

“WORDS OF TRUTH,”

Eecl. xii. 10.

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

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WORDS OF TRUTH.

UNSKILFUL IN THE WORD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

I.

THE careful reader of Scripture, who by divine grace, in measure, knows his own heart, as well as the state of mankind at large, knows by its testimony, and feels too, that man has departed from God; that he is guilty, and as far as he is concerned, irretrievably lost; that God must work in a new way to bring a clean thing out of an unclean: a way which is wholly impossible for man.

Since man fell from God, and from his original condition, there has been no period of the world's history where He left Himself without witness—not only of His eternal power and godhead in created things, in the revelations which He gave, and by means of the line of God's election and calling out of the earth, of persons standing in special and eternal relationship with Himself.

Again, He has been dealing in various ways with man, from the call of Abraham, and subsequently with Israel under law. There were individual dealings with the elect before this call of the "father of all them that believe." These dealings with individuals, as well as those of a larger scale with nations, have ever been a fruitful theme to the student of Scripture. Upon these it is not my present task to enter.

We find an expression used in Heb. v. 13, referring to those whom the writer would warn and exhort as to their spiritual state, as not answering to the present actings of God which were before his mind. He says, "For every one that useth milk is *unskilful in the word of righteousness*, for he is a babe."

To this expression, "Unskilful in the word of righteousness," I would draw special attention. If asked to explain its meaning I would say, It is *the right relations in which*

everything stands with God at any given moment—the faithful, responding to which, are thereby “perfect.”

We shall now enter upon the blessed field of the Word, to examine some examples of this in detail.

When the earth was filled with violence and corruption in the days before the flood, and when God was about to destroy the world that then was, Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord: he was a just man and a perfect; and Noah walked with God. To him God revealed His intentions, and commanded him to build an ark. He gave specific directions in detail as to this to Noah. The world stood in certain conditions in His sight; and God stood towards it in the relation of Judge. The word of righteousness for the moment, as revealed to Noah, not only took in the state of things before him, and God's attitude towards it, but these directions to the man who had found grace in His sight.

Acting on them, Noah stood as God's witness, opposed to the spirit of the age; and, skilful in the word of righteousness, he not only built an ark to the saving of his house, but he was also a preacher of righteousness to the ungodly world around.

Now these directions to Noah contained much deep instruction to the faithful in after days, although they would not require to act as he did. They would be instructed as to God's ways, and His faithfulness as to His own in an apostate scene; and they would see the results for the saint in his implicit obedience to what was then enjoined. To have used such instructions for building the ark themselves would prove them but “babes;” while for him to have done so betokened one of “full age,” or “perfect,” his senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Another day came. The world had wholly gone into idolatry, which in antediluvian days was not its sin. Man's evil heart went out in unrestrained wickedness, in which angels joined, till the foul scene cried out for the judgment of God. Satan now possessed his heart with the fears of judgment, such as that which had passed, and he caused him to worship demons. (cf. Jos. xxiv. 2; 1 Cor. x. 20; cited from Deut. xxxii. 17.)

Abraham was then chosen to be God's perfect man on earth; called out from country, kindred, and father's house, he became the vessel of His promises—the one to whom the word of righteousness was communicated. He might

have known that which had governed Noah, at another day; he might have been instructed in the deliverance of that man of God. Still it would have been of no avail to him in his day, so far as his being governed by it: he had his own path, and he followed it, walking before the Almighty as a "perfect" man.

I do not propose to examine his failure in the path, however blessed were the lessons he was taught; my object being to show that all along the history of the world which had departed from God, certain revelations were made, and certain conditions of soul are to be found, which show the relations in which the faithful—the perfect—stood with Him, suited to the revelation given by God, and occasioned by, and needed in the midst of the scene, as God viewed it. Whenever the saint was not governed by such, he lapsed into the condition of the "babe;" he had *become* such a one as had need of milk, and not of the strong meat which belonged to those of full age.

Remark, too, that the word here used for "babe" (Heb. v. 13) is not used for one betokening a right moral, or spiritual state of soul. It is not the same word as that used by the Apostle John (1 John ii. 13) for a true and right state of soul before the Father. A babe, with him, knows the Father; he has the spirit of adoption, and calls Him such in a known relation. The Galatians could be told by Paul, of the day when he himself, with others of his people after the flesh, were babes, such as they had "become" whom he addressed in Heb. v. (See Gal. iv. 3.) But when they had received the adoption of sons (v. 5), this was no more their true state in God's sight.

The Ephesians, too—indeed the faithful of Christ Jesus at all times, are exhorted to be no more babes, tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine. Rather would the apostle desire that they should all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect (or full-grown) man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. (Eph. iv. 13, 14).

But to return. I might trace the testimony of the word of righteousness further. The law was given, and was broken. The perfect man Moses, knew what to do with the tent of the congregation, when he pitched it outside, and afar off from the camp of guilty Israel. And so through the Judges, and prophets, and kings of Israel and of Judah. Through

the captivity and the return from captivity; and the long dreary days which then ensued till the close of the books of the Old Testament. It might perhaps be traced, in measure also, through the days that followed; though the data should be taken from the books which are not the Word of God.

We will now pass on to the day when the Baptist's awakening blast of the silver trumpet of God, drew the crowds from Jerusalem and around, to the waters of Jordan, to his baptism and the confession of their sins; surrendering every claim or supposed claim to the promises as children of Abraham, they threw themselves on the sovereign mercies of God.

He called on men—Israel, to awaken to the true state of things: to discover the relations in which they and all stood with God: to accept, by faith, their true place in His sight as convicted sinners. His testimony was the word of righteousness for that day. Those “perfect” were they who accepted this and went down to Jordan, judging their condition, owning their sinfulness, and surrendering themselves to God. They were skilful in that word, and were thus, in their generation, going on, *pari passu*, with God, as His steps advanced towards the end.

Amongst them came Jesus, the Lord. John is conscious that this One who was preferred before him, had no sin to carry to that spot where the “perfect”—the “full grown” were pouring out their souls in confession before God. And so his word to Jesus, “I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?”

Mark, now, the Lord's reply, “Suffer it to be so now,” said the Saviour, “for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.” Here was One who was “perfect,” both in His own essential nature as God and Man, and in His descent into the waters of Jordan. In this He was “skilful in the word of righteousness.” He had told John that thus it became them both, each in their true moral place, to fulfil all such. If grace was moving in the hearts of men, and leading them down on their faces before God, each sensible of his sins; grace also led the blessed Saviour to the same spot, that He might identify Himself with these first movements of grace in hearts in which God was working. *They* were, in the sense of their guilt, in the place where divine grace had led them. *He* was there, pure and spotless, in the same place where divine grace led Him. Both were “perfect”

—“full grown,” and in God’s present “word of righteousness,” each was skilful in the suited way. To this the Lord would seem to allude in His reply to John.

He was the perfect “meat-offering” now presented to God. The fine flour of His true humanity; mingled with oil, as conceived by the Holy Ghost in His mother’s womb. As the unleavened cake, too, anointed with oil, when the Holy Ghost, descending in bodily shape like a dove, alighted on Him. The frankincense of this pure meat-offering ascended from the waters of Jordan to the heavens; and they now opened, for the first time, and the savour of the frankincense entered the Father’s presence, evoking the greeting, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

It is as the pure meat-offering, I conceive, that He is seen in Psalm xvi. He is there as it were a Priest waving it before the Lord. We hear Him in the waters of Jordan, as He looked round on those in whom grace was working, and looked up to God in lowliness, speaking the words, “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.” To such His heart went out in joy, when identifying Himself with the workings of divine grace and truth which moved in, and brought them there.

The day would come when the Son of the Father would lift up His eyes to these heavens, which now opened and looked down upon Him, and converse with the Father, and pray, in the hearing of His own, that they might know from His lips the mutual thoughts of the Father and the Son about them (John xvii. *passim*).

I can conceive nothing more deeply impressive than this. I can understand the Lord, when Satan would try to frustrate His purposes about His people (Num. xxii. xxiv.), reasoning with the enemy, or his instrument Balaam, and saying, as it were, “Well, I must hear from *your* mouth what *my* thoughts are about *my* people.” And the enemy tells the Lord their deep, full blessing, and how no one can reverse it, for they are blessed! This I can understand. I can understand by grace the Son’s revelation of His Father: the Spirit’s reasonings on the work of Christ—His person, His offices. But when in spirit I stand by in the calm of that moment, just before the storm burst in all its fury on the head of Christ, as anticipated in the garden,

and consummated at the cross, and am called to hearken to the Son—not reserving His communication with His Father till He was gone away from the scene where human ears could listen to the divine intercourse between them; to hearken to Him who would have His joy fulfilled in them (John xvii. 13); telling forth His thoughts and His wishes for His people, in their hearing—as He was now presenting them as sons before the Father; then indeed, I see that the depths and springs of divine grace far surpass what I have learned, though I see clearly, and with a thankful heart, that there are depths that I have yet to fathom, and love that I have to taste for myself, which is the love of Christ I know, and yet which passes knowledge.

The Lord entered His service (for He was both Lord and servant too), and proposed that man should know his God, and welcome Him when He came into his midst in love. Though man was unfit to be with God through sin, yet God would stoop to be with man, that He might save him from his sins. The word of righteousness then was, that He was now to be received. The crisis had come, and to receive or reject the Son of God closed his history. To build an ark might do in Noah's day; to leave country, kindred, and father's house, might do in Abraham's; and so on, as we pass along the line of God's relations and dealings with man on earth. To bow in confession of sins, stripped of pretensions as children of Abraham, might be the true place in John Baptist's time. Now these would not do: the "perfect," "full-grown," should still press on, *pari passu*, with God. Trust in Him who was there; receive Him; leave all for Him; cleave to Him, was now the word. He would do all the rest—whether for time and temporal things, or eternity and the soul's relationship with God.

How few were the "perfect" in His day! Yet all that would, heard His voice and followed Him, though the hopes seemed blasted which they had formed, and none could tell what would be on the morrow, for which they were to take no thought: sufficient unto each day would be the evil thereof.

The work of the cross was ended. Christ was rejected by His own, and by the world. He died and was buried; He rises again from amongst the dead; is seen of His witnesses for forty days; He ascends as Man on high, by the right hand of God exalted; from thence He sends the Holy Ghost, as

exalted Man and Head of His body the Church, now about to be formed. The Gospel is sounded out to the self-ruined Jew, and is to reach onwards to the uttermost parts of the earth, to as many as the Lord our God should call. Man was called to repent—to bow to the grace that so freely acted, to accept the place of a sinner *pardoned*; as before, by the word of righteousness, sounded by John the Baptist, he was called to bow and own in faith that he was a *convicted*, self-ruined sinner.

But more. In very deed God Himself had come to dwell with the redeemed. No longer was it to be occasional visits to His saints, as in patriarchal days; or as He dwelt in Israel's midst, in a tent, while they were wanderers; or in a temple built with hands, in the land of Israel, till the glory departed from their midst. Nor again, was it to tabernacle for awhile amongst men, as He did in the Word made flesh. It was now the Spirit of God, sent down from on high to take up His abode in a new sort of dwelling-place—the bodies of His saints individually, and in their collective midst; to unite, to solace, to lead, to edify, to abide with them for ever, while they sojourned on earth in their pilgrim days, until the Church entered the glory of her Lord, to abide with Him for ever.

The Spirit's presence on earth was now the great cardinal truth of Christianity; and this, as flowing through the cross of the Lord Jesus, and the mighty results there wrought out. That cross, which solved every question for God and man, for time and eternity, brought glory to Him and salvation to His people. The Man who hung there was now on the throne of God—dispenser of all blessings, and wielding all power in heaven and earth. There He was for a time, till the purposes of God's counsels were consummated, and the Church of God gathered out from every people, and tongue, and kindred, and nation, to reign with Him over the earth.

This was an immense step in God's ways—one that would no longer leave His people in the condition in which they were at periods antecedent to this time. They may have been, and were hitherto "perfect" in their generation and time, according to the truths then made known—the word of righteousness for each period that had passed. But now all was consummated which had been counselled, or promised, and the "perfection" of that day would now no longer be the response to the present dealings of the Lord.

The great starting point of the interval through which we now pass, was—a Man, in God's glory, who occupied God's throne, who had wrought the redemption of His people, and His sending the Spirit personally to the earth, to gather out those whose sins He had borne and put away—to form His body, His Church, His bride.

Christendom then ensued, in her sad and blotted history. God's truths of the present interval were well-nigh blotted out by her corruption and iniquity, as far as man and Satan could do. Her history still runs on till its end in judgment. During that history God has raised a warning voice, a trumpet-tongued testimony from time to time, which, in its way, might be in a sense termed the "word of righteousness," for that moment. The hearts of the faithful have responded to such testimonies from God, and have been the "perfect," so to say, of their time. But to cleave to such in an after day, when God had still continued to bring forth His word of righteousness, and make known the right relations in which everything stood to Him, is but to "become a babe," and to refuse the "strong meat" of the "perfect" of the day which followed.

For instance:—To hold fast to the truths propounded by the Reformers—those great vessels which He then raised up to give forth His word of righteousness; and to refuse the further light and truth with which He has shined at later periods—even in the days in which we live, is but to betray a childhood in those who do so, which is truly to be condemned. It is not that they are called upon to deny those testimonies which they uttered, and which they were His instruments to revive; far be the thought. Nay, but to be thankful, truly thankful for them, and yet to haste their feet in willing steps onward in God's truths, as step by step He gave forth His word of righteousness as the moment suited for the same. An Abraham might learn true and blessed lessons from a Noah's path and God's then revealed "word" to him. Still it would not be a denial of it, or a refusal of the same, to be governed by the fresh "word" to himself at a later day. Nor do those who might be termed the perfect of the present day deny the truths uttered by the Reformers—nay, they glory in them, while they go on responding to the word for the present day, and hold themselves in readiness for the next "word of righteousness" to which He may draw attention, and which He

who foresaw the end from the beginning had revealed, in view of every exigence, in His word.

Thus the "word of righteousness" in which the writer of Hebrews would have us "skilful," makes known the present relations in which all things stand with God at any given moment. He looks for a ready response to such in the hearts and ways of His people, who are the "perfect" of the time: thus they are found in the current of the Spirit's actions and present ministry on earth, and are not satisfied with the things, however precious, which He has ministered in days gone by, and then forget that He continues with and in the Church, constantly and daily to take of the things of Christ and show them to their souls. How dry and worthless would creeds and formularies be to such: to those who looked for the fresh unfolding of the glories and excellencies of Jesus; and who love to learn more of Him whom they have not seen, yet have learned to love, to worship, and adore!

The fitness of this expression—"Unskilful in the word of righteousness"—will be easily seen, as used by the Spirit in the Epistle to the Hebrews. There was need of rebuke and encouragement from the Lord to those who were addressed. They were resting satisfied with certain elementary truths with regard to Christ. The Spirit would condemn this resting satisfied with such. They should go on to know Christ in glory, and all that flowed from the knowledge of Him there, and the results to them; in other words, to "go on to perfection." The very absence of such progress causes him to raise the solemn, warning words of the early part of Hebrews vi., knowing that retrogression in spiritual things may lead to their surrender, and the sad discovery that he who once held them, did so but to his own destruction, because only intellect and mind were at work, and no true quickening of soul was there.

He would encourage the feeblest living one, and warn the most instructed professor, filling the one with "strong consolation," and telling the other that, having made known the blessed truths of Christianity, God had no more to reveal, for He Himself was known, and His Spirit given to carry down the blessed things of Christ from heaven to earth, in His absence on high. If such were only used by intellect, and no living faith at work in the soul, "it was impossible to renew such unto repentance."

SOME THOUGHTS ON JOHN'S GOSPEL.

CHAPTER XIV.

“BELIEVE also in me.” These words the Lord says, because they would see Him no more; He was going into heaven alone, and they could not follow Him now, but He was going to prepare places for them amongst those that were very near His Father.

To console them for His going away, He tells them that He would receive them to Himself in His Father's house. When we go to heaven we shall find there some one we love to see. People wish to go to heaven because they are afraid of hell: but what delight would they have in heaven, who do not love Jesus and who do not know Him? But we believers are happy in going, and the sooner the better, because we know Christ; otherwise heaven itself would be a weariness to us.

If a son had a father and mother in a foreign country, he would say, “notwithstanding, I want to go home,” because his home is where he has those whom he loves. Two things I want to see in heaven; the first is Christ with the Father, and the second, all the saints perfected according to the heart of God.

Jesus says to Philip that he ought to know the Father, and the way to go to the Father. The Father was to be seen in Jesus, and the way was Himself, by which to go to the Father. This is a revelation complete and precious, because if we know and have the Son and the Father, we can look for nothing greater. It is the *acme* and fulness of joy in heaven. At *v. 7* it is said, “If ye had known me.” They had known Him well as the Messiah, but they did not as yet know well His glorious person. To Peter it was revealed that He was the Son of the living God, but even he had not really comprehended the glory of His person.

In *v. 15* we have the character of our love for the Lord, that is obedience: and false love is known by this, that it does not manifest itself in obedience to His commandments and to His word. From *v. 16* we have another truth that was not then fulfilled; that is the Holy Spirit, the Comforter. When they would possess Him, they would know that Christ was in them and they in Christ. Jesus would not remain for ever with them, but certainly the Holy Spirit would. The three Persons are ever distinct, though they cannot be separated. At *v. 19* we see that it is by faith we see Jesus;

because He lives, we shall live also ; our life is as secure as that of Christ. There are some who say that we cannot now know that we are in Him, though *v.* 20 tells us "In that day ye shall know ;" that day is when we have the Holy Spirit in us ; and we have Him now, and so we can say, "I am in Christ, and Christ in me."

In the first part of this chapter the Father is revealed in the Son for the consolation of His disciples ; He did not speak of the Holy Spirit, because He needed first to ascend to heaven to send Him ; in the second part it is said of the Holy Spirit whom the Father would send, that He would be a Spirit of adoption. Jesus had been their Comforter while He had been on earth, but He could not stay there always ; but the other Comforter, the Holy Spirit, would abide with them—that is, until the church would be caught away. Christ had dwelt *with* them, and the Holy Spirit would dwell *in* them. We have the very Spirit that is in Christ, by which we are united to Him so as to form one body. That the Father was in Christ, was a thing they ought to have understood, but it was not yet the time to understand that they were in Christ, because the Holy Spirit had not yet been given, and it is only known when He dwells in us. (See *v.* 17, and 1 John iv. 13, 15.) It is important to understand well that we are in Christ and Christ in us, that we are brought to God according to the worth of Christ.

In these chapters of this gospel it is always a question of responsibility, not for man a sinner, but for the disciples (see *v.* 21). If we are obedient, we enjoy His presence ; and if we are disobedient, though we know that God never leaves us, still we do not enjoy the sweetness of communion with Him. It is not a question of the grace that washes and saves a sinner, but of the responsibility of the Christian. "He that hath my commandments ;"—a Christian who knows the will of God, knows what pleases the Lord ; and a Christian who is negligent, and does not live near the Lord, has not, and cannot have the commandments of the Lord, although they are written for him in the Word.

Under the economy of grace, we have not commandments as they had under the law ; "do this and that, and do not do this or that." Under grace, in order to know Christ's commandments, you must study the Word, be vigilant, spiritual. A Christian who says he has not a commandment for this or that, is a disobedient Christian, because he has

not paid attention to what God has said. Many Christians are in this state, and then no wonder they do not know how to walk. If I do not know the will of the Father, it is a sign I have not lived near Him, with the heart and ears inclined towards Him. Then the loss is great. One loses the enjoyment of His communion and His manifestation, as it is said here, "I will love him, and manifest myself to him. . . . he that keepeth my word, we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." We have a beautiful example of this in Moses (Exodus xxxiii). God says to Moses, "I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight." But Moses is not content with this, and wants to know the Lord every day practically in the way he has to go, and therefore he says to God, "If I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee. . . . For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth." It was not a question of his own acceptance, but of communion that comes from the practical and daily knowledge of the will of God.

This manifestation for the Christian is not external, but altogether spiritual—in the heart. The world knows nothing of it, nor does the worldly Christian, but only he who lives in the presence of God, and who is obedient. It is a question of the faithfulness of the Christian, not of his salvation.

Jesus leaves peace, the peace that He must procure by the cross for us sinners, when He has reconciled us to God. "My peace," is what Jesus Himself enjoyed in this world. We have already remarked, elsewhere, that when a man gives, he gives what he has naturally, and in giving he is deprived himself of what he gives away; but Jesus is not deprived of what He gives, but He introduces us into the enjoyment with Himself of all that which He gives, as the glory, peace—in fact, everything. At v. 28 the Lord teaches us that we should love Him not only for the good He bestows on us, but for His own sake; that we likewise should be interested in His happiness. The departure of Jesus, if it was a subject of grief when they thought of themselves, ought to be on the other hand a subject of joy, if they thought (as they would have thought, if they had loved Him) of the blessing and joy of Jesus, in that He was going to the Father.

Satan is not called the prince of this world before the cross, because it was there it was manifested fully what he was. Satan returns now to Jesus: he had left Him after the temptations in the wilderness. Christ, the stronger man, had bound Satan, had spoiled his goods, casting devils out of man, curing the sick, setting man, in fact, free from all the effects of sin; but man, notwithstanding all this, would not have Him. Then, if God wanted man in glory, Jesus must die for the sinner Himself, for the evil state of man, in order to redeem him. But then Satan presents himself, and says, "If you want to redeem man you must pass through death, and I have the power of death;" and, in fact, the judgment of God confirmed what Satan had said, and therefore Christ annulled this power by death on the cross. It is said here that Satan had nothing in Christ; there was no entrance for evil, because He was pure and most holy, and all His life had been perfect. At *v.* 31 we see all earthly relationships with the world are ended and put aside: "Arise, let us go hence."

Y O N D E R.

Where the blossoms never wither,
 Where the flowers are ever gay,
 Where the Nightshades never gather
 Round the brightness of the day.

Where the joy of summer sunshine,
 With its fresh and balmy air,
 Decks with never-fading beauty
 All the tints so rich and fair.

There no death shall ever enter,
 There no blossom ever fade—
 Pain nor sickness, sin nor sorrow,
 Storm nor tempest, gloom nor shade.

There the restless will is silenced—
 Many a thorny path it trod!
 There the sparrow, there the swallow,
 Find their home—the house of God.

There the poor, the outcast wanderer,
 There the blind, the halt, the maim'd,
 Found by Jesu's power and pity,
 Are as barren ground reclaim'd.

There's the Lamb in all His beauty,
 Who can tell His glorious worth
 Once upon the cross in pity ;
 Now He's Lord of heaven and earth.

There He lives—the Father's sunshine
 Beaming forth on all around,
 There He leads the ransomed chorus,
 Heavenly, holy, happy sound.

See the choir that now surrounds Him,
 Hear the music of their strain,
 "Jesus Christ alone is worthy,
 Let Him live and rule and reign."

Now they take their harps and tune them,
 Now their pray'rs are turn'd to praise,
 Past their night of anxious waiting,
 Now the song of joy they raise.

"Sinners once, He has redeemed us
 When He shed for us His blood,
 And in every nation found us—
 Made us kings and priests to God.

"Now to reign in heavenly glory,
 Raised by grace and power divine,
 He has sought for and has saved us,
 In His brightness there to shine."

ON THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

CHAPTER V. 13, &c.

THERE is a very comfortable secret contained in this verse. The apostle writes to those who know the Son of God, to interpret to them all that is involved in that knowledge. They may now know their blessedness, which he wishes to tell them, that they have eternal life. Many a dear soul does not know the blessedness in which it stands in the knowledge of Christ. Surely we ought to know that if Christ has done a work for us, it is that He may bless us. "That you *may know that you have,*" &c.

When the unconverted are spoken to about Christ, it is to work a change in them ; but here it is interpreting Christ as eternal life, to those who believe. There is a large generation who, while they believe in Christ, and would, as much as Paul himself, hate every other confidence, yet do not know the blessed place in which they stand. We must

linger still a little here ; it is unto you that believe *on the name* of the Son of God.

Have you ever traced the names of God through the volume of Scripture? It is a beautiful study. In the first chapter of Genesis it is simply "God." In the second, it is not only the naked, abstract name of God, but the "Lord God"—thus putting Him in connection with, and nearness to man. As we go on through the book, we find the title drawing us still nearer. We find the new name "the God of Abraham." In the Exodus, when Moses says, "When they shall ask me thy name, what shall I say unto them?" the answer is, "I am that I am"—Jehovah Jah ; but not only this—not only the title of the self-existent God—but, "Moreover, the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob ; this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." And further on again, when Moses pleaded for Israel in the matter of the golden calf, he was hid in the cleft of the rock, and "the Lord passed by it." This is the name in which the Lord delighted—a name which declared God as suited to lost and ruined creatures.

I shall not linger here to speak of Isaiah's Immanuel, but pass on to Matt. i. Here we meet with "Jesus," the Saviour ; and again, at the close of the ministry, where the time is come for the full display of glory, He commands the apostles to baptize "in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost." *Name*, not *names*, because though three persons, they are but one God. This is the full disclosure of divine glory. We stand in the faith of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

In the book of the Acts the word "name" is much insisted on ; often repeated. It is the "name of the Son of God" as here, His name as He now stands, having accomplished all that a sinner needs ; having died and risen again. Be it known unto you that when by faith you adopt this name, you adopt all that the Son of God has done for poor sinners. He has been declared to be "the Son of God with power," &c., &c., and that name is published now all over the world as the only introduction to the true God. When we turn to Rev. xix. we have Jesus as the Rider on the white horse, coming forth in the last display of glory, surrounded by all dignitaries, clad with all the glories that He has earned for Himself.

Just like many matters in the Scriptures, His name becomes gradually disclosed, as we bring the various parts together. It is just in character with the unity of the whole volume.

And let me say, there is nothing so persuasive of the divine origin of the book as this very fact of its unity, and by the variety of its writers—separated by ages, nay, thousands of years; separated by habits, occupations, and sympathies, yet united to form a work divine in its unity.

The name of Christ unfolds its glories gradually from the bright creation glory of Gen. i. to the more excellent glory of “King of kings, and Lord of lords.” Yes, God has come into this world to gain honour to Himself for ever, and *from us!* God could let Moses know that He derived more pleasure from the name He got in contact with poor sinners than from His own title of essential glory. His name, Jehovah, He shall be known by, but His name of grace shall be His memorial to all generations. And now we see that it is the expression of the divine goodness to serve others. God prizes such occasions. Would that we could give Him credit for it! He loves to be the God of sinners rather than the God of glory! I have but to trust Him, to know that I have eternal life. Oh! cannot I let myself go and commit myself to Him? Shame, shame, if you do not let yourself go, and slip into His arms!

Verse 14.—There are two thoughts here—it is one thing to be conscious of your personal acceptance, and another to know that your petitions are accepted. You ought to be certain of your own acceptance, you cannot always be certain of the acceptance of your petitions. You do not want assurance (or you should not) of your own acceptance, but you do want to be assured of the acceptance of your petitions, because a condition attaches to them. If I go to a human friend with a request, I must know two things: one is, that he should accept my requirement, the other, that he should accept myself. When I go to God with a request, I should not agitate the question of my own acceptance, yet, I must, of the acceptance of my petitions.

Verse 15.—There are two ways of interpreting this passage in the light of Scripture. It may be spoken of ecclesiastical or of personal (*i.e.*, individual) sin. In 1 Corinthians xi. we have the sin unto death, as an offence in the Church, but there is another sin unto death—it is the sin of

Cain. We have it in Acts, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish." Adam sinned against law—it was a sin unto death; but Cain sinned against the remedy for sin. This is the thing noticed in Acts. It is not "ye *sinner*s, but ye *despiser*s,"—despisers of God's remedy. What can God do further, when you have despised the remedy which He has found for sin? This is sin against the Holy Ghost, which cannot be forgiven.

In Hebrews x. we have it again, "Treading under foot the Son of God, counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing." This is not ecclesiastical, but personal. It is not your sin that proves your ruin, but your despising the remedy. Some think this is ecclesiastical; I do not, for I do not see that John enters, in any wise, into Church matters.

Verse 17.—All unrighteousness is sin. This guards your making light of unrighteousness, even when it is not unto death.

A wholesome exhortation, but a grave conclusion!

Verse 18.—Then again we get the undefilableness of the new nature. The wicked one has neither commerce nor conversation with him—he is morally out of his reach. The wicked one can touch *you*, but not your *new nature*. It was not so with Christ. He could predicate of His whole nature what you can of your new nature. He could say that Satan had nothing in him; and so it was, from whatsoever point He was tried. Satan sought to engraft evil, a moral taint, but was foiled; there was "nothing" for him in Christ. You cannot, you would not say that of yourself, but you can say it of your new nature.

Here, again, Christ shines out in contrast to us, and we gladly yield the pre-eminence to Him. If you can say that your new nature is beyond the reach of the wicked one, it is because you owe that new nature to Him. You have your old nature from Adam, but your new nature is of and from Christ, and is, like Him, undefilable.

The world, as we have said, is that thing which is nurtured, framed, and educated by the wicked one, and which lies in his bosom. It came into life by his lies, and is supported by them. But we are in God. The truth has separated us from the world, and given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true.

Read v. 20 with the 8th chapter of John's Gospel, and we see there the wondrous argument that your understanding

must be prepared to know Jesus. "Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my words." The Jews were worse than Nicodemus asking "How can a man be born again?" Incompetency is worse than ignorance. This is what the Jews betray—incompetency to understand Jesus. He says to them, "You do not understand my words; my very language is that of a barbarian to you."

It is not alone that the natural man wants a lesson; he wants faculty also to understand. This is a solemn conclusion to this Epistle, though it magnifies the grace of God. Nothing exhausts love—love never fails. Is anything too hard for the Lord? Is anything too great to expect from Him? If I can say this of His power, why cannot I say it of His love? Can I expect too much of His love? Never! So when He finds me incompetent, darkness around and darkness within, He turns both into light. Otherwise the mission of the Son of God has not been answered. But He hath given us an understanding, and now you are debtors to Him for everything, for the lesson and the understanding. It is just what you would like to be, and that for ever, "A debtor to mercy alone."

In conclusion, I would observe that just as Jesus honoured the Father, so the Spirit honours Jesus. When Jesus speaks of the Father, it is to hide Himself behind Him. "That they might know thee, the only true God," &c., &c. So the Spirit delights to look at the Son, and say, "This is the true God, and eternal life." It is very beautiful to study the economic places of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The Son honours the Father, and the Holy Ghost honours the Son, and in worship of this name we stand, the name in which we have been baptized.

Verse 21 is often used in a very poor, feeble, moral way, as if it were to warn against going after the world. True, the love of money is idolatry, but that is not touched here. We are told to escape from moral idolatry, but the thought here is higher. Go, fashion to yourself all the attributes of beauty, excellence, and wisdom, and mould them into a deity, adorn it as you please with every grace, it is but a creature of your own imagination. Your idolatry may be more refined and theistic than the worship of Jupiter or Juno, but if it be not the God who has revealed Himself in Christ whom you worship, you are but an idolater after all.

Let us now glance over a few of the leading characteristics of this Epistle, as we have spoken of them.

We have God as light and love in contradistinction to Satan's lie in Eden. Then we have Christ as the manifestation of truth, that Eternal Life which was with the Father. He came into the world freighted with truth, and went back to Heaven freighted with salvation! Glorious journey that was, and full revelation. The Spirit, too, has here one peculiar defined character, it is "Uction." Other characters He has elsewhere mentioned, is "Seal," and "Earnest," but here He waits on Christ as the Spirit of Truth. The Truth of God was to be manifested, and the Spirit of God waited on the ministry, and made it the happy possession of our souls. Then we have the world formed by the lie of the Serpent, and nourished by its vitalizing, kindling power. We have the new undefilable nature, and we have the new life, neither committed to us, nor maintained, but drawn from an indestructible source.

This brings us to victory. The new life being a divine principle, is of necessity victorious. You are often defeated, faith never is—unbelief is made a fool of, faith never. "This is the victory," etc.

Lastly, we have tests. "He that doeth not righteousness," etc., etc. Do you not like these tests? Would you not have the Divine nature produce in you its proper fruits? It must prove itself in you, as in Christ, shining forth in righteousness and love. We have God—Christ—the Spirit—the new nature—the victory of faith—and tests.

It is well to muse a little over these things, this wondrous treasury. You are not with the church, but with God. It is blessed to walk with saints; there are duties we cannot fulfil apart from them, it is precious to be with the people of God, but after all the *great thing is to be with Himself*. The Lord grant that we may know and prize this company! —Amen.

QUERIES AND ANSWERS.

"C."—What is the meaning of the expressions "a perfect man," and "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," Eph. iv. 13? Is *ανδρα τελειον* here the completed mystical Christ of 1 Cor. xii.—"the church which is his body?" Or, is it the individual normal state contemplated

for every Christian in contrast with "children" of the following verse?

Is the "fulness of Christ" here the same as in ch. i. 23, the fully developed growth or completeness of the mystic Christ; or is it the growth of the individual Christian to his normal stature in Christ, the effect of the ministry through the grace of Christ, already referred to in the previous part of the chapter?

A.—"A perfect man" in this passage expresses the full-grown normal condition of the individual Christian; "the measure of the stature of the fulness of (the) Christ" being that standard to which he is to reach, and to be conformed. *Ἀνδρα τελειον* is also the individual: there is really nothing whatever about the body of Christ—the mystical Christ and the church in this part of the chapter (*vv.* 7-15.) The expression is used in contrast with the "babes" of *v.* 14. Remark too that the apostle uses *νηπιου* for babes; betokening an unhealthy state, as in 1 Cor. ii. 1, &c.

The "fulness of Christ" here is not the same as in ch. i. 23. Here it is all individual, as effected through the ministry spoken of before, or by whatever means the Lord works to bring about His purpose in result. In ch. i. 23, the body is Christ's fulness, who is set over all things. In ch. iii., the saint in whose heart Christ dwells, is "filled into all the fulness of God." (*Εἰς παν το πληρωμα του Θεου*). In ch. iv. 13, the saint is to grow to a perfect man—the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ—his normal stature, as you say; the effect of the ministry through grace, previously named.

H Y M N.

(ROMANS VIII. 38, 39.)

WHAT triumphant joy and blessing
Have Thy saints, O God, in Thee;
Quenchless love, through Christ, possessing
Glory great, and mercy free.

Death itself, nor life, nor angels,
Principalities; nor things
Present, nor to come; nor powers,
Height, nor depth; nor creatures all.

E'er our ransom'd souls can sever
From Thy love, in Christ our Lord;
Kept and bless'd by Thee for ever,
Be Thou in His Name ador'd.

FAITH IN THE WRITTEN WORD—AN ILLUSTRATION.

ESTHER iv. viii.

THE book of Esther, perhaps little read, and in which, as has been often remarked, the name of God is not once to be met with, is nevertheless part of the canon of Scripture.

Its purport is to record how God interfered providentially to preserve alive the Jews, when threatened with extermination by the decree of Ahasuerus, issued at the suggestion of the wicked Haman. Scattered abroad as exiles from their land, because they had sinned against God when they dwelt in it, He nevertheless placed His protecting shield over them, and put His arm around them,—a fact full of comfort for them in all their subsequent wanderings and vicissitudes. And we, who understand the secret history of matters, looking deeper than the surface, can discover whose malice it was that counselled that blow aimed at their very existence, which, however, was more than parried by the merciful interference of their God. Haman and Mordecai are figures on the stage, but the devil was acting behind the scenes, attempting again, what he had before tried in Egypt, to extirpate the people from off the face of the earth.

But why this persistent opposition to a feeble and defenceless people, dwelling a second time among strangers? Had the devil succeeded in his design, God's saving grace would never have been known. Had the Jews been then exterminated, the Saviour God had promised could never have appeared. Of the seed of Abraham, of the house of David, the Lord Jesus Christ was to spring. Had that line then been cut off before the time arrived for the Messiah to be born, the hopes of man must have withered, and the prospects of blessing for earth have been blighted for ever. In Egypt this was attempted by the decree to destroy all the male infants. God frustrated that design, and reared up in the very family of Pharaoh the instrument by whom He would afterwards chastise the Egyptians. After the Lord's birth, another effort was made to hinder the accomplishment of God's purpose. By the flight into Egypt, however, the blow aimed by Herod failed to reach his intended victim. But Satan has not forgotten the birth of the Lord, nor the nation's connection with Him after the flesh. And by and by Israel will feel the effects of his great wrath, when,

unable to kill the child, he will seek to destroy the woman (Rev. xii). One understands then the real cause why the existence of the Jews was imperilled under Ahasuerus, as well as the great issue at stake. Ostensibly it was politically wise for the king, as suggested by Haman, to grant that decree. In reality, unless God had interposed, it would have consigned all mankind to a doom, which, though just, would have been irreversible. Little suspected the king, as he sat to drink with Haman, the deep and awful meaning of that day's work, as far as men were concerned.

But "the counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations" (Ps. xxxiii. 11). God's purpose about the Lord cannot be frustrated. He will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are on earth and which are in heaven. He will judge, too, the world by Him, and has already appointed a day (Ephes. i. 10, Acts xvii. 31). These, and other statements of the word, acquaint us with God's plans, bound up as they are with the future in store for His Son; and not all the wisdom of Egypt's counsellors, the malicious cunning of Haman, nor the savage cruelty of Herod, could overthrow, or even arrest, the fulfilment of the eternal counsels of God. A comforting reflection is this for His saints, a most solemn consideration it should be for His enemies.

How incompetent is man, fallen or unfallen, to be intrusted with the destiny of his soul! Adam and Eve, for the pleasure of the moment, coupled with the expectation of being like God, forfeited all blessing for the future, with their life, as well as intercourse in innocence with Jehovah, their Creator. Pharaoh, for fear of Israel turning traitor during any invasion of the land, and asserting their independence, and escaping from Egypt, proposed to kill all their male children when born. Ahasuerus, to gratify his favourite, handed over the chosen people to be slaughtered by their enemies. Herod, to save a dynasty, would have irretrievably ruined the race. Such is man, so easily made a tool of by his most inveterate foe, acting, as he vainly imagines, for his own best interest; state policy, or self-preservation constraining him to follow a course, which to him even would otherwise probably be indefensible, yet really compassing his own ruin, and dragging down with himself, unless God interpose, the whole human race to the pit of everlasting destruction.

But another point comes out in this book, to which let me invite the reader's attention, and that is the illustration, afforded us by the Jews, of faith in the word of the One on the throne.

Haman's hatred of Mordecai was just as deep and bitter before, as after the decree for the slaughter of the Jews was issued. Till it was issued, however, the lives and the property of the Jews were as safe as those of any other of the subjects of the great king. But, the knowledge that such a decree was signed, to them changed everything. Haman's enmity they might have heard about, and yet might have lived without allowing the wrath of the Agagite to disquiet their hearts; but the written decree of the king, authenticated by his seal, who could withstand? This all classes understood, whether personally affected by it or not. For, though Ahasuerus and Haman could turn to their carousal, satisfied with their day's work, the city of Shushan was perplexed, Mordecai put on sackcloth with ashes, and throughout the king's extensive dominions, wherever the decree reached, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping and wailing, and many lay in sackcloth and ashes. What a change had come over the city, and produced by what?—the written word of the king!

The day of their doom, however, was yet distant; for the decree, signed on the thirteenth day of the first month, was not to come into operation till the thirteenth day of the twelfth month. Could they not then eat, drink, and be merry for a time, without taking it so much to heart just at first? Why not enjoy life still, and put off, till nearer the day, the thought of what was impending? Impossible. Death was before them, destruction awaited them, let them talk as they might. The thirteenth day of the month Adar was, it was true, still some way off; but what mattered that, if the day would infallibly arrive? The fatal decree had been signed and published; and, though they had at Shushan a year of grace, the day of their doom was fixed. If they believed the king's writing, how could they be otherwise than sad and distressed? What a view of life on earth, we may well believe, many must have got, if living in enjoyment and pleasure before? What availed a few months of pleasure here, if destruction awaited them at the end of the year? Doubtless some became earnest now, who before had been as butterflies on a summer's day, enjoying the bright-

ness of the moment, without contemplating the possibility of death cutting short their career. Would such a life do still? Ah, no! The possibility of escaping their doom would be now the pressing thought, and no longer how to kill time, and how to make the days pass happily and quickly enough. And were they foolish to be aroused and concerned at that decree? The issue indeed justified their concern, and men will all agree they did well to be disquieted, and to mourn.

But supposing they had taken up other ground, and discredited its existence, would that have saved them? They would not in that case have fasted. Sorrow would not have clouded their joys, and Esther might never have known of the king's fatal missive, till the morning arrived for its execution, and his palace floor had been stained by her blood. All might have been spared many hours of anxiety, but none would have been preserved from the extermination which threatened them. Or, supposing they had adopted a different course, and, whilst admitting the genuineness of the decree, had taken no steps to avert its execution, trusting to the general clemency and merciful character of their king; in that case also, they would not have fasted; but would not their seeming gaiety and thoughtlessness have been at times intruded upon, as by an unwelcome guest, with the fear that perhaps after all they might be sleeping on the brink of a volcano? And what would have been the final result under such circumstances? Irrecoverable ruin for their race. Incredulity, and continued procrastination, would have been alike fatal.

The decree was issued against all the Jews, so all were involved in the ruin it legalized and commanded. The palace at Shushan would not afford a sanctuary, nor the king's harem a refuge, as Mordecai warned Esther. God, he felt sure, would act for His people, for he evidently understood something of the divine purpose about Israel; but, as far as man was concerned, no Jew could count on exemption from death on that fatal thirteenth day of the month Adar. God's word, Mordecai felt, could not fail, so the nation would not perish; but which of them would survive that day, he could not have ventured to predict. Of one thing he was sure, and would have Esther to understand it, that unless she bestirred herself to gain an audience of the king, she and her father's house would infallibly perish in the coming calamity (iv. 14). Nor was her uncle mistaken in

his calculations, for no less than five hundred men, enemies of the Jews, were found, and slain in Shushan, the palace, when the appointed day arrived (ix. 6).

But what was to be done? How could they appeal to the king? How could they gain an audience? How could they convince a man like him that he had made a mistake? All now hung on the king's favour. Esther had not seen him for thirty days; and by law, to the infraction of which the penalty of death was attached, no one could enter his presence unsummoned, unless he held out the golden sceptre. The fate of the nation then, humanly speaking, hung on the king's favour. To claim an audience was impossible. Would he extend to her the golden sceptre, that she might live? In this, as far as man could see, was her and her people's only chance of escape. The king was gracious. God moved his heart to accept the person of the queen, as He afterwards withheld sleep from the monarch's eyes, to carry out His providential dealings with the Jews.

The king favourably inclined to her, she managed at the second banquet to acquaint him with the real nature of the decree which he had sanctioned. His eyes opened to it, Haman's death took place, and Mordecai's exaltation; and a second decree appeared, not reversing the former, but granting leave to the Jews to defend themselves, and to slay their enemies who should rise up against them.

On the three and twentieth day of the third month, the second decree was signed, to take effect some eight months later, viz., on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month. Now all was changed in Shushan, and amongst the Jews throughout the hundred and twenty and seven provinces over which the king reigned. "The city of Shushan rejoiced, and was glad. The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour. And in every province and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day" (viii. 15-17). But why this sudden change? The written word of the king had caused mourning, his written word was productive of rejoicing.

But some might have said, "All this rejoicing is premature. The thirteenth day of Adar has not yet come. Delay your demonstrations of happiness till that day has passed." But no. They did not do that, who believed their monarch's word. It was true that the first decree remained

uncancelled, but the second was unalterable, and of undoubted validity. They waited not, then, till the day had come and gone, to see whether they could place reliance on their sovereign's written word. They believed they could; they rejoiced in the prospect of finding it sufficient, months before they could put it to the test; for they knew that the writing written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, might no man reverse (viii. 8). What ground to rest upon was this! A solid, stable foundation.

At length the time came when the wisdom of their fasting, and the propriety of their rejoicing before the event, were both amply justified. Eight hundred of their enemies slain in the palace, and seventy-five thousand put to death in the provinces, proved the widespread enmity in existence against them, which only waited a fitting opportunity to display itself (ix. 12-16). Had they been unconcerned when the first decree was issued, how many would have survived the slaughter legalized by the king's commandment? Were they premature in rejoicing when the second decree was issued? Not one of those, who believed in the certainty of the execution of the one, but had full ground to be glad at the signing of the other; for, trusting to the royal word, and acting as he had directed them, not one of the Jews lost his life or his property, when the sun had set on that ever to be remembered day.

Again, supposing any one had questioned their right to rejoice eight months before the event could take place, what answer had they at hand? Ahasuerus, they could say, had indeed accepted the Jews, though most of them had never doubtless beheld him. But how could that be affirmed of those who had never been personally spoken to by him? They could know it by this: Mordecai, as their representative before him, had come out of his presence with a great crown of gold on his head, and royal apparel of blue and white on his shoulders (viii. 15). In his acceptance, each Jew could see his own. But none but those of Mordecai's race could on that account feel assured of the royal favour. All, however, who were Jews, could see in that a token of the king's favour to them. "And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them" (viii. 17).

Such, then, were the circumstances and conduct of the Jews during that year, the twelfth year of Ahasuerus—the

Xerxes, as is commonly thought, of profane history. Let us now turn to that of which they are an illustration.

By the king's written proclamation, as we have seen, the doom of the Jews was settled, and the day fixed. "The wrath of God," we read in Romans i. 18, "is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness;" and the day is appointed when that wrath shall be poured out, and judgment take effect (Rom. ii. 16; Acts xvii. 31; 2 Thess. i. 7-10); "and they shall not escape" (1 Thess. v. 3), is God's announcement concerning those on earth who will be overtaken by the day of the Lord. What, then, should men do under these circumstances? Should they ignore the divine warning? God's wrath will be poured out, whatever men may think about it. Should they continue careless about it? That day may then, perchance, overtake them (it certainly will come) as a thief (1 Thess. v. 1-3; Rev. xvi. 15). But will God indeed punish men some may ask. He fulfilled to the letter His announcement about the flood. He will, we may be assured, fulfil His word about the judgment to come. The Jews under Ahasuerus took the king at his word, and the wisdom of their belief in the decree was afterwards fully justified. Should men not act with reference to God's word in a similar way?

Again, exercise of heart in the Jews, in respect to their impending doom, preceded their deliverance from it, and to all now exercised in their consciences about God's holiness, God's truthfulness, and the sinner's desert, God speaks, to tell them of a way of escape from that terrible day of reckoning with the wicked which must infallibly arrive. In the gospel, we learn the righteousness of God is revealed by faith to faith, as it is written, "The just shall live by faith" (Rom. i. 17; John v. 24). The second decree of Ahasuerus was enough for the Jews. Should not God's written word be enough for men? No amount of mere profession will save a soul on that day, for God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness. No depths of sin into which a man may have got will place him now, if he believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, beyond the reach of salvation. "For all have sinned, and do come short of the glory of God: yet can be justified freely by God's grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (Romans iii. 23, 24).

The Jews believed, and rejoiced, before the day came. Souls in the early days of Christianity were expecting God's Son from heaven, who delivers us from the wrath to come (1 Thess. i. 10); and in Him they could, and did rejoice, receiving the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls (1 Peter i. 8, 9). Like the Jews in that twelfth year, we stand between the written announcement of the future and its fulfilment. Reader, have you, like those Jews, built your hopes on the written word of Him who is on the throne? Their only ground of rejoicing was the written decree as to a future day. We are to trust now in the word of our God. 'Tis true they could point to Mordecai's exit from the king's audience chamber, adorned with a golden crown and clad in royal apparel; and cannot we point to the sinner's surety, the High Priest too of His people, who is now in heaven crowned with glory and honour? (Hebrews ii. 9.)

My reader, shall the simple faith of these Jews, and the sequel of their history, fail to touch you? Shall their conduct be an example for you? Or can you say that, not only can you enter into their feelings, as they contemplated their doom, but you understand their feelings of relief and gladness, having yourself experienced such, when the way of deliverance was made known, and the word of Him, who sits on the throne, was implicitly trusted in and obeyed?

L I G H T !

E'en as the infant moon, from shadows free,
 Displays a light, which none had yet beheld :
 So shines the soul, whose darkness is dispell'd
 By living rays, which beam, O Lord, from Thee.
 And, as the moon's soft light extends, while she
 Pursues the azure path Thy will assigns,
 Until her face with fullest glory shines,
 Illuming, through the night, the land and sea :
 So doth the quicken'd soul increase in light
 As it abides in Thee, of light the Source,
 Heav'n's central Sun, the Lord, the Infinite ;
 Whom they alone reflect, that track Thy course ;
 Till, with abounding joy, they see Thy face,
 And, cloudless, see Thy glory, light, and grace.

THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY GHOST
WITH US.

II.

It has always been an effort of the enemy, if he cannot succeed in blinding the mind against the truth when ministered by God, to take up divine truths of some by-gone day, and to occupy and divert the mind with them, in order to shut out and hinder the reception of some fresh revelation, or present application of truth from the Lord.

He can take up that which God used at a former day, and use it effectually (if permitted) to blind the mind to some present ministration of the Lord. And this presentation of "present truth" is ever a test for faith. Man may be zealous and orthodox in truths which God had used in the past, to the refusal and rejection of that which God may at the moment be presenting and pressing on souls. It clothes men with importance to be found contending for orthodoxy; while, at the moment of such zeal, they may be rejecting some fresh light or revelation from Him. The zeal for what is past is used by the enemy to blind their minds, and that for which they contend, while it may be of God, does not prove to be a test of faith, which alone enters, or can enter, into the present action of His Spirit by the truth.

And this has ever been so. Man's heart evades having to do with God and His revelation as a present thing. He can reason about the past, and he can speculate about the future, (even the natural man's mind can do this), while the soul's present relations with God are evaded.

The "word of righteousness" for each moment was thus refused at all times by unbelief; while faith entered upon it, and seemed as a visionary when contrasted with that which was commended of man as a holding fast of what had gone before.

It was thus the case with those who reviled the man who had been born blind and had his eyes opened, in the ninth chapter of John's Gospel. "Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple, but we are Moses' disciples." God's present action was denied by them; while they, with seeming orthodoxy, acknowledged Him in the past.

So it was with the woman of Samaria, when Jesus the Lord was dealing with her soul. She could turn her mind to the past and recall the word of the prophets about the

expected Messiah. Her conscience at the moment was under the power of His words, and the truth was penetrating her soul; and the desire to avoid this too close dealing is noticed in the words, "We know that Messiah cometh." This was orthodox, and right as to faith prior to the moment then present. She could reason, too, as to the then supposed future—"When he is come he will tell us all things." But neither the past nor the future was the test for faith. He must have her to do with God as a present thing; her soul must bow under His present action, and carry away the grand discovery in her heart that *He* was there, and at that very moment talking with her—"I that speak unto thee am he."

Now, the sixteenth chapter of John opens with a remarkable forecasting of this by the Lord. He had come, and had revealed the Father. The One God—Jehovah, of Judaism—was in its day the grand centre of revelation. "Hear, O Israel; the Jehovah thy God, is one Jehovah" (Deut. vi. 4). There might have been hints as to the Trinity of the Persons of the godhead; but it was never the subject of revelation in the Old Testament. Israel had been called out from the nations to witness, amongst them, to the unity of the one true God—Jehovah, in contrast with the plurality of the gods of the nations. But the Son had come and had made the Father known. He was then (John xvi.) breaking off those earthly associations with His people, and about to go back to the Father through the cross, and to send from on high the Spirit, that God might be fully known.

He says:—"These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth *God* service. And these things will they do, because they have not known the *Father* nor *me*." They would with bitter zeal refuse the revelation of the *Father* and the *Son* (in Christianity); while contending for the orthodoxy of the God of Israel, as they supposed. Like Saul of Tarsus, who was the great example of that zealous persecution of the Jew which thought that God was served, and never better served, than by it. He says this of himself in so many words:—"I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having

received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities" (Acts xxvi. 9, 10, 11).

The whole truth of Christianity was now to be made plain. The Father had been revealed in the Son. It was expedient that the Son should go away, in order that the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, should come.

"If I depart," says the Lord, "I will send him unto you." As Man, Jesus now was taking His place on high, and from thence He would send the Holy Ghost to dwell with His people on earth till He would come again. A new thing was dawning: the counsels of God as to the church, which until now were hid in Himself, were about to be brought out; and the Spirit, who was not yet given until Jesus was glorified (John vii. 39), was to be sent from on high to dwell with and in His people, to perform the varied offices towards them and towards the world, of which He speaks in this chapter (John xvi. 8-15).

How frequently is the Spirit of God—the third person, as men say, of the blessed Trinity—spoken of as merely some power or influence, and not as a real Person having His own offices and distinct actions to perform, as have the Father and the Son, in the unity of the Eternal godhead. The Lord speaks of Him here in a marked and special way, distinct in His person as that of the Father and Himself. The Son had glorified the Father when on earth; the Spirit would glorify the Son (v. 14). He could say of Him, "When he is come." Doubtless He had wrought at all times, even before the world was; and all the good that ever had been done on earth was performed by Him. In creation He had moved upon the face of the waters. By Him had souls been born again, since Adam departed from God. He had inspired the Lawgiver, and taught the prophets to sing their glorious strains; He had led hearts of the children of God to look onward, and wait until the promised Seed should come. Now there was a new thing about to take place. He was to come and take up His place on earth, to bring demonstration to the world of its great and final sin—the rejection of the Son of God; to tell of righteousness in heaven for all who found that there

was none on earth, in man; to be by His presence the grand proof that the whole world was under judgment, with its prince, who was under sentence of it as its leader and its god.

But more: He would guide the disciples into all the truth. He would not speak from Himself (*αφ' εαυτου*), as some Spirit who spoke apart from the Godhead; but as the Son could do nothing from Himself (*αφ' εαυτου*), but as in concert with the Father who had sent Him, neither would the Spirit speak from Himself, but would, as one with the Father and the Son, equal with them, yet distinct in His workings, tell the disciples what He heard in those glorious plans, and thoughts, and purposes of the Godhead on high. He would, from the centre of that unapproachable light where God Himself—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—dwells, convey to the hearts of the disciples those wondrous things which God had prepared for Christ's glory and for them that love Him, but which the eye of man had never seen, nor his ear had ever heard.

“He will show you things to come,” adds the Lord (*v. 13*). Not only would He carry down the secrets of God from on high to them, but also He would shed across the earth—now darkened with the cloud of coming judgment—the light of the lamp of Eternity, and allow those whom Jesus loved to read their glorious future in His own coming glory, revealing a bright and blessed portion when their waiting days were over, as members of that church which Jesus loved and sought as His bride—His Eve for the paradise of God.

As Eliezer, the steward of all the goods of Abraham, the servant and friend of his master, He would set out from his master's house, across the desert of the world, taking of the goods of His master in His hand, to find a Rebekah for the true Isaac, and convey her across the waste to meet the Isaac of her heart, whom, though she had not seen Him, she had learned to love, and to rejoice at her prospect of His coming glory.

Let us examine the steps of this wondrous event, as forecasted by the Lord Jesus—the coming of the Holy Ghost, and His presence with His people.

We learn in John *xiv.*, for the first time, of Jesus going away to the Father's house. Hitherto the disciples had, with true Jewish hearts, looked at their beloved Master as

true sons of Israel. They expected Him to bring in the glorious kingdom of His father David, and be seen by a wondering and subject world; to reign and claim the homage of all hearts, whether of kings or people. What must have been the thoughts of that little company when they heard for the first time the solemn announcement from His lips, that He was about to leave them alone! (Yet not alone.) How their hearts must have sunk within them at the words, that the One for whom they had left all—for whom all earthly ties were broken, to whom they had clung for three short years, their only Hope, Protector, and Friend—was now about to depart and leave them, as they felt, desolate.

He meets what was passing in their hearts with these words, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me." God had been the object of their faith hitherto, and yet they had never seen Him; now they must learn to believe in like manner in their Messiah, as unseen. Look at Me, and in Me ye see the Father. Let all My words, and acts, and ways, and love be imprinted on your memories, for I am about to depart to the Father's house, and, wielding all the resources of His love there, to watch over and dispense them unto you. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever."

Here was the announcement for the first time made, of One whose presence would be substituted for the Lord's amongst His people. The Son, who had learned what best would suit them, would ask the Father to send them this other Comforter, who would never be taken away.

Further on in His discourse, He says that the Father would send this Comforter—the Holy Ghost—in His (the Son's) name (*v.* 26), and He would teach them all things, and inspire their memories, bringing all things to their remembrance whatsoever He had said to them.

Again, in chapter xv., after He had left the upper chamber where He had told them of His going away, and of the rich provision for His absence which He would, with the Father, bestow; after He had said "Arise, let us go hence," He says, speaking of those who had rejected Him, "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father. But that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated

me without a cause. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, he shall testify of me; and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."

Mark now, that it is not merely the Son praying the Father, who would send another Comforter (chap. xiv. 16). Nor was it the Father sending the Holy Ghost in the Son's name (chap. xiv. 26); but the Son Himself—as Man exalted, sending the Holy Ghost from the Father.

Mark also the twofold way in which He could act, as thus sent by the Lord. "He shall testify of me," said the Lord. He would be the Dispenser of the glories and riches of Jesus from on high: the Witness of all that He had entered upon, and could bestow on man exalted. In this work Paul was the chosen vessel and channel in an after day. But He would do more. Jesus had walked amongst men; and there should be a record of that wondrous and blessed path from the lips and hearts of those who had walked with and had known the spotless Saviour. Hence the Lord says of this, turning to the eleven disciples, "And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." Thus the two-fold witness would be borne of Him in whom was the Father's good pleasure: the line of light would stream down from on high with the witness of Him who was there. And the Holy Ghost would retrace the footprints of Jesus through the wondering hearts of His inspired witnesses, and treasure them up in the Word for all who should thereafter believe.

Another step of His coming to this world to dwell is recorded in the 16th chapter, which we have a little anticipated. He would take of mine, said the Lord, and announce it unto you; and show you things to come. Not only would His testimony come downwards from the glory, and shine backwards, retrospectively, over the past, but He would display the things of the Son; His riches and glories, who possessed all that the Father had; and He would cast His divine and living light prospectively onwards, and show them things to come. How full was to be His offices and testimony of the absent Saviour! His past gracious, lowly path; His present exaltation, as waiting in the heavens; His riches there; His future glory: all these would be in the Spirit's care, and the subject of His testimony, who would be sent down here in place of the absent Lord.

How immense, then, are the issues involved in the presence of the Spirit of God, personally on earth! How deep the importance that He should have His true and rightful place, in unhindered power! How solemn the thought that denies His presence practically, or in words. May His people ponder more deeply the great central truth of Christianity, after and next to the cross and its results and the exaltation of Him who hung there—the presence of the Holy Ghost with us here on earth, sent down from heaven at Pentecost, and remaining here on earth till Jesus comes again.

The 2nd chapter of Acts gives His advent, the fulfilment of the words of the blessed Lord. The day of Pentecost had fully come, and the promise was fulfilled. Peter's words testify to these great facts—"This Jesus," says he, "hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God, exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear" (Acts ii. 32-33).

SOME THOUGHTS ON JOHN'S GOSPEL.

(CHAPTER XV.)

THE important thing to apprehend in this chapter is, that it is always a question of the responsibility of the disciples. The vine and the branches were upon earth; it is not a heavenly union of the members of Christ, because it is not possible that a member of Christ be torn from His body and cast into the fire.

The branches are all the disciples who follow Him: at the present day they are all who profess to be Christians: and therefore, it is said (v. 6), "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth;" He speaks in general terms, *if a man*; but when He speaks of His disciples regenerated, He says (v. 3), "Now ye are clean, through the word which I have spoken unto you." In chap. xiii., He had said, "Ye are not all clean," because Judas was present then, but here he is no longer present. We repeat, then, that the subject is not here the love of God for the salvation of poor sinners, but the responsibility of the disciples.

The Jews thought the *vine* was Israel, and Jesus the best branch the vine had ever borne. In fact, Israel had been

called a vine, that the Lord had brought out of Egypt (Psalm lxxx.), and planted in Canaan, surrounded with every blessing; but, instead of bringing forth grapes, it brought forth wild grapes (Isaiah v). And now Jesus calls Himself the *true* vine, as He is the true Servant, though Israel be reckoned as a servant: but since she was unfaithful, Christ is substituted in her stead, and becomes the true Servant (Isaiah xl). He prunes the branches that bring forth fruit, that they may bring forth more fruit: this work is perfected by means of fatherly discipline. To abide in Him means to live in dependence and confidence realized in submission, near to Him; then one draws blessing from Him, love and everything.

At *v. 6* the phraseology is changed. He does not say *ye*, but *if a man*; then at *v. 7* He returns to *ye*, and the reason is clear: when He is speaking of true disciples, they can be pruned, chastised, disciplined in every sense, but they cannot be cast into the fire, because they are members of the body of Christ; but when He speaks generally, as at *v. 6*, then there is the possibility of a disciple, who makes a profession, being cast away; because he has not life. The vine is not union with Christ in heaven, but it is Christ on earth who takes the place of Israel, in order that the branches may bring forth fruit. In heaven there is no pruning, in heaven He does not look for fruit, and the members of Christ in heaven are not cut off, because the union of Christ's members is with the Head in heaven. The Lord calls the true disciples *clean*, and when He speaks of them, He means that they should bring forth fruit. Apart from Jesus, it is impossible they should bring forth fruit; if it could be done without Him, you would accord it very many things done by the world; but God does not own them as fruit, which is only produced when one lives in Him, in immediate dependence upon Him.

At *v. 7* we notice that if the words of Jesus abide in us, then our prayers are, according to the perfect will of God, expressed in the words of Jesus; and, as a consequence, we are sure of being heard in the things which we ask. There are two kinds of prayers, one when I am *certain* that what I ask is the will of God, then I am *certain* of being heard; and the second is when I am not certain if it be the will of God, in which case I ought to add, "if it be the will of God." This is what the Lord Himself did when He prayed in Gethsemane. The Father wishes His children to make

known their desires to Him. The words, "Ask what ye will, and it shall be done for you," contain an immense promise; the power of God is placed at our disposal. Then, if the words of Christ abide in us, we know what is in accordance with His will; in every case we should make all our requests known to God, as Paul says (Phil. iv). We have liberty to ask everything, but if we are not near God, in communion with Him, we cannot be certain of receiving the things in the way we asked them. The Lord knows what is needful for us. Paul was not answered in the way he thought, but in another way, assuredly far more happy. If we present all our requests with confidence, then Paul says that "the peace of God shall keep our hearts;" that is, one enjoys perfect peace whatever be the way the Lord sees fit to answer us (Psalm xxxvii. 3-7).

In v. 8, the disciples ought to bear much fruit, and imitate in this their Master, who bore all the fruits possible on earth. Then the disciples are exhorted not only to abide in Christ, but also in His love. If we keep His commandments, we enjoy the love of Christ; this is the way to enjoy His love, it is not that the faithfulness of His love to us is *uncertain*, because it is also true of Jesus, who kept the Father's commandments, and therefore abode in His love; the love of the Father for Christ was not doubtful; but it was in obedience that He enjoyed this love. Also at v. 12 we see that the *motive* to love the brethren is not found in the loved objects, but it must be in Christ Himself. So, too, at v. 14 we can see what we have already observed, that it is not a question of the love of God for poor sinners, but of the love of Christ for His disciples—those who are His friends; the more faithful they are, obedient, and submissive, the more He loves them. He has revealed everything to us, as one does to a friend. When one speaks on business with a person, one speaks but of what interests we have to transact with him; but to a friend, one's heart is opened to him, one tells him everything. Thus has the Lord dealt with us. But to be familiar with Him, and partakers of the secrets of His heart, one needs to walk according to His will; then only we have the intelligence of His mind, and we are initiated into His thoughts. Jesus here puts His disciples on the same ground as that on which He is with the Father; and if the world hates us, Jesus has already forewarned us, and we should not marvel at it: the world hated Jesus before the disciples—He who was the perfect One.

At the end of this chapter we have the judgment on the Jews. If Christ had not come, they would have had a cloak for their sin, but now they have no cloak: they had seen Christ, and the Father in Him, and, notwithstanding, had hated both one and the other. At v. 26, Jesus it is who sends the Holy Spirit; and Jesus, as Son of Man, who sends Him to reveal the glory of the Son of Man. At v. 27, the disciples must bear witness, besides the witness of the Holy Spirit Himself, because they had been with Jesus from the beginning; they must bear witness of those things they had seen on earth, while the Holy Spirit would bear witness of heavenly things, of the heavenly glory of Christ. We know from the preceding chapter, v. 26, that He would bring to the remembrance of the disciples the things that Jesus had said.

CHRIST'S SYMPATHY AND SUCCOUR.

Jesus, Saviour, Son of God!
 Thou Thy path on earth hast trod;
 Keenly felt each piercing thorn,
 Borne reproach, contempt, and scorn.

Glory now Thy head adorns,
 Which by man was crown'd with thorns;
 Thou, who didst for sin atone,
 Now art on Thy Father's throne.

Thou, the Living Lord, above,
 Art the same, in grace and love,
 As Thou wast, when here below,
 Healing sickness, soothing woe.

For the tempted, Thou dost feel,
 Thou dost succour, help and heal.
 Mighty Conq'ror o'er the grave!
 Thou dost ever live to save.

While we tarry here on earth,
 In this land of drought and dearth,
 While we have a want or woe,
 Grace from Thee shall freely flow.

Soon we shall have run the race,
 Meet Thee, Saviour, face to face;
 Then, from sin and sorrow free,
 We shall ever dwell with Thee.

FAITH AND HOPE.

THE Lord is ever an *object* as surely as He is a *refuge*. He awakens *hope* when He establishes the soul by *faith*. It could not be otherwise. If Adam had the presence of God, he had also the garden of Eden. And so the saved sinner has a portion or inheritance. Indeed, salvation, in the large sense of it, contains both. It bespeaks a purged conscience, and also the hope of a kingdom.

These are necessarily linked together, and of their union or combination, we find in the course of Scripture some beautiful witness.

Melchisedec was such a witness in patriarchal days. He was a priest, dispensing righteousness and peace, providing, like a priest, for the need of the soul. But he had also bread and wine, the refreshments of the kingdom for the heirs of promise after the toil of battle.

Aaron, under the law, in the day of his consecration, was another like witness, as we see in Lev. viii. 9. For he and Moses came down, as from above, to bless the people, as he had before, and all alone, blest them on the ground of the sacrifice. The *glory* appears as well as the *fire*, on that great occasion—the pledge of the kingdom as well as the acceptance of the sacrifice.

And, in the same Mosaic age, I may say, the constant link of Joshua with Moses is an expression of the same combination.

With this thought let me ask you to read the Epistle to the Hebrews. You will there find this combination strikingly maintained throughout. All the *presentations of Christ*, or of *our calling*, which you find there, and all the *exhortations* which you listen to there, embrace the two, our *object* as well as our *refuge*—all feel *hope* as well as *faith*.

At the very outset Christ is thus declared “Heir of all things,” as well as the One who has “purged our sins”; and all the Old Testament Scriptures quoted in chap. i. will be found to have respect to the coming kingdom. So in chap. ii., it is the Lord of Psalm viii. that is presented to us, and the Lord of that Psalm is as much the One who is to be Head of the world to come, as He has already been humbled for our sins.

Again, in chap. v.-vii., He is presented to us as Priest, but He is Melchisedec; and, as we know, the priesthood of

Melchisedec reaches out to the day of the glory, when the warfare and toil are over. And not only so, He is declared to have gone within the veil as a Forerunner, as well as a High Priest, and such a title intimates that the glory is within the veil as well as a sanctuary.

So, when He is presented as a victim, the sufficiency of His sacrifice is declared; but, together with that, His appearing the second time, bringing salvation or the kingdom with Him. The accomplishment of the purpose of His first appearing is the sure pledge of His second appearing (See ix. 28).

And then again, presented in the heavens as having sat down in the perfection of His work for sinners, He is declared to be sitting there in expectation of His coming day of power (See chap. ix. 13).

Our calling is displayed to us, as Christ is thus presented. We see this in chap. xii. 22-24. But that gives us a view of glory as well as of blood. We see the top of the mystic hill as well as the foot of it. The blood of sprinkling at the bottom sustains the whole, but there is no stopping short of the city, and the church of the first-born, and the angelic multitudes, or the whole system of coming glories.

So, in chap. xiii. 9-15, the city is there shown to us, as what we are called to, as well as the altar.

And, as I said, if we are *exhorted* as well as *taught* in this epistle, we still find encouragement for hope, as well as for faith.

Thus, in chap. iii., we are told to hold fast the "confidence and rejoicing of hope," as well as "the beginning of our confidence," or "the throne of grace." So, in chap. x., we are exhorted to have "full assurance of faith," but also to "hold fast the profession of our hope without wavering."

And thus, the voice that is heard in this Epistle is a witness to hope as well as to faith—it tells of glory as well as of blood. It is the voice of the Son from heaven; of Him who is heir of all things and expectant of a kingdom, as He is the purger of our sins.

And when the apostle *defines* faith, he links it with hope (xi. 6), in every way sustaining the combination.

THE WITNESS OF THE HOLY GHOST TO US.

III.

IN a former paper we traced the momentous fact of the presence of the promised Comforter on earth—the new thing—unknown before the day of Pentecost, when He was sent down from on high. Shed forth by the Son, as exalted Man, according to the promise of the Father; sent by the Father in the Son's name, in answer to the prayer of the Son of the Father; sent by the Son from the Father, now as Man in glory, He took up His abode on that day with, and in, the Lord's people on earth, to remain until Jesus comes for them. He had *wrought* at all times, but had not come to *dwell* till then.

We will now examine the testimony of Scripture in some measure, as to the witness of the Holy Ghost to us.

In the tenth chapter of Hebrews we read, "Whereof the Holy Ghost is a witness to us," &c. (v. 15.) We will find in other Scriptures the fact of His witness *in* the believer, but here it is another thing. In the course of the ninth chapter, the writer had gone through the contrast of the state of those under the Levitical economy—unable to enter the holiest, their consciences unpurged, and their works partaking of the nature of "dead works"—with those under the work of Christ, by which the way into the holiest was made manifest, the conscience of the enterer purged, and himself constituted a worshipper of the living and true God. In the close of it he shows that Christ had, in the consummation of the ages, appeared for the putting away of sin by the sacrifice of Himself. This work, in result, was not yet done; nor will it be until the new heavens and the new earth witness to the fact of sin being for ever put away. Of course for God, and for the faith of the believer, who saw with Him, the thing is done. The cross, and the work there accomplished, were the grand settlement and divine solution of the whole question of good and evil, and that for ever. Good and evil met there as they will never meet again; and when the evil reached its highest, the good rose in all the grandeur of God, and surmounted the evil in perfect triumph. The work was then and there accomplished, by which, and on the basis of which, sin will in effect be put out of the scene of blessing for ever, and the evil and sin that is put out thereof will find its eternal punishment, and be shut out from God for ever also, in the lake of fire.

It is a very common thing to state that "sin has been put away." Now there is no warrant, that I am aware of, in Scripture for such a statement. The ground-work was laid in atonement on the cross for that result, and in God's sight the work is done. Faith takes up His thoughts, and sees all done also; the result and effect of all will come again. There is a great difference between the act before God, and this full result, though it is fully realized by faith now in the conscience of the believer.

Then in the closing verses (27, 28) he shows, contrastively, the difference between the sinner's position and that of the Christian. For the one, death closed his course in this world, and judgment was his portion in the other. He may have been great amongst his fellows, and have benefited his fellow-man; sought out inventions, and decked the world by his taste and ingenuity; made the hearts of men throb with the power and persuasion of his oratory, or made it tremble at his name. As one has wisely said, "He is where his name is not, and his name is where he is not," where death and judgment—two certainties which dogged his footsteps in this life—closed all for ever.

Contrastively to the "as" of that verse, the "so" of the following reads on, and two divine certainties again are announced by the Spirit: the one—"Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many," and *faith* looks *back* to see them borne; the other—"Unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation," and *hope* looks *forward* to this desired end.

It will here be noticed how the cross of Christ on the one hand, and the coming of Christ on the other, are presented as the two termini of the Christian's course and history, and these two grand objects of faith and hope are now unfolded in chapter x. The cross, and His work there doing the will of God, is enlarged upon in the early part of the chapter, and at the close His coming again forms the subject.

Intermediately between them comes another thing, viz., the "witness of the Holy Ghost to us" (v. 15).

Now this peculiar truth of the Spirit's presence on earth, and His witness and varied operations, is strictly peculiar to the present interval, *i. e.*, that between the cross of Christ, or more particularly His ascension, and His coming again for His people. This was not the case in the Old Testament times, nor will it be so during the millennial reign of the

Lord. Before the cross, the Spirit wrought; now He dwells with us; and during the millennial kingdom Christ will be present, and reign in glory. It is to the present period, therefore, that the Spirit's presence as Vicar of Christ, so to say, during His absence and rejection by the world and the Jew, specially belongs.

His presence on earth is the demonstration to the hearts of the Lord's people of the total condemnation of the world, and even of that world (none the less) which now calls itself "Christian." If we ask the question, Where is Jesus, and why is He on high? the answer is, The world united to cast Him out as a malefactor, but God exalted Him to His throne. The world was against God and His Anointed. As the second Psalm testifies, "The kings of the earth, and the rulers set themselves against the Lord (Jehovah) and his anointed" (Messiah); yet "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision." Where, then, is the Spirit of God, and why is He here? He is on earth, to occupy till Jesus comes again, and He is here because Christ is on God's throne, rejected by the world. He is set down on His Father's throne (Rev. iii. 21); and not yet upon His own. "We see not yet all things put under him."

The Law of God, when given, was a test to man. Whosoever he might be that came within its sound, whether Jew or Gentile, felt that he was bound to obey its precepts. No man denied, unless it might be the avowed infidel, that he was not bound to keep God's law. It was, in all its commands, morally what conscience dictated in every man, with God's authority added to conscience's claim.

Still, under the legal dispensation God was unrevealed. He was shut in behind the veil, in the holiest of all, while man was shut out of His presence. And this gives the grand characteristic to the time before the cross of Christ and since then. In the Old Testament, God had not come to man, and man could not go to God. In the New Testament, God has come to man, and the believer can go to Him, cleansed of his sins, and delight himself in God.

But the presence of the Law of God on earth, while men felt its authority, did not reveal the standard that the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth has done. Many things were allowed under the Law that were not allowed in the Light—the Light of the Gospel. For this cause the effect Christianity has had upon the world, as far as it is known

in profession, has been very great. Men do not in the light what they do in the dark and in secret. There is a restraint upon men through Christianity being professed even, and the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth characterizes it, as the presence of the Law upon earth did Judaism.

But while this is so, He bears and presents a testimony to the conscience also. He is the Bearer from on high of the blessed message that the work of Christ has been so accepted of God, and has so satisfied Him, nay, so glorified Him, that He is free in His righteousness to send forth His love to all men—"whosoever will." He bears the message, too, of the exaltation of man, in the person of Jesus, to God's throne. He unfolds the work of Jesus, and its effects on those who believe, bearing testimony to us of our sins and iniquities being no more remembered by the God against whom they were committed. Now, unless we had this plain and blessed testimony from God, how should we know, as a divine certainty, that all had been put away for ever? It were impossible. There is no prophet now, like Nathan, to come and tell David, "The Lord hath put away thy sin."

Like as one who owed an immense debt that he could never pay, would justly fear the day of reckoning, which he felt in his inmost soul must come; but one of infinite wealth had stepped in and discharged all the debt behind his back: still the fears were unremoved; and though there might be a gleam of undefined hope struggling in his breast, the sense of his helpless misery pressed upon his soul. There had been some one kind enough to think of him; there had been another kind enough to discharge his debt; but this was not enough; there should be one also kind enough to come and tell him it was done, otherwise his fears had remained, and his head had still hung down with the misery of his state.

Thus God had thought of us in our sins; Jesus had come and paid the penalty, and erased with blood the mighty debt; and the Spirit of God has been sent from heaven to make it known, that, on His testimony being received, the delivered one might go in and stand by faith in God's most blessed presence, his conscience purged of every stain, and his heart free to look up and delight himself in Him, and worship and adore.

And so we find in Hebrews x., "Whereof the Holy Ghost is a witness to us, . . . and their sins and iniquities I will remember no more." Jesus bore them all, and put them

away for ever : the Holy Ghost bears the message that this is so : they are buried in the grave of God's forgetfulness !

I see a lovely instance of this "witness to us" in comparing Isaiah liii. with 1 Peter ii.

Many are aware that the former chapter narrates the feelings and confession of the godly Jew in the last days, when, on the return of Jesus to that ancient people, and they look upon Him whom they pierced, they take up the lovely language of this Scripture, and say, "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities : the chastisement of our peace was upon him ; and by his stripes *we* are healed" (v. 5). Evidently, then, this is the language of God-given faith, in those who utter it at any time, be they Jew or Gentile. But remark, that it is the language of faith, and spoken by those who are entering upon their souls' blessing themselves. When we turn to 1 Peter ii., the casual reader would suppose that the twenty-fourth verse was (with the other words of the apostle) a literal citation of Isaiah liii. 5. But no ! We read, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to (or done with) sins, should live unto righteousness : by whose stripes *ye* were healed." Remark that the words of faith in Isaiah liii., are, "*We* are healed ;" but the words of the Holy Ghost by Peter—the witness of the Spirit to us is, "*Ye* were healed." Addressing, as He does, all those Jews who *had* entered into the blessings of Christianity, and consequently all those, be they Jews or Gentiles, who were found in the same sphere of blessing, He would thus bear witness to us, as from on high, that by His stripes "*ye* were healed." Blessed testimony ! Blessed Witnesser, who would not—could not minister to the Lord's people aught but the fulness of their blessings now, though they were as sheep going astray, but are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls !

Thus He acts through the Word of God ; thus He acts through the Gospel when presented to faith ; and thus He will ever act till His work is over here below, and the Church of God is safe in the presence of her Lord for ever.

How solemn, awfully solemn, to "do despite to the Spirit of grace" ! (v. 29.) Tremble, godless professor ; illuminated professor of the truths of Christianity ! "Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord" (v. 30). Beware, ye Ritualists, who deny the sufficiency of

Jesus' blood, once shed, for the cleansing away for ever of sins. Tremble when you think of Him whose blessed presence on earth and testimony you slight and do despite to by your unbelief. Remember that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Thus He, the Witnesser, would warn the unsaved professor, and forecast in darkest colours the ruin of any soul who despises His blessed testimony.

He would look onward, too, to that bright and blessed day that hourly approaches—the coming of our Lord. He would witness of the unchanging love of the Lord for His people. He would encourage their hearts to watch through the long, dark night for the "Morning Star." Many a time has my heart been stirred within me, as I have looked at the morning star. Rising before the dawn I have seen the pale shades of light, as they grew more strong each moment, above the eastern sky, and the beauteous morning star hung in the blue-grey sky above the horizon, wending its way higher and higher, till at last when the busy hours of the day called me away, it soon vanished, imperceptibly lost in the glorious light of the rising sun. How I have felt cheered and refreshed with the remembrance of the Spirit's use of the lovely symbol, to convey the thought of the Lord's appearing, for a moment, as that lovely figure teaches—to greet the watcher through the long, dark night of this world's history, and bear him aloft to the glory of the Father's house on high. The Lord preaches to our souls in these things; He "speaks to our hearts," as Joseph to his brethren of old (Gen. 1).

And while Jesus would not close the Book of God without a parting word for His people: "I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star;" the Spirit then on earth with and in the Bride, giving her a voice, joins with her responsively to Him while she gazes on Him in the heavens in that blessed character, and says, "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come." The Spirit and the Bride join in inviting the Lord. Are there those too, who understand not her thoughts of her beloved? Yet "Let him that heareth (that invitation) say, Come:" let him invite the Lord who loved and gave Himself for him. Do any thirst around? any in whom the Spirit of God has wrought—for how but

thus would they thirst after Jesus?—then “Let him that is athirst come;” and, wide as the sun’s meridian ray, “Whosoever will,” whose has the desire in any wise, “let him come and take the water of life freely.”

And so the Spirit in the inspired writer of Heb. x. would not close His witness to us without exhorting the saints of God as to that day. He says (and here I take a liberty with the English version—a warrantable liberty, I trust), “For yet a very, very little, and the Coming-One will arrive, and will not delay” (v. 37). May the Lord cheer our hearts, amidst the sorrows and pressures of the way, by His blessed Spirit’s witness to us, for His name’s sake! Amen.

ON THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

CHAPTER I.

THE great point is that Ephesians begins with the counsels of God: man *was* responsible of course. First, you have the counsels of God, and then the operations of God to bring them about; then the consequences in practice. The saints, according to the counsels of God, are brought to the Father in Christ’s place. My first position in chap. i. is, I am with God and the Father; the second is, I am united to the glorified man—Christ.

Chapter ii. shows the working in individuals, to bring them into this unity with Christ.

God takes the dead man—Christ—and sets Him above everything in heavenly places; and He has taken me and set me in Christ Jesus. It is the operations, chapter ii., which effectuate the counsels, chapter i. The moment Christ has become a man, He obeys God. So it is said, “Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows” (Psalm xlv. 7). But being man, still Son with the Father.

☞ The Jews will be blessed with all temporal blessings, in earthly places, under Christ. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. True, it is said of the Jew, “Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth” (Isaiah xliii. 6). But they have not the same relation of sonship as we have; with us it is of a heavenly character. It is as Christ said, “My Father and

your Father." If you carry in your mind that these are counsels, and not accomplishment, the whole difficulty as to having got the blessings or not disappears. It is, of course, a question how much we apprehend it. I have this present relationship, and the love of God shed abroad in my heart. "The earnest of the inheritance" is a secondary thing, though most blessed. The great thing for us is to follow Scripture.

You have the calling and the inheritance. If you take the inheritance as the whole thing you make a mistake. The Holy Ghost is the earnest of this. But the calling is another thing. If you have not got the calling you have nothing at all. I have first the calling; when I have got this I am competent to understand the counsels of God, and then I have the earnest of the inheritance.

The saints now are heirs of God, not His inheritance. The Jews are His inheritance (Deut. xxxii. 9). It says, "The Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance."

All spiritual blessings are mine in Christ. This, he unfolds (v. 4), is my place with God (v. 5). "Having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself," is my relationship with the Father. God has given me all that. Have I it all in my hand as it were yet? No, but I have it for mine. I am waiting for the salvation ready to be revealed. I have got it, but I enter into possession then. I *am* a Son. I *have* eternal life. I *am* loved as Christ is loved, and can call God, Abba, Father. We are sitting in heavenly places *in* Christ, but not *with* Him yet. It is not only as to title now, it is in fact. I am a son.

If you take it out of the thoughts of God, "who hath wrought us for it," you go wrong. If you say "our glory, our inheritance," you make a mistake, it is "God's inheritance." It is not the question of accomplishment or otherwise. The counsel (v. 4), was before ever the world was made, that we should be holy and without blame before Him, and in His presence, &c. It is God's nature given to us. Christ *was* all this down here. He was holy, blameless, and always before God in love.

Then (v. 5) you have relationship with the Father, "according to the good pleasure of his will." When He speaks of God, He cannot have an unholy being there. When He speaks of the Father He puts them in the place of

children, according to the good pleasure of His will. He might have had servants there, but they would not have suited His love. I have the positive delight of God in giving me the best place with the Father. It is really Christ's place. That is God's mind. That is what is called the glory of His grace. It is remarkable giving Christ the character of "Beloved." He might have said "in Christ" only, but here it is God's mind to have me in the same blessed relationship with Himself as the Son—Christ's own place.

"In whom we have redemption," &c. (v. 7); now He states the fact that to get into this place, we must have redemption. Thus I have my miseries, and I have His riches. When I have His counsels, I have "the glory of his grace." Now it is the riches of His grace. If you ask what measure I am to take of this redemption in His Son, it is according to the riches of His grace. I have to measure it by God's thoughts, that is to say, I cannot measure it at all.

As soon as He has put us in this place of full blessing, He has made this grace abound "toward us in all wisdom and intelligence, having made known to us the mystery of his will" in us. That is not merely *my* place, but having put me into this place, He goes on to tell me all He is going to do about Christ.

He puts us into the place of competency, but also "abounds" to us in making known the mystery of His will. It becomes known to me when I know it of course, and not before. This is the hidden wisdom of 1 Cor. ii. 7.

What is prudence here?

A better word is intelligence.

You do not find the Church here at all (v. 10). He is giving us Christ personally. At the close of the chapter He shows us the special place of the Church, "He gave him to be head over all things to the church."

"In whom," that is in Christ, "we have obtained an inheritance" (v. 11).

Now, I believe He is speaking of the Jew (v. 12). The Jew who trusts in Christ after this dispensation will not get this, but those who have pre-trusted in Christ will get this. They get the start of the nation as it were. After the Gentiles heard the gospel of salvation, they trusted God too, and got the seal of the Holy Spirit of promise. God proved by sealing the Gentiles that He would have them as joint heirs. It was a most important thing that God has

put a seal on them; then the Jews could have nothing to say. Thus the example of Cornelius (*v.* 14), "Our inheritance . . . unto the praise of his glory." Not the glory of His grace merely. That completes the whole thing.

Then comes Paul's prayer (*v.* 17). I have Christ as man (*v.* 18), is all objective; it is a question what we may know when our eyes are enlightened. "His inheritance in the saints" is millennial. He inherited the land of Israel in His people, and He will inherit all things in the saints. You now come to the power that works it all (*v.* 19). I do not find Christ here till He is a dead man, raised by God and set far above everything. This makes a clean sweep of the world, and takes us as dead too.

We were lying dead in sins, and Christ came down there. Having been found there, and having put away our sins on His way down, we being all found together there (in death), God takes us and Him, and sets us all together in the heavenly places. He begins with Christ, where we were in death.

"Gave him to be head over all things to the church" (*v.* 22). I have here the headship over everything, and the headship to His body. He quickens us, and puts us into Christ. In Psalm viii. I only find Christ, the Church is not there. My head is the head of my body, but suppose I have an estate, I am head over that also, a double headship.

There is another thing in my mind. "The fulness of him that filleth all in all." I used to take that as referring to His Godhead only. Now, you find in *ch.* iv. *v.* 9, it says, "Now, he that ascended, what is it but that he also descended. . . . He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." I have been thinking whether it is not here also to Christ as Redeemer who fills all in all. He has gone below everything, and now He is set above everything. Then He who does fill all things takes the Church to be His body, the fulness of Him. It is the divine coming into the place of redemption, and going down into the place of the grave, then going up far above all heavens. There is a positive divine side when you say filling all in all; filling all things is not quite so strong, but the same general sense.

SOME THOUGHTS ON JOHN'S GOSPEL.

(CHAPTER XVI.)

AT the outset of this chapter we see that it is possible for a man who is sincere, to persecute the children of God, thinking that he is doing God service. He has got old truths, by which the conscience need not be in exercise; by them faith is not put to the proof. The Jews could boast over the heathen of the truth of one true God, and other truths which they possessed; but when new truths are revealed by God, as here the Father and Jesus (the Son), then they impugn these new truths, making use of the old ones to do so.

This is what has happened in the Church. The Catholics have truths that the Pagans and the Jews have not, and they boast of them: but when, in all times, and especially in the sixteenth century, men of faith have presented justification by faith, and other truths which put the state of their souls to the test, they resist them strenuously, building themselves on the truth they may have got.

So it may be said also of the Protestants, who certainly have more truths than the Catholics, but with them also they are hereditary truths. One is born in them, and educated in them, and it is no doubt an advantage, but the conscience is not thereby exercised; faith is not tested. And, therefore, when one speaks to them of the truth which they have not, as of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church, of the coming of the Lord, or that which touches the Cleresy, they oppose these new truths (though they are no more new than that of justification by faith, and the other truths which the Catholics oppose, being themselves in the Word), and they build themselves on the truths which they already possess. They clothe themselves with the old truths as with an honour.

The Jews believed in one God, but they did not want the revelation of the Father, because that truth at that time exposed their evil state. The truths in which one is born, and which are received from infancy cost nothing; contrariwise they are an ornament and a glory.

Verse 5 shows us how easy it is to be occupied with one's self rather than with the Lord. The disciples were all occupied with themselves, with what they had left, and what would happen them when their Master was gone away from them; and they were nowise solicitous in knowing where Christ was

going, nor the purposes of God in this respect. We are sad when we think of ourselves and not of Jesus! The sadness of the disciples was right, but they did not think of submitting themselves to God in view of what Jesus had proposed to them. It is the same thing with ourselves; if anything sorrowful happens to us, instead of only pining, we ought to trust in God, and think that He has a purpose in every trial, and all things work together for good to those who love God.

From ver. 7, the Holy Spirit is spoken of, and we have this truth that He could not come before Christ had gone to heaven. It was necessary that redemption first take place, and that man be in heaven. The Spirit should convince the world of sin; from which it does not follow that the world allow itself to be convinced, but it was a demonstration on the part of the Spirit of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. The presence of the Holy Spirit on earth was a proof that Christ was in heaven, because Christ had said that He would send Him when He was gone. The world is not convinced by the Spirit, it does not trouble itself about Him. When a person was convinced he became a disciple.

In the same way that Christ had wrought in creation before His coming, and then He came to dwell on earth; so is it with the Holy Spirit; He had wrought amongst men before His coming to dwell amongst men down here, and now He has come to us personally.

The Holy Spirit convinces the world of sin, because it has not believed in Jesus: the world, as such, never would receive Him, nevertheless the testimony is always there. The world prefers its own pleasures: what God calls sin.

Christ is the righteousness of God (*vv.* 5-10), because the world having rejected Christ, righteousness has left this world and gone to the right hand of God, where it is now found. In 1 Cor. i. 30, we have the two sides of this question, we are ourselves of God in Him; and then, of God Christ is made unto us righteousness. From Christ we have a new life, but this new life does not make us righteous before God, but Christ is my righteousness on God's part. God has given proof of His righteousness, in putting Christ at His right hand, as man, because that He as man had perfectly glorified God on earth. The law was the perfect measure of human righteousness, but as man could not make out righteousness, God has provided him with a perfect right-

eousness, that is Christ, who has deserved as man a place at the right hand of God. There He will remain until He rises up to put down all his enemies as a footstool beneath His feet, according to Psalm cx. For His friends He has done everything, nothing for them remains to be done, as it is written in Hebrews i., that after He had made purgation of sins, He set Himself down at the right hand of the Majesty on High. This is in contrast with the Jewish priests, who always stood to repeat the sacrifices which could never take away sins; but Christ, having offered one sacrifice for sins, and perfected by one offering them that were sanctified, took His seat at the right hand of God (Heb. x. 11-14). This is what He has done for His *friends*. Then when He rises up again He will deal with His *enemies*.

Verse 10, contains the most terrible words for the world: it will no more see Jesus in His Spirit of grace, by which He seeks to save souls; it will see Him then when He will send them to everlasting punishment. Man is satisfied with Satan, prince of this world; beneath his rule everything flourishes that is according to man's taste; arts, sciences, pleasures all worldly progress. Satan has put all the world against Christ in order to put Him to death on the cross; in this has been proved who the prince of this world was, and the world that is under his influence is likewise itself condemned. We, when we are converted, are freed from the dominion of Satan. All this is shown by the presence of the Holy Spirit on earth.

Verse 12 tells us that the disciples at this time could not understand the things that Jesus had said to them. These things were heavenly—the things to come, the blessings of the Church in heavenly places. It was the Spirit who should communicate these things to them. The things of Christ are all the things that belong to the Father; and if we now do not comprehend these things, it is our own fault. 1 Cor. ii. 10-16, is an example of what the Holy Spirit does now, revealing to us the things of God. These verses are often misquoted—that is, only one part of them is quoted. It is a quotation from Isaiah, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man," &c. This was true in the Old Testament, but the apostle goes on to show that such was no longer the case now, that these things that were hidden are now revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. And more is said at the end of the same chapter, "Who hath

known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him?" and the answer is, "We have the mind of Christ." But it is too true that often the Holy Spirit cannot reveal to us all He would; because if we sin, if we are careless, He is obliged to reprove us, instead of showing us the things that belong to us, heavenly things. To be reprov'd is very precious; but one loses much by the need of it, because one cannot enjoy or realize practically that which the Lord has revealed, while the Holy Spirit needs to reprove us on account of our bad condition.

The word *mystery* means a thing that is known only by revelation; it remains always a mystery to those who are not initiated into the things of God. In order to judge if a testimony is of the Holy Spirit, you must see whether it glorifies Christ; then, if it does not glorify Christ, it cannot be a testimony of the Holy Spirit. For example, the Holy Spirit could not bear testimony to, or give glory to the Virgin Mary; He bears witness only to Christ. Everything the Father has belongs also to the Son, and the Holy Spirit reveals them to us. At verse 16, the Lord means that He would not die as another man who goes into the grave, but that He would rise again and go to the Father. It was natural the disciples should ask what He meant, "A little while, and ye shall not see me; and again a little while, and ye shall see me;" because they did not understand how this could be; and the Lord encourages them by saying that the world would rejoice at having put Christ to death, and that the disciples would be grieved thereby; but this their grief would be turned into joy when they saw Him raised, and then for faith, glorified: and at that day no one could take their joy from them.

In this Gospel no mention is made of His death, nor of His sufferings in Gethsemane, nor those on the cross, though this apostle had been an eye-witness to them, because the object of this Gospel is to present Him to us as God. At verse 23 it is said, "In that day ye shall ask me nothing." It is precious to see how Jesus puts His disciples in immediate relationship with the Father. To go to the Father in the name of Jesus, means to go to Him in all the value of the person of Jesus. If a child comes to me that I do not know, I say to him "What do you want here?" but if he gives me to understand that he comes to me in the name of my best friend, then I receive him with open arms, as I would receive my friend. Jesus means us to go directly to the Father,

not only in His name, in the value of His person, but also because the Father Himself loves us. The disciples say they have believed in Jesus, and the Lord makes them feel that they were to lose Him. It is one thing to have faith for eternal life; it is another to keep ourselves in the Lord's presence with the flesh as dead. The Lord warns them in the end of the chapter that they would have tribulation, and then adds, not that they would overcome the world, but that He had overcome it.

ISAAC.

It has been the common experience of all ages among the elect of God, to see in some a feebler expression of the same mind than in others. We see it all about us every day, and find the witness of it in Scripture abundantly.

It is found in Isaac, in contrast with his father Abraham.

Abraham had been called out of his country and from among his kindred, detached from all the associations that nature and life and circumstances which the world had made important to him. He was to go into a land where he was a perfect stranger, and there lead a life—the springs of which were in God, and which had to be formed by faith and not by nature.

Isaac was not such a one. He was to live where he had been born. He was never called from home. But still his faith was tried, as it had been in Abraham. God's word was to be his rule and his life, as it had been his father's, though in circumstances not so striking and peculiar.

A famine touched the land where Isaac was born, and it was Isaac's calling, under God, to abide there. If Abraham had been called from his home, Isaac's call kept him at home. And the famine came to test Isaac's faith and obedience there, as Abraham's had been tested in Mesopotamia by the call of God.

And Isaac stood this test, as Abraham had. It was not so fine and bold an expression, but it was an expression of the same principle, or life of faith. "Get thee out of thy country," God had said to Abraham, and I will do so and so with thee; but to Isaac, God now says, "Sojourn in this land," and I will do so and so with thee.

Here was a different word, but it was exactly the like test of the same principle of faith. It was not so bold and striking, I grant; it had not so much of the martyr character in it. It does not elevate Isaac so high in our thoughts, when we look at saints in their manners, or in their station. But so is it now, as it was then; and there is comfort in all this. The small and the great are alike before Him. To some it is given in the behalf of Christ not only to believe, but also to suffer for His sake. But the small and the great are alike before Him. There is the eye, and there is the foot in the body. Nay, there is the thirtyfold, and the sixtyfold, and the hundredfold in the husbandry. There is, indeed, the sowing bountifully, and there is the sowing sparingly.

Let not the weak say, I am not of God, because I am not strong. Let not Isaac, because he is not Abraham, forget that the God of grace, yea, and the God of glory, has said, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

And we find in the twenty-sixth chapter that as Isaac by faith continued in that land, because of God's word, though there was famine there, God blessed him, as He had said unto him—just as He blessed Abraham, who, because of the same word, left his own land, for we read, "Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year a hundredfold, and the Lord blessed him."

A RETROSPECT.

Soon shall our wanderings cease,
 And we have reached the shore
 Where we shall rest, with Jesus blest
 Our toil and conflict o'er.

Then when our eyes look back,
 And all His ways retrace,
 Upon them each will fall the light
 Of love divine and grace.

The wilderness now past,
 The heavenly mansions gained,
 We'll tread the courts of glory fair,
 With footsteps bright, unstained.

We'll think of ill no more,
 No tear shall dim our eye;
 But we shall rest in full delight,
 With Jesus ever nigh.

Nor nigh alone—unseen—
 His glory shall be there,
 “Above the brightness of the sun;”
 His portion we shall share.

His face with brightness shines,
 Once marred with grief and shame;
 His pathway lay through tears and death,
 Our pathway is the same.

But we shall reach Him where
 Our joy shall overflow:
 The “Man of Sorrows” once on earth,
 He’s “Man of Glory” now.

Then let our souls rejoice;
 What He provides is best:
 And we shall share what He has there,
 For ever with Him blest.

NEHEMIAH VIII.

WE may *remember* our condition as sinners, but we are to *enjoy* our condition as saved (Eph. ii).

We may remember condemnation now, as in glory we shall remember the toil and contradictions of the pilgrimage. But salvation is to be our subject now, as glory will be then.

Booths were made in the feast of Tabernacles—but they were only remembrances in order to enhance present joy in the fruitful land, and in their cities and villages. So that their father had been a Syrian, ready to perish, is to be *remembered* by the Israelite worshipping in the midst of his inheritance—but his basket of first-fruits is to be his *object* (Deut. xxvi).

And so here—the law rightly caused the people to mourn, but the day was the first-day of the seventh-month, a day of blowing of trumpets, and mourning under the law must give place to joy in the Lord, and form the character of the people.

What formed Adam’s character, as we see him and his company in Gen. iv. ? It was the redemption he had learnt. He is happy in God there, and a stranger on the earth.

What formed Noah’s character in the ark ? The redemption he was then proving. No mere handling of the gopher-boards of his house, to see whether they were doing their duty by keeping him safe, but an opening of the window, in expectation of the new world.

What formed Israel's character in that paschal night in Egypt? They were feeding on the Lamb, whose blood at the moment was sheltering them, but not anxiously inspecting the scene of judgment outside, whether indeed the angel had passed by.

What gave Moses a character when he was in the Mount with God? He had quaked and feared at the foot of the hill; but all that is laid aside and left behind, and with unveiled face he is in the presence of God, having been introduced to Christ in the shadows of good things to come.

And what is to give the believer his experience, and to form his character? Salvation, the consciousness and certainty of being pardoned and accepted. The joy of the Lord is to be his strength, and he is to know himself as brought nigh by the blood of Christ, though remembering that he was a Gentile, a sinner uncircumcised, far off, without God and without hope, a child of wrath even as others.

This is beautifully illustrated in Neh. viii.

Nehemiah teaches the congregation of Israel there, that the joy of the Lord is to be their strength. The law had caused them to mourn, but the day in which they were then met was the Feast of Trumpets, and their experience and their character were now to be formed by that day, and not by the law. They were to rejoice themselves, and with largeness of heart, seek to make others as happy as themselves.

Very full of blessing this is.

God is now to be apprehended by us in grace; we are to know Him as love, and find our dwelling-place in Him. The law may have taught us to deal with Him as righteous, and think of Him as a judge. The gospel teaches us to know Him in grace, and gives us communion with Him as a Saviour.

And, as the gospel prevails over the law in this dispensation, so is it to prevail in our experiences. Many of us are feeble, hindered by nature, and by Satan; and the Lord will surely comfort the feeble-minded, and support the weak. But we must recognise this as *His* way, and recognise it as what ought to be *our* way.

The Cross is a deeper thing than the Glory; it is God's moral nature glorified in the place of sin.

LETTERS OF INTEREST.

“I HAVE to thank you very much for allowing dear ——, to serve with us for a little. It has been a fresh mark of the Lord’s attention, but does not make me the less indebted to you; He will not forget it to you. I have had it often on my mind to write to you, according to promise, but until to-day deferred to do so. In giving an account of *work*, it is difficult to lose sight of ‘I,’ though I know how one loves to know that one’s prayers are answered. Suffice it to say, at every place I went to the Lord permitted me to see some blessing—saints acknowledging help received, &c. This will show you that your prayers were not in vain; and when I say ‘yours,’ I need hardly say I include those of the whole gathering. Since I came here I have had perfect rest, so far as active service has been concerned; and for this I have not been sorry, for the body a little required it. In the two days’ meetings (open) the Lord only gave me to give out one hymn, and I even then did not respond, so I have been a silent worshipper. The ministry has been most powerful and instructive. One felt how much there was of the old nature unjudged in one’s self, and how little that Christ could really tolerate. In fact, if one really judges one’s self day by day by the Word, taking Christ (now in glory), as the perfect expression of that Word, and viewing His life as a perfect example, how the remembrance of thoughts, words, and ways that were not of Him burst upon one’s mind!

“Oh! to cultivate more and more that cloudless intimacy with Himself that makes the intrusion of evil thoughts even an absolute impossibility. There will be none in heaven,—may we not anticipate to have even now ‘the days of heaven upon earth,’ or live in heaven even though upon the earth?”

“I trust you are, while passing through the Valley or Baca (tears), *making* it a well (John iv.), heaven’s rain filling the pools. One should learn to take rich blessing out of all the vicissitudes of the way, remembering that the deeper the trial the deeper the blessing; because the deeper the knowledge of God. My kindest love to all the dear brethren.”

“You speak of our small numbers. They do not daunt me, for I know the Lord knows them. He has sent them, they were not of my gathering; and He has withheld those who would only through half-heartedness have been a trouble and an anxiety to us. We have been sifted; and all

I hope is we may never need another sifting, but that those who remain may continue faithful to Him. They will not do so unless everything is made subservient and secondary to His glory. The moment we put our interests first all will go wrong; but if we make our interests identical with His, all will go right. There may be trial (who so tried as Christ?), but poverty itself is a blessing when He is in the ship.

“Oh! that it were more a fixed principle amongst the saints to do nothing, to say nothing, and to think nothing that will not bear His scrutiny—His gaze. This is the only *happy* pathway—the conscious fear of the Lord all the day long, and the sense of His presence; in His presence is fulness of joy. As for me, my —— experience has been the best I ever went through, for I have learned in some little measure what it is to walk alone with God, and count on Him for everything. I have had some heart-breakings, over some who were once so promising; but with you all my intercourse has ever been of the happiest kind, and the devotedness of some of you (even of David’s mighty men, some are more conspicuous) is to me a source of constant satisfaction and joy. I have indeed been well repaid for my work of faith and labour of love.

“I rejoice to think that ——, is once more with you, and am so glad you are in those beautiful Epistles of John. One has well said that Paul is ‘heavenly,’ but John is ‘divine.’ I like your connection of chap. ii. 12-27 with John xiv. 6, but yet I should have thought that that verse would have been the possession of the babe. Chapter iii. 3 is indeed searching.

“May I be allowed to help your thought on Gen. xxiv., which I much like, with 1 Pet. i. 8. She was rather Petrean than Pauline at the point you name; at v. 64 she becomes Pauline (2 Cor. iii. 18). I feel sure she was then on the look-out. In v. 65 the word ‘had’ is in italics. I think the passage reads better without it.

“I am very glad you are encouraged about the Sunday school, and are having happy meetings. It must be so when He Himself, and not the gift, is before the eye and heart.

“I was much encouraged by the happy little company at H——, true Philadelphians. Here there is much anxiety for the gospel, and I am pressed in spirit to spend next Sunday here, instead of in N——, as I had intended. I hope to be with you on Friday week. I like commencing with a prayer meeting.”

MEDITATIONS ON THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS.*

“*The just shall live by faith.*”

INTRODUCTION.

IN none of the Pauline epistles, nor in any letter of the other apostles, is the foundation of our relationship to God in so clear and broad a manner presented to us as in the Epistle to the Romans. The apostle commences with the sin of man. He addresses himself directly to the conscience of the same; then unfolds individual justification, and at the same time how the believer is made free from sin, and in what the character of this liberty consists.

But to be able better to understand this Epistle in its connection, it is necessary to make one's self somewhat fully acquainted with the condition of the assembly at Rome. The circumstances of the time enable us to judge somewhat of this condition, but the Epistle itself furnishes us with still further information about it. But, without entering here into details, we shall only mention the *one* fact that the assembly at Rome consisted of Christians, who were both from among the Jews as well as from among the Nations. The former, boasting in their carnal privileges, were occupied with introducing Jewish elements; and the latter, undervaluing these privileges, altogether stood in danger of setting up a carnal liberty. Such circumstances gave occasion, not only to various uncharitable actions, but, what is still worse, they were calculated to loosen and to pollute the ground of the truth. The apostle, perceiving this danger, meets it, as a true minister of the truth, by a perfect unfolding of the principles of the doctrine of salvation—an exposition which entirely excludes all glory of man, be he Jew or Gentile, and brings most clearly to light the glory of God.

After a brief introduction, from chap. i. 1-16, which presents the glad tidings of grace, the apostle begins at once to declare the sins of the nations and of the Jews. He demonstrates the responsibility and the utterly ruined condition of man. Be he *under law* or *without law*—Jew or Gentile—he is lost. (See chap. i. 16, to chap. iii. 20.)

At the close of this description of the lost state of man, from chap. iii. 21-31, he reveals the only and all-sufficient

* Translated from the German of J. N. D.

remedy for this condition—the *blood of Christ*. This blood reveals both “the righteousness of God for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God, as also at this time his righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” Man, be he Jew or Gentile, can only be justified by faith, on the ground of the work of Christ; and this truth overthrew all claims of the Jews based upon their presumed privileges.

The Jews boasted not only of the law, but also of their descent in the flesh from Abraham. Therefore, the apostle proves, further, as both Abraham and David testified, that a man is justified by faith, and finds his salvation only in forgiveness. This appeal to Abraham gives occasion to the unfolding of a new and most important principle—namely, to the introduction of man into an altogether new state before God through the resurrection—into a condition where sin reigns no longer, where man is justified, not only in that he has forgiveness of his sins, but also that he is acceptable to God (chap. iv).

This doctrine of the resurrection is applied in chapter v. to our justification; in chapter vi. to the new life in Christ, the power of which is that we reckon ourselves dead to sin; in chapter vii. to the deliverance from the law. Finally, in chapter viii. is presented to us the condition of the delivered Christian whose deliverance rests upon the work of Christ, whose joy is consequent on the participation of the life of Christ, and whose redemption will extend also to his body.

There remains still another question to be answered. The apostle had proved in the preceding part that the Jews, looked at under the law, could produce nothing for their justification; the law, on the contrary, condemned them. But what could be said now in respect of the promises? God had given the promises *without* condition. The apostle treats this subject in chapters ix. to xi.

In chapter ix. he shows that the Jews, though Abraham’s seed, could righteously be rejected because of unbelief and disobedience, since Ishmael and Esau, descending from the same father, were excluded from the privileges, in that these were made sure to Jacob and his seed. They consequently had either to cast off their own choice, or to acknowledge the sovereignty of God; and God was therefore perfectly free to bring into execution the claims of the prophets as regards the calling of the Gentiles.

In chapter x. he shows that, according to the predictions of the same prophets, the Jews had stumbled on the stone of offence, and had not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. But, then, Are the people altogether cast off in consequence of this? Certainly not; for in chapter xi. the apostle proves—1st, that a remnant was existing; 2nd, that the call of the Nations was to provoke the Jews to jealousy; and, 3rd, that the Redeemer should come out of Zion.

Upon the ground of perfect equality of the Jews and the Nations, both as regards their lost condition and also as to the means of the redemption of both, and on the ground of their complete unity as justified ones by faith in Christ, the apostle now exhorts them to brotherly unity, in honour preferring one another, that all discord between brethren from among the Jews and from among the Nations may entirely disappear, and a mutual, hearty love be cultivated in its place. He adds various other exhortations respecting our conduct here below (chaps. xiii. to xv.), and then closes his Epistle with many salutations to several members of the assembly, who had distinguished themselves by their integrity, and were personally known to him (chap. xvi).

Now, concerning the distinctive character of the Gospel which Paul declared, it may not be without profit to say a few words here.

Soon after his calling he preached at Damascus, Christ as the *Son of God* (Acts ix. 20). The testimony of the apostles hitherto, as we plainly see in the first seven chapters of the Acts, had for its subject the Messiah, or Anointed One—rejected and crucified by the people of Israel, but acknowledged and raised up again by God. God had raised Him, and “made him both Lord and Christ” (Acts ii. 36), and the people of Israel were invited, through the presence and testimony of the Holy Ghost, to acknowledge Him in this new position by repentance and faith. It was, therefore, a testimony which had reference to the relation between God and His earthly people. But Israel refused to acknowledge this, and rejected the witness of the Holy Ghost most distinctly in the stoning of Stephen, “a man full of faith and *the Holy Ghost* (Acts vi. 5, vii. 57-60). Israel had now rejected the last testimony, and there remained, therefore, nothing but judgment for it. But the execution of this judgment has not taken place as yet. Israel, though having been long since set aside as a nation, still awaits this

final judgment. As soon, then, as Israel had rejected all, God raised up Paul, and revealed through him a new testimony, which he calls *his* Gospel. This testimony unto which Paul was called as an apostle has not for its object Christ as the Messiah, but as the *Son of God*. It had no relation to a connection between God and His people as such, but to a relation between God and His children.

GALATIANS IV.

IN Genesis we have *the Father*. It is the Book of the Patriarchs; and the affections of the Father are displayed and exercised there very beautifully.

Abraham, as well as others in this book, desires a child; and though his house might have been established in a servant, a loved and trusted servant too, Eliezer of Damascus, this will not do for him. As long as he went childless his heart was unsatisfied.

He makes a feast when his son Isaac is weaned. This was his joy, to hear himself addressed as a father; and Sarah will then also have the house cleared of the bondwoman and her child.

Jacob adopts the sons of Joseph, giving them the place and inheritance of the firstborn, and welcoming them with full affection.

These are among the instances which we find, in these early patriarchal days, of the counsel and affections of our Heavenly Father shadowed or expressed in these His representatives in the Book of Genesis. And I may add, there is no law, no Moses, no schoolmaster in this Book. God has the elect *immediately* under His own hand and eye, dealing with them by *home* method, so to express it, and not as by the intervention of "tutors and governors."

The Law came afterwards, and then the elect were carried to school, and put under rules and ordinances foreign to the home of the family, treated rather as servants than as children. The head of a school is a schoolmaster.

But the dispensation of the Spirit has now come. The Son Himself has been manifested. He was made of a woman, made under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. The elect are now put *on* the ground of His accomplished redemption, and *in* the acceptableness of His loved person.

Now, *this* condition of things is the Father's delight. There was a need of the schoolmaster for a season; but that need has been answered, and the Father has His child home again. This is not the age of the *νηπιος*—or the infant, the child that cannot speak, but the age or dispensation of the *υιος*—the son, the elect who have the Spirit, the Spirit of adoption that cries, Abba, Father, filling the house with that music. It is the time of the *weaned* Isaac, and all that appertains to the bondwoman must leave the house.

This, again I say, is the Father's delight. The affection of the Father finds occasion to indulge itself to the full.

But the Galatians were disappointing His affection. They were returning to ordinances; and this is contrary to the spirit of adoption, taking the elect from the Father's house again to put them under tutors and governors, as before, and destroying the free, gracious, confiding communion of children with their Father. They were bringing back Hagar to the house. And it is this which the Spirit so earnestly resents in this part of the Epistle to the Galatians. It is the grieved and wounded bosom of the Father that speaks in this fervent Epistle. Sarah had expressed this resentment in the Book of Genesis, when she said, "Cast out the bondwoman and her son." That word is quoted here; for here in like manner the Spirit, in the behalf, so to speak, of the Father, expresses the like resentment. Paul would act the part of a *parent* in this Epistle (see verse 19).

By faith we are *justified* (Gal. iii. 11); by faith we are *made children* (Gal. iii. 26). A return to ordinances or works of law, therefore, reproaches Christ, as though He had not accomplished our justification; but it also silences in our hearts the cry of adoption, and thus disappoints the love of the Father. And it is *this* which this chapter, with some indignation, resents.

And I do feel that this gives this part of the Epistle a very affecting and beautiful character. It is the resentment, or uttered disappointment of Him who so long ago as the days of Abraham and Sarah, let His elect know this—that no conditions of things as between Him and them would satisfy His heart, but the relationship of a father to those who not only are, but also know themselves to be, children: who are weaned, like Isaac, from the milk of ordinances, and brought home, and to the good of the Father's table. When our relationship to God becomes the subject with our souls,

how *commanding* it is—at least, if it be a real thing with us. We may be anxious, or merely calmly inquiring, or having found, be joyful; but however such affections may vary, they are *commanding*.

Look at David, happy in God, when conveying the ark home—what an “object” in the thoughts of others this made him! Look at him again, when under conviction, in the day of Ornan’s threshing-floor, how full of humiliation and yet of self-sacrifice he was!

Look at the congregation of Israel, when happy in God, in the day of the coronation of David, how large-hearted they were—and to the princes of Israel, in the day of dedicating the house of God with David (1 Chron. xii. 29).

Look at Peter, in the hour of his conviction, how careless he was whether the boat sank or swam.

And see Zaccheus, interested in inquiring after Jesus, how heedless of the crowd and of the tree he was; and then, when happy in Jesus, how heedless of the injurious speeches of the people!

And thus with the eunuch, when an inquirer, he was not moved by the strange and sudden appearance of a stranger; and then when he was satisfied, he was not moved by the still more strange and sudden disappearing of his companion.

When the Galatians apprehended Jesus at the first, see what manner of “blessedness” was among them (chap. iv.); and when the Hebrews were “illuminated,” what unstinted joy leading to self-sacrifice was in them! (chap. x.)

Those instances illustrate what I have suggested: when the Lord really becomes the object, how *commanding* a relation to our hearts He fills and maintains! Others become secondary.

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

(CHAPTER XVII.)

THIS chapter is the most wonderful in the Word, inasmuch as we are admitted to hear what the Lord says, not to His disciples, but to His Father. It does not properly contain instruction; it is the heart of the Lord which is expressed openly to the Father.

The great truth that it contains is, that it places the disciples in His own position, as well towards the Father as

towards the world; and then, at the end of the chapter, He wishes us to be along with Him. In the first verses it lays the foundation of this new position. We can observe here, too, that in this Gospel His death is only spoken of as a departure from this world. (Chap. xiii. 1, 2.)

The Lord had received all power over all men to give eternal life to those whom the Father had given Him, and this expression, That they are those whom the Father had given Him, we find frequently. His disciples are a precious present that the Father hath made Him, and Jesus is charged with guarding them, saving them, and making them fit to present them to the Father in His house. Jesus always thinks of the glory of the Father, and never abandons the position of Servant, which He had taken.

Christ is the eternal life (1 John i). When one receives the Word one receives Christ, who is the life which is communicated to us by Christ, when the Word works in us through faith. Here the character of the life is the knowledge of the Father and of the Son. At verse 4, Christ has finished the necessary work, notwithstanding all the difficulties He had encountered on earth. In virtue of this work He demands of the Father to be glorified with that glory which He had as God; and now He will possess that same eternal glory likewise as Man. He will return into His former glory as Man, in virtue of the work which He has done for us, with the view of having us likewise in the same glory along with Himself.

It is a wonderful thing that there should be a Man in heaven, in the presence of God, glorified. And this Man perfected in everything! This Man has been down here to pass through our trials, to know our difficulties, and to manifest to men all divine goodness. Such was one of His designs in coming on the earth, and this fact inspires us with full confidence in His presence. He now demands to be glorified, because on earth He has no more to do. If He had not finished the work, He would not have been able to depart, to go into the glory.

At verse 6, Jesus says that He has manifested the Father's name to His own, and this is what He has done during all His ministry, as we see in the Gospels—for example, in the Lord's sermon. According to this revelation we are introduced into the position of sons with the Father, as is expressed still more clearly to Mary Magdalene, after

His resurrection, "I ascend to my Father and to your Father."

It is beautiful to see that, notwithstanding the great feebleness, the incredulity, and the unbelief of His disciples, Jesus, in speaking to the Father, gives them the honour, as if they had kept His word, and elsewhere as if they had persevered in all His afflictions. They had, no doubt, done so, but with what weakness and infirmity, which should have made them blush to hear these praises! But Jesus presents them to the Father according to His love, which was perfect, and acts so as not to see the defects in the loved objects. The Jews were fully expecting that Jehovah would give *some things* to the Messiah, but the disciples had known that the Father had given "*all things*" to the Son.

THE EARTHEN VESSEL, THE TREASURE, THE POWER.

2 COR. iv. 5.

THE apostle, beloved brethren, speaks here of the ministry that he had received. He was one who in a wonderful manner lived with God so as to carry out this ministry; still what he ministered was received, only he was a vessel filled in a more than ordinary degree. This ministry especially regards the testimony, whatever the sphere, and therefore the thing that he ministered is ours, so that thus we are vessels, each one in our own little sphere, of that with which he was filled.

The ministry of the Spirit, contrasted with that of the Old Testament prophets, shows that the things must be possessed for ourselves, before they can be ministered to others. Now this is not characteristic of the prophetic ministry. There are three steps in 1 Peter i. 10-13 as to this. The Spirit of Christ which was in the prophets, *testified beforehand* of the sufferings of Christ, and of the glories that should follow. These things are *now reported unto us* by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven—that is after Christ was glorified. Then we are to have girded loins, and "hope to the end for the grace that is to be *brought unto us* at the revelation of Jesus Christ." We stand between the two last, the Holy Ghost sent down and the revelation of Jesus Christ, and so our loins are to be girded while here,

The apostle then shows how the testimony is carried out ; it has "shined in our hearts for the giving forth of the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Paul had had a revelation of Christ in him, "When it pleased God . . . to reveal his Son in me." This revelation of Christ in him was that by which he might preach Him, and it was not only *to* him but *in* him, and this latter, of course, in a remarkable way in his case ; but in every one of us according to our measure.

In the previous chapter he had spoken of what his ministry was—commonly called "the gospel of the glory ;" Christ is speaking from heaven only "once more ;" the earth is to be shaken so that now we have the last things. It is the glory that He is speaking of in contrast with Moses, who covered his face. His ministry was of death and condemnation, and even that reflection of glory man could not look at because it came as a demand or exaction from God. If the legal claims had come alone, man might have thought he could have stood it ; but accompanied by the glory it was impossible. Man must either hide himself from God, or hide God from himself. The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ is not a little bit coming down with Moses, but it is in a Man in heaven, and a *Man* who was *on the Cross*. Sin, death, and the power of Satan, are all dealt with together, and now He who has done it has gone far above all heavens. It is not *requiring* from men what they ought to be, but it is God *giving to* man. The only part we had in the Cross of Christ was the sins that He bore, and the hatred He met with. There sin has reached its climax in antagonism to that blessed One, and there I see God putting away sin, and from the glory where He has been received comes the testimony that sin is gone, the work is accomplished, and I get the witness of it—the glory of God. That is the thing that is ministered by the gospel of the glory. The Man who has borne our sins, who was made sin, against whom Satan did his worst, is in glory, and of this we have the full testimony in the face of Jesus Christ.

This gives a very distinct character to the position we are in. We are brought by Him to believe in God ; God has wrought a work by Him so effectual that He who did it is at God's right hand, and now I can see the glory, and delight in it. "We all, with open face, beholding the glory of the Lord are changed." Oh, let me see that ! My sin-bearer

is in glory! Of course I delight in that. The Holy Ghost comes down because of it and I am sealed! The Christian stands down and looks back at the sufferings as the accomplished work of God, and forward to the glory. He knows the accomplishment of the work, and what it leads to, because Christ is in it as a Man when He revealed Himself to Paul. He treated every Christian as Himself. "Why persecutest thou *Me*?" If Christ owns me as Himself what am I waiting for? I am waiting for Him to come and take me there, to get the thing that is mine, for the Holy Ghost is sent down to tell me that it is mine.

In the early part of chapter v. he speaks of the power of life which has come into the place of death, so that he can say, I do not want to die—to be unclothed. I see a power come in, and I can be changed into the glory without dying at all. Of course he did die, but it is a present living power, so he says we shall not *all* sleep; the power of death is broken. *If* I die, he says here, it is all gain, because I am present with the Lord, my spirit will be with Him, and I shall be raised when the time comes. It is very striking the way in which the Lord speaks to Paul in Acts xxvi. "Delivering thee from the people (Jews), and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee." He belonged to Christ in glory, so do we. Of course, we have not had a vision, but what he testified of, we receive. The Holy Ghost is sent down as the seal of our *persons*, and the one thing we wait for is to have this Christ. "To them that look for him, will he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." He came to put away sin the first time. Those who neglect this die in their sins, but to those who look for Him, of course He has nothing to say as to sin; it is a resurrection of *life*. If I cared for a person very much who was coming to me, I should go and meet him; so Christ comes Himself for us, and, In what condition are we there? We are glorified already when we come to the judgment seat of Christ. Did you ever think of that? Nothing can be simpler. There we shall learn the unceasing grace that cared for us all the way through. Of course in looking back now I see it in measure. The fulness of the redemption that has taken us up is, that we are "raised in *glory*." I am like Him when I appear before Him. Then what need have I to fear judgment? What do I fear when I come before Him the second time of His coming? Why—that my

sins were put away when He came first, and the second time I am perfectly like Him. Christ then sees the fruit of the travail of His soul; because He has made us perfectly happy and satisfied.

We stand between the finishing of the sufferings and the coming in of the glory. The hope of the coming was the first thing lost—"If that evil servant say in his heart, My Lord *delayeth his coming*," (he was that *servant* still). When the end of the world comes, heaven and earth flee from before His face; that is not His coming! That which He sends to awaken them from sleep (for people wonder that godly men do not see it, though the wise were just as much asleep as the foolish) is the cry, "Behold the bridegroom." I have a positive revelation that the thing that wakes them up is the testimony that the Lord is coming. The wise though having the oil in their vessels had settled into some comfortable place, and the Lord comes and wakes them up, "*Go ye out.*" Do you think that if the Lord were to come to-night you would have bright, well-trimmed lamps?

I must warn you that—"in the last days *perilous* times shall come," though they are blessed times for all that. It is of great moment to see now that when in 2 Tim. iii., the apostle speaks of these perilous times, the Scriptures are the resource, and knowing too of *whom* they are learned. If I go and learn of Paul, then it is all right, but if you say the church teaches, then how am I to know? For you all know how the word of God is called in question now. To the word of God there is no *handle*, it is sharper than a two-edged sword all over, it cuts every way, and if men meddle with it they find no handle. If a man comes to me and talks about readings, and I say to him—How do you like a book that told you all that ever you did? It deals with his conscience. That is the way the word of God is known. Look at that poor woman of Samaria. The Lord had been talking about all sorts of things, till at last He says, "Go, call thy husband." Then she tells the truth to hide the truth. The instant the conscience is reached there is intelligence of the word of God. Faith's roots are in the conscience. If I am to have to say to God, there must be faith in it; so when I am in the presence of God, my conscience is there. The place where the word of God gets, is never in the intellect, always in the conscience: when God comes with His sword and reaches the conscience, I know very

well that it has a point. When the devil comes to tempt our Lord, what is a sufficient weapon for Him? He quotes a text from the Old Testament, the book that men think so little of.

In I Cor. ii. 9-14, I find three things. The Holy Ghost *reveals* the things—then by words given of the Spirit we *communicate* the things, and by the Holy Ghost they are *received*. It is such a comfort, beloved friends, that what we have is directly from God. You see the character of those who walk correctly—you see the blessed testimony we get of it in the Church of Philadelphia. “Thou hast kept my word.” In the time of all going away to evil, He could say this, the name of Christ has its value in the soul, and the word of God its authority for heart and conscience; just as the word was the thing they kept through grace; remark how strong that is in connection with what I was saying.

In Phil. ii., when speaking of *subjection*, the apostle says, “Of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things *under the earth*,” but when of *reconciliation*, he only says (Col. i. 20), “things in earth, and things in heaven.” We are like Eve—she was the spouse of the one who was Lord over creation and all things; she was the help-meet, the one who was associated with him who was Lord. “He hath given him to be head over all things.” What I desire for your souls is, that in the accomplished work you should see that you are saved, and that the Holy Ghost comes and puts us in association with it. If I wait for the glory I know that He is waiting for it too.

Now, we are passing through the world and we have the treasure in earthen vessels. How are we to walk according to the power of the grace He has put us into? Then we come to the walk, meanwhile grace has brought me salvation, and I am looking to the glory to put me into the full result. “We are troubled,” that is the vessel, “but not distressed,” *because God is there*, perplexed, but “not in despair,” *because God is there*. All the treasure is put in a poor, earthen vessel that feels all the difficulties and trials of the way, but has the grace of Christ. I have the sentence of death in myself. I reckon myself dead with Christ, so what is bringing death to a dead man? Paul held himself to be dead to sin and everything; he was not insensible to the trial. God was there in the trial as he had given Him the glory. And he learned that the treasure is not here, but

there, and that there is no possessed power, but a *possessed treasure in a dependent man*. If I am alive as to the flesh, and let it act, it spoils the treasure. If the lantern is not clean, the light does not shine out. I have the Christ revealed in my soul, but if flesh comes in, that spoils the testimony. If I reckon myself dead, and a man comes and asks me to amuse myself, I say, *I am dead*. Supposing persecution comes and my flesh is not dead, I am afraid, and all sorts of things. Paul takes up death in Christ practically, and says, "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus,"—he realizes his place—and I must reduce it to practice, and know that my flesh is flesh and must not stir, and, if I am full of Christ, it will not. If I let the flesh come in it is like letting the glass of the lantern be dirty. The Lord says to Paul, "I see you are in earnest, so I will bring you within an ace of death, that you may realize it." If there is any tendency in the flesh to spring up, put the red-hot iron on it. Death so wrought in Paul that only the life of Christ wrought from him to the Corinthians. Now, that is testimony. Now you find the blessings we go on into. The man is entirely superior to circumstances. Of the death that God allowed to come so close to him, he can say, "God which raiseth the dead." Stephen is the copy of Christ in the midst of death—completely superior to circumstances.

Now, beloved friends, this is for you, all things are for your sakes. Paul was for your sakes—do you believe that? The object of God's delight, the gift, the glory—*all* is for your sakes. Oh! if we only saw that we should get out of the little, narrow path of circumstances we are in. We are made to feel the powerlessness of our wretched flesh as men. "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." If God puts you through the circumstances, He makes everything work together for good, and remember, "He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous," no, not for a moment. It is only the outward man that is perishing; why, the children of Israel's clothes did not wax old though they were evil and naughty! But the children of Israel would not go up into the land, so God says, You must turn back into the wilderness, and He turned back with them. "He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous." I never can spend one instant without the power of God being exercised

to lead me through the trial and everything : if we only could remember it !

“ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,” the glory that had been put into the lantern ; it had been dealt with by death, and now he has the eternal weight of glory. He is breaking down the vessel, and soon he will have the glory, and then there will be no vessel seen at all. Now, there is the Christian !

Now, as referring to the old ministry, there are three things. It does not give life, or strength, or an object, but when I have Christ, I say, Well, I have *life* ; but I am a poor, weak creature, well, I have *strength*, and I have also an *object* in view. A grace sufficient for me, a strength needed, and He will help me on the way to death, and more, I shall be like Him in glory. He is learning to reckon himself dead every day by having an earthen vessel, if the earthen vessel meddles with it, it mars the testimony. I must get to know the thing : it is not insincerity, but flesh and blood cannot understand it. It does not follow because this blessed revelation is there that the flesh is broken down. The flesh does not like the cross. I got the blessed treasure in the earthen vessel, and if it is only a vessel it is all right, if not, there comes the dealing, the application of the cross practically to the flesh, delivering us to death for Jesus' sake. If the vessel begins to stir it spoils the manifestation.

Now let me ask you, Can you say that you so see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ that salvation is settled for you ? Is that what the glory of the Man who is in glory does for you ? Can you say that you are waiting for the Man who has got the victory to come and take you to the glory Himself ? The furniture is all sent on before, as it were, and you are only waiting to go to the house, nothing detains you in the old one. Have you seen what the flesh is ? If I look at my place and standing, I say, I am not a child of Adam, I am a child of God, and if the vessel stirs it spoils the whole thing. The Man who is in glory has become my Saviour ; there is no uncertainty about it. I stand with the only full hope that this blessed Jesus, at a time known to God, will come, and then I shall be *like* Him and *where* He is ; and through faith we know it now, and the word of God has told us so.

The Lord give you that the flesh in you may be so

broken down that you may see and understand the wisdom of God, and see Him, who is the wisdom of God, and who, when He comes again, will see of the travail of His soul, in seeing us in the same glory as Himself, and now to bear about the dying of the Lord Jesus, that nothing but the life of Jesus may be manifest in these mortal bodies!

LETTERS OF INTEREST.

DEAR ———,—I have your letter. I am sure that the enemy is very busy, as well as the evil heart within. What you need is real, thorough deliverance from yourself—*i.e.*, 'the flesh' in the first place, not to speak of power to overcome evil in practice.

You speak of evil thoughts, unbidden and hated, springing up in the heart, even when you seek to be occupied with the Lord; this, too, even when really thinking of Him. Then you stop to confess them, and the occupation for a moment in confession only provokes another evil thought; and so it is, as you say, 'an unending,' 'all-day work.'

My feeling is, that you have never really enjoyed full deliverance from self and flesh. You are what Scripture calls still 'in the flesh,' though a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Your recognition of and occupation with the truths of Scripture, being far beyond the work in your conscience, has been, and is, a great snare to you. I hardly know of anything that is more hurtful to the soul than the craving of *mind*, which you have fed from time to time with divine truths. . . . All this has been a snare of the enemy, from which may you be fully delivered!

I believe that if your soul was free, you would find that the simple yet profound truth of 'reckon yourselves dead,' &c. (Rom. vi.), would so act that the thought of turning aside to confess what would spring up unsought for in your soul would be found to be really and only allowing the flesh a triumph in leading you to be occupied with it.

Where there is no *will*, such thoughts will be left, turned aside from, and treated as 'not I.' Of course, when the soul is not free, I could not say that you could do so at all. But were freedom enjoyed, you would not be the sufferer from such things. The presence of them would indicate that you are not free. Yet I feel a difficulty even in telling

you this, because from your intellectual knowledge of things (which can hardly be called divinely-received knowledge), you would be tempted to go through known truths of deliverance, and seek to find out what your experimental response to them is, in order to obtain what you do not possess. . .

Were I to enter upon the doctrine of your questions, I feel I would but injure you. What I would simply say to you is, when evil thoughts are presented to your soul, unsought for and hated, do *not* stop, and cease from your measure of occupation with the Lord, to confess them. If *will* enters, they must be confessed; but if not, pass them by, as you would avoid an evil person who is not yourself, and whom you know is incorrigible, and with whom contact was only misery and defilement. "Avoid such, and pass not by them" (Prov. iv. 15), but leave them there. To own them at all is but to give the flesh the place it seeks—a recognition in some way or other. *This* even, when it is only to abhor its workings, will be a satisfaction to 'the flesh.'

O that you had grace to leave 'the flesh' unrecognized and disowned, and to pass on, conscious that it is always there, and will be in you till the end! How blessed that one can, by grace, disown and refuse to hear its suggestions when it works, knowing through mercy that 'It is no more I!'

Your case has been, or is one, that 'is common' to most of the Lord's people, if not to all. I refer now to the arising of unsolicited and hated and wandering thoughts. You should simply go on and take no notice of them whatever; as by doing so you only give flesh the place it seeks. Go on as not hearing these suggestions: be, as it were, deaf to them. Confess to God if you find *will* enter; but not so as to be occupied with the analysis of the evil; rather look up to Him—the sense of weakness and impotency filling your heart, and, in the attitude of dependence of soul, pass on, with your eye resting upon Him, out from whom strength comes wherever there is conscious weakness.—Yours faithfully, &c.

"THE passage (2 Cor. v.) has been one of much consideration. I do not doubt, the saints too will be the subjects of the judgment-seat. They will be manifested before it, but that their *persons* will be called into question, that could not be. They

are justified. They rise not to judgment, but to life. So that the question of their *persons*, *i.e.*, of themselves, is settled.

“But in happy family order, the discovery of wrong tempers or hidden breaches is a most welcome process. Far better to have such things manifested than smothered. The discovery or confession of them is the best kind of healing.

“All work of this kind should have been conducted and concluded by the light of the Spirit in us. But by reason of flesh, this is not so. This process is hindered and left imperfect. But the light of the judgment-seat of Christ will not be so hindered. There will be no *flesh* to contend with it as a rival energy. It will *manifest* all—and that light and that operation will be a needed work to make the saints happy in their *social* eternity.

“But observe this, as another once remarked, the thought of this judgment-seat gives the apostle no *uneasiness* about *himself*—it rather makes him think of others; for he says: ‘Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we *persuade men.*’

“This is a very happy thought. He was not distressed about himself when he thought of judgment.

“Beloved, all of us are a *compound*, Jesus was a *combination*. In Jesus all graces were mingled, and mingled in their due proportions—in us grace and corruption are compounded together. In Him, as another has said, there was nothing *salient*—all was *duly* mingled. In us there is nothing of *perfection*. All, in one way or another, is moral *unfitness*.

“But the day is at hand, when the flesh will have perished in its own corruption, and the new creation in Christ shall shine in its purity as well as in its glory.”

QUERIES AND REPLIES.

ZETA:—1. Was Christ the first Adam? &c. 2. What is the difference between the “day of Jesus Christ,” and the “day of Christ”?

1. 1 Cor. xv. is explicit as to your first question. Christ was not the first Adam in anywise. He is said to be the “Last Adam,” and “The Second Man.” The Second man, in contrast to the first—retrospectively. The Last Adam—prespectively, for there can be no advance beyond Him, by

whom God Himself is made known. He is not said to be either of these, in terms, until He was glorified. Doubtless in title He was all that and much more; but He is not said to be either until He is on God's throne, and God's eternal counsels are then revealed as to Him and all belonging to His glory.

As the "first Adam" was so in title before he left Paradise, the ruined head of a lost world; yet, he was not named so until the Second was brought in; so the Last Adam was not named such until He entered His glory as Man.

God substitutes the Last Adam for the "first," when the "First" had run his course in responsibility, from innocence to the cross. Then He brought in the man of His counsel, to make good in Him all His purposes from eternity. The very terms, "Second" and "Last," show the "first" morally judged and set aside, and that there can be no advancement beyond Him who is brought in.

It is of course another thing to speak of substitution in atonement for His people. For them He was absolutely and positively "made sin"—the very thing—sin itself. "He that knew no sin was made sin for us" (2 Cor. v. 21). The full and righteous bursting forth of the whole, unmitigated wrath of God fell upon Him, as thus made sin. This He met, as one alone able to do so, and answered all that was in God's nature against sin—exhausting the wrath by so doing, and adding thus to God's glory.

All this, in order that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him: the expression of God's just appreciation in and by what He wrought. It is but the just value put upon that work to constitute him who believes in Jesus an unsullied ray of God's righteousness in Christ.

2. As to the "day of Jesus Christ," and the "day of Christ," there is a difference between, and in the use of the varied names of the Lord in the New Testament. "Christ" is His official name. "Jesus Christ" more His personal name, as ascended, looked upon as having gone through the whole path—incarnation, life, sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, glory. He is first *named* "Jesus Christ" in Acts ii. The Gospels were written after that day, and when "Jesus Christ" is then used, it would seem that the mind of the Spirit is upon Him as on high. He then returns and traces His path and history as to how He reached that place.

Hence, in Phil. i. 6, when the course of the saints is before Paul's mind, and the unfailing love and working of the Lord to bring them through, it is more suited to speak of the *Person* who will have His day, and had run the course Himself; it would then be "Jesus Christ's day."

In *v.* 10, the expression "day of Christ," brings the *day* of the appraisal of all things—even of their present walk before the mind; this, more than the Person whose day would come, after His path of persevering service here. He prays that they might be "pure and without offence for (the) day of Christ."

ON THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

(CHAPTER II.)

"AND *you* hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." He begins with the Gentiles (*v.* 2). Gives their condition as dead in sins (*v.* 3). He turns to the Jews, and you, he says, were by nature the children of wrath even as others. Dispensationally they were near, no doubt, but not by nature. So he puts the Jew practically in the place of the heathen (*v.* 4). Then he leaps right over to God Himself. They were children of wrath, but God is rich in mercy. He goes over from the condition in which men are lying, to God's love to them when they were in that state (*v.* 5). Quickened together with Christ. I get it as a complete thing here. In Col. ii. 13 the resurrection is not connected with quickening, the resurrection is in the preceding verse. In Colossians I get that the quickening is a total change of the subjective state. I am quickened, but it is another thing where you are going to put me. When we were dead in sins, He has quickened us together with *Christ*. I am not in my old place at all. God has quickened us together *with* Christ. It is not here that Christ quickens us. It is that He was dead, and having forgiven us all trespasses, God has quickened us together with Him. In Col. ii. 13 it is really redemption, but it is life that is the question there. Having life is a different idea from the fact of being quickened. It is, a man living in this world has eternal life. I am quickened along with Christ, who has come down into the place in which I was—death. Why does He come there? I was there in my sins, and He came there (having obtained

forgiveness of my sins), and took me away. Then we get up together into heavenly places. It says, "The Son quickeneth whom he will" (John v. 21); but that is a very different thing to being quickened along with Christ.

In iii. John He says, "If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things?" He is referring to Ezekiel xxxvi., and as a master in Israel he ought to have known that. It is the thing for Israel then. These are the heavenly things.

This is, a new man comes out of death along with Christ. I am then in His state as man. So He goes on "Hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places."

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

AT HOME WITH GOD.

(REV. i. 5, 6.)

THERE'S not a ray of that bright place,
As shining in the Saviour's face,
But lightsome shines within the heart
Of those who find their deathless part
With Christ in yonder blest abode,
The purchase of His own life's blood.

'Tis ours, and there we find our home;
Nor storms, nor clouds, nor tempests come
Within the haven of that rest,
Where we as one with Him are blest—
The Father's Son enthroned on high,
Who died for us on Calvary.

At home with Him in glory bright,
Where all is love and all is light;
For God is all in all above,
And "God is light" and "God is love."
At home—sweet thought—at home with God:
At home through Jesus' precious blood!

Nought else could fit us for that place
But love divine and sovereign grace:
Grace that could rise above our sin,
Love that could love us though unclean.
Such love and grace in Christ we see,
That brought Him down to Calvary.

But now He's seated on the throne,
His portion there in light our own;
And endless days shall bear our song
In light, and joy, and praise along,
"To Him who saved us by His blood,
And brought us home to dwell with God."

“THE TESTIMONY.”

(THE SUBSTANCE OF A CONVERSATION.)

“IF we had him, he is a devoted Christian, and would greatly help the testimony.”

“What testimony?”

“Oh, the testimony of the Lord in — : he would be such a help to us.”

“Ah, I see where you are : you are thinking of *your* testimony, and not of the ruin of the Church, and the Lord’s coming as our only hope in the midst of it.”

“I think, through grace, I do see the ruin of the Church, and am also waiting for the Lord’s coming ; but is it not right to raise a testimony in the meantime ; and do you not think if we had such a man as that—a fine, earnest, active, devoted man, that he would greatly help us?”

“Well, you may depend upon it, if you bring any one to be a help to you, he will turn out but a prick and a thorn in your side.”

“What ! Do you mean to say that the Lord would not make such as he a help to us?”

“Yes, if you did not look for help from him in that way. But if your eye is on him, then it is off the Lord ; and what you sought comfort from would be but dust in your eyes and grit between your teeth. If you were not where you are it would be another thing ; but you are in the place of ‘dependence upon God,’ and He is very jealous over you, and will keep you dependent on Himself. What is it to Him to save by many or by few ? Others, not in the place of dependence, might look to man and get blessing from such as he, as you speak of ; but, for one in the place of ‘dependence upon God,’ it would be deeply dishonouring to Him, and He would not allow it.”

“Oh, but I did not mean to turn away from the Lord, and look to man : I only meant that if he came in, what a help he would be !”

“Rather say *how helped* he would be. You are dependent on the Lord for help, and independent of man. When I see a bright soul outside, I court him for the Lord, and say, ‘Oh, how I long to see so-and-so in ; what blessing he would receive were he in the right place !’ Not ‘how he would help us,’ though we might be helped by him at the same time.”

“Oh ! I see, God is seeking worshippers.”

"Quite so. And what power and happiness there would be if all saw that. How dependent upon God, and how honouring to Him; while at the same time how ready to receive from Him any help, and in any way He chooses to give it!"

"But still, while owning all that, what about the testimony? Do you not think it would help the testimony?"

"My dear friend, do you not know what you are a testimony to?"

"What?"

"Utter and entire failure, from every point of view."

"Well, of course that is true, I know; but are we not the epistle of Christ?"

"The Church in her normal character is that, and she is always responsible for it. But what sort of an epistle is she now? What sort of an epistle are you at ——?"

"Oh, please do not name it. The thought of it fills me with shame."

"Well then, what have you to say?"

"I quite know and see the Church has failed corporately. And, alas! we at—— too have failed. But for that very reason ought we not the rather seek to raise a testimony?"

"You have sought to do so, and have you succeeded? Are you proud of your attempt?"

"Well, surely not. But are we not to be witnesses?"

"Of course we ought: corporately and individually too we ought to be witnesses for Christ: that's not the question: but when I hear brethren talk of raising a testimony, I query if they know where they are, at the tail-end of a ruined dispensation. If you talk of a testimony—the sun in the heavens is a testimony; the moon and the stars are a testimony; all 'declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handywork.' 'The law of the Lord is perfect' too—that is a testimony, and has never failed. The Church at Pentecost, freshly gathered by the Holy Spirit, come down from heaven, was a testimony; but where is it now? When Paul preached the gospel of the glory of God, shining in the face of Jesus Christ, and established the church on the foundation of that truth and its consequences, that was a testimony; but where is it now? Ephesus had the candlestick taken away from it, and it never was nor ever will be restored here. Examine these chapters on the Churches, and what do you find? the testimony getting less and less—until you come to Laodicea, where there is *no testimony at all*,

except a testimony to corruption, and Christ outside and seeking to get in. Sardis was a testimony to ‘works left undone,’ to spiritual laziness and inertness that left ‘incomplete’ what it had in hand to do.”

“Yes, but what about Philadelphia?”

“Well, what about it? Simply, that ‘He that is holy, he that is true,’ and He that has all power says, ‘I know thy works.’ Is that enough for you? or do you want other people to know them too? As it is, I should think they know enough of them, to know that they are not much to your credit.”

“Well, I own that, but does He not say, ‘I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it?’”

“Yes, but that is *His* work, not yours : for simple as it is even to open a door, you have not strength for that, much less to ‘raise a testimony.’ But Philadelphia did work, and this is what He says she did, ‘Thou hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.’ And this is what she is told to do, ‘Hold fast that thou hast, that no man take thy crown.’ That is what she is told to do. There is nothing about ‘raising a testimony.’ As to the rest it is He who does it all. You will notice how often ‘I,’ and ‘I will,’ comes in.”

I know thy works

I have set an open door before thee

I will make them of the synagogue

I will make them come. . . . and know that.

I have loved thee.

I also will keep thee

I come quickly

Him that overcometh will

I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. And

. . . And

I will write upon him the name of my God,

” ” my God,

” ” my God,

” and my new name.

“‘He that hath an ear to hear let him hear.’ Philadelphia was not called to raise a testimony (though she was a bright testimony), for she had not power adequate for it. What He says of her is, ‘Thou hast kept the word of my *patience*.’ nothing about raising a testimony.”

“But then has God no testimony at all now?”

“God never left Himself without testimony, ‘in that *He*

did good (mark *who* it was that raised the testimony), and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with joy and gladness.' Thus it was God Himself who preserved the testimony to His own goodness among the nations (compare Rom. i. 18-32): and so at the end of the history of the church in Laodicea the testimony is in like manner preserved—'These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness.' And this is the more remarkable as Laodicea is the church emphatically that sets up to 'raise a testimony.' Alas! it is but a testimony to unholy self-complacency. 'I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing.' He says of her, 'I will spue thee out of my mouth;' that is no testimony to me.

"Now, Philadelphia is the place for you. If God says, 'I know thy works,' let that suffice you. Never you mind the testimony—time is too short to think of that. Mind yourself, and that will be a great deal more glory to God, and better for yourself—walk humbly, with your head down, and your eyes up."

"Well, I thought I understood the ruin of the Church, and the coming of Christ as our blessed and only hope, but I see there is vastly more to be learned and apprehended by faith. I am but scratching on the surface yet."

We can only be, in truth, a testimony to the complete failure of the Church of God. But, to be such, we must be as true in principle as the thing that has failed. And, as long as we are a testimony to failure, we shall never fail.

MEDITATIONS ON THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS.

(CHAPTER i.-iii. 20.)

IN none of the other epistles does the apostle place his *apostleship* upon so firm a basis as in the one before us, and this perhaps for this reason, that he had no claim upon the Christians at Rome in consequence of his labour; although he knew several saints there personally, yet he himself had never been at Rome. Nevertheless he was their apostle, because he was the apostle of the nations. He was debtor to the nations. He wrote to them, because he had received of the Lord a mission to all nations. The Christians at Rome, therefore, belonged to the field of his labour. To him it was

entrusted "that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost" (chap. xv. 16). God wrought effectually by Peter among the Jews; but Paul was sent to the nations, and as such acknowledged by the twelve other apostles (Gal. ii. 7). He was therefore fully entitled to write a letter to the assembly at Rome, not merely because he was a servant of Christ—such were many besides him—but because he was "a called apostle, separated unto the gospel of God" (verse 1). His calling took place on his way to Damascus, through the glorified Christ Himself (Acts x.), and his separation unto this service at Antioch, through the authority of the Holy Ghost (Acts xiii. 2). The object of his service, whereunto he was called, was "the gospel of God concerning his Son." It is *the gospel of God*, because as it originated from God Himself, and as His own purposes are made known therein, God Himself is the source of this gospel. It was promised afore by His prophets in the holy Scriptures (verse 2), and this shows unto us the connection of the Old Testament with the gospel.* It is here well to notice, that this gospel was not yet revealed, and brought to light through the holy Scriptures, but was only before declared as a coming thing. But in reference to the assembly this was not the case.

The precious object of this gospel is the Son of God—"the gospel of God concerning his Son" (verse 3), Jesus who had finished the work of redemption: He Himself is the true object of this gospel. In verses 2 and 3 He is presented to us in a twofold relation. At first He is the object and fulfiller of the promises—"of the seed of David according to the flesh," and then He is "declared the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness, by resurrection of the dead" (verses 3, 4).

Let us observe first the two words "declared" and "made" standing opposed to one another. He was the Son of God, and this is perfectly *declared* by His resurrection from the dead. But He came in the flesh, as it is written: "The word was made flesh." This will simply signify: He became a real man—the second Adam. He was born of Mary, He was the *man* Christ Jesus, but He had in nowise part with our *corrupted* nature, as is asserted by a false doctrine spread much abroad, whereby our redemption is quite called in question. The power of the Highest had overshadowed

Mary, and what was born of her was that *Holy thing, the Son of God* (Luke i. 35). As man, Jesus was the second Adam—head of a new creation. He was the Lord from heaven, and came to be the fulfiller of the promises of God, of the seed of David.

The resurrection from the dead is the great and public proof, that Christ is the Son of God. The power of the Spirit, which in perfect holiness manifested itself in Him during His whole life, was displayed in the resurrection in *perfect power*. In the resurrection, therefore, it is not a question of promises, but of power. Here is the question concerning Him, who Himself was in conflict with death, under which man lay captive. Jesus perfectly conquered death, and that in connection with the holiness, which during His whole life gave testimony of the power of the Spirit, by which He lived. First it is declared through His own resurrection and then through the resurrection from the dead in general, that He is the Son of God.

The gospel was the gospel of God ; but through Jesus Christ, the Lord, Paul had received “ grace and apostleship ” (verse 5). Christ was the head, and He sent forth the labourers into His harvest, to work in the world. The *grace* here refers not so much to the personal redemption of Paul, but rather to his service. The entrusting of the same was grace. It signifies the true character of service, and the practice of it. Paul *through grace* was the bearer of this *message of grace*, which exercises its whole power upon lost sinners, and presents the inexhaustible riches of God to the believer freely. The object and bearing of the mission of the apostle was “ the obedience of faith among all nations ”—not the “ obedience of the law,” which was Israel’s responsibility. Here we have also the *kind* and *manner* of the obedience, and not the *object* itself. At the same time we are told that it was for the name of Jesus, to confirm the authority and the value of this name, who shall bear universal rule and be acknowledged.

Among these nations were also the believers at Rome, “ called of Jesus Christ ” (verse 6). The apostle directs his epistle to all believers in that great city. He calls them “ beloved of God and called saints ; ” this is their character. They are saints—not through birth, nor through ceremonial ordinances, but through “ divine calling.” The Jews, in contrast with the nations, were *born* saints, but the Christians

are "saints through the calling of Jesus Christ," and are "beloved of God" (verse 7).

The apostle wishes them "grace and peace from God, our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (verse 7). This blessed message starts from thence, and from thence he addresses himself to them. In his gospel and in his heart he brought the perfect *grace* of God through Christ, and the perfect *peace* of man with God, as also the peace of God itself. This is the ground upon which Christianity places man; these are the true and blessed relations of God to man and of man to God, which the gospel declares and imparts. When the apostle writes to single persons, he adds to his salutation the word "mercy." Personal weakness and infirmity are there recognized in such cases. (Compare Timothy, Titus, &c.) But as soon as believers are looked at as a body, as an assembly, then are they the objects upon which all mercy is shed abroad. They are, viewed with the eye of God, continually under the influence and energy of the love and grace which has blessed them.

The faith of the Romans was spoken of throughout the whole world at that time (verse 8). The reason why their faith was known so generally, lay perhaps chiefly in the persecution, which broke out under the Emperor Claudius (Acts xviii.), and through which many Christians were driven out of Rome. Their faith was therefore approved, and this awakened the deepest thankfulness in the heart of the apostle toward God. Paul is not only in his service, but also with his whole heart connected with this work of grace. Filled with the love of God, he does rejoice in the operation and spreading of this grace, and thanks God, who is the only source of the same. "He serves with his spirit in the gospel of his Son" (verse 9). His service was done in communion with the source in which the service itself had its origin. His "prayer without ceasing" proves how hearty and uninterruptedly his communion with this source was. And in truth our service, yea, our whole conduct here below, cannot be blessed and accompanied with power, except it flows from communion with God (verse 10). At the same time he declares his apostolic relationship to them, and this with a delicacy, which is peculiar only to grace and love. He longs for them with the heartiest and most brotherly love, in order to "impart some spiritual gift," which his office as apostle enabled him to confer (verse 10); and this would he do, for

this reason, that he himself and they also might be partakers together, and be comforted together by their mutual faith, through the communication of this gift of grace (verse 12). Yea, what tenderness of feeling and what love did he manifest in those few words! He is a called apostle among all nations, although he had not seen them, but in his heart he is their servant. He himself had often purposed to come to them, that he also, in this field of labour, assigned to him of God, might have some fruit (verse 13). He declared that he is a debtor to all nations, and that he, as much as was in him, was ready also to preach the gospel to them that are at Rome (verses 14-15). This readiness had its source as well in the perfect devotedness of the apostle, as also more particularly in the knowledge of the precious value of the gospel, the bearer of which he was. Yet how wondrous was the way in which the prayer and desire of the apostle to come to Rome was fulfilled! He came there only at the end of his course, and then as a prisoner. Surely, the ways of God are wondrous!

It has been already remarked that the readiness of the apostle to preach the gospel to them at Rome had its source particularly in the precious value of the gospel. This is specially expressed in these words: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ,* for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (verse 16). Paul knew the gospel as the power of God, and therefore he was not ashamed of it—not even of preaching it in the great metropolis of Rome. Whosoever, therefore, believeth receives in the gospel the power of God unto salvation. All are lost, both Jews as well as Greeks; for all there is but *one* power for redemption, the power of God, and this power is the gospel. Therefore it must be preached to all; first to the Jews, who had the law and the promises; but also the Greeks had claims upon the declaration of it.

The law would have been the power of man, had man been able to fulfil it. But now all glory is due to God. It is "the gospel of God," and it is also "the power of God unto salvation." Man has no merit and no glory in it. The gospel brings a redemption, whose source and might is God alone. Man has done nothing towards it, neither *can* he do anything towards it. God has interposed in His might and love to save the sinner according to the power that is in Him, and, therefore, it is and remains the work of God alone.

* T.R. reads "of Christ."

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

CHAP. XVIII.

Now the Lord goes to meet evil, the power of darkness ; but it is beautiful to see the calmness and tranquillity with which He presents Himself to His enemies. He had been in the presence of God, in the enjoyment of communion with Him, and when He goes forth to meet His enemies, He shows a tranquillity, which was an evident sign of the peace and power that were in Him. He had come to reveal the Father, but He is also ready to die ; because He had come to die. At verse 6, His enemies fall to the ground, and as a man He could have gone away from them ; but He goes to meet the power of the devil in order to allow His disciples to escape with their lives. In such-wise He went to bear the evil that we might be saved, as it is written in verse 9. Peter's conduct is the exact opposite to that of Jesus ; when Jesus was praying in the garden Peter was sleeping ; when Jesus is going as a lamb to the slaughter, Peter wants to resist ; when Jesus is making a good confession before his enemies, Peter is denying Him. Nevertheless the Lord answers Peter with calmness, and notwithstanding what we know had passed in the presence of the Father respecting His feeling of horror at this cup, seeing that it was His will He should drink it, He now takes it tranquilly from His hand, Jesus always called God His Father, all through His life, except when He was making atonement for sin upon the cross, then He called Him God, (" My God, my God ; ") and it is after the expiation He again called Him Father, showing the relationship which He enjoyed, not only as Son, but according to all the perfections of God glorified, into which he brings us also along with Himself.

Peter and John had a special love for Jesus, see verse 15. They were closely bound up together in the Lord's work after the resurrection. Jesus always treated the Jews with indifference, and as it were with contempt, see verses 20, 21. At verse 31, we see how God overruled the designs of His enemies for the accomplishment of His own will ; as an example of this, the Jews did not want to take Him on the feast day, but they could not do otherwise. He must die on the cross for three reasons :—1st. Because it was the most infamous of deaths by which malefactors only and slaves

were executed. 2nd. Because He must be lifted up from the earth to draw men unto Him. 3rd. Because it was the expression of the curse, as it is written, "Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree."

Pilate asked, "What is truth?" just as the modern philosophers do; but there can be no truth apart from Christ; man has not the truth, because he does not want God, and then all his calculations are based on a false foundation.

THE SAVIOUR'S CALL.

(MAT. XI. 28.)

COME thou weary heavy-laden,
Come to Me and rest :
Lay thine aching head and throbbing
On my breast.

I have passed through hours of sorrow,
More than thou can'st know;
I have fought the fight and conquered
Long ago.

Well I know thy weary burden,
And thine aching heart ;
Once I bore in love and pity
All sin's smart.

Oh! if thou but knew'st how tender,
And how full of grace,
Is my heart towards weary wanderers,
Then thy face

Would light up with joy and gladness
Spite of all thy pain,
And thy very woe and sadness
Would be gain,

If it only brought thee to Me,
Who from heaven came down,
Left my Father's home and sunshine,
And my crown.

For, within my fair creation
Lurked a serpent vile,
Filling men with evil passions,
And with guile ;

Leading them to endless ruin
By a gilded road,
Ending in eternal darkness,
Far from God.

So I came from high in glory
 By my Father's side,
 And I lived "A Man of Sorrows,"
 And I died:

Lived that thou might'st see my glory ;
 Died to set thee free,
 When I bore sin's awful judgment
 On the tree.

And in life and death I suffered,
 More than thou can'st know—
 Drank the bitter cup of sorrow
 And of woe.

But I did it all to win thee,
 Win thy heart to God ;
 Gave my body to be broken ;
 Shed my blood.

Still the same though high in glory,
 Conqueror o'er the grave :
 Once in pity humbled ; mighty
 Now to save.

Come to Me and lay thy burden,
 Sin and sorrow down ;
 I will be rejoiced to make it
 All mine own.

And " my peace " shall be thy portion—(John xiv. 27)
 In the Father's love :
 " Peace " I purchased by my sorrow—(Col. i. 20)
 Thou shalt have.

* * * * *

Lord, it is enough, I own it ;
 Why should I decline ?
 For time and for eternity
 I am Thine.

Thine, to serve Thee here in gladness,
 Serve Thee soon above ;
 Learn the sweetness of Thy sadness,
 Know Thy love.

DIVINE NAMES AND TITLES.

THE beauty of, and precision in, the use of the various titles and names of God are well worthy of being carefully noted by the student of holy Scripture. The field is a rich one, and the mine will yield its wealth to the Spirit taught Christian. Strange that in a scene where the rays of the divine glory are reflected from these names, and one so fruitful for meditation and study, for wonder and worship, some should find food for unbelief, and on this very point assail the divine inspiration of the word of God! The truth is, that Corinthian wisdom and German learning are on a par, for "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God," and "the things of God *knoweth* NO MAN, but the Spirit of God." The Holy Ghost is the alone power to understand holy Scripture. "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God," and "reveals" them to us. In 1 Cor. ii. 10-13, the absolute necessity of divine teaching is insisted upon strongly; so strongly, indeed, as to cast everlasting contempt upon mere fleshly wisdom and learning, when they would dare to enter the sacred precincts and seek to scan the divine verities of our holy faith. The Holy Ghost in these verses is presented as the alone *Knower* (v. 11), *Searcher* (v. 10), *Revealer* (v. 10), and *Teacher* (v. 13) of the precious mysteries of God. Where this is unknown or practically ignored, there can be no progress in the truth beyond what is necessary for salvation.

We will now glance at a few of the names by which God has been pleased to reveal Himself to man, trusting that the reader will for his own profit follow out in fuller detail this deeply interesting subject.

1. God (Elohim). There are about twenty-seven hundred occurrences of this name in Scripture. It is an interesting fact, and one not sufficiently weighed in the Arian controversy, that the word as thus used is a *plural* one, and is translated "Gods" in Ps. xcvi. 7; lxxxii. 6; John x. 34, 35. Thus this word *alone* vindicates the fulness and establishes the truth of the persons of the Godhead. Strange that it should have been to such an extent overlooked! God (Elohim) created and made. In Genesis i.,* where the

* In the first two chapters of Genesis, as in other instances, the division is forced and unhappy. Verses 1-3, chapter ii., should close chapter i.

subject is creation, Elohim occurs 35 times. This frequent use of the name within a compass of 34 verses sufficiently indicates the wide extent and fulness of the name Elohim. The word, although sometimes used in a lower sense as to earthly *judges* (Exodus xxi. 6) of *Israel* as set in the place of authority and blessing (John x. 34, 35) and of angels mighty in power (Ps. xcvi. 7; Heb. i. 6) always involves the idea of authority and power.

Creation-glory, and Godhead-fulness are unfolded by this blessed name.

2. God (Eloah). There are about 60 occurrences of this name in Scripture, and in most, if not all, of the instances it is used in striking contrast to the many gods of the Gentiles. Our God is *one* and alone in power, wisdom, and goodness. It is the singular form of the word "Elohim." The grand truth committed to Israel, and which ought to have formed the burden of her testimony in midst of an idolatrous world, is found in Deut. vi. 4, "Hear, O Israel; the Lord (Jehovah) our God is *one* Lord:" this lies at the *root* of all testimony for God. Mark xii. 29.

The contrast between God (Eloah, singular) and God (Elohim, plural) is strikingly presented in Neh. ix. 17, 18, . . . "Thou art a God (Eloah) ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not. Yea, when they had made them a molten calf, and said, This is thy god (gods, elohim) that brought thee up out of Egypt, and had wrought great provocation." Also, in Deut. xxxii. 15-17. In those verses God (Eloah) and gods (elohim) are plainly and distinctly contrasted.

Not until the mighty works of God in creation, and the still more marvellous acts and ways in moral display in Egypt, the Red Sea, and the Wilderness were fully declared—not until the great and everlasting principles of good and evil were traced up to their respective sources—and not until the various relationships of man and Israel with God were established* have we a single recurrence of the word Eloah. The excellency and fulness of the Godhead are maintained in the fullest possible manner before even God (Eloah) confronts the gods of the uncircumcised. This He does for the *first* time in Deut. xxxii. 15. Eloah's controversy with idols is a grave and important question, and

* Save kingly power and government; but, in truth, every relationship is shadowed forth in the "seed plot" of the Bible—Genesis.

will be found fully discussed in the fifth section of Isaiah. (Chapters xl. —xlviii.)

To the heathen God sends a message in their own language* that their gods will perish from the earth and from under the heavens (Jer. x. 11); this threat will be executed in the day of the Lord as Isaiah ii. 18 solemnly intimates, "The idols He shall *utterly* abolish."

3. Lord God.

The first occurrence of this double title is in Genesis ii. 4. The relationships of man with God were established in innocence (chapter ii.), and were maintained spite of the fall (chapter iii.), hence in these two chapters the title "Lord God" occurs 20 times. Man's responsibilities to God, to his wife, to creation, are in no wise compromised on the divine side because of the inability of man to meet them. The cross of Christ presented to faith settles for ever on behalf of all who believe, the question in all its breadth of creature responsibility, and Christ risen from the dead and ascended is our source of new life, which has new responsibilities. Man unfallen (Gen. ii.), and guilty (Gen. iii., and Ps. xiv. 1, 2), and Israel (as Psalms undoubtedly teach) are taught that the "LORD" with whom they are in moral relationship is none other than God whose power and glory forms the theme of creation's song and testimony. (Ps. xix., cxlv.) Thus God (Elohim), supreme in power, alone in creation-glory, and in the absoluteness of His being, has been pleased to bring man and Israel into positive relationship with Himself, and, we might add, creation too, as Genesis ix. 8-17 clearly enough shows. (See especially verses 10, 12, 13, 16, 17.)

4. LORD, or Jehovah.

This title, so familiar to the Jews, expresses absolute existence. It is much more difficult to perceive and grasp by a Gentile mind than by a Jewish one, so the name is explained to us, saved Gentiles, in Revelations i. 8, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord (Jehovah), which *is*, and which *was*, and which is to *come*, the Almighty." We learn the absoluteness of His being—the independent, self-existent One—in the words "which *is*" (compare with John viii. 58), while Jehovah's relation to the past is expressed in "which *was*," and His relation to the future in the words "which is to *come*."

Now man (Gen. iv.) and Israel (Ex. vi. 3), but *not* the

* Syriac.

Patriarchs, were in moral relationship with Jehovah—the self-existing One. It is anything but trifling to note, and that carefully too, the use of these divine titles. Let Genesis vii. furnish us with an example of the exactness of the Spirit in writing the names “God” and “LORD.” In verses 1-5 it is “LORD;” in verses 7-9 it is “God.” Why this? Why is it said in verse 5, “And Noah did according to all that the *LORD* commanded him,” while in verse 9 it is said, “as *God* had commanded Noah?” In the latter passage God’s rights in creation is the thought, hence a pair of animals and birds—male and female—were to be brought into the Ark clearly for the propagation of the species and the preservation of creation. Thus the appropriateness of the title “Elohim” the Creator is self-evident. On the other hand, where it was a question of moral relationship, seven pairs of *clean* animals and birds were to be brought into the Ark (these would be needed for sacrifice, the basis of all relationship with God), hence the fitting title “*LORD*.”

In the first Book of Psalms (i.—xli.) Jehovah occurs upwards of 270 times; Elohim about 50 times. In the second Book (Psalms xlii.—lxxii.) there are only about 26 instances of the use of the divine title Jehovah, while Elohim occurs about 200 times. Again, in Psalms xiv., “*Jehovah* looked down from heaven,” while in Psalm liii., “*Elohim* looked down from heaven.” In the former Psalm, the wicked “call not upon the *Jehovah*,” while in the latter it is said “they have not called upon *Elohim*.” Why these differences? Are we stupidly to term them “fanciful distinctions?” Has the accuracy of the Holy Ghost, in inditing Scripture, no charm for us? Certain am I that these distinctions, when duly weighed, will be found of deepest interest to the spiritual.

Judah in her land, and especially in Jerusalem—consequently in covenant relationship—is the subject of the *first* Book of Psalms, hence the frequent use of the covenant name “*Jehovah*,” while in the *second* Book, Judah’s outcast state from her land, and especially Jerusalem, is the great burden; thus Elohim, *not* Jehovah, is the leading title in the book. Read Psalms xiv. and liii. in this light, and instead of *seeming* confusion, the perfect order and beauty of these titles will shine out. Let every word and sentence of holy writ be solemnly pondered; let nothing be passed over as too trivial or unimportant. Scripture, given by

inspiration of God, is made up of letters and words; never, therefore, pass over a single word in the Bible; treasure up every word; for "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." Luke iv. 4.

5. Almighty God.

The first time this title is used is in Genesis xvii. 1. "Almighty," used singly, or in conjunction with other divine names, occurs about 60 times in the Bible. Half of these instances will be found in the ancient Book of Job, and all of them refer to God only. There are only two instances of the compound title "*Almighty God*." To the *first*, stranger, pilgrim and patriarch—Abraham—called to walk with God against a wicked and idolatrous world—the "*Almighty God*" (Gen. xvii. 1) was the sure and all-sufficient resource of the man of faith. Almighty in grace, almighty in sustaining power, almighty in resources—such seem to be the force of the patriarchal title. In Revelations xix. 15, we meet with it again—"He treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of *Almighty God*." If the *first* book of Scripture tells of an all-sustaining, all-gracious God, the *last* book speaks of an all-consuming, wrathful God—almighty in wrath and judgment.

In Exodus vi. 3 it is said, "And I appeared unto Abraham (Gen. xvii. 1), unto Isaac (Gen. xxviii. 3), and unto Jacob (Gen. xlviii. 3), by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them." It is true we frequently meet with the name "Jehovah" long previous to Israel's redemption out of Egypt, and oftentimes applied when moral relationship is in question, but that is not at all the point in this interesting passage. The Fathers of the people must have been long familiar with the title Jehovah, and, no doubt, have understood something of the glory of the name, but God did not please to reveal Himself to them *as* Jehovah, but as God Almighty. Were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob* to go on pilgrimage? Then God reveals Himself to them accordingly *Almighty!* How it would speak to their hearts of God's infinite resources, and all-sustaining power! If, then, one is called upon to come clean and clear out from a judged world as Abraham (Gen. xii.), or as the Christian (2 Cor. vi. 14-18), from false and idolatrous worship and unholy fellowship, what are the resources

* *Not* Joseph, who is a marked and personal type of the Lord in suffering and in glory.

and aids of such a one in his separate path? To *prove* the relationship of a son or daughter—to know a Father's heart and tender love, and to know practically the infinite resources of love, wisdom, and power in "the Lord Almighty."

May it be ours to learn the blessedness of a separate path! It will never be so lonely as the path of the stranger. Son of God come down from heaven—He trod it *alone*—we in company with Him.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

ON THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

(CHAPTER II. CONTINUED.)

Q. Is the Jordan a type of this?

Jordan is an illustration of it, but it is simpler to take it, as it is here stated, by itself. Why I can see it in Jordan, in a certain sense, is because the Ark went down—there was no smiting with the rod. I have no Ark in the passage of the Red Sea. Here I am dead in sins, and He put them away in coming and taking them through death.

Q. What is the great moral difference between the Red Sea and the Jordan?

The Red Sea is deliverance from Egypt (the world and all that was against me). Jordan is entrance into the land along with the Ark (Christ).

(*V. 6.*) I now get power accomplishing counsels. So far as these counsels are realized, they are real to me; and so far as they are not realized, there is no present enjoyment. You must take care and not take it as present enjoyment only, because you would then lower the counsels.

I say you are holy and without blame before Him in love. You say you are not, you have lost your place; the moment you take it as present enjoyment you lose it. I cannot take that as the sense of the passage. It is all God here, exercising the power. I have man as nothing, except dead in sins.

I have God who has taken Christ out of death and put Him at His own right hand, and God has taken me and put me there too.

In the first chapter it was counsels only, here it is the working of power.

(*V. 10.*) "We are his workmanship." The whole thing is a new creation, we are created in Christ Jesus unto

good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. I believe that the works foreordained are quite as much part of the counsels, as what has gone before. The works of the Christian are just as much foreordained as the place He has brought him into in sovereign grace. To walk as Christ walked. When you come to the exercise of this from chapter iv. v. 17, this is brought out.

V. 11. They have no part in the old promises, they were "aliens" from all Jewish favours, but now made nigh by the blood of Christ (v. 14). "Broken down the wall." The twain are made one new man. This is their reconciliation together by the cross, and then both are joined together by God through it. He then comes preaching peace to you who were afar off (Gentiles), and to them who were nigh (Jews). It is entirely by this that the "middle wall" is broken down. There is a double reconciliation in verses 16-17. The Church could have no place till the middle wall was broken down. This necessarily excludes Old Testament saints from the Church. It is all the thought of *God* preaching peace by Christ.

Q. Why is the Spirit left out of this chapter? Because it is God's counsels and the power to bring them about, therefore it is God. I should say as a general principle that the Spirit is brought in in Ephesians. You have Him as the sealing of the individual (1st chap). At the end of this chapter He dwells in the collective thing—the Church. The quickening is not said to be by the Spirit, because he is talking about what God has done.

I have the dead man and God the workman. It is what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe when He raised Him from the dead. No doubt the Spirit was there, but it is God who is in question. You have not the Father at all yet.

(V. 21.) Now I have association with Him as a building; as in ch. 1, I had it as a body in the counsels of God; Christ, head over all things to the Church, which is His body. Here I have the present operation of God. It is the body of Christ, but the habitation of God through the Spirit. I do not say it is on earth, here: this is true in other parts of Scripture.

The moment I get it as counsel, I get it as God's mind. We see Him as Head over all things to the Church, but we do not see Him *yet* as Head over everything. In Ephesians

I have the thoughts of God as to individuals and the thoughts of God as to the body. Christ raised from the dead as Man, and Christ Head over the Church, and it as His body, as a glorified Man.

The operations in chap. ii. perfect the counsels of chap. i. I get the building as growing to a holy temple in the Lord. When I get hold of this neither the body nor the temple is finished. In other places it is looked at as complete, but not here. I ask whether we *are* holy, without blame before God? You say, No. Then that is not fulfilled. We are so in Christ. But it does not say in Christ in chap. i., but it is going to be an actual thing; that is the counsel of God. When I get the building growing, it is not supposed to be finished. Christ says, "I will build my Church;" (Mat. xvi.) this building is not finished. Peter says "To whom coming as unto a living stone . . . ye also as living stones are built up," &c. (1 Peter ii, 4.) But the building is not finished. Till you get into the counsels of God, you do not get the first principle of the Ephesians.

He has chosen us in Him that we should be holy and without blame before Him, carefully leaving out present or future. It is another question how far this is realized.

THE ETERNITY OF PUNISHMENT.

FOR myself, I have read a good deal of what has been written on this subject—of course, not perhaps a hundredth part of what has been written; but I found one passage of Scripture which so quietly and explicitly settled the whole question for ever for my own soul, that I would like to send it to you for your thoughtfulness also. It was this: that in Rev. xx., where the scene of final judgment is foretold, God *waits* till the thousand years are expired, before the last temptation of the unsaved on earth, and the last judgment is set for the final doom of the wicked. *Then* He raises them. But they are raised in *God's eternity*, and not in time at all. If they were raised in *time*, there might be something urged; but, when raised in God's eternity, time is then no more; and what is raised in eternity cannot cease to exist in time, for it has passed away, and what happens in eternity is, and must be, eternal. The existence of the wicked, raised for, and receiving then their doom, remains while eternity rolls on. What think you of this?

A BREATHING AFTER JESUS.

I THINK I can say, I love a personal breathing after Jesus, and the consciousness of His nearness to us. If we did but ponder it duly, what a precious mystery it would be in our esteem that, before we go to His place to be with Him, He comes to our place to be with us. The Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, has come, and now dwells in us, manifesting the Father and the Son, and soon we shall go to the Lord to dwell with Him and see Him as He is. And this is more than *visiting*; it is dwelling and abiding; He with us now, we with Him ere long—and both of these dwellings and abidings are declared to be for ever.

These manifestations of the Father and the Son through the Spirit are but poorly enjoyed by us, if we may speak for others. We want a *closer* dealing of the soul with Christ—a more real, vivid, personal communion. The enjoyment of these manifestations the Lord connects with a *keeping of His word* (John xiv. 21-23). And I think I have seen *that* in some souls. For there is a class of true, simple, fervent spirits, who greatly outrun the most of us. It is not that they are much in the *study of the Bible*. No, it is not that. But they have *His words* stowed up in the memory of their hearts, and they draw them thence for varied, living, affectionate use through the day. They have Christ in a way far beyond what the constant mere study of the Bible would give them. Indeed such study, if alone, is not, in the divine sense, a keeping of His words, and has no manifestation of Him accompanying it. And again: this having of the words of Christ is something beyond the *obeying of precepts*. These words or sayings (see John xiv. 23, 24) may be, and more properly are, *revelations of Himself*, than *enunciations of His will*, more telling us what He is, than what we ought to be.

A proof that the disciples were wanting in this comes out in that same chapter (John xiv). The Lord had been telling them of His going away. Had they learnt Him as they should, they would have kept this saying of His, and they would have rejoiced (*v.* 28). Even among ourselves, we may say, this keeping of sayings or words is the proof of love. It tells another that He is in the memory of our hearts.

ACCEPTING AND MAINTAINING.

It is impossible to see with too much clearness the contrast which lies between our condition as believers in Christ, and remember what we were as natural ones. Having been in the latter state before God, but now out of it, we must have before us that it was not in consequence of our wickedness only that we were involved in such a condition, but also on account of having descended from the man "by whom sin entered into the world."

Born in this state, our actions necessarily have had the colour of his condition, and that as the nature was bad, so must have been the actions.

But now, as Christians and responsible ones here, God looks not merely for good actions in the moral sense of the word, but the reproduction of Christ in us. In the former case, as the action was according to the nature, so also is the latter: as power was required in the former in order to express the action, so does the latter require a power also. When man in nature is alive apart from God, the devil is the gainer by his activity, and man is the chief agent; so now, if I am here to manifest Christ, it is evident that not only must the nature be of God, but the power also.

Being in this new position before God, I have given me at the beginning what I shall have for ever save the changed body—that, as I break with man on earth and the devil, I begin with One in the glory of God; and so great is this change, that it is according as I see its greatness and reality that my walk here will be determined; and though I may not know or even hear of such a change, the truth is not altered that, as a Christian, I begin from a place unknown by, and far beyond the ken of man.

It may be asked, "Can both these powers and natures exist at the same time?" They can and do exist continually, the believer has both, but he is to so manifest the new nature by the new power, that the old things are not to be recognised, but kept in the place of death, in order that Christ may be reproduced in him.

Whether I reproduce Christ or not, I am as perfect as He is before God; if I am connected in any way with Christ, through faith's exercise, I am meet for that glory wherein He dwells. Hence it is not in consequence of fulfilling our duties here, as responsible ones before God, that blessings in

God's counsels are attributed to us. I have all I am ever going to receive (*save the changed body*) when the "no working faith" receives God's word—Christ and His glory are mine for ever, old things having passed away.

Now if I do not accept what God has done and what He has given me, how can I maintain a place here commensurate with them? Two great dangers arise from not simply and fully accepting what God has done—viz., the truth is owned abstractedly without faith being exercised, and consequently an earthly walk; secondly, assuming the responsible place here without knowing in the heart the position and blessings which belong to the believer. Bad as the world is, these two principles active in it often tend to make it more spurious than ever.

The former is more frequently found among saints, though the latter is on the increase. A spiritual mind cannot fail to perceive that the spirit of evangelization at the present time tends to promote both these principles, the latter especially: the knowledge merely of a Saviour who has been provided for sinners is deemed sufficient for the converts to take the place of workers for Christ. A limited knowledge of God in His wondrous workings in grace must produce an impoverished walk here below, and the evil effects of such, both to the world and to the saints of God, can hardly be estimated. A believer may exclaim, "If I do not trust in the cross, nothing is of any avail to me!" Such is not the language of Scripture. It is for me to accept what *God* has *done* for me, and what *He* has *given* me, and then learn how in righteousness He could have acted towards me in the way He has done. If I give a person fifty sovereigns, it is not for him at first to question *how* it is that I can act so freely towards him: it is after he has accepted what I have to give he can better understand why I so acted; and the more he then sees that he had no claim on me whatsoever, the more will he recognise the grace which served him. So with the believer—if I simply receive what God in His infinite grace has given me, and the nearness to Himself of the place which is mine, with a worshipping heart I learn *how* He came to do all this for me, and at the same time I also learn *how* He dealt with me as one "in the flesh" at the cross.

In the prayer in John xvii. we have the Father, Christ, and glory, but no mention either of the cross or the Holy Ghost. Christ says in the beginning of the chapter, "I have

finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Here it is a question between Christ and His Father—the *work* which the Father gave Him to do. The work is divinely settled, and the results follow. The results are for the believer in connection with Christ's glory, and for him to accept by faith.

Many souls are perplexed about the truth of death and resurrection with Christ. They think until they know what this truth is in their hearts, they are not entitled to own the fulness of God's grace: that they are not fit for the place which God has given the believer until they arrive there consciously; in fact they are trying to reach Christ and the glory according to their own thoughts of death and resurrection.

Now if I simply own my position at first in faith, that it is in Christ, I will afterwards be enabled to practically maintain that position, but for me to try to reach a position in which I am already is a matter most anomalous.

The nature of these two truths must be clearly seen by the believer — viz., *Accepting* and *Maintaining*. The divinely-devised plan has been divinely accomplished, and the blessings accruing to me I am to accept in faith as mine. I receive a power to enable me to conduct myself worthy of the place and possessions which have been given me, and also learn increasingly of the love and grace which led Christ to die in order that I might have them. Faith is a wonderful thing, as everything must be which comes from God. The truth of death and resurrection is also accepted in faith, and the power enables me to walk as one who is not of this world, but an heir of glory. The cross now receives a prominence in my thoughts which it had not before; I look back at it, I learn the judgment passed upon flesh there; and (which principle I carry about with me) if the cross and this truth disappear, the flesh shows itself, and I for the time practically am as one who is in the flesh, and who also practically denies my position in Christ. Hence faith; faith must continually be in exercise. The soul in Romans vii. in the state of misery mentioned has not in faith owned the flesh judged at the cross; he does not in faith accept that he is "not in the flesh," though at the same time desiring to please God; and as the state in which he is practically at the time is alien to God, confusion and wretchedness as depicted, then must ensue.

The chapter describes a transitional state of soul—it is neither the normal state of the natural man nor the normal state of the Christian, but the state of the believer passing out of the former into the latter; and the less faith exercised during these exercises, the greater the bondage and yearnings of soul. The Christian's life is one of faith—faith in everything; else if not, he is below his place as a Christian. Faith knows God, receives the truth in the divine way, and the heart of faith renounces every principle of the natural man.

It is also remarkable that in Romans, chapters vi. and vii., there is no mention of the Holy Ghost—there is in the fifth and eighth chapters. The proneness of the quickened one to look within for the workings of the Spirit, through bad teaching, &c., appears to be guarded against by God in the omission. As also mentioned, in John xvii. there is no mention of the Holy Ghost, though there is much about Him in the preceding chapters.

We lose not a little if we overlook the *double* rejection of Christ by man. He was in glory when man finally rejected Him. The place from whence man would not have Him, is the place in which He will have man through grace. The link was not then formed between man, as man, and Christ; hence if a link was to be formed through any means with Christ and those on earth, it is evident the link must have been in connection with Him where He is, for He is in the same place still. Hence Acts ix., "Why persecutest thou *me*?" Here is the link between those on earth and Christ in glory, and so united are they that they are all one "me."

Paul shortly after was found preaching "Christ," not His work merely. (See same chapter.) Such a connection must involve no light responsibility as we pass through this world, for as the virtues of the Man above flow into those united to Him on earth, they are responsible for what they are, and what has been given them—in short, to carry themselves here in a manner compatible with what they are as united to a Man in glory. This position on earth—this close connection with Christ above—and the results which He looks for in consequence, comparatively speaking, are but little apprehended.

Many profess to follow Christ, to represent Him here, who do not see what the place of a disciple is. When multitudes went with Christ, as we find in Luke xiv., He turned and said unto them, "If any man come unto me,

and hate not his own (this latter word not in our translation) father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" &c.

The consequence of taking a place for Christ here, without having first counted the cost, must be a lameness in walk and weakness in manifesting Him who is professed to be owned. When the cost has not been counted, a worldly Christianity, of which there is such abundance, must ensue; a standard according to circumstances is raised to enable professors to retain the world and to speak of Christ at same time, and what we see so solemnly being developed—the world asserting its right and power to worship God, caused in great measure by the looseness, carelessness, and worldliness which have characterised, and do so still, the mass of God's saints.

Christ puts the greatest difficulty at first, if the cost be counted and the difficulty overcome, all will come right. The responsibility resting upon us is great; have we all counted the cost to be for Christ here?

It is plain I must be sensible of what God *has done* in order to praise Him for it; it is in the sense of what I am now, and what are mine, that my heart will praise Him. And if I cannot praise Him for what He has given me, how can I praise Him for *the way He* has acted with His Son in order to give them to me? Hence, at the Lord's Table, the meeting might often be called a believers' meeting merely, for there is not present the spirit of worship which is a consequence of the fulness of blessings bestowed in love, and received by the heart. I shall never be able to estimate the work of the Cross, by merely seeing Christ as having died for me; the knowledge of what I have righteously and graciously received in consequence of the work, will enable me to value it. And it is as we enter into these things that we enter into the wondrous love which gave Christ to die for us, for "herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son a propitiation for our sins." 1 John, iv., 10.

May the Lord give us to see what we are—heavenly ones now, and our calling here—to testify for and represent our Head in heaven!

"HIS PRAISE SHALL CONTINUALLY BE IN MY MOUTH."

READ PHILIPPIANS IV.

IN the third chapter of Philippians we find the spiritual energy which carries the saint onward in the race to Christ in glory. This chapter treats more of the power which gives him complete superiority over all the circumstances through which he has to pass, not as making him insensible to their sorrow, but able to "rejoice *in the Lord* always."

Nothing is more instructive, or more humbling in this way, than the life of Paul. Cut off from the ministry which he loved, shut up in prison at Rome, where he had laboured "more abundantly than they all;" finding, at the end of such glorious efforts as his ministry produced, the result was that "all they which are in Asia be turned away from me;" and "all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." Yet He can say, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice." You will find plenty of trouble, plenty of conflict, for Satan is not bound yet. The more we go on, the more we shall know the opposition—sorrow in the church—saints individually going wrong; all these things *ought* to press upon our hearts; but we ought to have the power which lifts the heart totally above it; the communion and faith which links up the heart to Christ, and walks with Him—the power, too, to serve others, come what will.

Christ—the "Man of Sorrows," was the example of this: whom so ready to serve as He? "I have meat to eat that ye know not of" were His words. Even Martha, whom he loved, tried to get Mary away from listening to His words. The disciples sought to turn Him aside when He told them of His death; all showed a total misapprehension of what He had come for—to "give his life a ransom for many;" yet in the midst of it all, He can ask that His disciples may have His joy fulfilled in them!

If we really have this joy of Christ, we can "endure all things for the elect's sake," *because we are in spirit with Him*, and He with us in it all; and He did endure all things for the joy that was set before Him—even the cross. It is not the mere buoyancy of a heart ignorant of the power of evil, or of the opposition of Satan. There is a great deal of this superficial joy, this floating over the surface of things,

with many. But it is the *real power*, where the depth of evil and opposition is apprehended, and the power of the *Lord* is known and trusted in as *above it all!*

What is working now, is “the power of good (of God Himself), in the midst of evil;” and it is paramount to the evil in the midst of which it works. True, the evil is flowing in like a mighty stream, which, if not stemmed, will flow on to the ocean to judgment, unless the Lord interfere, as He does in goodness and in mercy, or in judgment, or a scourge. But the *character* of the world until Satan is bound is just this, that he is its god and its prince; and in the midst of a world where Satan is prince, the power of Christ has come in above it all.

If my soul is living in the immediate centre of this power, it will feel the pressure of the evil, but will not be depressed —“In nothing terrified by your adversaries.” The practical daily supplies of strength depend upon the hearts being with Him who has overcome it all; who has all power in heaven and on earth. Then we know the sure and certain resting-place in Himself, which nothing can touch. True, we have to labour on, as it says, “Labour to enter into *his rest*;” but if the heart is with Him who is in that rest, it has a power which nothing can reach; and the *first* mark of this power, when the tide of evil is present, is *patience*. That which “endures to the end” is better than a miracle! Thus we learn the graciousness and power that keeps the *heart free* to think of what Christ has wrought in others; free to be occupied with the whole Church; and yet which can think of every state, even of a slave with his master (Philemon). Paul’s affections were fresh for each “true yoke-fellow,” as though all had not “forsaken” him; and though all sought their own, it did not hinder the out-going of his heart.

Are our hearts living enough with Christ to think of a brother thus? Paul’s heart was so with Christ, in the consciousness of what it is to be His, that when he thinks of a brother, it is as one whose name is “in the book of life!” In another place, he says, “I stand in doubt of you,” but in the next chapter, “I have confidence in you through the Lord.”

“Blessed is the man in whose heart are thy ways.” The secret of all was, he made wells of the sorrows. Going

through the valley of Baca, it was turned into a well—the blessing from on high, where Christ was, filled the pools.

The history of the apostle is very important in connection with this. In prison, chained between two soldiers, cast, of course, more than ever on the Lord—the Lord was very gracious to him — but he learned, come what will, to “rejoice” not in the prosperity of his work, or in the prosperity of the Church, or of the saints; but to “rejoice in the Lord always!”

What holier, deeper, truer, Christ-like feeling is had in these trials! As the Psalmist says (xxxiv), “I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise shall continually be in my mouth.” How did it come about? “This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him.” The Lord was his Shepherd, therefore he can say, “I shall not want,” not “I have gotten green pastures,” “I shall not want,” but because the Lord was his shepherd. “He restoreth my soul, he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.” He spreadeth “a table before me, in the presence of mine enemies.” “He anointeth my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever” (Psalm xxiii).

Paul, standing before King Agrippa, says, “I would to God that not only thou, but all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether *such as I am*, except these bonds.” He does not say, “I would you were all Christians, but *such as I am!*” There is a happy man! So conscious of the blessedness he had in Christ; so full of the love of Christ, that he could wish you were as he was! The heart’s complete, internal happiness in Christ, so that the trials—trials even in the church which are much more deep and real—only carried him to Christ!

Are we so conscious of this blessedness in Christ, that we can say to others, I would you were as I am? Do you say, “Only an apostle could say this?” Nay, it is what *every Christian, old and young, is called to!* The only difference is, that a young Christian rejoices more in himself and his blessings; he has a blessed comfort in himself. The fathers more simply *in Christ*, they have got to know Christ, they have a personal acquaintance with the Lord Jesus Christ, and rejoice in intimacy with Him. The young rejoice in the first blush of feeling. It is good and true,

what God has given ; but in the “pull,” going through the world, we find that there is nothing *positively* to rejoice in but Christ.

The power for this consists in that nearness to Christ, that when the evil springs up—the power of Satan present—the heart has to do with Him in resurrection, who has destroyed him who had the power of death ; with Him whose mighty, holy arm hath gotten Him the victory ; He says, “Be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world.” He *starts* us with this testimony, having gone Himself into a place where evil cannot reach ; and we have got Him there, the immovable source of blessing, and rejoice in Him there. He has not taken us out of a world governed by Satan’s power, but He keeps us from evil, because we are not of the world, as He is not of the world.

The saints too, when running the race, are to look away unto Jesus, who has begun and ended this whole course of faith ; who has met the power of Satan in the beginning, and in the end ; tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. He overcame him who had the power of death (that is the devil), and is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high—the victory won. We are to enjoy Him now, high up, above, and independent of the things we are passing through. Do not let any present circumstances occupy you. Do not look away from Him to them—but rejoice ? Not in yourself in any way, but in *Christ always !*

You must be with Him in spirit for this, because He alone is out of the evil, and is the centre and fountain of God ; and what should be seen in you down here is, your “*moderation,*” your yieldingness. Suppose I am happy in Christ, am I looking for my rights in this world ? Christ had none ! Oh ! no, my treasure is elsewhere ; I am going out of this world ; I can wait for my rights till Christ has His. Let our hearts be weaned from things here, let us pass through the world as weaned children. Christ passed through it, leaving all to go its own way. In the presence of unrighteousness, the spirit is apt to rise ; but let us cultivate the subduedness that *yields*. The Samaritans would not receive Him, and He turns aside into another village. Oh ! what a lesson that is ! Because He had steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem ! The half-hearted would not receive Him, because He was doing the very thing that marked His devotedness to His Father. And so it will be

with you; the religiously half-hearted will not want you, *if you set your face steadfastly to go right!*

"The Lord is at hand!" He has taught us to wait for Him—to be always "like men who wait for their Lord."

"Be careful for nothing but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. His peace is better than cares. We have cares and sorrows, true, and we should have more, if we were living more as servants among the sorrows of this world. Not indifferent—Christ was never that. But there is a getting away from Christ in my own heart—a tendency to make one anxious even in caring for others. But I must go and *tell God*, and this carries me so above the cares that I can rejoice in Him.

What does God give to the heart that has given all its cares to Him? An answer? No: (though we know He does answer;) but *His peace!* Is God's heart taken up with circumstances? troubled by them? Is His throne shaken by the folly and the wickedness of the world; or even the failure of the saints? Never! Put your cares, then, on God, and He will put His peace into your heart—the ineffable peace of God! He who knows the end from the beginning—the peace He is in, shall keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus. There is no indifference, carelessness, or coldness; but supplication, earnest entreaty, and all with thanksgiving.

A man, whose heart is filled with thanksgiving, reckoning on God, goes to Him with prayer and supplication, and the soul, having left all on God, feels His hand under the trouble, and can say, "It is His affair; not mine." *He* is a happy man. He goes through this world in this blessed fellowship with Christ; in the power of the Spirit of God for inward joy, and for outward circumstances; his affections free to go out to his brethren.

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Hearts free to find the *good* in people. Jesus could find the least bit of grace in a poor soul; His heart was ever ready to enjoy it; "I have meat to eat that ye know not of;" "Mary hath chosen that good part;" "Behold an Israelite indeed in

whom there is no guile." There is always this perception when the heart is kept free to enjoy the fruits of the Spirit in others, as being occupied with *what is good!*

You cannot touch pitch without being defiled, and there is a great deal of pitch in these days. *Thinking with the world*, talking like the world, then the heart gets into the colour of it. *It is not Christ!* The heart set free, lives in the thing that Christ's heart delights in. Oh! it makes *such* a difference; living in the atmosphere where Christ's heart dwells, instead of being dragged after ten thousand other things.

"Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you." Not only His *peace*, as in verse 7, but *Himself*.

What blessedness in that name God constantly gives Himself. He is never called the God of joy. Joy is an up and down thing that may be disturbed; there may be cause for joy, yet trouble may hinder the heart enjoying it. Peace is what nothing can disturb; it is calm as the throne of God! "Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen" (Rom. xv). "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. xvi). "The God of peace shall be with you" (Phil. iv. 9). "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly" (1 Thes. v. 23). "The God of peace . . . make you perfect" (Heb. xiii. 20).

Peace is the effect of a full and perfect work. He has "made peace through the blood of his cross." Why? Because He has gone through everything that was contrary to God—has borne the wrath (the very opposite of the peace) of God; and the instant He is risen, He comes into their midst and says, "Peace!" And now to us God takes this wondrously blessed name of "*the God of peace.*"

Do your hearts possess that peace? If God rises up with every attribute that He has, can anything disturb it? I can say before God, I am in the light as God is in the light, because the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses me from all sin. I may have conflict with self, with the world, or with Satan; but He sets me in that peace which nothing can disturb. Your peace should flow as a river.

Faith is needed to be able to rejoice always in the Lord. The feet going where God would have them go, not *avoiding* evil merely, but walking where *He* would *lead* us in every

detail of life—in our habits, dress, conversation, intercourse. Nothing tests the *condition of soul more than every-day habits.*

"I can do *all things* through Christ which strengthens me." It is a different thing to say, "Christ strengthens me," and to say, "*I can do all things.*" Paul had *learned* it. Blessed thing to find that Christ was sufficient for him; he had learned how to be abased, and how to abound (more difficult, for abundance has the tendency to draw the heart *away* from the Lord—He had kept him from that twice). If he had want, he had Christ; if abundance, it was Christ. This is not joy in circumstances, but moral power rising above circumstances, and he had *learned* it; looking at Christ all through; finding it out all the way along. It was *true* when he began his course, but Paul did not *know* it then as he did at the end, when he could speak of it to others as that which he had *learned*. Just as he says, "*My God*"—blessed word! known well in all sorts of circumstances. "In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness," *He* could say, "*My God* shall supply all your need!" *I know Him*, and, if you ask me what is the measure, it is "*according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus!*" I guarantee to you all that. Paul found that all sought their own, but it only enabled him to say more completely, "*My God.*"

What reality there is in the life of faith—walking in secret with God. Poor hands we are at it; but it is that which no world can touch, no Satan can rob of, and the trials that come out in that path only prove us superior to every circumstance through the power of His grace! God grant that we may know it and Him in it. Amen.

Rom. xiii. was written to the saints at Rome, under the *fourth* Beast, represented by Nero.

A New Birth gives me a nature capable of enjoying God.

Eternal Life brings me into fellowship with the Father and the Son.

LETTERS OF INTEREST, &C.

I HAVE of late had much thought as to Heb. xi., not exhibiting instances of faith chronologically (although that may be true); but more what faith is in progressive power, therefore that the first manifestation of our faith is in our Creator God, who made all things, who therefore *is*—and that He is the rewarder of the diligent seeker.

Then we have the first foundation of our redemption, Abel's sacrifice, in which there is the confession of the penalty of sin is death, and that in the slain Lamb. I have judgment on sin executed, the worshipper stands by the merit of his offering, and God accounts him as virtually accepted in the death; the result of this is that he is righteous—God testifying of the gift—therefore his name is among those who have eternal life—he yet speaks. As the Abel offering is the first, so is it the foundation of all worship, it is what the Lord's Supper teaches. Sin judged and punished, judgment passed, and the worshipper feels in the sense of being righteous before God. It follows that anything like confession of sin, or a sense of the burden of sin, is quite inconsistent with the table, for then is celebrated sin put away in the person of the Lord's death, and the worshippers as righteous before God, standing in His righteousness: everything therefore should express thanksgiving and praise that comes from their lips.

But there is a further place that we stand in by consequence of sin judged and put away, and the worshipper righteous before God. Death is annulled, and our place is Enoch walking a life of communion, waiting for translation because sin has passed away and righteousness has come in. To walk with God is the privilege of the new place, not a walk in innocency as in the garden, but a walk in righteousness in the full sense of the desirability of sin removed, and our intercourse founded on righteousness. The Holy Ghost then gives us the sweet communion of pleasing God; but then He guards with a further declaration that it must be a walk of faith without which it is impossible to please Him. Therefore to have the full sense of what God is necessarily is required. Now, I realise therefore, not only the existence and power of God, but His relationship to me, and it is in a walk of faith, I must know Him as my Father in Christ Jesus—myself His child—that I passed from death unto life, and that I am quickened and raised and sitting with Christ in the heav'nlies, and there the true place to which "I am

come" with all its blessed associations and company—this is the sweetness of communion with God in His righteousness.

Now, further on you have faith passing *through* judgment, and therefore Noah is rightly moved with fear, and prepares an ark, and with a trembling heart steps into it with all his house to wait the day of His wrath. What a contrast between the two conditions, the Church and the Jewish Remnant, the former out of the judgment and past death, the other through the merits of atonement, carried in righteousness through judgment.

And here is the distinction of Peter's Epistles and Paul's, the one like James to the twelve tribes, and the other to the first fruits or mystery of the Church. Where this is not seen, there is with some the regarding the Church as from Abel downwards and going through the tribulation. Also, with the high church to repeat the sacrifice, which is indeed its worst form, for with it is connected a forgiving of sin confessed, instead of the knowledge of sins judged and Adam nature done with—"died to that wherein we were held" in the person of our blessed Substitute.

II.

It is a constant consolation to me the brief time these things are needed for, and that the passing moments, days, and years, bring our salvation nearer than when we believed. I was reading this morning, Luke xxiii. What an announcement to the dying thief! "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." What cheering news for the last of his earthly sufferings, and what a contemplation to be able to turn his eyes off his own circumstances and fix them on Jesus. How every moment must have increased his confidence, so that from confessing him as the innocent One who had done no wrong, and himself as a deservedly doomed one, to have had his eyes enlightened to learn that in the righteous, spotless One was his Saviour and Redeemer—truly this was dying in full view of the cross!

What a balm it was too to that blessed One to see the first-fruits of those who thus looked to Him as the pierced One, the Son of man lifted up. How it takes the knowledge of the wisdom of God to look on such a scene and realize it, that therein is the power of God in the weakness of God, the wisdom of God in the apparent foolishness of the cross, and being enlightened well may we say—

Sweet the moment, rich in blessing,
Which before the cross we spend.

III.

“The words of the preacher, the son of David, king of Jerusalem.” “The Song of Songs which is Solomon’s.”

In Ecclesiastes we see a man capacitated to test everything under the sun. He is high and wealthy; endowed with wisdom, and has all under the sun at his disposal and command. And he uses his resources and capabilities, does great works and that of all sorts, to find out the good that would satisfy. Nothing that is great, or expensive, or magnificent is withheld from him; he walks the full and ample range of human promises, and traffics in all the productions that spring up under the sun.

In the Canticles we see a man that is, as it were, nobody. He has no memorial in the earth at all. He has nothing, and is nothing. He may be an object of the least possible account in the seeking of the world. For palaces, and vineyards, and servants, and singers, and instruments, and wisdom, in all this and the like he is poor indeed. This is the contrast that strikes one in these two writings. The one was king in Jerusalem, the other nobody! But dissatisfaction attends the one as he travels the wide and rich domain of his kingly earthly resources—deep and unspeakably precious delight and satisfaction is the portion of the other in comparing with the one unchanging object. The one little ewe lamb does for him what the flocks and herds of the other never did, never could bring him.

All that she, whom we find in the Canticles possesses is her “beloved,” but he satisfies her. And it matters not how poor in all beside she may be, it matters not either *where* she has him, so that she has him. There is the lovely garden, and there is the lofty mountain, there is the shade of the apple tree, and the bed, and the vineyard, and withal the king’s galleries. But it is evident throughout, that it is *himself* that makes her *all in all*.

This is the deep contrast. The king in Jerusalem has nothing in the midst of everything, the unnamed, unendowed soul in the Canticles has all in one.

Are the experiences of our souls in some company with all this?

The grief of the one is this, that *all* has disappointed him; the grief of the other is this, that she cannot make as much of her *one thing* as it deserves, having tasted its capacity to satisfy her. What a difference!

The flocks and the herds, I may again remember, left the rich man unsatisfied; the one little ewe-lamb, as it lay in his bosom, taught the poor man that he wanted nothing else.

IV.

. "My hands have been more busy than my head, I trust not than my heart, since I saw you, so I can feel for you with whom this is always the case. One learns valuable wilderness experiences in these things, and passing through the valley of weeping make it a well.

"I am so glad you are reading Peter (dear G—— asked for it the other night) so suitable for sheep in the wilderness, with the Lord as "the chief Shepherd." How Peter seems to connect Paul and John by the heavenly calling. Paul puts us in heaven, John traces the life on earth, Peter connects the two.

I have been more than ever struck with the extraordinary beauty of the epistle to the Ephesians; the first chapter leading us into communion with God as to His *thoughts* concerning His Son and us as associated with Him before the world was. The next chapter opening out His work concerning His Son and us, when He raised Him from the dead, and us with Him, and seated us together in the heavenlies. In the first chapter we are blessed in Him, chosen in Him, accepted in Him, have redemption in Him, have obtained an inheritance in Him, are sealed in Him. Similarly—1. All spiritual blessings are ours; 2. As men we possess them; 3. As children we enjoy them; 4. No stain of sin rests on our consciences; 5. He unfolds to us His secrets; 6. He has given to us an inheritance; 7. The Holy Ghost is the earnest of it till we are in glory. Seven inestimable blessings. In the second chapter we are seated in Him, created in Him, made high in Him, growing in Him, builded in Him. There is also a fourfold description of our condition—a fourfold presentation of God—and a fourfold statement of the results of His work toward us.

1. We were dead in trespasses and sins;
2. Walking according to the course of this world;
3. Fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind;
4. By nature children of wrath.
 1. God was rich in mercy;
 2. Of the great love;
 3. Rich in grace; and

4. In kindness.

He has 1. quickened us ;

2. Raised us ;

3. Seated us ; and

4. Will display us. (Verse 7.)

How much enjoyment there is in thus feeding on these blessed truths, and how wonderful to contrast them with 1 Peter iv. 18, where we are told the righteous are *scarcely* saved (or with difficulty), though the power of God in all its fulness has been in exercise in seating us in the *heavenlies*, yet such is our weakness and the power of the enemy against us that it takes all the same power of God to bring us through the wilderness, but how happy to know that all that power is on our side."

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

(JOHN XIX.)

MAN has given to Jesus a crown of thorns, but God has given Him a crown of glory. Pilate was conscious that he had to do with a wonderful man, with some one superhuman; as in the words Jesus said to him, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above." Pilate sought to set Him at liberty, but he had a bad position in this world, which he valued more than the life of an innocent man. He had no respect for the Jews; "Shall I crucify your king?" It is remarkable to see how all men are shown to be each the opposite of what he ought to be in whatever position he is found. His disciples, who were His friends, and who, therefore, ought to have been faithful to Him, forsake Him—one denies Him, another betrays Him. The judge whose part it was to judge righteously condemns Him, washing his hands of Him, though he knows He is innocent; the priests, who ought to have compassion on those who are out of the way, and to intercede for them, accuse the innocent. Behold the heart of man placed in the light of what he has done to the Saviour!

The fourth monarchy of Daniel, the Roman Empire, is found in conflict with God, in consort with the Jews. The judge (represented by Pilate) was in opposition to righteousness (Christ); but when Christ will return, then "judgment shall return unto righteousness" (Ps. xciv. 15). It is the

same thing now, judgment is in opposition to righteousness, but when Christ reigns they will go together. The evangelist always presents the Lord to us in His last hours always tranquil; and as in the account of what happened in Gethsemane, he does not give us His agony, but rather the result of His divine presence, having made those who came to take Him fall to the ground; so here we have not His suffering, nor His cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" but on the contrary, He is occupied with His mother, and confides her to the care of John. Then, when He said that the hour was come of the perfect accomplishment of all that He had to do, He Himself gives up the spirit—not through the force of sufferings, nor through the violence of man, but because He had the commission, as He said Himself, to lay down His life, and to take it again. John x. 18.

They broke the legs of the other two on the cross, but not so with Jesus, because He must die Himself, and it was written that not a bone of Him should be broken. Luke tells us that Jesus dismissed His spirit to the Father, in which expression we have His human perfection; His confidence in His Father raised Him above all the power of death, and He expressed in this way His trust as man in the Father. He dismisses His spirit when all is finished. He must die, but man cannot make Him die, until His time has come. It is admirable to see how in the death of the precious Saviour man's hatred against God, and God's love towards man meet. God, in His grace, is shown as above man's sin. All that is here expressed in a touching way. The thrust of the soldier's spear was the last insult man offered to His person; and to this last insult comes the answer in the blood and water that flowed from His side where the spear had pierced Him. Behold the effect of the death of Jesus for the guilt of man! It works salvation for poor sinners. There where we find the climax of hatred, we also find the proof of God's great love—these two things meet at the cross. The water signifies purification, and the blood expiation. As it is written (1 John v.), "Not by water only, but by water and blood," because purification without atonement would be of no avail. We see, also, here, that salvation is not the restoration of the first Adam, salvation is in the second Adam. Salvation is not the effect produced in the life of a man according to the flesh, but when he is received by faith, the life of the Son of God is given to man. Blood

and water came from a dead Christ, who had no longer any relation with man down here. Thus it is of the Spirit, who was not sent until after Christ had ascended to heaven. This life is in the Son, and he who has the Son has life. Wherefore, these three witnesses, the Spirit, the water, and the blood (1 John v.), speak of a dead Christ.

We have here on the scene the two who were disciples secretly, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. When all the rest had taken flight these took courage. It was written that He should be buried with the rich, and so it happened. It is by means of the cross that we enter into blessing, because it is only through the death of the flesh that we enjoy the things of God. By the cross we have part in eternal blessings, and by it also the enjoyment of heavenly things. The flesh has no part in any blessing, and therefore it must be put to death, held for dead upon the cross every day. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." Gal. v. 24.

LORD JESUS, COME!

ROUGH is the wilderness,
 Barren and drear;
 Pleasure or happiness,
 Who would seek here?
There, where the Saviour is,
 Is our blest home;
 Longing, our spirits cry,
 "Lord Jesus, come!"

We, of the Spirit born,
 Seal'd as God's own,
 Passing the desert through,
 Cannot but groan.
 Jesus while waiting for,
 Far from our home,
 Can we forbear to say
 "Lord Jesus, come?"

Soon shall we see Thy face,
 Know as we're known;
 Glory shall crown Thy grace,
 There on Thy throne.
 We, then, encircling Thee,
 No more shall roam;
 Till then our cry shall be,
 "Lord Jesus, come!"

A SALUTATION.—(Mat. xxviii. 9.)

HAIL! Morning Star!—the Father's self and Son,
 Lord Jesus Christ: Thy vic'try now is won:
 Thy greeting back we bring;
 Thy praise 'tis ours to sing;
 Heaven's courts shall joyful ring
 With ceaseless song.

Thou Lamb of God—thou Lamb for us once slain—
 To shed Thy blood Thou cam'st in love divine,
 To bear Almighty wrath,
 To break sin's power and death,
 To let love's tide flow forth:
 All praise be Thine!

What brought Thee down to us from heaven's height,
 To midnight gloom, and shades of deepest night?
 Thou didst pass angels by:
 As man Thou cam'st to die,
 That we might dwell on high,
 With Thee in light.

This far surpasses all creation's work—
 There Thou saidst "Let light be," when all was dark:
 But now Thy praise we sing,
 Who didst from heaven bring
 As cure for death and sin:
 Redemption's worth.

O love beyond compare! O love divine!
 Stronger than death and sin, let Thy light shine,
 Till all the tribes on earth,
 Learning Thy glorious worth,
 Unite to set it forth
 In joyful strain.

 SCRIPTURE QUERIES AND REPLIES.

Q.—What does "Apples of gold in pictures of silver" mean?

A.—"Divine fruit shown out in redemption," for gold is always divine and silver always redemption; and as you see fruit the result of His holy Spirit within us, it is displayed on the beautiful picture of redemption which we are in Christ Jesus.

 FRAGMENT.

How truly does God make it manifest that even touching the world, godliness has the promise on its side! Who to be compared in happiness with him who knows the inestimable blessing of a Father's love in Christ Jesus? How it wiles away the time in fruit-bearing!

DEAD TO SIN: DEAD TO THE LAW.

THE only way in which a believer is not under the law, is by being dead with Christ. God counts the believer "dead to the law by the body of Christ;" faith accepts this and does likewise. Still, like other matters, experience and faith contradict each other when the soul is in a certain stage under the dealings of His hand; and until things, already true, are experimentally known. One finds in one's own soul that many things are accepted as true abstractedly, and as of God, yet the soul's experience has apprehended them but feebly, if at *all*. "If I may also apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." One can sometimes look back at the years it has taken under divine instruction and discipline, to learn experimentally some little sentence of Scripture that has just, as it were, dawned brightly upon one, and been as the voice of God.

One finds too, that there is no use saying to such and such a one, "you have not yet learned that!" with regard to certain truths. You could not make a soul understand that it had not! Thus, I have often said, there *could* be no proper doctrinal exposition of the Psalms by any man's pen—no matter how deeply taught of God he might be. No two souls have ever gone through the same experiences, or the same circumstances in which such experiences might be found. Hence, the spiritual experiences produced by the Holy Spirit in one, would not be the same as those in another. The Spirit of God is the same of course; but the feelings of the vessel are different, and the circumstances are not the same. Christ alone has tasted, in divine grace, all that man ever could, or did, or will experience in his own person. He has gone through all, having willingly entered, especially at the close of His life, upon that period of His earthly history when He learned all, so as to be a perfect High Priest, and to be enabled to speak a word in season to him that is weary.

In the Psalms we find these expressions of exercises of heart that must be felt to be understood. Hence, no one could make them intelligible to another. When the soul finds itself in the circumstances, it finds the suited expressions that never could be understood unless it were there. Sometimes it finds Christ giving it the joy of being able to join with and enjoy Him what He could say; at others, Christ in

divine grace gives the words that express the soul's personal experiences, and not His own. Hence, the mistakes that have been made in attributing all the words of Psalms to the Lord's own feelings personally.

I believe, to speak generally, we have in the New Testament three kinds of experiences; or rather experiences suited to three conditions of the soul. In Romans vii. we find those of a soul *before deliverance* is known. In Romans viii., those of a *delivered* soul entering in the power of the Holy Spirit upon the sorrows of a creation of which it yet forms a part as having a body unredeemed; and having relationships with the old creation that cannot be severed with impunity; while, at the same time, it is itself of the new creation. In the Epistle to the Philippians, we have experiences which are the *fruit of conscious union with Christ*, maintained in practical power in the soul. It might be very justly called the Book of Psalms of the New Testament. The Psalms are the beatings of the heart of the Old Testament: Philippians, those of the New. It has been frequently said by another, that in this Epistle you do not find sin mentioned; I may add, nor do we find the experience of an undelivered soul? It has also been noticed that the flesh is not spoken of, only to say that the writer has no confidence in it. I question if Paul would have been employed to write this Epistle when he wrote that to the Romans. Not that the Holy Spirit could not do so by any one; but the vessel was not yet formed, so that out of his belly (the inward affections and experiences of the soul) might flow rivers of living water from Christ. "I have learned" so and so, is his language here.

But to return. The only way in which the believer can have nothing to do with law as a prohibitory code, &c., is by being dead with Christ. But how few know this in practical power even for deliverance! And while souls are taught that they have nothing to do with the law, which I should not state in so many words, they are left really under law as a principle, and Romans vii. describes their state; at least a modification of it, for this is an extreme case.

"Law, as a principle," is not the same thought as "the law." The former being the sense of responsibility to do God's will, and to suppress all that is not suited to Him in my ways: the latter being a divine prohibitory code aimed against all that "sin" would bring forth in the form of "sins," or

rather "transgressions." "In the flesh" and "under law" are correlative terms, describing a similar state of soul. The former describes the condition of a quickened soul which has not yet learned the liberty that is in Christ, nor deliverance from "the flesh." In such a state the soul cannot take up the language of faith and liberty, and say that the flesh is "not I myself." It has not yet learned to look upon "sin," and the new "I" as totally distinct and separate. The bond still exists in the soul's experience, and though quickened it is "in the flesh."

If verses 2 and 3 of Romans vii. be read parenthetically—taking verses 1 and 4 consecutively, we will arrive at the meaning more simply. The other two verses are a case put by the apostle by way of illustration, and in order to bring out in a fuller way what verse 4 teaches. The point the apostle is insisting on in the chapter is (1) the believer's deliverance from law : (2) law is the strength of sin, and that which discovers it either as a code or a principle : and (3) that deliverance is through death to it by the body of Christ, in order to be to another—even Christ risen, for fruit to God : (4) this being in power of life in resurrection which is possessed : and this (5) is the true "I."

There is, in the experimental part of Romans vii., the discovery, first of all,—of the thorough evil of "sin"—the evil nature in me which, though my desires as a quickened soul are right, will not bend, nor do that which is good, but is ever fruitful in evil, and nothing but evil, continually. From whence come then the desires which aim, yet hopelessly aim at doing God's blessed will, with desire and purpose of heart? Is there not—yea, must there not be another "I"—and a life and a nature which longs to fulfil the law of God, and to do His will? This dawns upon the soul. But there is the antagonism of "sin" to this right and proper will of the new man, which would do all God's law most heartily if it possessed the power; and "the strength of sin is the law." The law has provoked "sin", and brought forth its latent evil and antagonism to the will of God. "I"—with its right desires, and its delight in the law of God, the new "I" and "sin," are thus pitted against each other, and the soul longs for strength to combat "sin," but only failure and defeat ensue. The person has no settled peace with God in such a state; and is really "in the flesh." The new I and sin are one to the soul's consciousness. The more the struggle goes on to fulfil the

blessed desires of the new "I"—the more does the hopeless helplessness to do so become apparent. The "law of the mind; (that is, its tendency or principle of action as we speak of the "law of gravitation" in accordance with which an apple falls to the ground,) of the new "I" is overcome by the "law of death," that "other law" or tendency which is in my members—which are subservient to "sin;" and instead of liberty, captivity and bondage ensue.

This useful, though bitter experience leads the soul to the sense of thorough and hopeless weakness and inability to attain to, or to obtain the freedom it seeks, and the new "I" is not yet known as "I myself"—my proper self as before God; nor is "sin" yet known, nor "the flesh"—hateful hating God with tendencies which never cease to be the "law of sin." In result, when the soul is led to look away to Another, even to Christ for deliverance from what it cannot overcome, deliverance is at once found, and liberty is known. The very moment the soul looked away to Another it owned, even it might be unintelligently, that it had no further hope in self, and this alone brought freedom. It can now look at "sin" in the nature as "no more I," and deny its every claim for notice in every way, even religiously; but only as a second person as it were that one is conscious of bearing about with them to the end, whose suggestions and thoughts and actions (if allowed) only inspire disgust and abhorrence, the more deeply and the better they are known: it only can be dealt with by being avoided, and by lending a deaf ear to its suggestions.

The person then is "not in the flesh." The tie that existed between "sin" and "I" is for ever broken—this tie was "the flesh," and I am not in the flesh but in the Spirit, and am set free from the law of sin and of death.

"Law" and "sin" are correlatives. But "sin" as an evil thing, that is "no more I," is not what is first before it. The law, or law as a principle, is that which first presents itself to it, and which it seeks to obey. "Sin" is discovered by it, along with new desires which eventually are known as the new and true "I," and the struggle leads to the discovery, unknown before, of the two in the one person.

I am quite sure that the state of soul described in Romans vii. from first to last does not portray one struggling against "sin" known as not the true and proper I, though there; but it is striving to obey *law*, or fulfil it as a principle, and

the effort brings out the impossibility, by the discovery of "*sin*" as distinct from "*I*." To *begin* by seeking to be set free from "*sin*," would be to reverse the whole truth of the chapter. "*Law*" is before the soul ; the discovery of "*sin*" is made in consequence ; and the soul has to find deliverance through Another, in whom God has condemned *sin* in the flesh, and by being dead with Him to *sin*, and hence to law which was the strength of it.

"Reckon yourselves dead," &c., "and alive," &c. These are not to be taken up as reckoning "*sin*" dead, or the "*old man*" dead. It is, that *we* are to reckon *ourselves* dead to *sin*, &c., and "he that has died has been justified from *sin*." It is never said "*sin*" is dead at all, that I know of ; but "*I*" am dead to *sin*—to the law, &c., and thus set free from them. Thus, faith is always in exercise. Rom. vi. 11 is abstractedly the bringing to bear upon the soul the great doctrine which he had been reasoning out ; that is, *our* death with Christ to "*sin*," and its effects for justification from it ; and as possessing justification from "*sins*" by blood, in one who has died to "*sin*" itself, even Christ. We must bear in mind the great point of the apostle, stated in verse 1 : that we cannot be alive to a thing, and dead to a thing at the same time ; and as we possess justification by blood from *sins*, and justification of life in the Christ who had died and risen ; we must be dead to what He died to, &c. Therefore, verse 11 comes in as addressed to one who possesses all this in Christ Jesus, appropriating to faith the condition He was in as faith's possessions also.

It does not press the point whether it is for standing or practice ; but it is an abstract reasoning by the apostle, of Christ having died to *sin* and being alive to God, presented to him who believes. It starts from the thought which he began with, that the unholiness of the thought that a person might continue in *sin* because grace was so free—grace, which reigned through righteousness to eternal life, and which had cleared him and justified him by virtue of what another had done, even Christ. Certain blessings devolved upon him through his federal head—Christ. The chapter takes up and applies Christ's death to *sin*, and all that He died to, and His living now to God, as entirely free from anything whatever to do with it, and further, that it is made good to faith's reckoning, and in the practice of the believer. To make a

separation at verse 11, and say, it is for standing, and verse 12 for practice, is not, I conceive, fair or right. Take all the statements for standing or practice (as faith may appropriate them), as in the abstract, and all seems simple; bearing in mind that it treats of the believer's deliverance from *sin*, as chapter vii. shows his deliverance from *law*, and that by being dead to both through Christ's death.—Ed.

DIVINE NAMES AND TITLES.

(Continued from page 97.)

6. Most High God.

This beautiful title occurs four times in Genesis xiv. 18-24, and several times in the book of Gentile political prophecy, Daniel.

In the Genesis Scripture, Melchizedek, as king and priest, points to Christ—a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. vii.), but a Priest in blessing, not in offering sacrifice, as Aaron (Heb. ix., x.); also as King in Zion (Psalm ii.), and King over all the Earth (Zech. xiv. 9). Surely there is but One able and worthy to sustain this double glory—"He shall be a *Priest upon His throne.*" In the coming days of the kingdom, the faintest sigh, the falling tear will reach the heart, and meet the eye of the Priest, while every case of wrong, cruelty and oppression, will be righteously dealt with by the power of the King. God's two ordinances—the temple and the throne—respectively represented by the priest and the king, took up the cause of the Blessed One, and His heavenly title "Son of God" procured His condemnation at the hand of the Jewish Sanhedrim—(see Matt. xxvi. ; Mark xiv. ; Luke xxii.), while His title of earthly glory, "King of the Jews," was deemed sufficient (although thrice declared innocent by Pilate) to condemn Him at the Gentile judgment-seat (see closing chapters of the four gospels). The very titles under which He was rejected by Jews and Gentiles will be those confessed and owned by the Jewish remnant in the coming days of Israel's restoration to her God and land (John i. 49).

"Most High God," is a millennial title, expressing *power* and *blessing* over the heavens and the earth. Priesthood and royalty exercised mediatorially will uphold the glories of millennium days. The kingdom will be received *from* the

Father, and for one thousand years the Lord Jesus will sway the sceptre in righteousness and put every enemy below His feet, and at the close of His glorious reign He will *deliver up* the kingdom to God (1 Cor. xv. 24-28). Thus the kingdom will be mediatorial in power, as the priesthood will be in blessing (Gen. xiv. 19-20).

“Most High” is used *five* times in Daniel iv., and *five* times in Daniel vii.; but in the latter Scripture the expression occurs three times in a plural form, and refers to the heavenly places; same as in Ephesians i. 3, and vi. 12. It might be translated “high places.” Daniel vii. 25 applies the title, rightly too, to God, the other instances in the chapter applying to the *sphere* of blessing, not to the Blesser. Verse 27 is an interesting passage, as showing the future connection between the *heavenlies* and *earthlies*; “and the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to *the people* of the saints of the Most High (rather, high places); whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.” While earthly dominion and glory are committed to the saints (Jewish) on earth, the heavenly glory will be enjoyed, as we know, by the heavenly saints, while the connection between the saints in heaven and earth is blessedly maintained. This is not an arbitrary distinction: Revelation xxi, 12, 24, 26, clearly enough show that the celestial and terrestrial spheres of glory will be in intimate fellowship. A similar strain is the burden of Hosea ii. 21-23.

7. The Lord of all the Earth.

This easily understood title first occurs in Joshua iii. 11, 13; is also used in Zec. vi. 5. In taking possession of the earth—of which Canaan was a pledge and Joshua a type—God selected this fitting title, but when His people would connect His blessed name and presence with evil, God left the earth, had no longer a home or throne in it (Ezek. i-ix). To have longer remained in the temple, or sanctioned the iniquity of the throne, would have been to abnegate His character, and lower His glory as God: that were impossible. Governmental power, therefore, passed from the hands of His people into those of the Gentiles, and from that epoch, they date the history of “the times of the Gentiles”* (Luke xxi. 24; Dan. ii.); while the glory or presence of Jehovah had passed away into heaven

* “The fulness of the Gentiles,” (Rom. xi. 25.) refers to their ingathering in grace.

(see Ezekiel i-xi). God could not sanction by His presence the power conferred upon the Gentiles, so long as His people were held in captivity by these powers, and the cities of Judah lay waste. Hence, when the cause of Israel is again taken up, the title will be re-asserted (Rev. xi. 4: compare with Zechariah iv. and vi. 5). Nebuchadnezzar lauded the "God of heaven," so also Daniel, not the "Lord of all the earth," for as we have seen, that title only is taken up when making good Israel's place of supremacy in the earth. The central part of the revelation is God's assertion of His rights and titles over the earth; necessarily this will bring in days of terror and wrath upon man—*i.e.*, such as have refused to own His rights. They will be willing enough then to give glory to the God of *heaven* (Rev. xi. 13), but *that* is not the testimony rendered in these days. Men will be willing enough, as I have said, to own God's title to heaven, because that keeps God at a distance from them, but when He announces His purpose to take up again this earth, men refuse, sternly refuse, to own the title: — "God of the earth," and so the judgment will roll on and on—seal judgments, trumpet judgments, and vial judgments, will sweep over the bosom of these christianised lands, and guilty world, until the song from heaven breaks upon a joyous and delivered creation. "The kingdoms of this world (or rather the world-kingdom) of our Lord and Christ is come; and He shall reign for ever and ever." Rev. xi. 15.

This then is a title God *did* assert and *will* establish in power and judgment.

8. God of Heaven.

We have about 20 occurrences of this interesting and divine title. It is only used twice in the New Testament, and that only in the Revelation. It is found in the Book of Ezra eight times. This is important, for it is that book which details the doings of the returned captives from Babylon to Jerusalem. Now while God graciously allowed remnants of His people to return to their land and city, they did so under Gentile patronage and protection. They got blessing *from* God but not the presence *of* God, hence in the five post-captivity books—Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi—they are not once termed "my people," save as viewed prophetically. The altar fire may consume its victims, the set and consecrated feasts of the Lord be observed according to the written word, the new moons, and

free-will offerings of the people be duly accepted according to the law of Moses, the Temple Courts may resound with songs of praise, the fallen walls of Jerusalem be reared, the city gates as of old be opened and shut at their appointed seasons, the throne may again be established, but the *presence* of the Lord cannot be given to the people. Their Temple—beautiful and glorious as it was—had no ark, no mercy-seat, no Urim nor Thummim, no cherubim shadowing the mercy-seat, *that* which gave priesthood its distinguishing glory was wanting. Where was the cloud of glory—the well-known symbol of Jehovah's presence? He had vacated His place between the cherubim, and retired into His native place—heaven—but will return, as of old, and fill the new Temple with His glory (Ezekiel xliii). These glorious days are not far distant. This, then, fully accounts for the frequency of His title in this book. God was not actively interfering on behalf of His people from His throne established in Jerusalem, nor dwelling in their midst in the Temple. The throne of righteousness and power is now set up in the great Gentile metropolis—Babylon—and the glory has left the house; hence the appropriateness of the title “God of Heaven.” God acts *in* and *from* heaven—not *on* the earth—and controls and directs all for the blessing of His own. When He begins to act publicly on behalf of His people, He will do so under His Joshua title, “Lord of all the Earth.” The point now for faith to recognise is, that God is acting and directing, although unseen, for the present blessing of His people. This is an immense stay to the heart in presence of evil and evil men—“Be *still* and *know* that I am God.” The Book of Esther, in which the name of God does not once occur, shows the secret providence of God exercised in blessing through the Persian monarch towards those of His people, who were even so indifferent to Jehovah's interests that they preferred to remain in the land of the Gentile, instead of returning to their own city, and gathering with their brethren around the altar of God. Esther thus shows the people *out* of the country of promise, but watched over and protected by God Himself; while the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah show us Cyrus, Jehovah's anointed and shepherd (Isaiah xlv. 28, xlv. 1), caring for the people *in* the land—God all the time owned as the “God of Heaven” as these books fully testify.

The expression "Kingdom of Heaven," occurring about 30 times, and only in the Gospel of Matthew, is an important one in connection with the title "God of Heaven."

9. Father.

Of all the divine names and titles there is none so touching to the Christian as "Father." It is pre-eminently God's New Testament title. It is the language of the babe (1 John ii. 13); it is the utterance of conscious relationship (Romans viii. 15); but a love and relationship really enjoyed only where there is practical separation from the world (1 John ii. 15, 16). In John xiv., the Lord Jesus prepares a place in the Father's house *for us*; in chapter xvii. He speaks to His Father *about us*; while in chapter xx. He declares His Father's name *to us*.

"*Our Father*" is the language of the disciples; "*My Father*," that of the Lord Jesus. "Father" is the name above all others which stirs the feelings and awakens the tenderest affections of the heart. It is a name only fully declared after the conflicts of the cross—after redemption had been effected, after the awful depths of man's sin had been fully fathomed, and the wrath of God exhausted itself—*then*, and only then, could the Blessed One speak of declaring His Father's name to His brethren; then He did say, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren" (Ps. xxii. 22, compared with John xx. 17), "Raised from the dead by the glory of the Father," and "exalted by the right hand of God," He sits upon His Father's throne. Soon His God and Father will build for Him a system of glory, which will widen and extend until it embrace the new heavens and new earth,—Jesus *Himself* the centre and foundation, glory and head of the new creation, wherein all things are of God. Raised from the dead, He declares His Father's name to His brethren, and imparts to them the virtue of His new condition. The first man brought in sin, death, and tears; the Second Man dealt with sin, brought in life—eternal life, and will, by-and-by, wipe away all tears from off all faces.

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

FRAGMENT.

The practical condition of each is, either *inside* with God, and going out; or, *outside*, and seeking to get in.

MEDITATIONS ON THE EPISTLE OF PAUL
TO THE ROMANS.

CHAPTER I.-III. 20.

HE who believes partakes of this redemption through faith, because every revelation of God can only be made our own through faith. But it gives, as we shall see further on, a special reason why the gospel is "the power of God unto salvation."

In the gospel is revealed the righteousness of God—that righteousness which is already satisfied in Christ, and which justifies instead of condemns. Man has no righteousness; he has only sin, and when he must appear before God as a sinner, then judgment will meet him. God declares now in the gospel a positive righteousness—a righteousness which is due to what Christ wrought in our stead, and which can be given to us through His death and resurrection. It is the righteousness of God, perfect as He Himself, according to His own heart. And this righteousness is revealed *from faith, i. e.*, upon the ground of faith (*v. 17*).

In the Old Testament God declared His righteousness in the law, or upon the ground of works; but all who were under law, and sought to obtain this righteousness through the works of the law, came under the curse and death. The righteousness of the law found no fulfilment in man, and therefore it sentenced and killed him. But the righteousness of God, declared upon the ground of faith, has found in Christ a perfect fulfilment; it is in Him, the second Adam, fully satisfied and glorified. Therefore this righteousness does neither condemn nor kill the one that believeth, but it preserves him and is his portion. He has no need to work for it in order to gain it, but he receives it as a free gift.

Were righteousness proclaimed upon the ground of works, then only the righteous would have part therein; but now, as it is upon the ground of faith, it belongs to him that believeth; ". . . revealed from faith to faith." Faith is the beginning and the end of this righteousness. It is without the least aid on man's part—from beginning to end the work of God—and is revealed to faith, wheresoever it may be found. The Jew is nothing more than the Gentile; both stand upon the same level, and the obtaining of this righteousness is open to both, by means of faith, that is,

upon the ground of faith; only faith is to both the only way of obtaining this blessing, which is entirely of God. This even strengthens and confirms the Jewish prophet, in that he says, "The just shall live by faith," (Hab. ii. 4) *i.e.*, the righteous possess life upon the ground of faith. The law says, "Do this, and thou shalt live;" but the gospel says, "He that believeth hath eternal life."

At the close of this introduction the apostle has arrived at the right point in order to begin with his explanation of the great truths of salvation. In *v.* 17 he has laid down a foundation truth which contains the whole doctrine of salvation in a few words, and which he now attempts to prove. But his explanation of justification by faith by all means must precede the proof of its necessity and of man's deserving punishment before God, and with this he commences in *v.* 18.

In this verse, which, as it were, forms the heading of that which follows, is briefly expressed the condition both of Jews and Gentiles. "Ungodliness" characterizes the Gentiles, or nations which regard not the presence of God; "and the unrighteousness of man, who hold the truth in unrighteousness," characterizes the Jews. These confessed the truth, in that they had the knowledge of God according to the law, but they dishonoured God through their works. The same may be said of all professors of Christianity, if they in their profession walk in things which God hates.

Against all these things "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven" (*v.* 18); and therefore all who walk therein have to expect nothing else but this wrath. Though this wrath is not yet seen in the execution of divine judgment, neither is it revealed in the gospel—then this is the revelation of the righteousness of God for the redemption of those that are in this condition—yet nevertheless this wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, against all that dishonoureth the presence of God, and against all unrighteousness of those who hold the truth and yet dishonour God. God is holy, and therefore He can but reveal His wrath against sin.

From *v.* 19 the apostle describes next the sad condition of the Gentiles, their undervaluing and contempt of the witness of God, and thence the ensuing deep immorality which shows their solemn responsibility. That man has sinned every one indeed discerns, but that he is *guilty* is

admitted by only a few. The apostle proves this in verses 19 and 20. At first God has by the works of creation borne witness, and placed before their eyes proofs of His own power and Godhead. This alone would have left them without excuse; but apart from this they had acknowledged God in the beginning. The descendants of Noah were, no doubt, not without the knowledge of God; then after God had destroyed the old world by a terrible judgment, He began the present one with one family, which He placed for the preservation of the knowledge of Himself. But man did not preserve this knowledge, and sank into deep darkness. We find here three degrees of deep immorality: conceit, darkness, and holding darkness for light (*vs. 21, 22*). In their want of judgment they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the image of corruptible man and to beasts, and changed the truth into a lie, worshipping the creature, and left the Creator to whom all honour is due (*vs. 21-25*). Therefore God gave them up, and in just recompense turned their own wickedness against themselves. Because they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the image of an unclean beast, God gave them up to uncleanness, through the lust of their own heart (*vs. 23, 24*); because they did not serve God their Creator, He has given them to serve their vile affections (*vs. 24-27*); and because they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient. The same mind that ought to retain the knowledge of God, retains now all unrighteousness (*vs. 28-31*). They were altogether left to themselves. Deprived of every moral sense of distinction, they walked in the most abominable lusts; the most intimate bonds and relations manifested most their reprobation (*vs. 26, 27*). They lowered themselves even beneath the beast, and received thus in themselves the well-deserved reward of their error and rejection of God. In that they gave away the honour of God on this wise, they dishonoured themselves.

Their natural conscience was now convinced, as we see from verse 32, that God did judge such things, and that the doers of the same, according to the just claims of His nature, were guilty of death, and in spite of this they not only committed those things, but had also pleasure in them that did them; they manifested in this manner their sympathy with the vileness of others.

CHAPTER II.

IN the first half of this chapter the apostle, without respect to national position, turns to all who are enabled through this natural conscience to discern the above-mentioned condition of things. And all men have the ability to do this, because through the sin of Adam all have obtained the knowledge to discern good and evil, and are enabled thereby to judge of the difference. Therefore we have not here particularly presented either the Gentile under the consequence of his conduct against God, running openly about in filthy ways, nor the Jew with his special privileges amongst the nations. The apostle addresses himself to this class with a most general title:—"Whosoever thou art" (*v.* 1)—whether Jew or Gentile, or philosopher or Pharisee, (or even now a professing Christian)—thou art without excuse. He is such a one who judges the evil of another, but not of himself. But if he judge the evil of another, he condemns himself; yea, through his judging, he condemns doubly, because he proves by it that he knoweth the bad and the sentence of God concerning it, and does it in spite of it. "But the judgment of God is according to truth against them which do such things" (*v.* 2). May also some one through the knowledge of evil and through judging it, obtain honour of man, God is not deceived by such subtlety. This outside appearance of wisdom and knowledge enables nobody to escape the judgment of God (*v.* 3), because His judgment is "according to truth."

Further now the apostle remarks in verse 4, on "the riches of the goodness and longsuffering of God." But however immeasurably great the riches of this goodness and longsuffering are, it will never weaken nor annul the judgment of God against evil. God's goodness invites to repentance. Who by continuance in the evil seeks to comfort himself with the goodness and longsuffering of God, and also to forget the certain judgment of God, deceives himself, and is also in truth a despiser of the goodness of God. Instead of using it unto repentance during his life of sins, he uses it for comfort. But the terrible consequence will be, that he heaps up for himself the anger that on "the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" will come upon him (*v.* 5). For as sure and certain as is the end of a divine life which will find "honour and glory," even so sure and certain also is the end of a life opposing

God and His truth, which results in "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish" (*vs.* 6-10). Here it is not only a question of doing good, but the perseverance in good works. The apostle has proved in the previous chapter that the Gentiles had not persevered therein, and now he argues that it was also the case with the Jews, and that therefore with regard to this all stood alike before God. God also judges, without respect of the person and regardless of Jews and Gentiles, all according to its true moral character and according to the advantages which each one has received. The Jews had the law, and to the Gentiles their own conscience bore witness that the work of the law was written in their hearts. They judged between right and wrong, and discerned between good and evil. Their consciences and their thoughts, which accused or excused one another, testified that they knew what was morally good and what was morally wrong, and their writings also bore witness of it. Therefore God will judge the Gentiles by their conscience, and the Jew by the law, and that on the day on which He, according to the gospel of Paul, will judge the secrets of the heart by Jesus Christ (*vs.* 12-16). Then takes place not an eternal and carnal judgment, as the Jews imagined, but the judgment concerning each one, and this after the knowledge which God has of the heart.

Now the apostle turns himself to the Jews personally, and proves the blamableness of their condition under the law. If any one called himself a Jew (*v.* 17), and boasted in his advantages (*v.* 18), and thought himself a guide and teacher of others, because of his external knowledge of the law (*vs.* 19, 20), and yet was blind himself and without true knowledge of God, and in every aspect a transgressor of the law (*vs.* 21 and 23), then did he dishonour God, and even cause His name to be blasphemed among the nations (*v.* 24). And the Jews not only sinned against the commandments of God, but polluted also the *Cultus* or divine service, because they committed sacrilege, in that they withheld from God His sacrifice and the service due to Him, and used the holy place of the temple for their own use (*v.* 22).

Further, now the apostle shows, that God without the fulfilment of the law regards not circumcision. The circumcision of such a one, who transgressed the law, became uncircumcision (*v.* 25) God requires reality. A Gentile who did what the law required was worth more than a Jew who

broke the law. Therefore, also, righteousness in an uncircumcised condition shall be imputed for circumcision and receive the blessings connected therewith (*v.* 26). Through the principles here laid down, the apostle will simply prove that God requires reality. In the two last verses he proves finally that he only is a real Jew, who has the law in his heart, and as such is circumcised in the spirit, and not he who professes only the outward circumcision. Though that condition had not the praise of man, yet it had the praise of God (*vs.* 28, 29), and upon this alone it depended.

LETTERS OF INTEREST, &c.

“THERE are some precious fragments remaining in the midst of the mighty ruin—and the mighty ruin only binds the soul to the perfect and enduring rest and presence of the glory. For, who can tell, beloved, the joy of spending eternity with Him who looked up to Zaccheus as he sat in the tree? Think of what a heart it was that so answered, and more than answered the desire which His own Spirit had awakened.

I have just alighted on a sight of the glories of the Lord Jesus Christ which never struck me before, at least in their combination.

Look at the close of John i. and ii.:—The Lord there knows the *good* and the *bad* in man, without being told of either. He knows the good in Nathanael, *i.e.*, the stirrings of the Spirit of God, His own Spirit in the conscience of that guileless confessing Israelite. He knows the bad in the multitude, so that though they were wrought on by His miracles, He would not trust them.

What divine understanding is this in the bosom of Jesus? He stands, so to speak, at the spring-head of all the flowings and movements of the Holy Ghost in the elect, quickened soul; and He is in full omniscieny, aware of the deceitfulness above all things of the heart of man. Moral hidden springs are thus naked and bare under His eye. (Jeremiah xvii. 9, 10.)

I observe also in the intervening passage between the close of John i. and close of ii., some bright expressions of glory in Christ. He touches the springs of nature as of creation, turning water into wine; and He touches also all

the strength of death to wither it all, saying, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

Farewell, beloved, may we long more ardently for *that* Presence which has virtue to *rectify* and to *satisfy*, and to cause aboundings of health and joy beyond all measure."

II.

"In Col. iii. 11—Christ is "all" and "in all?" It is not the same as 1 Cor. xv. 28—"God all in all," but it includes *two* thoughts, that Christ is "*in*" all, *i.e.*, that Christ is in each believer; and then being in each, He is "*all*" to each of them.

It seems to me that in chap. i. the apostle draws out the first thought, that Christ is *in* all; and in chap. ii., he asserts the second, that Christ is *all* to each of the saints.

Meditate on Colossians with this in your mind, and see if we agree."

SCRIPTURE QUERIES AND REPLIES.

E.le.P.—It is quite unscriptural to speak of the Holy Ghost as dwelling in the body of Christ—"The church which is his body." He dwells in the "House." The Church looked at as the "body of Christ"—its Head in heaven—was formed by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, taking the aggregate number of the saints at Pentecost and baptizing them into one body in union with the Head, and consequently one with the other. No figure could possibly convey more completely the union of Christ and His people. They are, as joined unto the Lord, one Spirit with Him.

The Church looked upon as the place where God dwells here is spoken of as the "House," or "a habitation of God by the Spirit" or spiritually. *God* is said to "dwell" in her, and to walk in the midst of his people.

Both terms embraced the same people at the first. They were coterminous in extent, though not convertible terms. For the "Body" expressed union. The "House" or "Habitation" not so. It has often been shown that into the latter, "wood, hay, stubble," might be introduced, as has been the case, without the Holy Ghost leaving the house though thus defiled; while none could become united to Christ as a member of His body, unless he was a true believer who had received the Holy Ghost as a seal. Consequently, the history of things shows us that evil having

crept into the house, the Spirit who dwelt there would point it out and warn and guide the saints, and act on the conscience of the evil, if the ear to hear was there; but all this as dwelling in that which was still the house of God in responsibility. Of course, the body of Christ being only the true living members, it is contained, as you say, the less in the greater.

2. Your body, as a believer, is a member of Christ, though made out of the dust (1 Cor. vi). The whole man—"spirit, soul and body" is destined to be with Christ in glory, its present condition being changed. The apostle is pressing personal purity and gives prominence to our "body" in this chapter, and in it we are to glorify God.

"Your body," says the apostle, "is the temple of the Holy Ghost,"—adding "which ye have of God, and ye are not your own, but ye are bought with a price; therefore, he says, "glorify God in your body." (The remaining portion of the verse is not authentic Scripture.) It cannot be said that the Spirit dwells in the "new nature." *That* is produced by the Spirit's quickening power through the Word of God acting on the conscience and producing faith in Christ. Then the Spirit of God having thus wrought, is given as a seal to him that believes, and is said to dwell in his body. There would hardly be any sense in saying the Spirit dwells in the new nature.

3. You ask if the Lord has fulfilled, *i.e.*, completed or finished the law in any sense whatsoever; and if He ever kept the law for Israel or the Gentile or the Church, or any one? And that He did come "*to fulfil*" the law, but it is not said that He "*fulfilled* it," as all will not be fulfilled, (that is all contained in the law and prophets), much before the eternal state?

Now, the Lord Himself states, in the sermon on the mount (Matt. v.), "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." And here we must ascertain the meaning of the word "fulfil." It does not mean to *obey* it—nor is the thought that He came to *add* something to it; but to *make good the whole scope* and gist of the law in His own proper person, to complete the circle, and answer to the whole thoughts of God as far as therein was contained. This word is so used elsewhere: "*Fill ye up* the measure of your fathers;" "until the times of the Gentiles be *fulfilled*;"

“that the righteousness of the law *might be fulfilled* in us;” *i.e.*, its whole import brought to fruition. And lastly I mention Col. i. 25, where Paul’s ministry of “the Church”—the mystery, having the result of fulfilling the Word of God.” That is, this truth was needed to complete the circle of revelation, all other subjects having been revealed before.

Thus Christ, in His own person, was the summing up and complement of all that God’s mind contemplated in the law and the prophets; though, of course, much more also.

I have no doubt that whatever our blessed Lord did in keeping the precepts of the law, He did for His people. Israel went into the land on the condition of their observing the law; and their non-observance of it was to result in being driven out of it. (See, *passim*, the whole book of Deuteronomy, and especially ch. xxviii.) Having lost it on the condition of obedience, the Lord comes, and it is remarkable that when He enters His course as an obedient Jew, under the law, He cites Deuteronomy in every case when undergoing the temptations in the wilderness. (*Cf.* Matt. iv. with Deut. vi. and viii.) Everything which He ever did was for His people and for His God; though it must not be supposed that His keeping of the law was a substitutionary thing for our not keeping it, so as to work out righteousness for us. The righteousness in which we stand, or rather which we are counted by God—God reckons us such intrinsically by virtue of the work of another, Christ; in token of which He has placed Him on His throne—the result of His meeting all God’s holy nature as to sin on the Cross, so that He could righteously act according to the dictates of that nature in love.

By His having kept the conditions of Deuteronomy, under which Israel failed, He has earned a personal title to the land Himself, (*cf.* Ps. xviii. 20-24,) while, of course, also possessing such in the rights of His own person, as son of Abraham and David, while Son of God and Heir of all things.

As you say, much that is in the law and prophets will not be fulfilled, (in the sense I suppose of being *accomplished*), much before the eternal state. So it is. But the presenting in Himself as the complete scope of it morally, is a different thought from the accomplishment by Him of it in detail historically.

MY PORTION.

THE fields are always green,
 The flowers with fragrance smell,
 And as we gaze, we'll sing His praise,
 Who "hath done all things well."

No taint of sin will mar,
 No curse will blight the air,
 But joy divine will e'er be mine,
 For Jesus will be there.

He will maintain my soul,
 Fresh in unfading light ;
 Where God in love through all above,
 Preserves them ever bright.

The Lamb is on the throne,
 Who once for sinners died ;
 And, wondrous sight ! in all that light
 We shall be at His side.

For ever with Him there !
 Of other hopes bereft,
 I'm waiting still, till He fulfil
 His promise ere He left. (John xiv. 1—3.)

The tints of nature *fade*,
 Its flowers of short-lived hue ;
 To-day they're green, soon are not seen,
 But there they're always new.

Watered by God's own hand,
 First sown by Him in death (Rom. vi.),
 They blossom where, in verdure fair,
 They live by Jesus' breath.

In everlasting life,
 The plants of God's renown,
 Shall fragrant be in eternity,
 His glory then our own.

EPHESIANS—PHILIPPIANS—1 TIMOTHY— 2 TIMOTHY.

FOUR of Paul's Epistles have a special bearing one towards the other as to the truth.

I. Ephesians unfolds the doctrine of the Church of God as the body of Christ in heaven, and as builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit on earth, in its normal condition; ever true before God, and for faith. No ruin can affect what is thus maintained on earth, and will be finally presented in glory by the power of God.

II. First Timothy takes the Church up on the other side, also in its normal condition, but as presented before men. Consequently you do not find the Holy Ghost spoken of except as connected with Christ (ch. iii. 16); nor the relationships of father and children—body and head—bridegroom and bride—which are most fully brought out or hinted at in the Ephesians. 1st Timothy treats of what it is as presented before men as the pillar and ground of the truth; Ephesians as before God and for faith. Both take up the Church in her normal state.

III. The 2nd Epistle to Timothy, on the other hand, takes up the *abnormal* state of things with reference to the outward state of evil which had come in, and the pathway of the servant or of the saint through it all, as to external things; showing the energy of faith and ministerial service, and what faith and devotedness can accomplish counting on God, in the midst of the ruin and falling away of the Church as a whole.

IV. But while 2nd Timothy has its place of deep and lasting importance for us, as marking a pathway of separation from evil in the midst of the professing Church, Philippians has a specially lovely place marked, as in 2nd Timothy, by the absence of apostolic power.

Written in the prison at Rome, where the great apostle had now been for some years, this Epistle marks the resources of Christ (when the Church was deprived of apostolic ministry) in a special way.

To Paul, as has been said, were committed two special ministries. Peter was the apostle of the circumcision, and had his own place. Paul was (1) "The minister of the gospel to every creature under heaven;" and (2) "Minister of the Church (the mystery) to complete the word of God." (*Cf.*

Col. i. 23-25 ; Eph. iii. 8, 9.) Avowed and open enemy of that grace which rose above all the enmity of man's evil heart—the apostle, as we may say, of the hatred of man's heart to God ; he is converted by the sight of Jesus in the glory, and the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ ; and delivered from the people and from the Gentiles, he is sent forth (1) as the apostle or minister of that grace and glad tidings which rose above his sin. Wasting too, and persecuting the Church of God, he is converted to the union of these scattered saints in one body to Christ—the mystery of Christ and the Church, and (2) was “the minister of the Church to complete the word of God.”

He had now (Philippians) been cut off for some years from both ; a chained prisoner in Rome ; all that were in Asia had turned away from him ; the Church was set ling outwardly into the world, and departing from her heavenly calling ; all sought their own, not the things of Jesus Christ ; many walked as enemies of the Cross. Who then, of all men, would seem to have been more needed than the devoted energetic Paul ? But, wonderful to say, a prison had matured his confidence in Christ and His resources ; had made Christ increasingly his all, and he can write with beautiful calmness, (1) “I would not have you ignorant that the things which happened unto me have turned out to the furtherance of the gospel,” (ch. i. 12) ; and (2), in ch. ii. 12, “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of (his) good pleasure.”

Thus the double ministry of Paul prospered in Christ's hands, even when the vessel was no more free. The gospel was furthered by reason of his bonds, and the saints—the Church—if obedient when he was there, were now cast more entirely on God, and had the joy and opportunity of being more obedient than ever—God working in them to this end when Paul was gone.

It is an interesting study to examine the history, in the Acts of the Apostles, of the first planting of Christianity in those places which were afterwards addressed by an epistle.

The Epistle to the Philippians illustrates this (Acts xvi.) Satan's opposition to the gospel, first by patronizing flattery, and, failing this, by persecution, marks his work. In the midst of all this, “rejoicing” characterizes the servants of

Christ. Paul and Silas, freshly scourged, their feet fast in the stocks, "prayed and sang praises to God at midnight." "Songs in the night" ascended from those prison walls, which no power of Satan could silence. In the Epistle the saints are under the persecuting hand of Satan, and the apostle in prison at the end of his course, as he had been in the beginning of his work at Philippi, in another, finds his heart overflowing with the rich consolations of Christ; and he writes to these beloved saints—"Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice." The Epistle is characterized by this rejoicing in the midst of the enemy's opposition, and the failure of the Church all the way through.

In 2nd Timothy we find there what we may term the negative pathway of separation from evil. In Ephesians iv., the positive ground of action, and responsible place of the saints corporately in the unity of the Spirit, while in Philippians we have the practice of that platform—the living fellowship of the Spirit of God.

Ephesians presents the normal state of the Church to Godward, corporately.

1st Timothy—her normal state before man—the world; also in the corporate or collective condition.

Philippians, the abnormal condition before the Lord, and the devotedness of individual faith.

2nd Timothy, the abnormal condition also, but more with reference to the evil which is largely spoken of.—Ed.

DIVINE NAMES AND TITLES.

(Concluded from page 130.)

A LITTLE upon the Names and Titles found in the New Testament may not be unacceptable to some.

10. Jesus.

This name of wondrous sweetness occurs nearly 700 times in the New Testament, and in no case, so far as I am aware, is it written with an adjective. "Jesus" needs no adjective to set His glory forth. The rose of Sharon emits its own fragrance, and the lily of the valley reveals its own bloom and beauty. The glories of *His* person, the moral perfection of *His* ways, and the glories of *His* works tell out WHO and WHAT He is. In most of the human hymnology and spoken language of the Christian, we constantly meet with

such expressions as "Blessed Jesus," "Dear Jesus," but *never* in the Word of God. Again, the name is not used as a superscription, and it is clearly incorrect to do so in epistolary correspondence. "*In Jesus*"* is not Scripture.

The name is rarely used *alone* in the Acts and Epistles, the reason being that the position of Jesus is changed. As *the Man* amongst men, His divine glory hid, and moving about as the "Man of Sorrows," he was known as "Jesus." 'Twas His personal name as Man born into the world (Luke i. 31; Matt. i. 20, 21). It was a name which told of reproach, suffering and shame. Men looked coldly upon Him, Israel spurned Him and rejected His claims, and creation knew Him not. They covered His beautiful countenance with spittle, He was made the subject of the drunkard's song, they put Him to an *open* shame—parting His garments amongst them, and gambling for His seamless vesture. Many bulls, yea, the strong bulls of Bashan beset Him—the great and mighty. Dogs—men utterly without feeling and conscience gathered around Him; yea, the power of *the Dog*—Satan—was there. The circle of wickedness narrows, the assembly of the wicked enclose Him. O my soul, what a scene is this! Men and demons have got their prey, they trample upon Him as they would upon a worm. Reproached, laughed to scorn, the pouting lip, the shaking head; they pierced His hands and feet, and now the horror of the scene is intensified, God covering it in darkness. Like a funeral pall, Judea is shrouded in blackness. Then the clouds of judgment gather and break and the waves of wrath roll on and on. The storm bursts upon Him, for sin must be judged. "God is *light*," so the storm of divine and righteous wrath spends itself upon Him. The cry of desolation and abandonment, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" tells its own most awful tale. The last moment has come, man undeterred by the clear evidence of divine power—the rending of the rocky sepulchres of the dead and the overspread darkness—can yet find light enough to consummate His wickedness by piercing the Holy Sufferer's side. Eternal infamy rest upon the nature of man!

How does God meet all this? What are His thoughts about Jesus? Accompany me, beloved, to the tomb of Jesus. What are the lessons gleaned from that empty

* 1 Thess. iv. 14, should be "*through Jesus*."

sepulchre! The *glory* of the Father displayed (Rom. vi. 4) and the *power* of God put forth in the raising up from the dead—"Jesus." Where sits He now? On His Father's throne. Where is the Man whom God delights to honour? Seated in midst of heaven's glories. How is He robed? With garments of glory and beauty. What encircles His brow? A crown of glory and honour. What are His Headships? Creation, providence, God's new creation, and every glory known and unknown. What is He to angels? The object of their worship. What is He to saints? The burden of their holy songs. What is He to God? His only begotten and well-beloved Son. What is His place as Man? Universal power and supremacy. Who will be the centre of the world-wide system of glory? The Lamb slain. Whose name will awaken the song of creation? The name of Jesus. Yes! yes! the many-mansioned house of the Father has Jesus as the first-fruits of the gathered family and the kingdom-glory will have Him as its light, centre, and foundation.

But these glories prepare us for other names and other titles, and as the Acts and Epistles unfold these varied glories and dignities, they speak of Him accordingly; hence the name "Jesus" alone is seldom used. The first twelve chapters of the Acts have, through the ministry of Peter and others, as their great burden, the filling of Judea and Jerusalem with the glory of Jesus (chap. v. 28), and not only so, but "therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (chap. ii. 36). Chap. i., the testimony is to the return of Jesus; chap. ii., the testimony is to the resurrection and ascension-glory of Jesus; chap. iii., the testimony is to the power of the name of Jesus; chap. iv., the testimony is to the power of suffering for, and the practical exhibition of the grace of Jesus; chap. v., the testimony to Jesus so energetic that the religious leaders of the people are utterly confounded; chaps. vi., vii., the closing testimony to Israel that their rejected Messiah—glorified and standing at the right hand of God—will yet return, if Israel will only say, "Come." This is met by the violent death of Stephen, who is sent to heaven after his Master with the insulting message, "We will not have this man to reign over us." Thus other glories are opened to us; other dignities will be worn by

Him—glories won and dignities obtained through that wondrous pathway—death and resurrection.

11. Christ.

This official designation is usually written in the Gospels with the article prefixed, thus, "*the* Christ." Our otherwise excellent version of the New Testament fails in numerous instances in conveying the title as found in the Greek, the article being seldom given in English: this is to be regretted, because thereby a vital part of the testimony of the Lord to the Jews is somewhat obscured. The omission of the article is therefore important. The Messiah*—so largely spoken of in the Old Testament writings, and with which the Jews were so familiar—had now come, and was presented for their acceptance. Jesus *the* Christ offered Himself to Israel as the Saviour from their sins, and Deliverer from Gentile domination; but Israel knew not the day of her gracious visitation, so contrary was He to all expectations, although Psalms xxii., lxix., and Isaiah liii. might have prepared them for the reception in suffering of the Lowly One. They rejected His messianic claims. As to His moral glory displayed in His person and ways, their hearts and minds were blinded. Consequent upon His full and final rejection as King of Zion, and as *the* Christ who would have built up Zion in her glory, God is not pressing in *meantime* the Jewish claims of His beloved Son, but will make these claims good in a day that is fast approaching; then it will not be contingent on Jewish or Gentile responsibility, but God will work in the absoluteness of His power for the glory of His Son, whether as *the* Messiah in Judea, or in His wider title as Son of Man in the earth. Now our position, portion, and blessings are found in Israel's rejected One, crowned and glorified in heaven. Christ's *new* place as risen and glorified determines ours, hence in the Acts and Epistles, where our place is fully developed, "Christ" is rarely written with the article prefixed. In the Gospels, as we have seen, it is an official title; in the Epistles it is used as defining our position before God. We are in "Christ," who, raised from the dead, has been set over all the works of God's hands. What a wondrous place we are set in! What an amazing blessing! Saints individually are said to be "*in*" Christ, Eph. i. 3-6; corporately, as the Church, we are united with Him in His life, blessedness, glory, and future dominion over all things.

* Messiah (Hebrew) and Christ (Greek) both mean "anointed," as in Psalm ii. 2.

"*The Christ*" is thus rarely met with in the Epistles, it is generally "*Christ*;" the former expressing Jewish hopes and blessing; the latter defines Christian peace, blessing, and responsibility.

In 2 Cor. xii., Paul says, "I knew a man *in Christ*." We are not as to position and standing before God in the first man, Adam, and we ought not to be according to life and practical ways. God has disowned the first man and brought in the second. Christ before God is the root and source of life, and *new* responsibility to all in the new creation; it is founded upon Him. Thus every living soul is either in Adam of old-creation headship, or in Christ of new-creation headship. Standing and responsibility are found in, and flow from connection with Adam and Christ. But should I die, Is my position before God in the least affected? Nay, my responsibility to walk according to my standing in Christ is of course over; but the position itself is a *settled one*, death cannot touch it, it is unassailable by all the power of the enemy: thus the "*dead in Christ*" will rise to be conformed to the image of God's Son. 2 Cor. xii. 2, with Eph. i. 3, show the saints alive on earth, as to their standing before God in Christ; while 1 Thess. iv. 16, with 1 Cor. xv., show that those who may die do not thereby forfeit their position before God "*in Christ*."

In Acts ii. 36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and *Christ*,"—not "*the Christ*" that He was *on* earth, but Christ the exalted One. I connect my responsibility with Him as Lord, which is a title of authority. I connect my position with Him as Christ.

12. Lord.

The leading thought in the use of this word is "*authority*," and that in all matters concerning the Christian. If I have a fixed position "*in Christ*," I have corresponding duties and responsibilities, and these are in reference to the "*Lord*." There are shades of meaning in the different words, which our translators have failed to give us, having invariably used the word "*Lord*," although it is represented by several words in the Septuagint, or Greek version of the Old Testament. The Lordship of Christ is connected with the closest and tenderest relationships of life; thus, marry "*only in the Lord*" does not imply that I am free to marry any one "*in Christ*" that is a Christian merely, but if, in obedience

to the Lord and in the practical recognition of His authority, I am separated from an unholy association, I dare not re-enter that community, and take from it one who even may be a Christian. "In the *Lord*" settles that and such like questions. All natural relationships are to be regulated according to the Lord—what is due to Him, Eph. vi. 1-10; Col. iii. 18-iv. 1. The Lordship of Christ in the Christian assembly (1 Cor. xii. 3, 5) as to spiritual manifestations and gifts, and in particular with that which is the figure of the Church's unity—"the *one* bread," or "loaf," is strongly insisted upon, 1 Cor. x., xi.; in the latter chapter the title is used eight times in direct and solemn reference to the Lord's Supper. It is a title also expressive of absolute and universal proprietorship, (compare Matt. xiii. 44, 38 with 2 Peter ii., Jude 8.) Christ, as man, has been *made* Lord and Christ. Jehovah he ever *was*, but as Man, a^l things put under His feet, He has been *made* Lord. All Christian responsibility is connected with this divine title.

13. Jesus Christ.

This double title is found eight times in 1st Peter, and once in his 2nd Epistle. In every instance it is used with striking and remarkable precision. Jesus, the lowly humbled Man on earth, is now the glorified Man on high. The thought is from what He *was* to what He *is*. Thus the title as used connects His shame and His glory. His sufferings and His glories are thus linked together. Such seems, to me, the general idea in the divine order of the words "Jesus Christ."

14. Christ Jesus.

John in his Epistle and Revelations, and Jude in his short Catholic letter, speak of "*Jesus Christ*," but not once "*Christ Jesus*." Peter writes "*Christ Jesus*" twice, and that in his 2nd Epistle. Paul rarely says "*Jesus Christ*," his favourite title being "*Christ Jesus*." The glories of these divine titles are interestingly traced in the writings of the apostles Paul, Peter, and John. It is plain from Scripture, and experience fully proves the truth of it, that the character of a man's conversion is distinctly reflected in his walk, testimony, and service. This, again, largely determines his future in the system of glory. Paul's conversion is recorded Acts ix.; Peter's in Luke v.; and John's in his gospel, chap. i. The manner and character of these conversions are as different as possible. Peter, attracted by the *grace* and con-

victed of sin by the display of the *power* of Jesus, got attached to an earthly Messiah, following Him in His ministry amongst the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and conformed to his master even in death.* The pointed preaching, by Peter, of Jesus risen and exalted, and that through His name remission of sins was to be had, was quite in keeping with the scene in Luke v. Jesus on earth filled the eyes and heart of Peter by the wondrous display of power—the gift of the miraculous draught of fishes; so Jesus exalted and ministering forgiveness of sins was the “gift” received consequent upon his *new* position. Benefits received from Jesus on earth (Luke v.), from the same Jesus risen and glorified (Acts ii. 38), and from the coming Jesus—revealed in His glory (1 Peter i. 13), seems to me a characteristic feature of the ministry of the Jewish apostle. Paul’s first acquaintance with the man “Christ Jesus” in the glory—with Christ as Man risen up out of the dead, Head over all things to the assembly, and *to* whom and *with* whom saints are eternally united—formed the life and became the grand and distinguishing feature of Paul’s ministry. John was converted to the *person* of the Lord—the Son in the bosom of the Father and displayed before men, in the infinite perfection of His ways as “Son of the Father” and “Lamb of God.” Now, let us sum up their testimonies to the Lord. Peter, knowing Jesus on earth, speaks of Him as “*Jesus Christ*”; Paul, knowing Christ in glory, speaks of Him as “*Christ Jesus*”; John knowing the Son in the bosom of the Father, speaks of Him as the Son who *is* “*Jesus Christ*.” Thus these blessed titles are used in exact correspondence with the ministry received, and which again is reflected from the character of conversion of each apostle. Individuality is stamped across the blessed pages of inspiration, as it is also in the ministries exercised in the Church of God.

15. The Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the full written title of the Lord. It will be found in the introduction to the Pauline Epistles, save in that of the Hebrews and 2nd Timothy. It is not once used in John’s three Epistles; in fact the word “Lord” does not occur at all in these letters. If the thoughts we have given under each title are connected, the scriptural idea of this fullest of all the titles of the Lord will be easily seen.

* We are told that Peter was crucified, and at his own request as unworthy to die like his Master, with his head downward.

May the Lord Himself give grace to hold in divine power those blessed unfoldings of the truth as developed in the various names and titles of the Lord!

16. Son of God.

This divine title is one of personal glory. It is only fully unfolded in John's writings. If Paul tells us of *heavenly* secrets, John tells us of *divine* mysteries. Peter speaks to us of the glory and grace of the Risen One in connection with Judah in her land and in her dispersion; James writes to the scattered twelve tribes, gathering in groups in their synagogues, and presents the glory of Jesus Christ as the grand regulating power in their assemblies; Paul unfolds the glories of the Risen Man in connection with creation and the Church; John discloses a deeper glory than that which bears upon Judah, Israel, creation, or the Church, even the full, divine, and personal glory of Jesus Christ—Son of God—Son of the Father. "Son of *God*" is His title of personal *dignity*—a title and place which were His in all eternity. "Son of the *Father*" is the blessed expression of the intimate *fellowship* between the Father and the Son in the eternal ages that are past; while "the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father" declares the depth and tenderness of the divine love—ever abiding between the Father and the Son. We have Son of God in His dignity and glory; Son of the Father in closest and eternal relationship; and "*only* begotten Son in the bosom of the Father," *alone* in the knowledge of the secrets and love of the divine bosom. What wonders are unfolded in the title "*Son*"—dignity, relationship, and love! The title "Son" is His by *inherent* right, ours by *adoption*. Could we speak of having inherent Sonship? Surely not. John i. 12 settles *that* point.

Luke connects the Sonship of Jesus with the *incarnation* (chap. i. 35); Matthew with the calling out from Egypt (chap. ii. 15); Mark from the public ministry of the Lord (chap. i. 1); but John traces the Sonship of Jesus Christ before time began. It is not a correct phrase, "Son *from* eternity;" "from" gives you date, "Son *in* eternity" gives you none. Eternity, Personality, Deity, Divine Equality, and Creatorship are ascribed to Him who is the "Word," the "Son," and that in the brief compass of 42 words (John i. 1-3). We see the Son of God with the *sinner* in the Gospel; we have the Son of the Father with the *saint* in

the Epistle. We have no date or epoch as a start in the Gospel; we have date and an epoch distinctly marked in the Epistle; “*in the beginning*” is the Gospel; “*from the beginning*” is the Epistle. The fullest and most magnificent title—because a distinctly moral and personal one—is that of Son of God—“Son of the *living* God;” and it is upon the glory of His person divinely revealed that Christ builds His assembly. This grand and divine title is neither official nor dispensational. Paul, in accordance with his double ministry (Col. i. 23-26), “*straightway*” preached Jesus that He is the Son of God (Acts ix. 20). The divine glory of His person forms the ground of all his Gospel and Church testimony. The divine glory of the Son is needed for Church foundation, Church blessing, and Church glory,—*this* is the great subject of the Pauline Epistles; the divine glory of the Son for the gathering, blessing, character, and moral likeness of the family in the Father’s House, are the themes of John, who himself knew something of the intimacies of the divine bosom.

Thou art the everlasting Word,
 The Father’s only Son;
 God manifest, God seen and heard,
 The Heaven’s beloved one.
 Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou
 That every knee to Thee should bow.

17. Son of Man.

This title is used of Ezekiel upwards of 100 times, and of Daniel thrice. It is never applied by others to the Lord Jesus; He always uses it of Himself. It seems to have been a title He peculiarly delighted in. It occurs but once in the Epistles, and that as a quotation from Psalm viii. (Heb. ii. 6.) In *eternity* alone with the Father, His delights were with the sons of men, and in *time* He took the title expressive of this delight upwards of 60 times. Like the two Old Testament prophets referred to, who found their sphere of ministry outside Israel owned and recognized of God, Jesus takes this title consequent upon His rejection as “The Christ” by Israel. Thus the narrow limits of Judaism are overstepped, and instead of a glory filling merely Immanuel’s land, the scene widens, and the dominion of the Son of Man embraces the heavens and the earth, and instead of a glory skirting the coasts of Judea, the *whole* earth becomes lightened with His glory. Universal dominion and univer-

sal sovereignty are glories hanging upon this interesting title. The judgment of man, as also the authority to execute that judgment, are Son-of-Man glories. (John v.) Life and power to communicate that life, are referred to His divine title "Son of God." (John v.) Rejected as the King of Zion. (Psalm ii.) We are given the feelings of the remnant of Israel in Psalm iii.-vii., and viii. : the glory widens far beyond the confines of Israel ; the whole earth, yea, the universe is embraced in the dominion of the Son of Man.

18. Son of David.

This Judaic title is necessarily a dispensational one, connecting itself with royalty and blessing within the circumscribed limits of Judea.

Son of God is a *divine* title ; Son of Man an *earthly* title (not of course as to its source, but as to its *sphere*) ; Son of David a *Judaic* title.

We will now briefly sum up these titles in their order as given :—

1. *God* (Elohim)—Creation power and glory.
2. *God* (Eloah)—Only Living and True God.
3. *LORD GOD*—Creator relationships.
4. *LORD* or *Jehovah*—Moral relationship.
5. *Almighty God*—Almighty in grace to the saint and in wrath to the world.
6. *Most High God*—Millennial title.
7. *Lord of all the Earth*—Proprietorship over the earth.
8. *God of Heaven*—Providential government on earth.
9. *Father*—Title of God's relationship with Christians.
10. *Jesus*—The personal name of the Lord.
11. *Christ*—The exalted one ; our standing.
12. *Lord*—Power and authority.
13. *Jesus Christ*—The humbled One exalted.
14. *Christ Jesus*—The glorified One, once humbled.
15. *The Lord Jesus Christ*—The full title of the Lord.
16. *Son of God*—Divine title of personal glory.
17. *Son of Man*—Title of earthly glory.
18. *Son of David*—Title of Judaic glory.

May the Lord grant an abundant blessing upon these meditations—such a blessing as will bear fruit to His glory and present profit to His people !

W. S.

MEDITATIONS ON THE ROMANS.

CHAPTER III.

In consequence of what has been said above, the question naturally is raised, "What advantage then has the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?" (*v.* 1). The answer to this question we find in verse 2. Their advantage consisted first in this, that they possessed the oracles of God. (The remaining advantages are summed up afterwards in chapter ix.)

The apostle then puts forth a second question in verse 3, which also might be asked of believers of the Jews, namely, whether through the unbelief of some, the faithfulness of God be without effect with regard to the oracles? The apostle replies, "God forbid!" The faithfulness of God can be altered by nothing; yea, rather through the unfaithfulness of man it will be placed still more clearly in the light. How much soever every man may prove himself a liar, yet God abides the faithful One, Who—if any reason with Him—will stand justified in all His words, and overcome as conqueror in every sentence (*v.* 4). But He remains as faithful in His threatenings as in His promises; and if Israel has rejected Him, it also must experience His judgment. However great their advantages might have been, yet it did not in the least diminish the claims of the justice of God. The unrighteousness of the Jews indeed glorifies the unfailing faithfulness of God, but it was of no profit to the mass of the people (*v.* 5). God punishes unbelievers according to what they are, and God can judge nobody otherwise, not even the world (the judgment of which was desired by the Jews): there the condition of the world elevates the faithfulness of God towards His people (*v.* 6). How foolish therefore would it be to think, that God must not punish the sinner, but rather reward him, because that through his lie the truthfulness of God is placed more in the light! What an inconsistent thought! as though the good consequences of a transgression, relieving from the well-deserved punishment, ought necessarily to establish this bad principle of which believers have been accused, "Let us do evil that good may come." But all who think and do such, will heap up to themselves a just sentence (*vs.* 7, 8).

If now the Jews had any advantages, were they therefore better? Had they any superiority? None whatever; for

all were condemned under sin, Jews as well as Gentiles, as has been proved already (*v.* 9). This the Jews did not deny in reference to the Gentiles, but only with regard to themselves. And therefore the apostle quotes several passages from the Old Testament, which clearly prove that they are included under this judgment (*vs.* 10-18). Exactly those oracles of God, the depositing of which with Israel was one of their greatest advantages, declared in a very sublime manner, that the Jews were also under sin and judgment. They themselves maintained, yea, boasted that the law belonged to them, and that it was given to them; and if it were so, then to them applied the terrible description of their internal and external condition as well, and the solemn declaration of God, that not a righteous one was to be found among them (*v.* 10). In the Psalms and Prophets they saw their own sad picture drawn, most distinctly in the passages quoted, Psalm xiv. 1-3, and Isaiah liv. 7, 8. In verse 19 then the apostle adds to these solemn deprecatory oracles of the Old Testament the words, "But we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." Jews and Gentiles stand guilty before God. No man will be justified before Him by the works of the law (*v.* 20); then those who had the law had become more guilty through the transgression of it. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." It puts them more fully in the light, and shows their true character; but it neither gives power against the evil, nor justification from it.

Hitherto the apostle has proved that all men—Jews as well as Gentiles—are guilty before God, void of all righteousness, and now he describes the way, by which all can come to God. The gospel unveils the riches of grace and the righteousness of God—a righteousness which is apart from all law, and which is proclaimed to bless lost man. "Now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets" (verse 21). This righteousness is a new and independent matter, altogether outside the law, though the law and the prophets witness to it. It is the only foundation of our hope before God; it is "the righteousness of God by faith in Jesus Christ" (verse 2). Man has neither accomplished this righteousness nor has he exhibited it; it is of God and is the righteousness of God Himself. Were the righteousness, by

which man is justified, of man, then it would be through the law, because the law represents the rule of a human righteousness before God; but then it would be only for the Jew, because they alone had the law given to them. But now this righteousness is of God; it stands in equal reference to all, be they Jews or Gentiles. It is common in its character as in its application; it is the righteousness of God for man, because man has no righteousness before God. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (verse 23), that is, they are in want of all that belongs to God. Now this divine righteousness is given to every believer; the believer only possesses it. It is brought nigh unto all; it is offered to all, but it is effectual only upon those who believe on Jesus Christ (verses 22, 23). And these have nothing to do, but "are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God has set forth, a propitiation through faith in His blood" (verses 24, 25).

Therefore it is God who justifies man, and the reason of this justification is His free gift alone. He justifies in the power of His own grace, on the ground of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. In the person of Christ God has set forth the true mercy seat. In the old covenant the high priest carried the blood into the sanctuary, *once* every year, and sprinkled it upon the mercy seat, for the sins of the people, according to the commandment of God. In the New Testament Christ is the sacrifice for our sins, in Him all former sacrifices find their realization. He is the sacrifice as well as the one that offers; He is the High Priest who brought his own blood into the sanctuary, as also the mercy seat set forth of God. Through His blood perfect satisfaction has been given. God can now deal with us in perfect grace, because He has put upon Him our guilt and has delivered Him to death in our stead; He can justify all who believe on the blood of Christ.

When God, through His forbearance, has passed by sin committed formerly, by sins of the Old Testament saints, so His righteousness through this forbearance in the passing by of sins, committed in times past, is perfectly justified by the setting forth of this mercy seat (verse 25). But even so His present righteousness in the justification of lost sinners is evinced in this mercy seat. It proves that God is just, in that it presents a perfect satisfaction because of sin, and it further proves that God is a justifier, in that He now justi-

fies him who believeth in Jesus (verse 26). This justification is therefore now a proof of the righteousness of God.

Now the justification of the sinner, which issues from the mercy seat and is founded alone upon the blood of Jesus Christ, leaves no more for man to boast in. It lies altogether beyond him, in Christ alone, and is in free grace imputed to the believer. All national advantages of the Jews, with reference to justification, have lost their value before God. All self-justification, that is so fond of boasting in itself, vanishes here. Yet it is not by a law of works, that this boasting is excluded—thus man, that could justify himself by his works, would have something to boast in—but it is through the law, or the principle of faith. Under this divine principle we all are placed; then the works of another make us, without the works of the law, through grace, partakers of the righteousness of God (verses 27, 28). All men are sinners, but God acts in grace. But in this character He is not less a God of the Gentiles than of the Jews (verse 29). It is one and the same God, who justifies the circumcision upon the *principle* of faith—in contrast to the law of works—and the uncircumcision *through* faith—as the only remedy (verse 30). The justification of man therefore stands in connection with faith only; the man that believeth is justified.

But the authority of the law is in no wise made void or weakened through this doctrine of the faith, but rather establishes it (verse 31). It fully owns the entire deserving of condemnations of man through the law, and supposes therefore his lost condition. The law claims righteousness, but it gives none, but it brings, as we have just now seen, the knowledge of sin. If now the righteousness, claimed by the law, would not have been necessary before God, when it failed, then also the want of another righteousness would not have existed. But faith acknowledges the necessity of a righteousness before God, and therefore another righteousness, the righteousness of God, is given to the believer. God cannot weaken the principle of duty towards the law by which man is utterly condemned, but because He acknowledges the right of this condemnation, He now glorifies His grace in that He gives a righteousness to man; but this He did only then, when it was quite evident that man had none. Faith, therefore, does not make void the law, but establishes it.

LETTERS OF INTEREST, &c.

I.

“You are right in anticipating the advance of Popery I am sure. The woman is still to ride the beast. Her day of supremacy may be short, and she will have to yield to the *civil* apostate or the Antichrist, but she is appointed to have a day, and we live in the opening of it.

“Let our trumpet give a certain sound in the ears of the saints, while it ceases not to sound an alarm in the conscience of the world around. But, beloved, the *purity* of the *house*, and the unspottedness of the *Lamb on the table*, are not to be surrendered to the desire for larger fellowship. I can wish the labour of others good luck with all my heart. I could wish souls converted at —— through the preached word, but I could not sit at a table, the company around which have published a letter which in *principle* says, the Person of Christ is not secured from dishonour there.”

II.

“We must be calm and firm in holding the mysteries of God in this relaxed day of the *human mind* which makes itself the measure.

“I have in Scripture the *light* that is above me, that I cannot *approach*, but in the presence of which I worship. (1 Timothy vi.)

“I *hate* the effort that would *unclothe* the revelation of God, and lay it naked and bare, that human intellect may run rough across it as its own native territory.”

III.

“I suppose your thought on David and Ziklag is quite correct. He encouraged himself in the Lord his God (1 Sam. xxx. 6), we are told—and very much of the same simple, single heart that animated him in the day of Goliath, revives in him here. And the decree that he made, so savouring of *grace* shows this, for I suppose we never more generously act in the largeness and liberty of grace, than when our assurance in God is full and fervent in the soul. (See chap. xxx. 25.)

“I believe the Lord allowed Ziklag to be burnt as discipline for David, because of his conduct in chap. xxvii. 8-12.”

SOME THOUGHTS ON JOHN'S GOSPEL.

CHAPTER XX.

THIS Mary Magdalene is the same who had been possessed with seven devils. She comes to the sepulchre very early, "while it was yet dark." On the previous day, which was the Sabbath, the women had done nothing. Mary Magdalene was the first of them all who came to the sepulchre. She, as well as the other women and the disciples, shows that she did not at all believe the words of the Lord, seeing that she came to look for the Living One among the dead; but her heart was sincere and full of affection to Him, and when this is the case, the Lord pardons much ignorance. The disciples find everything in the sepulchre in perfect order; this was a proof of the calmness with which the Lord had triumphed over death, and it was a proof that beyond doubt it was impossible that robbers had taken away His body, the linen cloths and the napkin being folded up apart. It is said that Peter and John when they *saw*, believed. They knew not the Scripture that said, "He must rise again," nor the words of God that had spoken to them of this.

Theirs was not divine faith that believes without having seen, simply because the word of God says so. They should have believed without coming to see; because the Lord had said He would rise again the third day. This faith of theirs founded upon sight had no other effect than of making them return to their own home. It was in truth a difficult thing for one to believe that a man would rise again—it was the first case of a man rising of himself. Others had been raised by Jesus, but of himself alone no man could rise again, except the Lord Jesus.

At verse 10 we have the fact that the disciples returned to their own home. They had seen and that satisfied them; they could return to their temporal affairs. There was not in them a deep need of Jesus—of having Him. Quite different was the case with Mary; for her, all the world without Jesus was an empty sepulchre. She sought Him, and she found Him; thus too, all who seek Him find Him. The great thing is that Jesus possesses the heart. The disciples loved Him, they had followed Him, but Jesus was not *everything* to their hearts. And consequently it is no marvel, if God chose Mary to be the instrument of revealing the highest privileges of the saints. And so it is always.

Mary Magdalene wept because she had not Christ—without Him she had nothing, she was unhappy. She was very ignorant, therefore she said: “They have taken away my Lord.” If He was the Lord, how could He be taken away? by whom? She thought she had a right to His body, and she says: “Tell me where thou hast laid him and I will take him away,” because she loved Him deeply.

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

SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

Q.—He who taught His disciples to suffer patiently, and not to resist evil, and that he who took the sword would perish by the sword (Matt. xxvi. 52), said also that “He that hath no sword” was to “sell his garment and buy one” (Luke xxii. 36). Why this apparent difference, and in the same period of His ministry?

A.—The passage in Luke was specially applicable to “the hour,” *i.e.*, the period inclusive from the Last Supper until the death on the cross. Before this He had claimed all for His followers as the Messiah in power, and yet in lowly grace. (See Luke ix. 3.) To this experimental knowledge of His care and power He appeals (chapter xxii. 35), using that word “Lacked ye anything,” which calls to mind so beautifully the passage in 1 Kings iv. 27, when, under Solomon’s reign, his subjects “lacked nothing.” This was touchingly known by those who followed a greater than Solomon. In v. 36 He announces the solemn change that was coming, because of the “hour” on which He was then about to enter. He says, as it were:—Now all my intervention thus on your behalf must cease. Those displays of my power to your hearts must now be suspended; I go to face the powers of evil—to drink the cup. Now you must shift for yourselves. “*For* this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned amongst the transgressors,” &c. To those who listened it was but a literal direction about selling a garment and buying a sword. His words were far above their ken; and the secret thoughts of their hearts were betrayed, as well as the secret preparations for carnal strife they had concealed in their robes. They answer Him, “Lord, behold, here are two swords.” His reply shows that He felt and knew that His words

were beyond them, and He utters "It is enough"—you cannot hear my words or understand me now. It is not a literal meaning my words imply, as that which you attach to them (*cf.* John xxi. 22, 23).

The other passage, Matthew xxvi., &c., is the sequel to, and result of their carnal thoughts. One of them smites with the sword outright. His carnal zeal, still undiscerning of the Spirit's mind, leads him in act beyond the thoughts of those who, without understanding, say, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" The Lord then pronounces the word which is characteristic of the new Christian place of passive, unresisting grace—"All they that take sword shall perish with the sword." Since it came in (the Christian place), it is as inconsistent and anomalous to see a sword by a Christian's side as it would be to see a soldier of the Queen's army fighting against the Queen in the ranks of her foe. The Christian's weapons are not "carnal," though "mighty" in another way. There have been Christian soldiers who knew not the heavenly calling of a Christian, and they have perished with the sword and gone to heaven. This latter is *His* grace. But they knew no better, let us say, in the same grace. If they had, the sword would have been too heavy for a conscience that walked in the light with God in heaven, and heavier each day till it was thrown aside; or, alas! what has happened, I daresay, at times, worn by an exercised conscience, with the Spirit grieved, until the Spirit ceased to strive and the conscience felt no more!

 REST.

"Come unto Me and rest,"
 Jesus, the Saviour, cried;
 Come, all by sin and guilt opprest,
 He has for sinners died.

"Come unto me and rest,
 All ye that labour come;"
 Come to His gentle, loving breast,
 The contrite sinner's home.

Come, with your heavy load
 Of unforgiven sin;
 Come, trust His rich, atoning blood,
 Which makes the guilty clean.

His yoke is easy—come,
 His burden light to bear;
 Come, and from Him no longer roam,
 Rest, for the soul is there.

AARON AND HIS SONS.

(LEVITICUS VIII.)

THE characteristic place from which Jehovah spake to Moses for Israel, in the Books of Leviticus and Numbers, has been remarked by others. In the former, He spake from the tabernacle of the congregation, giving directions how He was to be approached who dwelt there; in the latter, from the wilderness of Sinai, to instruct a people passing through a wilderness themselves.

Let us look for a moment at the moral significance of this, rather than at the historic and suited fact of His having done so.

In Genesis, when God had created the world, and pronounced it "very good," He came down and spake in the garden of Eden, where He walked in the cool of the day, to hold familiar intercourse with His creature—man. But man had revolted from his Creator, and the blessed intercourse of God with him is over, on the ground of innocence; and while God drove him out of the garden, He Himself retired from the garden, never more to hold intercourse with man on this ground again.

In Exodus, when He had redeemed a people out of the nations, He bare them on eagle's wings to bring them to Himself as a peculiar possession; He proposed terms of relationship between Himself and them in the Law. And when these terms were accepted in principle, He descended upon Mount Sinai—not now to the garden of Eden—and, amidst the terribleness of that sight, gave forth the just rule of conduct for man—the sinner, with regard to Him and with his neighbour. Again, as we know the proposed relations as broken up, man having revolted still more from God.

When we open Leviticus we find that it is no more from the garden of Eden God speaks, nor from the mountain where He had surrounded Himself with blackness and darkness and tempest, but He has, as it were, retired into His own resources, to His own fit dwelling-place in light, and there, from the Shekinah of glory, reminding us of the inaccessible light in which He dwells, He proposes, not now that He should approach man as innocent, nor man a sinner, in relations suited to these respective conditions, but that man, a sinner, may come, and come with welcome into His

blessed presence in light ; but when this is so, unfoldings of the perfections of His blessed Son irradiate the scene, and fill to overflowing the heart of him who finds that he cannot come to God without finding Christ there! Christ, too, in His varied loveliness, whether in life or in death, is presented to the soul of him who comes, that he may be filled with joy, and comforted and refreshed by that which also fills the heart of God. Step by step God had retired from the scene, until in Leviticus He has gone back into Himself, so to speak ; but if so we find that Christ occupies the whole scene, to the satisfaction both of God Himself, and the one who has come to Him.

I need hardly say that I speak now of Leviticus as read in the light of the New Testament, when the way into the holiest is made manifest, through the veil being rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

God speaks, then, from "inaccessible light," yet He speaks of Christ, and in such a way as leaves the conscience at rest, and the soul free to delight itself in Him who is invisible, and who, while He reveals Himself, lays bare the heart of him who approaches Him, and yet cleanses the conscience, and constitutes him a worshipper ; worship becomes the spontaneous outflow of his soul.

But while the foreground (chapters i.-vii) of Leviticus is exclusively occupied with Christ, whether in His own person, or the manner of the use of Him by the worshipper, we find that which has ever occupied God's heart and counsels before us at once in chapter viii. For God has had counsels and purposes before the world was, for His own glory ; and we find unfolded the intentions of His Son becoming a man, and of His associating man, and the sons of men, in whom was His delight, with His Son in eternal blessedness and in His supremacy over all the works of God's hands.

We find this thought entering much into the texture of Leviticus viii. so as to lead to the question, Why are the Sons of Aaron clothed before the sin-offering is applied to them? We frequently find in the Scriptures the knitting together of the purposes of God about His elect before the world was, with the cleansing of them by the blessed work of Christ on the cross, looking upon them as sinners needing redemption. In other words, the blessed association and identification of Christ and His people—as brought into the same place of blessing with Himself according to God's

intentions. And yet while perfect identity is theirs with Him, we shall always find that they are the redeemed while He is the Redeemer; they the sanctified while He is the Sanctifier, and so on. His divine place is preserved; while the highest blessings which they receive only prove the superiority of the Blessor who is the source of them.

It is remarkable the contrast and yet the complement—the one to the other which Leviticus viii. is with Leviticus xvi. The latter chapter is connected in the mind of the Spirit with the former, in the opening verse, which as it were, gives a basis or occasion for God to unfold the provisions of chapter xvi. The sons of Aaron are, with Himself, clothed in chapter viii. Failure then ensues, and chapter xvi. opens with a reference to this failure. This connects them both.

In one chapter (viii.) we find that Moses was to take Aaron and his sons, the anointing oil, the bullock for a sin-offering, two rams for the burnt-offering and consecrations, with the basket of unleavened bread. All were thus prepared when the ceremony of the day began. And first we find that all—both Aaron and his sons—were “washed with water.” The same “word” which sanctified the Lord, and sent Him into the world (John x. 36) has set His people apart, and sent them into the world—sent into it because they were not of it. You could not send into it one who was of it in any wise. But those who are set apart by the Eternal Word of God, are sent into it when redeemed, as He was sent into it in virtue of who He was. The Father sanctifies the Son—sets Him apart and sends Him into the world. The Son sanctifies Himself when His work is done, and goes on high, in order that those whom the Father has sanctified and He has sent into the world, may be “truly sanctified” according to the pattern of Him, until they also go on high.

But when it becomes a question of Aaron's official place, there he is alone. The coat and the girdle, the robe and the ephod, with its curious girdle; the breast-plate also, with the Urim and Thummim; the mitre and its plate, and the holy crown—all these were put upon Aaron, and in this he stood alone. Jesus might be clothed and honoured, He might be set in the place purposed for and suited to Him; but no need had He of blood being shed. He is robed and clothed with priestly glory in virtue of His own

sacred person and its perfection, as answering to all the mind of God as Man and Mediator, and being the display and disclosure of it as Son.

But mark well. His sons do not come at once into further association with Aaron. But Moses, who stood in God's place now anoints with the holy anointing oil the whole tabernacle and all its contents, sanctifying them. He sprinkles the altar too with oil; anoints it with its vessels, and both the laver and his foot, to sanctify them. Thus in connection with them Aaron is anointed all alone.

This is the more remarkable when we turn to chapter xvi. and find that on the great day of atonement when Aaron alone, had entered the presence of God, carrying the basin of the blood of the bullock and sprinkled it before and on the golden mercy-seat; that he then came out and sprinkled with blood the altar of incense; and with blood reconciled the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar (of brass I suppose)—these same things which he had anointed with oil in chapter viii., and this before the other goat was offered.

Thus we have two distinct things before us.

Christ as Son is "appointed Heir of all things," according to Heb. i. He will, according to God's counsels, possess all things as their true Head, in the power of the Holy Ghost—the oil. But sin having defiled the inheritance, He must take it with all its responsibilities and inherit it; not only as Heir of all things, but as Redeemer; and then follows Heb. ii. If, in chapter i., He is "Heir of all things" as Son, by God's appointment, in chapter ii. He, "by the grace of God, tastes of death for all" (*τα παντα*). If in Lev. viii. He possesses all things by the power of the Holy Ghost; in chapter xvi. He redeems all things by the virtue of His precious blood. And thus God's eternal counsels are brought to pass through the work of the cross, and will be brought to fruition when the joint-heirs are gathered together.

We have this like thought in Eph. i. There we learn that God will head up all things into Christ, in the "administration of the fulness of the times." He will take possession of God's universe as its Head—as the Second Man. *Then follows the joint-heirs and their possessions in Him, and their being gathered out by the power of God in accomplishing His counsels (chapter ii.)*

Still, in Lev. viii. it is not exactly in the condition of sinners

needing redemption that the sons of Aaron are seen. It is more the value of Christ's work in its various phases put upon them, fitting them for their official place as priests in connection with Aaron. The sin-offering and other sacrifices come in consequently *after* their investiture with their priestly robes in connection with Aaron. Thus the connection through the cross, of the counsels which associate the elect with Jesus, and their standing in the acceptance of the worth of Christ on the cross, is maintained. The sin-offering being brought, Aaron and his sons place their hands upon its head, showing the connection and identification, and yet the difference, between Him and them. For Jesus was as surely *made* sin as we *were* sin itself. He alone could be *made* what He was not. Still here there is no sprinkling of the sons with blood. It is the purifying of the altar by blood, which is poured out at its foot; and the fat and the inwards burned upon the altar. It seems to be more the identification of all with Him in the blessed act, by which the basis of God's glory was established, by which the elect were brought into positive identity with Him who chose them, and delighted in them before the world was.

So also when the "Ram of consecration" was offered, after the burnt-offering, Aaron and his sons are again together. He who acted in God's place and for Him—Moses (for it appears to be him all through here), did this with the burnt-offering. And Aaron and his sons are all anointed with the blood of consecration. So that the thoughts, actions, and walk are all put under the guardianship and value of the precious blood which He shed. How wondrously blessed! How poorly responded to by His people, is this place of blessing; yet how true it all is!

Then the meat-offering and the basket of consecrations—the unleavened cake and oiled bread are all placed upon and received from off Aaron's and his son's hands (*vv.* 27, 28). Thus we learn in type what is taught in doctrine in Eph. v. 1, 2, that the elect who have been redeemed are to "Be therefore imitators of God as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us, an offering (meat-offering) and a sacrifice (peace offering) to God for a sweet smelling savour." "An odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice (peace offering) acceptable, well-pleasing to God" (Phil. iv. 18).

After the anointing of Aaron and his sons, and his gar-

ments, and his sons' garments with him, the Holy Ghost thus sealing and constituting all the priestly family, high priest and priests, in their persons and circumstances as one (*vv.* 30-36), they are shut up for the seven days of their consecration, to feed upon the consecrations, and "keep the charge of the Lord," until the eighth day of glory (chapter ix.) comes, when the Lord will reveal Himself to *Israel*, and His glory appear to His earthly people, and they will fall on their faces in repentance and adoration of Jesus—their Jehovah-Messiah.—ED.

MEDITATIONS ON THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM chapter i. 18, to chapter iii. 20, the apostle has unfolded the sad condition of man—be he Jew or Gentile—and from thence to the end of chapter iii. presented the blood of Jesus as the only and perfectly satisfying answer to this state, in that he rejects all justification by works of the law. If now the Jew, through what has been said hitherto, was not sufficiently convinced, that man can only be justified before God by faith, so was there still another fact of greater weight for him, namely, that Abraham was called of God to be the father of all believers; and, in truth, those thoughts about the law in no wise touched the question of promises made to Abraham.

The apostle, therefore, here applies the doctrine of justification by faith to Abraham, in that he first puts forth most determinedly the doctrine itself (verses 1-8), and then assigns the right place (verses 9-16) to the character and extension of privileges, and blessings of Abraham, in which the Jews rightly beheld the root of their national prerogative. At the close of this chapter he discloses the new position which the resurrection gives us (verses 17-25). We receive in Christ Jesus both righteousness and life, and, therefore, also holiness in life cannot be separated from justification by faith. There are, therefore, especially three thoughts which are unfolded in this chapter:—

1. Abraham believed God.
2. Abraham entered into the blessings of faith, when he was yet uncircumcised; and
3. His faith embraced the power and the life of the resurrection.

“What shall we say, then, that Abraham, our father, as pertaining to the flesh has found?” (verse 1.) The contents of the whole chapter give a complete answer to this question. Abraham obtained righteousness, as well as the promise that he should be the heir of the world, upon the principle of faith, and not by deeds of the law; “For if Abraham has been justified on the principle of works, he has whereof to boast, but not before God” (verse 2). Man would have praised Abraham, justified by works, but God, with His gift of grace, would only meet *believing* Abraham. Scripture says, in the 1st Book of Moses (Genesis xv. 6): “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness” (Verse 3). God spake and Abraham believed. He spoke of Himself as of the giver of the blessing, as of the God of grace, and Abraham glorified Him through his faith. But this faith was imputed to him for righteousness. When the apostle James says in his Epistle, chapter ii. 21: “Was not Abraham, our father, justified by works, when he had offered Isaac, his son, upon the altar?” speaking here of the trial of Abraham, which followed long after, he will simply expose false belief, and prove that the justifying faith of Abraham had not been a dead, but a living and effectual one. At the same time it is remarkable, that the works of faith, related by James, the work of Abraham as well as that of Rahab the harlot, had nothing whatever to do with the works of the law, but, on the contrary, were condemned by the law; for neither manslaughter nor treason were works the law would approve of. But they were the works of faith, and faith was reckoned unto them for righteousness.

The two following verses (4-5) contain general principles which prove, in the simplest and most distinct manner, that God justifies not him that *worketh*, but the one that *believeth*. Christ shed His precious blood for the ungodly, and on this ground only can God meet man, when He will bless him. He acts in perfect grace, in that He justifies the ungodly. To the one that works the reward would not be reckoned according to grace, but as of debt (verse 4). On the contrary, the one that does not work, who perceives that he is nothing else before God than a sinner, lays hold of God as the one who justifies the ungodly on the ground of the blood of Christ,—his faith is reckoned to him for righteousness (verse 5). This righteousness has nothing to do with works

of man, it flows from God Himself in perfect purity; yea, it is His own righteousness that is given to the one that believeth through free grace.

David also, who found himself under the law, speaks not of the blessedness of the doer of the law, but "of the blessedness of that man, to whom God has reckoned righteousness without works." He counts that man happy—wherever he may be—though in himself he is nothing else but a sinner, yet to whom God, acting in perfect grace, imputes not sin, but covers it, and reckons to him righteousness without works (verses 7, 8). Now, "this blessedness"—the righteousness of faith—"does it rest upon the circumcision, or also upon the uncircumcision?" (verse 9). The principle laid down is, that to Abraham his faith was counted for righteousness. Now, was Abraham circumcised when he was declared righteous? No, he was still in uncircumcision. The righteousness is therefore by faith, and therefore is reckoned to the uncircumcised on the ground of faith—a crushing witness to the Jew, who grounded all his ideas of advantages upon Abraham. This righteousness was reckoned to Abraham, not because of the circumcision, but because of faith, and this imputation took place when he was yet uncircumcised (verses 9, 10). Circumcision, therefore, was not the means of his justification, but only the seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had when yet in uncircumcision (verse 11). Abraham, therefore, is the father of all, in uncircumcision, who believe that righteousness may be also imparted to them, and is also the father of the circumcision. But it is not enough for the Jew to belong to the circumcision, but he must enter into the faith of Abraham, if he would have part in his blessings (verse 12). It is a question of true separation for God, which commenced in Abraham, in that God, amidst the evil, separated man for Himself.

The apostle proves now, that the promise made to Abraham and his seed, was precisely as little dependent on the law, as the righteousness of circumcision imputed to him by God. The promise stands only in connection with the righteousness of faith; which Abraham had already in uncircumcision (verse 13). But if those of the law were heirs of the promise, their faith would be vain, and the promise also would be annulled (verse 14), because the law works wrath and brings a curse instead of a blessing; then all who are under the law

are in the transgression of it, and have therefore to expect not the promise, but the wrath of God (verse 15). The promise as such, however, by no means annuls the question of sin; but this does not hinder God from accomplishing what He has promised. But, in accomplishing His promises because of sin, He only can act in perfect grace, and, therefore, all—be they Jews or Gentiles—can be heirs solely upon the principle of faith. “Therefore it is on the principle of faith, that it might be according to grace, that the promise might be sure to the whole seed—not only to him who is of the law, but also to him who is of the faith of Abraham” (verse 16). It is therefore faith, and not the law, which gives title to the inheritance. Even the Jews would inherit in no other way; and through the same faith the door was opened to the nations. On this wise was the word accomplished: “A father of many nations have I made thee” (Genesis xvii. 5). Grace secures the promise to all believers, whether of the law or not.

We have seen now, that Abraham, when he was still in uncircumcision, was justified—without the law, and before it was given—by faith; but upon what did his faith rest? Upon the God “who quickens the dead, and calls that which is not, as though it were” (verse 17). Apparently there existed no hope of his becoming father of many nations. His body almost an hundred years old, and the dead womb of Sarah were both against hope; but his faith against hope held fast to the power of resuscitation of God. By no other way than by the way of faith—the faith that rested upon nothing visible, but held fast, unshaken to the promises of God—was it possible, in order to become father of many nations, that so his seed should be (verses 18, 19). “He (Abraham) staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and was of full persuasion that what he had promised he was also able to perform” (verses 20, 21). Faith alone gives God the glory; but unbelief dishonours Him. Therefore, faith alone finds glory before God; it was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness (verse 22).

But this imputation of righteousness is not only here for Abraham, but for all that believe, and, therefore, also for us, “who do believe in him that raised Jesus, our Lord, from the dead” (verses 23, 24). The apostle speaks here not of faith on Jesus, but on God—on Him, who entered

in power into the region of death, in which Jesus lay, because of our sins, and raised Him up. The resurrection—be it that of Christ or His purchased ones—is the fruit of the mighty action of the love of God, who delivered Him from *under the consequences of sin*, after that He had borne our whole debt of sin, so that we, when we believe on Him, who has raised Him thus out from the dead, lay hold on the whole extent of the work, upon which the resurrection has put the seal. We apprehend the grace as well as the power, which are presented in this work. In like manner as God has acted with regard to Jesus, so has He also acted with regard to us. He has once and for ever made an end of our sins, and has in Jesus translated us who believe—justified through what He has done, because He has done it for all that believe in Him. His deliverance to death is the most perfect proof of our transgressions, and His resurrection the most complete proof of our justification (verse 25).

The resurrection, as it is presented in Christ, is not only simply a resurrection *of the dead* in general, but a resurrection *out from the dead*—the fruit of the intervention of God, in order in righteousness to deliver from the last consequences of sin (*i.e.* death), Him who has glorified God. Now, if we believe on this God, then we understand that it is He Himself who has redeemed us from all that sin has brought upon us, in that He made us alive; whereas Jesus, made sin for us, for all believers, has blotted out sin for ever. The believers of the Old Testament believed that God had the power to fulfil His promises, but we believe on Him, as the One who raised up out from the dead, Jesus, our Lord (verse 24). We believe not that He *can* do it, but that He *has* done it.

The principle of the resurrection, which we find confirmed specially in the two last verses, is now applied in chapter v. to justification; in chapter vi. to the life of the justified one; in chapter vii. to the law; and, in chapter viii. to perfect deliverance, and forms, as it were, the heading of these four chapters.

THE ANNIHILATION OF THE SOUL.

I LATELY had to say to one who had got infected with this doctrine, and like a man bewitched by a seducing spirit and a devil's doctrine, as this most assuredly is, he was alike regardless of the inconsistency of his own arguments and the direct statements of Scripture, where they opposed what he was advancing. Thankfulness for the soul-deliverance he professed to have received through this newly imbibed idea, and regardless opposition to all that could be said against it, went together in his mind, along with the entire setting aside of the plainest passages of Scripture. Yet I fully believe he thought that he was right and had the truth, as he professed to be only seeking for it, but he really was under the deadly influence of having "given heed to seducing spirits." Nothing but a distinct proof that the doctrine would do away with the person and work of Christ would satisfy him that it was wrong. It was this especially that interested me in him, for he thereby showed a regard for the foundation of the truth, and gave me hope that he was right at bottom, and would, through the Lord's mercy, be brought right altogether; therefore with the more willingness I sought him out.

He affirmed that the unbeliever perishes at his death, soul and body ceasing to be, and remaining in unconsciousness (a strange contradiction; for how could he be unconscious if he ceased to be? but this arose from a false use in his mind of the word "perish") until reunited for final judgment, when he is consigned for a limited period to a punishment in which he is finally annihilated as the penalty of his sins. First, I showed him that the Lord's account of the death of the rich man, in Luke xvi., quite disproved this, for it said that he "died and was buried, and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments," having left five unconverted brethren on earth, "and seeth Abraham afar off," to whom he prayed for some one to be sent to "testify unto them lest they also come into this place of torment." Now, at the final judgment of the wicked (Rev. xx. 11, &c.), the earth and the heaven have fled away, and the present state of things has ceased altogether, and there is no more gracious testimony to the unbeliever; so that the torments of this man, who is represented as sensible in all his faculties—his real self there—must be *before* the time he alleged for

the future consciousness of the wicked reunited soul and body, for judgment and annihilation.

But this did not meet his mind—or perhaps better, his *will*—for he said it was but a parable, and could not be literally taken. First, it is remarkable that the Lord does not say it is a parable; He tells it as a fact; but taking it as a parable, what does it teach us parabolically? Surely not that the dead lose all present consciousness till the great judgment day, but the reverse. But he was under a spell, poor fellow; he had already come to another, a fore-gone conclusion, that it either meant to teach nothing, or the annihilation of the soul; and all its power was nullified by the poison he had already imbibed.

“But besides,” I said, “you lose the person of Christ by your doctrine; for if by his constitution man is made subject to annihilation, and that this is the punishment of sin—(for the wages of sin is death; had there been no sin there would have been no death: and the Lord said to the young ruler, “This do and thou shalt live;” *i.e.* death would never overtake him)—then Christ became a man, and on the cross He became sin, and bore fully and exhaustively the punishment of sin, the judgment due to it—and if so, He must have been annihilated, His humanity gone, and gone for ever—and we have lost the Saviour and salvation, or if He did not fully bear the penalty of sin, He could not have put it away—it is still between us and God, and judgment is still before us—and our salvation thus is equally lost. He bore the judgment of sin, or He did not bear it. If He did, we have no Christ; if He did not, we have no salvation. And it is useless to say His divinity preserved His humanity from annihilation, if that were the penalty of sin—it would thus become but a cloak for sin, a shield to prevent the proper judgment of sin from having been borne, instead of being, as it is, the blessed and divine source of eternal life and salvation for us in Him, who truly bore our judgment “in his own body on the tree.”

“Well,” he said, “I confess I never thought of it in that light—I must think of it, and I will; and I will be very glad to read your book,* or any book that will give me the truth, for it is the truth I want.”

I also found that this doctrine was connected in some minds with refusing to take fermented wine at the Lord’s

* “The Doctrine of Eternal Punishment,” by J. N. D.

Supper—but one word in Scripture settles this question. In 1 Cor. xi. 20, 21, it is said, “When ye come together, therefore, into one place, this is not to eat the Lord’s Supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry and another is *drunken*,” (μεθύει). Now this word (*methuo*, or *methusko*, which is but another form of the same word), is the habitual word in Scripture for drunkenness. It is used in the Septuagint Greek translation in numberless passages in the Old Testament for drunkenness, e.g., 1 Sam. i. 13, Habakkuk ii. 15, and in the New Testament it is used in the following, amongst others:—Acts ii. 15, “These are not drunken;” 1 Cor. v. 11, “a drunkard;” and 1 Cor. vi. 10, “drunkards” (*methusos*); 1 Thess. v. 7, “are drunken in the night” (*methuousin*). So also Matt. xxiv. 49, and other passages proving beyond honest controversy that the wine used at the Lord’s Supper has this property of making drunk, and the apostle finds no fault with the wine they used, but rather with the way in which they used it.

But to my mind this is allied with the spirit of 1 Tim. iv. 1-6, and, by denying the virtue of wine rightly used in faith with thanksgiving, is to be classed distinctly amongst the “doctrines of devils,” “For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.” And it is folly to say He made the grape but not the wine; for first “meats” (βρωματα), 1 Tim., iv. 3, means “victuals” of any kind (as in Matt. xiv. 15); and on that score bread is no more the creature of God than wine. E. C.

CORRESPONDENCE.

I.

I COULD not accept the thought current with many, that only a certain number of the saints will be taken up when Christ comes for His people. In the first place, you lose the thought that it is sovereign *grace* (not righteous discriminating selection) which acts toward *all* His people alike, and on the ground of which all will be taken up to be for ever with the Lord at that hour. Scripture gives the proper attitude of the Christian as waiting for Christ, and the result to him—his being taken up to meet the Lord in the air; it never supposes aught but this normal condition being responded to by His people practically.

To do otherwise, and provide for unfaithfulness to this one hope, would be unworthy of Him. His *grace* will take *all* to be with Him then, while at His *appearing* His *righteousness* will give to one, two, and another, five, cities in answer to the conduct of each.

Another reason would be, that when His body—the Church—is completed, He will come for her (though other saints may go with Him as raised and glorified also); and when He does, He will not leave a portion of Himself—His body, the Church, behind. Probably the not seeing the distinctive place of the present interval, in which the Holy Ghost on earth since Pentecost is gathering the Church, the Bride; and when that is done, when Eliezer has brought Rebecca across the desert and Isaac comes to meet her, Eliezer turns to other service, as it were, for Isaac's glory. Now this being so, we will dismiss the thought at once that saints—members of Christ's body—will be left to go through the tribulation. *It* is the time of *Jacob's* trouble, but *he* will be delivered out of it. (Jer. vii.)

Now in Rev. vii. we find the sealed of Israel—the remnant of that nation, under the symbolic number (the multiple of 12), signifying *earthly* administrative completeness (for Israel is to have earthly supremacy and administration in the kingdom) of that people. We have also the complement of the heavenly people, or priesthood, under the figure of the twenty-four elders, and we have the Gentiles (spared from the judgments) *before* the throne, an earthly place of blessing, not *round about* the throne, which is heavenly—shown as coming out of the great tribulation for the peopling of the earth in the kingdom, and in subordinate blessing to Israel.

The parable of the ten virgins does not clash with this—the wise go in; the professor is shut out when the Lord comes. It is a similitude of the kingdom, in which profession would be; not the Church as His body. Nor does the Lord's words, "Pray that ye be counted worthy," &c., clash with this either, for at times He looks upon and instructs His disciples as the remnant who would form the nucleus of the Church begun at Pentecost; and at times He teaches them looking upon them as an elect remnant of Jews (which they were) who would represent the hopes of the *nation* of Israel. They are treated on remnant ground in Matthew xxiv., and Christian ground in xxv., just as we

have them also in this double condition in Acts ii. and iii., until Stephen's death and the destruction of Jerusalem. Then Paul comes in *quite* heavenly in his testimony. This explains the Lord's exhortations to them as occupying this duplex place.

Paul too, when running the race in personal devotedness to Christ, speaks of "If by any means I might attain," &c. Yet he *had* his heavenly place in union with Christ too (Eph. ii., &c.) It is true, on the one hand, that he was in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; and as a saint, he was on earth running the race, and looking to win Christ and be found in Him, in whom he already was. Both conditions are true of all Christians.

As to the 144,000 of Rev. xiv., it is the multiple of a perfect earthly symbolic number of the remnant of *Judah*, those of chap. vii. of *Israel* generally, the *Jewish* remnant (*Judah*) being saved in the land (see end of Zech. xii.) and the *Israel* remnant amongst the nations (Ezek. xx.)

I suppose those who never *rejected grace* will be saved (at least many of them), after the removal of the Church.

There is, no doubt, a Jewish Bride for the earth, according to Canticles, &c.

I do not think the "blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb," points to the *persons* who are blest, but to the blessing they are called to.

II.

This is the key to the greater works of John xiv. The Lord was occupied in repairing the first creation while yet it was recognized; to His disciples He entrusts the task of so ministering Him that the new man would in effect displace the old, though He does not altogether give up the healing of the old man.

At one place, R——, the Lord has of late been working remarkably in the gospel, and, I believe, solely owing to the faith of one man. It was laid on his heart, after their usual prayer meeting, to ask would any meet specially to pray once a week for the Lord to save souls, and eight volunteered. After a few weeks the Lord began to work, and when I was there about eighteen souls had been saved in five weeks, and nearly all whole families ("Thou and thy house" over again). It would delight you to have heard those men pray, as if they *expected* the Lord to answer them.

ON THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

(CHAPTER II. CONTINUED.)

AFTER chapter i. (v. 19), I get the working, the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, [not to the elect who do not believe.] It is in Him I have got it, but not in result yet. I cannot speak of the counsels of God going on. They are a perfect and complete thing in God's mind.

When will the counsels of God be complete as to you? The final result is kept before us in the chapter. I quite admit that, in a sense, it is my place before God, but it is not true of me as it will be. We must not confuse between standing and counsel. We know it is all in Christ.

What is predestination to the adoption of children? (chap. i. v. 5.) I am a son, no doubt, yet I am waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body. You are wrong in bringing in the present thing if you are interpreting the passage. It is present *and* future in one sense. In chapter ii. I am sitting in the heavenlies *in* Christ. God has put me into Christ, and in that day we shall be sitting *with* Him; that is not carried out yet. He therefore puts before us the apprehension of these things. In the second chapter I get the two characters of the Assembly. It is the *habitation* of God through the Spirit, and it is *growing* to a holy temple in the Lord. So you have the present *and* the future thing.

I believe that when you come to the habitation of God in all the earth, you get wood, hay, and stubble in. Professors are not let in here, but from other Scriptures I learn that man has corrupted what God has set up. The moment I get man's responsibility I get the wood, hay, and stubble. God set it up for the habitation of God. Man is put in responsibility and fails utterly, as always Adam in the garden of Eden. Noah, in the government after the flood, first gets drunk and cannot take care of himself; the law is given, and they make a golden calf; under the priesthood, they offer strange fire the first day; royalty set up, fails in Solomon; Nebuchadnezzar, ruling the Gentiles, sets up idolatry, and becomes a beast. I get everything as having come to nothing in man, and yet all set up in Christ in perfection in one shape or another. Here, in Ephesians, I get it as God has set it up. It is its true, proper character, but, like everything else put into man's responsibility, failed.

Chapter iii. Here I get, not what we have been remarking, God's thoughts, and God's works, but Paul's administration (*v.* 2); that is the character of the third chapter, and therefore it is a parenthesis. Paul's administration of the mystery is a most important part, which falls in with all we have been looking at. We have it according to God, learned by Paul, "*my* knowledge of the mystery of Christ." Verse 5 proves that these are New Testament prophets. It is commonly said that prophets are one wall and the apostles the other wall, and Christ the Corner-stone to bind them both together. But the prophets are clearly the prophets of the New Testament.

(*V.* 6.) The Gentiles are fellow-heirs.

(*V.* 9.) It should be the "administration" of the mystery, not the "fellowship" of the mystery. Here we find that this was completely hidden, till it is brought out after Christ's death.

(*V.* 10.) You get again that the witness is in heavenly places. They learn God's manifold wisdom in the Church (*v.* 13). He comes to his prayer again, He was suffering for the Gentiles (*v.* 14). You get the second title as to the prayer, that is, He is Son. In chapter i. it was the God of our Lord Jesus Christ; here it is Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; as a man He was raised from the dead, so here I have Him as a Son.

(*V.* 14.) This dwelling in your heart by faith is a present thing.

(*V.* 15.) "Every family in Heaven and earth" takes in angels, and the Church, and the spirits of just men made perfect—Jews and Gentiles. "Named" does not mean that every one calls God Father. But it is as the Father of all He does it.

In *v.* 14 many reject the words "Jesus Christ" as an interpolation; I have left them in on the whole.

(*V.* 16.) "According to the riches of his glory." It is not now "to the praise of his glory," but according to its "riches." He takes the place as already there. He puts Christ into us. I get the power of the Spirit of God working so that Christ is in my heart by faith. What He does is thus according to all His power and riches in glory. Christ is the centre of that, and Christ is in my heart. So He says according to the riches of His glory—the length, and breadth, and depth, and height he does not know what.

(V. 18.) "With all saints" is the first circle, which you must possess to comprehend, what is the length, and breadth, and depth, and height.

Christ being in our heart, we have two things to take in. Being in such a scene I shall be dazzled. So he says the person who is the centre of the Father's glory is well known to you. Like as if I were to go to court, and were dazzled by what I saw; but I find one there that I know full well, and that is the Prince of Wales, I am quite at home at once. That brings me back to the love of Christ, with whom I am intimate and familiar. Yet this is far from diminishing the extent of the blessing, for He is God as well as Christ. So that I know His love, yet it passeth knowledge, and we see this in this word "that we may be filled *to* all the fulness of God." (V. 19.) I get, by having Christ in my heart, into the centre of all the glory, and see every ray of it as it were, because Christ is in my heart. It is an astonishing way of bringing it all together.

Paul is said to be steward of the mystery of God. He is the person to whom the administration of the mystery is entrusted.

(V. 20). "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Now I have another thing. God *can* do more for us than we can ask or think is often used in prayers, but that is not what we have here. It is here according to the power that worketh *in* us. Here I get the administration. I get the actual present thing.

First, we had the counsels; secondly, the power that took us up from death in sins and put us in Christ; thirdly, the power that enables us to realize all this according to all the fulness of God.

The end of v. 21 reads literally, "all the generations of ages of ages"—it means to all futurity, and yet takes it up now, for it speaks of the power that works in us. This (v. 21) shows us that the Church will remain a distinct thing for ever, and ever, and ever.

Paul calls himself less than the least of all saints because he persecuted Christ—"why persecutest thou me?" He was taken from all that, that he might be a living testimony to the sovereign grace of God.

Peter denied Christ when he knew Him; Paul sought to destroy the name of Christ off the earth. To Peter, He says,

“when thou art restored, strengthen thy brethren.” To Paul, He said, “for this cause you obtained mercy that Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe” (1 Tim. i. 16).

SOME THOUGHTS ON JOHN'S GOSPEL.

CHAPTER XX.

But Jesus (as too the angels had done), after having got out all that was in Mary Magdalene's heart, called her by her name, as the good and divine Shepherd who knows all His own sheep by their names; and soon as she hears her name she recognizes Him. Then Jesus commissions her to take the highest privileges, immense truths, to His disciples. What a contrast between the disciples going to their own home and Mary Magdalene! This new revelation is not that of the work of salvation, precious though that be. This revelation is respecting the *position of Christians*. “Touch me not,” He says to her, because He had not ascended to the Father to take the kingdom and to return to earth, as the Jews looked for Him. This is the first time Jesus calls His disciples “brethren;” He had called them friends, but not as yet brethren, because the work of the Cross was not accomplished; and according to the 22nd Psalm, He would call them brethren only after His resurrection. After having been heard from the horns of the unicorns, that is after death, (as the judgment of God) then He would make known the name of His Father and of His God to His brethren, and lead the praises of God in the midst of the assembly. This position must then be revealed, after the work of redemption had been accomplished.

After the new position is revealed to the disciples, they are gathered together for the first time. This effect is produced not by what they had *seen*, but by the message announced to them by Mary Magdalene. The fact of the resurrection was not sufficient to gather them together in assembly. Jesus comes into their midst. Moreover it is likewise the first time that He pronounces peace to them—that peace He had made by His death. He had no doubt said to the woman who was a sinner, “Go in peace,” (Luke vii.); but peace is here pronounced as already made by the work of Christ—made by the cross. Jesus, in resurrection,

takes a spiritual body ; we cannot well picture to ourselves what this spiritual body is, such as we too shall have at the coming of Christ ; that is a body that has bone and flesh, that can eat, be touched ; and nevertheless a body that can enter through a closed door and then vanish. When we shall be in that state, we shall fully understand that Christ was the firstfruits of the resurrection, and then we who are Christ's. In this chapter then we have Christ raised ; then the disciples have the revelation of their new position ; then we have their gathering together and the Lord in their midst ; then He announces peace, and sends the disciples to their work. Finally they receive the Holy Spirit, not the Person in fact, but as the power of life. Here the Holy Spirit is introduced to present the picture of the completeness of their position.

Thomas presents to us the remnant of the last days, that will believe only when they see with their eyes, but meantime we believe without seeing. The chapter presents to us a beautiful picture of the history of Christianity from first to last.

SCRIPTURE QUERIES AND REPLIES.

“Zeta.”—What is the difference between being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (Matt. xxviii. 19), and being baptized in the name of the Lord, and Lord Jesus (Acts x. 48 ; xix. 5)?

The only *formulary* ever given was unto (*εις*) the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matt. xxviii. 19). Some have supposed that this formulary was changed in the Acts of the Apostles. But when the commission was given the Lord was *present*, and baptism is founded on His resurrection—not on His ascension ; while in Acts He was *absent*, and the point was then the owning of one who was not there in person. Hence the recognition of His name. Yet we find in nearly every case the term is changed, so that the thought of there being a fresh formulary is guarded against. In Acts ii. it is “*in (εν) the name of Jesus Christ.*” In chapter viii. “*in (εις) the name of the Lord Jesus.*” In chapter x. “*in (εν) the name of the Lord.*” In chapter xix. “*in (εις) the name of the Lord Jesus.*” The formulary, therefore, in Matt. xxviii. is the form which should be employed, while the recognition of the name of the Lord is added as presenting the person to Him.

“HE THAT GATHERED MUCH HAD
NOTHING OVER.”

EXODUS XVI. 18.

THE manna, which was God's provision for His people in the wilderness, was not the fruit of human toil, or the product of man's industry. In no way nor measure did it depend on the skill or diligence of them who fed upon it; but it was the sovereign provision of God, bestowed as the witness of divine grace and divine resources, upon a needy people, who had no other supply either around or within them.

It is, and we know by our Lord, as expressive of that eternal life, or true bread, which is as this manna, the sovereign gift of God to a people thoroughly destitute of it, and unable to acquire it by any industry or skill of their own.

Being this—having this character affixed to it—being the witness of God's provision, and the gift of His grace out of His own stores to the needy, it is altogether beautifully and fitly said of it, “He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack.” For God's provision is sovereign; it is like Himself; it comes to enrich the poor; it acts upon its own character, having all independent virtue in itself; it is grace, and if so, it does not wait on the working or industry of man (Romans xi. 6). Whether it be redemption or life, whether rescue from the strength of the enemy, or the breathing of a new life, it is sovereign, free, and apart from human aid or admixture, “otherwise grace is no more grace.”

Accordingly when *God* delivered Israel out of Egypt, Israel had nothing to do; their only place was to “hold their peace,” for the Lord would fight for them (Ex. xiv. 14). And so now, when *God* is feeding them in the desert, or giving them to live in the place of death which was refusing all supplies for life, their own doings are equally set aside; no industry added a bit to this, no slackness of hand diminished a bit from it; whether they gathered of the manna more or less, they quickly found that they had only just the thing given to them in grace, and what they needed. “They gathered every man according to his eating.”

We know how this great principle is exhibited in the gospel: “The righteousness of God,” for instance; the gift of the Spirit; the new life in Christ Jesus; these sovereign provisions of God in meeting our circumstances as guilty ones, and as dead ones;—these cannot be improved by any

diligence on our part, nor are they bestowed in larger or smaller measure. All the elect are equally justified, equally new creatures in Christ, or born again of the Spirit. There is not in them more or less of this righteousness or new creation. Not one of them is at all more delivered from a state of condemnation than another; but all, be their spiritual diligence what it may, are in the same sense, way, and measure, justified from all things, from which they could not have been justified by the law of Moses.

There is, it is true, another truth as well as this, fully consistent with it, I need not say, but still of a different character. There is *attainment among the saints*, as well as the *common standing of the saints*. And thus indeed "the diligent soul shall be made fat." To the holy, careful keeping of the heart there is surely affixed much of present spiritual strength and refreshing. Peter attaches very blessed fruit to this holy diligence (2 Pet. i.); and our own experiences, if genuine and spiritual, must and will verify God's word in this. But this is another thing, as the reaping reward in the kingdom is another thing, "As it is written, he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." Quite true. The diligent soul shall have its larger spiritual comfort now, as the diligent servant shall have his ten cities by-and-bye. But this is all another thing, for touching the gifts of grace, whether righteousness or life, whether rescue from Egypt or from the state of condemnation; or whether the grant of the manna from the heavenly storehouses, or of life in the new creation in Christ Jesus, man's skill and diligence are positively and utterly nothing. He that gathers much has nothing over. No stock there, no work of supererogation. Every man according to his *eating*, and not according to his *gathering*. His need is met by the sovereign unaided provision of God, and there the mystery ends.

A BRIEF WORD ON MATTHEW XII. 5.

"Have ye not read in the Law, how that on the Sabbath days, the priests in the Temple profane the Sabbath and are blameless."

The Lord, in His reply to the Pharisees who charge His followers with breaking the Sabbath day in Matt. xii. 1, 2, uses the above remarkable expression.

The disciples were an hungered, and had plucked the ears of corn on the Sabbath day, and the Pharisees had charged them with doing that which was unlawful to do upon it.

It was quite lawful to "pluck the ears of thy neighbours' standing corn" (see Deut. xxiii. 25), but they made it an unlawful action when done on the Sabbath day. The gracious directions of God, were thus forced into the narrow lines of Pharisaism. The Lord does not vindicate the grace of Deut. xxiii. 25, but by recalling cast-out David's course with the shew-bread in the days of Saul the usurper, He shews that when God's anointed king was a wanderer and an-hungered, the shew-bread was in a manner common; there was no value in forms and ceremonies when God was rejected in the king of His choice. So by the force of reasoning when God was rejected in His Christ, the Sabbath was no more than any other day. He touches here the springs of evil in the "blind Pharisee," and takes no notice of the plucking of the ears of corn charged on His followers.

But more, His answer in verse 5 conveys a fine and blessed principle not to be overlooked. The Sabbath, given with the law, was a command or claim upon man under that law. Priests and sacrifices were not contemplated under pure law at all. They came in as God's provisions of grace when and after the law was broken! In fact, the whole ceremonial of Leviticus, and of Exodus after the giving of the law by Moses and its breach through making the golden calf, &c., with all that then happened, came in as gracious provisions for the approach to God Himself of those who had failed under law.

We might say in a few words as to verse 5:—The Sabbath was the *claim of law*; the priesthood and sacrifices were the *provisions of grace*, and while under the law and its demands the provisions of grace through priesthood and sacrifices took the upper hand, its claims had to stand aside, that these provisions might express themselves; how much more should the Sabbath now stand aside in its claim, when God Himself was there in their midst in lowly grace—in the person of Christ!

This system of priesthood and sacrifices is commonly called the "ceremonial law," in contradistinction with that which is named the "moral law"; but we might the more correctly term them "ceremonial grace"!

Alas, when we look around us, in how much do we find the same thing under a different guise! God and his grace rejected that ordinances and ceremonies without meaning or value might have their place in the religious thought and practice of man!

Ed.

MEDITATION ON PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

CHAPTER V.

AFTER the apostle has presented the great principles of truth in reference to justification and life, he commences to apply them to man, *i.e.*, the condition of the soul. He shows their effect, when they have been received through faith by the power of the Holy Ghost. The work of redemption is finished, and in the power of this work, Christ is for us with God. The believer has full part of the blessings of this work, and is justified. "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God." (Verse 1.) Justification is our true condition before God, in power of the work of Christ, in power of His death and His resurrection. We also see from the holy Scriptures, quite clearly, that God never separates justification from faith, because as this justification is alone the blessed result of the work of Christ, so we cannot have it otherwise than through this, that our souls have been brought into living communion with God through faith.

There are now three exceedingly blessed advantages which follow upon the justification by faith:—

1. We have *peace with God.* (Verse 1.)

2. We have *access into the grace in which we stand, i.e.*, we rejoice in the favour of God, and

3. We glory *in hope of the glory of God.* (Verse 2.)

"We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." There exists no partition, no separation any more between us and God. Sin is blotted out: every question about it is perfectly answered: the offering of Christ has fully satisfied every claim of God upon us. All that lies behind us, all that is connected with the old man—not only our real sins, but all that anyhow could be reached by judgment—is done away with, and therefore we have a perfect peace. But this peace is not upon anything in *us*, our doings or not doings, our feelings or experiences, but based alone upon the *work of Christ*. Faith always finds it without us in the finished work, and this as a result of our justification through this work. This peace also is not an object of our hope, but we *have* peace. It is not a peace *with ourselves*, but with *God*. Our relieved conscience acknowledges God Himself as the only Redeemer. Every thought whether He has any wrath against us has com-

pletely disappeared. He Himself it is who has freed us from all, through which His just anger rested upon us. The God with whom we have peace is a God that has loved us—a God who, in that He executed His power in love and righteousness, raised up Him who bore all our sins, who altogether blotted out these sins, and whose work did fully glorify Him, has brought Him in His presence. Likewise now are we also brought into the presence of God—into the presence of God who is love, as it was in the work of Christ because of us.

But we have not only *peace* with God, but we also rejoice in the *favour* of God; “Through Christ we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.” (Verse 2.) Grace characterizes all our true communion with God. We stand for ever in this grace, and in all the present circumstances we can reckon upon His love and faithfulness. We are in and with Christ, always an object of the grace and well-pleasing of God.

But our blessings go still further. Brought in spirit through the power of the resurrection of Christ in the presence of God, we also boast in hope of His *glory*. We shall be brought there through Christ, where He Himself is gone before; and to enter there where He is, means to enter into His glory, and of this glory we boast in hope even now—a hope which has a sure and steadfast ground in the resurrection of Christ. It may be remarked here, that God Himself is the source of all, that He Himself has manifested and ordained all. The glad tidings, through which that accomplished salvation by Him is made known, is the *gospel of God*; the power, which *still* now works through the gospel, is the power of *God* unto salvation; the righteousness, which is revealed therein, is the righteousness of *God*; the favour which we enjoy, is the favour of *God*; and the glory, to which we already now are introduced in hope, is the glory of *God*. All stands in connection with His might revealed in the resurrection, and in a particular manner in the resurrection of Christ.

We therefore have *peace* as regards the past; with respect to the present, we stand in the *favour of God*; and concerning the future, we await *the glory*. In certain consideration the whole blessed position of a Christian is expressed in these three terms:—*peace*, *grace*, or *favour*, and *hope*. Yet there is still more, because twice more we hear the expres-

sion: "And not only so." (Verses 3, 11.) Here God discloses fresh graces, new spiritual enjoyments.

There is nothing left behind to *be feared* by the one justified by faith, but to boast. He rejoices in the favour of God, and from thence all circumstances below, even tribulation, shall be turned into blessings to him—"We glory in tribulations." (Verse 3.) They exercise the heart, they liberate us from the world, they reveal the movements of the flesh, and give us to know that, in whatever way the temptations of Satan may come, nothing can separate us from the love of God. All these temptations rather serve to keep down the own will, and the own activity of the heart, and to make us more ready to surrender all to God; then, in truth, all things are led by Him. Through tribulation, therefore, God meets our flesh, causes a deeper apprehension of our dependence, and brings us ever nearer to Himself. In the same, we also experience the sympathy and the providence of His love in so rich a measure, as to which even the glory shall offer us no opportunity. In all circumstances is His blessing-giving and mighty hand active for us, in all temptations we can count upon His faithfulness and care. He permits nothing to disturb us, but to bless us, and therefore have we every reason to glory in tribulation. Just that which causes the unbeliever to want of courage and despair, effects courage, confidence, and endurance in the believer:—"Tribulation worketh endurance." Instead of weakening it, it will be strengthened, because God through tribulation meets that in us and keeps down what would hinder us in endurance. He purifieth the faith from every thing unclean, of all, that is of ourselves, and through this enables us to endure; because only that will stand which is of God. "Endurance worketh experience." (Verse 4.) Experience in the ways of God—experience of our weakness and His love and faithfulness. "Experience worketh hope," so that we do not appear as those who sometimes hope, sometimes fear, but as those who in all circumstances look up to God in confidence, who are quite sure of the fulfilment of all His promises and assurances. And so the words:—"The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear," will be grounded and settled in the soul.

But this hope is founded only upon the work of Christ and His position in heaven, and the power of it is the Holy Ghost. "Hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of

God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." (Verse 5.) God not only has given His Son for us, but He who is love also is in us. His own love will be enjoyed in our souls, because it is shed abroad into our hearts by the Holy Ghost. This gives us the full assurance that we are the people of God, and that a bond is knitted between us and Him, which can never be severed; yea, His love in us to a power in hope, which nothing is able to shake. Resting, therefore, in Christ, and bearing in our hearts the witness of the Holy Ghost, of the love of God to us, we go sure and comforted through all the manifold temptations.

Although now the *enjoyment* of the love of God is *in us*, the *proof* of it is *without us*, and thither the apostle now at once again directs our thoughts. Faith can never rest in what is in us, but only in that which is outside us in Christ. From thence proceed all our blessings. But is not our utter inability, our utter ungodliness, a hindrance of sharing those blessings, and of being objects of the love of God? Certainly not; for the love of God has just thought of such. "For when we were yet without strength, according to the time Christ died for the ungodly." (Verse 6). It was just the time, when man was manifested as an ungodly one, and when he was without strength to separate from his ungodliness, even then, not when God showed him a way under the law. God loves not as man loves. Whereas man must have a motive for his actions of love, the love of God on the contrary springs from Himself (verse 7); for how could God find a motive for love in us, when we were "hateful and hating one another?" (Tit. iii. 3.) "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Verse 8.) The Holy Ghost does not ask first what man is, to know what God will be; He simply places the love of God before us. And to give us full security, He lets us see the consequences of the finished work of Christ for the believer. And if Christ has died for us, when we were yet *sinners*, how much more shall we be saved being *justified* by His blood from the wrath, *i.e.*, the coming judgment upon the world, through Him? (Verse 9.) The *living* Christ will not certainly destroy us, when the *dying* Christ has saved us. If God reconciled us by the *death* of His Son, when we were yet *enemies*, how much more, being reconciled, will He save us by His *life*—through the power of an end-

less life, in which He lives Himself eternally? (Verse 10.) A *living* Christ will certainly save a friend, when a *dying* Christ has saved an enemy. Oh, how comforting and encouraging are the simple conclusions which the Holy Ghost unfolds to our eyes in these verses! But our salvation is not only fully secured, and we boast not only in the received blessings, but "we boast in God" (verse 11) who has given us all these blessings, which is far more. We rejoice in the gifts, but our rest and greatest joy can be in the Giver only. We enter on the infinite and blessed ocean of the knowledge of God, and His holiness is now our joy, which, otherwise, must have terrified us. He is *our* God, and *what* He is, is our delight.

The apostle has now declared the foundation and source of salvation, as well as the confidence and enjoyment that flow from this salvation, he has established everything upon God, who has but to deal with lost and impotent sinners, and, therefore, the floor is thoroughly cleared—all demands of the Jews are annihilated. Every privilege of the Jews in contrast to the nations is at an end, whenever it is a question of sin, of grace, or the sinner; they have nothing to boast of. The Jew could not say sin came by him or by the law, but man, as man bears the guilt.

The apostle now treats this important subject, and at the same time reveals the God of all grace, acting in respect to sin. "Through one man sin came into the world, and death through sin." (Verse 12.) Therefore, the question with regard to sin must not be retraced to the law but to Adam, the head of the human race; for sin came not by the law—though sin abounded through the law, and could be imputed only since then—but by one man, Adam. "And by sin came death; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Verse 12.)

But the meaning of these verses is not this, that one is condemned solely through the imputation of sin to Adam. Still, it is true that his sin is imputed to his race; but besides this, there is present the individual condition of every one who condemns him, because of his own sins. We have been born at a distance from God, and inherited a nature which is enmity against Him. The son has the nature of his father, a nature which is inclined unto all evil. While we, therefore, have been born under sin, we are well *able* to sin, but not *guilty* because of it. This we become in

that we sin in reality. But the apostle does not separate our fall in Adam, our conditions under this fall from the individual condition of our heart before God. We are guilty because we sin, and we sin because we are sinners born in sin. Through sin Adam died, and we with him, and in consequence of it we sin, and we are dead also in sins and trespasses. We are, therefore, under the consequences of the sin of Adam in a twofold aspect ; first, we are sinners, and have a corrupt nature, and then we are guilty before God because we have sinned, in consequence of this natural condition. Man, therefore, is not only a sinner, but also a debtor ; and, therefore, can be judged justly. This is of importance ; for as soon as we make Adam's sin the only reason of our condemnation, there remains nothing more to guide the conscience.

In verse 12, Paul mentions sin in the world as a present fact. He denotes the presence of death as the clearest proof that sin has entered. Death is the mark of sin, for which man is condemned, with or without law. "Until the law, sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law." (Verse 13.) As a general principle, it is said here, that sin has been declared through the law, and that, though anything may be bad in itself, yet it is not imputed as transgression, so long as there is no knowledge through the law that it is bad. "Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression" (verse 14), *i.e.*, over them which were in a different position to that of Adam, as well as that of the Jews, who had sinned without the law. The apostle here puts the Jew upon one and the same ground with Adam, as did the prophet Hosea when he testified of them in chapter vi., 7, "They, like Adam, have transgressed the covenant." Both had a precise commandment which they transgressed. But it was not so with those who were in the world in the interval. They must die, because they had sinned ; but it was not in the similitude of Adam's transgression.

The apostle here insists so much upon this truth, that Adam was the head of the first creation, and his sin therefore imputed to all his descendants, because through the proof of it he will arrive at the introduction of Christ as Head of the new creation, in which all are justified.

Adam is a type of Him who was to come—of Christ. Just as the disobedience of Adam, so also the obedience or

the work of Christ produced an effect upon a large number of individuals. Even so as death came upon all men who had sinned like Adam by transgression of certain commandments, or in any other way, so also the remedy against sin, brought by the Lord Jesus, had no less a *general* effect. The worth of His work through His death is altogether suitable to the condition of man, whatever the nature of sin may be. The Jew died under the curse of the law; Christ has borne this curse. The Gentile, without law, dies under sin; Christ delivers him by His death.

In the following verses Adam and Christ are put in contrast to each other. This parallel not only enables us to judge rightly of sin and of grace, but also shows us the bearing and excellency of the work of Christ. In the first Adam we have the offence; in the second, that is Christ, the gift by grace. Death came through the offence of the first Adam; abounding grace, that is eternal life, through Jesus Christ (verse 15). In verse 16, then, the apostle shows that the free gift does not stand in an equal proportion to all that was caused by the sin of *one*; for the judgment came by *one** to condemnation, but the free gift is of *many* offences unto justification. This grace is sufficient for the forgiveness of a multitude of transgressions of the law.

In the first Adam death reigned over us; in the second the delivered ones reign in life. What a blessed contrast. "If by the offence of *one* death reigned by the one, much more they which receive the abundance of grace and of the free gift of righteousness shall reign in life by the *one*, Jesus Christ" (verse 17). They shall not be reigned over by life, but rather reign themselves in life by the one, Jesus Christ. They have not only forgiveness of their sins, but also the gift of righteousness, and therefore they reign in life. Therefore not only the *one* sin of Adam, but all sins committed afterwards, are forgiven us through faith in Jesus, so that the free gift has been more abounding than the guilt. But not only, for we shall also be made *righteous ones*, and this in the new creation. Before the fall Adam was innocent but not holy and perfect; but the Christian, cleansed by the blood of Christ, is holy and is perfect, so that he is not carried back to the condition of Adam, but that he is before

*The little word "one" here refers not so much to Adam as a single person, but rather expresses the singular in contrast to the word "many."

God in Christ, one with Him, as a new creature. The Christian, moreover, is in another far more glorious condition than the first man in his purity. He needs not to take care of the life by his obedience, nor can he lose it through disobedience ; he reigns in life.

Verse 17 closes a parenthesis, commenced in verse 13. In verse 18 the general argument is resumed, though still a parallel between Adam and Christ. Here we have to observe the words, "towards all," in particular. Therefore as by one offence condemnation towards all men, even so by one righteousness justification of life towards all men (verse 18). "Condemnation towards all men" is accomplished not in the result, but in its own and natural effect. Grace comes in to deliver. Even so justification of life towards all men came—not *upon* all, but *towards* all men—not as application, but as direction. Just as Adam's sin rested not only upon him, but abounded *unto* many, even so the one righteousness ended not in Christ, but abounded unto many. In verse 19, where it is a question of application, we find the word "many" used, and not "all," as in the previous verse. I therefore can preach the gospel to every creature, and can say to the sinner, "The blood is upon the mercy-seat, come to God!" but to the believer I can say, "Thou *art* justified in Christ."

To what purpose, then, the law? It came "that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound ; that as sin has reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (verses 20, 21). If righteousness were to reign, as sin reigned in death, we should stand under eternal punishment ; but grace does reign, and that through righteousness. Grace has become abounding, not righteousness. God uses His sovereign right in grace unto eternal life. Besides a faint glimpse of eternal life, the Jew expected but life this side death ; but God justifies in His grace by Jesus, and gives eternal life beyond death to him.

FRAGMENT.

The Book of Judges is the history of the failure of Israel in not putting out the evil.

THE PATH OF THE BLESSED ONE.

How great the love, Lord Jesus,
 That led Thee from Thy throne;
 To die, from sin to free us,
 And make us all Thine own—
 That led Thee, Lord of glory,
 A servant's form to take;
 Thyself, Jehovah's equal,
 Of no repute to make.

We love to trace Thy pathway,
 From off that throne on high;
 Down here to Bethlehem's manger,
 Thence on to Calvary.
 The gentleness and meekness
 In all Thy ways we see,
 Have won our hearts' affection,
 And we would like Thee be.

We love to see the glory,
 Unseen by Nature's eyes,
 That shone in every action,
 Which only faith descries—
 The peace, so calm, unruffled,
 Amid this scene of woe;
 The joy, ("my joy,") that nought could dim,
 Which only Thou could'st know:

The light that met the sinner,
 Revealing all his sin;
 Then freely all forgiving,
 And breathing peace within;
 Telling it was to save them,
 Thou cam'st to shed Thy blood;
 Thy life and death were needed
 To make their peace with God:

The love that knew each sorrow,
 And felt for every woe;
 That made Thee ever ready
 Thy sympathy to show.
 Thyself the "Man of sorrows,"
 None would Thy sorrows share;
 Yet self-forgetful ever.
 Thou could'st for others care.

But, oh! we're lost in wonder!
 As there on Calvary's tree,
 By man cast out, rejected,
 God's wrath was borne by Thee.
 Oh! "love beyond all measure,"
 That took the sinner's place,
 And bore the dreadful merits,
 "Of sin and its disgrace."

And, oh! we love to see Thee
 At God's right hand above;
 Still daily, hourly serving,
 The objects of Thy love—
 With gracious care removing
 Each spot that would defile,
 And hinder their communion
 With Thee, "the little while."

And soon Thou'lt come in glory
 (Such is Thy *perfect* love);
 Thou would'st not do without us
 In yon bright home above.
 Thou would'st not yet be satisfied,
 Till we are with Thee there;
 The Bride Thy love has purchased,
 Thy Father's home must share.

THE "MAN OF THE PHARISEES."

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

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

Such, however, is the beautiful variety of moral illustrations in the Book of God, that in chap. iii., in the midst of all this, we get Nicodemus occupying his own peculiar place. He was attracted by the miracles, as those of chap. ii. had been; but then, his *soul* was reached as theirs had not been. It did not end with him as it had begun. He did not merely *wonder and believe*, but he wonders, ponders, is exercised in his soul, and seeks—timidly indeed, but still he *seeks*, and seeks Jesus. The miracle had put him on a journey to Him

who had wrought it, *as something more than a mere worker of wonders*. And the result is peculiar, as is the thing itself.

The Lord does not take him to Himself at once, as He had done those in chap. i. and iv., nor does He refuse to commit Himself to him, as He had refused to do with them in chap. ii. He is patient, and yet decided. He exposes him, forcing him to learn himself; but still He goes on with him, in a measure committing Himself to him.

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

And such links are, at the end, I judge, formed between Jesus the Saviour, and Nicodemus the sinner.

He is seen, a second time, in chap. vii., standing for righteousness in the person of Jesus, in the midst of the Jewish elders. But this seems to me but a little way beyond where he is in chap. iii. He is still the companion of the Jewish rulers, acting with them, though doubtless under some misgivings of soul; and timidly still, as the one that had before come to Jesus by night, and in small measure owning the Righteous One.

But in chap. xix. he has surely advanced. Here he puts himself on the side of the world victim. He stands, as with God Himself, in relation to Jesus there. God will provide that Blessed Sufferer with a glorious, triumphant resurrection by and by; Nicodemus and his companion Joseph will in their way provide Him with a tomb and grave-clothes now. Their spices shall perfume that sepulchre which, ere long, divine power shall rend asunder.

Surely Nicodemus was now occupying the place to which the early words of Jesus in chap. iii. had told him of. Is he not now, in spirit, looking at the uplifted serpent, the crucified, healing Son of Man? And may we not judge, that from henceforth he was one, to whom Jesus committed Himself. Do we know that Jesus has committed Himself to us?

JOHN XXI.

A great part of this chapter is more obscure than the preceding one, and this by its very nature; being a prophecy, and a prophecy under the form of a symbolical action. The disciples had gone into Galilee, according to the commandment of the Lord (Mark xiv. 28; xvi. 7), to meet Him there. In Galilee the Lord was in relation with the poor of the flock, with the Jewish remnant, and this chapter treats of this relationship. In Luke xxiv. we find that the Lord ascends into heaven, and blesses the disciples while departing from them; there He commissions them to preach repentance and the remission of sins among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. This Gospel has to do with heaven, and therefore we are told that Christ ascended into heaven. The Gospel that the apostle Paul preached answered most to this mission; although the Spirit through Paul joins the revelation of the union of believers, and consequently the Church. Matthew does not give us the ascension of Christ into heaven, but He is found in Galilee; and His ascension is not found in this Gospel, nor in that of John. The foundations of Christianity, as the death, the resurrection, and the glory of Christ in heaven, remain always the same. In fact, all the disciples saw Him ascend up into heaven from Bethany. But the Evangelists, Matthew and John, are not occupied with the subject, and treat of the relationship of the Lord with the Jewish remnant.

We have seen Thomas, figure of this remnant, recognise the Lord when he saw Him; and the declaration of the Lord that those (*i.e.*, Christians) who believe without seeing are specially blessed. Now in this chapter xxi, the Holy Spirit puts the subject altogether aside. The remnant of the Jews are found now gathered together, and the net is cast into the sea to gather other fishes. This is the assembly of the millennium; rather of the Gentiles and of the children of Israel. Here the net does not break, in contrast with what had happened when the Lord called the disciples; for the same figure (Luke v.) had shewn before that the net broke, that is, that the gathering together of believers at that time could not be accomplished; but in the millennium, of which we have said we have a figure here, it will be accomplished; because the personal presence of the Lord will prevent the work from coming to ruin. The figure being used before

makes it easy to understand it again in this chapter. The Lord had fishes already on land (ver. 9). The supper signifies, I think, that the Lord and His own are again in company on earth. In chapter xiii. He had left the table, in order to become their servant and to wash the feet of His disciples; and this is what He is now doing, in His grace ascended into heaven, as He speaks of in this chapter. Here again companionship with them is renewed. It is said that this is now the third time that Jesus appeared to His disciples after His resurrection; that is, that they were together; He alludes to the twice in the preceding chapter and to this. He appeared once to found the Church, and to send His disciples into the world; the second time when Thomas believes, because he sees, figure of the Jews in the last days; and now, the third time, when He is seen in association with His own, and gathering together all the spared Israel and the Gentiles under His authority.

Then (ver. 15) He gives Peter the care of the sheep of the circumcision; it is not a question of the Gospel sent forth into the world, but He gives to Peter, under circumstances very instructive, the care of persons already gathered. He does not reprove him for his fall, nor speak of his denial of his Lord, but He searches his heart to show him the spring of his failure. Peter had said, "Though all should deny thee yet will not I"; and the Lord says to him, "Lovest thou me more than these?" With these words He destroys the false foundation, the heart is made bare, and Peter is made fit to feed the sheep. The weakness was manifested, and perfect grace, and Jesus confides His beloved sheep, the most precious objects of His love, to him who had learned his weakness and to have no confidence in himself. Peter had found a love in which he could have perfect confidence. What a lesson he had to learn in order to be fitted for the Lord's service! Behold in what a way were the two great apostles Peter and Paul educated; the first denying the Lord when he knew Him, and Paul destroying His name, had he been able to. Their mouths are closed unless they speak of the grace which they specially have tasted. But it is beautiful to see how in the moment in which the Lord shows what His servant was, He confides to his care that which was dearest to Him.

Then the Lord shows the end of the earthly career of Peter, and does it with deepest grace; by which Peter is

forced to see that the will and good pleasure of man are worth nothing. He had *wished* to go to death for Jesus; but in the hour of danger, the voice of a servant girl was enough to frighten him. Therefore, when he would be old, another would bind him and lead him whither he would not. The privilege would be granted to him, when human will would be no longer active, of dying for the Lord; a thing he had not courage to do, when he had had a wish to do it. He had lost a precious opportunity by unbelief; and he might have never had an opportunity of recovering it. But the Lord, having restored him in grace, gave him back what he had lost and power to accomplish it, but when human will was there no longer. Then when he has learned what he is, and the grace of the Lord, the Lord could say to him: "Follow thou me." The instruction is personal; but in this account I doubt not we find an intimation of the result of the service of Peter. The service of the Lord in the midst of the Jews has not gathered this people; and Peter must follow the Lord in the experience of a fruitless work in respect of the people, although many souls have been brought to the knowledge of the Lord.

John had another service. Peter, seeing that he was also following the Lord, wished to know what would become of him. The Lord answers in words purposely obscure—"If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" The disciples thought from this that He would not die, but the Lord had not said this, but "*If I will*" And not only did John live a much longer time than the others (when the hopes of Israel were closed, on to the coming of the judgment executed on the people), but his ministry extends on to the return of the Saviour [that is, what is found in his Epistles and in the Revelation]. It is not here a question of Paul's ministry, begun after the death of Stephen: this introduces the Church united to Christ in heaven; but of the testimony of the Holy Ghost in relation with the earth, and the hope of establishing on the earth a people owned of God. This result has not been brought about by means of Peter; and, therefore, John must, as an apostle, declare that many Antichrists were there already: it proves that the last times had come; and, as a prophet, he declares the fall of the Church and the judgment of the world.

Finis.

NO CARE.

"Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things."—Luke xii. 30.

"The sons of this age are in their generation wiser than the sons of light."—
Luke xvi. 8.

My God and Father knoweth
My daily—hourly need ;
His care the raven showeth,
The fowls His goodness plead,
The worm the plough removeth
As men their fields prepare,
The barnless bird receiveth
Without one sigh of care.

'Tis thus my Father giveth
His child each fresh supply :
No thought for life disturbs me,
No care for food have I.
The earthly ones may wonder :
My joy they cannot know,—
While for my Lord I'm labouring,
'Tis for themselves they sow.

Oh, yes ! my Father knoweth
The lily's growth declares,
And *every* flow'r is covered
In raiment He prepares.
The world may need adorning,
And hide in smiles its woe,
And little knows my Father
Can feast a pilgrim so.

My Father's house I've entered,
I dwell not on the earth ;
A heavenly saint by calling,
A son of light by birth.
For me no Paul is weeping—
I mind not earthly things ;
I want not a millennium
Ruled by the King of kings.

Now from that house I'm coming,
To bring to earth a store
Of rich abundant blessing,
It never knew before ;
For, while I use as steward,
"The mammon" *not* mine own
I draw a SON'S "true riches"
From One upon a throne.

The Bridegroom quickly cometh :
 His image soon I'll bear ;
 Lord Jesus, I am waiting
 To meet Thee in the air.
 And while the child is watching,
 The Father's blessings flow,
 For could an heir of glory
 Be left to want below !

Oh, no! for with the Father
 The First-born now is throned,
 And patiently I'm waiting,
 For one with Him I'm owned.
 The world may need its pleasure
 To fill the void within,
 And cares not for the Treasure
 The heavens have now shut in.

LETTERS OF INTEREST.

I.

I learned the meaning of Luke xii. 52, John xiv. 21, that if there was division in the *house*, Christ came Himself to the *heart* in sweetest sympathy and comfort. I recognised these efforts to drive me from the ground I occupied as a witness for the truth of God, as the efforts of Satan though permitted of God to sift my flesh and humble me, that my will might be broken, so that Christ might in my body be magnified ; I learned to glory in them and praise the One who sent them, through them all. I learned, too, the meaning of 1 Pet. iv. 12, 19, that one position of special nearness to the Lord ("the house of God") involves not only Satan's fiercest rage, but our Father's loving chastisement, and that when the trial comes, one should not go for shelter to the ranks of the world, for the end of the disobedient will be far more fearful than the chastisement of the righteous, their troubles will be far more dreadful presently than our light affliction now. No, our resource is *God*. When Jesus in Gethsemane's garden was pressed again and again by Satan, His relief was prayer, and when the trial came, He did not attempt to avoid it by leaving the scene, but accepted it in all its (bitterness).

II.

I will ask you to think over Rahab again, and I think you will say that Exodus xii. agrees with Joshua ii., Exodus xiv. with Joshua vi., and with the last, Col. iii. comes in. She was under the shelter of the scarlet line in chapter ii., but not on resurrection ground till chapter vi.

I had observed the difference between feeding on the lamb, and looking out of the window; compare Noah with the last.

"ALL THINGS ARE OURS."

Every possible glory indeed is ours. The blessedness that is in God Himself, as far as it can be communicated, for we dwell in God and God in us. Relative blessedness, for we are children. Associated blessedness, in union with the blessed One, for we are the bride. Official nearness and glory, for we are kings and priests. Human blessedness, for we shall be perfect men, after the image of the second Adam. Corporate blessedness, for we shall have joy together. Individual, for we shall have a name given which no one knows but he that receives it; and we shall have the fulness of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, unhindered by these poor bodies; yea, clothed upon by a vessel suited to the power of the divine inhabitant, so as to be able in full largeness of heart to enjoy all this.

RELIGION: LAW: GOSPEL.

Every religious thought of man confesses that he is trying to get to God: it may be by prayers, ordinances—what you will; still the fact is there. A course of conduct is prescribed for this, and man is told he must do this or that. The Law did the same. But the Gospel comes and it says, You have done this and that, and I have come to you and put it all away!

"THE BASKET OF CONSECRATIONS."

WHEN the Lord Jesus said to the two disciples of John Baptist, "Come and see," in reply to their question, "Where dwellest thou?" we are not told the place in which "they abode with him that day." This is in keeping with all John's gospel, which tells us what the Lord said of the Father's house. No locality is assigned it by the Lord, but only that Jesus is there. The Lord assumes that no other description is needed by the soul that knows Him. The heavenly Jerusalem, the Bride, the Lamb's wife, is minutely described. Her glory, which is but His, is much unfolded; but who could describe an intimacy, an affection! Human language is poor and meagre, and is only formed to express what is current amongst those whose it is. Divine things need another mode and channel of expression, "unspeakable words, which it is not possible for a man to utter."

There, in that nameless dwelling, these disciples abode with Jesus on "that day"—sweet figure of the Church's portion—shut up with Christ in the unnamed house of His presence, until "the day following" comes, when "Jesus would go forth into Galilee"—the place of grace. There He "findeth Philip," and "Philip findeth Nathanael." Nathanael discovers (as the remnant of the Jews will before the days of the kingdom) that a "good thing" *had indeed* come "out of Nazareth"—One who read his heart, and is discovered to be the Son of God, and King of Israel.

This blessed portion of the Church of God, shut up with Christ to "keep the charge of the Lord" for the completed period (seven days) of her association with Him in heaven, is presented in a lovely type in the close of Lev. viii. The priests were not to go out of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation till those seven days were over. Day and night for seven days did they keep the charge of the Lord, feeding upon the ram of consecration, the unleavened cake, and cake of oiled bread—the bread of the basket of consecrations. And as we read, "So Aaron and his sons did all things which the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses." How blessed if the Spirit of God could say too, "So Christ and His people did all things which the Lord commanded and counselled for His glory!" It can be said of Him alone who did all God's will—the blessed Lord Jesus; One whose perfections

only bring out into more distinctness the failures and imperfections of His people. How blessedly and completely are the people of the Lord shut up for their "seven days," to feed upon "the basket of consecrations," and "keep the charge of the Lord"! The scene of the transfiguration (Luke ix., &c.) prepares us for their thus being shut up to Christ alone. The Lord had been proclaimed by His followers as the "Messiah," and although He had never presented Himself in this character He owned the faith of any who owned Him as such, and blessed the possessor of it, but did not present Himself thus to Israel. Who He was, who had moved hearts and consciences, from the king on the throne to the humblest in the land of Israel, only produced reasoning in the minds of men. "John Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say that one of the old prophets is risen again," were the speculations of the people. But faith—always certain, replies in answer to His question, "But whom say ye that I am?" Peter, answering, said, "the Christ of God." He now changes His name, and tells them that the "Son of Man"—His title over (not only Israel, but) all the works of God's hands (Ps. viii.)—would suffer as a martyr at the hands of men, but would rise again from the dead the third day into His true Headship of all (Luke ix. 22). Then follows a path of sorrow and rejection (verses 23-27), of taking up of their cross daily, and following after Him who was then going to His; One who would be ashamed of those, when He came in His glory, who were ashamed of Him in the day of His humiliation.

But at the end of the path of sorrow (so different from what His disciples expected from their Messiah, whom they thought would restore the kingdom to Israel) He draws back the veil, as it were, and unfolds in the transfiguration, a scene which would cheer and strengthen the hearts of those who saw it, and of His own who would read it when written in the Word, as a bright ending to the road which leads to this glory.

Verse twenty-seven shows us that some of those around Him at the moment would not die till they would see in this scene, a rehearsal of the day of the Kingdom of God.

Then, after eight days, He took the three disciples—Peter, James, and John—and went up into a mountain to pray, and as He prayed the fashion of his countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening. Two men—Moses and Elias—appeared in glory with Him, talking with Him

of things to come; of His departure, which He should accomplish in Jerusalem. The subject of their conversation was His death in the city where His earthly glory should have been consummated.

The two companions of Jesus may be looked upon either as affording dispensationally a picture of the Law—Moses being its representative, and the prophets—Elias being one of the greatest of them; the normal and abnormal state of the people of Israel being addressed by each, and both passing away when Jesus had come ("The Law and the Prophets were until John," &c.)—or, they may be looked upon as representing the saints who have slept in Christ, and, having died and been buried their bodies will be raised in glory. This is seen in Moses; while in Elias we see the translation without death of those "who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord." These are taken up and are, we may say, "sought for" like him by those who are left behind, and not found.

We have then a lovely picture of the glory of the Kingdom, which will by and by be displayed when the Lord comes forth with His saints, to be glorified in them; earthly saints, too—His Jewish people, represented in Peter, James, and Jo'n—see this glory, and the Lord hears the heavens, and the heavens hear the earth, while the earth hears her blessing in the day of her glory, and the seed of God on earth will be blessed.

But when the "bright cloud" overshadowed them, there was a voice from within from the Father's house, which man does not see—the Father's voice, proclaiming, "This is my beloved (or elect—*εκλεκτωμενος*) Son, hear him." This brief sentence—pregnant with the mind and thoughts of the Father about Jesus, seems, as has been thought, to embody all God's previous thoughts as given in the Word, and as He speaks them forth, He points to Jesus as their summing up and fulfilment, and He leaves Him as the portion of His people—shuts them up to Christ for the whole period of their sojourn here below: the "seven days," during which they are left to "keep the charge of the Lord."

The *law* had spoken of a *prophet* whom the Lord would raise up to Israel, whom they should "hear," or be cut off (Deut. xviii). The *Prophets* told of an "*Elect*" one, in whom God's soul delighted (*cf.* Isaiah xlii. 1—4)—a *Priest* who would accomplish all His will. While the *Psalms* had

spoken of a *King* who should sit upon God's holy hill in Zion, in the word "Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee." The law then showed Him as the One whom they should hear—"Hear Him." The prophets could refer to the sentence, "This is mine elect," and the Psalms unfold Him as the "Son"—born on earth a man; and all pointing to Him as the summing up of the mind of God; both Prophet, Priest, and King. "Jesus (then) was found alone" when the rest passed away. And when the night was passed and they descended to the plain, it was but to find Satan the usurper of the scene; but Jesus was with them as before, and now faith in Him would draw forth all that was needed to meet the exigencies of every hour in their path: they were shut up to Christ!

What a portion has the Lord given His people, thus to feed on Himself alone! What a place is theirs who have now to keep the charge of the Lord! The more we ponder a little sentence uttered by the Lord when addressing His disciples before He went away, the more we find its depth and fulness, and how it pervades the whole Scriptures from that moment. We read in John xiv. 20, "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." We in Him before God settles our *place* in its blessedness; He in us defines all our *duties* before men. This thought pervades the Scriptures from "that day"—*i.e.*, when the Comforter would come (Acts ii.), and onwards to the close of the Word. What can be more blessed than to realise that we are in Him; what intimacy more near and wondrous than to live and walk in the power of the truth that He is in us. This is the true position and condition into which Christianity introduces us. How it puts to flight the religious efforts and deceptions of men, the consciousness in the soul that we are in Christ, and Christ is in us!

In the Epistle to the Romans when Paul has concluded his argument from chapters i-vii., he triumphantly opens the eighth by the words, "There is now therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." The word "therefore" implies much in this statement. It is as it were saying, "As the case stands, there is no condemnation," &c. Everything was so fully met, according to the nature of God Himself, and their transfer from Adam to Christ risen was so complete, that "therefore" there could be none! But if the saint is thus in Christ Jesus; in union with the Man in glory,

there comes the other side in verse 10, "And if Christ be in you the body is dead because of sin; and the Spirit is life because of righteousness." If on the one hand, the place of the saint is unalterable, and condemnation can never reach such, on the other (and another which never can be severed from the place) the duties and practical condition follow. The body, the vessel, is held in death, because if it acts its only acts are sin, but the "Spirit is life." He becomes the living power of bringing forth the "Christ" who is in us; and this because of righteousness. Not only do we find that in and by God's righteousness are we justified, but that righteousness becomes the fruit of the Spirit's action in life.

In Ephesians, too, in the prayer of the apostle in chapter i., he desires that the saints may be brought into the consciousness of God's calling, God's inheritance, and the "energy of the force of His might" (or as we ordinarily read it, "the exceeding greatness of his power"). All these things—"calling," "inheritance," and "power," come out from Him, the result being that He sets Christ as man in glory, far above all principality, power, might, or dominion, and every name that is named in this age or that which is to come; and gives Him—head over all things to the assembly, which same is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

This same mighty force of God—an energy of might which creation did not require when it sprang into being at the fiat of the Eternal, but which God put forth to raise up a man from among the dead, who had gone down on the cross under the curse and wrath for sin; who was made sin and met God's nature as to it, adding rays of glory to it which before it had not possessed. This same mighty energy of God, I say, is now put forth to quicken, raise up, and seat in Christ Jesus in the heavenlies, those who were once sunk in a death in sins, without movement of heart towards Him. He was dead *for* sins, and also made sin; they were dead *in* them, and God then wrought by the force of His might, and carries us up in Him into the heavenlies.

Paul desires they may understand all this in the soul's blessed consciousness by the Spirit of God. Then comes the other side: and again, he bows his knees to the Father (chapter iii.) that these saints, so blessed, might be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith. (Here it is He in them, as in chapters i., ii., they in Him.) How easy

to realize all that follows if this be so! If He dwells in the heart—He, the centre of all that glory—then indeed the heart need not be instructed into what the apostle speaks of as "length, and breadth, and depth, and height." A soul who is enjoying this by Christ dwelling in his heart does not ask that it may be explained to him: he knows it, and can say "Come and enjoy with me those fields of glory, and you will know it also." He is "filled into all the fulness of God." In chapter i. he is filled by those things—"calling," "inheritance," "power"—which came out from God. In chapter iii. he is brought into God's fulness—filled into it. What a power that works in us—the power of this glory. A power and energy mighty of God, wrought for us in raising up Christ, and then His own: a power which now works in us, that we may say "To him be glory, by the assembly, by Christ Jesus, unto the age of ages." Thus we learn, even now, what the Church's occupation will be for ever—Praising Him for what the Beloved One is to God, and we in Him!

How sweetly does all this prayer remind us of Rebecca's journey with Eliezer of old! How he unfolded to the Affianced one's heart what Isaac possessed and was; till as it were, he "dwelt in her heart by faith," for she had never seen him. His riches and his glory were unfolded to her willing ears on her journey till he came forth at eventide, and she veiled her beauty from all but him!

So here; the Spirit of the Father strengthens the heart in the beauty and love of Jesus—the love of Christ which passes knowledge, till it is filled into all the fulness of God. The saint is shut up to Him who thus dwells in his heart by faith, and whom having not seen he loves, and whose glory unfolds itself to his soul.

In Colossians, Paul finds these saints not yet fully conscious of their completeness in Him in whom all the completeness in the Godhead dwells. Epaphras doubtless was *for them* a faithful minister of Christ; he taught them faithfully all that he knew. But I doubt not that when he visited Paul in his prison, to enjoy the instructions of the great apostle, and to tell him of his own labours in the Lord, that the wisdom of the aged man saw that he wanted in his own soul that which he could not supply to others as long as he possessed it not himself. Paul had never seen those Colossians; but had heard of them through this dear servant of Christ. He feared, too, that not being established in the

consciousness of union with Christ which they needed, they were in danger, by the introduction of ordinances and the like, to slip away from Him ; and the heart of the aged prisoner swells, and his pen unfolds a chapter more full of Christ's glories, perhaps, than any other Scripture he had ever written. He fills the regions and spheres of Creation, Providence, Redemption, and Glory, with the One in whom all the fulness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell. He fills the basket of consecrations, and feeds the souls and hearts of those whom he addresses with wondrous food. If their hearts had been beguiled for a moment, and other things proposed to them in addition to this Christ of God ; if they had, as it were, looked forth for a moment from the Tabernacle of the congregation where they had been shut up to feed upon Him, with what refreshment would their souls return to the food—the bread of God—the old corn of the Land of Glory, the basket of consecrations, on which he would feed them while they kept the charge of the Lord !

How sweetly does he desire their growth by the true knowledge of God, and that their souls' intelligence might be expanded under this heavenly food ; that they might know the whole mind and will of God, be fruitful in every good work ; be strengthened with His power unto all long suffering with joyfulness. Thus the heart would burst forth in praise to the Father, who had made them meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, delivering them from the power of darkness, and translating them into the Kingdom of God's dear Son, in whom they had redemption—even the forgiveness of their sins.

Thus he leads their souls to Him in whom they not only possessed these things, but in whom God's thoughts and purposes of glory centred—the Creator of all and Reconciler of all things. He says "Because by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him : and he is before all things, and by him all things consist (or subsist) and he is the head of the body, the assembly ; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence, for in him all the fulness was pleased to dwell."

ON THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

(CHAPTER IV.—CONTINUED.)

To the sixteenth verse we have ecclesiastical exhortation connected with what we have had, founded on this unity of chapter ii. The first thing is lowliness, that is the general exhortation. Jews and Gentiles were jealous of one another. Here it is the state of a man's soul. The fact of all this privilege is to make a man lowly, &c.

Q. What is the vocation? It is the position we have in Christ in chapters i. and ii.

(V. 4.) "Your calling." It is God's calling to you, that to which you are called. The unity of the Spirit is in the bond of peace. If we are quarrelling, it is clear we are not in the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The Jews and Gentiles were brought together, and were to walk in the power of that practically. As they all have the Spirit, and each has the Spirit, so they have to *walk* in the unity of this Spirit in the bond of peace.

We get three unities here.

The first unity is, one body, one Spirit, one hope; the second, one Lord, one faith, one baptism; the third, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all. The unity of the body is maintained, whether the will or not. "There *is* one body." You cannot pull a member out of Christ. That which is one I am to keep practically one in the bond of peace. We have not the trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost exactly, but more their special places in the economy of grace, the Spirit—the Lord, and God and Father. You have the Spirit the reality of the thing; then I get the public profession, one Lord, one faith, one baptism; then the universal unity (*v.* 6), one Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and—He brings us back—in us all.

Q. How can He be the Father of all? We are His offspring (Acts xvii. 28, 29).

We are to walk in the bond of peace because there *is* one body. It is not the effect of our keeping it.

We *are* baptized into one body, and are in the unity of the Spirit. But we have not kept it, and have been fighting and quarrelling, and all that. Endeavouring is to be the desire of our hearts. I have the blessings in unity, not what we have just been considering in connection with the Spirit, the Lord, and God and Father.

And now we come to what is individual, "To every one of you is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (v. 7). This is individuality. The unity took in all; now I have it individualized. One is an apostle, another is a prophet, another is an evangelist, and so on. But you get it universal to every member.

First you have the permanent gifts. They were always apostles or prophets, but they were not always prophesying although they were permanent. Here they were *persons*, not only *gifts*.

In v. 6 you clearly see the universality of the gifts, there I get every member taking his part. In Romans xii. you have it both individual and general. You have waiting on your ministry, &c., and he runs it on even into graces—all gifts. In Corinthians you have the simple phase of power. A man speaks with tongues, but (chap. xiv.) though the Spirit gives him the power to speak with tongues, he is not to say a word for all that, unless they understood, or that there was one to interpret. And so in the case of a revelation given to another sitting by, a prophet even was to hold his peace. It is not that his power is not real, but if he uses it at an improper time, he is not acting in grace, nor according to the Spirit.

In Ephesians I get Christ interested in the Church, and establishing that which is to edify it.

This will go on always, because Christ will not give up caring for His Church.

In Rom. xii. you have positive permanent gifts. A man is not to go beyond his gift, and then Paul goes on even to graces. Here we have (v. 16) that which every joint supplies. Here it is the grace of Christ supplying for the need. In Corinthians there is nothing said of its continuing for ever, but here it is *till we all come* (v. 13). It said (chap. ii. v. 20), "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets." You are not going to lay the foundation again.

Here the gift is identified with a person.

Q. What is the difference between Christ being the chief corner-stone and the foundation of the apostles and prophets? This foundation was the first thing that was laid, and Christ was the corner-stone that bound it all together.

In Matthew xvi., "on this rock I will build my church," it is Christ building; here it is Christ binding together. We have all these counsels. Christ going into death, and

being buried in the lower parts of the earth, so that He could not be holden of it. Then He goes up above all heavens, so that the whole redemption scene rises above everything.

Then the persons He has delivered from Satan He makes the vessels of His power in delivering other souls. It is connected with the fact of Christ having gotten the victory and filling all things.

(V. 8.) "Led captivity captive," is leading Satan captive. Christ is looked at as Messiah on earth. All that is gone now, because He goes down out of the way of Jews and Gentiles, and out of the way of everything; and then I have Christ in glory, and not a Christ on earth accomplishing promises. I have one who, to glorify God, goes down below all things, in order to go up above all things and glorify God. He gave up His Jewish place of Messiah in descending, so He goes above all things, and fills all things in the power of His redemption.

Then we come to the application (*v. 12*). 1st, Perfecting of the saints. 2nd, The general work of the ministry, the edification of the body of Christ, and the building up of the saints. Perfecting is having it complete in all its parts.

Q. Why do you want evangelists for the edification of the body.

If you go to edify all the body, you must bring in others. Edify the body means building up the body. So if you did not have evangelists you could have no body at all to build up. Pastors and teachers build them up in detail.

(V. 13.) If he *is* working to bring us into this (the perfect man), I quite admit I do not expect it to be brought about, but it is the object of desire.

Here is a person that does not know the unity of the body at all, but I should walk with him as a child of God, and hope the Lord will teach him that too.

Q. What is the meaning of the word prophesy in the New Testament?

Prophecy is a very vague word. It is used for positive inspiration, and it is used for edifying and building up in all things. Prophecy now is when a person, in the power of the Spirit of God, brings truth home to saints who do not know it. He is in a general sense prophesying. Not of course making a new revelation. It does not follow it is about *future* events at all. Half of the inspired writings of the prophets are not foretelling future events. How few

future events you have in Jeremiah. It is often recalling them to what the Lord would have them do.

The exhorter exhorts persons to conduct, but the prophet brings out truth which has lapsed perhaps, and is not owned.

(V. 15.) "Perfect man" is individual, because you get speaking the truth in love, that you may grow up into Him in all things, who is the head.

Q. What is perfect in Christ? The man that is perfect in all that Christ has formed him for.

In one sense a perfect man means a full-grown man. Paul could not say he *had* attained. When you come to results, it is quite true that we are not practically perfect. These gifts are given for the purpose "till we all come," &c. I do not doubt but that if there were more devotedness, there would be more gift developed.

Q. Why is Samuel spoken of as the first of the prophets? (Acts iii. 24.)

When the breach was made between God and the people of Israel, and the ark was taken, every link gone and Ichabod written on the people, He raises up Samuel, in sovereign grace, to be a link with Israel by prophecy.

(V. 13.) "Till we all come." This is going on always.

(V. 16.) You get the mutual connection of all saints. Observe it is to the edifying of itself in love, and it grows up.

Q. Does this show that every member has the power of building up?

Yes, certainly. Look at a man who has godly wisdom and a gracious heart, and never moves his lips in the assembly.

A man may be doing an immense work which never appears here, except in the peace that is maintained. It will all come out in the day of Jesus-Christ. There may be a word of wisdom or exhortation in private also; it is not necessarily in the assembly. I think there is danger of lectures and addresses swamping the responsibility of every member. (V. 17.) I get the principle of individual walk. There are two great subjective principles of godly walk. One is having put off the old man, and having put on the new, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (*vs.* 22-24). I have got now a man who is not after man, but after God. I have got a man put off which corrupts itself, and a man put on which is created anew. The second is that the Spirit is dwelling in me, and I am not to grieve the Spirit, whereby I am sealed till the day of redemption (*v.* 30).

THE LORD'S HOST.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THE LORD'S HOST," as of old with an earthly people, may fitly be used to distinguish those—now a spiritual people, whom He has redeemed. He has in His mighty love delivered them from the "world," the "flesh," and the "devil," through the redemption which He has wrought; putting them in full acceptance before God; an acceptance known and enjoyed by faith. This is the common lot of all who are His, of every child of God. "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." (Eph. iv. 8). He first went down into the condition into which sin had brought man; into the "lower parts of the earth," broke asunder the last stronghold of the enemy; led captive those who were captives to Satan, and so perfectly and completely delivered them, that He can now use them against the enemy as instruments of His power.

Now, not only has He given us, by the calling of His grace, to be "holy and without blame before him in love;" but He has also seated us "in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," as to our present place before Him. Nor is this enough. It is not sufficient that we should possess these, our blessings, and our place by faith; He would also have us to realize consciously the wealth of our portion in Him.

Of what use would be all the riches of India, even to one who possessed it by an unchallengeable title, if he did not realize his possessions, so as to use and enjoy them? So with the things of Christ—"Our own things." We may be assured of it that they offer a wondrous field for diligence of heart, to realize and enjoy them, and to put others into possession of them also. But we may also be assured that this requires purpose of heart, with a right condition of soul, and self-denial and devotedness: faithfulness, too, with that which is "another man's," that God may entrust us with the "true riches" (Luke xvi. 11-12.)

There is a wide difference between being, in the abstract, possessors of these heavenly riches, and the active realization and enjoyment of them, as of our place in union with Christ.

We shall hope, if the Lord will, to examine these things in detail; with the activities of those who have entered upon their heavenly warfare, let us add, with diligent hearts; and we will then endeavour to exhort one another while it is

called to-day, and encourage one another, or be encouraged, as the Lord may distribute to each of us in His own wise way.

We will divide our meditations, therefore, into three larger divisions, viz.—

1. The heavenly place, in Christ Jesus, which is ours as the people of God, through the redemption that is in Him.

2. Being there—the condition of soul which is needed, that we may realize our “own things.” This will embrace three special phases :—1. The practical dealing with *flesh* and *self*, consequent on our place in Him. 2. The condition of soul needed to meet the *enemy*. 3. How the *presence of the Lord* is ensured, and “*good success*” in our spiritual warfare. And,

3. The realization of our heavenly inheritance and the deliverance of others. In short, the activities of “the Lord’s Host” under the leadership of a heavenly Christ.

The striking analogy between the Book of Joshua and the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, has been a fruitful theme of meditation and blessing at all times amongst the Lord’s people, even when the analogy has been but faintly seen. Our meditations will be based chiefly upon these Scriptures which offer such a rich field for the study of the Lord’s people. “Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” (Rom. xv. 4); and “All these things happened unto them (Israel) for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come” (1 Cor. x. 11). Not only then, have we the immense field of the “Law of Moses and the prophets, and the Psalms,” for our learning, patience, and comfort; but we have in a special way the “things” which happened unto Israel, under the specific dealings of the Lord, presented to us as warnings and encouragements by the way.

May He bless His people, and stir up their hearts’ energies in the way that He can own and bless, for His name’s sake! May we not only have divine sensibilities as to the truth, and as to the blessedness of these things which pertain to Christ; but may we have the divine energies also in seeking His face, that we may know and enjoy the things that are freely given to us of God!

SAMARIA, GALILEE, JUDEA.

JOHN. IV, V.

THESE regions are (morally) very diverse. Samaria was the *defiled*, Galilee the *rational*, Judea the *religious*. Conscience was stirred in Samaria, and no miracle was required. The mind was exercised in Galilee, and miracles were the ground of faith. Self-importance, because of their religion, in Judea, prevailed to blind the people to the doings of the Son of God.

Samaria was the defiled, the outcast, the place "without the camp," as we may say. It was a type of the world of sinners. But then, it was such a place, a world of sinners, which the Son from the bosom came to visit. It had no character to lose. It lay as in its blood under the eye of the Son of God. It was therefore the very scene for a *Saviour* to find His proper occupation in, and the answer to His mission from heaven. And according to this, the Lord sits at the well of Sychar without reserve. He had no weight upon His spirit there. He was in His place, in a defiled place, the place which gave Him opportunity to act as from Himself, and to let it be learnt what He was, and for what He had come into this world from God.

In Galilee it was otherwise with Him. He looked out towards that region with a weight upon His heart. (iv. 44.) He testified that a prophet has no honour in his own country. Galilee was the proud, the rational, the worldly. It was not such a world the Son came to visit and to relieve. It was not *intellectual* man He came to flatter and to *educate*, it was sinners, needy and defiled ones of Samaria, He came to save. Galilee was not that natural scene for the Divine Stranger to sojourn and serve in, that Samaria was. And therefore, while we see Him taking His place at the well of Sychar without reserve, and then dwelling for two days in the village of Sychar as at home, here in Galilee there is not this ease and quietness of spirit at all. He has a weight on His heart, as He first looks out towards it, directing His steps thitherward, and while in it He may minister grace and power, but it is with no sensible refreshment to His soul.

Then in Judea He must stand, and even answer for Himself as a man arraigned at the bar of judges and accusers. (John v.) Judea was the religious, if Galilee were the

rational or the intellectual. Judea was the religious world, and the Son from the bosom had not come here to vindicate and adopt *religious* man, as He had not come here to educate and advance *intellectual* man. His business was with *defiled* man, ruined man, man as a sinner. In religious Judea He is challenged and arraigned, as in rational Galilee He was received upon competent testimony.

“A great multitude” was hanging over the pool of Bethesda. He who carried living water in Himself, and had healing for all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people, is neglected, not one of this great multitude seeking Him. He has to propose Himself to their notice, and even then He is not understood; and after He has done His work of grace and power, and done it to perfection, the impotent man, even taking up that on which he once lay, and carrying it, instead of its carrying him, He is left for the temple first, and then (ignorantly or religiously at least) committed into the hands of His enemies.

What a picture of the religious world! The place where ordinances, the Pool, the Sabbath, and the Temple, were waited on by thousands, while there was not one to *seek* Jesus; and when they were *found* by Him in healing power they did not understand Him! But defiled Samaria makes room for Him—for a blotted conscience and a troubled heart are materials for the hand of the Saviour of the world!

There is comfort in all this. How differently the Lord is affected in the three places. In Samaria He *sat* on the well, and dwelt there two whole days. He was at once at home, at His ease—for He was entertained there by sinners, conscience being stirred. In Galilee He was *reserved*, and found no fellowship, though He exercised power. The mind was exercised, but conscience was not stirred.

LETTERS OF INTEREST.

I.

“I THINK there is a difference between sin being on the conscience, and the soul being out of communion with the Lord. Not that in the former case the soul has not lost communion and the needs to be restored; but there is a difference; of course when we sin, that remains as a blot on our conscience until it is confessed, and until the faithful and

just One not only forgives us, but cleanses us from all unrighteousness. Still, the conscience may not have felt the stain of sin. Sin may not have left its mark there, and yet the soul will feel that it is not enjoying the bright shining of the Lord's face in communion and joy. I think there may be many reasons for this, much more and many more than I can touch upon.

Now, if I walk in nature, much and constantly, it lowers the soul down to its level, and although it is not sin, still it is not the energy of the Spirit of God, and it does not keep the soul in communion with the father and the Son. It is surprising how much we do walk in nature, and yet the conscience is not disturbed nor soiled. The love of one's children and family, and the toil of every day may find the heart walking blamelessly, and yet not in the energy of the Holy Ghost. It is not that we cannot exercise these things, and walk in the Spirit besides; but it is not easy nor common to find it so.

The very fact of walking in nature, and blamelessly exercising the toil of our hands, may necessitate that the mind and powers be much and constantly on the strain, and in the day in which we live this is almost a necessary thing. When, therefore, the moment of relaxation comes, and the strain is taken off the mind, and the heart turns to Christ, or seeks to occupy itself in divine things and serve the Lord, it finds that the soul has not been maintained in its true communion with the Lord, and communion is not there—the soul needs to be restored or revived.

Even service to the Lord may carry it away from Himself, and when the energy in which the service was performed is gone, the heart feels that the flow of communion is gone. Like the Sensitive Plant,—the least touch makes it droop, and need the quiet moment, and the wear and tear of life to cease, ere its leaves assume their wonted shape—ready for the beams of the sun to play upon each part of them again, in their normal condition.

There are shades in these things hardly to be defined, and the slightest breath will hinder that blessed condition of the soul in which communion with the Father and the Son flows in unhindered power.

As to the forgiveness and cleansing when we sin, it is two-fold in its action I think. Suppose a child soils some part of its dress, which a careful mother has taken pride to

put on. The child may go and hide its face in its mother's bosom and feels the forgiveness it seeks flowing freely from the mother's heart, even if unspoken by her. But still, though forgiven, the soil remains on the dress, and keeps up the remembrance and the pain of it in its heart. But, then, if the mother not only forgives but cleanses the spot away, and leaves the dress as before—all trace removed, how the child's heart will rise up in the liberty of the forgiveness and grace it has tasted, knowing now not only the forgiveness but the cleansing away of that which occasioned the heart's distress : communion is now restored fully.

II.

“Conflict in high places, or as we have it ‘For we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places,’—(Eph. vi. 12)—is but little known in the armies of the Lord, I think. No doubt it is the true, normal condition of His soldiers as to their warfare, but it assumes great things about them. Not only does it suppose them in all the consciousness of the place, ‘in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus,’ as fully realised in the soul (Eph. ii.); and that the ‘Christ’ who fills all things dwells in their heart by faith, thus enabling them to survey those fields of glory of which He is centre and Lord ; and to be ‘filled into all the fulness of God’ (chapter iii). To walk in the power of the ‘new man,’ with an unrieved Spirit, who has sealed them till the day of redemption (chap. iv). To walk in love as Christ loved and gave Himself for them, but to God, and as ‘sons of light,’ as imitators of God, as beloved children (chap. v). In short, to enjoy the power and full realization of the completeness of the standing and acceptance they have in the Beloved ; and to walk in the full response, by the Spirit, to this on earth—Christ living in them. *Then* indeed the Lord's people will know something of conflict in high places. Then will the wiles of the devil be spread to make such fall, when they are engaged in unmasking him, and meeting him with the whole armour of God, who would hinder the progress of the people of God in their taking possession of the heavenly land. Chapters xiii.—xix. in the little book called ‘*The Lord's Host,*’ describes, in measure, in detail, this solemn yet blessed warfare of the soldier of the army of the Lord.

III.

“I would hope that ——— may still be improving. We like not these interruptions, beloved, sure I am we do not, and none the less than my poor weak self; but they are good. The Lord never has to *excuse* Himself. At the end of Job’s many trials *all* had to repent, or retrace, or recall; but the Lord was justified in His doings, and clear in His visitations. The end was His glory, though the path may have been His strange work. The end was His interpreter, though the path may have been His riddle.

IV.

“He who orders the event orders its circumstances, and you must be silent. . . . Knowing my poor ways and services I am often in a spirit of bondage; disposed to compare myself with others, and thus be cast down. But this is all wrong. We ought to say, Let Him be glorified by whom He may be glorified. When Peter saw John *next* his Lord, and even leaning on His bosom, you may be sure Peter did not grudge the place to John. So let it be with our spirits; let us rejoice that *others*, in one sense, are more to Him than we are. O the liberty that suits the redeemed spirit, dear brother!”

MEDITATIONS ON THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS.

CHAPTER VI.

IN chapter v. 20, the apostle has declared—“Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” These words now would easily give an occasion to the flesh to raise the question—“Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?” (v. 1.) or in other words: Shall not grace glorify itself more abundantly in us the more we continue to live in sin? God forbid! replies the apostle, and then shows clearly and simply that is quite unnatural and absurd for the Christian to continue in the life of sin, because, through death, he has been torn away from its dominions. “God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” (v. 2.) Life in sin is death, and stands in the fullest contrast to the life imparted in Christ to the justified one, and the apostle here speaks of this life. In this chapter, therefore, it is not a question of the putting away of our

sins, as in the former, but of our deliverance from the *dominion* of sin. We not only have sinned, but also are the slaves of sin; and the Holy Ghost here shows us that, before God, we are such, have been fully set aside, and have been brought into the presence of God as slaves of righteousness, by having been co-planted into the death and resurrection of Christ.

From verse 3 to 14, we have a further explanation of the way and manner in which we have died to sin—a truth of the most blessed consequences, specially for our practical walk here below. But this having died, is never separated from the death of Christ, as we shall clearly see, for to reckon one's self to have died to sin, or to the law, *apart* from His death, would be a dangerous error.

Next then, the apostle shows how this having died to sin is already confessed and expressed by baptism to the death of Christ. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized to Jesus Christ were baptized to his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism to death; 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." (*vs.* 3-4.)

Through baptism we are brought in connection with the testimony and position of Him into whose name we are baptized. It was so with the baptism to John, and it is so with the baptism to Jesus Christ. In this place the apostle simply states, that we—believers, brought in connection with the death of Christ—are also buried with Him by baptism into His death.

The death of Christ is the fullest proof that the condition of man is altogether corrupt; because even the Son of God must die on the cross as soon as He took the place of man before God, to deliver him from death and its consequences. The lost sinner now understands that he is delivered from death as soon as he lays hold upon the work of Christ by faith, because Christ has suffered death for him. In His death he himself has partaken of death, and therefore has already received the wages of sin. Now, by baptism to the death of Christ the believer confesses, that he has departed from the first condition, which is altogether rejectable before God, and set aside in the death of Christ, in order to walk in a new condition before God. Baptism therefore presents perfect deliverance from the condition in

which we had our place in the first Adam, before God, and were lost. Therein we testify that we, as having died in Christ, are also buried with Him; and now, God on His part gives us the same testimony. But if we have died with Him and been buried with Him, then are we also raised up with Him, and stand in Him, the second Adam, in a new position before God, which we shall find more clearly expressed in *vv.* 5 and 6.

But what now is the object of our being planted into the death and resurrection of Christ respecting our walk? "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." (*v.* 4.) In the first condition we lived in sin and in death, but now in newness of life, because we have been raised up with Christ. The life of the Christian is quite new, and the walk issues forth from it. The bearing of this new life, into which we have been placed through the resurrection, is put before us here in a very striking manner. Christ has perfectly glorified God in His death. His resurrection, therefore, was requisite for the glory of God. God was bound, so to say, through His own glory to raise up Christ out of the dead, because Christ had glorified all that was in God—His righteousness, His love, His truth, and His power. It was impossible for the glory of God to give death a lasting victory over Him who was faithful, and the relation existing between God, as Father, and Jesus, equally forbid that God should leave His Son as slave of what had been the fruits of sin and the power of the enemy—as slave of death. In a word: God owed it to His own glory, as God and Father, to raise up Jesus from amongst the dead. Christ, therefore, has been raised by the glory of the Father, and in this new condition—the fruit of the operation of this glory—He is the type and the character of life, in which we walk before God. Without this revelation of His glory in Christ, God would have been hidden for ever. In the glorified Christ alone, the centre of all the counsels of God, we behold the glory of the Lord with unvailed face, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

(To be continued, D. V.)

S I N.

“SIN is lawlessness” — *ἀνομία*—1 John iii. 4; “The conception of lust”—James i. 15; the motion of a will opposed to God. It first shows itself in disobedience—Gen. iii.—whether the result of being deceived by Satan or otherwise (1 Tim. ii. 13, 14); it goes on in refusing to acknowledge the evil of this (Gen. 4); and in this rank soil is developed all wickedness till overtaken at length by the judgment of God. Gen. vi. vii.

Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. Abel owned that there was need of propitiation; his offering was an appeasement for sin and an acknowledgment of the rights of God; Cain’s offering was complimentary. Abel’s was in acknowledgement of the breach that sin had made, and in faith of the sacrifice and virtue of Christ as the ground of approach to God; Cain’s was in the denial both of the sin and of the sacrifice. Abel’s was the judgment of the first man by whom sin had entered, and death by sin. Cain’s was in the denial of this, and in consequence the development of the first man, now fallen, in all the forms of wickedness in which the world has been founded and built up until he reaches a semi-angelic state in wickedness, gigantic and renowned (Gen. vi.), but without and against God, in which state, after much forbearance on God’s part, he is overtaken by judgment—(Gen vii.)

Abel’s offering was “in faith,” and was the witness of his righteousness (Heb. xi.4); Cain’s was in the rejection of the testimony of God; he was a hater of righteousness, and his deeds were evil.—1 John iii.

In a world of sin, truth and righteousness is to own the sin and the need of propitiation, and to own my part in this. It is purely evil to ignore it, and when the foundation is bad to go on as though it were good and God were not offended. I must judge myself as connected with the fall, and as I cannot repair the breach, or meet the offended majesty of God, I must submit myself to His righteousness—and this is established through His grace for us in the blood of Jesus—who also Himself becomes our righteousness before God. So that while it makes nothing of me in the flesh, but a sinner and helpless, it makes everything of Christ and the grace that gave Him, and more of me in Him than what before I had lost through sin—thus giving me a full judg-

ment of man in the flesh, and also a perfect assurance and boldness of access into the presence of God through Christ; it is also the foundation of all practical righteousness in daily life, as it is, too, the only righteous and truthful manner of approach to God, or, of our relationship in blessing with Him.

But this is the very thing that provokes the enmity and wrath of the unrighteous man, who denies the true nature of sin and his fallen state, and of the offence rendered by his sin against the majesty and sovereignty of God. The deeds of such a one are only and always evil. Whatever his actions may be in themselves, the state in which he lives is that of sin, and his every act carries in the *motive* of it the nature of the sin in which he lives, the state in which he is; it is the act of an unsubjected will; and it is the solemn testimony of Scripture that "the whole world lieth in the wicked one." (1 John v. 19.)

Three things constitute the world morally, as established by fallen man driven out from the presence of God, in Gen. iv., viz., riches, pleasure, and science; "the desires of the flesh and of the mind." Subtract these three things from a man of the world, and nothing remains for him but conscious misery, without God. It is the rich man's hell of Luke xvi., reached morally in this world before he actually gets there in the next. The world is already founded on sin—judgment will be the consequence of this from the hand of God—a judgment already announced by Jesus (John xii. 31), and from which He alone can save us. E. C.

THE LORD'S HOST.

THE PURPOSES OF GOD, AND THE STATE OF THE PEOPLE.

CHAPTER I.

IN the early chapters of the Book of Exodus we have a vivid illustration of the state of God's people as sinners, before redemption. They are in Egypt, a company of slaves and idolaters. Egypt gives us, in type, the world in its state of nature, fallen and under Satan's power. They were there in conscious misery, though apparently without any thought but present ease from the bondage under which they groaned. The "iron furnace of Egypt," with the lash of its taskmasters, and the clank of the chains of its slavery was felt,

but God was unknown! Even when their cry "by reason of the bondage" was heard, it was not a cry to God. It reached His ears doubtless, for all things are naked and open before Him; His ear is never heavy, so that the groans of this scene do reach Him. The poor prodigal (Luke xv.) had got to the end of his means in the land of his slavery, but that did not bring him to his father, nor even "to himself;" nor did his heart cry to God for deliverance. To supply the want from which he suffered, he goes further away from God than ever. His *will* brought him away from his home at the first; his *need* took him further off still; his complete *misery* gave occasion for the display of his father's fullest grace!

So with a sinner. You will see one wasting health, talents, and energies, in the pursuit of some bubble which long eludes his grasp; when reached at last, it vanishes from his sight and affords no satisfaction to his craving heart. Then the prodigal goes further, and joins himself to a citizen of that country, but he finds the reality of the principles of that land—it never *gives*. Ask a man of the world to look back upon his life and tell you, when he was wasting his energies, and appearing so rich and happy, did it satisfy him? He will honestly answer you, No! His *want* never brought him to God; it carried him further away even than his *will*; and he barter for the husks his all! It is in a certain sense a mercy to find a soul at this extremity, for in the extremity of *misery* there is no hindrance to the grace of God, which an "elder son" refused.

"And God heard their groaning" (Ex. ii. 14); and God came down to deliver them. He is not merely love, but He is active in His love. "God so loved the world that he *gave* his only begotten Son." "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." But "God is a consuming fire." How then can He act in love, and have to do with sinners without consuming them? This is beautifully hinted at in Exod. iii., where the angel of the Lord appeared to Moses "in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush." The bush burned, but was not consumed. Strange anomaly! "And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, *why the bush is not burnt*!" This was the wonder. If God had revealed Himself in the character of One whose burning holiness must consume all contrary to itself, who might abide? But He came down and revealed Himself in

lowly grace in Jesus. He veiled His glory in that lowly Man. Still "he could not be hid." As the sun in piercing through the cloud proves the intensity of his beams by the light and heat which they convey, so Jesus in His lowly path of service and toil, sent forth His beams of love and light to enter the hearts of those whose need had penetrated His. He came down in grace to seek in a poor lost world for those who would trust His love, before the day of judgment. Thus God, who is a consuming fire, was not consuming, because He was revealing Himself in grace, but in a grace which reigns through righteousness.

He now announces His purpose to Moses: "I am come down to deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land into a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey." Not a word is said of the wilderness, and its forty years of endurance and toil. His *plan* was to test them there, which He did; but His *purpose* was to bring them to the place where He could dwell, to a land that "drinketh water of the rain of heaven. A land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year" (Deut. xi). He would bring us into a place where His own heart can be satisfied, and where He may dwell with and enjoy His people. How different from the land of slavery where nothing is to be had for nothing, where no man gives! "For the land whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs" (Deut. xi).

God has redeemed us for heaven and for His own glory in Christ. He has not redeemed us for this world at all, though He tries and tests our hearts here, and teaches us to test and trust His. So He announces His purpose to Moses, and says not a word of the wilderness.

Now when Moses came to announce God's purpose to redeem His people, Satan began at once to bestir himself. As long as the strong man armed kept his palace, his goods were in peace, but when a stronger than he appears, all is changed. Burdens are increased, and the tasks more severe. Bricks are to be made without straw. The quiet service of Satan, where all are asleep under his power, gliding down the stream, is easy indeed, compared with the moment when

God begins to work. The deathfulness of a previous state is even preferred to the pressure of the enemy. The chains which had been noiseless and unfelt are now heavy, and their clank is heard. How many and how varied are the fetters with which Satan binds his victims! And these chains are the saddest of all which are noiseless, and therefore unfelt and unheard.

Cain's chain was envy. He could not bear to see one who had not toiled like himself accepted without an effort, as Abel was. Balaam's was the "wages of unrighteousness" which bound his soul in its fetters. He would gladly have died the "death of the righteous," but to break the fetters he so well loved, and to live the life of the righteous, he could not bear, and he was a lost man.

With Herod, it was his lust which bound his soul. In him we see the signs of deep workings of the natural conscience, so much so that "he feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly" (Mark vi). He seemed for a time to be an altered man. But the chain that bound his soul with noiseless power was too powerful for him to break, and to please a courtesan he beheaded John. How deeply solemn!

We might mention other cases in Scripture of this kind. Judas loved money; avarice was the noiseless chain, and it eat away his heart; no eye but the Lord's could see it. He grasped it more tightly, till the "son of perdition" "went to his own place." With the amiable young ruler, it was his possessions which bound his heart unconsciously to the scene, till Jesus put His finger on the chain, and "he went away grieved, for he had great possessions." With Gallio it was the careless indifference which we see in so many; "He cared for none of those things." With Felix it was procrastination. He trembled at Paul "reasoning of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," but put off repentance to a convenient season, which, alas! never came. With Saul of Tarsus, it was his robe of self-righteousness. Cleaving so closely to the heart, these chains are unfelt till the Lord interferes in mercy; then all is changed. Satan's bondage begins to be felt as it never was before, and all his energies are then put forth to frustrate the purpose of the Lord in delivering grace. Alas! we find that the people whom He has come to deliver now murnur. But we cannot

wonder at this, as all was comparatively well with them in that service with which Satan had made them satisfied. But when the chains are touched they complain.

I desire to address the conscience of my reader as I pass on. Is there some noiseless chain, silently but surely woven round your heart, and, alas! it may be, unknown to you? Perhaps it has been touched now and then by the Lord, and the clank heard for a moment in your conscience; still yet you are unbound. It may be a chain which you know yourself—the Lord and conscience have made you aware of it—and still it is there. Some secret sin—something cherished and allowed in your heart and ways—unseen by the eye of others, there it rusts, and cleaves to you. Be warned, and look to Him who has pointed it out; be assured that as surely as His unerring eye has seen it, so surely can He snap the fetters that bind your heart; they will be like “the cords that were upon (Samson’s) arms”—they will become “as flax that was burnt with fire.”

Do not allow the terrible chain of procrastination to bind your soul till that “convenient season” which never comes; but be warned, and flee to Him (be you saint or sinner), and in His presence He will prove the truth of His words—“If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, you shall be free indeed” (John viii).

MEDITATIONS ON THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS.

CHAPTER VI.—*Continued.*

OUR implantation into the death and resurrection of Christ is more clearly expressed in *vv.* 5 and 6, as remarked before, and in these as well as in other passages the little word “*with*” is particularly to be observed—crucified *with* Him, dead *with* Him, buried *with* Him, raised *with* Him, made alive *with* Him. We have fully become a perfect plant with Christ, in His death as well as in His resurrection. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. In His death we are fully set aside before God, with regard to the old man, and renewed to life in His resurrection. We have now our place before God as raised-up-ones with, and stand before Him in His own divine righteousness.

We are not only, through His *blood*, reconciled and justified, we are also crucified with Him in His *death*, and made alive with Him in His *life*. The expression "body of sin" signifies the whole condition of the natural man as fully subjected to sin and its dominion. Now this body of sin in which we had our place before God by nature and served sin, is put aside, in that the old man is crucified with Him and therefore our service of sin has ceased. This discontinuance therefore is the simple result of the fact that we are crucified with Him. Raised up with Christ we have ceased to be slaves of sin; as such we are crucified with Him, and raised up with Him to be slaves of righteousness; "For he that is dead is freed from sin" (v. 7). A dead man cannot be charged with sin; but a *living* man is responsible for the condition in which he is found.

"Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him" (v. 8). The power of life by which He lived is also our portion. We belong to another world where Christ lives as the risen One. This we believe and also know it, "that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him" (verse 9). We also therefore reckon upon the resurrection. In His perfect victory over death into which He entered for us through grace, we participate in the resurrection. By faith we have entered into life through Him, because we have part in the death which He has suffered for us.

The obedience of Christ was put to the test to the end, even to the death of the cross. He would rather die than be disobedient, for this would have delivered Him to sin. But He was far from it. He died and accomplished His obedience in death. But now that He has glorified God, He hath for ever done with death. Through the glory of the Father, resurrection was the blessed result of the death of Christ. Now, He lives to God, and has nothing more to do with sin; His life stands in connection with God only. "For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God" (v. 10). Even so it is with us, for we enjoy all this through faith; we have died to sin, and are become alive unto God and have no other object of life but God through Jesus Christ. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Christ Jesus" (v. 11). I have to reckon myself to be dead; I have the right to do it, because Christ has died for me.

Sin is not dead, it lives; but I am dead. The old man is crucified, and therefore now follows this grave and solemn exhortation in verses 12 and 13, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof; neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." Here it is not a question of a principle, but of a power. With Christ we have died unto sin, and in practice sin has no more power over us. Death has led us out of its service, and as alive from the dead we have now to yield ourselves unto God as in the service of righteousness. But mark well that grace is the source of practical power upon which it depends here. "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (*v.* 14). The *law* demands but gives nothing, and therefore under the law we are the slaves of sin; but *grace* forgives and gives, and therefore sin cannot reign over us. Under grace we have God on our side, and He is stronger than sin; and because He has judged the same, He cannot permit it to reign.

In grace the flesh certainly beholds an opportunity to sin, but we see in this chapter how the apostle stops it each time. In *v.* 1, it reads—"Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" No; for that would no longer be the grace which annulled sin to save us. And here, in verse 15, it says—"Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace?" No; for in this case we should be the slaves of sin in another way; for we are slaves to whom we obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness. (*v.* 16.) We were the slaves of sin, because we stood in obedience to it; but now that we are in Christ Jesus, we are made free from sin, and become the slaves of righteousness. Through this liberty we are made free to serve God and to obey righteousness, whereas it was impossible for us formerly to serve God. The character of the life which we possess in Christ Jesus is obedience—namely, obedience in righteousness. We walk in the same righteousness which has justified us in Christ Jesus. And even as free as we were from this righteousness, even so free are we now in Christ from sin. (*vv.* 15—20.) The apostle here uses the expression—"Slaves of righteousness," because, as he says, of the weakness of the flesh. Either the Romans

would not have understood him, or it was to be feared that they, led by the weakness of the flesh, would have continued in sin, had he used a weaker expression. This slavery is not now service without fruit. Practical righteousness reveals itself always in a more perfect separation to God. One obeys, and the fruit of obedience is unto holiness, the spiritual ability which leads us to a fuller knowledge and fellowship with God.

The three last verses then, show us the fruit, the end and the reward of a slave of God. The slave of sin has no fruit, only shame, and his end and his reward are death. But the fruit of the slave of God is unto holiness, and the free gift received from God, and his end, are eternal life. He possesses this life in Christ Jesus now, but it is also ready prepared for him for the end of his walk. (*vv.* 21-23.)

LETTERS OF INTEREST.

I.

DEPEND upon it, dear — the path of obedience is the path of blessing. Our blessed Master has left us an example that we should follow His steps; and He answered the tempter who sought to tempt Him from this path, three times with the words of Holy Writ—three times from Israel's guide-book, Deuteronomy. He could say, "By the words of thy lips I have kept me from the path of the destroyer" (Ps. xvii.), and this path He has put before His sheep (John xv. 7, 10-11), so that obedience is absolutely necessary to my enjoyment of His love, to my knowing His joy, and to my asking aright in prayer and getting my requests answered.

As another has said, "The place of divine favour is always ours; we are accepted in the Beloved, but its realisation and enjoyment depend on the revelations and action of the Holy Ghost in us, and *these* depend on our walk, and state, and obedience. The enjoyment of divine favour and blessedness is made to depend on the walk of the saint. It must be so, if it be by the Holy Ghost dwelling in us; for how should we be enjoying communion in love in the midst of evil or idle thoughts?"

There is plenty of activity abroad everywhere, and one is thankful that Christ is preached and souls get blessing; but then the service that will meet with the Lord's approval on

that day is that which is done in His name (*i.e.* with His authority, for He is Master), and unto Him as an object, His love constraining, as you remark in your letter, "neither to saints, nor to sinners, but to Jesus only."

There is a great difference between doing what *I think He will like me to do*, and doing His will. If I say "What is His will?" I must learn it by sitting at His feet; be near enough to Him to be guided by His eye, and be led by His Spirit in communion with Him, this is "*intelligent service*" (*λογικην*) (Rom. xii. 1). Mary is at His feet as *learner*, then in her sorrow for succour as a *mourner*, and then as a *worshipper*; but at *His feet* was her place.

Joab did many exploits for David, but when *the over-comers* are seen, and their deeds recorded, Joab is not there (2 Sam. xx. iii). Benaiah does find a place in the kingdom, and what he did is told us, and he got his place when the rejected one got his and reigned, but even he, Benaiah, was surpassed by others, who had also a place there, for verse 23 tells us, "that he attained not to *the three*." Those three distinguished ones the Holy Ghost has been pleased to leave on record, to mark out for our instruction.

What then had they done? Benaiah had slain the Moabites and the Egyptian, and also the lion in a pit on a snowy day. But what mighty deeds have these three accomplished (verses 13-17)? They studied the heart of the rejected king, and brought refreshments to him in his rejection, they counted not their lives dear unto them in order to please him; they first of all associated themselves with him in the cave of Adullam in the place of rejection; they then studied his heart, heard his voice, and at the risk of their lives studied and wrought to please him, and verily they had their reward. May we be followers of him! (Heb. viii. 13, Col. i. 9-10, Heb. xi. 5).

II.

"Perfection," or being "perfect," as used in the case of Christians (Matt. v. 48), in the case of Israel (Deut. xviii. 13), and in the case of Patriarchs (Gen. xvii. 1), means, I believe, the acting consistently with the character in which God has been pleased to reveal Himself at the moment, guided and governed by the principles on which He acted according to the revelation given and the relationship in which the person stood to Him.

To Abraham God was revealed as "Almighty." His perfection therefore, was to walk before "Almighty God" as a pilgrim of faith, dependent on His power.

To Israel God was revealed as "Jehovah," the Fulfiller of all His promises, who, when redemption had been accomplished in figure, came down to dwell amongst His people. Their perfection, therefore, was to walk with Jehovah in that separateness from evil which became Him, and to count on His faithfulness.

To the Christian God has been revealed as "Father." His perfection, therefore, is to display the relationship in which he is, the nature which he has, a divine nature, by acting as a child, governed and guided by the principles on which his Father acts, and counting on His grace. He is to be an imitator of God as a dear child.

Scripture makes it clear there is no such thing as perfection, intrinsic perfection, in any on earth; there never was since the fall, save in Christ only. The believer cannot say that he has no sin in him—at least if he does he deceives himself, and the truth is not in him. If, therefore, none can say they have no sin in them, none can say they are perfect in that sense.

This lack of intrinsic perfection, however, does not excuse or make a way for failure in practice. The believer is called to walk as Christ walked, and that, most surely, was perfectly. "I do always those things that please him." There is power for this (Phil. i. 10-11). So that while the believer cannot say he is perfect, owing to the fact of sin being in him, yet he is to be governed and guided in his walk by the principles suited to God, revealed as Father, to display the nature he has as a child from the Father, and in this sense to be perfect as his Father in heaven is perfect.

You will find, I think, an illustration of what I mean in verse 16 of the same chapter. That the Christian is expected so to let his light shine before men that they seeing the character of the works cannot do otherwise than trace them to a divine source—"the Father which is in heaven." The works are such as to leave no doubt from whence they flow.

It is interesting to observe that while God has been revealed to us as Father, He who has been so revealed is the Almighty God of Abraham and the Jehovah-God of Israel. Thus we have the fulness of all the former revela-

tions of God, while having a further and especial one to ourselves—God in grace, the Father.

You will see this in 2 Cor. vi., where the Spirit of God urging on His saints that holiness and separation from evil which become the place they have been called to, says—“Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a *Father* to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the *Lord* (Jehovah) *Almighty*.” Abraham’s and Israel’s God is our Father.

III.

I am sorry to hear from your note that dear — is poorly, yet “it is well:” “your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.” The Lord comfort and sustain you both, and give you fresh experience of His goodness, to be a sweet recollection when in the glory; when there and looking back, of which of our trials shall we say, “I wish I could have had my way, I would have spared myself that?” No, “The Lord has *His* way, in the whirlwind and the storm” (Nahum i.), and His way is the best way, nay, “His way is perfect.” Flesh says, “But I don’t like it now.” God, however, the “God of hope,” gives faith, and strengthens faith, and faith is the substantiating of things *hoped* for, so that if I cannot by reason of infirmity “rejoice in tribulations,” I can at least “rejoice in hope,” and He who says “patient in tribulation,” in the same verse (Rom. xii. 12), who is Himself the “God of patience” too, *gives* patience, power also to the faint (Is. xi.). The Lord direct your hearts into God’s love and Christ’s patience! Thanks to Him who loves and cares for us, we are all well. We prayed for you this evening. I had my spirit much refreshed last night at —, in speaking from Ruth. She and Boaz “the mighty man of wealth,” *two* persons so distant every way in chap. i., made *one* in chap. iv., and all the details so lovely. The scene “at the gate,” where righteousness was vindicated, the obstruction put out of the way, love and grace set free, and the desire of *faith* answered—the idolatress of Moab, the poor gleaner in the *field*, the loved and honoured wife in the *house* (ch. iv. 11).

MEDITATIONS ON THE ACTS OF THE
APOSTLES.*

INTRODUCTION.

THE Acts of the Apostles are a continuation of the Gospel of Luke; they are written by the same evangelist. Whether the discourses be those of Peter or of Paul, they have their starting-point in the heavenly commission which we find at the close of Luke's Gospel (Luke xxiv.).

It is not necessary, I trust, to say that it is all by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; inasmuch as each of the evangelists has been used by God in presenting to us a different aspect of the history of the Lord, and has accomplished, with the help of the Spirit, the work allotted to him of God.

For example, in Matthew we find in a special manner the dispensations of God, and the Lord as Emmanuel in the midst of Israel on earth. In Luke, after the first two chapters, we have the Son of Man and the ways of God in grace, and the blessings of the present time. Again, in Matthew the ascension of the Lord is not recorded, and the commission given to the apostles comes from Jesus risen, and is addressed to the Gentiles, as though the remnant of the Jews were already received in grace.

In Luke, the Lord is on His way to ascend into heaven, and goes up from them while speaking to them, blessing them with a heavenly blessing; and the commission is addressed to all—first to the Jews, and then to the Gentiles. The disciples were to commence at Jerusalem. And this work—the fulfilment of this mission—is what we find recorded in the Acts.

Let us follow the course of this history, which is essentially the history of the activity of the apostles Peter and Paul: the first amongst the Jews and in the foundation of the Church at Jerusalem; the other among the Gentiles, although he always addressed himself first to the Jews. The former—Peter—one of His eleven disciples, had followed the Lord on earth till the cloud received Him and took Him out of their sight; the latter—Paul (an open enemy of the name of Christ, and converted by sovereign grace while engaged in the destruction, were it possible, of this Name) only saw Him in the glory, and goes out to the Gentiles to

* Translated from the Italian of J. N. D.

call them to the faith; a marvellous witness of the sovereign grace of God, and of a glory which rendered a magnificent testimony to the perfect and accepted work of Christ, and to that into which faith in Him and in His work brings believers. Both these great apostles lay the same foundation of salvation preached in the one only Saviour, and one only work whereby we are saved.

Then the great and important fact, on which all the history depends, is the descent of the Holy Spirit. No doubt we find, as in all the history of the Bible, man's responsibility and the ways of God amidst the actings and the weakness of man; nevertheless the presence of the Holy Spirit on earth, sent from the Father and the Son of Man, and dwelling (1) in believers and (2) in the house of God, is of the greatest importance. It is only after God has accomplished redemption that He comes to dwell amongst men. He did not dwell with Adam in his innocence, nor with Abraham, though He visited him, nor with any until He had brought Israel out of Egypt, and had redeemed them from under the hands of the king of Egypt, whose prisoners they were. Then He came to dwell in their midst in the cloud, and the tabernacle was filled with His glory.

Similarly, after the Son of Man had ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of God, having accomplished the work of redemption, He sends down the Holy Spirit from heaven—the Comforter—according to His promise; and the baptism of the Holy Spirit ensued. Sent by the Father, He cries “Abba, Father,” in the hearts of those who have received Him. Sent by the Son of Man on the part of the Father, He reveals His glory as Man in heaven; and, further, He forms the body of Christ, uniting the members to the Head, so that “he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit,” dwelling in the believer, and likewise in the universal Church of believers, so that they are together the habitation of God. It is evident that this truth is of immense importance; the spiritual liberty of the child of God, the unity of the assembly of God, and the union of the children of God, all depend on the presence of the Spirit, as it is all founded on the work of the Saviour on the cross. Then this truth brings to light the actual state of the external Church in which He dwells, because she has grieved this Spirit; and has been, and has acted, in every respect the contrary of what the Spirit would have had her to do, so that the judgment of God is about to come upon her.

Since I have spoken of the descent of the Holy Spirit, I must explain that I do not refer here to the "new birth," although it be the same Spirit that works it also, but of the coming of the Holy Spirit personally, when the Son of Man had ascended into heaven. The Holy Spirit has wrought divinely ever since the foundation of the world. He moved on the face of the waters; He inspired the prophets, has been the immediate instrument of all that God has done on earth and in the heavens; but He did not come down here until the Son of Man had ascended to sit on the right hand of God (John vii. 37-39); and He is received only when we have believed (Eph. i. 13; Gal. iv. 6). This we see clearly elsewhere likewise; we are sealed when we have believed, and specially believed in the value of the blood of Christ. Washed in this precious blood we are fit to be the habitation of the Spirit of God. "Know ye not," says the apostle Paul, "that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God" (1 Cor. vi. 19). As when the leper was healed and cleansed under the law, he was first washed in water, then sprinkled with blood, then anointed with oil (Levit. xiv. 8, 9, 14-18), a distinct type of our cleansing by the word of God when we are converted, and born anew, then of the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, and lastly, of the anointing of the Holy Spirit, by which we are sealed unto the day of final redemption. So likewise all the gifts, the exercise of which we find in the Church, are the manifestation of the Holy Spirit which works there. But here in the Acts we do not find the exposition of the operations of the Spirit, but the fact itself of His coming to work.

(To be continued, D.V.)

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 But joy, and peace, and gladness, and rest from sin;
 Oh! 'tis all glory yonder, for Christ is there,
 In blest effulgence shining beyond compare.

And there's no sorrow yonder, nor grief, nor pain;
 They live to serve and worship the Lamb once slain;
 And there's no morrow yonder,—'tis one "to-day,"
 There shines with fadeless splendour the Sun's bright ray.

For Christ's the Sun and sunshine of that bright place;
 There we shall learn His glory, as here His grace;
 And now we wait with patience His blessed will;
 The stormy wind and tempest His word fulfil.

They're servants of His pleasure, He bids them come;
 Then by a word they're silenced and all is calm:
 And we shall reach in safety the moment bright,
 When we shall see His beauty in radiant light.

And if meanwhile He calls us to face the storm,
 His shepherd care surrounds us, and His strong arm
 Shall guide us through in safety the long dark night,
 Till earth-born clouds shall vanish in morning light.

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