was "for sin," and (He has) "condemned sin in the flesh." This is judicial, but it is deliverance through death. The second and third verses of Rom. viii. bring the oil and the blood on the altar together. Hence we present our bodies a living sacrifice to God, holy and acceptable. It is still the same judicial estimate of sin according to Christ's death only looking to realisation by the power of the Holy Ghost.

As regards 1 Peter i. 2, it may be taken as a general idea of its value ; still it alludes to the Old Testament, when the sprinkling of blood was always the judicial cleansing of that which was sprinkled.

But we find it more definitely elsewhere. Though the general truth may be in the apostle's mind, yet I do not quote Heb. ix. 13, 14, because he refers to the great day of atonement and the red heifer, on neither of which persons were sprinkled with blood. Sprinkling in the original, agrees with "ashes," not with "blood." Still, though the force of that be very different, *v.* 19 shows that the sprinkling of people was not absent from his mind ; and *vv.* 21—23 show that this was in his mind connected with purging, though I do not apply *v.* 19 to it. It was the dedication of the covenant with the sanction of death. But in the other verses cited, purging and blood-sprinkling on that which was to be purged go fully and expressly together in his mind, and in *ch.* x. 22, this is expressly applied to the conscience—"Having your hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience."

Now, the value of the precious blood of Christ does go a vast deal further. We have boldness to enter into the holiest by it ; we shall be in glory by it, and perfect there ; we have redemption by it. The cleansing of the conscience is, so to speak, merely negative ; it clears from the sense of guilt, it meets judgment, requirement. On the door-posts in Egypt it shut God out, because He came as an avenging Judge. Still we evidently need it in this character. So in sprinkling everything in the tabernacle, it removed the stains of Israel's iniquities, and enabled the worship to go on. It entitled the leper to come into the camp and partake of all that would practically restore him to God. It was the basis of all, because that by which anything was sprinkled met the whole character of God—was as fit for the mercy seat and Him that sat upon it, as for the sinner to cleanse him. Still in its application as sprinkling on anything it went no further than the cleansing from positive defilement by sin. Most blessed, assuredly, as it is indispensable to have it ; but still, as so sprinkled and applied, only going to the judicial but perfect removal of all uncleanness in God's sight. I repeat, what the blood has done goes infinitely further for us, and in glorifying God. The sprinkling is a purging process ; the death of Christ involves all the glorifying of God in it.

I think we must make a slight difference in thought between the death of Christ and His blood-shedding; the latter being connected with purging through expiation and propitiation, while in the death we get besides, the perfect testing of all that Christ was for God, and it was a perfect sweet savour as in the meat-offering. Still they are not disconnected, for there is sweet savour in the burnt-offering, but blood-shedding and sprinkling on the altar with it. I only refer to it as having also a different aspect, which, as we only know in part, we may look at separately.

What is important to remark is, that this sprinkling of blood, though every remedy comes from God's love and sovereign grace, is not in itself the outgoing of that full and infinite love—does not take in the counsels of God, nor the work of Christ as the righteous base of those counsels, nor His so being made sin as to open the wide scene of God's glory. God is viewed as a righteous *Judge* simply, who requires what is clean in His sight, and we through grace are cleansed for Him as He so requires. Hence I have said, that while most precious and indispensable for us, it is the lowest step in the wonderful scheme of grace. In it grace is measured by our need, and God takes the character of Judge.

J. N. D.

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## FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE.

### 1 THESS. i.

It is very striking to find that in every Epistle, with the exception of the Galatians, the Apostle gives thanks unceasingly to God for the saints to whom he writes, remembering them in his prayers night and day. His heart being with God, praise to Him is the first thing that rises up; though afterwards he may have to instruct or rebuke or correct them in his letters. Thus, the heart being with God, gets at that which God gives.

In the case of the Galatians they had apparently got off the ground of justification by faith, so that he stands in doubt of them; and yet, after he has expressed his feelings of perplexity and sorrow at their state, we find his heart is still with God above the circumstances, enabling him to say, "I have confidence in you through the Lord."

Now, this is just what we need in passing through the

world. We must go through it, and God means that we should find it a place of trial and difficulty, that it may test our hearts, and teach us what He is to us under all.

It is important, however, to remember that all our exercises—I mean Christian exercises—follow complete and finished redemption. There are exercises in Egypt before we know redemption—making bricks without straw, and the taskmaster's lash. But the Red Sea delivered God's redeemed for ever from Egypt, as we read in the song of Moses—"Thou hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength to thy holy habitation." The wilderness journey is not contemplated in this song. It is deliverance from Egypt, and God setting the redeemed in His inheritance.

So with us, our redemption in Christ has delivered us from the world and sin and death, and has brought us in Christ into the heavenly places. But, as a matter of fact, there is the wilderness to go through. God might have brought them into the land by a short way, but He led them round by the longer, "lest," as He said, "peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt." (Exodus xiii. 17.) He counts the hairs of their heads. He thinks of what is best for them in every circumstance. After forty years they find their clothes have not waxed old, neither have their feet swelled. They had not thought of this till the journey was over, but their God had thought of their clothing every day. He had never omitted to rain manna upon them. True, He suffered them to hunger and thirst, to humble them and prove them, but only that He might supply their bread and their water for them. Through their unbelief they would not go into the land at the end of two years, and were turned back to wander thirty-eight years longer in the desert, but God turned back with them, and took not away from them His pillar of cloud by day, nor His pillar of fire by night.

It is thus that God deals with us in all the trials and difficulties of life. He means us to have trouble, and to feel the opposition of everything around to the life He has given us. What then we want, is to have the heart living with God, and then we shall have His mind about all our circumstances. Do you suppose that, if Israel had been thinking of God's interest and care for them, they would have murmured as they did? Surely not.

It does not matter what our troubles are. One may have the care of God's people pressing on him; another the cares of the world; another, trouble in his family. Countless varieties of exercises there are, no doubt appointed by Him for His people; but the answer to every trouble is having the heart living with God above the circumstances.

Now, if we turn to the state of the Thessalonians, we shall see them bright and happy in the midst of most terrible persecutions. There is no epistle so happy as this. They are in what we call their first love. The springs of divine affections were bright in them. In the third verse we find faith, and hope, and love—that which constituted the full expression of grace working in the Christian—active in them. The Apostle remembers their work of faith, their labour of love, and their patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, how far is it thus with you, dear friends? It is a blessed thing to work for the Lord. It is a great privilege to be allowed to have any service for Christ; but how far is it with you a work of faith? I do not mean to question sincerity. You may work for the Lord, and earnestly desire His blessing; but is every word you say uttered in direct faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thus the expression of what your faith in Him is enjoying; or do you say what you know to be blessed truth, and what you desire God to bless; while the secret spring, that should link the work with your communion to Christ is gone? It is not that you may not have faith in the work. That may be all sure, and yet, in those inner springs of your spirit, your work may not be a work of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Again, you may labour abundantly, and you may love the labour, and do it willingly and honestly; but is the labour so completely the result of your own personal love to Christ, that it is really what these Thessalonians' labour was, a "labour of love"? But there was more than work and labour; there was also the condition of their hearts. They looked for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, not as a doctrine, but as the object of their affections. A mother looks for a son, who is to return from sea, not as a mere truth, but his return is in her heart. If it be delayed, can she settle down and say, "I have made a mistake," and think no more of him? O no, she must exercise patience, but hers is the "patience of hope." She may attend to her household duties as before—that is quite right—but where will her

thoughts be? why, wondering when her son will be home. All truths in Scripture are *persons* or *facts*. People may say, "Why, you have talked of the Lord's coming now for forty years, and He is not come yet." Well, but that alters nothing. We look for Him, because we love Him, and wait to see Him. and so we exercise the "patience of hope." He is Himself waiting, and we wait with Him. We are companions in the patience of Jesus Christ. We know the reason of His delay. It is God's long suffering in saving sinners; therefore we are not left in ignorance; but we cannot give up His return; to do so would make us the most miserable of all men. We find the "patience of hope" in our blessed Lord when in this world. He served and laboured in faith and love to His Father; but He also waited for the coming glory; His life was the patience of hope.

But if we had not more than the work of faith, labour of love and patience of hope, the character of Christian walk would be very imperfect. In Christ there was perfect obedience. All His work of faith, labour of love and patience of hope was in obedience to God His Father. As He says in John, "But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do." These Thessalonians did all "in the sight of God and our Father." This obedience is most blessed, and yet it is a check upon us which we need, carrying about with us the evil we do. Their faith, hope, and love, sweet as they were in themselves, needed to be in the sight of God their Father, under His eye and done in obedience to Him.

Now of *such* the Apostle can speak as "knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." He knew it, not by God's secret counsels, for none but God Himself thus knows it, but by the exhibition of His grace in them. He could see, indeed, that they were God's elect. Of the Galatians he had to say, "I stand in doubt of you." These Thessalonians he can rejoice in, as evidently chosen of God. When we see such blessed fruits of grace in any, how sweet it is to rejoice over them, and to know they are indeed God's elect; while of others we can say nothing, but must stand in doubt of them, as Paul did of the Galatians. And this testimony not only rejoices the Apostle, but in every place their faith to God is spread abroad, so that he needs to say nothing about them. People exclaimed, What a wonderful thing has happened in Thessalonica! A man



came there and preached to them, and a number of the people have turned to God and broken all their idols, and whatever you do to them, you cannot overcome them. They are so happy in what they believe, that even if you kill them, they do not mind, for they are waiting for a Son of God from heaven. No doubt their lips testified too, but their lives spoke, so that Paul had no need of saying what they were.

Is it so with you, beloved? Are you thus waiting for God's Son from heaven, having turned to God from idols? and, whatever be your circumstances and trials, are you living above them in communion with God? or are you happy in the world, whether Christ comes or not?

## JOHN.

I HAVE found (besides the smaller divisions) three larger divisions of chapter i. of the Gospel of John helpful in understanding it:—1st, vv. 1-28, What Jesus is in *Himself* personally; then, 2nd, vv. 29-34, What He is *for God*; and 3rd, vv. 35-51, What He is *for man*.

This chapter gives all the *personal* titles of our Lord Jesus Christ, from His eternal existence and deity, to His millennial character as Son of Man—God and Man. His *relative* titles of High Priest, Head of His body the Church, and Messiah, are not introduced. In all, you find fourteen titles; the Word, God, the Life, the Light, the Word made flesh, the only-begotten with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, the One on whom the Holy Ghost abides, the Son of God as Man on earth, the Baptizer with the Holy Ghost, the Son of God (as born, Ps. ii.), the King of Israel, the Son of Man (Ps. viii).

In the first two verses you find His eternal existence, as the Word, or expression of all that God is: "In the beginning," as far back as our finite minds can conceive, "the Word *was*," and therefore, before the beginning and eternal. But He was also a distinct person then; the Word was "*with God*." And more; not only was He with God, but He "*was God*." Then, lest His personality should be admitted as of time, but not as eternal, it is added, "*The*

*same* was in the beginning *with* God." Thus you have, 1st, His eternal existence; 2nd, His personality; 3rd, His deity; and, 4th, His eternal personality.

Now, not only was He this, but also He created all things; or, as it is more truly said here, "all things came into being by him." He *made* them (Heb. i. 2); He *created* them (Col. i. 16); they *came into being* by Him (John i. 3).

In v. 3, "In him was life," and only there. And this life was the light of *men*—not of angels. Angels are the witnesses of God's *sustaining* a creature unfallen; sinners are the witnesses of the *redemption* of a creature which has fallen. Not a ray of God's nature was to be found in man. He was darkness and walked in darkness, and into such a moral sphere the light shines; but there was no reciprocity for the light, nor receptivity of it. The darkness comprehended it not. Men saw no beauty in Him that they should desire Him.

When man could not see, because he was blind, God acts in grace and sends a man (John Baptist) to tell him that the light is shining! The Sun is shining, and lest you, should not be touched in heart, and warmed by His rays God sends a message to say that he shines (*vv.* 6-8). When He thus acts in grace, Himself fully revealed, He must go beyond the limits of Judaism, and John bears witness of the Light, that *all* men through Him may believe.

He returns (*v.* 9) to the Lord as the true light, "which, (*read*) coming into the world, lighteth every man." It is not the true effect of the light upon men, but He as an object is a light for all, which only those whose eyes are opened can see.

We now have (*vv.* 10-13) the result of His coming in three parts. 1. The world was so estranged from God, that it *knew* not its Creator. 2. His own people, the Jews, *received* Him not. 3. But as many as received Him received the right to be the children of God, and this through faith in His name, *i.e.*, the revelation of the person of Him who was thus revealed. But if they received Him, it was by being born of God, in sovereign grace. He communicated to them a nature in which they could know God, and enjoy fellowship with the Father and the Son. Natural descent by blood, as children of Abraham, profited nothing. The will of the flesh was only sin, for the carnal mind is enmity to God; it is not subject to Him, neither indeed can be.

The will of man could not bring it about by his deeds and efforts. God must beget the soul from the roots of its being.

The Word became flesh (*v.* 14), and tabernacled amongst us, full of grace and truth. Not only did the Light come in to pierce with its investigating rays, to detect the conscience of man, and to reveal the secrets of his heart; but full of *grace* (first), to bring God close down to our hearts in the tenderness of an only-begotten of the Father, that man's confidence might be won, and the lusts of his heart broken, and then turned back to God; not only full of grace, but of *truth*. The grace which He unfolded and revealed was rejected, and then the truth is fully revealed; what man is, what God is, what sin is, what the world is, what Satan is, what love is in God's heart, what righteousness is; all is revealed by Him who is the truth and the measure of all things. Judging all that is here below, He reveals all that is on high; speaking what He knew, and testifying what He had seen. In the Cross all these things come out, and the whole question between good and evil is solved.

Perfect evil has been met by perfect good; the good has triumphed, God is glorified, and the sinner saved.

"We (those whose eyes had been opened) beheld his glory"—not as Son of David, Jehovah, Almighty, Creator, or Lawgiver, but "of an only-begotten of the Father"—the only one of His nature, and of His fulness have *all* we received, and grace for grace—grace more abundantly. There were neither degrees in the faith, nor limitation to the grace. Law was given by Moses, and was God's demand upon man; it neither revealed God nor man, while it told what the one required and what the other ought to be. But grace and truth were by Jesus Christ (*i.e.*, His name), and they came when law was broken. Men had been sinners without law, and transgressors under the law; then grace came, and was despised and refused, and then the truth brought out fully what man *is*—wholly lost; and what God *is*—in the fulness of His heart seeking our confidence as sinners. The law was God sending commands to man to be something for God. Grace comes, and truth, and reveals what God is for man.

No one had seen God at any time, but the only-begotten Son, in the bosom of the Father declared, told plainly, all that He is, and He is our Saviour! May we seek His face that we may know Him!

## THE VALUE OF MEDITATION.

WE lose considerably, both in reading and hearing, by not conferring with our own souls about the truth we may have received, and at the time felt to be applicable to us. The ant is set before us as an example of one who prepares for the winter. Now we find that God provides us with provisions for some dreary time that is coming; but instead of being like the ant, when the winter comes, want comes on us "as an armed man." It is not only winter, but we have no food, and all because we have merely enjoyed ourselves during the summer. Nothing reveals this (even to ourselves, if we at all judge ourselves) so much as the great difference between us in summer and in winter. In summer we seem to enjoy everything; we could almost imitate the lark; but when winter comes, the frost and pitiless blast supervene. All the supposed spiritual joy of the summer's day is gone, and we talk and think only of the inclemency of the air which surrounds us. This painful discrepancy, or exposure of our want, would not occur if we really had stored provisions suited for the exigencies to which we are exposed. The apostle could say he had *learned*, in whatsoever state he was therewith to be content. He knew how to be abased and how to abound. (Phil. iv. 11-12.)

I believe the soul ought to say when it takes in any truth, "Well, some day I shall want it, let me now see how it fits me, and whether I have it from God"—in a word, whether I have made it as much my own as any other acquisition of which I have real possession.

Receiving and not pondering, only leaves the soul in the end more barren, simply for the reason that you lose your appreciation of anything if you find that it only charmed you, but had no place of abiding use or benefit to you. A clean animal must be also a *ruminating* one! Good feeding will not do; the other must follow. Meditate, and find the true applicability of all you hear or learn to yourself, and what you really learn (certainly in divine things) you never forget.

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"Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all." (1 Tim. iv. 15.)

## SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

H.—How can Heb. ii. 17, be reconciled with Heb. viii. 4? The latter Scripture seems to imply that ascension seems to have been a necessary preliminary to the Lord's entering upon the office of High Priest; yet the former speaks of His making reconciliation for the sins of the people.

What is meant by *reconciling sins*?

Is not John xvii. in character the High Priest's prayer?

A.—To me a very blessed aspect of the Epistle to the Hebrews is, that it is the complement, in a certain sense, of that to the Romans. The latter *sets* the believer "in Christ" before God in divine righteousness, recognizing an unchanged evil nature, a carnal mind; but also a new nature, the spiritual mind (ch. viii. 1—11). The former shows us the divine provision of grace to *maintain* us there by the priesthood of Christ. This is alluded to in Romans v. 10; reconciled by His death, we shall be saved by His life, *i.e.*, His priestly intercession on high. So in chap. viii. 34, "Who also maketh intercession for us." Then in Heb. vii. 26, we read (as putting both thoughts together), "He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

But all this supposes Him to stand in the capacity of High Priest, between a reconciled people and God; and to this Heb. viii. 4 refers. He exercised no true priestly service then, until He ascended to glory.

But still there was something which He did as a priest before He went on high. Just as the High Priest on the great day of atonement of old was making good the claims of God, and putting the sins of the people on the head of the scape-goat, while after all he was not in his normal place as between a reconciled people and God, so the Lord Jesus, ere He entered on the normal exercise of His priesthood, as a priest He did the work of the cross; both actively as offering Himself, and passively as the victim offered, in making atonement for the sins of the people. This is what is referred to in Heb. ii. 17, where the word is incorrectly translated "reconciliation." There is no meaning in reconciling sins; there would be in reconciling people. It should be "to make propitiation (ἱλάσκεσθαι) for the sins of the people."

John xvii. is wrongly taken as an intercessional or priestly prayer. Now, the Lord is there as Son, not priest or advo-

cate, and He is occupied in putting His disciples into His own place on earth before the Father and before the world, with an allusion in the end to their place in the Father's house by and by. He looks to the Father to keep them where He had kept them while with them.

Priesthood is for mercy and grace for help in time of need, to a feeble people who have to cry to God, in a place of danger and liability to fall and start aside from Christ.

Q. Why was the Lord Jesus called the "Word?"

A.—He is called the "Word," as the *Person who is the impersonation of the mind of God in the abstract*. Eternal in His being—"In the beginning was the Word;" having a personal existence—"The Word was with God;" His deity expressed in the words "And the Word was God;" His eternal personality in the words, "The same was in the beginning with God." The Word then, was, before all creation, eternal; in nature divine; in person distinct, and in personality eternal: the expression of the whole mind that subsists in God.

W. S.—It is commonly held that the Body of Christ is also the Bride. Can you prove me this from Scripture, &c.?

A.—There is no doubt that the Body of Christ and His Bride are both names used for the Church. At the same time it is to be understood that there is an earthly Bride of the Canticles—the Jewish remnant of the last days. In Eph. v., while Paul is exhorting husband and wives, his mind cannot pass on without thinking of Christ and the Church. He quotes the passage (Gen. ii. 23, 24) referring to Adam in Paradise, and Eve taken out of the man—bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh—while he slept, and then the statement, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh," used in Ephesians v. to convey the union of Christ—the second Adam—and the Church; the Eve, so to speak, for the Paradise of God. "We are members of his body; we are of his flesh and of his bones."

There is no allusion in Rom. vii. as to union with Christ, or to the Church at all. It refers to the law and a risen Christ, and the impossibility of having rightly to do with both together, as for a woman rightly to have two husbands. The word "married" is not in the original at all (Rom. vii. 4).

In 2 Cor. xi. 2, the Church is espoused to one husband, that she may be presented as a chaste virgin unto Christ.

In Rev. xxi. 9-27, xxii. 1-5, the Church is distinctly named the "Bride, the Lamb's wife." Babylon, the whore, said she sat as a queen, and was also described under the figure of a city, or polity; so is the Bride. She is looked at here as a polity or centre of administration of the kingdom in heavenly glory. It is not the Father's house, but the displayed glory, in the light of which the saved nations walk (v. 24).

In Rev. xxii. 17, "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come." The Spirit dwelling in the Church produces bridal affections in her, and she invites Christ while He is absent, as the Morning Star (v. 16).

There is an earthly Bride, of which the Song of Songs speaks—the elect remnant of the Jews.

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## FRAGMENTS.

You will never find in Jesus, an ear which has grown heavy, an arm shortened, or a heart that has grown cold toward us; much as we have had to learn our own hearts.

If I cannot trust God to make me happy by doing His will, I will try and make myself happy by doing my own.

If you take the world, you must take the enmity against God along with it; for the friendship of the world is enmity against Him. Are you going to have this world from Satan, or the other world from Christ?

We need to have perfect confidence in God to dare to obey in this world.

If Christ be the husband's delight, the wife will seek to please him with Christ, and not with the things of the world. With Christ she would comfort him when he came home; otherwise it would be but dragging him down.

## DAVID.

## 1 CHRONICLES XX.

WE have been looking at the mistakes of David, and have found that God dealt more severely with the first than with the second mistake, because the first arose from carelessness about Scripture, the second from a misunderstanding of the mind of God. It is a more serious thing to neglect the written word, than to mistake the dispensation. There was no Scripture forbidding David to build the house; there was Scripture which commanded the Levites to bear the Ark.

We have now arrived at the period of David's greatest mistake, more than a mistake—a grievous sin—the matter of Uriah the Hittite. This is his worst day; but we have not got the details here—not that God hides them, for we have them in the book of 2nd Samuel; but the Spirit is doing another business in this book. From the 21st chapter to the end of the book forms the fourth scene in the life of David. Did you ever observe a ruling desire in the mind of Christ? You will say, It was healing the sick. That is most true; but His prominent characteristic was, Zeal for the house of God. He began with it. “The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.” What we see in Jesus, in the gospel narrative, we find here in David—the servant walking in his Master's steps, or rather giving us a prophetic notice of what his Master would be. We have seen David's zeal for the house; to him the throne was valuable, chiefly, as subservient to the glory of God. We find a regret for the want of this zeal expressed by Paul to Timothy:—“For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state.” Timothy alone exhibited it. Is there not much of this amongst us—want of care for the house of God? But David had this zeal, and, let me say it, it was characteristic of *the servant*. He began his reign with zeal for the house of God, and made it his business to bring back the Ark. He made a mistake, you say. Yes, that he did; but still his mind was to bring back the Ark of God. And when his mistakes were rectified, it became the business of his life to prepare for a house for God. How little of such a mind have we! Ah! we enclose *ourselves* with walls, mark well their bulwarks, and tell the towers thereof, but where is that natural care for God's house of



which Paul speaks to Timothy. Timothy naturally cared for these things. David made the care of God's house his business; he was a servant, and his business was to see that his Master was glorified.

Here (chapter xxi.) we find Satan at his old work again, which he began in Eden instilling pride into Eve, and now he stirs up David to number Israel. This was God's prerogative; numbering is a sign of possession; a man numbers his cattle. David's numbering Israel was a mark of appropriating them to himself. This was God's inheritance, and He alone should number Israel. God numbers the stars; He telleth them all by their names. Even Joab disliked the thing, but his judgment was over-ruled, and he went forth to number Israel. Now, you find the Lord can keep His distance from David. (Verse 7.) Do you know what it is to have God to keep at a distance from you? There is such a thing as God retiring from communion with His people. He can have no communion with the flesh. If therefore, we walk in the flesh we have not communion with Him; the moment we touch the flesh, we are out of communion with God. Of course *I do not speak of salvation*, I speak of communion, and there is none between light and darkness. David discovers his sin, and confesses it, and God *sends Gad* to reply. This reminds me of the addresses to the Seven Churches, in Revelation, being sent *by an angel to John*, and so to the churches. Was the Gospel preached to Paul by an angel? No, indeed. But as God was retiring from the corrupted churches, He sent His messages by an angel. Have you ever had a message from an angel? Has God ever been constrained to send you a message in a round-about way. Ah! but is it not blessed to have the word direct from God—to retire to the closet, and there listen to His own voice? Here God sends His message, and He does not, as is usual, call David His servant. He gives him his choice of three things as punishment. Observe how beautifully the renewed mind speaks in David. It was not against his neighbour he had sinned, it was against God, and yet he would rather commit his cause to the God he had offended, than to man whom he had not injured. It is a great thing to be able to trust God in the day of rebukes and chastening!

We have another instance of the same thing in Ziklag. The destruction of Ziklag was the fruit of David's sin. David

gazed at it in flames, and turned round to encourage himself in God. Jacob is another instance. While the angel wrestled with him, his faith revived. If we knew the Scriptures, we could never be in a perplexity. We should meet plenty to sadden, nothing to perplex, if the Word of God dwelt in us richly in all wisdom. God sent His own sword in the angel's hand. (Verse 15.) The beginning of all blessing is in the heart of God. God's bosom is the *birth-place and the dwelling-place of grace*. If you do not trace blessing to that source, you are not high enough; if you trace evil there, you have not soared too high. "Every good and perfect gift cometh down from above;" but "let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God." God looked on the destroying angel, and said, "It is enough, stay now thy hand." David looked on him, and instead of seeing him still advancing in the work of destruction, he sees him pause, sword in hand, the sword extended over Jerusalem. David and the elders were clothed in sackcloth, and David said unto God, "Is it not I?" Yes, this is ever the language of the repentant soul. "It was all my own doing." Like the Syrophenecian woman, let the Lord say what He will of her, she answers, "Truth, Lord." I do not say to thee, Lord, that I am not a dog, but *this* I tell thee, Lord, the dogs sometimes eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table! This is the language of the repentant soul. Yet, God is at a great distance; He interposes with the angel and God, between Himself and David. It must be so. The moment you are in the flesh, the Lord removes to a distance. What communion hath light with darkness? You have done with God in the Spirit when you are living in the flesh. It does not touch your salvation, but it does touch communion.

What a picture it is! The king and the princes in sackcloth, and the angel with the drawn sword hovering above (verse 18). Then the angel commissioned Gad to say to David to go to Ornan's threshing-floor, and set up an altar; and of course David was glad to obey. Ornan bows down before him and offers to give him the threshing-floor and everything about it freely. "No," says David, "I will buy it at its full price. I will not take that which is thine for the Lord, nor offer burnt-offerings without cost." We all know what a moment of softness is, a moment when the heart is more impressible than at ordinary times, more

capable of good impressions. There are times of public calamity, that make men gracious. "How gracious thou art when pangs come upon thee!" I have seen people *kneel* in the street in a violent storm. This is natural. It is neither to be condemned, nor trusted. It may all pass away. How sensitive people were during the cholera! No one knew when his own turn might come. And was not the plague in the land? Might not Ornan be the next victim? At such a moment, of what value was his property? Ah! did we realize the truth that this world is the city of destruction, what a light hold we should take of things here! Could we be so careful, and bargain so jealously, did we remember that? Ornan may however, have truly desired to give all, but David will pay for all. He erects an altar and calls on God, and God answers him by fire from heaven. *And then* God desires the angel to sheath the sword. Not till then, though the desire originated in His own bosom. Do you believe that the altar which God had appointed has had the power to sheath the sword of the angel? In the Gospel the news is brought us that Christ has answered the sword of judgment; but the victim, the blood, and the altar were all appointed for us before the foundation of the world! So God loved the world!

David now finds God looking at the altar, and no longer at the sin. So He does for us. He looks at Christ and not at us, or rather He looks first at Christ, and then at us. And faith follows and puts the blood before the eye of God! Now we find David absolutely afraid to *stir one step* from the altar. The tabernacle and the altar were at Gibeon, but David says, "This is the house of the Lord God." (Chap xxii. 1.) *Here* God had answered him; *here* he would abide. Beautiful picture of the soul *clinging to Christ*! The altar had satisfied the throne. David knew it and was satisfied, and this was as it should be. The *conscience* of the sinner must be obedient. You say, my hand and foot must be obedient. Surely, but must not my conscience also? God has provided a rest for my conscience, and it is my duty to accept it. David did so, and would not stir from the altar. He exults in it. "*This* is the house of God." And where is the house of God found? Where the salvation of God is celebrated in the Lord's Supper. This is the Gospel in the house of God, the remembrance of His death on the resurrection day. *Salvation* is the ground of worship,

as the Lord said to the woman of Samaria, "Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship; for *salvation* is of the Jews." That is the true ground of worship. Nor can I worship in the house of God, till I know what the salvation of God is. The house is to be built where mercy rejoiced over judgment. This is all David needs, and the remainder of his life is spent in preparing for the house. He did not put one stone upon another; he was content to be nothing. In its way it was almost finer than Paul's service to see the zeal of God's house eating him up; and so his story ends, he lays up more than the house required of his own proper bounty. This is like Jesus. He was the Servant while here. He will return as the Son. He was the eternal Son of the bosom; the Son as conceived of the Virgin, and declared to be the Son of God, with power, by the resurrection; but as regards *man*, He was the Servant. When He comes again, it will be as Son and Heir to inherit all things. "Lord, remember David and all his afflictions; how he swore unto the Lord and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob; surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, nor slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob."

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## OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

### CHAPTER I.

CREATION—which seems a simple thing, but is not, and is only apprehended by faith; it is the first element of faith spoken of in Heb. xi. Then the formation of the earth, where God put the responsible man, the centre and lord of it; and in which all the moral principles of man's relationships with God are to be developed.

### CHAPTER II.

The responsible man in the relationship in which God has set him, to Himself; the world; the creatures; to his wife—Eve; in whom the Church is typified. At the beginning of it, the rest of God, into which man never entered.

### CHAPTER III.

Man's responsibility tried by temptation, and his total failure. The judgment on Satan, and the promise of and to the seed of the woman; but the first man driven out from the presence of God.

## CHAPTER IV.

Adam becomes the head of a fallen race, though Eve hopes to get the promise through the flesh. Man completes sin by killing his brother, and the "world" set up without God. God gives an appointed seed in lieu of the slayer and the slain.

## CHAPTER V.

The genealogy of the race of Seth—the Lord being called upon; and in the midst of it one is seen walking with God, and translated to heaven.

## CHAPTERS VI.—IX.

The total corruption and wickedness of man, and the Flood closing the history of the first world. Noah is preserved through it, and the animals. He founds the relationships of the new world by sacrifice, but fails entirely himself as governor. Gives in prophecy the history of the world in his three sons: his own history closes.

## CHAPTERS X., XI.

The settling out of the world in nations and families, in these three sons, and that happening by the judgment of God on their setting up themselves, independently of Him, to make themselves a name—Babel.

Abraham brought in through Shem's genealogy as a "peg to hang it on." An elect one called out, and the promises given to him, to be the head of God's race upon the earth.

## CHAPTER XII.

He, having followed the call of God eventually, is in the place of promise, a stranger, and a worshipper. But through pressure of circumstances he gets out of it, and into the power of the world, denies his wife, and has no worship.

## CHAPTER XIII.

His entire abnegation as to the world, and the full revelation to him of the sphere of promise.

## CHAPTER XIV.

His victory over the world, and the revelation of Melchisedec as Priest, and millennial blessing brought in, after his conquering the kings, and God, possessor of heaven and earth. This closes that part of the history.

## CHAPTER XV.

The promise of the seed, with the covenant founded on death, and of the land. Righteousness connected with faith; this, as the seed has come in in any sense.

CHAPTER XVI.

The attempt to get the promised seed by the efforts of the flesh.

CHAPTER XVII.

The seed according to promise. God reveals Himself to Abraham by His dispensational name, and gives him the promise of the seed with the seal of circumcision on it. Abraham to be the father of many nations, and the heir of the world.

CHAPTERS XVIII., XIX.

God visits Abraham, and confirms the promise as an immediate thing. Abraham on high in communion with God, and the world judged below in connection with Lot in Sodom, and the righteous one saved out of it. "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2 Pet. ii. 9). [We had Enoch, the heavenly man, and Noah, the earthly remnant. Now we have had Abraham, the heavenly, and Lot the earthly.]

CHAPTER XX.

Abraham failing in respect of faith, as to those who were externally within the place of promise—Abimelech and the Philistines—is delivered, and as prophet intercedes for them. (The Church could not go on with these mixtures.) Then having denied his wife, the rebuke is put upon Sarah—the Church; or Israel, as the vessel of promise, as the case may be. The world knows very well what the Church ought to be for Christ, and how to reprove her.

CHAPTER XXI.

The son of promise is born, and the law cast out (Gal. iii., iv.)—Hagar and Ishmael. And, further, Abimelech and those Philistines who were in the place of promise—the son being born—become subservient to Abraham, who figuratively takes possession of the place of promise, planting a grove, and worships. He was only in a tent before.

CHAPTER XXII.

Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac upon Mount Moriah; thereupon the promise is confirmed, not to Abraham but to the *seed* as before given in ch. xii. This leads to another principle; he had given up the promises according to life here; he gets them in resurrection, on the ground of the complete sacrifice offered to God.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

As the heir died, so the old vessel of promise (Sarah) dies ; thus Israel is set aside.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

Abraham sends down Eliezer (who represents the Holy Ghost) to get a wife for the risen Isaac, who is in no condition to go back to his old country, all things being given to him as son and heir. The bride is taken out of the old land, gifts conferred upon her; she is brought to Isaac, and into the place of the vessel of promise—Sarah's tent. The Jew had been the vessel of promise, the Church now is. This closes Isaac's history, as the risen one.

## CHAPTER XXV.

We have now done with the first great principles of faith and the risen one—Isaac, and we come down to the earth and the heir of the earthly promises—Jacob, the Jew, who goes down and gets a wife *there*. Jacob, who values the promises that Esau despised who had the title to them, comes in by grace and election without title (Rom. ix). In point of fact it came by the profanity of Esau, but the means of getting it were evil ; still God secures the result. We find the immense principle that we have only to take care that the means employed are right in possessing ourselves of all that God has promised. God might have made Isaac cross his hands in the blessing, or the like, to secure the promises to Jacob.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

The renewal of the promises to Isaac : he is forbidden to go down into Egypt—the world ; he is to have nothing to do with it in his Isaac position. Follows his father's example in denying his wife ; but Abraham did it in the place of promise, Isaac on lower ground (decay in the place of promise). He has "contention" and "hatred" in the place of the world ; but when he gives up the wells, and gets into his own limits—Beersheba—then he is owned by those who were there.

## CHAPTERS XXVII.—XXXI.

Esau and Jacob. Jacob gets the blessing as he had got the birthright, by deceit. He goes *down* to what represents the world to get his wife. Not as Isaac, who got a wife sent *up*. He looks for blessings and earthly promises, and vows tithes to God if God will take care of him. However, God does so. This is very low ground, but still there is faith. He uses duplicity towards man, and he is cheated himself—"paid in his own coin," so to speak.

He gets Leah instead of Rachel. He has got the Gentiles looked at as on earth; still the Jews are loved—Rachel. He represents the Lord in His *ways*, not in his *conduct*: he loves Rachel. The Gentile, Leah, never loved like the Jews upon earth; but God blesses Leah.

God brings back Israel with his children, after having been a slave for twenty-one years, to his land.

The instruction we get is this: the Lord takes care of the believer, but he is cheated and worried and slaved, and reaps in discipline the fruit of his own ways. We mark a wretched state of faith in him: there was faith, but his was a dismal, earthly history. Attempting to get his object in a carnal way, and he is chastened all through.

#### CHAPTERS XXXII.—XXXIV.

Esau comes, and again we find lies. God sends a host of angels and he sees His hand, but nothing raises his faith, and we see the utter weakness of fleshly ways, and the spirit in which he walks—low and earthly. The Lord will not allow Esau to touch him, but takes him in hand Himself, and wrestles with him at Jabbok when he had sent all over. He will not reveal Himself, but makes him halt for life, giving him faith to overcome. You get a great deal more experience in one that walks badly than in a person that walks well. The man that walks with God has very little experience, but all he has is with God. “Enoch walked with God, and was not, for God took him”—that is all about *him*. Abraham has no wrestling, but is up on high interceding calmly with God for others, in communion; Jacob is below interceding for himself, and God wrestling with him, not he with God, who gives him power for the conflict but will not reveal Himself. Jacob had asked Him, but He would not tell him His name.

Then he makes another blunder. He buys land (not a sepulchre like Abraham), settles in the place, and builds an altar there, calling it El-elohe-Israel. He *was* this, but no revelation. Marriage proposed with his family there.

#### CHAPTER XXXV.

Now God says, Go up to Bethel—there He would appear to him. The moment he is to go and meet God he *thinks* of the idols that he knew all quite well about before. There is no putting away of idols until we get into God's presence; *then* they are put away. The first thing God now does,



when the idols are buried is to tell His name, which He did not at Penuel. The intercourse is short: no intercession for others; not the same bright blessing as with Abraham, but intercourse—talking with him. God goes up from him at this place.

This has brought us back to Rachel—Israel's history in fact. She dies. She had had Joseph; now she has Benjamin. She calls him Ben-oni—the son of my sorrow; Jacob calls him Benjamin—the son of my right hand. This points to Christ at God's right hand, who was the son of affliction also.

#### CHAPTER XXXVI.

The world set up in power before God's people are—Esau, with Kings and Dukes. This closes the history of Jacob.

#### CHAPTERS XXXVII.—XLVIII.

Now the history of Joseph begins, with his dreams, and so on. He is despised, but he has the *wisdom* of God, as soon after the *power* of God. Rejected by his brethren and sold to the Gentiles, he shows himself all through as the godly one in patience and lowliness. Then he passes to the right hand of power, and receives back his repentant brethren in that character, and puts them in the best of the world—Goshen.

[In the midst of this history Judah is going on in wickedness (xxxviii.) Yet it is the Lord's genealogy.]

Jacob could bless Pharaoh: the less is blessed of the better. He looks still to the land; asks to be buried there. Joseph gets the birthright. Jacob crosses his hands and puts things in their place. (No one type runs into another.) Joseph thus steps into the place of the first-born; it is said so in terms, in Chronicles. The birthright was his, and he gets the double portion.

#### CHAPTER XLIX.

Then you have the blessing of the tribes of Israel in a general view, prophetically, of their history. Reuben, Israel's first-born, fails; Simeon and Levi, corruption and violence; failure of those who seek to maintain their rights by nature's force; Judah, strength and power, but all goes on till failure is complete; then all is judgment till you come to Dan, in which you get the power of evil—apostacy—the serpent. (The Jews have a tradition that Antichrist will come of this tribe.) When Israel joins with the world you get the serpent. Then there is turning to the Lord for salvation, and all is

changed. "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord." Faith waits until God interferes. Gad—he is overcome, but overcomes at the last. Asher, blessings flow; and Naphtali goodly, words. Joseph, a rejected Christ exalted. Benjamin, the son of God's right hand, in victory over all His enemies.

## CHAPTER L.

Whatever power and magnificence Joseph had, his heart was in Israel, and he gives commands concerning his bones; they were to be carried to Canaan. He has faith as to Israel's hope and portion.

## LIFE'S ANSWER.

BY THE LATE DEAN ALFORD.

I know not if the dark or bright  
Shall be my lot—  
If that wherein my hopes delight  
Be best or not.

It may be mine to drag for years  
Toil's heavy chain,  
Or day and night my meat be tears  
On bed of pain.

Dear faces may surround my hearth  
With smiles and glee,  
Or I may dwell alone, and mirth  
Be strange to me.

My bark is wafted to the strand  
By breath divine,  
And on the helm there rests a hand  
Other than mine.

One who has known in storms to sail  
I have on board;  
Above the raging of the gale  
I hear my Lord.

He holds me when the billows smite—  
I shall not fall;  
If sharp, 'tis short; if long, 'tis light;  
He tempers all.

Safe to the land! safe to the land!  
The end is this;  
And then with Him go hand in hand  
Far into bliss!

## "THE COAT OF MANY COLOURS."

GENESIS XXXVII.

THE history of Joseph was something more than remarkable from its commencement, lighted up as it was with the love wherewith his father Jacob loved him.

It was, as we know, typical of Him that should come after him—and precious prefigurings these were, from first to last.

"The coat of many colours" which his father had made for him tells how the patriarch was guided in his thoughts to a greater than his son; and this might have been a shadow to all that generation (if they could have received it) of the coming One, "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the God-head bodily." The mind of Jacob was as wittingly guided, in thought and deed, about his Joseph, when the coat and its many colours were to represent another, as when, afterwards, Israel crossed his hands on his deathbed, and laid his right for blessing upon the head of Ephraim, the younger; and thus set aside Manasseh, the firstborn "according to the flesh;" for such is the order of God.

So also, when Joseph dreamed, and told out the mystery of *the future* to his brethren, when he and they were binding up their sheaves, and *his* arose and stood upright, and their sheaves made obeisance to him, if they had possessed the faith of Joseph, to fashion their expectations more in the light and truth of things not seen as yet, than of things as they appeared, they would have read their fortunes in his coming glory, as believers in Christ *now* do; but to them he was only "a dreamer."

Moreover, in spirit he dreamed yet again, and exceeded the disclosures of the sheaves in the wheat field; for this time all in heaven, the sun and the moon and the stars became tributary, and made obeisance. But "his brethren only envied him; nevertheless his father observed the saying." These revelations of Joseph's personal greatness and coming glory shot forth their many colours, which fell variously on the eyes of those around; as when Jesus Himself was upon this earth, some saw no beauty in Him that they should desire Him, whilst others said, "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Here we may add, as a consequence of His obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, that the Father hath

highly exalted Him, and given Him "a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess;" and *this* is what Joseph in earlier days dreamed, when all made obeisance to himself.

Beyond his personal and relative glories there lay his service and interest for his brethren and his father; so that, when Jacob sent him to see how they and the flocks did, they seized upon him and shut him up in the pit, and finally sold him for twenty pieces of silver to the Ishmaelites. As for the coat of many colours, which none but *he* wore, they took it off him, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood, and sent it to their father, who "mourned for his son many days." How unmistakably does all this tell us of Him who was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and for whose vesture they cast lots; yea, of the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot unto God. The bird killed in an earthen vessel, over running water—or the living bird, with cedar wood and scarlet and hyssop, dipped in the blood of the one which had been killed—or Joseph's coat of many colours, dipped in the blood of the kid, and then sent to his father—what are all these to *us* but shadows of one and the same thing, the body of which is Christ?

Not to pursue this striking analogy further between Joseph and the Lord—who was cut off out of the land of the living, and who in the days of His flesh was taken from prison and from judgment—we may notice how, by resurrection out of the pit, as well as by deliverance from Egypt's dungeon, and as the revealer of all Pharaoh's secrets (chap. xli.) he was publicly owned as "the man in whom the Spirit of God is." And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, "Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art; thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled; only in the throne will I be greater than thou."

But we may leave Joseph at this point, and pass by his installation into office and government, and his might, and the times that went over him, as the Saviour in Egypt, to consider him in the light of prophecy, when Jacob called unto his sons, and gathered them together to tell them what should befall them in the last days. Here again Jacob is wittingly

guided by the Spirit, in chapter xlix., saying, "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall;" and this prophecy is made true to us by Him who took the place of this foreshadowing, and said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." In New Testament fulfilment this fruitful bough and the well are nothing else to us than Christ and the Spirit:—"If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him should receive consequent upon the Son of Man being glorified, or, in typical language, "whose branches run over the wall."

Again the prophetic Spirit said, "The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him; but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob (from thence is the shepherd—the stone of Israel)." These are no longer mysteries to us, who know the sufferings and persecutions He endured from the archers. Though crucified in weakness, He liveth by the power of God, and the triumphant morning of His resurrection from the grave is to us the proof "that his bow abode in strength, and that the arms of his hands were made strong" by the glory of the Father. Blessed it is for us to know that "from thence" (on the other side of the devil's power and the cruelty of the archers, where He now is, as well as of the wrath of God in judgment, as a sacrifice for His brethren) comes forth the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant, and the Stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, "in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." Consequent on this work of redemption, accomplished by the death of Him who "was grieved and sorely wounded," but whose arms were made strong in resurrection, follow the sure mercies to Israel in the millennium, as well as the greater blessings in the heavenlies, to men who are now one *in* Christ.

And here it is important to notice that all blessings are from the God of our Lord Jesus, the Father of Glory, and are witnessed to us by the Holy Ghost, who is the earnest of

them and the seal as regards our acknowledged title. In advance as all this is of Jacob's days, yet he looked in the same direction as to the only unfailing source of life, and so connected them as to prophecy with "the God of thy Father, who shall help thee; and the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of the heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts and of the womb." Guided wittingly as to the blessings and the promises, as he had been previously in making the coat of many colours for the person, he was carried out by the Spirit to say, "The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of *my* progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brethren."

We have learnt from this outline of a typical Joseph, that in *figure* his father and the brethren were gathered round him, and the sun, and moon, and stars bound up with his person; moreover, that the secret of these glorious though future associations with Joseph was through his sore grief and wounding by the archers, and his own brethren (as well as by the coat of many colours dipped in blood) when he was put into the horrible pit and sold for twenty pieces of silver. Nor will the many colours be complete if we do not add to this his resurrection out of the pit in order to be *relatively* as great in *another* country as he was *personally* glorious in *his own*. "Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck," and they cried before him, "Bow the knee!" And he was ruler over all the land of Egypt.

Further, we have seen that in the person and work of Joseph, by his typical death, in humiliation and rejection at the hands of his brethren, and in the possession of power and place by exaltation through Pharaoh, all blessings flowed in upon the head of him that was separate from his brethren, "unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills."

Let us now turn from this family picture of Jacob and his sons in Genesis to the "blessing wherewith Moses, the man of God, blessed the children of Israel" centuries after the death of Jacob, in Deut. xxxiii.

It is very necessary to observe that when the Spirit of God takes up a typical man such as Jacob, or his son Joseph,

or Moses, or Aaron, the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ puts some of the honour and lustre of "the coming One," in whom all the pre-eminence and the fulness dwell, upon these figure men. A prism, for instance, when applied to light, which is in itself white or colourless, brings out and reveals the seven beautiful colours which lay concealed and form the magnificent bow which spans the horizon of our sight. So the Holy Ghost, between the Man in glory, and the image man on the earth, shines in the face of Moses, or brings down the garments of glory and beauty with all manner of sparkling stones, for clothing a high priest like Aaron as the representative to the eye of faith of the Son of God passed through the heavens; or like the Joseph, only second to Pharaoh in the throne and kingdom, with whom we are now more particularly concerned.

Passing these considerations, we may remark the difference between Joseph and his father's blessing upon his head; and Joseph in relation to Moses, the man of God, "who was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together." It is in this *corporate* character that Moses views the sons of Israel and Jacob—no longer in their relation to their father merely, but as connected with Israel nationally. "Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency!" This difference explains the contrariety which else exists between the blessings pronounced by Moses and Jacob's intercourse with his sons upon "what should befall them in the last days." For example, in Genesis, Reuben is looked at in his trespass against his father, and this act is the rule before Jacob's mind; whereas Moses says, "Let Reuben live and not die, and let not his men be few." A more striking instance is supplied in the case of Simeon and Levi, for in Genesis they are viewed in reference to their conduct about Dinah, their sister, and the Shechemites; whereas in Deuteronomy they are blessed according to their zeal for Jehovah's glory when outraged by the idolatry of the golden calf.\*

In many respects the blessing of Joseph, whether by Jacob or by Moses, is similar; though the king in Jeshurun adds, "the goodwill of him that dwelt in the bush," as a special deposit between Jehovah and Moses, for Israel and its tribes. But now this is transferred to the head of him that was sepa-

\* Simeon is omitted in the prophetic blessing of the Tribes in Deuteronomy.—ED.

rated from his brethren. The blessings, too, which were given in principle and in power to Joseph, as by a father to a son, are seen in Deuteronomy in *result* to the nation and the millennial earth, to fill the face of the whole world with fruit in a twofold way, for "his glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns," and also "with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth; and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim and they are the thousands of Manasseh."

The gem that sparkles in its own brightness is, however, the one which Moses bequeathed in the line of Joseph to all Israel, "the *goodwill* of him that dwelt in the bush." The knowledge of its value and preciousness led the man of God to declare finally, "There is none like to the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heavens in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms, and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel!"

The faith and hope of God's elect are now of another order, being formed under the revelations of the Holy Ghost, which tell us what the Father hath counselled for the glory of His Son. Under this anointing, we are carried in communion beyond "the goodwill of him that dwelt in the bush," in the days of Moses; or the sun, and the moon, and the stars, when "they made obeisance to Joseph." The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ reserved the fulness of all perfect blessing for the *true* Joseph, and He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto *us* the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure, which He hath purposed in Himself; "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together *in one* all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him." Blessed it is for us to know that in our Joseph "we have obtained an inheritance, . . . that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ."

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

J. E. B.



## “BETWEEN THE TWO EVENINGS.”

EXODUS xii. 6—MARGIN.

MATT. xxvi. 17—xxvii. 61; MARK xvi. 12—xv. 47; LUKE xxii. 7—xxiii. 56;  
JOHN xiii.—xix. 42.

“THE evening and the morning were the first day,” Gen. i. 5, tells us; and this mode of reckoning time prevails throughout the Old Testament, and retains its place in the New also, as the above passages plainly indicate to us. From 12 to 12 our time ranges. The Jewish day was from 6 to 6 of our time, and commenced at 6 p.m.

This prefatory observation is the key to the order of events that took place on the most eventful day that this world ever saw or will see.

It was “the first day of unleavened bread when they killed the Passover,” that Christ our Passover sat down “at even” with His disciples. The day had commenced, and the memorial of Israel’s redemption from Egypt was partaken of by Him who effected that redemption, and was, ere many hours were over, in His own person, to fulfil the act which that redemption had so long and plainly pointed to. It doubtless took some time to prepare the meal, and before it was partaken of (*δείπνον γενομένου*—supper being come—John xiii. 2), we learn from John xiii. that the washing of the disciples’ feet took place, and therefore we are not surprised to find that “*night*” had set in when Judas left the supper room. (Verse 30.)

The blessed instruction of John xiii. 31, xiv. 31, follows, and then. “Arise, let us go hence,” tells us that the supper room is left by all, and on the way the truths of chaps. xv. to xvii. are unfolded. Thus the night wore on, and now the Mount of Olives is reached, and Jesus prays while the sorrowful disciples sleep. “What, could ye not watch with me *one hour*?” (Matt. xxvi. 40) gives us a clue to the duration of the prince of this world’s temptation, though those words were uttered after the Lord’s first return to His disciples; and presently the “*lanterns and torches*” (John xviii. 3) tell us that darkness still prevailed.

He takes the martyr’s place now, presently to exchange it for the victim’s, and, as a lamb to the slaughter, He is led into the high priest’s house. Here He was for some time detained, for “about the space of *one hour*” elapsed between the last two occasions that Peter’s faith was tested (Luke xxii. 59), but at length the crow of the cock that awakened poor

Peter's conscience bears its testimony that *the morning* was approaching. "As soon as it was *day*" (Luke xxii. 66) He was arraigned before the chief priests and elders. Brief indeed was their mock trial, for "when the *morning* was come" (Matt. xxvii. 1) He is brought before Pontius Pilate the governor. With sad rapidity He is tried, sent to Herod, returned, tried again, and condemned to death; for at the "*third hour*" (Mark xv. 25)—nine o'clock of our time—He is nailed to the accursed tree. Till 12 a.m., by our reckoning, He occupies the martyr's place (How blessedly able thus to sympathise with those who are made conformable to His death!), and then becomes the victim. "When the *sixth hour* was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the *ninth hour*." Nature veiled her face in sympathy. God and Jesus must go into the question of sin alone. The doom of the earth was sealed. These things this darkness tells us.

"And at the *ninth hour* Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani," which is, being interpreted, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." All was now over. The cup of wrath was drained to the dregs, and Jesus passed into Paradise, to be with His Father until the moment for His resurrection arrived.

Yet three hours of this eventful day remained for the interment of His body; and "when the *even* was come" (Mark xv. 42), Joseph of Arimathea begged the body from the governor, and laid Him in the sepulchre; and thus these four-and-twenty hours of unequalled importance closed, and the Sabbath-day ensued.

Well may we pause and worship as again and again we trace its eventful history!

D. T. G.

## REMARKS ON THE EPISTLE OF JUDE.

If you get the character of Antichrist in the epistles of John, you get the opposite element in Jude. "They went out from us." It is open apostasy. Denying the Father and the Son is antichristian; denying that Jesus is the Christ (1 John ii. 22) is apostate Judaism. That is not the case with Jude. There I get, not the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, but Christendom—Christians looked at as general profession, and the corruption is in that. It is "crept in" (v. 4), not "went out" (1 John ii. 19). They did not deny the Lord but they turned His grace into lasciviousness (v. 4).

"To convince all that are ungodly *among them*" (v. 15). Even when He executes judgment it is still "among them;" it takes every character of evil up to the very end. Enoch prophesies of *these* who have "crept in." They denied the character of Christianity, without denying Christ; as in Philippians, they were "enemies of the cross of Christ." The judgment is on those who have got in, though of course there will be a judgment on others.

Denying the only Lord (*δεσπότης*) God" (v. 4) is the comparison of a master and a slave in the market whom he has bought, but who will not own him. The earliest evil bears its fruit to the end—it ought to have been purged out—but as to its fruits, they remain to the end. Cain is natural religion; Balaam, ecclesiastical corruption, and Core, opposition to Christ's royalty and priesthood. We have to look not only for open infidelity, but to moral persons moving on amid Christianity and "*gainsaying*."

"Looking for the *mercy*" (v. 21) is striking. You cannot get into an evil that you do not find Christ *for* you in it; you cannot give up your Isaac without getting him in resurrection. If in trial we look to God, we receive fresh revelations. The disciples gave Him up as a living Christ, and they got Him as a glorified Christ. The *mercy* throws the soul on the patient goodness of Christ, and of which goodness, if we are spared the evil, we are the expression. If I feel that I belong to a system that has all gone wrong, I feel myself cast on the *mercy* of God. Do not get out of the place where the sense of divine love can keep you in the sense of divine holiness. (See 1 Thess. iii. 12, 13.) If I walk with God, there must be holiness. Christ Himself is the perfection of good in the midst of evil. Elijah goes to heaven in the midst of apostate Israel. In that case we have an Elisha. This mercy keeps the tone of the heart right. There must be real faithfulness, not pretension; but we must be looking on to the end, when things will be right; but now things are gone so wrong that I want mercy at every step.

One single beautiful word I would add. "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law." Christ has come of a woman and come under law, He has come into a place of ruin where the law has made transgressors. The Pharisees separate themselves (v. 19); they set themselves up.

## THE TEMPLE.

ALTHOUGH the Books of Kings give us the public history of God's government of Israel, in the Chronicles we rather find the history of His ways in grace; all is told out in Kings, while in Chronicles only those sins are mentioned which exalt the God of all grace—yet, when we come to look at the two books in their typical aspect, we shall find that the Books of Kings surpass the Chronicles, in that the former point us to heavenly, the latter to earthly things.

Of this principle the two descriptions of the various buildings erected by King Solomon are a striking illustration. Each have their own peculiar place—each their especial signification.

Let us briefly glance at the description of each, and at their typical bearing.

There can be no question as to whom King Solomon points when we read in Zechariah vi. 12, 13, "Behold the man whose name is The Branch; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord: even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne." It is *Christ*, the son of David. Joined with Him do we find King Hiram, and he likewise (how common are these double figures in Scripture!) points us to the One that "shall rise to reign over the Gentiles," and in whom "shall the Gentiles hope" (Rom. xv. 12). As head of Jew and Gentile, Jesus builds the temple of the Lord.

Cedar trees, fir trees, great stones, costly stones and hewed stones, were the materials needed for the work. *Jehovah* is the first thought of these united kings, and "the house of the Lord," therefore, is their first design. Compact, and in unison as to its proportions, adorned with porch and windows "of narrow lights," it is surrounded by chambers, the structure of which does not encroach upon the proportions of the house, seeing that their beams are dependent on "narrowed rests" round about.

This carefulness with regard to *the Lord's* dwelling-place is further brought specially before us when we read that the house "was built of stone, made ready before it was brought thither; so that there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building" (1 Kings vi. 7). How suited this is to the calm and dignified repose of the One who, when "a great and strong wind rent

the mountains and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; . . . and after the wind, an earthquake; . . . and after the earthquake, a fire," was neither in wind, earthquake, nor fire, but in the "still small voice" (1 Kings xix. 11, 12). Compare also Rev. viii. 1.

"The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir," says the Song of Songs (chap. i. 17); and well chosen were those trees which represent creation's fairest produce (1 Kings iv. 33), and this earth's fertility (Isaiah lv. 13) to adorn the home of Him to whom earth and creation alike owe their existence. "Carved with knops and open flowers," creation does its best to do Him honour, while the unseen stones tell us of beauty outwardly, and strength within (verse 18).

As in the Tabernacle, so in the Temple, was there the holy of holies, the oracle, where the ark of the covenant should have its place; but, unlike the wilderness habitation, no *veil* is here to shroud the glory of Jehovah, but merely a partition formed of doors of olive tree and chains of gold, with which most precious and lasting material the whole house was also covered. When we learn from Rev. iii. 18 that gold signifies Divine righteousness, in contrast to human wretchedness, the wondrous suitability of this is evident, as well becoming the house of the "righteous Lord," that "loveth righteousness" (Psalm xi. 7). The unvarying accompaniments of the throne, the cherubims, come now into prominence, and their very material, like that of the doors, seems to tell us that the One in whom all the *promises* of God are yea and amen (2 Cor. i. 20) is now enthroned in glory; they are made of *olive* trees (Rom. xi. 17).

But the accomplishment of promises and triumph over the king's enemies ever go together (Luke i. 51-55, 71-74), so we find the "palm trees" too brought in to tell of *victory* (Rev. vii. 9); and what a beautiful combination must it have been when "all the walls of the throne round about" were carved with figures of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers within and without, and the floor was "overlaid with gold," and the doors of olive tree were adorned with "carvings of cherubims and palm trees, and open flowers, and overlaid with gold," and the two folding doors of fir tree were "covered with gold fitted upon the carved work" (verse 29-31). How sweetly does it remind us that righteousness and promise, victory and creation's blessings, can now be blended together in perfect harmony.

Seven years was the house in building. Perfection in spiritual things gives a period to the formation of the house. How could it be otherwise with the work of such a Workman?

But though first in order, and rightly so, was *the House of the Lord* built, there is yet another structure that occupies King Solomon; and though there may not have been the same energy in exercise as when the house of the Lord was in course of construction, yet in due time *his own* house was completed.

Next in order comes *the house of the forest of Lebanon*, with its porch of judgment, its pillars and its windows, denoting, doubtless, government characterized by firmness and perspicuity—ever the features of the throne of God. (Rev. iv. 6, 7.)

And, lastly, private affections have their place as well as public government; and Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had taken to wife (a bride culled from the world, for Egypt is ever a type of this world's glory), is not forgotten, and a house is erected specially for her who is the object of his love.

Durability, and that of the choicest kind, is evidenced in all these structures by "costly stones, according to the measures of hewed stones sawed with saws, within and without, even from the foundation unto the coping. . . . stones of ten cubits, and stones of eight cubits."

And now we pass from the various (beautiful in their variety) structures themselves, to their internal fittings and arrangements.

And first in order come the "two pillars of brass, of eighteen cubits high apiece," with their "two chapiters of molten brass," and "nets of checker work, and wreaths of chain work," and these adorned "with pomegranates," and "lily work." And these were erected in the porch of the temple, or house of the Lord; and when erected, duly entitled, "He will establish," and "In him is strength."

How eloquently do these, standing as they do at the entrance to the dwelling of the "Most High, possessor of heaven and earth," tell of the power and stability of the throne of Him who governs man righteously, yet inseparably from graciousness. And this again consistently with the purity of His nature.

The brass, the pomegranates, and lily work are blended together in perfect unison.

If the pillars bear witness to the power and stability of

the throne, the sea, which comes next in order, testifies to the holiness of Him who sits upon it. And though the oxen with their faces every way, may tell us of the patience that bears with evil throughout the universe (Matt. v. 45), yet "the brim thereof . . . wrought like the brim of a cup, with flowers of *lilies*," and the "bases of *brass*," with their "borders" of *lions*, and oxen, and *cherubims*, and the "*wheels*," and the "ledges . . . graved with cherubims, lions, and *palm trees*," most assuredly remind us of the purity found to perfection in Him—His righteousness, that demands it from those who approach Him—His power in dealing with those who disregard it—His government in favour of the righteous, and against the wicked—the rapidity with which he carries out his purposes, and the victory that must follow when He has taken in hand the case. The lavers, the shovels and the basons, conclude the work of this widow's son of Naphtali, whose father was a man of Tyre, a simple figure of Jew and Gentile.

But of what inferior order was his work to that of Solomon, for it is not without a purpose that the Spirit of God has recorded that *Solomon* built the house of the Lord—His own house—the house of the forest of Lebanon, and even that of Pharaoh's daughter; but to *Hiram* were entrusted the lesser work of pillars, sea, lavers, basons, shovels. Cast of "bright brass" they might be, and without weight, but no one but Solomon must build the house or construct the vessels of *gold* that remain yet to be spoken of. For the house of *the Lord* were they, and of material suited to His glory. The altar, the table for the shewbread, the candlesticks, with their suited flowers, lamps and tongs, the bowls, the snuffers, the basons, the spoons, the censers, even to the hinges for the doors, were all to be of *gold*, and all to be the work of *Solomon*. How careful of His glory is the God who has thus recorded with minutest accuracy the material and structure of every thing that He has ordained to surround Himself, from the house to the hinges of the doors!

Let us now turn to the Book of 2 Chronicles, chap. ii. At once the difference strikes one. "*Solomon* determined to build an house for the name of the Lord, and an house *for his kingdom*." It is not so much the person of the dweller that is here before us as the dominions of the King—the earthly kingdom rather than the heavenly home. And this difference is manifest throughout. In Kings no *site* is named;

in Chronicles, the Mount Moriah at Jerusalem is specially designated as the place of the Lord's selection.

And yet King Solomon takes an interest in it, and builds it, seeing it is for Jehovah, sweetly reminding us of Christ's attention to His Father's interests, whether heavenly or earthly. It has its glory too, "garnished with precious stones for beauty, and the gold was gold of Parvaim" (chap. iii. 6); but yet "the vail" is there (verse 14), telling of distance and imperfect access to the throne. The altar, too, of brass (chap. iv. 1), the lavers wherein to wash the offerings, the sea for the priests to wash in (verse 6), remind us that we are not by any means on the same exalted ground we have already gone over from the Book of Kings; for whatever the privileges of the earthly subjects of the millennial throne of the Son of Man, they can in no way be compared to the higher order of privilege accorded to the heavenly saints.

I must leave the reader to draw his own conclusions from the comparison of these two accounts, merely adding a word as to the typical import of the various buildings as other Scriptures would seem to unfold them to us. As we have observed, in Kings we have rather the public government of Israel; in Chronicles, God's ways in grace; but in the former, types of heavenly things; in the latter, types of earthly ones. This, by attentive study, can be easily ascertained.

May we not then expect in the one the heavenly glory of the Father and the Son to be set before us; in the latter, the earthly glory of the Son of Man.

The house of the Lord, *with its chambers*, may surely tell us of the Father's house with many mansions (John xiv. 2). There He dwells in the atmosphere of love peculiarly His own. The love of His Son has formed this place for Him, and not only for Him, but for those whom the same love has been pleased to gather around Himself—the companions of His glory, the sharers of His home. He has His own peculiar home, but immediately grouped around Him are the "chambers," the "place" that the Son has gone to prepare for us.

But the Son, as well as the Father, has His own peculiar glory; as "Son over his own house" (Heb. iii. 6), the circle of His interests, the sphere of His attentions. He thinks of us, He cares for us, He meets our every need; and in connection with this peculiar place, this place of special preciousness to us, He builds "His own" house.

But more than this, there is the house of the forest of



Lebanon, with its porch of judgment, reminding us that public sway will be the portion of Him to whom every knee shall yet bow and every tongue confess. From the heavens He must reign till He hath put all things under Him (1 Cor. xv. 25-27). It therefore tells us of the glory of Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

And lastly, this fourfold picture is completed by the house of Pharaoh's daughter, telling us that whatever may be the joys of the Father's home, the sense of the care of Him who rules over His own house, the grandeur of the time when saints will follow in the train of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the Bridegroom still will not permit the Bride to forget His precious love, that love that proved its fullest measure when He *gave Himself* that He might sanctify, having cleansed her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish. Truly this is love, "strong as death," that "many waters cannot quench."

It remains but to notice the scene of His *earthly* rule, the house of His kingdom. Jerusalem will yet be the throne of the Lord. Represented there, no doubt, He will be by the Prince of the house of David, but the earthly Jerusalem will be the scene of His government as the heavenly one will be that of His grace and glory.

How happy to have one's portion *there* !

D. T. G.

## A CHRISTIAN'S CONFORMITY TO CHRIST.

IN the first place, it is a great point to get what is *positively comely* for the Christian. This is of all-importance. We take habits, customs, associations and the like from this world. We shall find in Scripture that to be conformed to this world is absolutely forbidden. Even in detail we are not to be conformed to this world—not merely to be outwardly unlike it, which is of no avail of course, but it is a positive commandment.

There is another thing. A Christian has a positive *study*—*Christ*. A Christian's own mind is nothing ; one is apt to get into the current and go with it. Everything in the world is made by the world and for the world. We are apt to get coloured by it. Whereas the Christian that takes

Christ—pleasing Christ, as the one thing, gets everything in the common practice of life so done as to suit Him—he has the Word of God to direct him. A man cannot desire to be rich, according to the Word of God; you get a solemn warning against it—a Lot and a Demas. You cannot as a Christian follow dress; it is not comely. The Word of God condescends to think of the braiding of the hair, the wearing of gold, and the putting on of apparel—the *smallest* things in the world.

The most valuable precept for one who is in earnest is the doing everything in the name of the Lord Jesus. It is a common principle, “Do *all* in the name of the Lord Jesus.” “He that *hath* my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.” It is *not*—He that loveth me keepeth my commandments. One who has the commandments becomes acquainted with what God likes. A child really attached to his parents will *have* the commandments. His thought and attention to the parent will make the child attentive to what the parent likes. People like the world because they are not thinking of Christ, but thinking of the world. They have not the commandments, because they are not thinking of the Lord Jesus Christ, but thinking of themselves.

A person says—Come and see some sight. Can I go there in the name of the Lord Jesus? Of course I cannot. I must be pleasing Christ. Then I do not go. They say, What is the harm? The harm is that I am forgetting Christ to please myself. A child might say—What harm is there in this or that? and the thing might be no harm in itself, but if it is what my father does not like, the harm is that it would show indifference to pleasing the person with whom I have to do.

There is another thing. When we get upon that ground the difficulty (very real to a heart that is thinking of itself) is *gone, totally gone*. If I speak of a great sacrifice, *why* is it a great sacrifice? Because I loved it so well. A great struggle? That is because of the state of my soul. Supposing it is money or dress, it may be a struggle, but *why*? Because I love decking myself out. The thing is as simple as possible. Where *Christ* really takes possession of the soul, the difficulty is gone. My *heart* cares for the thing. The *conscience* says, You ought to do this or that, but the heart does not chime in. The word has reached the

conscience, but it has not reached the *heart*. I believe it is of importance there should be the manifestation of the life of Jesus in our bodies. You will see how it is treated as easy.

Look at Heb. xii. I am running a race. That is a *weight* in your race; lay it aside, a comfortable way of getting rid of everything there could be to hinder. Suppose my whole heart is set upon the race, and I am running with a cloak on that I have cared a good deal for: I *like* the cloak, but it is a great, heavy one. If I am thinking of the race I do not trouble myself about the hindering cloak; to throw it off is an easy way of getting rid of it. If I love my cloak I lose the race. "I lay aside every *weight*." It is the simplest thing in the world, "and the sin that doth so easily beset us," entanglement of the feet. The question is, whether the heart is really in the race. Now turn to Phil. iii., where the heart is earnestly, positively, and devotedly in the race. There is an active energy and divine grace in us that seeks to be like Him. "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." There is no great sacrifice in giving up dross and dung. If the flesh is not kept down, there is conflict; but supposing that to be the case, there is no great sacrifice about it. The real power is just that, only there must be purpose of heart in the race, that I may seek to "win Christ."

"When he shall appear, we shall be like him." It is faith and hope that make us run always, even in this life. You hope for a crop—you sow. It is always the thing hoped for that characterises the man. He has hoped for power—he is ambitious. The thing he has hoped for characterises him, if he is a consistent, energetic man. If I am hoping to be like Christ, I shall get the character of being *as like Christ as I can by the way*. The rest is a *weight*, and the moment it gets the character of *weight*, it is the simplest thing possible to have done with it. The flesh has to be overcome because it likes these things.

You will see the double principle in 2 Cor. iv., where the apostle speaks of that. It is lovely to see how the Lord guides in it. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts . . . (but) we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." *Dependence* is brought in—another important point. "Troubled on every side"—the vessel—"yet not distressed," because God is there. "Per-

plexed"—there is the poor vessel—"but not in despair." "Persecuted"—the vessel—"but not forsaken," for God is there. "Cast down"—that is the vessel, "but not destroyed."

Then you get "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." I get the *constant mind* of the apostle—that is, that while he reckoned his flesh dead as to his place before God, still he had as regards his path, always to hold it dead. Here we get faithfulness in it, "*always* bearing about in the body;" the dying of the Lord Jesus was applied practically to the flesh, and it was never allowed to stir. I must hold it dead if I am going through this world. Not only *holding* himself dead, but "*delivered* unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." There I get the spirit in which he walked, and God was dealing in constant unceasing grace.

If we are really in earnest seeking to glorify Christ, death works *in* us. It *has* worked *for* us, and the effect of death working *in* us is that nothing but the life of Christ works from us towards others.

If Christ is actually the object, everything else is but dross and an entanglement. I have nothing to do but throw it off. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified to me and I unto the world."

Well, I quite understand the flesh claims to have its part in *I*, but then I say—That will not do. If I can say, "It is not *I* but *sin* dwelleth in me," it is all right. Wherever *I* works it is sin, except the *second I*—the new nature. We need not have had the last Adam if the first Adam could have been mended. It is easy to throw off a weight when it is *only* a weight. Not that there is no conflict, but it is easy when Christ is *everything*!

If a Christian is honest, it must be, whatever we do, "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." This will sweep away a lot of things, and so much the better!

## 1 JOHN IV.

WE have before noticed the three tests or marks of a believer in the previous chapter (verses 7, 10, 24). I must remark a fourth at the commencement of our chapter, before proceeding with my subject. This is, listening to the words of the apostles themselves. After their time it could no longer be a test; but then, what they taught was a test of all else. Whoever does not give heed to them, and bow to the Word of God by them, is not of God. "He that is not of God heareth not us." "*Us*" is very distinct and definite. The Church never teaches—it is taught. The apostles assembled the Church and taught much people. (See Acts xi. 26.) To whom soever God has given gifts, they teach, but an assembly never teaches; it has to confess the truth. Teaching belongs to those whom God has made teachers. Another thing to be remembered is, that revelation is not inspiration, though in common parlance the words are often confounded. A revelation is a positive, definite thing, learnt of God. He has revealed something that men's thoughts do not know. God's Word is a test of everything else. "He that knoweth God heareth *us*." That which was from the beginning—that which God revealed we know—we know only what it is, and it is a test of all else that can be. But the question is, to whom was the Word written? To those in office? No; to all the people—to all Christians. I find that the Word of God is addressed by the apostles to those who listen, and if you do not hear it, you are not of God. The more you search and find out the place that the Scriptures hold, the more certain you become that they hold this place. If my child disobeys my commands, he disobeys me. In speaking of the Word of God in Hebrews iv. you read, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in *His* sight," &c. There is no difference made between the Word sent, and the living Word, Christ. The Word of God is the expression of His heart and thought; and rejecting it is rejecting Him. It is a great thing, beloved friends, to get things simple. If you reduce revelation to inspiration, it is gone. Revelation commands me, as being of God. Paul expresses it when he says to the Thessalonians, "When ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1 Thess. ii. 13).

There is a remarkable connection between life, and the

love of God dealing with us. We live by the life of Christ. But life alone would often create restlessness of soul. If I did not find testimony enough in myself, I might become uneasy, and doubt whether the life existed in me after all. This is dealt with here; and he takes up the love of God the other way, and casts us over on the fact that this love is in God Himself (v. 7). That is the real connection in which to view all experiences. The evil is when we look at our experiences—though it is better to have them; but we should look out from them at Christ. The effect of having the Spirit of God is, to take me out of my experiences, and bring me to Christ as He is in Himself. Suppose I have such and such an experience that distresses me—well I must go off to Christ: the experience is not wrong, but looking at it, and not out of it at Christ, is wrong. When I do know myself, if I have not something *besides* myself, in a certain sense it is all over with me. You see here, how, while the apostle requires the experiences of life, he leads the soul out of them to another.

If I have love to the brethren (verse 7) I am born of God. I have no such thing in nature. I must have the nature of a being, though I am not necessarily on an equality with that being, to know what he is. I know what it is to be a man, because I am a man. So if a man has the divine nature he knows God. Of course he has much to learn, but in a sense he knows God (*e. g.*, as light and love). Well, how is that shown? One characteristic of it is, love to the brethren. O, but some one says, I am so cold, so imperfect, so wanting in love; I do not know what to think of myself. I get out of myself in verse 9. "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." I must have the divine nature to know and understand God, but He takes us clean out of ourselves, to show us that which is totally outside us, and of that which is not in ourselves at all, but in God. He loved me when I was dead—when there was nothing that I could find in myself. "He sent his only-begotten Son," and I see love in God, it is manifested, and in Himself. Now, my eye can rest in looking out of myself. I could not see it if not in myself too, but He has manifested it in sending His own Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Then He goes on to say that it is not in my heart at all. "Herein is love; not

that we loved God, but that he loved us." It is manifested not only in acts but in nature. Now I have what it really is. It is not in my loving God at all, though it will produce that. It is another thing, for when I was hatred to God He was love to me (verse 10). Then He goes on to the day of judgment. First, it is in God, and then manifested to us when we were sinners. It is not only independent of motive in God, but "God commendeth His *own* (for that is the word) love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." (Rom. v. 8.) There is nothing in me to draw it out but sinfulness and wickedness. In true love you always find a thoughtfulness about the *state* of the object of love. The love that *is* in God is perfect thoughtfulness about me, and this is blessedly brought out here. Why should He send His Son that we might live? I was dead as regards God, though if dead to Him, alive enough in my wicked will. I was *wicked*, and He sends His Son as a *propitiation* (v. 10). I was *dead*, and He sends Him that we might *live* (v. 9). He gives the object of His infinite delight for me when a sinner dead in guilt. That which *saves* nothing when there was no motive, and *stints* nothing, is *perfect divine love*. Now He sees perfectness in the ones for whom He gave His Son. "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel." He did not leave out righteousness. In the work of the Lord Jesus, God was perfectly glorified in righteousness, and on this ground the love of God towards poor sinners can be righteously free. God cannot have sin in heaven; therefore, if He does not put *it* away, He must put *me* away. The source of it all was the supreme and sovereign and self-springing love of God in doing that which was needed for man; and He was perfectly glorified at the Cross, and it goes beyond propitiation, because it puts man in glory.

Mark another thing. Not only are the *sins* gone, but *I* am gone, "that we might live *through Him*." I do not live through Adam now, I live through the Son of God; therefore my place now with God is, if you take up *righteousness* (v. 10), in virtue of the *propitiation*—if you take *life*, it is *life in Christ* (v. 9).

Now I have the perfect certainty of the manifestation of this love. I look to the God who has done it all, and I say, He is love. Supposing that I have a child who says, I love my mother quite enough—well, I say, you do not love her

at all. But supposing a child says the contrary, and mourns over the feebleness of her love, I say that she loves her mother more than the other. True love is, "not that we loved God, but that he loved us." I have learnt God through my sins, and the place where I learn His love is, not in my love to Him, but in His love to me when I did not love Him. It is a love that is infinite in its way of dealing. Sins and self are set aside, so that now the life that I live, "I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." "*Not I*, but Christ liveth in me." Then (v. 14) I have the love manifested, and I *believe* it, (v. 16). The whole principle is brought out in verses 9 and 10. So that now I find, "If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." If God has loved us in such a manner as this, why, we must love our brethren.

"If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." Now here we have the springs and enjoyments of it in a saint. We have seen God's love to a sinner, and by the Holy Ghost, which has "shed abroad" the love of God in our hearts, we learn it in a saint. Why, if I have God dwelling in me, what more can I seek? We have been washed from our sins, and the Holy Ghost can come and dwell in us because we are clean. You will find this still more striking if you look at John i. 18: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." I cannot know a man till I have seen him. The only-begotten Son has declared the Father, and manifested Him to the earth in the sight of men. The one who, as a present thing, is enjoying the absolute perfectness of the Father's love, has seen the Father (v. 12). All is concentrated in Himself, the only begotten. Now, supposing I told you what my father was. Well, I must tell you what he is *to me*, for that is how I know him; and this is precisely what Christ does. It resulted in giving perfect confidence to the vilest of sinners. If you were to ask me to explain it, I could not; just as if you were to ask me to explain the sweetness of honey, I could not—you must *taste* it. Here this blessed One declares what the Father was in His own person. In a certain sense the Comforter is substituted for the person of Christ on the earth: "I will not leave you comfortless." He was *with* them when on earth, but not *in*



them. He had to take man into heaven in His own person, and to send the Holy Ghost down to man on the earth. "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." This is known by the Comforter. And "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts *by the Holy Ghost*." (Compare chap. iii. 24, iv. 13). No saint ought to be satisfied without knowing that he dwells in God; and if he does not know God as the sanctuary of his heart, he is not in a right state. The first thing to know is that He dwells in us: "Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us," and the next thing is to know that we dwell in Him: "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." He comes and dwells in us, and His love is perfected *in us*; it came *to us* as sinners, but now *His* love is perfected *in us* (verse 12). We shall be kept safe against mysticism by the fact that it was *to me* as a sinner, and is still *God's* love, not mine at all. Can I measure what is infinite? No. Then what is the consequence? I never can get out of it. So with God's love.

"And we have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." This is properly preaching the gospel, and what we ought to have, personal knowledge, though not now actually with the eyes. It is absolute grace, but which is known now in the power of it by God dwelling in us. No person is fit to preach the gospel unless he is dwelling in the love he is talking about. Mysticism consists in the love that is in my heart, but the thing that is "shed abroad" is *God's* love. Mysticism falsely thinks it is some state of man's heart.

Now, we ask, what takes away the pretence of not considering this the actual condition of every Christian? "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, *God dwelleth in him*, and he in God." I get astonished, beloved friends, sometimes, that such passages as these have not touched us more! It is not progress, it is not a high state of mystical condition. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God." I delight in that phrase. Supposing I meet a careless Christian, I say to him, How are you treating this great guest? How much have you thought of Him to day? If you had the Queen in your house, would you not consider her? Is that the way you have been treating God? Of course it is by the Holy Ghost

that we have God dwelling in us. Supposing I meet a humble, distrustful soul, I say, Do you not confess that Jesus is the Son of God? Oh, yes. Well, God is dwelling in you; He has made your heart His dwelling-place. Where there is carelessness it touches the conscience, and where there is lowliness it reaches the heart.

(To be continued.)

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## "THE DESIRES OF THINE HEART."

THERE is no desire awakened in us, except there be a nature in us suited to the desire.

Now, often we are conscious of a good spiritual desire, which though encouraged, has never been satisfied, yet we are conscious that it is a spiritual desire, and according to the Word of God. It seems to you strange and perplexing that such desires are not gratified. I think they will be. But I see also that we need to be prepared for the answer to the very desires which we most honestly entertain and express to God.

I believe Peter most truly desired to be with the Lord, and to follow Him (John xiii), and I believe this desire was eventually gratified; but Peter had to pass through deep self-renunciation before he was really prepared to *follow* the Lord; and when at length he attained the consummation of his desire, I have no doubt that he found it an inconceivable compensation for all he had suffered in preparation for it.

True desires are to be appreciated, but one must remember that they cannot be effectuated except by the power of God's Spirit, and thus obviously coeval with the mortification of flesh. The flesh, in some way, now bars the *dénouement* of the desire.

If I desire the joy of the presence of Christ, I shall find that anything which interferes or is inconsistent with His presence, from which I at present derive satisfaction or relief, must be set aside; and if not by my own surrender, by His intervention, fulfilling to me the fruit of the desire which His own Spirit has engendered in me.

If I surrender it of myself, I have, like Peter leaving the ship to go to Jesus (Matt. xiv), all the sense of His power in me—more than an equivalent to me for the step that otherwise would be so trying to nature *walking on the sea to*

*go to Jesus.* I am going to Him; that is the simple desire of my heart. There is a sea between me and Him, but I see Him, and He says, "Come," and I go. What is more blessed or more satisfying to the heart! Then I have nothing but Him, and then I know that He is all to me, even though I may get alarmed and doubtful because of the waves.

But if I do not go, He, in various ways, and by some peculiar process, leads me to the end of myself, and of those things, as the ship, which I may cling to instead of *going to Him on the water*. I cannot tell you how He will do it, but I know that He will surely do it, if the heart be true to Him, even though for years it is going to and fro and not satisfied; at one time mourning on account of its inability to attain to its leading desire, and therefore breathing out beautiful expressions—offspring of the true desire; but again turning aside and going down on its knees to drink water (see Judges vii), to *enjoy* some present mercy, as if that would satisfy a heart awakened to the excellence of Christ.

After this manner I believe Jerusalem was a hindrance to the Apostle. When in the prison in Rome, when he had lost all hope on earth, how simply and entirely his heart finds its place with the Lord!

Whatever is most before my mind is my object. If Christ be the object of my heart, I must set everything and every one aside for Him; if not, He surely will make me feel what it is to put anything else on a par with Him; for if I do, He will let me see how lonely and desolate I shall be without Him.

There is nothing we ought to fear so much as the atmosphere of social family interests; nature is there at home, and there is apparently no violence offered to the spiritual mind; yet it is a Delilah's lap, and no spiritual soul ever yet dropped into its current that did not come out of it sad and barren, and all its sweet words lost. There is no place so hard to die in (morally) as where one is most at home—the nearest circle to the heart; and yet, if you do not die there, all your death elsewhere is, to a certain issue, of little avail.

Some of us are called at times to take a decidedly *solitary* path, and I believe it is the *most blessed* one, but the heart at first greatly shrinks from it.

Beware of social family interests—right in themselves surely—but the Spirit of Christ is leading you to Himself, and you must abandon all, as being entirely secondary to Him, if you would be happy or blessed.

# "AS I HAVE LOVED YOU."

JOHN XV. 9—20.

THE Lord, speaking of their condition when He would have left them, bids them "Love one another, as I have loved you;" a wondrous *manner* of love; and they are called to exercise it. Wisdom is needed with love, so as to make it productive of good in another. This love to them of which He speaks here, is not God's love to a sinner; but Christ's to His disciples while in the midst of them, meeting their weakness.

In the degree in which I am obedient I get the communications of His mind. The great thing here is confidence and intimacy; not theirs in Christ, but His treating them with confidence. He puts full confidence in those whom He has associated with Himself. "I call you friends"—He will not *call* them servants, though they are such; He makes companions, as associated with Him, and He reveals the Father's thoughts to them, bringing them into the intimacy He has with His Father. He tells them everything He had heard of the Father. What a place this was to put them in! For if they were not fit to receive these communications, He was betraying the confidence of His Father.

We have received a divine nature, which makes us capable of enjoying another world. But then Christ is the One who fills that other world; therefore we must know Him, if we would know what that world is.

The disciples were called out of the world, and linked together in service to the glory of the Father. What separates us from the world is, that Christ has chosen us out of it. "Ye are not of the world," &c. A time will come to every soul to test it as to which has the most value for it—Christ or the world. There must be, then, the standing *alone*; not without Christ, but without known helps.

How can the world bear that we who believe should go and say—I am in Christ, and you are lying in that wicked one? Not that I would say it, but it would show them their real place. Now Christ comes to us and says, "I have chosen you *out* of the world."

While in the world I may speak against it as much as I like. Once on Christ's side, the world will be up in arms. The felt presence of the Holy Ghost gives a consciousness of guidance which makes me go on happily and cheerfully. I am led along every step without thinking for myself.

## SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

"G."—Please explain the meaning of 1 Cor. x. 31:—"Do all to the glory of God." How is this to be the primary object of all we do, such as using natural talents and the like?

A.—First of all we should seek to know the direct subject before the mind of the Spirit in any Scripture; for to introduce a thought which is not there only makes it more difficult to understand it. The apostle Paul has specially before him the thought of meats offered to idols, with the conduct becoming those who are Christ's in their practical walk in the world. Whether it were eating or drinking, or whatever we do, all is to be done to God's glory, and not to please ourselves and our selfish ends. We should think of another's conscience, even if our own were free, and all things lawful to us. A weaker one might be stumbled by our liberty; better then, to deny ourselves than injure him for whom Christ died. Especially then, should we observe this care and solicitude for the conscience of another in the things of God. He is best kept himself who thinks most thus of his brother; and he who in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. No offence should be given by abusing our Christian liberty, whether to the Jew or to the Gentile, or to the Church of God; seeking thus the profit of others and not our own.

As to the use of natural talents the principle holds good. We are not our own, but are bought with a price (and what a price!) We should seek to know what is the will of the Lord in their use. We may be able to serve Him by them in working for our bread, or for others, or to help in the Lord's work if the former be unnecessary. And we have to think of His will, not our own. When it becomes a question of doing our own will it is sin.

The Lord may use our natural talents in His service by bestowing spiritual gifts upon us. Natural ability is recognised in the Lord's bestowing spiritual gifts in the parable of the talents, (Matt. xxv). The ability is recognised, then the gift bestowed, and then increase is to be made by trading with the same in His service. But the simple question of every-day life is, whether it is the will of the Lord or my own will, which actuates me in the use even of natural talents and ability; if it be His, it will surely be to "God's glory" in a scene where His glory is trampled under foot, and man's will characterizes the world.

Another writes (from Hastings) as to ministering in every-day life to others, even when such is refused. Let us be assured that the Lord will open a door for service of such nature, as He does for every kind of true service to Him ; when He does not, we cannot force one open. The flesh may refuse our services of love (even as it did Christ's), but divine love is never checked by the ingratitude of its objects, as a spring is not hindered by the channel through which it flows. To *resist* flesh is to *feed* it ; to bow to the will of the Lord in meekness is our path. To recognise flesh in another is but to provoke and call it into action, as recognising it in ourselves is but to give it a place once more. Flesh likes this, for it cannot bear to be reckoned dead and incapable of good, whether in ourselves or in another.

"H."—There is an expression often met with, "The cup of wrath," and Christ drinking it. The thought may be scriptural, but I cannot find it in the Word, &c.

A.—The expression is not cited as a text, but it is the expression of a truth in Scripture. This is a common and every-day thing. Christ made propitiation, and bore the wrath. We say He made atonement for sin, and rightly so ; the word signifies that wrath was there, and should be appeased. The same word is used by Jacob, when he says, "I will appease him by a present" (Gen. xxxii.) Christ did all this just because wrath was there against sin and sinners. He met fully the character of God without *changing* it, and thus opened a righteous channel for His love to flow. It is not said in terms that He bore wrath, lest you should think He was personally under wrath Himself ; but as a propitiation He met it, thank God, as we can say. Wrath against sin and sinners is constantly mentioned in Scripture. "Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke : then a great ransom cannot deliver thee." (Job xxxvi. 18.) "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men," &c. (Rom. i. 18.) "And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." (Eph. ii. 2.) There are many other passages, as a Concordance will show. I have not one by me at present.

This wrath must be met, and Jesus met it. But before He went to the cross, where He did so, He revealed the *Father*, which is always God's name in grace as revealed by the Son. When you think of *God* as such, you think of a holy being ;

when of the *Father* sending the Son, you think of grace. At the cross He met all that the nature of God required, and brought more glory to Him than if there had been no sin, and this, too, as a *Man*. (See John xiii. 31, 32.) There (the cross) you see a Man meeting God in righteousness and judgment against sin, as in life He was showing what God was for man in grace. There you see truth, holiness, righteousness against sin, love to the sinner, majesty, all uniting, yet for the moment the evil seemed to triumph over the good. Thus the cross was the perfect solution of the question of good and evil according to the nature of God Himself; evil completing itself, and good having its perfect triumph; God glorified, and His justice which refused admittance to the sinner, hanging up a vail between him and God, is disarmed, and now only finds her happy task—the vail being rent by the stroke which met her claim—in clothing the sinner in the best robe, whose entrance to God's presence hitherto she denied.

Jesus was the declarer of the Father when here; and all the fulness of the godhead was pleased to dwell in Him bodily. (See Col. i. 19; ii. 9.) I do not believe there will be any other revelation of God—nor could there be. When God has been revealed there can be no more to reveal. “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” We shall see more plainly when flesh and sense are gone, but the object will be the same—Jesus—for ever. Two verses of a well-known hymn, on Rev. v., convey to my mind the thought better than most human words can do—

“All the Father's counsels claiming  
 Equal honours to the Son;  
 All the Son's effulgence beaming,  
 Makes the Father's glory known.  
 By the Spirit all pervading,  
 Hosts unnumber'd round the Lamb;  
 Crown'd with light and joy unfading,  
 Hail Him as the great I AM.”

“The presence of his glory” would refer more to the unveiled glory of God, which we never yet have seen, nor could we with mortal eye. So Gabriel spoke of standing in the presence, or before God; Jesus, too, of the angels beholding the face of His Father; which means that they are mystically represented before Him who thinks in grace of such. To seek to learn some other thought from the passage would be, I fear, but to introduce one.

THE RELIGIONIST, THE SINNER, AND THE  
"MAN IN CHRIST."

LUKE xviii. 9-14; 2 COR. xii. 1-11.

THERE are three states before God described in these passages—that of the Pharisee, of the publican, and of the "man in Christ." The subject before us is not so much what we have done, as what we are—a much deeper thing. There are many who know that their sins are forgiven, who know nothing of settled peace with God. Put into one scale the blood of Christ, and into the other all the sins that a son of Adam could commit, and even the most fearful sinner can hardly doubt which way the beam will turn. But the question of our nature—of what we *are*, is a deeper one than this. Forgiveness of sins, is *not* peace with God. Men will indeed be brought to account for the things that they have done; for "Every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment," and certainly their actions will not be passed over; but the nature that produces these actions is the deepest thing.

A person may know forgiveness of sins; but suppose he should commit sin again, what may happen before he can—as people say, "resort to the fountain"? What if he should die before he get there, and thus be taken red-handed in sin? I do not believe that God would suffer His child thus to fall; but I give these as common questions asked every day. The question of our nature must be settled before there can be solid peace with God.

We read in Luke xviii. that "Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a publican." Now it is not so easy to dispose of this Pharisee as people think; there is much to be said for him. He was in the temple, the right place for a religious man such as he, the place that God had appointed for worship. There is no temple now. Men have indeed tried to make imitations of it, and very poor imitations they are, but God has not ordained any place of worship on earth. Where is the place of worship now? Heaven, where Christ is. The Pharisee was in the temple, and his first words are, "God, I thank thee." This sounds very well. What have creatures to do but to praise God? "That I am not as other men." Here he gets on rather dangerous ground, but you will observe *he thanks God for this, that he is not as others.* There was not only what was nega-



tive in his case, but something positive also.' "I fast twice in the week. I give tithes of all that I possess." The Pharisee's mistake was that he stood on the ground of self in the presence of God, who knew the material that was before Him; and who prefers the case of the publican. The mistake of the Pharisee was to stand before God in the value of self. When we think of what God is—when we think what the judgment will be—which of us would not join in David's prayer, "Enter not unto judgment with thy servant"?

There are more Pharisees than people think. Have you peace with God? If not, are you on the ground of the Pharisee, for self is before you in some way? You see some who have been looked on as devout people all their lives, and yet when they come to die they are all at sea. I do not deny that they may be believers, but is that *all* the blood of Christ can do? Is that the thought of Christianity—to leave people at sea just when they most need help? It is that little bit of self they are standing on that does all the mischief.

Supposing you have a bad temper, and are asking God to improve you, you have something of the Pharisee about you. The idea in Christianity is not to take you up and improve you; it is not intended thus to cure your bad temper.

There are two passages in Scripture that *seem* to contradict one another—what is said in Romans and in the Epistle of St. James about justification before God. The gospel of God's grace, the letter of God's love, is addressed to "Him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly." If you are a worker, the letter is not for *you*. What is justification? Standing before Him, who sees into the very fibres of my being, without a flaw or speck on my soul.

St. James speaks of justification before *man*. If you want to be justified before *men*, you will do good works. You would not like to substitute justification by works before *God*; that is, if you really know Him, and are not putting in His place and investing with His name an idol of your own creation. There are many more idolators than people are aware of.

There is a time coming, when we *shall* hear about works. The dead, small and great, shall stand before God to be judged, and the terrible issue will be, as sure as the Bible is true, that these Pharisees—these people who went in on the value of themselves—these workers that are judged according to the things that they have done—shall be cast into hell.

The Pharisee in Luke xviii. was quite right to be in the

temple, God's appointed place of worship—quite right to pray, for he was a dependent creature; but the mistake was, he was blind enough—he was mad enough—to stand on the value of himself. The Lord commends the publican's prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner." My heart goes with the utterance, but it is not Christian language—it would be unsuitable language for a Christian; but, beloved friends, it was a blessed utterance. It was extracted by God from a soul overwhelmed by the sense of his miserable, wretched condition. It was not a Christian's standing, but it was a blessed state.

It is a happy thought that there is a place where you and Christ will infallibly meet. The Saviour and the sinner have a blessed tryst, where they meet. Have you come down there? "God be merciful to me a sinner." You see the publican's confidence, or rather his thoughts (for there was not *confidence* yet), were not in self, but in *God*. The reason so many are without rest is because they have never dropped out of self. That little bit of self is the disturbing element. In the case of the publican we do not find Christian ground. Where shall we get it? In 2 Cor. xii., where we read of a man in Christ. But it may be said, surely there is something between the publican and the man in Christ. *Nothing whatever*. If you have said with the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner," the next position for you is a man in Christ. There is no halting place, no half-way house, no border-land. If you are not in Christ you perish. Does any one dare to say that if you are in Christ you will perish? "They shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. I and my Father are one." You must not expect to find a declaration of the gospel in the parable of the publican. The publican would certainly have been material for the blessing of which we speak, but Christ had not died; the blood had not *then* been shed.

Is it not a marvellous thing that people, Christian people, like to stand at this distance from God, "afar off"? People still like that old covert of Adam in the trees of the garden, where they can indeed hear the voice of God, but are not near Him. They prefer shade and distance to nearness and sunshine.

"A man *in Christ*." This explains it all. If "in Christ," I am out of self. I am looked at by God as having died, having gone under judgment, and oh, dear friends, there will

be a resurrection of every thing, but not of my sins or of my evil nature. I stand now, not on the merits of Christ, but *in* Christ. A Christian is an infidel about self—everything is founded on what Christ is. If I am standing there, bright days do not make Christ brighter; dull days do not make Him darker. *I am in a place of unalterable value.* No panic of my wretched heart can cause any fall in the value of Christ. Satan may charge me, my own heart may charge me, but it will not alter the value of Christ. I believe in a peace that nothing in the present—nothing in the future—nothing in the world—nothing in hell—can ever alter. Christ is everything to the Christian. He stands in the simple excellency—oh! who would add to it—of Christ. The Christian *up there* is according to the value of Christ; *down here* he is a poor, weak creature, with nothing good in him but what is of Christ. If the Christian looks at others he can see what is of Christ in them; if he looks at self he sees evil; and thus the Divine precept is fulfilled—esteeming others better than himself. If I want to get my soul rejoiced, do I look at self? Where do I look? Above. If I want to judge myself, I know well where to look.

The eye of God rests with eternal complacency on Christ, and on me, because I am in Christ. Faith is no credit to me, as to myself I am nothing. Paul says of himself, "Though I be nothing;" and if *he* could say it, you and I may—yes, we will say it, when I am weak then am I strong. Is it that the flesh gets any better by the believer breathing the air of heaven? No. As has been said, if taken up into the third heaven, a thorn is needed as soon as it comes down again. If this were so with an old saint, a veteran like Paul—if the first horse in the race had to endure this—what about poor things like ourselves? And sincerity makes it no better. There are no more miserable people in the world than these sincere people. How can you get boldness for the day of judgment in the flesh? How can this crumbling mass of sinful mortality fit itself for the beams of that judgment throne? The truth is simply this—Christ died—I died with Him; Christ rose—I rose with Him; Christ ascended, and I am in Him. If you have not *this* place, there is nothing for you but the worm that never dies, the fire that never is quenched. In Christ, higher you could not be, holier you could not be. If you say, "God be merciful to me a sinner," God calls you from that place; you need not stay there. In Eph. ii. we read of those

who were even worse than the publican, those who had no hope, and were without God in the world. Now what does Paul say to them? "But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." By fasting and prayer? No; but "by the blood of Christ." He is our peace. Oh! claim Him as your peace, ye who stand afar off. We are made the righteousness of God in Him; the peace of God is ours. Could you match it? Take all you ever did; take all your ancestors ever did (if you can appropriate it); take all your prayers and tears and works, and die on them if you dare. The Lord give you to rest your souls on Jesus! Amen.

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## THE REWARD OF CONFIDENCE.

HEB. x. 35.

THE Epistle to the Hebrews trains the soul for confidence in God through Christ.

It tells us at the very outset, that the One who is now seated at the right hand of the Heavenly Majesty got there as having purged our sins (chap. i. 3); and, I ask, may not that inspire confidence?

It tells us also that it *became* God, it was for the Divine glory, to give us a perfect Saviour (chap. ii. 10); and, again I ask, does not that give confidence?

Again, it teaches us that Jesus was faithful in all His house (chap. iii. 1).

Again, it teaches us that He did perfect Himself as the Author of salvation to us sinners; and that, according to this, God has put Him into such a priesthood as enables Him and entitles Him to confer righteousness and peace on us with all royal authority, and to save us to the uttermost (chap. v. 9, vii). Surely, I may say again, this is all fitted to inspire the believing soul with confidence.

But still further, God is so satisfied with His perfection for us, that He has seated Him with an oath in a sanctuary pitched by Himself, and in the highest place of dignity in the heavens (chap. viii. 1, 2); and this is of the same character, inspiring confidence. And the Holy Ghost witnesses, in the language of the New Covenant, the same perfection in Christ to remit our sins (chap. x. 15); and of this I say, as of the rest, what thorough, what entire confidence may all this secure to our souls!

This perfection in Christ for us being proved, we are challenged to honour it; and this honour is to be rendered in several ways, as we see in chap. x. 22-25.

We must draw near with full assurance of faith, and with a purged conscience—in other words, with a heart true to Christ's perfection or sufficiency for us as sinners (v. 22).

We must be exercised in hope (v. 23). (For "faith" in this verse read "hope.")

We must exhort each other to the fruits of faith, in love and services, assembling ourselves together (in the hope of a coming day of glory) for the common edification (vv. 24, 25).

By each of these things the perfection of our salvation in Christ is *honoured*. Because each of these things—(this boldness of faith—this exercise of hope—this cultivation of fruit in love, or character of assembling together)—implies or assures that a sacrifice for the purging of sins has been accomplished. None of these things would be enjoined upon us if the peace of the soul or the cleansing of the conscience had not been provided for and secured.

But this is all blessed truth, for may I not say this? If the perfection of Christ's work for us sinners be honoured in the sanctuary in heaven (as it is by His being seated in the highest place of dignity there), surely it is but little to say, that the same work ought to be honoured in the assembly of the saints on earth. If the Lord, Christ Himself, honours that perfection of His own work for us sinners, as He does by thinking not of it, but of that fruit in victory and glory which depends upon it (x. 13), surely it is but little to say, that we in our hearts ought to honour it.

But, again, this confidence being established in our souls on this perfection in Christ for us, the Apostle goes on to warn us to *hold* it fast, because it has "great recompence of reward," or *great power attending it*.

## I JOHN IV.

(Concluded.)

If the blood of Christ has been put on me, the Holy Ghost must bear testimony to my cleanness before God. So in every true Christian God dwells, and He is a sanctuary to us, a dwelling place, where we can and do abide. The title is the blood of Christ. "I am glorified in them," Christ said. By and by it will be perfectly, but now

we are called to manifest it in our mortal bodies. The moment I have my place with God in virtue of Christ's work, God can dwell in me. His dwelling down here is in virtue of that work. He never even dwelt with Abraham, though He said that He had brought Israel out of Egypt that He might dwell among them. Christ was alone when in this world. His work was not executed. God was down here as a Man. "Destroy this temple." The temple at Jerusalem was empty, and "the fulness of the godhead bodily" dwelt in Christ. Now the Holy Ghost dwells in individuals, and collectively in them too. "Your *bodies* are the temple of the Holy Ghost," and "in whom ye are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." But how perfect, beloved friends, this shows redemption to be! Our place is to have the Holy Ghost thus, between the accomplishment of redemption and the glory. The sufferings are accomplished, but the glory is not come. The Holy Ghost is "the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." (Eph. i. 14.) We are not waiting for grace. The work of grace has been accomplished, and the Holy Ghost is given to us meanwhile. God does not know such a thing as an unreconciled Christian. It is a great thing to take God at His word! We may be weak in the place, but the place is not uncertain. Our place in virtue of redemption is as simple as simple can be; *it is Christ's*.

"Herein is *love with us* (see margin) made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world" (v. 17). When I reach the judgment seat I shall be like the Judge, so it can give me nothing but boldness. We have had in a previous verse (12), "His love is *perfected* in us," and in this one it carries us on to a day of judgment. His love has been manifested in sinners, and is now enjoyed in a saint, and puts us before the judgment seat perfectly like the Judge. Are we to have boldness now? Yes, *in this world*. God has said it, and I am to believe it.

Then comes in all the diligence, and prayer, and reading of the Word. John always states our state, and then shows the *fruit*.

Beloved friends, do you really *believe* all this? Then I ask, how are your hearts in *respect* of it? How far have you confidence in God as that He dwells in you? How far as to the manifestation of this love do your hearts live in it?

If you have such a guest dwelling in you, what attention do you pay Him? Are we living as if we *believed* that God dwelt in *us*? Here we are with a "treasure in earthen vessels," and constantly made to find out our own nothingness. Still, while this is true, He has revealed Himself to us in perfect love, and given us to know that we may walk in the power of it through a world where the Lord Jesus walked perfectly. May the Lord give us to have our hearts emptied of everything not of Christ, that we may be free to enjoy this perfect love!

All that would justly create fear is gone, but to see it so we have to look at the day of judgment. It will not do to think of ourselves as sinners when we speak of judgment: the Cross does for sinners, but not the day of judgment. Often a soul looks at the judgment seat and finds himself not completely at peace: he does not know the righteousness of God. The moment I see my place in Christ, I say, "As he is, so are we;" there is no question of judgment for me. I cannot say, I am as Christ *was*, I can say "as He *is*." I am not as He was in His humiliation, but I am as He is in the glory, though it may seem a paradox. Till He died on the Cross the work was not done, though He was *going to do it*. I am in Christ according to the efficacy of what He has done for me, and according to His place with the Father. Christ will come and receive me to Himself, that where He is there I may be. "It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory." I am glorified before ever I get to Christ, just like Himself. He is not the firstfruits of the wicked; it is "they *that are Christ's* at his coming." He was raised because He was perfectly acceptable to the Father. "Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father." What is the meaning of resurrection from among the dead? It is the firstfruits of it. "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." The Spirit does not dwell in the wicked, and I am raised because the Holy Ghost dwells in me. I am raised in glory. We come up to give an account of ourselves, and are glorified beforehand. How can I talk of hope in the sense of uncertainty? There is nothing like it. I go right into glory. I am not only saved by what He has *done*, but I am blest *with Him*. He is the "firstborn among many brethren."

If I look at my sins, they are all gone; if at my standing, it is in present grace; if forward to judgment, "As he is, so are we." The Christian position is not fear.

"We love him, because he first loved us" (v 19). He does not say we *ought* to love, but *we love*; it cannot be otherwise. The sense of its mother's love is love in a child. When I am looking up to one who is above me, I have a sense of the love that one has for me, and that is love. You cannot have divine love revealed in your heart by the Holy Ghost without loving; of course we do not love enough, but still we do love Him. The sense that His love is infinitely beyond all our love is the proof that we do love.

"This *commandment* have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also" (v. 21). This love is a necessary effect of the nature; but this is not all. It is not a mere fruit of nature; there is a relationship as well as nature, and God must have obedience as well as love. We see it exemplified in Christ when on earth. He says, "That the world may know that *I love the Father*; and as the Father gave me *commandment, even so I do.*" The law of liberty does not set aside the commandment. But who is my brother? It is a terrible idea that we cannot know the children of God. "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil." How can we have that kind of love if we are not to know who is our brother? If I meet a person, and he is born of God, and I am born of God, we are brothers; nothing can be simpler. The Spirit is the Spirit of *truth* and the Spirit of *holiness*. So, supposing that a person comes with a great deal of truth, but without holiness, Ah! I say, that will not do, the Spirit of God is the Holy Spirit. Again, if he comes with great pretension to holiness, but without truth, I say that cannot be the Spirit of God, for the Spirit of God is the Spirit of truth. Satan may deceive us with regard to a person on *one* side, but he cannot on *every* side as God can.

A person may say, How do I know I love God? I love His children. We are wandering in a wilderness where there is *no* way (Psalm cvii), but God makes a way for us, and it is a great thing to *want* a way. When Adam was innocent he did not want a way. How can I find a way in a world that has departed from God altogether? When I have Christ, I find a way. I have the minutest directions as to how to order my way. I



am taught how to do all, and I have God with me all through. A slave did not know over night what his master would have him do in the morning ; neither do we, except as to certain things. The whole principle of a saint is *obedience*. " By this we know that we love the children of God when we love God and *keep his commandments*." If I love *you*, it is because I love God, so I cannot go with you into disobedience.

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## THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.

(Extracts from Correspondence, slightly altered.)

I MEET with others on the principle of " One body and one Spirit." We " endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," and we seek thus to be in the " fellowship of the *Holy Ghost*" who maintains the unity of the body of Christ. Consequently we find ourselves apart from those who are not in this blessed path, even though they may be perfectly sound in doctrine and godly in life, but who are, perhaps, unwittingly associated with a party which has for its principle neutrality and indifference to Christ's glory.

We meet on a ground wide enough to embrace every member of His body to the exclusion of none. If those who come are *knowingly* in connection or association with that which cares not for His truth and glory, it would exclude them from fellowship at the Lord's table. If they are unwittingly mixed up with it, I should be glad to meet with them, but I should feel bound to tell them the ground we take with reference to Christ, and the position they occupy in reference to Christ. This would leave it on their own responsibility to be with us or against us. We could not return to them, while we are told " Let them return to thee."

Consequently I could not join with them in Gospel work, because they have not God's end in view. God's end is not salvation merely, but that His people should be on earth a living witness for Christ in His rejection and absence with other members of His body, walking in unity and peace. The Church of God is the witness on earth that God is light, God is love, and God is one. The Holy Ghost on earth answers to and reveals Christ on high. He is the Holy and the True ; the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Holiness and the Spirit of Truth.

One member cannot be said to represent the body, or to be

the body, because he eats of the one loaf. If he comes together in any place to eat the Lord's Supper, *according to God's mind*, with other members of the body of Christ, they would be collectively a true expression of Christ's body on earth in that place. A number of members of Christ may be together and not in the unity of the Spirit at all (as I doubt not is often the case). It is not that Christ does not sustain them as members of His body, but they may be together on independent ground, or linked with the wide spread (and widening) principle of neutrality to Christ. The Holy Ghost, consequently, would be hindered, and though much that is true, as open ministry and the like, be owned in principle, I could not own it as an assembly of God, because Scripture would not recognize it. There is but "one Spirit," and if I am seeking with others to maintain the unity of the Spirit, there can be no antagonistic principle which I could own.

The Holy Ghost has not left God's house (now "a great house," or Christendom), although many corruptions are there; while at the same time Scripture does not own the claims put forward by many in it to be an assembly of God.

The Book of Ezra gives the account of the return of a remnant from Babylon to a divine position and city. They did not pretend to the former greatness without that which would answer to those pretensions, but they sought to walk in faithfulness before God with an empty temple—no Urim and Thummim—no Ark of the Covenant—no glory; but God's Spirit with them (Haggai ii. 5), and separation from all that was contrary to Him, characterizing their course. (See Ezra i. 59-63; iv. 1, and x. 1-9.)

Analogously there is now a remnant separated to God from the corruptions around—back on divine ground before Him, pretending to nothing but to be together in the fellowship of His Spirit on earth, and waiting for Christ's return. They are glad to give the right hand of fellowship to every member of His body who desires to walk in the truth with them in like separation from all that is evil around.

I believe it is a day when we must gird up our loins through His grace, and fix our eye upon Christ alone; we shall then be able to judge of what is due to *Him*, and not form our judgment by looking at our brethren. We shall be able, then, through His grace to escape the master-corruptions of the day—the enemy's imitation of the true—the principle of Jannes and Jambres withstanding Moses by a counterfeit.

As to ——'s question—The expression "One body" is used with reference to all the saints upon earth at any given time. "Ye are the body," to Corinth, as the assembly in that place; *i.e.*, on the *ground* and *principle* of their gathering together they were the "body;" a most important passage. It shows that the assembly anywhere is ever on the ground and principle of the body. Those who now meet in one place and partake of one loaf on this principle are no more the body of Christ at that moment than at any other time. But they have faith in the truth of it, as seen in their practice, which others who talk of it without practice do not seem to have. The former can show their faith by their works—the only way in which such can be done.

The "body" is not used to express *union* with Christ in any passage that I am aware of. The body is united to Christ by the Holy Ghost. Those who are together in the practice of this truth are "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." The Holy Ghost constitutes the unity of the body. They are walking in the fellowship of the Holy Ghost—a Divine Person who will not bend His ways to us—we must bend our ways in the truth to Him. People suppose that because they are members of Christ they *must* consequently have the practice of such a truth. We cannot have the practice of it (although absolutely of it) unless in the unity of the Spirit, and with those who have been there before us; it is impossible to have it avowedly apart from such. The effort is to take divine principles apart from their practice. Scripture is too strong for this.

The Lord lead all our hearts into that love of the truth, and love in the truth, and for the truth's sake, that we may be enabled to escape the vortex into which so many are falling!

## EFFECT OF BEING IN THE LORD'S PRESENCE.

HE is light, and the moment I draw near I feel the light; it attacks the darkness. One feels this in reading a chapter, or in a meeting, or whenever the soul is near Him. It is the first action, so real and true, and withal giving you such a sense of its being of God, that the conscience derives a cheer from the known fact that God is dealing with it, and this always invigorates the heart. The light exposes the darkness,

and shows me how incongruous it is with the Divine presence. But the darkness being denounced, I *next* come to apprehend what is of God in myself; "He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God" (John iii. 21). The work of God in me comes out to my own apprehension clearer and clearer as I am near Him, and this is an action of unqualified delight. I feel I know my relationship before Him in eternal life in Christ, having through it fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. How happy to feel the shell of nature gone! As Paul says, "I know a man in Christ" (2 Cor. xii. 2). He could not tell anything about the shell. Whether in the body or out, he could not tell; but he knew, oh, how well! how entitled through Christ he was to be in the third heaven. So did the thief, when he got there in company with our Lord.

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### "OBEY YOUR PARENTS IN THE LORD."

MY DEAR BROTHER,—As long as children are of the household, actually in relationship with their parents, the duty of obedience remains. If a man is married, he begins a new house, and is the head of it—leaves his father and mother. But as long as he or she is of the house, obedience is the duty, as the relationship remains. "In the Lord" is the limit and character of obedience. If I had a Jewish or heathen parent who commanded me to deny Christ, I could not do it. It is not "in the Lord." So, if I was desired to do any thing which practically denied Christ, I could not do it "in the Lord." If the parent be merely unjust in ways, and no duty be compromised, I believe the path of a child to be patience and casting himself on the Lord. I can suppose a child engaged in a positive duty, which the parents in such case would have no right to cause the child to break through.

"In the Lord" has nothing to do with the character of the parents, but the character of the child—otherwise it would absolve from all obedience the child of heathen or Jewish parents. The obedience is in the Lord,—Your affectionate brother in Christ,

J. N. D.

## THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

GATHERED to Thy name, Lord Jesus,  
Losing sight of all but Thee,  
O! what joy Thy presence gives us,  
Calling up our hearts to Thee.

Yet with reverence we would linger  
In the shadow of the cross,  
Which has closed our hearts for ever  
To the world and all its dross.

And we see with joyful wonder  
How the cross has cast its light  
On the throne of God up yonder,  
So that we can walk in light.

Deepest shame and brightest glory  
In that wondrous scene we trace!  
For it tells the twofold story  
Of God's grace and man's disgrace!

Loved with love which knows no measure,  
Save the Father's love to Thee,  
Blessed Lord, our hearts would treasure  
All the Father's thoughts of Thee.

All His joy, His rest, His pleasure—  
All His deep delight in Thee—  
Lord, Thy heart alone can measure  
What Thy Father found in Thee.

How He set His love upon Thee—  
Called Thee His beloved Son;  
Yet for us He did not spare Thee,  
And in death our life was won.

Blood-bought people, saved and spotless,  
Here we come to show Thy death;  
But presented by Thee faultless,  
We shall magnify Thy worth.

O! the joy, the wondrous singing,  
When we see Thee as Thou art;  
Thy blest name, Lord Jesus, ringing  
Sweetest music to God's heart.

Notes of gladness, songs unceasing,  
Hymns of everlasting praise;  
Psalms of glory, joy increasing,  
Through God's endless day of days.

## SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

“A.L.O.C.”—There are some who maintain that when the Church is taken away, the Holy Ghost will then be withdrawn. Is it so? 2 Thess. ii. 7 speaks of a restrainer till the “wicked” sets himself up as God?

A.—The personal place in the Church on earth which the Holy Ghost assumed, as sent down from heaven at Pentecost, only remains true as long as the Church of God is here. You must distinguish between His actions on earth previously and Himself now personally dwelling in the Church, which is peculiar to Christianity. When it ceases as a system on earth, as existing only during Christ’s rejection and absence, the Holy Ghost’s personally dwelling on earth is no more needed; for Christ will then be present Himself and reigning in power. The Holy Ghost will then work, and His actions be known and manifested, as was the case before He came to dwell, and will thus continue to carry out all divine good as God’s direct power, and in the unity of the godhead.

Scripture does not state that the Holy Ghost is the One who “letteth,” in 2 Thess. ii. 9. The wisdom of God has left the restrainer unnamed. Of old the saints believed it to be the then Roman Empire, and were probably right. Now, it doubtless is the power of God working by His Spirit in the Church on earth—as we can gather from general intelligence of the Word. When the Church is taken away there may be a long or short interval before the manifestation of the “man of sin.” God will then use whatever He pleases as the restrainer. It may be the Holy Ghost’s action in the godly Jew or whatever He wills. Hence it is left vague in the passage. Any instrument may be at the moment this restrainer in God’s hand.

The Holy Ghost will be “poured out upon all flesh” in the millennial day—a remarkable manifestation of His power and action. As to “dwelling” it is peculiar to the period of Christ’s rejection and absence. He is the Spirit of communion, leading the children of God into the consciousness of the possession of their own things.

When He ceases thus to dwell, the Lord gives a testimony to the world, through His earthly people Israel—the Jew. This is termed the “spirit of prophecy,” because it is the desire produced in the hearts of the godly for what they have *not yet possessed*, but are looking for; and this expresses

itself as "the testimony of Jesus," *i.e.*, the testimony He gives at that day.

In Enoch you find illustrated the spirit of communion ; in Noah the spirit of prophecy. The one walks with God ; has the testimony that he is pleasing to Him, and is translated out of the scene before the judgments of which he testified were poured out on the world. In this he is a figure of the Church. The other must pass through the waters of tribulation and build an ark, prophecies about blessings he had not yet enjoyed, preaches righteousness to an ungodly world, and becomes heir of the renewed earth. He typifies the Jewish remnant in whom the Spirit of God works during the interval before the millennium is set up.

The Paraclete or Comforter is the name given to Him in His actions and sojourn on earth with and in the Church, as the Messiah was the Comforter or Consolation of Israel. (Luke ii. 25.) "I will send you *another* Paraclete," or "Comforter," points to Christ Himself, as amongst those godly ones as their Comforter then ; this, too, while Christ is away.

Q.—Will sin cease when the Enemy is bound ?

A.—We learn of Israel—"Thy people also shall be all righteous," &c. (Isaiah lx. 21.) And that the multitude of Gentiles saved through the great tribulation (Rev. vii. 9-17) all call upon the name of the Lord ; "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto Jehovah ; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee." (Psalm xxii. 27.) But we also learn of a solemn outbreak of sin and sinners at its close, when Satan is once more set free.\* (Rev. xx. 6-9.) We also find that during this time of blessing the direct manifested government of God will cut off by judicial death those who sin (See Psalm ci. *passim* ; Isaiah lxv. 20, &c.) Those, then, who are born in the millennial day will need to be "born again," as much then as now, though those who begat them are the Lord's.

This being so, sin in man's nature, *i.e.*, the flesh, is the same as since the fall ; but Satan, who can act upon it by temptation, will be bound, and the "world" (the present great system built up on man's departure from God)—"all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life"—this moral system will then have

\* See Pss. xviii., lxvi. and lxxxi., as to the "feigned obedience" of the nations then to Christ.

passed away, and the renewed earth be under the peaceful sway of Jesus. Consequently the "world" will be no more an evil system to allure the "flesh," through the power of the "devil," and to sin in that day will be wilful sin against Christ, in manifested power and glory.

"The evil heart of unbelief" will show how "evil" indeed it is, in a day when all is light and manifestation, should it be unbelieving at such a time; in contrast to that in which we have to walk in what is unseen and eternal. It came in when man departed from God; not surely in paradise.

Q.—What is "a *living* sacrifice," the reasonable service spoken of in Rom. xii. 1? Sacrifices require the death of the animal in the Old Testament.

A.—I believe it refers to the meat offering (more than to sacrifices where death came in), as far as such can be applied to us. It should more correctly be termed the "meal offering," or "mincha." The fine flour mingled with oil was Christ's human nature as conceived of the Holy Ghost by the Virgin Mary (Luke i). Unleavened cakes anointed with oil point to his being anointed with the Holy Ghost at His baptism (Luke iii); the frankincense to those graces which God alone appreciated truly and fully, and all of it was consumed—all was tried by fire and only emitted a fragrant odour to God. No honey—the sweetness of nature, and no leaven—that which is sour and inflated. Salt always added, as the holy grace which binds the soul to God and enables the heart to refuse all that is presented to it which is not of Him. In short, a sinless man was before God's eye in Christ, and was what none else ever was *in itself* offered to God.

In Rom. viii. 2, 3, we are consecrated to God and presented to Him, as in Christ. In chap. xii. as priests for whom the mercies of God have opened our temple door, we have come out of all man's corruption, and now present our bodies, hitherto slaves of sin, to God, a "living sacrifice" as the meat offering, and as in Christ and His life in us, "holy," to which the salt pointed (*cf.* Mark ix. 49, 50), and "acceptable," the grace of Christ seen in us (the frankincense)—all presented to God as an "intelligent priestly service," or "worship," as it might be; in contrast to the ceremonial which might be under the law without intelligence of heart and conscience.



Q.—We have in 2 Cor. i. 22, “The earnest of the Spirit,” and in Eph. i. 14, “The earnest of our inheritance.” If the Spirit is the “earnest of the inheritance,” what is the “earnest of the Spirit”?

A.—The subject in hand in Eph. i. 1-14, is the calling of God (*vv.* 3-6), which is our present portion, and the inheritance which we have in Christ in the future over all created things. Christ’s place in the calling and Christ’s place in the inheritance is ours, as joint-heirs with Him. The inheritance being a matter still to come, we receive the Spirit as a seal, as looking back at the fulness of redemption which sets us in the calling, and looking forward as the earnest before we possess the inheritance. He is named, consequently, the “Spirit of *promise*,” as connected with what we have not yet received.

In 2 Cor. i. the inheritance is not named, but He who is its earnest has been given us. It is a wonderfully comprehensive passage (*vv.* 20-22). God had made promises of old; His Son comes in the “yea,” the fulfilment in His person, and the “Amen”—the certainty of them all. Those to whom the promises were made (the Jews) reject Him, and so the promises are deferred until another day, when Israel will “Amen” the promises of God, when grace restores the seed of Jacob.

Another thing now unfolds itself. God had *purposes* and counsels before He made the *promises*—before the foundation of the world. His “delights were with the sons of men” ere the world was. (Prov. viii.) The history of the first man’s responsibility was closed in the Cross; and the second Man enters into His glory when cast out in shame from this world. The people of God’s counsels are now called; His eternal purposes are unfolded, and God has a fresh and wondrous glory “by us”—Christians—the objects of those counsels. God establishes us “in Christ” before Him. Then He “anoints” us with the Holy Ghost for power for our pathway and service while awaiting the day of glory, and seals us as His own to secure all this glory to us. This brings into our hearts the conscious earnest of all, and by the Spirit thus given. The affections are thus kept in the joy and enjoyment of our own things.

The context in each case makes the difference of language simple.

Q.—“I charge thee before God . . . and the elect angels”? (1 Tim. v. 21.)

A.—The elect angels are the witnesses of God’s preserving a creature unfallen; men, the saints, of His redemption of creatures who have fallen. The fallen angels are those who exercised their own will without a tempter, as man, and lost their place irrecoverably. They are reserved in chains under darkness until the judgment of the great day. Angels are either “elect” or “fallen,” as far as I know from Scripture.

Q.—What was the distinctive character of the missions of the “Twelve,” Luke ix., and of the “Seventy,” Luke x?

A.—The mission of the “Twelve” was, as sent out by the Lord the Messiah of Israel, before His ministerial rejection, which in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt., Mark., Luke) is seen before the “Transfiguration.” His final rejection was in His humiliation at the cross, and supplementally, in His glory, witnessed to by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. (Acts ii.-vii.) They were sent out to preach the kingdom of God, and were given power over all evil spirits, and to cure diseases—the samples of the “powers of the world to come” or millennium, when Satan will be bound, and man’s diseases cured. Their mission was general and final, and not specifically confined to Israel. No provision for the journey was to be taken, for Messiah’s power commanded the hearts of men for all their need.

When this mission was over (v. 10) they returned, and in v. 18 the Lord seems to ask what the results of His own mission (chap. viii.) and theirs (chap. ix.) had been. It was refused. Some said one thing, some another (v. 19). Discussion and reasoning is not faith, and no real results as a general thing were seen. Those who had faith confessed Him (v. 20) as “*the Christ*,” which is no more to be preached (v. 21); the testimony was over. “*The Son of Man*” was now about to suffer, being rejected; and His followers would have a path of sorrow and rejection in this world like His own (vv. 23-26). The transfiguration scene follows to sustain their hearts in such a path of suffering, unfolding the glories that would follow when that day would come.

The seventy are sent out on their mission now (chap. x), which is founded on His rejection as the *Messiah*; and the declaration of His coming glory as *Son of Man*, head over

all things. His full glory as Man while Son of the Father, is the result of and follows His rejection here.

It is striking that while they are empowered to "heal the sick" (chap. x. 9), they were not empowered to cast out devils, yet they make some tentative efforts in faith, to cast them out (*v.* 17), which were answered of God. Devils were subject to them, "through thy name," they say. Such is God's answer to living faith, wherever it is found.

Q.—Who are the "two witnesses?" (Rev. xi. 3, 4.) Do they answer to the "Saints of the Most High," in Daniel vii. 22?

A.—During the period known as the "Great Tribulation," which lies between the Lord's coming for His saints, and His appearing in glory with them, the Lord Jesus gives a testimony through the Jews as to His claims as "Lord of all the earth." This is referred to in the account of these "two witnesses," in this symbolic part of the Revelation; "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established." God is giving an adequate testimony at that day to what is then coming on the earth. The number which may be used to testify does not signify; adequate or sufficient testimony is the thought. This witness has a double significance, as the miracles show. They are similar to those performed by Moses, when the people of Israel were captives in Egypt (*Ex.* vii.-x); and by Elias, when the people were apostate, worshipping Baal (*1 Kings* xviii); as the shutting up of heaven, and the smiting the earth with plagues and turning the water into blood testify. They are owned as true worshippers in that day, and they have the spirit of prophecy, which is the "testimony of Jesus," *i.e.*, the testimony He gives at that day to His royalty and priesthood about to be established (*cf.* *Zech.* iv).

I believe they are godly Jews whom the Lord thus uses in this special manner, some of whom seal their testimony with their blood, looking for a "better resurrection."

I judge that Daniel vii. 22 refers to the appearing of the Son of Man in glory who is the Ancient of Days Himself, to deliver the godly ones who are trampled down by the beast. This results in two things here (*v.* 22) stated generally; 1st, "Judgment was given to the saints of the high (or heavenly) places"—not "Most High;" and 2d, "The saints possessed the kingdom"—the heavenly and earthly departments of glory.

## CHRIST FOR MY SINS; AND CHRIST FOR MY CARES.

JOHN iv. 1—38.

It is a wonderful thing to think of the reality of the intimacy with which the Lord carried on His intercourse with people in this world—His ways and manners with them—and who He is. In truth it changes all our thoughts of God. He has visited men before the day of judgment, and we find Him giving, and not judging—dealing with them in quite another way. He who is to be the Judge had to come beforehand to be the Saviour; had come in grace, seeking worshippers; come to visit the hearts of men where they were—naughty hearts; coming to such, not to judge at all; but to deal with our souls about the very sins for which He would have to judge us. He has dealt with the sins already in a totally different way. It confirms the judgment of course—puts the seal of God's testimony on it in the strongest way; but at the same time it gives us to know and understand that the whole thing is decided in a totally opposite manner. Instead of coming to claim the debt, He comes to pay it; both ways prove the debt was there, but the dealing with sinners is in a totally different way—dealing effectually, and that is the Gospel! “The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.” It is a Saviour we have to tell of, and I could not thus speak if He were not a Saviour who had wrought an effectual salvation. Then comes exercises of heart, and the discovery of what we are, to bring us to repentance; but it tells us we are saved. “Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace.” It was at all cost to Himself, but He did not recall it, or deceive her. Can *we* go in peace? We go out of this room with the consciousness that we go on the Lord's own warrant, in perfect peace, and with nothing to fear as to the consequences of sin, if He has said, “Go in peace.”

Beloved friends, have you peace? Have you got what He announced and sent out to be preached? It is no good telling me you cannot have peace. There it is. Was it to be preached and not believed? God would have us happy with Himself, and therefore sends peace. It is no light thing, for He has made peace through the blood of His cross; being justified is a real thing, an effectual thing, a divine thing, founded on what has been perfectly done. If

I believe, I come to enjoy it; if I reject it, I am guilty. It is that God has visited us to bring us peace. "In the world ye shall have tribulation; in me, peace." Hence God gives Himself over and over again, the name—"God of peace." It is the name of predilection which He gives Himself. He never calls Himself the God of joy; that may change, but peace is eternally settled.

We will see how He dealt with this woman. It was thorough grace. "Salvation is of the Jews." They had the Law, the Temple, everything that belonged to God, like the elder brother. But the Jews cast Him out, and He must needs go through Samaria. This was the beginning of His ministry. The Pharisees were jealous of Him, so He goes out and leaves this place of salvation according to promise. It is the terrible condition of the world that the Son of God has been in it, and they cast Him out. He came there and has been rejected, and the testimony is, that the whole world lieth in wickedness. The world not only sinned, but rejected Him who came into it when man had sinned,—the world that had grown up since God cast man out of Eden. God came into it, and they cast Him out. If I call myself a Christian, I profess that the world has crucified the Son of God. Still the grace goes on. God took that as the means and occasion to bring it out. That is what is so glorious in the Cross; that which was the perfect expression of man's enmity, was the perfect expression of God's love. There was the meeting-place of man's hatred against God, and God's sovereign love to man. He was not at it yet, but was walking in the grace and spirit of it. Here, rejected out of Judea, he must needs go through Samaria, and we get the blessed truth that God is above all sin, because Samaria was most hateful. He can exercise love in the scene of the thing He abhors. "God commendeth his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." He gave His blessed Son, one with Himself, to death, and to drink the cup of wrath for those who were nothing but sinners. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."

Now, mark another thing we have here. We find Him thoroughly a man come down to this world, having made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant, made in the likeness of man. O that some hearts could get hold of that! I speak now of the way that He came—of His

death I will speak again. When He was rich, for our sakes He became poor. It is brought out in the circumstances of this history. In the heat of the day, wearied with His journey, He comes to the well and sits down where He can find a seat. Do our hearts really believe that this was the Lord? Why was He in a condition to be weary? Why there? It was perfect love! He comes down to take this place. He passes through the world—the Holy One that could not be contaminated, and uses this to go through a world of sinners to bring them the love they wanted. Holiness, undefiled and undefilable, carries to sinners the love they need!

He sits weary, and the disciples go away to find meat. To think of the Lord Himself, whom none of the princes of this world knew, but who was the Lord of glory, sitting weary on this well, thirsty and having nothing to drink, dependent upon this world for a drink of water—the world that was made by Him, and knew Him not! He asked this woman to give Him to drink, dependent on her for water. In this very fact she finds out that there was something remarkable in the Man. It was extraordinary that a Jew should speak to her, and her mind is attracted by it.

Let me say a word of this woman, full of blessed interest, as drawing out into exercise the heart of the Lord. She was a poor, vile creature—alone there. We read of the time when women came to draw water, talking together of all that was passing; but she does not come when the other women came. Hers was an isolated heart; she had isolated herself, and had got nothing. An energetic woman, who had been seeking happiness by the energy of nature, and found wretchedness and ruin. She was all alone at that unusual time of day, with a heart full of cares—totally alone, because of her shame; but she found One more lonely than herself, and that One was the Lord! She could go to the “men in the city,” but He was totally alone, had not one to go to, though Himself the most affable and accessible of men. There was never a circumstance in which He was found where power, love, goodness, and truth would not flow forth. There was no weariness if a poor, desolate sinner came. No matter what company He was in, He was accessible to their hearts; but there was no sympathy for Him. He met no love and goodness going through this world; His heart was utterly a stranger in it; it was all sympathy for others. If He had to answer for Himself before the

chief priests, who were hunting Him to death, the moment the cock crew His eye was upon Peter—never wearied. No circumstance He was in could ever touch the spring of grace and goodness that was in His heart.

Here was the Judge of quick and dead—not as judge, of course, but the Person who is to be judge—meeting with the poor sinner in grace—sitting with the very person that deserved to be judged! In that sense in the communion of His grace He is sitting with us. It is just what is going on through the gospel. “We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech by us.” She says, “How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?” Mark the answer of the Lord. It has two distinct points in it. “If thou knewest the *gift* of God”; that is, what God is doing to you. It is the ground He takes with you: “The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ.” The next thing is “And *who* it is that saith to thee give me to drink.” That is, if you knew—not, who I am, but who it is that has come down so low as to ask a drink of water, you would be in perfect confidence before Him. If your eye were opened to see God giving eternal life—come to require nothing, and who would not get it if He did—how it would change all your thoughts of God!

He once came looking for fruit and found wild grapes. Under the law He sought for fruit and had His servants killed. He said, I have yet one son,—but when they saw Him, they said, “This is the heir, come let us kill him.” The result was not fruit, but hatred to Him and His Father. Now He does not come (I do not say *producing* fruit—He does that—but) *looking* for it. He has come to *sow*, dealing with the sinner personally in the gospel, and where there is grace, and the sense of need, there will be the fruit of the Spirit, and He will look for it.

Human nature judges God, but God’s nature comes out entirely superior to that. *He gives!* Then we get these two blessed principles, that God is giving, and that the Lord has come down to such poverty as to be dependent upon this woman for a drink of water; has come to put Himself down under the wants of those that had nothing but wants, so as to meet them. She is attracted—there is power in His word; and He begins speaking of spiritual things to her.

We see here the way in which the woman is absorbed with her cares. Verse 15 is a remarkable expression of her

confidence in His word ; but mark the state of her heart—entirely occupied with her waterpot and her wants. Do you know nobody like that? People who own the word of God to be the word of God; who own its authority, but are completely occupied with the things of this life. As a natural person she received not the things of the Spirit of God. Her mind was awakened to respect for His word, so that she could believe what He said, but she could not grasp spiritual things; *they had not the smallest entrance into her heart*, so full was it of temporal things. What was to be done? Pouring out words of grace, all had flown over her head—passed over a heart that is absorbed with the things of the world.

Now He takes the other side, not the gift of God, but the state of man! “Go call thy husband and come hither.” The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.” Quite true. She tells the truth to hide the truth—as often in this poor world. The conscience is awakened now ; and there it is where the word enters always. It is quite right the love should attract the heart, but the conscience must be reached. Everything must be out in the light that has come into this world : conscience must be brought into the presence of God.

It is wonderful how quick memory even becomes under this action of the light. Sins are recalled which have long been forgotten. Light has come in ; she has understanding now, though she had not understood a word before (she was completely buried in her cares). “Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.” The word of God had reached her conscience, and wherever it does it has authority, and it is the only way. When I find a book that tells me all things that ever I did, I know what it is. It does not require to be proved by man, for there is no book in the world with authority till it reaches the conscience. Then it is its own witness to the folly of attacks made upon it, and proves the folly of unbelief. It is the “word” itself—its own witness. I do not take a candle to see if the sun shines. Do you not see the sun shines? No. Then you are blind. The only thing that brings authority is the word of God coming into the conscience. “Here is a man that told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?” God is love, and His blessed Son, a poor man speaking to the woman ; but He is also light come in. These always go together. You never find when the gospel is received, that it does not get in as



light to the conscience—there is no fruit without it. Where it gets in it will be light exposing all, and if not there is no root. The point where intelligence is brought into the heart of this poor woman, is where her conscience is reached. How would *you* like Him to tell you everything? Does He not know every wicked thing I have done? It should come up in judgment; but my comfort is, that it was all out before Him when He was dealing with me in grace. Now I can bear the eye of God searching everything through His word. In dealing with the soul, love has brought the light here.

Love attracted Peter. Why does he not run away? Why go up to Him, and say, depart from me! (Luke v.) He was drawn by the love and grace, and convicted by the light that the love has brought in. Light, which manifests to myself what I am in the light of God, brings me there. We are in the light as He is in the light. There must be truth in the inward parts. But did that hinder the Lord, saying, "If thou knewest the gift of God"? Now, instead of trying to make things straight with God, I have found Him (knowing everything I did) in perfect grace. There is then no hiding sin, but all is brought into the light by God.

Mark another thing. God is bringing in something new. Was He going to trust the heart of this poor woman? No. He was going to get her to trust His heart. People say, May not my heart deceive me? To be sure it may! Will His deceive me? The grace of God brings the salvation to us—brings us everything we want. So He brought strength at the pool of Bethesda—"Take up thy bed and walk." He is not requiring from us anything, but brings the thing we want—brings Himself—and there is nothing we want like it. He brings us to repentance—to the conviction of what we are, as here. But He comes saying, "If thou knewest the gift of God." God has something to give—eternal life through Jesus Christ. But I shrink from coming to God. Quite right, to a certain extent. But with whom am I that is bringing in this light? With the very Man that asked for a drink of water. "If thou knewest *who it is* that saith to thee, give me to drink"—a poor man with nothing but words of grace—you would have trusted Him. Do you think I could trust God in the day of judgment? But can I trust the poor man sitting on the well-side? It is when

my eyes open upon the Person and work, that I find I have been talking with the Lord Himself, and He had not a word against me, and knew all that ever I did. My heart has the blessed consciousness that it has met God.

There are poor infidels beating out their brains to find out about God, but I have *met Him*. He had nothing but kind and gracious words, though He knew all my sins. His whole ways and words and works are perfect love, and come to seek me as a sinner. The Father seeketh worshippers. You have not to go to this mountain or that; He sent the Saviour *seeking*. How many does He find? Does He find hearts here that would pass by the Lord Jesus—that have read hundreds of passages in which His grace was manifested, and gone away untouched, unmoved, though God was spending His heart on you? See how even the heart of the Lord rejoices over this one poor sinner. “I have meat to eat that ye know not of.” Do you believe that of Christ? Come to open her eyes—that was the Lord’s meat. It is lovely to see the Lord’s heart in that way. Just see how it opened out to all the rest. He has actually been rejected out of Judea, but the case of this woman has so comforted Him now, that it opened His heart to say, “The fields are white to harvest.”

Then we have to go on to see that sins having been perfectly manifested, and the love; then comes the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ—because there can be no allowance of sin—nothing but love, that comes for the sinner, and gives Himself. The heart was won, the conscience was reached. But what about these things that she had done? The very Lord who was speaking to her goes under them and puts them away. We do need something else than that which reaches the conscience—we need that which purges it. We are made white as snow, and are bound to believe it, the Lord having borne our sins in His own body on the tree. He has charged Himself with them. I was convicted, and then humbled about them. But before the day of judgment comes, Christ was bearing the sins He would have had to judge. The cross was God dealing with Him about them. In the day of judgment I say, *That* is the Man who put away my sins. Before the time comes for judgment, the person who is coming to judge has Himself borne the sins He would have had to judge me for. The question is not whether I deserve condemnation, but what has God wrought?

I dare not doubt it. There is no place where I see sin so terrible as on the cross. If your sins are not all perfectly put away for ever, they never can be, for Christ cannot die again. (Heb. x.) He will rise up for judgment, but He is sitting down now, for the work is completely done; if not (as to the work, not as to your feelings), it never can be. That being so, therefore, when the soul is exercised, I look at the cross and say, He has borne my sins. I hate them the more. That is all right; it is the work of the Spirit in us; but I speak of the work done for us. Do not speak of past, present, and future sins; it is a foolish confusion of the time my heart thinks of it, and of the work that put them away. As to future sins, I ought never to think of sinning again. As to past sins, how many were past when Christ died? The work was done when they were all future. It is confounding the work done with the effect in me and when He did that work. He was raised in glory; is there then any question whether I am to be glorified?

There is another thing as to the cross. It all passed between God and Christ perfectly alone—of which the outward darkness was the sign—according to the exigency and righteousness of God, where it must be according to the absolute perfectness of those who wrought it. Men had nothing to do with it; all we had to do with it was our sins—and the hatred that killed Christ, you may add. It was a divine work *about* my sins.

Now as to the effect of this. We saw the poor woman so absolutely absorbed with her water-pot; but the moment her conscience was thoroughly reached, she goes off to testify to others. If you only get Christ, He will tell you all things. She leaves her water-pot. The Holy Ghost has not recorded for nothing that the thing that absorbed her was gone. The word and power of Jesus, that gave her conviction of sin, also substituted Christ for the things that had power over her heart. Christ for my righteousness; Christ instead of my sins; Christ as the object for the heart instead of its cares.

I add a word for the comfort of any soul that is convicted of sin, but has not peace. Supposing a person has received the *word* of Christ, but cannot say he has got Him—but, if only I could find Christ! I find so much sin in me I would give anything to have Christ. What put that desire into the heart? You have got Him as a great Prophet; His

word has reached the heart, you are convicted of sin, but do not know if you have Christ as Saviour. He has spoken to you about eternal life, and you have received a word that has made Christ precious to you and your conscience bad. Then you have got Him. His word has had the authority of the word of God in your conscience. If that be so, the Christ that has visited you is the Christ that has borne your sins. The Christ who thus speaks to us to bring these thoughts to our hearts is the One that through grace has borne the wrath before the day of judgment comes.

How is it with you? Has your heart given up your water-pot for Christ? I do not mean that there will be no conflict. But has your heart so heard His word that it has penetrated into your conscience? Do you think you are going with your sins into heaven? How many sins had Eve committed when God turned her out? One! Have you not committed more? Are your hearts expecting to get into heaven with your sins or without them? Are they all put away? How can you rest a moment until you know they are? What madness and folly! The One who deals with our conscience is the One who came where we are, and is now beseeching us to be reconciled to God. It would be a terrible thing in the day of judgment to have had the heart closed against the voice of the Charmer. Has not He charmed wisely? Were ever words like His—words of grace, unutterable grace, with which He has sought to win us? It is a blessed truth, before the day of judgment comes, the Judge has come Himself to deliver. How solemn to think that you will have to be judged then if you do not accept the deliverance now!

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“Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, worship the Father. . . . The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ. When he is come he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he. . . . The woman then left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?”

## SUPPLICATION AND PRAYER.

I FIND out differences of this kind by observing how the soul acts. I find, then, that when it wants anything there is supplication; a sense of need presses on it, and to be relieved of this need there is the dealing of the soul with God. I am not sure whether the Lord ever prayed thus but once—the time He prayed for Peter.

Now prayer is more general. I believe it embraces all that is upon my soul. The temple was called the house of prayer, not of supplication merely. I understand by the word prayer, all that was expressed to God over the sacrifice, but that was on the ground of acceptance. Now, I find the soul presenting every consideration and interest before God, and yet, perhaps, none of them assuming the place of supplication. The word supplication is constantly used conjointly with prayer. I think prayer has more confidence in it. It is said, the energetic supplication of an earnest man availeth much, but in the example it is said he prayed with prayer.

If I were presenting my whole case, cares, and blessings to God, I should expect that I should, as assured that He knew them, find peace and relief in my heart and mind; but if I had a pressing want, especially one for which I had no assurance of His consideration, then I should supplicate; but if I had this assurance as to the thing I needed, such as grace to fulfil the place He called me to, then it would be prayer and not supplication. I believe there is often supplication first, and prayer after. I think confession is a preliminary; you must dispose of the cause of darkness before you can enjoy the happier services of the light. I think the soul in prayer travels from Luke xi. to 1 John v. In Luke I am learning or rather proving my resourceless condition; my pertinacious importunity under the most unfavourable circumstances proves this. If I had any other resource, I should not continue applying to my apparently heartless friend. The point to be established, and so necessary for your blessing, is that you have no other resource but God. Now, in 1 John v., it is if we know that He hears us, we have the petitions that we desired of Him. This, I may say, is the other side; if I ask according to His will, He hears me; and if He hears me, I have the petitions. This shows us the close and earnest

dealing there must be between the soul and God if we would know His mind, though I doubt not we are often mistaken in the true nature of our petitions, that is, we do not divine the right thing that would effect our petitions; for instance, Paul may have been assured that his petitions were heard in asking that he might serve the Lord better after the crash at Jerusalem, and his petition was answered, but not according to the programme. Possibly, in the Apostle's mind, he might have reckoned on returning to active labours, whereas his services were really made greater through his epistles from the prison. I adduce this to show how the marrow—the true spiritual desire in the petition—may be granted, and in a form so unlike that which you may have expected and relied on; that in the answer that you may often not see any resemblance between a new circle into which you have been introduced, and a former petition which you had *expected* would be answered, and which as yet you have seen no answer to.

Praise is no doubt the highest point of prayer; after the soul has presented, and, so to speak, reviewed every possible interest before God, what remains for it but to praise Him? David went in and sat before the Lord, and he praised as he prayed. There is no lively prayer without thanksgiving; and who could, even in a little way, understand the way God provides for, and enters into all your circumstances, together with the blessing and glory which He gives, without praise?

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## GLEANINGS.

THE mischief done in the misuse of the law is, that it sets up man as *alive*. Christianity says he is *dead*. "The law has dominion over a man as long as he liveth." (Rom. vii.)

The "rule" of Christianity is, that you must *live* as well as *talk*. We must run according to the rules of the games. (1 Cor. ix.)

The "Red Sea" is (typically) Christ's death and resurrection *for* me. The "Jordan," my death and resurrection *with* Him. But when I have passed the latter, I look back to the Red Sea, and I find I died and rose *in* Christ.

Divine love looks down, and is sovereign. It looks up, and is subject.

## SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

Q.—Is there any direct reference to the Church in the opening verses of Eph. i.? We sing—

“Abba chose the Church in Jesus  
Long before the world began,”

which seems to be the thought in these verses.

A.—There is no reference to the Church, as such, in Eph. i. until you come to *vv.* 21, 22; still those only who compose it are before the mind of the Apostle. Individuals were the objects of God's choice before the foundation of the world. Election has to do with persons. Here it is the intentions of God—His purposes, which are the subject (*v.* 4). I would alter the word “church” in the hymn quoted, to “saints.” It would then be more like the truth, though it is rather too broad a term.

V. J. A.—How is it that Dan is not included in the tribes mentioned in Rev. vii.?

A.—God here draws back the curtain, so to say, and shows us that in the midst of these courses of judgment He remembers mercy, and thinks of His ancient people—sealing a perfect number (*i.e.*,  $12 \times 12 \times 1000 = 144,000$ ) for preservation for the millennial earth. But *judgment* being then in course He is silent about Dan. He was the first tribe that went into idolatry (see Judges xviii. *passim*). It was a son of a Danite woman, whose father was an Egyptian, who blasphemed the name of Jehovah, and cursed, and who was stoned. (Lev. xxiv. 10-16). This apostate is said to be typical of the Antichrist in the end. Of Dan, Jacob a-dying said, “Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward” (Gen. xlix. 17). The deceit of the serpent and the treachery of the adder characterised his history.

How sweet to find that when *grace* restores these long scattered people after judgment has been satisfied under the government of God, that Dan has his portion and his ordered place in the land amongst the tribes. Ezekiel (chap. xlviii.) prophesies of this, and even counts him first in the order given. Jacob prophetically touched on his future blessing, even before he spoke of his apostacy (Gen. xlix. 16), in the words, “Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel.”

Q.—(1) Does Rev. xi. 1 suppose the people to be in their own land, and the worship restored in the command to measure the temple, &c.?

(2) Is this the first half week, at the end of which the beast breaks his covenant? For a second half week appears to conclude with the second woe (*v.* 2).

(3) Does the third woe give another half week, &c.?

A. (1.) The passage supposes that the people are in the land, and worship restored in the measure such will be before the kingdom is established. The external profession of Judaism is not owned, while a true remnant are.

(2, 3.) I believe the second half week, and it only, is here (as in all Scripture) counted and named. The first half week is always vague. (See my remarks on this in pp. 98, 99, 119, 120 of the present volume, Nos. 62, 63). The second woe commences at chap. ix. 13, and runs on to chap. xi. 14, embracing in its scope the parenthesis of chap. x. The third woe trumpet is embraced in chap. xi. 15-18, which takes in the closing moments of judgment which usher in the kingdom, and embraces the judgment of the great white throne, as well as the whole kingdom, in general terms.

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### GLEANINGS.

THERE is a tendency in our heart to think that the evil of the world is greater than God. Bring God in, and you find at once that He is greater than the evil.

KNOWLEDGE.—To learn now is the proof and testimony of ignorance in the person who learns. Discoveries are made. Well, I say, these things were going on all the time, and you never found it out!

We have liberty, not for the flesh, but to serve God.

We are alive in Christ, and alive with Christ.

It is not the "old man" that is justified, or the "new man," but *I* live in Christ. My soul, *i.e.*, I, in my proper person, am justified.



## GLEANINGS.

"In everything"—not only when you know the will of God—"make known your requests." It is not a question of intelligence, but of confidence in God. "And the peace of God . . . shall keep your hearts and minds." (Phil. iv.)

"The peace of God" is that which "passes all understanding;" the "peace of Christ" is that which I have in my heart.

There is nothing more dangerous than for a soul to speak of truth, when not living in that truth. It is the road to a fall.

"Then shall I know, even as also I am known" (1 Cor. xiii. 12). That is, I shall know in God's way of knowing a thing, without learning it.

Faith gets hold of the object; hope desires it; love enjoys it.

The Lord Jesus reveals the secrets of the heart. (John iv.) The Scripture does this also, and the gathered assembly in the power of the Spirit. (1 Cor. xiv. 23, 24.)

Instead of a rejected Christ, as now, and the power of the Holy Ghost to go against the stream; the stream itself, by and by, will be blessing from a glorified Christ.

In Moses, self first comes up in the way of confidence in itself; then, after forty years, in the way of fear.

Faith never makes me, or my state, its object; but it makes Christ and His work its object.

The presence of God, when the conscience is sensible of it, takes away every hope of enjoying sin.

Forgiveness, in the sense of non-imputation, cannot be sought by one set free in Christ, because he does know that sins are not imputed to him. He confesses his sins and *fatherly* forgiveness is given him.

Innocence, sin, righteousness, describe the world that was, the world that is, and the world that is to come.

In Joshua we have a heavenly Christ—He stays in the tent of the congregation. In Moses, a gracious Christ, who goes down into the camp. (See Exod. xxxii., xxxiii.)

DISAPPOINTMENT.

DISAPPOINTMENT.

Our yet unfinished story  
Is tending all to this :—  
To God the greatest glory,  
To us the greatest bliss.

If “all things work together”  
For ends so grand and blest,  
What need to wonder whether  
Each in itself is best!

If some things were omitted,  
Or altered as we would,  
The whole might be unfitted  
To work for perfect good.

Our plans may be disjointed,  
But we may calmly rest;  
What God has once appointed  
Is better than our best.

We cannot see before us,  
But our all-seeing Friend  
Is always watching o’er us,  
And knows the very end.

What though we seem to stumble,  
He will not let us fall;  
And learning to be humble  
Is not lost time at all.

What though we fondly reckoned  
A smoother way to go  
Than where His hand has beckoned,  
It will be better so.

What only seemed a barrier,  
A stepping stone shall be;  
Our God is no long tarryer,  
A present help is He.

And when, amid our blindness,  
His disappointments fall,  
We trust His loving kindness,  
Whose wisdom sends them all.

They are the purple fringes  
That hide His glorious feet;  
They are the fire-wrought hinges  
Where truth and mercy meet.

By them the golden portal  
Of Providence shall ope,  
And lift to praise immortal  
The songs of faith and hope.

From broken alabaster  
 Was deathless fragrance shed;  
 The spikenard flowed the faster  
 Upon the Saviour's head.

No shattered box of ointment  
 We ever need regret,  
 For out of disappointment  
 Flow sweetest odours yet.

The discord that involveth  
 Some startling change of key,  
 The Master's hand resolveth  
 In richest harmony.

We hush our children's laughter,  
 When sunset hours grow pale;  
 Then, in the silence after,  
 They hear the nightingale.

We mourned the lamp declining,  
 That glimmered at our side;  
 The glorious starlight shining  
 Has proved a surer guide.

Then tremble not and shrink not  
 When disappointment nears;  
 Be trustful still, and think not  
 To realize all fears.

While we are meekly kneeling,  
 We shall behold her rise,  
 Our Father's love revealing  
 An angel in disguise.

FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL.  
*(From "The Ministry of Song.")*

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## GLEANINGS.

Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word." (John viii.) Even in human language you get the meaning of the words spoken from the meaning of the thing spoken of.

The Jews said, We have an altar, and these Nazarenes have no right to come. No, says Paul: "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle." It is you who have no right to come.

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