

“THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH.”

The Son of God took the form of a servant. He came not in His own name, but in His Father's. He emptied Himself, made Himself of no reputation, and in the fulfilling of that form He began His course while yet but a “young child:” and He was, among other humiliations, obedient even to a flight into Egypt, as though to save His life from the wrath of the king, for the glory of Him who had sent Him.

We must watch against taking these instances of His perfect *Servant-form*, and using them to the depreciation of His Person. He was unassailable. Till His hour came, and He was ready to surrender Himself, captains and their fifties again and again would fail ere they could reach Him—but rather than this, He would again and again “humble Himself,”—going into “Egypt” on one occasion, and unto “another village” on another—the scorned, rejected Son of man.

Shall we treat this mystery of the subjection, the voluntary subjection of the Son of God, with a careless mind? Shall we draw aside the veil irreverently? And yet, if these instances to which I have referred, and others kindred with them, be cited to prove the *mortal* condition of the flesh and blood which the Lord took, we do draw aside the veil with an irreverent and unskilful hand. Yes, and with more than that. We do Him double wrong. We depreciate His person through acts which manifest His boundless grace and love to us, and His devoted subjection to God.

And yet it has been said again and again, that nature or violence or accident would have prevailed over the flesh and

blood of the Lord Jesus, to cause death as with us. But does not such a thought connect the Lord with sin, inasmuch as in the inspired history of flesh and blood (and we are to be wise only according to what is there written), death attaches to it *only* through sin. If flesh and blood in His Person were liable to die, or by its own nature and condition capable of dying, (save by His gracious surrender of Himself), is it not therefore, connected with sin? And if so, is Christ before the soul?

This suggestion treats Him as one *exposed* to death. It takes such knowledge of Him as leaves Him liable to die in a way which *He could never have taken up* in the fulfilling of His form as a Servant. *And beyond what He took up in that character, He was liable to nothing.*

There is indeed something in this suggestion to make one fear that "the gates of hell" are again attempting "the Rock" of the church, the Person of the Son of God. And if it be vindicated on this plea, that it is designed only to illustrate the Lord's true humanity, the vindication itself becomes matter of increased suspicion. For, is it mere humanity, I ask, I get in the Person of Christ? Is it not something immeasurably different, even God manifest in the flesh? He would not as a Saviour, do for me a sinner, if He were not Jehovah's fellow. No creature of the highest order could work out meritorious righteousness. Every creature *owes* all that he can render. None but One who thinks it not robbery to be equal with God can *take* the form of a servant—for He is a servant already, as I have said before. No creature can supererogate, as another has said, the thought would be rebellion. No fellow creature could stand for us by his obedience. His obedience is *already due for himself*. None could be qualified to stand surety for man, but one who could without presumption, claim equality with God, and consequently be independent. So that a suggestion which professes to

illustrate true humanity* in Christ, ought to alarm us, as though our Rock were assailed anew.

By Arians and Socinians, the full glory of "God manifested in the flesh," was clouded long ago with either a deeper or more specious falsehood. Lately the *moral* nature of the man Christ Jesus, "who is over all, God blessed for ever," was assailed in Irvingism, and it was blotted and tainted, as far as that evil thought could reach. Still more lately, the *relationship to God* in which Jesus stood, and the *experiences of the soul* in which Jesus was exercised, have been the unholy traffic of the human intellect—and now *His flesh and blood*, the "temple" of His body, has been profaned. But one can trace a kindred purpose in all, *the depreciation of the Son of God*. And whence comes this? And whence comes the very opposite and contradictory energy? What is *the Father* occupied with, or jealous about, if it be not the glory of the Son, in resistance of all that would depreciate Him, be it gross or subtile? Read, beloved, the Lord's discourse to the Jews in John v. There that secret is disclosed, that though the Son has humbled Himself, the Father will see to it that He be not thereby dishonoured, or in any wise depreciated—watching over the rights, the full divine rights, of the Son, by this most careful and jealous decree—"he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him."

And let me add, other facts in the history of the blessed Lord, such as hunger and thirst and weariness, are not to be used as the least warrant for this thought about the mortality of His flesh and blood. The Son of God in flesh was exposed to nothing. Nothing outside the garden of Eden was His portion. He was hungry and wearied at the well of Samaria. He slept in the ship after a day of fatiguing service, but

* i.e. mere humanity. "True humanity" was absolutely perfect in Christ, as the writer proves. [Eds.]

whatever of all this He knew in the place of thorns, and thistles, and sorrow, and sweat of face, He knew it all and took it all, only as fulfilling that "form of a Servant" which in unspeakable grace He had assumed. But underneath lay "the form of God." He arose, and as the Lord who gathers the wind in His fists, and binds the waters in a garment, He rebuked the sea into a calm (Mark iv.).

The Son of God died on the tree, where the wicked hand of man had nailed Him, and the eternal purpose and grace of God had appointed Him. There He died, and died because He was there. The Lamb was *slain*. Who would think of gain-saying such a thought? Wicked hands murdered Him, and God provided Him as His own Lamb for the altar. Who would touch for a moment so needed and precious a mystery? And yet the Lamb gave up His own life. No exhaustion under the suffering, no pressure of the cross, led Him to the death; but His life He yielded of Himself. In token of being in full possession of that which He was rendering up, "He cried with a loud voice," and then "gave up the ghost." The history of the moment admits of no other thought; and I will add, neither should the worshipping affections of the saints. Pilate marvelled that He was dead already; he would not believe it, he had to satisfy himself of it. No time had been passed on the cross sufficient to extort the life, so that the legs of the others had to be broken. But He was dead already. Pilate must make enquiry, and call for the witness, ere he would believe it. *The thought we claim is thus the only interpreter of the strict literal history of the fact.* And our souls, had we grace, would bless God for such a picture of His slain Lamb, and of our dying, crucified, killed and murdered Saviour.

Do we blot out the record that He was the *slain* Lamb, or silence the song in heaven which celebrates that mystery,

when we say, that His life the slain Lamb rendered up Himself? The history of Calvary, which the Holy Ghost has written, sustains this thought; and again we say, that what we claim is the only interpreter of the strict history of the fact. He was *free*, and yet under *commandment*. Faith understands it all. And according to this mystery, when the hour had come, as we read, "He bowed the head and gave up the ghost" (John xix. 30). He owned the commandment which He had received, and yet of Himself yielded up His life. He was *obedient* unto death, and yet laid down His life as of *Himself*.

The Son put Himself under the commandment of the Father for the ends of God's glory in our salvation (John x. 11; and now the Father delivers a commandment to us, to give all divine honour to the Son, or, in other words, to walk in the truth of His Person (John v. 23; 1 John iii. 23; 2 John 4-6.)

J. G. B.

"I SHALL BE SATISFIED."

His journey was short, but it was a bright and happy one, both as a child and as a christian. About the middle of his fourteenth year it ended in a brightness before which the brightest sun that lighted his earthly days was pale indeed.

That his life had been as nearly blameless as the life of a child could be, had nothing to do with the deep peace, the unclouded assurance in which he closed his eyes for their last sleep. He had learned, as only One can teach, that he was a sinner before God. His simple, happy testimony, in childlike confidence was:—"The precious blood of Christ washed all my sins away." Precious blood, indeed! Oh *how* precious! "Precious" for the weeping mother as she sees her child escaping her loving grasp and passing into an unseen eternity!*

* *Unseen*, but no longer *unknown*, since Christ entered "with his own blood" and the believer can say "we see Jesus!"

"Precious" for the lonely weeper, as the autumn winds howl about the lately closed grave, and the rains of winter fall upon it! Unspeakably precious! The loved one is not there, but only the outer covering, the torn-down tabernacle; Jesus has received the set-free spirit in the title of "His own blood." "To-day shalt thou be *with me* in paradise." But supremely "precious" is that blood to the soul itself that is quitting its house of clay to appear before God. A mother's hand may hold the head softly till the spirit passes away. Her tenderness can go no farther. The last grasp of the hand is relaxed, the last kiss is pressed on the cold brow. A mother's love can do no more. *It cannot cross the line.*

"Precious" then the blood which has purged the conscience from dead works—which has blotted out as a cloud his transgressions, and as a thick cloud, his sins! "Precious" the blood which has met every claim of God and has established His throne in righteousness as a mercy-seat! "Precious" the blood which has more glorified God than sin had dishonoured Him, and has made His satisfied heart of love to rejoice over His redeemed with joy, to rest in His love, to rejoice over them with singing! "Precious" the blood which now brings the ransomed spirit into the circle of such joys! No lonely passage into a "world unknown!" Rather an abundant entrance there, where that "precious blood" is known in its true value; a "boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus" that heaven honours!

If heaven was filled with joy once, when the newly-entered soul was led to repentance, and God's own joy was diffused through the courts above, what thrills of praise now that the happy souls enters, confident and glad in the one only title, "the precious blood of Christ!" Joy in the heart of a redeeming God! Joy for the Father whose "commandment is life everlasting," and for the Son, who in obedience to that commandment laid down His life! Joy for Him who gave that now redeemed and

happy spirit to the Son of His love, in eternal counsels of wisdom and grace ! Joy too—unspeakable joy—for the Saviour to receive in realms of endless rest the fruit of the travail of His soul ! The darkness and toil of Calvary have won for the ransomed of the Lord the brightness and rest of the Paradise of God. He who stood to receive the spirit of Stephen, finds fresh joy in welcoming to that Paradise those whom the Father gave Him ! Thrice precious blood of Christ !

It was only on the morning that the last breath was drawn that the dear child knew that there was danger to his natural life. It surely must have been the Lord Himself who whispered the Home-call. Not a sign of fear ! Not a sign of regret that a life, more joyous than most, had reached its end. " I am going to the Lord," he suddenly exclaimed, as he heard or felt the summons ; and soon after—

" Joyful, joyful will the meeting be ! "

Oh, what has God wrought in His redeeming love ! He has filled the terrible " worlds' unknown " with the smile of Jesus—with the welcome of a known and beloved Saviour. " I am going to the Lord, and I shall be happier than any of you. I shall be satisfied when I awake with His likeness ! " Yes, the heart that knows Him thinks of heaven as the place where He is. He who is the light and joy of that scene for those who have reached it, is the attraction for those who are nearing it.

The heart bows low before such grace. A death-bed with its untold terrors, turned by redeeming love into a peaceful home-going, and the " king of terrors " himself into a welcome messenger to bring the soul into the presence of Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood ! No fear in that meeting ! The once marred face has no strangeness for the spirit that now gazes upon it. Taught of God, it *knows* Him to whom it owes everything for eternity,

and in whose presence it has now found fulness of joy.

“He who to His rest shall greet thee,
Greets thee with a well known love.”

How true the instincts of a child, taught of God, in connecting with the joy of seeing the Lord the further joy of the resurrection morning!

(To be continued.)

THREE REQUISITES FOR THESE LAST DAYS,

III.

AN ALABASTER BOX FILLED WITH SPIKENARD.

(Matt. xxvi. 6-13; Mark xiv. 3-9; John xii. 1-8).

First a few remarks as to Lazarus, Martha, and Mary:—

In the 10th chapter of the Gospel of Luke we are for the first time introduced to the happy little home of Lazarus and his two sisters, whom the Lord loved. The heavenly Stranger, Who had not where to lay His head, made it His retreat, when after a time of unremitting service and labour of love, He withdrew to that peaceful little household of faith with its happy inmates, who knew better than Simon the Pharisee how to appreciate the presence of such a Guest. It is there we first find Mary seated at the feet of the “*Son of man*,” as a true learner, receiving of His fulness, before, in John xii., we behold her serving and worshipping the “*Son of God*,” and pouring out upon His feet the precious contents of her alabaster box. In Luke we find her sitting at the feet of Jesus, the eyes fixed on the One Who is altogether lovely, on His divine and moral beauty and comeliness; her ears drinking in His words of grace, truth, wisdom, and love. That stream of blessing ever flowing from His lips—whether as a mighty

tide in teaching and healing multitudes, or as the gentle flow of private conversation, ministering words in season to the weary—entered into the hearts and minds of the privileged hosts of that heavenly Guest, especially into the heart of the one at His feet. Mary's posture was a stationary one—at the feet of Christ, the secret of all progress in true knowledge, service and practical walk; whilst her more active sister (whose liveliness had, perhaps, been conducive to her brother's and sister's quietness), is chiding with her for her *lack of service*. But what is the Lord's reply? "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but *one* thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that *good part* which shall not be taken away from her."

What words these for a "day of small things" like this, when men are boasting of doing great things in the field of christian labour and service! Mary had chosen "*the good part*."—Why, she was sitting there doing nothing, whilst Martha was up and doing, serving the Lord.—The difference between the two sisters was this, that Martha was occupied with *serving* the Lord, and Mary with the *Lord Himself*. Alas! to how many of the Lord's beloved has service become a snare, by permitting it to slip in between Christ and their hearts. Everthing that is allowed to slip in between Christ and us, whether it be gospel service, lectures, or good works of any other kind, soon assumes the nature of idolatry. It is the bosom-disciple of the Lord, "whom the Lord loved," who closes his first Epistle with the solemn warning, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols!" Whilst reclining on his Master's bosom, being pillowed, as it were, upon His love, no idol could slip in. It was the same disciple of Christ, whom the Holy Ghost chose to write that wondrous Gospel, which has very truly been called the "Grand Gospel," not only on account of its depth and yet marvellous simplicity of language, nor because of the great principles unfolded in it,

("Life," "light," "love," "believing," and "world," occur in the Gospel of John incomparably more frequently than in the synoptic Gospels), but because the Person of Christ, in His divine glories, and what *He is in Himself*, are set forth in that Gospel in an especial way. Words like these: "*I am the truth*," "*I am the way*," "*I am the life*," "I am the resurrection and the life," "I am the bread of life," "I am the light of life," are found in none of the preceding Gospels, perfect and indispensable as they are in setting forth, like the divers colours of the rainbow, other glories, beauties, and perfections of Christ. John, who more than others did "cleave with purpose of heart" to the *person* of Christ, was the one, who in an especial way, wrote down what Christ is, as the Great "*I am*," in His glories as the Son of God. And let me add, Beloved, there is nothing renders our souls more stable than keeping the *Person of the Son of God* constantly, fixedly before our eyes in the power of an ungrieved Spirit, who "glorifieth Him, receiving of His and showing it unto us," thus filling the alabaster box with spikenard.

I have said, that Mary's posture and service before the Lord was of a *stationary* character. But in a wider sense this may be said of the whole of that little household at Bethany. (We must not forget, that the Lord loved all the three.) We find in the Gospels two groups of godly women, both of them patterns of personal, true devotedness and of acceptable service to the Lord, only in different ways. One of them is of a *moveable* and the other of a *stationary* character. The former we find mentioned in the viii. chap. of Luke (as also in other portions of the Gospel). The names of three of them are mentioned there: "Mary called Magdalene, (not to be confounded with the sister of Lazarus, nor with the woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee), out of whom went seven-demons; and Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance." They,

with the apostles, went with the Lord to every city or village where He preached, and shewed the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. A blessed service indeed, and acceptable to God and His dear Son. The other group of devoted servants of Christ is the *stationary* one at Bethany. They did not follow the Lord whithersoever He went, though none the less true "followers," *i.e.* disciples, of Him whose love to them is especially recorded in Holy writ, as is His love to John. But there is a striking difference between these two groups. The former, so honorably mentioned in Luke viii. we behold again, in the last chapter of the same Gospel, coming to the grave of Jesus, with the spices and ointments they had prepared, in order to perform the last service of love to the dead body of Him whom they had served and followed so devotedly from place to place. But they had to be questioned at the mouth of an empty grave by the two bright heavenly messengers of the resurrection. "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" Not so those of Bethany. Neither Lazarus nor his sisters are to be seen at the grave. Why is this? One would have thought that the one, whom the Lord had, not many days before, recalled to life again,* and given back to his weeping sisters, would have been the first to mingle his tears with those of the women at the grave; and that his two sisters, with whom Jesus had wept in perfect human sympathy at their brother's grave, before He restored him to them in divine power, raising him from the dead, would have been the first to join those women at the grave in their intended service of love.

It was *because* Lazarus had been partaker, and his sisters witnesses of that wondrous resurrection scene, so divinely described in the eleventh chapter of the Gospel of St. John,

* Not a small boon indeed even to a godly Jew (Comp. Isa. xxxviii.), especially with their blessed Messiah living in the midst of them on earth, who was "to redeem Israel" and establish the promised kingdom.

that neither of them was present at the grave of Jesus. Could they go and seek one among the dead Who could say at Lazarus' grave: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die?" Could they seek Him among the dead, who needed only to utter the words of divine command: "Lazarus, come forth," and the dark mouth of the grave had to give up its prey, and death, nay, corruption to disappear at His bidding? Impossible—They had learnt too much at Bethany to go to the tomb in the garden of Joseph, and "seek the living among the dead."

Blessed little group of Christ's handmaids at His grave! They had followed Him during His life, moving with Him and His apostles from place to place, willing to spend and to be spent in their untiring, loving devotion to His person, and attending to the personal wants of the "Son of Man" with such tenderness and attention, as only godly women know how to perform such service of holy love. Great, indeed, will be their reward in heaven! But twice blessed little family of Bethany, who were not only permitted to be the hosts of the Son of God, but had a perception of His glories, not only as Israel's Messiah, but as the Son of God,* in a greater measure than that, however honoured, group at the empty grave of Jesus. And thrice blessed Saviour, Who loved them all and appreciated their service of love in their several places, but made Bethany *His retreat*—May we learn of each of these two groups, what the Spirit and the Word intend to teach us: the self-denying, loving and active devotion of the former, in the outward attitude of Christ's service, and from the latter, the being at home with the *Son of God* and

* Even Martha, though less than Mary entering into the Lord's mind, said, equally with Peter to him, "I believe, that thou art the Christ, the Son of God which should come into the world." And she not only said, like Mary, "Lord if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died," but she added: "But I know that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee."

His glories and thoughts, in the attitude of worshipful nearness at His feet, the only true place of learning divine truth and service. Alas ! with all our superior blessings and privileges, how short, how lamentably short do we fall of that which characterised each of those two blessed groups. Have we not too much forgotten, that the only way of practically imbibing and exhibiting the *mind of Christ* is—the *heart's deep study of Christ* in the Word of God and at His feet ?

But let us return to that worshipful scene of incomparable beauty in Simon the Leper's house.

DETACHED PORTIONS.

I.

There is a secret of happiness which none but a true Christian possesses, and which he possesses in its full power only when he is living in communion with God, in simple faith, "I know," says the apostle, "both how to be abased, and I know how to abound, everywhere and in all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."

Now this principle depends for its strength on the certainty that God's will cannot be defeated, and that His will arranges everything for the best for those who commit their way to Him. It also depends on the apprehension of the resources of our happiness being all in Christ, independent of all the circumstances which may affect the christian in the world. Things in the world may be all confusion, and things in the church may appear to be but little better, but this is not sufficient to destroy, or even to neutralize, the power of that principle of happiness of which the Apostle speaks. God's counsels cannot be defeated; the ends of Christ's death

cannot be frustrated; and the springs of the happiness of a risen man in Christ do not ebb and flow with the changing circumstances which may chequer his earthly course.

Christ was so sufficient for the Apostle's soul amidst dangers, and difficulties, and wasting labours, and apparent discomfiture, that he wanted nothing else, and He is equally sufficient for us. If we cannot in a moment leap up to this position practically, because we have been living at such a distance from God, and because Christ has been so little the object of our souls, and the power of our walk, it is, nevertheless, a great thing to see clearly where the secret of our happiness is, and where the secret of our weakness and unhappiness lies.

[EXTRACTED.]

MOSES AND AARON.

When Israel was in the wilderness God raised up these two honoured servants, Moses and Aaron, as types of Christ, to sustain His people before Him as a worshipping people.

No one character can sustain all the offices of Christ. What Moses was not, Aaron was: but what both Moses and Aaron were not, Christ is. We need, and it is said in Heb. ii. "we see Jesus" in all His offices, as Apostle, High Priest, Captain, &c., all through to the end.

In reading of these two great persons, Moses and Aaron, it is a remarkable thing in what a different order their names are presented in the Holy Scriptures when they are spoken of, as to their natural birth, and when as the servants of the Lord. In the one it is Aaron and Moses; in the other it is Moses and Aaron (Exod. vi. 20; 1 Chron. vi. 3). For Aaron was the elder, see Exod. vii. 7; and therefore this order. But when they get their places as the servants of the Lord, then the order always is reversed—it is Moses and Aaron;

for Moses had the first place. God has always been showing this, that the greater in the way of nature is not the greater in the sight of God. God's choice of the manger as a place to lay His Son in this world, is His witness of this.

In these two joint types of Christ, Moses gets the more prominent place: and in connection with this we see in Moses more lively exercise of love and care and tender sympathies. In Aaron we get more of doctrine, the doctrine of grace reigning through righteousness because of the value of the blood; but in Moses, more of the bowels of compassion and active loving kindness of God from which the other flowed.

In the pleadings of Moses for the people, there is a precious manifestation of the strength of love in the presence of God for them. He is seen in active intercession for the people when their condition is very desperate: but he pleads and prevails. He pleads on the ground of the immutability of the promise of God. He pleads for the glory of God in the preservation of the people: and in the strength of his attachment, shows himself so bound up with the people, that he not only would not have them destroyed that he might be made great without them, but would not even stand without them.

In Aaron there is an official place, righteously fixed in the grace of God, because of the value of the blood. In Christ all are combined.

But while Moses is seen in the strength of the love and grace of God, pleading for the people in the mount with all tenderness, yet when he came down to the people themselves, he is rigorous in judging their sin. When he was up with God he manifested nothing but tenderness and affection for them; but when he was down among them, then he showed his zeal in judging their sin. We are acting in the flesh when, in want of zeal for the glory of God, there is an allowance of evil from personal feelings. God never allows evil. He forgives it on the ground of the judgment borne by Christ,

or He judges it in those who commit it; but He never countenances it in any. An allowance of evil may appear very gracious and kind, yet it is very cruel in the end, as well as very dishonouring to God. There is want of zeal for God in allowing evil, and there is great injury to those in whom it is allowed.

In Moses we see one very righteous against sin, yet most active in the grace of God. In Aaron there is more of a fixed official place. In preaching the gospel I fear the danger of being merely doctrinal, and not sufficiently displaying the active love of God. We should do both. So also in teaching; the two characters of Moses and Aaron must not be separated. Aaron failed to be a type of Christ when he stood apart from Moses, for he did not speak a word from God. And Moses also failed to be a type of Christ at the waters of Meribah; for he did not glorify God. Christ could say, "I have glorified thee on the earth." At the waters of Meribah Moses failed to do that. God was magnifying Himself by giving the people water to drink; and Moses was in the place to show out Christ, by speaking unto the rock, and letting refreshment flow to the people; but he spake unadvisedly with his lips. There might appear to be an excuse, that they provoked his spirit: but it was no excuse; and he could not go with the people into the land. He afterwards prayed that he might go in; but the Lord told him not to ask that again: it was not granted (though the Lord buried him, and showed him afterwards on the mount of transfiguration). When he said, "Hear now ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock?"—he was not then showing out Christ. Christ never spake in that way. Everything was said and done to provoke Christ's spirit, but He never spake unadvisedly with his lips. God would let us see the poverty of all types, in showing out the perfection that is in Christ Jesus. He would also give us a warning from this failure of Moses as to the

spirit in which we deal with evil. We should learn an important lesson from this failure, and remember that it was the meekest man in all the earth who thus failed in speaking unadvisedly with his lips, that we may consider ourselves lest we also be tempted.

There are certain occasions that are peculiarly dangerous ; one surely is, to *glorify God* as his righteous servants, in dealing with the failure of others, when *we are personally provoked thereby*. Moses forfeited the land. He came under discipline for the way in which he dealt with the evil, and the Lord never abated the discipline. On all such occasions, as in all other things, our sufficiency is of God, and of God alone.

The distinction between Moses and Aaron is a very blessed one. In Aaron, as we have said, we see the doctrine of salvation ; but in Moses we have a beautiful type of the Lord Jesus as the sent one, in the grace of God, and the place which we who believe in Him, have in His heart.

Moses is the sent one, raised up in Egypt, condemned to death there, but raised up again for his great work.

We see much of the Spirit of Christ in the intercession of Moses. The Lord yielded to what Moses interceded for.

It is Moses that anoints Aaron and that rears up the Tabernacle.

In Israel brought into the wilderness, there is a fit type of the church now in the world—a wilderness to it. When we look at them, and their manners in the wilderness, we have shadows of what Christ has to bear in us now : but we are *His own house*, and therefore especially dear to Him.

The burden of the people was too much for Moses: but not so with Christ.

As Moses was the lawgiver then, so Christ is our lawgiver now ; as we see in Matthew v. vi. vii., sealing the law among His disciples, and they acknowledging Him as their lawgiver. When He returns, all Israel and the whole earth shall own

Him as their lawgiver:—they will then wait for His law. We have His commandments, and he that hath His commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Him.

DEMERRARA.

SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. 1. In Psalm viii. 4 &c.—Is it the first Adam that is contemplated in the place in which he was set by God at first, as head of the creation; or is it Christ as Son of Man, at the head of all things as appointed heir, and redeemer of them? J. L.

A. The quotation, Heb. ii. 6, 9, (see also 1 Cor. xv. and Eph. i.) proves that the reference is to Christ and not to Adam, although Adam “was the figure of him that was to come.” It is “man” (lit. *Enosh*) “and the son of man” (lit. of Adam), names that cannot belong to the first man. They do to Christ, as we see in the Gospels. So the connection is with “the world, (or the inhabited earth) *to come*,” not the past (see v. 5). And again, Jehovah has “put *all* things under his feet,” He only being “excepted” (is the Divine commentary in 1 Cor. xv.) “who did put all things under him.” All this—and more might be added—proves clearly and authoritatively that not the first man, (save as a figure) but Christ is *the Man* of Ps. viii.

Q. 2. Is there any distinction between the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and His sealing of believers? Please give their distinctive features. M. F. A.

A. It is by giving us the Holy Spirit to indwell us that God seals us in Christ. The indwelling Spirit is the seal, the seal of the new position in righteousness and in life, before God, given to those who believe the *gospel* of their *salvation*, because of Christ’s finished work (Eph. i. 13; iv. 30).

If M. F. A. will give her address, a fuller unfolding of the truth will be D.V. sent to her. It would be impossible to answer the second part of her question in a few words.

Q. 3. (a) Please state the meaning of the expression “bring again the captivity,” Jer. xlviii. 47; xlix. 6, 39; Ez. xvi. 53: and when will it literally take place of Moab, Elam, Sodom, and Samaria?

(b) Please state the true meaning of Ez. xvi. 48–63.

(d) Please state the true application of 1 Tim. ii. 5, “to be testified in due time.”

YOUNG BELIEVER.

A. (a) Nebuchadnezzar was the rod in the Lord's hand to bring judgment on the Nations, as well as on Israel, for their multiplied sins. They were alike brought into captivity, and *supreme* dominion was given to Nebuchadnezzar. "The times of the Gentiles" then began, and their history goes on as detailed in Dan. ii., viii. and other prophecies. But when these times are fulfilled, and the title of Jesus to royal power and judgment on the earth is enforced (Ps. ii.), not only will the kingdom be restored to Israel, (He "is the King of the Jews"), but those Gentiles who have honoured Him in the person of His messengers, He will welcome as "the King" to "the Kingdom prepared for them *from* the foundation of the world" (Matt. xxv. 31 ad. fin). Thus there will be saved Gentiles ("Nations") as well as restored, united and blessed Israel, who will henceforth through the "thousand years" be the *earthly* centre of these nations according to God's purpose when the earth was divided (Gen. x. 25; Deut. xxxii. 8). Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel therefore speak of some Nations who will be restored in the last days, as Moab, Ammon, Elam, and Egypt. Even Sodom and Assyria are also to be subjects of this grace, while others will not, as Edom, Babylon, Philistia, &c., of the former it is said "I will bring again the captivity," not of the latter.

(b) Jerusalem, the beloved city, had sunken lower in guilt than Samaria or even filthy Sodom. These are named as her "*sisters*" in sin and shame, to humble her. But the mercy and grace that could restore and bless the most guilty of the three, can also, and will restore, in the day of the Lord, the other two. The recovery of what to us are *lost* races will be seen in the ten tribes of Israel, as well as in the Gentiles referred to.

(d) The whole passage when read (*i.e.* from v. 1 to 7) entirely precludes the thought that the "due time" is *yet to come*. The literal rendering is "the testimony in its own times" ("to be rendered" or "borne," understood, see R.V.) and there immediately follows, as indispensable to a "*testimony*"—"whereunto I was appointed *herald*." "Its own times" began with these appointed "heralds" proclaiming the testimony *everywhere*, as it was to go forth "unto all," while as to blessing, it would be "*upon* all them that believe." (Rom. iii. 22.)

(c) Your third question (too long to insert) is a very solemn one, as it refers to one of the many efforts to sustain a false hope of the ultimate salvation of those who *die unsaved*. The theory that the wicked dead "will be raised to have a much more favourable opportunity during the

Millennium" is in direct contradiction of Scripture. "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." This is a truth maintained in many Scriptures, but our Lord Himself teaches us "that they that have done evil shall come forth from the graves, unto the resurrection of judgment (John v. 28, 29). In Rev. xx. Those who "have part in the first resurrection" are "blessed and holy" v. 6,—while "the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished," and then they live again for judgment, which is final and eternal (v. v. 5—12 to 15). The "alls" in the texts named, must be read with their context. There is not a passage to support "universalism," and the theory itself is inconsistent with "all," as even "more favourable opportunities" might be rejected or neglected.

Q. 4. Please explain the difference between "the Kingdom of God" and the Kingdom of heaven." Why is the latter term used in Matt. xiii. and the former in Luke xiii.?

A. "The Kingdom of God" (or "of heaven" in Matthew), is the rule or government of Christ as God's King, ("my King" Ps. ii). Matthew's gospel is peculiarly rich in dispensational truth, and gives the whole course of the Kingdom—its announcement, its rejection, its "mysteries" during the absence of Christ, His coming again and its establishment in power on earth, when He "shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, and he shall sit upon the throne of his glory." The Jews had earthly thoughts as to it, in addressing them therefore, Matthew *almost* always uses the form, "Kingdom of the heavens," in connection with the prophecies in Dan. ii., vii.; but not *always*. When the Spirit is pressing the *moral* claims of the King he departs from His usual phrase and uses "Kingdom of God" (vi. 32; xix. 24; xxi. 31, 43).

"Kingdom of heaven" then conveys a dispensational meaning, over and above the wider, but in itself more conscience-searching expression, "Kingdom of God," (see the use in Paul's epistles, Rom. xiv. 17; 1 Cor. iv. 20 of the latter).

The "Kingdom of God" was *present* when Jesus, God's King, was on earth (Luke xi. 20; xvii. 20, 21). It did not take the dispensational form of "the Kingdom of heaven" until Christ went on high. The term, "Kingdom of God" could be used by the other Evangelists where "Kingdom of heaven" occurs in Matthew.

THREE REQUISITES FOR THESE LAST DAYS.

VI.

AN ALABASTER BOX FILLED WITH SPIKENARD.

(Matt. xxvi. 6-13; Mark xiv. 3-9; John xii. 1-8).

In each of these three Gospels the Spirit of God, before introducing us into that bright scene in Simon the leper's house, records in a few words the dark counsels of "the assembly of the wicked," that was soon to surround the cross, and now was gathering at the house of the high priest. Satan, the prince of this world, was summoning his principalities and powers in the heavenlies, "the rulers of the darkness of this world," to instigate and prepare his earthly tools at Jerusalem for the terrible battle to be fought at Calvary. A darkness thicker than any that ever had brooded over Jerusalem, even in its worst days, was now gathering upon it. An awful passover was to be kept with the Satanic leaven of malice and wickedness. The Lamb of God was to be slain; Messiah to be cut off and have nothing. At the high priest's palace the watchword of high treason was whispered by one of the Lord's apostles: "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast."

It was since the raising of Lazarus from the dead, when God's glory shone so brightly through His Son at the dark mouth of the grave, triumphing over death and corruption, that the wicked counsels of these tools of the "murderer from the beginning" had ripened into the bloody decision, "to take Jesus by craft and put him to death;" some of the more cautious and men-fearing adding: "Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people."

The darkest of all murderous and treacherous nights, that ever hung over this sad earth, was approaching; the atmosphere of Jerusalem was thickening: the leaven of malice and wickedness was everywhere working, and they were going to keep "the Jew's passover."

But through that increasing darkness there shines a steady light from the house of the cleansed leper at Bethany, and as we approach it and enter in, a scene presents itself to our wondering and adoring gaze, the brightness of which is enhanced by the very darkness and coldness of the dangerous night without. There we behold the Lord with His disciples in Simon's house at a supper, which loving hearts and willing hands had prepared for the gracious Master. Lazarus whom He had raised from the dead, sits amongst the guests at the table with Him, and Martha serves, as usual. But there is another who serves—Mary. And what a service is hers! Martha ministers to the bodily wants of the blessed "Son of man," who was about to be delivered into the hands of sinful men. Precious and blessed service indeed! But a higher and still more blessed service is reserved for Mary. She ministers to the *Messiah*—the *Son of God*. "While the king sitteth* at his table," her "spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof." She opens her beautiful, white alabaster box† of almost transparent marble and pours out part of its "very precious" and "very costly"‡ contents upon Christ's head,

* Or rather "*reclineth at his table.*" It is the same in Matt. xxvi., Mark xiv., and John xii. and also in Luke vii. To understand these scenes better, we must remember, that the ancients did not *sit* at their meals, but *reclined* at length on couches. Mary, therefore, came up *behind* Him, as he reclined at the table, and bending down over the couch, poured the spikenard on His head and His feet; and probably kneeling at His feet, wiped them with her hair.

† The *alabaster* is a species of marble, distinguished for being light, and of a beautiful white colour, almost transparent. It was much used by the ancients for the purpose of preserving various kinds of ointment in. (Barnes' Notes.)

‡ *Spikenard* was made of the finest oil, *nut oil*. It consisted of *seven* ingredients: 1.—*Malabrathum*; 2.—*Schoenus*; 3.—*Costus*; 4.—*Amouinum*; 5.—*Nardus*; 6.—*Myrrh*; 7.—*Balsamum*, that is, all the most valued perfumes of antiquity. It was obtained in Judæa by foreign commerce from the East Coast of Africa and from India.

and par upon His feet. Like the woman in Simon the Pharisee's house, she does not speak one word, but she does just the right thing in the right way and at the right time. Whiter and purer still, through the grace of God, and more transparent than the beautiful vessel in her hand, was that godly heart, filled with Christ, and rejoicing in the beauty of the Messiah-king, and bowing adoringly before the glory of the Son of God. More precious than the contents of her alabaster box, were the adoring affections of her heart, which had been filled by Him before whom she now bowed in worshipful homage, with the precious stores of the thoughts of the love, and grace, and truth, and all the moral glories of the Father, of which He, at whose feet she had imbibed them, was the personified expression. No doubt deep gratitude to the gracious Saviour, who had restored the beloved brother to his sorrowing sisters, at the same time filled her and Martha's heart, and it had its share in her and Martha's service of love. But that gratitude formed only one of the seven ingredients, so to speak, of that precious compound, the odour of which filled the house, and ascended higher still; for it was spent upon Christ, and came from a heart filled with Christ. And, as the penitent sinner in Simon the Pharisees house, poured out her ointment upon the feet of the "Friend and Saviour of sinners," heedless of the chilling presence of the self-righteous Pharisee and the religious disputes of his friends, so Mary, in Simon the leper's house, poured out her spikenard upon the head of Israel's Messiah-King and the feet of the Son of God, whose divine power and authority she had witnessed at her brother's grave, heedless of the indifference of some of the disciples, and even of the presence of His betrayer.

But there was a great difference between the homage done to Jesus in the house of the Pharisee, and that offered to Christ in the house of Bethany. The former sprang, as has been ob-

served, from the heart of a penitent sinner, moved to its inmost depths by the riches of divine grace as revealed and personified in Jesus, and drawn in grateful holy love to Him, who did in no wise cast out even the vilest sinner, who was drawn to Him by the Father.

But in the house at Bethany, it was not only the deep sense of the perfect grace and truth, as it appeared in Jesus, in Mary's heart, (though, of course it was this also,) but especially of the glories of Christ as the Messiah-king of His people, and above all, of His glories as the Son of God, that is, His *Messianic* and His *divine* glories, that bowed her heart and knees before Simon's honoured and blessed Heavenly Guest, and made her pour out the precious contents of her alabaster box upon His head, as the Messiah-king, and upon His feet, as the Son of God. The first part of her worshipful homage expressed that note—

“Hail to the Lord's anointed,
Great David's greater Son.”

—thus foreshadowing the future homage of His people, when “they will be willing in the day of His power,” and will hail their once rejected and crucified King with: “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

“When to the times appointed
The rolling years have run—
He comes to break oppression,
To set the captive free;
To take away transgression,
And rule in equity.”

The second act of her tribute of silent worship owned Christ as the Son of the living God, as Israel will also own Him in that day, when they will not only hail Him as their King, on whose shoulder the government shall be, but will call His name: “Wonderful,” “Counsellor,” “The mighty God,” “The everlasting Father,” “The Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah ix. 6.)

But that time had not yet arrived. Christ must first suf-

fer before entering into, and coming in His glory. He was to be disallowed of men, and to be rejected by the builders. The leprosy of idolatry, even the love of the treasures, the pleasures and the honours of Egypt, which Moses had despised, preferring the "reproach of Christ," clung still to his nation. There was something of it in the house at Bethany, not in Simon the cleansed leper, Christ's grateful and willing host, but in some of His disciples, and the worst in one of His apostles, who had been for more than three years His companion, but not like John, His follower. All that time he had been the daily witness of His mighty works and gracious and heart-searching words. But whilst walking alongside with the Mighty and gracious One, whom he called "Master," even the Son of the living God, there was an idol in his heart, which he carefully harboured and concealed and would not suffer to be dethroned, even by the daily sight and presence of Him who was "God manifest in the flesh." Thus he became a thief, the chief of traitors and the "*son of perdition*."—Christian reader! remember the words of the Lord's inspired *bosom* disciple, whom *Jesus* loved: "Little children keep yourselves from idols."

Judas it was that took the lead, and became the spokesman in giving expression to that "*indignation*"—not within *him*, but in some of the Lord's disciples—at that which, to them, was nothing but a *waste of ointment*"—for it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and given to the poor. Does the reader feel indignant at that indignation? Well he may, but let him pause for a moment and remember, that three hundred pence, which to us may appear to be a small sum, means, according to our money, no less than nine pounds and more. And suppose such an ointment, of more than nine pounds value, were lavished before my reader's eye to anoint some king's head, would he not feel tempted to be angry, at such a "*waste of money*," remembering how

many starving poor might have been helped by such a sum? So let us put our swords into their scabbards, reader, considering how the same inclination that was in the Lord's own disciples—practically to prefer service and all kinds of good works, by which *we* also get some credit, to the adorable person of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us—is to be found in us. "And they murmured against her."

And how does the Lord silence their murmuring? Does He rebuke them for their care for the poor? Certainly not. "Ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever you will, you may do them good: *but*—mark that "*but*," benovolent Christian reader—"but Me ye have not always." Ah! what a gracious, and all the more crushing rebuke! How their hearts and consciences must have felt its force, after those gracious lips had been closed in death for them on the cross, where He suffered the just for the unjust, to bring them and us to God, and to fit them and us to dwell with Him in His and our Father's House. Will they, and shall we then think the homage that all heaven renders to Him too costly?

We have observed already, how God, during the presence of His dear Son on earth, always took care in an especial way to honour Him, when men on special occasions showed their disregard of Him. So it was in Simon the Pharisee's house, so it was in the house of Simon at Bethany, and so it was at the culminating moment of Satan's and men's hatred of Him, when that mock title, affixed to the cross by Pilate, was acknowledged and verified by the dying thief. But as in Simon the Pharisee's house, we find "*wisdom*" in turn justifying her child, so we find the same, though in another and higher way, in Simon's, the cleansed leper's, house at Bethany.

"I SHALL BE SATISFIED."

(Continued.)

"Directly I leave off looking at you, Mother dear, I shall see Jesus." What would the wise ones of earth give at such a moment for a like assurance, for such divine certainty! Truly "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise." "They shall be all taught of God." "Wisdom is justified of all her children." For "wisdom" it is which so receives the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ as to count it all joy to depart and "see Jesus;" wisdom it is, divine wisdom, which *knows* that "absent from the body" he will be "present with the Lord;" wisdom "which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. *But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.*"

One of earth's wisest has exclaimed: "Child! Child no more! the coursers of time, lashed as it were by invisible spirits, hurry on the light car of our destiny. And all that we can do is, in calm self-possession, to hold the reins with a firm hand: and to guide the wheels, now to the right now to the left, a stone here, a precipice there; whither it is hurrying us who can tell?" The highest attainment of man's vaunted intellect is the doubting, dark, dismal: "*who can tell?*" A child of tender years, but yet a child of heavenly wisdom may well rebuke the great German master. Far removed from vain human speculation he knows WHOM he

has *believed*. He is going to be with Him. A few moments and he will gaze on His peerless face. His communion is already with the Father, of whom he has heard and learned, and with His Son Jesus Christ, whom, says he, "*I shall see*." The house of his earthly father may have been the happy scene of a thousand acts of tenderest love and care. He is now exchanging it for the heavenly home of a Father, known in grace as revealed in Christ the Son of His love. Peaceful change! No doubt the supports of the earthly tent are roughly shaken as it is quickly taken down, but all is peace within. Quiet assurance too, that—

"Eternal in the heavens
Is his prepared abode;
Radiant and pure, in light divine
The building of our God!"

Into its joy the spirit calmly passes, whilst the "fulness" of joy awaits a brighter morning. Yet how "far better" who shall tell? He closes his eyes beneath a devoted mother's smiles, at once dimmed and brightened by scalding tears, but he *knows* he will open them in that better home beneath his Saviour's satisfied smile. Priceless grace of God to lost and ruined sons of Adam!

Let us linger for a moment by the dying bed of a little child, whose single eye of faith sees Him that is invisible. No helpless journey in a drear unknown is thine! No tight rein on a dark and dangerous road which no assurance lights, no company cheers! Nay, nay! a path lighted by the favour of God and the love of the Father! A path in the company and under the conduct of the blessed Shepherd who folds His precious lamb to His tender and sheltering bosom! Happy child of faith! He who has given thee "rest by His sorrow and life by His death," has cast the light of His risen countenance on the dark valley of death that thy spirit might exclaim: "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy."

Yes, it was a true and right instinct, at least, that linked the joy of being with his Saviour, whilst "unclothed," with the deeper and perfect blessedness which awaits him and us, when that Saviour "shall change our bodies of humiliation that they may be fashioned like unto his body of glory." The fact that Scripture says little as to the disembodied state is very instructive. This is not the accomplishment of God's purpose, though a part of His ways, and, for those who enter the heavenly paradise to be with Christ, a most blessed part. When the thief, who sought to be remembered in the far-distant coming of Christ in His Kingdom, heard that that very day he was to be with Christ in paradise, his heart might well dance for joy, What *could* be better? A thief, an injurious person, one who had cast in Christ's teeth the shame and the sorrow of the cross which that blessed One was enduring for his deliverance—such a one, redeemed by the blood shed at his side, purged from an evil conscience and washed with pure water, to be in Christ's own joy on high that day before the sun went down! What songs of thankful, adoring joy filled his ransomed soul! The horrible pains of such a death were well nigh unnoticed in the joys he began to taste beforehand. His new-found Saviour, his blessed Lord cries "Into thy hands I commend my spirit," and he knows that that Spirit is now welcomed to the paradise where he was to join Him. It cannot be long, for the sun (but lately darkened) is sinking in the west. The Sabbath, a high day, draws on. The ruthless soldiers, charged with the work of getting rid of those who were hanging on the trees, come round and break the legs of the thieves, heedlessly and heartlessly fulfilling the Lord's words as to one: "*To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*" Who shall say what that unbound spirit had proved "of joy and love no tongue can tell" by the time the sun had sunk behind the western hills!

And who shall tell the joy of a later day, when the head of

another who had been a blasphemer, a persecutor and injurious, falls by the sword of Rome! He had learned to know his Master well, through grace, and his path, unlike the thief's, had been a long one. He had known his Lord in active service for His name, and in wearing suffering. He had known Him, had Him near to him, when preaching in His name "the forgiveness of sins" in the synagogue, and when preaching "Jesus and the resurrection" before the Areopagus, and found it his joy to spread the savour of His name in the hearts of a Dionysius and a Damaris, and in "many of the Jews and religious proselytes." And he had known Him in the dark inner prison at Philippi and when cast for a night and a day in the vast deep. He had known Him and learned His ways as he healed the lame man at Lystra, and when he lay as dead after his stoning there. In serving and suffering, in sorrow and joy, when the work prospered and when false brethren crept in unawares, when "all they which dwell in Asia heard the word," and when no man stood with him but all forsook him, he had learned something of the depths of the heart of Christ Jesus his Lord.

What wonder that Paul should count death a gain when it set his spirit free to depart and to be with Christ! What could he desire better? Every affection of the soul finds its answer in that presence. For the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord he had counted all things loss. The same object before his eyes when death was presented called forth the desire to depart and be with Christ which is far better. Yet when the moment was come and he was "ready to be offered," his heart, though full of the joy of being with Christ "directly" that the axe had done its work, passes over the time of blessed waiting *with* Christ and hails the day of glory waited for.

Thus it must ever be. Who can read the early part of 2 Cor. v. without longing for the power of life in Christ

which has wrought in our souls, to be manifested in the mighty working by which "mortality shall be swallowed up of life." Those in the ineffable joy of the Lord's presence on high *wait* with Him for the day of His glory and triumph. We wait here, encumbered with these poor bodies, seeing through a glass darkly, absent from the Lord. We rejoice in the joy of our brethren who have reached that blissful presence; so little would we, if we could,

"constrain
Their unbound spirits into bonds again!"

Yet for them and for ourselves we desire the *full* result of the work of Christ and of the power of risen life in Him. "Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."

(To be continued.)

THE WORD AND FRUIT-BEARING.

Israel's connection with Jehovah lay in lineal descent. Ishmael and Isaac were both sons of Abraham, but the line ran only in the seed according to promise. In Isaiah viii. we find a new link referred to, when Israel would be set aside; *viz.* the reception of the Word of God: this made way really for Gentile as well as Jew, and for any of Moab, or Ammon, or an Edomite too who might lay hold of the Word of God.

In Matt. xii. we hear the judgment and rejection of Israel, and at verses 46 to 50 the new link is brought in. Chapter xiii. is the unfolding of the effects of One bringing the Word to sow it; and what that Word would do—*viz.* detect Satan, world and flesh, and further prove its own internal power in fruit-bearing in some.

In John xv. the Lord speaks to disciples (Isaiah viii.

16-20,) that is, people who had owned that He was a Teacher sent from God and had taken the place of disciples. This does not go so far as does chap. xvi. John, where we get the heavenly relationship and the power of life &c.

This has helped me as to the understanding of chap. xv. In principle it applies to us, as it did to the church of God in Jerusalem—the church as down here.

“Abiding in Him,” in this connection, would be—never thinking of ourselves apart from Him, “the Word of God;” who, to us that believe, has caused us to be born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the Word of God that liveth and abideth for ever. (1 Peter i.) The Word, if it dwells in me, assures me that I am in Him who is the root of all blessing down here.

Grace mercy and peace

Affectionately yours,

G. V. W.

My kind love to the poor and afflicted.

ON SOME PRACTICAL POINTS OF CHRISTIANITY.*

I write as to a few principles of truth, of common interest to all God's children, which seem to me a little set aside, or for the time overlooked by many of them.

The first point, then, on which, in all brotherly love, I would touch, is the high and holy power *in knowledge* of the Christian. The Spirit of God has made his body His own temple (1 Cor. vi. 19): there He dwells, and “searches all things, yea the deep things of God” (ii. 10). The spirit in him is God's Spirit, and, entering beyond the circumstances

* Judged to be by the same writer as the foregoing note.

around, he searches God's deep things. One measure of the success of his research is marked in v. 15, *viz.*, that he that is spiritual judgeth, or discerneth *all things*, yet he himself is discerned of no man; for "we have the mind of Christ." And in 1 John ii. 20, we also read of this as the characteristic of the youngest in the family of God, "*the little children.*" "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and *know all things*;" it "abideth in you" and "*teacheth you all things.*" Thus, then, God, the Holy Ghost, dwells and acts within, on the nature given, and so fulfils His place of "Comforter" or Guardian to the saints (John xiv. 16. 18.) opening their hearts to the Word, and thus to the things of God.*

A second point I would touch upon is the certainty of truth as revealed in Scripture for guidance. The road from London to York is "the road to York;" and that from London to Dover is "the road to Dover;" and these roads are in opposite directions. Any one that knows the country knows this; and also knows that no measure of persuasion of my own mind that I am on the road to York will get me there, if I am tracing my way on to Dover.

God may and will bear with my ignorance, if in my ignorance, perhaps, I accredit "persuasion of my soul after prayer," in the place of the instruction which His standard, the Bible, affords: but still His standard has a voice of its own, and it is a *fixed* standard; and so far as I am not conformed to it I am in the wrong, and a loser. And moreover, everyone that judges me by it can see that I am wrong and a loser, though I may not do so myself. Both these points, but especially the latter, I find overlooked in the present day by Christians in England.

* The Holy Spirit has undertaken this service of love to more than compensate for the personal absence of the Lord, so that it should be even *expedient* for the disciples that Jesus should depart. What a rebuke is this to those who would plead "the mental capacity of young believers," as a reason for diluting the truths of God with that which is attractive to the natural mind. Is not the consciousness of the presence of the Holy Spirit in them thus weakened from the first? (Eds.)

A third point is, "individual responsibility;" or responsibility as individuals—as the only proper state of soul in which to decide on the path to pursue. Naked came we in, and naked we must go out of this world. Not even a wife will be allowed to interfere, and no confederacy will be allowed. Every word of the Lord is written, and every object of God, as revealed, comes from God, as Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer, to me as though I were a *solitary* being in the world. This is to be seen in the first parable in Matt. xiii.; in which (if you will read chap. xii. and connect its close with chap. xiii.) you will see that Jesus was setting forth the principles of the new Kingdom which He was about to establish, in place of that earthly Jewish one which had just rejected Him. See also Is. viii. 11-18., exhibiting the same truth, *i.e. individual responsibility to the testimony*, as the only principle of blessing; of which Isaiah and his two children were types (Heb. ii. 13). Obedience to God's word is the only guide which I have set before me; and I had better go to Patmos, an exile, for obedience to it and helping of it on, than stand in any sphere of usefulness or testimony with the very least compromise of obedience to it, or manifestation of fellowship with it in its course through the world or the church. Whenever God works, *the first point* with Him is to secure manifestly His own glory in what He does. When unrenewed man works, or when renewed man works like an unrenewed man, God's glory is left out of the question. When Christ, by His Spirit in the saints of God, acts, (it may be upon the discovery of sin and wretchedness among men, for the delivering men from it), mercy may flow to man; but first of all, glory to God in the highest. But the chief character of the labours of many of late has been, "action to meet necessity in man, without due care whether the way of so doing glorified God;" *i.e.* was His prescribed way of doing, or only the best way *they* could find.

Fourthly, I would just notice that there are four things, which, when in action, we should attend to. First, to be "*in obedience*;" secondly to *God* and not to man: thirdly, to expect to have the mass around us against us; and fourthly to have to suffer for Christ. All this is beautifully presented in Acts iv.

With *results*, as a Christian, I have nothing whatever to do. I am to obey God, rather than man, always; and then to suffer for it here; remembering, however, that such obedience is a joy to God, the Father and Son, in heaven, and to the Spirit who is with me; and will be told with joy before men and angels and devils too, at "that day."

People tell me now-a-days they would like to act so or so, and would do so, if alone; but they want to effect something on the mass in which they find themselves. Did reformation ever so begin? or must God reverse His principle of dealing with us as individuals? or, to please them, act upon the *tout ensemble*? Did not Abraham, and Moses, and Daniel, and the whole household of faith (see Heb. xi.) have to take their stand with a—"Lord, here am I," "What wilt thou have me to do?" and was not everything around them, even when ostensibly of God, often in opposition to them? Or again, will they refuse to act upon the mass because the only way they can do so, according to their Lord, is by shouldering the cross themselves as individuals? "The weakness of God is stronger than men," and "the foolishness of God is wiser than men." May we know this, and be content to be fools for Christ's sake, that we may become wise. People make their position, and peculiar circumstances, and the feelings of earthly friends of more authority, practically, than God's word, the power of the Spirit, and the feelings of the man Christ Jesus—who, though Son of God, is looking down with sympathy from the throne of God to see how the poor, weak members of His body on earth now get on.

Alas ! how little of true pastorship does He see over them ! How badly fed ; yea starved by hirelings too oft ! And how left in the dark pits of ignorance concerning Himself and His claims, if not of His finished work and salvation.....And now I "commend you to God and the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified." May we know the service of God and of His Christ, and to His sheep here below ; and complete freedom from the cruel thralldom and servile fear of man's day, and ways, and thoughts.

"THE DAY OF THE LORD."

V.

We were noticing at the close of the last paper, some striking points of contrast between the true and false church, and only add now, that it is to God's goodness in giving us the light of prophecy, that we are indebted for perfect knowledge of the future of both. The utmost confusion is under our eye now, the precious and the vile are so mingled that separation seems hopeless, and "he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey." It is in Rev. xvii. to xxii. that we find this confusion unravell'd and ended.*

God will judge the false church, which has refused the heavenly testimony of the Holy Ghost, and has sought earthly glory at the hands of kings whom she has corrupted to obtain it. In righteous retribution they, or some of them, will be the executioners of the Divine wrath upon her (xviii. 16), amid the rejoicings and the hallelujahs of the heavenly company, for she has been the tyrant over God's people, and has brought the deepest dishonour upon His name. (xviii. 20,

The church, as the fruit of God's counsels (Eph. iii. 9, 10 ; Col. i. 26), is not, as has been said, the subject of prophecy ; but as connected with a testimony on earth, and as bound up with the future display of the rule of the heavens in "the day of the Lord," it is.

xix. 1-4.) Public testimony is then at once borne to the relationship of the true church to Christ (xix. 7-9). He holds her as one with Himself, and takes her, before all the heavenly company, as His bride, His wife; and Eph. v. 27, the crowning proof of His love, will be accomplished.

Then heaven can be opened and Col. iii. 4 be fulfilled. Christ can be manifested to the world, for every detail of heavenly order will be perfect. The iniquity of the earth will have also come to the full. If Babylon has disappeared; from the scene, if Satan can no longer work by deceit, as in it, he can yet display the extent of his resources of power. He will raise "the beast" to the throne of the Roman Empire revived, and give to him his power and authority. The apostasy at that time will be wide-spread. The ten kings of the great Western confederation will "have one mind and will give their power and strength to the beast," and "the kings of the earth" will be drawn into the general revolt. The false prophet will lead the apostate Jews. Man will lift his head up to heaven—he wishes to be as God (Gen. iii. 5)—and all profession of godliness will be abandoned; open blasphemy will take its place, and the dwellers upon earth will be in full sympathy, wondering at and admiring the vast combinations, the result, as they imagine, of the full development of man's exalted faculties.

But here let us pause, lest, being occupied only with externals, we lose sight of the lesson God would teach us in these revelations. Are we conscious of what the hearts and minds of men are capable as to evil, when they are not stayed on God? Do we really believe that Satan can energize, can put terrible force into all the sinful lusts and passions that we know are natural to man? The demons could act even on swine and the Lord suffered it (Luke viii. 32, 33). The effect was an instant rush to destruction.—Surely this sets before us more than the ruin of these poor brute creatures.—When

Satan entered Judas, no human affection, no pity or tenderness, no remembrance of the past or dread of the future could arrest his course. He loaded his Master with kisses, yet said to those who thirsted for His blood,—“Hold him fast,”—“Lead him away safely”—and he also perished speedily in his iniquity. Satan can act on men with fearful power, and what will it be when all hindrance is removed and the predicted “son of perdition” comes on the scene? * (2 Thes. ii. 3-8). Beside the success of the arch-enemy in the garden of Eden, there will be found three epochs in the world’s history when restraint on his power over men is seen to be removed.

1. At the time of the cross (“This is your hour and the power of darkness”).

2. At the time of the revelation of “the man of sin,” (the time we are considering).

3. At the end of the millennium (Rev. xx. 7-10).

Unspeakable is the mercy that now puts a check on his malicious power, and prevents him exciting the passions of men, as we see from these instances he can do.

But we gladly turn from this painful subject to that which shall close it. The brightness of the glory of the Lord when He appears, and the full character of the result are before the prophet’s eye (Rev. xix. 21 to xx. 6). Righteousness is to reign in the earth, but first, judgment must return to righteousness (Ps. xciv. 15); for never, save once, can their separation be more absolute than when Jesus comes forth “to judge and make war.” He is seen by the prophet on the symbol of victorious, subduing power, “the white horse;” in faithfulness and truth, having perfect judicial intelligence, the right to all dominions, possessing the secret of His own inherent

* The reader should carefully consult the following passages in connection with the closing scenes of “man’s day,” as given in Rev. xix. 19; xvi. 14, 16; xvii. 12, 11; viz., Deut. xxxii. 35-43. Jer. xxx. 5-9. Matt. xxiv. 15-31. Dan. vii. 23-28; ix. 27; xi. 36 to xii. 3. 2 Thess. ii. Zech. xii. 2-9; xiii. 8 to xiv. 5. Is. xiv. 4-23; xxiv. 17-23 compare 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. Is. xxviii. 15-21; xxx. 27-33; lxvi. 15-18, 23, 24, and many of the Psalms.

glory, but coming in vengeance because of the dishonour put upon Him. His name—"THE WORD OF GOD." As the prophet foretold, all the saints will come with Him. They must be eye-witnesses of the extent of Satanic daring and of human wickedness, even as they shall be sharers in their Lord's triumphs.

But can the devil furnish his kings and armies, and their chief, with power and resources adequate to meet the "King of kings and the Lord of lords?" There will be no lack of effort or of determination. The world's great-one will magnify himself exceedingly, the false prophet will deceive men into implicit subjection to him. (xiii.) All the results of scientific research, all the modern appliances, energies and wealth of the West will be joined with all the impious, seductive and religious deception of the East. Satan and his unclean spirits will gather all for the final struggle, and God will give his followers up to a strong delusion to believe a lie, that they all may be judged (xvi. 16; 2 Thess. ii. 12). The result is told in few words. In the place of light and rule all is announced (xix. 17, 18) and the doom is righteous.

The infidelity so prevalent, as to the personality of the devil and his daring, here meets a full rebuke. He has proved himself too strong for man in Eden, in the earth, and even in the heavenlies (Eph. vi. 12). He has marred creation, ruined men, led Israel to present destruction, degraded the church, and blinded the minds of them which believe not. Only One has conquered him in life, and in death, and He alone will bruise his head in the final conflict, and give the earth to be relieved of his baleful presence during the long promised time of "the restitution of all things" (Acts iii. 21). This is the third division of our subject—"the day itself," "the day which the Lord hath made," the day when "He alone will be exalted"—and must be reserved (D.V.) for future consideration.

SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. 1. In John viii. 59, we read that "Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by." And in Luke iv. 30, when "they led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city (Nazareth) was built, that they might cast him down headlong, Jesus passing through the midst of them went his way." Did the Lord on these occasions, using divine power, *disappear* miraculously, or did He simply hide Himself for the time being?

2. In what sense are we to understand: "there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20)—Some say—only in Spirit?

J. B. M.

A. 1. We believe that the Lord's action in John viii. 59, was the opposite of the exercise of divine power in an open way. As in Luke iv., they who led Him, missed Him, they did not know how, so here those who would stone Him, could not find Him. But there was no display of power such as protected Elijah. "I am meek and lowly in heart." "He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets." (See also page 1 of this vol.)

2. Though it is surely by the Spirit that Christ is with us when gathered to His name, we must bear in mind that the Lord has said:—"There am I." Though of course His glorified body is in heaven, yet it is a deep and precious reality that He is there, He who loved us and gave Himself for us, and is now the living object of our affections, He is as truly there as if we could see Him, and we realize it by the Holy Spirit present to reveal Him to us, and to make our hearts prove all the blessedness of "THERE AM I IN THE MIDST."

THREE REQUISITES FOR THESE LAST DAYS.

V.

CHRIST'S RESPONSE TO TRUE SERVICE.

And how does the gracious Master defend His handmaid and own her service? He not only defends and justifies, but honours her in a four-fold way, each time increasingly and more abundantly worthy of Himself.

1st. "Let her alone; why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on me."

The first three of those words of the Lord have in Holy Writ a twofold meaning: one of them of the most solemn, and the other of the happiest character. The Lord, through His prophet Hosea, had applied them in an awfully solemn way to backsliding Israel, characterized by the name of "Ephraim."

"Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone!"

Words of tremendous solemnity, showing how God, whose very first commandment to His people was: "I am the Lord thy God, which hath brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me"—looks at idolatry and how He deals with idolaters.

It is true, "Ephraim," the "prodigal" of the Old Testament, will return in repentance at a not very distant time, "bemoaning himself," and saying; "Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me and I shall be turned; *for thou art the Lord my God.* Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed,

yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth."

And the Father, who replies to a Gentile prodigal's tears and confession of utter unworthiness with ; "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet," will reply to Ephraim's repentance with : "Is Ephraim my dear son ? Is he a pleasant child ? For since I spoke against him ["let him alone"], I do earnestly remember him still : therefore my bowels are troubled for him ; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord."—(Jer. xxxi. 18-20.—Compare Isaiah liv.) The words of pardoning love and grace will be spoken : "Take away the filthy garments from him," and : "Behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment," and : "Let them set a fair mitre upon his head."—Those blessed words of pardoning grace, that "reigns through righteousness," will be and can be spoken to penitent Israel, because on the cross "mercy and truth have met together," and "righteousness and peace have kissed each other." (Comp. Zech. iii. and xiii).

But, oh ! in what an awful way has that sentence of divine judgment : "Let him alone !" been executed upon backsliding and idolatrous Ephraim ! Centuries after centuries the ancient people of God have been scattered over the whole earth. The ten tribes, where are they ? None can tell. Even the acutest ethnologist is unable to discover them, whilst the remaining portion of that which is now "Lo Ammi," still bears the distinctive mark of Cain on their forehead known everywhere, fugitives and trodden down by the "Gentiles" up to the most recent date. Indeed, "Ephraim" has been *let alone* in a terrible sense !

"Little children, keep yourselves from idols !"

In another still more solemn case in the New Testament, the sentence : "*Let them alone*," is pronounced by the Lord

Himself upon those who form the most desperate and inexorable class of all sinners in the wide world; *i.e.*, upon *hypocrites*. That sentence was preceded by those awful words: "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." Then follow the solemn words, doubly solemn, coming as they did, from the lips of the ever gracious, but true One:—"Let them alone! They be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."

Terrible sentence this! Ten times more terrible than even the "*Let him alone*," pronounced on "Ephraim." There will be restoration, in Ephraim's case, according to the wondrous grace of God, but there was none here. And what about those professing Gibeonites, who "turn the grace of God into lasciviousness? What about the religious "Jannes and Jambres," who, being mere imitators, have the form of godliness, and deny the power of it, deceiving and being deceived, the modern "blind leaders of the blind?"

"Let them alone,"

is the verdict of Him, who is the judge of the quick and the dead. There is no remedy for hypocrites. The son of perdition in Simon's house, was one of them.

There remains nothing but the "rooting up" and the "falling into the ditch!"

With what relief the heart turns away from those two dark sides of being "let alone," to the bright scene in Simon's house, and to those thrice happy words: "*Let her alone*," spoken by the lips of the gracious Master, to her who had wrought that good work on Him. With the Lord's hand-maid at His feet, there was no danger of idolatry, as little as with His bosom disciple, so long as that attitude remained their habitual one.

Nor was there a danger of putting on hypocritical appearances, as in the traitor's case at Mary's side.

The vision of her heart and mind, as well as that of her eyes, was engrossed with the moral excellencies and perfections of the "Son of Man," the beauties of the "Messiah-King" of His people, and the divine glory of the "Son of God;" and as she was bending and ministering to Him the tokens of her adoring homage, she became herself the beautiful typical expression of her people at a future happier period, when His people, no longer like backsliding and idolatrous Ephraim, will be "willing in the day of His power." They will behold the beauty of the King; and they will see the "King in His beauty," will offer to Him the spikenard of their homage, "whilst the king sitteth at His table." Then indeed will they say: "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden and eat of his pleasant fruits." And He will answer: "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

As to Mary, the beautiful type of Jehovah's new covenant with His people, His words are: "Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. For the poor ye have always with you, and whensoever ye will, ye may do them good: but me ye have not always."

What a gracious, and yet all the more crushing rebuke, we repeat. Blessed, patient and gentle Master! At the eve of His cross, to hear from those, for whom He was about to suffer and to die and to drink that awful cup, words like these; "Why was this waste of the ointment made?" Enough to chill the warmest human love and make it hesitate in its purpose of self-sacrifice! But He knew all men; "He knew what was in man." He knew alike their hearts and ours, Christian reader; but for that very reason He had come to

suffer and to die for us. His purposes of redeeming love could not be shaken, for that love had not its motive in us, but in Himself. "Not that we loved him, but that he loved us." Blessed for ever be His gracious name!

Mark, Christian reader. The Lord does not say merely; "She hath wrought a good work," but: "She hath wrought a good work *on Me*." There are plenty of good works done by men, aye, by Christians too, that shine before men, but produce no glory to God and His dear Son. "Let your light *so* shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Where a good work is wrought on Christ, it will certainly have the effect of glorifying God and His Christ; if not, men will glorify you, but then there will be no reward in heaven for you. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men: knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ."

And what a reward will be ours, dear fellow believer and fellow-servant of Christ! Not only the seal of approval in our hearts and consciences, and His gracious smile upon us, shall we enjoy as our present happy portion; not only shall we hear His gracious; Let her (or him) alone; why trouble ye her (or him)? rebuking the grumblers and fault-finders; (and they will be sure to raise their voices, wherever a good work is wrought on Him alone, *i.e.* done "in the name of the Lord Jesus," and to Christ, whom we serve, and not in the name of men, nor before men); but what a reward is yet in store for all true-hearted service! And as we observed elsewhere: Abraham and Sarah, who had the honour of having the Lord of glory as their guest at Mamre, and of waiting upon Him; Lazarus, Mary and Martha, who in their humble abode at Bethany received and served the One who was amongst

them as he that serveth ; will then in their turn be served by Him, Who is the Servant of servants, as He is the Lord of lords, and King of kings, even the King of glory, when He will gird Himself and come forth and serve them. And not only them, but you and me amongst the rest, Christian reader; most unprofitable servants though we have been, especially if we consider the infinitely superior privileges, in position and blessing, which are ours, compared to those humble and faithful servants of their and our heavenly Master; all the more humbling to us, seeing what our poor "service," if it can be so called, has been and is still!—May our service be more wholehearted and in singleness of eye rendered to Him, for His name's sake, and for the greater glory of God!

"I SHALL BE SATISFIED."

(Concluded.)

How brightly will the resurrection morning greet our longing eyes! With what glad hallelujahs shall we welcome Him who brings it! Every longing of hearts which here below have tasted His love will have found its answer the moment we cast the eye upon Him. Faith's first and constant craving, "that I may win Christ" is at length satisfied; He is won!

There, centre of that multitude which no man can number, is Christ in His peerless beauty. "Many brethren" are there, but the First-born stands supreme. All own Him; all bow before Him; all gather around Him. *They* are glorified, but the glory is unmistakably *His*. His preeminence, even in the glory which He shares with those who surround Him, fills all with joy. Their best portion in that unclouded glory

is to behold it in *His* face. The glory which the Father gave Him, He has already given them. It is a glory which tells the sweet tale of redeeming love. His joy is full now that this glory folds them in its bosom.

The unspeakable satisfaction which beams in the face that was once marred in behalf of those nearest to Him, will fill every heart and be reflected from "every sinless brow." "*He* shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied." "*I* shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

With Him, as He comes, is many a dear one long missed from the home and from the assembly. "The dead in Christ will God bring with him" is written to be the comfort of broken hearts which that meeting alone will fully heal. Links which are merely natural will have passed away when "mortality is swallowed up of life;" but not those formed by the grace of God. The aged winner of souls whose loving intreaties led his grandchild to the Saviour will have him for a crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus. The mother to whose tears and prayers the child owes, under God and by His grace, his salvation will find a closer link with him in eternity than the natural link down here. The son, now hoary with years, who travailed in birth for a beloved mother gathered to Christ fifty years ago, will find his "heaven, two heavens" as he sees her, fair and lovely, in the image of Christ.

"Thus have I pray'd—while others slept,
 "I've pray'd and pray'd again, and wept,
 "Through half the live-long night.
 "For one whose bright and beauteous brow
 "Waits for a crown of glory now,
 "A blessed saint in light."

The writer owes to his mother, now and for long with the Lord, the first taste of the water of life. Later on, it was his by the grace of God to bring deeper draughts of the same

water to cheer and strengthen her faith and to give her the hope of the Lord's return as a fresh joy in her heart. She will not be his mother when the Lord brings her with Him ; but the double link of grace so precious will abide as long as fruits from the tree of life are the refreshment of the redeemed.

What consolation this for the bereaved heart ! Here, alas, how much is there to mar the precious fruits of grace ! There all will be the final perfection which befits the deep and wise counsels of a redeeming God ; all will fully answer to the value of the blood which has made them good. How beauteous the faces we have known and loved here when God brings them with Him ! At the parting sorrow *would* well up in the heart and struggle with the deeper joy which faith gave the soul. At the meeting on the cloud, joy has won its abiding victory ; God's hand has wiped away the last tear. *Then* the shadow of death passed over the mortal face, *now* the life of Christ beams there for ever. It was sown in weakness, it is raised in power ; it was sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

No sort of spiritual joy will be wanting in His presence ; it is *fulness* of joy. But for us the highest and deepest will be the answer to the prayer, the very thought of which fills our hearts with joy whilst " absent from the Lord : " — " Father I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou has given me, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." John xvii. 24. How joyful, wrapped in *that* cloud, to be shewn " the path of life " by Him who loved us and gave Himself for us ! Joyful, too, to enter *with Him* the Father's house ! But there at last, in the home of love to find that prayer fully answered—ah ! that joy has never yet entered the heart of man.

If Christ even now cherishes us as those whom the

Father gave to Him, what manifestations of love shall we prove when *we* answer to all the thoughts and purposes of God about us! And what response from our enlarged and satisfied hearts!

What rest, what deep satisfaction to behold His glory with an eye no longer dim, with a heart no longer cold! What blessedness to contemplate that *given* glory, and to find that every ray of it tells of redeeming love! What joy to behold such glory in the face of Him whom the Father loved before the foundation of the world! But who shall tell that glory? Who can even conceive the blessedness of those who behold it? It is *given* to Christ, thank God! Yet he who received it was the Father's eternal delight. Sovereign, everlasting "wisdom" brought up with Him. "The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father." "For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

Before His majesty we shall bow in deepest worship. His glory we shall behold with adoring hearts. It will be our perfect, our eternal joy. The delight of His heart in having with Him those whom the Father gave Him will give the glory we behold, rays of unspeakable gentleness. The gladness of a day of espousals will fill the blessed home of love and pervade the redeemed—not their spirits only, for each one will be clothed upon with his "house which is from heaven." Each redeemed one, body as well as soul, will be a chosen vessel of the Father's love, when we are "children of God, being children of the resurrection." The whole man will delight in the glory of Him who has made the Father known, and brought us, in the value of His precious blood, to His heavenly home.

My brethren, a cup of joy remains untasted on high whilst these words are being traced;—it is a cup reserved for the day of untold brightness which will soon break for our rejoicing eyes. Jesus our Saviour will not taste it till we are

with Him. Then what draughts for Him and for us! Shall we indeed see His face as He drinks it! Will our hands be stretched out to receive it from His! Shall we, who now mourn the coldness of our love for Him,—shall *we* drink after Him of the wine of joy in the Father's kingdom! The soul is almost confounded in the presence of such grace. "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!"

"I SHALL BEHOLD THY FACE IN RIGHTEOUSNESS."

But to behold Him will be to be like Him. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren." Rom. viii. 29. Precious purpose of our God at length accomplished:—"we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is!" "As we have born the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." We have been known down here to be the children of the first and rebellious Adam, by our likeness to him. There we shall be known by the image we bear, to belong to the last and obedient Adam. Truly it will be "fulness of joy" to bear that loved and lovely image. Fulness of joy to be in it *for ever!*

"To find each hope of glory gained,

"Fulfilled each precious word:

"And fully all to have attained

"The image of our Lord."

The child was taught of God when his faith looked to the full accomplishment of God's counsels through the blood of Christ, and in His joy at the thought of being with Christ—even though unclothed—exclaimed:

"I SHALL BE SATISFIED WHEN I AWAKE WITH HIS LIKENESS."

SANCTIFICATION.

(Heb. x. 10 ; ii. 11.)

“By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” (Heb. x. 10.)

The weighty and solemn truths brought before us in this verse are :—First.—That we, believers in the Lord Jesus, are sanctified—*set apart*—through, or at the cost and by virtue of, the offering of the body of Jesus Christ. Second.—That this sanctification is according to the will of God. Third.—That it is true in our case now on earth.

There are evidently two aspects in which the practical bearing of these truths on our walk, as sanctified ones, may be considered, ever remembering that He who took us, at such a cost, out of our condition by nature and set us apart to God, now succours us in all our weakness against every attack of the enemy.

These two aspects may be considered separately, in order to more direct application to the conscience, so that sanctification in *fact* may be also sanctification *confessed*.

The first is,—that we are set apart *from* all that is contrary to the mind and will of God as expressed in His word, whether in regard to us individually, or our association with others ; whether in respect to morality, or the things of God, as His worship, His service, His assembly.

In chapter ii. 11 we read,—“For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one : for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.” The absolute sanctification of this relationship is seen in John xx. 17, “Go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God and your God.” The absolute sanctification of believers as priests to God is equally

clearly stated in the chapter we are considering (Heb. x., see verses 10, 14, 19-22).

Thus as "*a holy priesthood*" (1 Pet. ii. 5; Rev. i. 6), as "*holy brethren*," and as called by Him who is holy, we are exhorted to be holy in all manner of conversation. There is religious iniquity unsuited to "*a holy priesthood*," as well as moral iniquity unsuited to "*holy brethren*;" but as redeemed from all iniquity, we have ever to remember the *one offering* by which, and at the cost of which, we have been thus *set apart*, or sanctified.

To tamper therefore, or become associated willingly and knowingly, with that which is unsuited to these relationships with God, is to set at nought, as to its practically separating effect, that one offering: a solemn thought!

The positive side of this truth is, that we are set apart at this great cost, not only from all iniquity, but *to God*, (to God in Christ, and to His name) to do His will and find in Him all our springs.

How blessed is this side of this great truth. Set apart to Him who is the Creator of all things, perfect light and perfect love; who is the Redeemer, at such a cost of His people; who cares for us in all our need, and leads us by His Spirit into the knowledge and enjoyment of that perfect love from which nothing can separate us,—the unspeakable love of our God in Christ; who fills all things and us to His fulness; hears our feeblest cry and answers all our petitions according to infinite wisdom and unchanging grace; working in us too, by His Spirit, to will and to do of His good pleasure in the path of obedience.

Oh! to have grace, to trust to the love and care of such a God, while seeking to walk in the path of faith, in separation from all iniquity to HIMSELF.

It should be so—implicit confidence and trust—if we would live the life we have from and in Christ, seeing that the

characteristics of this life are righteousness and true holiness *in unshaken confidence in God*. If there is not this, if there is sin, if there is a doubt or a fear, we know that it cannot spring from the new life—Christ in us—but from the old, bad self, judged and condemned in that one offering. Let us then, by His grace, and by the Spirit, live out the life we have from Him, making manifest our sanctification as priests to God, in our keeping apart from the fleshly will-worship, and, so called service, of the religious world; and as those whom Christ "is not ashamed to call His brethren," in separation from all unholiness and unrighteousness.

In glory there will be no conflict. Now there is, but nothing can "separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord;" and nothing should sully the purity of our Nazariteship, our absolute sanctification by that one offering. Circumstances, however trying, should only be the occasion for the display of its beauty. A. J. B.

"IN PERFECT PEACE."

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."—(Is. xxvi. 3.)

The word "peace" is often employed to express that which is the immediate result of justification by faith, and of our being reconciled to God; even that peace which He made, and is—"Who hath broken down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." This "peace with God" through our Lord Jesus Christ is inviolable and unassailable; though he that is idle and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ may realize, by sorrowful experience, his loss of the conscious enjoyment of it. (2 Peter i. 8-9.)

There is, however, another sense in which the same word is largely used in Scripture, *viz.*, to express that state of tranquility and quietness of mind which we find designated the "peace of God," or "perfect peace:" and while we, who believe, rejoice because the adversary cannot by any means rob us of *peace with God*, we ought never to tolerate anything which tends to hinder the peace of God ("which passeth all understanding") from ruling in our hearts. (Col. iii. 15).

To one surrounded by sorrowful circumstances, or who perceives calamities impending, how very desirable is the assurance that he shall be kept in that peace, which under all circumstances shall prove sufficient to guard his heart and thoughts in Christ Jesus.—(Phil. iv. 7. R.V.) While the prophet Habakkuk beheld, in a vision, the coming forth of the Lord to take vengeance, he trembled in himself, that he might rest in the day of trouble; yet he could rejoice in the Lord, assured that grace would enable him to rise beyond the reach of coming sorrows. (Hab. iii. 16–19). Again, amid those universal and fiery judgments so vividly portrayed in Is. xxiv. and referred to also in xxvi. 20–21, the believing remnant are encouraged by the promise:—"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee." Seeing then, that these shall be thus "kept" during the period of the "great tribulation," why are we, who have a more glorious destiny assured to us, so often cast down and disquieted in soul, when overtaken with but "light affliction."

A sorely tried believer might frankly confess: "I can and I do thank God, because grace enables me to rejoice in the assurance that I have peace with Him, but, alas, these oft recurring trials press so heavily upon my spirit, that I scarcely know how to look up. Would that I were kept in perfect peace!" We would tenderly caution him who might be inclined at times to express himself after such a manner, not to confound the perfectness of the peace which it is the

privilege of every believer to possess in Christ (John xvi. 32), with his own imperfect appreciation of it.

In His own person, Jesus was the only absolutely perfect example of one kept in perfect peace. Though, indeed, the "man of sorrows" throughout His entire pathway from the manger to the cross, the Son of Man ceased not to enjoy perfect peace. Truly His soul was troubled in view of that "hour" of unspeakable anguish, yet on the very night of His betrayal, He comforted His sorrowing disciples, saying unto them, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." Such was His love to those who, in the hour of His sorrow, forsook Him, and fled! Such was his peace!

If Peter was not "kept in perfect peace" throughout that night of trial, it was not because the peace which His Lord had given him was imperfect, but simply and only because the mind of that apostle was at the moment rather stayed upon himself than upon the Lord. (Compare Mark xiv. 29-31.) Ere we proceed further, we cannot be too careful to observe that the promise to "keep in perfect peace" is quite conditional. If Peter's mind had been stayed upon the Lord instead of upon himself, he would doubtless have been "kept," even as he was on a later occasion, when he lay bound between two soldiers, and Herod purposed to slay him on the morrow. To men his doom appeared to be sealed, (though many believers were earnestly praying for his deliverance), but Peter's mind being now stayed upon the Lord, he experienced no personal disquietude of mind, and was found sleeping so soundly, that the angel that appeared for his deliverance must needs smite him to awaken him.

The promise to keep the trusting one in perfect peace is immediately followed by the needful exhortation: "Trust ye in the LORD for ever, for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength." (Is. xxvi. 4.) In days of compara-

tive ease and prosperity one might profess his trust in the Lord, but it is in days of sorrow and adversity that the believer proves the everlasting strength of Him in whom He trusts. And the prophet says of those for whose benefit he is inspired to write: "Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer (marg. secret speech) when thy chastening was upon them." The weeping Jacob's supplication (Hosea xii. 4), and Nehemiah's prayer as he stood before the Persian King (Neh. ii. 4), are both striking examples of the "secret speech" of the troubled saint.

Those in trial in the chapter open before us, cease not, also, to vindicate the Lord Jehovah (v.v. 5-7). And if earthly refuge fails them, while enemies surround them, in Him they cheerfully repose their hearts' fullest confidence. So that they can truly cry, "Yea in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the desire of our souls is to thy name and to the remembrance of thee." And each one, according to the measure of his own individual desire, can add:—"With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early." Is the night here spoken of simply the night of nature? Is it not rather a night of sorrow and anguish, a period when all around appears dark and gloomy, and the darkness is of such a nature that earth's sun is powerless to dispel it? The sorely persecuted Psalmist would, with uplifted heart and voice, make supplication with thanksgiving at such a time.—(Ps. xlii. 8); and these, also, lift up their eyes above the surrounding darkness, as they express, each one, his own soul's desires towards Him who is the Light of the World: while each one's spirit, cheered and comforted by the sure word of prophecy, seeks Him whose coming shall usher in the bright morning of glory. Taught by the Spirit these gladly welcome each successive ray of the swiftly approaching glory, and even while they pass through deep waters of

affliction, in full assurance of faith they joyfully exclaim ; " Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us : for thou also hast wrought all our works in us " (v. 12). And if, to the natural vision, that deep exercise and travail of soul through which they are now passing appear likely to prove fruitless, (v.v. 17, 18), the prophet assures them that in resurrection life the Israel of God shall experience both joy and fruitfulness, (v. 19). Meanwhile, Jehovah invites this persecuted Remnant to " come," yea, to enter into those " chambers " which grace has made their own ; to shut those " doors " about them which grace has provided for their security ; and in Him Who is their defence, high tower and refuge, to abide, " kept in perfect peace," " as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast " (v. 20).

Beloved reader, are you " put to grief in manifold temptations." (1 Peter i. 6, R.V.) ? It is written :—" All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or peril, separate us from the love of Christ ? Shall those of whom we have spoken, those sufferers in the day of Jacob's trouble, testify with thanksgiving (Is. xxvi. 1-4) to His abundant grace who will preserve them right through the great tribulation, and will you not, in days of sorrow, " lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees ?" Why art thou cast down ? Why art thou disquieted, troubled soul ? " The Lord is at hand. In nothing be anxious ; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." (Phil. iv. 5-7, R.V.)

Were you grieved at the removal of those earthly props upon which you were unconsciously leaning ? Have you beheld with sorrow the shaking of things that appeared to

be most stable? Be not grieved at the removing of those things that are shaken, for those things which cannot be shaken abide for your sustainment, comfort and blessing. Infinite wisdom perceived the "needs be" that you should be overtaken with these trials. (1 Peter i. 6.) Infinite love withheld not these sorrows which now put your faith to the proof. Not merely is your faith strengthened and increased by its exercise, you may also glory in tribulations: "knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience hope, a hope which maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." You are a positive gainer by these trials which have overtaken you.—"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." To the beloved Philippians the apostle wrote:—"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." May our minds be continually stayed upon Him who is able to keep His beloved ones in perfect peace.

A. J.

SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. (a) What is meant by the expression, "wash away thy sins" (Acts xxii. 16)? In what sense are we to understand that baptism has to do with cleansing here?

(b) What is meant by "the house of God" (1 Pet. iv. 17), and in what sense does judgment first begin there?

A. (a) We must bear in mind that, with Ananias, no doubt existed as to Saul being born of God. Though before a blasphemer, and a persecutor and injurious, he had obtained mercy. He was thus a divinely quickened soul, indeed an elect vessel to the Lord for a work of deepest and widest grace. (ix. 15, 19.) With all this however, he was not, *as on earth*, in the place which the Lord had appointed for those who believe on Him. He had not submitted to the sign of identification with Christ in His death, that all efficacious death for our sins (1 Cor. xv. 3, 4). Hence the words of Ananias, which, strictly rendered, are—"And now why lingerest thou?" (*i.e.* after what he had said to him in *v v* 14, 15). "Arise and get baptised, and have thy sins washed away, calling on the name of the Lord." Until he had passed in *figure* through the waters of death (see 1 Pet. iii. 21, 22) he was not in the position *on earth* of one whose sins were washed away. In 2 Pet. i. 9 there is a warning against forgetting this position.

(b) The Spirit in 1 Peter ii. 4, 5, speaks of all who believe in Jesus during this time of His rejection as "the house of God," a spiritual house built on the "Living Stone." So, in the verse in question, after saying that judgment must begin at the house of God, (see Ezek. ix. as to responsible Israel), Peter adds, "if it first begin at *us*;" and this in contrast to those who "obey not the gospel of God." Now all believers being the "house of God," are the immediate objects of His government, for holiness becomes His house for ever. His dealings with us, though ever in perfect love, often take the form of severe, though salutary discipline. He makes His strokes to be felt, that we may practically own His government, and be partakers of His holiness. In view of these governmental dealings with us now, how solemn the question—"What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?"

Q. (a) Please explain 1 Tim. ii. 12, and 1 Cor. vii. 14

Is the believing wife at liberty to teach the gospel to the unbelieving husband?

(b) In 1 Tim. 13, Timothy is exhorted to "give attendance to reading." Is this in the assembly?

A. (a) If verses 13, 14 are read with v. 12, it will be seen that the Spirit is treating of the relative position of the woman to the man. Her formation after Adam and her natural character are ever to be remembered. She has an honoured and useful place in Christianity, as many instances in the New Testament prove, but this word in Timothy is to guard her at *all times* when before men, while 1 Cor. xiv. imposes silence on her *in the assembly*. That the believing wife is in every way to seek the conversion of the unbelieving husband is beautifully shewn in 1 Peter iii. 1-2: a meek and quiet spirit is her best adornment, and in the sight of God of great price. 1 Cor. vii. 14 meets the case of either a husband or wife brought in faith to Christ *after marriage*. It is in contrast to the requirement of the law (Ezra ix. x.), which insisted on separation in the case of mixed marriages. The Lord has in grace ordained otherwise for His own. Continuance in the relationship is enjoined, not forbidden. The unbeliever, husband or wife, is sanctified to the believer, and the children are holy, not profane or unclean.

(b) The connection appears to point to public service. "Exhortation and doctrine" have certainly to do with others for their profit; "reading" the oracles of God is however essential to fit even one who is a gift of Christ to the church for his high and holy calling. It is thus that the man of God is to be perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good work. The exhortation should be laid to heart by all, though specially applicable to them called to "exhortation and doctrine."

THREE REQUISITES FOR THESE LAST DAYS.

VI.

CHRIST'S RESPONSE TO TRUE SERVICE.

But a Master so abounding in grace, that He rewards even a glass of water given in His Name, does not content Himself with those words of acknowledgment of Mary's service, rich and precious though that reward was. He continues :

2 "*She hath done what she could.*" What higher praise was or could ever be given to any of Christ's servants even for the most devoted service? Even the service of a Paul or Peter, who sealed their testimony with their life blood, could not have been rewarded with a more complete acknowledgment from the Master.

That poor widow who cast her farthing into the treasury, received from Him, who searcheth the reins and the hearts, the gracious acknowledgment, that she had cast in more than they all which had cast into the treasury, because they did cast in *of their abundance*, but she *of her want* did cast in all that she had, even all her living. How her service must have refreshed the Saviour's heart in the temple, even His Father's House, which those, whose service the prophet Malachi described, (ch. i. 10.) attempted to turn into a house of merchandise !

Those poor (but rich) churches of Macedonia, when "in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded into the riches of their liberality," because they, like Mary, *first gave their own selves to the Lord*, and unto the apostle "*by the will of God*," received from their heavenly

Master, through His Spirit in the apostle, a still further and higher acknowledgment, than the widow and even Mary, though in the latter case only apparently. For the apostle bore them record, "that to their power, yea, and *beyond their power* they were willing of themselves." (Alas! alas! how unlike is our poor service to that of the poor widow in the temple, not to say that of those poor, and yet so rich Macedonians! How much more does it resemble that of those rich, but poor, those instructed and gifted, yet foolish and vain Corinthians, who needed to be reminded of the *poverty of Christ*, "Who became poor, that through his poverty they might be made rich," in order to "provoke them to love and good works!") But neither to the poor widow nor to the Macedonians; was the same praise accorded as to Mary, who was not, we must remember like those Macedonian believers, indwelt by the Spirit of God, and united by Him with a risen and ascended Christ. It is true, in their loving sympathy and zeal, those whole-hearted churches, in a certain sense, did *more than they could*, that is, they went beyond their power, (*i.e.* their means). This was not the case with Mary, of whom we are not told, that she was poor, though I do not doubt, that even in this respect "she did what she could," for the little household of Bethany appears not to have belonged to the rich of this world, as did Joseph of Arimathea and others, who ministered from their substance to the Lord in His life and death.

That which gave such a value to Mary's service in the eyes of the Lord was not merely its outward value as to expense, but the *way* in which, and the *time* at which it was rendered to Him, and the "*tact*" of faith, and the unfailing instinct of holy, loving zeal, through grace, that made her do just the right thing in the right way and at the right time in the Master's service. For the Lord continues:—

3. "She is come aforehand to anoint my body to the bury-

ing." None of His apostles, neither zealous Peter, nor the loving disciple of His bosom, who first of all recognised His risen Master, had thought of it. He had spoken to them again and again of His rejection, cross and resurrection, enjoining upon them : " Let these words sink down into your ears," but they had forgotten them, as if they had been " idle tales," for His cross as well as His resurrection were things " hidden from them." Nor did Mary apparently know any more than they about His cross and resurrection. But the difference between her and the other disciples of the Lord was this, that she, with the instinct of true and devoted holy love, had an intuitive sense, as it were, of the dangerous atmosphere around, and of the treacherous and murderous hostility against her beloved Master, that was animating Satan's tools all around.

We have frequently heard of remarkable instances where the life of some one being threatened or otherwise in peril, an instinctive and irresistible presentiment of the imminent danger has come upon one or other near and dear to him, and has often served to save the imperilled life of the beloved one. That which in such cases is a kind of intuitive instinct or presentiment, wherewith a merciful Creator has endowed some of His creatures in a providential way, was, though in a far higher and spiritual sense, the work of God's grace in Mary's soul. Without knowing anything of the diabolic treachery of the traitor close by her; without knowing of the imminent crucifixion of her adorable and adored Saviour, she had an instinctive, nay, we would say, intuitive sense of the increasing enmity of Satan and men against her blessed Master and Lord, which at the same time only served to intensify the emotions of her heart in holy devotion and love for Him, and stirred them to their deepest depths. If men hated Him without a cause, she would show her love for Him more than ever; if He was to be disallowed

by men, to be rejected by the builders, she would offer to Him, at His feet, the humble homage of a heart that had been taught by divine grace to love Him whom the Father honoured, because He honoured the Father. The best and most precious thing to be procured was but a poor expression of what was due to Him as Man, as Messiah-King, and as Son of God; but she knew He would not despise her humble and imperfect service. Thus she became a most honoured vessel under God's grace, and a fresh instance was afforded of His ways, of honouring His Son, in an especial way (as we have seen in Simon the Pharisee's house), at the moment, when men more than ever showed their contempt, neglect and rejection of Him. Nay, more, "*she anointed his body to the burying.*" Well intentioned and acceptable to God as was the service intended by Christ's handmaids, when they came with their spices to the grave to anoint His body *after* His death, what was it, compared to this wondrous service of the one, who anointed His *living* body for His burial, lavishing upon the holy and gracious One, as a last token of homage, all the precious sentiments of a heart, that had received from His fulness, grace upon grace, and been stored at His feet with all that became Him, and was now spent upon Him in compensation for the cold neglect of His disciples and of the wickedness all around Him.

And what was the compensation *she* received from her gracious Master, for the indignation and murmurings of her fellow-servants?

4. "Verily, I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her."

What monument of the most exquisite marble or bronze, erected by grateful monarchs, or nations, to the great and useful men of this world, can be compared to this truly divine monument, set up eighteen centuries ago by the Lord of

glory to His humble and devoted handmaid? All the malice and power of the god and prince of this world and of all his hosts have not been able to upset that monument of divine grace and liberality, nor has time been able to obliterate its divine inscription. As the Word of God itself, of which it forms a part, it must endure for ever. And as long as the blessed Gospel shall be preached under the canopy of heaven in hundreds of tongues through land and sea,—

“This also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.”

Let us now proceed to contemplate the *third* of our “Three requisites for these last days.”

But before doing so, we must crave the kind indulgence of the reader, for permitting ourselves to copy, for our common benefit, in the article which follows, a fragment taken from a volume of the “Present Testimony,” as it appears to us to have a close bearing on to-day’s subject.

FRAGMENT.

“Those who fight the Lord’s battles must be contented to be in no respect accounted of; they must expect to be in no respect encouraged by the prospect of *human* praise. And if you make an exception, “that the children of God will praise you, whatever the world may say,” beware of this, for you may turn them into a world, and may sow to the flesh, in sowing to their approbation; and you will neither be benefited by them, nor they by you, so long as respect for them is your motive. All such motives are a poison and a taking away from you the strength in which you are to give glory to God. *It is not the fact*, that the misapprehension of the world is the only misapprehension the Christian must be contented to labour under. He must expect even his brethren to see him

through a mist, and to be disappointed of their sympathy, and their cheers of approbation. *The man of God must walk alone with God; he must be contented that the Lord knoweth.*

It is such a relief to the natural man within us, to fall back upon human countenances, and human thoughts and sympathy, that we often deceive ourselves, and think it "brotherly love," when we are just resting in the earthly sympathy of some fellow-worm. You are to be followers of Him who was left alone, and you are, like Him, to rejoice you are not alone, *because the Father is with you*, that you may give glory to God. Oh! I cannot but speak of it. It is such a glory to God to see a soul that has been accessible to the praise of men, surrounded by hundreds and thousands of his fellow-creatures, every one of whom he knows how to please; and yet that he should be contented, yea, pleased and happy, in doing, with a single reference to God, that which he knows they will all misunderstand. Here was the victory of Jesus. There was not a single heart that beat in sympathy with His heart, or entered into His bitter sorrow, or bore His grief in the hour of His bitter grief. But His way was with the Lord, His judgment was with His God, His Father, who said: "This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This was the perfect glory given to the Father by the Son, that in flesh and blood such a trust to God was manifested. And this is what you are called to, and you are not called to it as He was, but you are called to *see God in Him*. God has come near to you in Christ, and here you have a human heart—a perfect sympathy—(as well as) the heart of God, and to this you are ever carried. And if there be any other sympathy with you in the wide universe, whether on the sea of glass, or still on this earth, it is only as the *pulsation of the blood* that flows from Christ to His members—that it is to you*

* It is hardly necessary to remind the reader that the writer has used here the word, "blood," in the sense of "life."—We should have preferred the latter.

of any account. Feed upon it, and remember, you are thus to walk in the world, not hanging upon one another." (Present Testimony, vol. viii. p. 46.)

Momentous words in these days! God grant us to heed them!

"WHO HATH ALSO SEALED US."

- 1.—IT IS THE BELIEVER IN CHRIST WHO IS SEALED.
- 2.—IT IS GOD WHO SEALS HIM.
- 3.—IT IS IN CHRIST THAT HE IS SEALED.
- 4.—IT IS WITH THE HOLY GHOST, AND
- 5.—UNTO THE DAY OF REDEMPTION THAT HE IS SEALED.

(1) "Of this man's (David's) seed hath God, according to his promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus." (Acts xiii. 23.) "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the end of the earth." (Is. xlix. 6.) The salvation of God, then, *is come* for Jew and for Gentile.

The testing of man under law is over. The fulness of time for the revelation of God, when He brings His salvation near to guilty and ruined man, is come. "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. iv. 4, 5.)

A Saviour God has revealed Himself in Christ. This revelation is perfect and to God's highest praise. "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him." (John xiii. 31, 32.) There, at the cross, the whole question of sin was dealt with according to the claims of God's righteousness. The believer's sins

were borne; the judgment due to them fell upon Christ, the obedient, the willing victim. Sin in the flesh too, was condemned and our old man crucified.

For God, the result is that in place of sin is righteousness; instead of disobedience, obedience unto death; instead of God's dishonour in a world of sin is the highest honour for God that heaven or earth has ever witnessed. This honour has been brought to His name by the One who from all eternity was His delight, but who has now called forth a new love and delight by this very work:—"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again."

For Christ, the result is that He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father,—that He was straightway glorified and seated at the right hand of God, "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." God "hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

For the believer, the result fully answers to, and is the fruit of the glory of God made good by the Son of man in the cross. The believer has a full, present and eternal pardon of all his sins. (Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14.) He has peace with God (Rom. v. 1.). His old man is crucified with Christ, (Gal. ii. 19, 20; Rom. vi. 6). He has eternal life,—"life more abundantly;" a risen Christ is his life (John x. 10; xvii. 3; Col. iii. 1-4). He is a child of God (John xvii. 26; Eph. i. 5; Rom. viii. 14, 15). Such are some of the fruits of the death and resurrection of Christ. But there is another. It is the most blessed of all. It SEALS the rest;—it is the gift of the Holy Ghost.

It was only when the work of the cross was finished and He who wrought it was glorified, that the Holy Ghost was, or

could be given. (Compare John vii. 38, 39; xvi. 7; xiv. 16, 17.) It is scarcely needful to remark that the gift of the Holy Ghost here spoken of, and called in Luke xxiv. 49, "the promise of my Father," is a thing altogether *new* and characteristic of christianity. All good, all blessing for man from the beginning has been by the Holy Ghost. He has wrought from creation downward in a thousand blessed ways. But He never came to " *dwell with* " believing men and to " *be in* " them, until God had been glorified in the Son of man and God had glorified the Son of man in Himself.

The guilty sinner who, through grace, owns himself such before God and who, by faith, enters into the blessing which the work of Christ has procured for all who believe, *is saved* with a full and eternal salvation suited to God's estimate of the work of the cross. The work is *done* by which God is just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. That work has been accepted of God; He has publicly declared His acceptance of it in raising Christ from the dead. The sinner that believes enters into all the value of this work. He stands before God in all its excellence. That which so fully meets the claims of God, and so satisfies His heart, is likewise the believer's standing of cloudless acceptance. The work then is complete as regards the PERFECT ACCEPTANCE of the believer, —the PERFECT FAVOUR in which he stands. There only remains the SEALING of the blessed transaction in the person of the believer. This God has done in giving him the holy Spirit to dwell in him and to make of his body, His temple. "After that ye believed ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." The Holy Ghost—the promise of the Father—is given to abide with, and to dwell in, the believer—*every* believer—consequent upon his believing in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

(2) "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and

forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses of these things ; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him." (Acts v. 31, 32.) Thus it is *God* who seals the believer. "Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God ; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." (2 Cor. i. 21, 22.) The Holy Ghost dwelling in the believer is the seal of God to a finished transaction and to the perfect favour in which this has set the sealed one ; He is moreover the unalterable witness that the sealed one belongs to Him who has thus sealed him as HIS.

Nay more, the Holy Ghost in the believer is the seal of the new relationship into which the believer is called. The amazing purpose of God that we should be "children by Jesus Christ to himself" waited for the work of the cross which alone could make it good, and for the resurrection of Christ, for it was as the risen One that He fully declared the Father's name. This priceless declaration was the first service of love of the risen Lord. Ascended, the same Lord, "having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." The Spirit thus given is the seal of the new relationship. Present in the soul, He sheds abroad there the ineffable love which formed the holy relationship and which finds its satisfaction in it. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." (Gal. iv. 6.) He gives the consciousness of this abiding relationship, works the affections suited to it and is Himself the seal of perfect love.

(To be concluded next month, D.V.)

ISRAEL AND THEIR RIBAND OF BLUE,

AND

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND CONDUCT.

I.

When Jehovah enjoined the children of Israel by His servant Moses, to make and wear their riband of blue (see Numb. xv. 37-41), it was by no means a question of bringing them into relationship to Him, as His earthly people. This was already a settled thing. They had previously proved the value of the blood of the Paschal Lamb in sheltering them from the righteous judgment of Jehovah, when the destroying angel smote all Egypt's firstborn. They had also passed through the Red Sea, which was divided, and made dry for their safety, and they had afterwards sung with Moses the enjoyed triumphs of deliverance.

They had therefore been brought to God, to be under His care and direction in their wilderness journey to Canaan. (see Ex. xix. 4.) Much had also been manifested of their rebellion and unbelief; and moreover, at an early stage they had openly and solemnly put themselves upon a new footing at Sinai, by accepting Jehovah's proposed terms of blessing founded upon their obedience, and thereby abandoning the ground of pure sovereign grace on which they started. This should be borne in mind in considering the present subject; yet, notwithstanding this change, the point to be understood in connection with the riband of blue is, that they were at that time Jehovah's earthly, and *alone* recognized people. The book of Numbers, in which this appointment occurs, records Jehovah's arrangement and provision for their journey

through the wilderness. Their numbering, their position, and march, with the glorious Ark going before them to provide a resting place for them, while their enemies should be scattered, were all thought of by Jehovah. It was after this that their sin, and unbelief, and rebellion came fully out, and they spake of making a captain and returning to Egypt. Nevertheless, Jehovah blessedly falls back upon His own unchanging purpose, and declares His unaltered mind, telling Israel what to do when they get into Canaan. (Num. xv. 2.) This is lovely, and most cheering in the presence of unfaithfulness, and that too, when they had to suffer the fruit of their sin in being turned back into the wilderness.

Jehovah none the less speaks of Israel as His people, and the land as that of His provision; then, coming to our subject, the badge and conduct for them are instituted, and that "throughout their generations."

The fringe with its riband was not therefore appointed for their faithfulness, but because they *were* the people of God. It was to be made and worn in the divinely appointed way, and its use is distinctly given.

It was intended by Jehovah to have a twofold purpose; on the one hand, to lead to obedience to the Lord's revealed mind, and on the other, to act as a preservative from a double snare in the outgoings of the heart and the lust of the eyes concerning things around. (see v. 39.) Most solemn and important, touching the jealousy of Jehovah for His people!

All this was crowned by the fact, that they belonged to Him who had brought them out of Egypt, in order to be their God, as He states, "I am the Lord your God." (v. 41.) Then follows the way or means by which the distinct and distinguishing badge of blue should take effect in their walk, ways, and associations. They were enjoined to look upon it, and to remember all the commandments of the Lord &c. Most important instruction, whether in view of preventing

negligence of Jehovah's claims and commandments, or to guard the state of their heart, and use of their eyes as to all around. Blessed provision, but alas! either forgotten or misused by them afterwards, when slaves to their own passions and desires. Before their captivity in Babylon, the prophet Jeremiah charged them with forsaking the law of Jehovah, and walking after the imagination of their own hearts. And at a later day, when a greater than Jeremiah was in their midst, their position and conduct convicted them of having totally failed in answering to the ends proposed in the riband of blue. Jesus, their Prophet and King, in Matt. xxiii. solemnly exposed Israel's leaders, who were making broad their phylacteries, and enlarging the borders of their garments, yet at the same time, were oppressing the people by binding (not the riband upon them) but burdens grievous to be borne, which they themselves would not move with one of their fingers, and giving no heed to Jehovah's commandment. On the contrary, they were just feeding the lusts of their own eyes, and the desires of their hearts. They sought the uppermost seats in the synagogue, where Jehovah alone should be owned and honoured, and greetings in the markets, and being called "Rabbi," instead of owning their own Lord.

Such was the state of this distinguished people, whose conduct culminated in their causeless hatred to Jehovah, who was there before them in the Person of Jesus, their Messiah. In their closing history they joined with the Gentile powers (to whom through their disobedience they were in bondage), to crucify their King. This solemnly ended, not only their distinctive riband, but *themselves* as the people of Jehovah who were to wear it. The cross of Christ openly displayed man's heart and conduct towards God, leaving no alternative but for God to pronounce judgment upon him. (Compare John xii. 31, and xvi. 8.) In vain therefore is it for man, even the

earthly people of God, much more a poor Gentile, to wear any badge or fringe before, or in the world, as a distinction between man and man. To try to cultivate man morally is even worse; for is it not to deny, in proud forgetfulness, what he has proved himself to be in hatred and opposition to the Son of God?

The Scriptures now plainly declare that all men, "all the world," are alike guilty, and under the judgment of God (Rom. iii. 9, and 19). As long then as man remains in his *natural*, or unconverted state, he can never improve his condition before God. Any outward reformation, whether moral or religious, with or without a badge worn to indicate it, is a denial of the truth—"They that are in the flesh cannot please God." (Rom. viii. 8.) Where then can life and conduct according to God be looked for; in other words, in whom are we to find the antitype to Jehovah's earthly people, and their riband of blue? If, as has been seen, the cross of Christ is the moral end of man, and the world, it is hopeless to seek that which is acceptable to God save on another platform than that of flesh, and the world. Blessed be God, the same cross that displays man's sin, no less declares what God is in Christ, and furnishes a holy and righteous means for an entirely new set of people, both in life and conduct, springing, not from the first man, but from the second Man, the last Adam.

In 1 Cor. xv. it is written—"The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the *earthy*, we shall also bear the image of the *heavenly*" (vv 47-49). The truth here stated, is not a question of God's earthly people, Israel, but of Adam and his race, in direct contrast to Christ, and those that are *His*. Of the latter, as belonging to the Lord from

heaven, there are two things stated. First, what they are: then, what they *will be*. Already are they heavenly, and they will assuredly bear the image of the heavenly. How important it is to rightly understand that, consequent upon the Christian's connection with Christ, he *is* heavenly—"As is the heavenly such are they that *are* heavenly"—though it is perfectly true, on the other hand, that he awaits the moment when he will "*bear the image of the heavenly*" i.e. be fully like Christ in glory. Does not ignorance of these truths account for much now prevalent among true Christians? For many fail greatly in the confession of what, by grace, they *are*, and some assume a perfection here which is not possible, until they are fully fashioned into Christ's image in glory. The subject is thus one of deep practical importance, but the further consideration of it must be reserved, the Lord willing, for the next number.

"THE ELDER SHALL SERVE THE YOUNGER."

(GEN. xxv. ; ROM. ix. 11-12.)

In Abraham we see a man whom God called out from his country, his kindred, and his father's house, that he and his seed might inherit the promises; and in this Christ was fore-shown, as the Apostle clearly teaches in Gal. iii. 16 and 29.

In Abraham's two sons, Isaac and Ishmael, God unfolded another truth, viz. that "the children of the flesh are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed" (Rom. ix. 8); and so Ishmael, who was born after the flesh, is cast out. Moreover, the children of the flesh never could walk in fellowship with the children of God; "for as it was then, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now" (Gal. iv. 29; Gen. xxi. 9).

In Isaac's two sons are seen the flesh and the Spirit again, but in a different way; the one was the *greater*, the other the *lesser* (Rom. ix. 12, Marg.).

Ishmael, the son of the bond-woman, was cast out; but Esau, the *greater*, is in a far more awful state; he is the *despiser* of the birthright, for there is no connection between greatness in the flesh, and life in the Spirit; and in Christ, who is our life, no greatness is seen save that which is of God: "I am meek and lowly in heart."

Now as Isaac, in contrast to Ishmael, was the *child of promise*, so Jacob the younger, in contrast to Esau the elder, was the *one of God's choice* (Rom. ix. 11).

The greater and the lesser can have no fellowship one with the other, any more than the one that is born after the flesh with him that is born after the Spirit. When Rebecca conceived, the children struggled together before they were born—the witness of their conflict—"and she said: If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to inquire of the Lord." This was no idle inquiry, for the Lord interpreted the significance of it. They were two nations, two manner of people, unlike to each other, and to be separated from their birth; "the one people to be stronger than the other people, and the elder shall serve the younger" (Gen. xxv. 23).

How simple the lesson! God never takes up any body because he is great in the flesh, and He never refuses any one because he is weak, worthless, and nothing after the flesh. God is sovereign. He chooses between the greater and the lesser, and His choice is the lesser. "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand—not of works, but of him that calleth; it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger." Are you afraid of the election of God? If so, why? Do you want to be the greater? You say, no! I am nothing in the sight of God. ("A poor sin-

ner, and nothing at all," as one said.) Then did you ever know the Lord refuse one who stood before Him on that ground? You never did! He has laid help upon One that is mighty. He refuses people who will maintain that they can help themselves; but He will maintain His own faithfulness and truth by proving the all-sufficiency of Christ for all who, refusing everything of their own, honour *Him* by trusting in *Him*.

There is another Scripture which is brought out *after* the children had done good and evil. It is this—"The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi. I have loved you, saith the Lord; yet ye say, wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness." (Mal. i. 1-3.) But what saith Esau, the greater, to these dealings of God? "We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places." Edom, the children of Esau, clung with obstinacy to their own resources, even at the time when they felt their own poverty. They said, "We are impoverished." And what then? Is it "We will look to the Lord?" No! "We will return and build the desolate places." Then said the Lord, "They shall build but I will throw down." He will not let that building stand that is set up in independence of Him. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it."

Another word is said of Esau—"They shall call them the border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever"—This is the contrast to Jacob, of whom it is added: "Your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The Lord will be magnified from the border of Israel" (vv. 4, 5). Why is this? Because in Israel He will see His own work, and His own glory; so before the children had done good or evil, God chose the lesser, for whom and in

whom He would act and be magnified, but not the greater who, sinful but unhumbled, would act for himself and thus seek to magnify himself.

Esau was born first, clothed with the signs of natural strength—"he was all over like a hairy garment." Natural preeminence and strength were his, and they may make a little display for the moment, but they will not endure, and can never subserve the glory of God. "The youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint." This weighty and important lesson the flesh never learns, yet it is one that God is teaching His children from day to day. "For when I am weak, then am I strong." See 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10.

Esau's natural power and gifts displayed themselves thus: "he was a cunning hunter, a man of the field." What is a cunning hunter? He is one who is wise in the way of destruction, in taking the life of those poor animals that become his prey. "Destruction and misery are in their ways." Saul was a cunning hunter, and the priests of the Lord were his prey, when he "slew four score and five persons that did wear a linen ephod;" and he did it by the hand of Doeg the *Edomite* who was set over the servants of Saul. (1 Sam. xxii.) In Ps. x. the cunning hunter is described thus: "He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages; in the secret places doth he murder the innocent; his eyes are privily set against the poor. He lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor when he draweth him into his net: he croucheth and humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones." Thus the Pharisees were cunning hunters, and the widows were their prey, when they devoured their houses (their property), and for a show made long prayers.

Natural greatness takes advantage of the weakness of the

weak, and the poverty of the poor, and often shows itself in a disposition to rise by the downfall of others. Among the fowls forbidden to be eaten under the law, birds of prey are first named—as the eagle, the ossifrage, the ospray, the vulture, and the kite. They were to be had in abomination (Lev. xi. 13, 14). Is there not a lesson in this?

Esau was also a man of the field. By it, and by present things all his hopes were bounded. He never "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

But "Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents." He was a pilgrim in this world, as he afterwards declares unto Pharaoh (Gen. xlvii. 9). So also the Spirit of God connects him with Abraham—"By faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise" (Heb. xi. 9).

In continuing their history the faith of the younger and the "profanity" of the elder are made apparent. The day of trial came, and Jacob was ready to give up his pottage for the birthright; and Esau was ready to sell his birthright for a mess of pottage. The plain man that dwelt in tents saw in the birthright a title to a joint inheritance with Abraham and Isaac, who like himself had been living in tents; but Esau saw in the mess of pottage what might sustain him a little longer as a cunning hunter, and a man of the field. The question with each was, which would I rather have, the pottage or the birthright, present things or things to come, a morsel of meat or the promises of God? I would rather have the birthright, said Jacob; and I would rather have the pottage, said Esau. Such were "the two manner of people" born of Rebekah.

Jacob knew what it was to "buy the truth and sell it not." He would readily give up his pottage for the birthright; but

he would not give the birthright in exchange for anything. The blessings of that birthright will never have an end: the one morsel of meat was gone in a moment.

Jacob's faith, when he was *dying*, is borne witness to, and the bright joy of his soul as "he blessed both the sons of Joseph, and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff." But when Esau was at the *point to die*, he could see no power to help him in anything better than a mess of pottage. He said "Behold, I am at the point to die; and what profit shall this birthright do to me?" Such is unbelief! Whatever the preeminence, the strength, the beauty of natural qualities, in the presence of eternal realities it is utterly at fault; and Scripture connects the manly, hardy, cunning hunter with fornicators, and profane persons. (Heb. xii. 16.) Still more solemn is the word of the Lord—"he that believeth not shall be condemned."

These "two manner of people" still remain on the earth. May the Lord give every reader to be "of them who believe to the saving of the soul."
(DEMERARA.)

"One principle comes before us in Psalm cxiii., which cannot be brought too often before our souls, but which we have a constant tendency to forget. God chooses weak things, that it may be evident that good and blessing come from His power and love. God uses means; but when man speaks of means, he generally speaks not of reference of heart to God—prayer, His word, and the like,—but of leaning on man's influence and man's strength. This is all evil. Oh that we may remember that God chooses the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and weak things to confound the things which are mighty, that no flesh should glory in His presence. Blessing were not *divine blessing* indeed if it were not so. But what a lesson in the midst of this world, and for the heart of man!"

ERRATUM.

On page 60, eleven lines from the botton, read sanctified in for to.

ISRAEL AND THEIR RIBAND OF BLUE,

AND

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND CONDUCT.

II.

To return to what a Christian is—The chapter itself (1 Cor. xv.) proves that his life, his present position and his future glory are entirely bound up with Christ; not Christ in His perfect, holy, spotless life upon earth, for in this, as the precious “corn of wheat,” He was alone (John xii. 24); but Christ *risen* from the dead. This latter fact is what the Spirit of God insists upon as the fundamental truth of the Gospel, for if Jesus, who died for our sins, be not risen, all is vain, and not only could there be no glorious resurrection for us, but our sins as sons of Adam were not put away. Christ risen therefore, is the grand proof for the believer of his present title to the enjoyment of sins forgiven, of life possessed, and of coming glory secured. Precious, abiding anchorage for faith amid all the vain reasonings and unbelief of the natural heart and corrupt mind of man, Praise, eternal praise to God for Christ, His risen Son! In Him only, who said to His disciples: “Because I live ye shall live also,” is the life of those who are declared to be heavenly—as it is stated also in this chapter, in the contrast of death and life: “As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

Clearly then is it seen that all hangs upon the question of *connexion*. As to the first, all are most unmistakeably linked with Adam in a life of sin, therefore necessarily of death and judgment. As to the second, the believer only, who has owned his ruin and believed the precious Gospel of Christ

dead and risen, is alive in Him who lives to die no more ; and as it is *Christ* that lives in him (Gal. ii. 20), his life is necessarily the opposite to the life of Adam's race. In its nature this life is of God, being born of Him, and consequently it is wholly divine, therefore heavenly, and destined to that glorious and eternal sphere.

This it is that the apostle John more fully enters into, shewing the source, nature and character of the life already possessed by those who have received Christ. (1 John v. 11, 12 and 18.) It is of God's own giving, and in His Son. It may thus be said of the believer as to this new order of life : "he sinneth not:" and, "he keepeth himself and that wicked one toucheth him not."

Is not the sense then in which the Scriptures declare the christian to be "heavenly," even whilst awaiting resurrection glory, thus clearly established? Now, therefore, is the only moment given to such to express before the world, ways in character with what they are—First, to know what they are, and then practically to *be it*; the latter a consequence, never the cause.

Christendom surely is made up of two sorts of people, those who really are Christians, and therefore "heavenly," though failing to live as such fully; and those who attempt by ways or assumed good works, to become what they never can be save by faith in Christ Jesus. To put conduct before life is a serious error, and entirely reverses Divine order.

As to what is expected from those having Christ as their life, we find this exhortation : "Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity which is the bond of perfectness." (Col. iii. 12, 14.)

Now is there not seen in these verses the antitype to

Israel's riband of blue, and that after a heavenly sort? Surely the appointed colour has its significance as shadowing forth that which is heavenly. Here then, twice over, those associated with Christ are told what to put on, or, so to speak, what they should wear. Their ways are to be the expression of their life, or, as is often remarked, their *state* should answer to their *standing*.

(To be concluded next month, D.V.)

“THE DAY OF THE LORD.”

VI.

The third division of our subject, “the day itself,” is the theme of many prophetic scriptures, and found under several designations, as it is also presented under various aspects. It is called “The Regeneration,” “The times of refreshing,” “The times of restitution of all things,” “The kingdom of the God of heaven,” “of your Father,” “of the Son of Man,” “The kingdom which cannot be moved,” and “shall never be destroyed,” “The kingdom which God has promised to them that love him,” “The everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Some of these designations refer to the earthly part of the kingdom, and some to the heavenly, while some embrace both. It is also to be borne in mind that “the day of the Lord” reaches onward beyond the thousand years of Rev. xx., during which, those who have part in the first resurrection reign with Christ. As it is said in 2 Pet. iii. 10—“In the which (*i.e.* in the day of the Lord) the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”

In considering this third division, our attention must be

given chiefly to the effects of the manifestation of the governmental power and authority of Christ, with His heavenly saints, over the whole earth. "The day itself," therefore will have this meaning:—the time of righteous, beneficent and peaceful government of "all nations," when that government shall be on the shoulder of Christ, the Child born, and the Son given to Israel, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. (Is. ix. 6.)

How perfectly will He display in His government the Spirit's description—"He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God: and he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain!" (See also Ps. xlv.; lxxii.; Is. xi.; Zech. vi. 12, 13; ix. 9, 10; Mal. iv. 2, &c.)

Such is the beautiful description of the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, after the long night of the usurped dominion of the Serpent, the prince of darkness. It would be to write a volume to go into the details of the glories of Christ that will then be displayed to men, and the results in blessing to creation, to the saved of Israel and of the Nations, and to their offspring. The contrast to all the past will indeed be wonderful. Let christians but consider the present state of things—"the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together"—"wrath has come upon the Jews to the uttermost"—"the peoples labour in the very fire and weary themselves for very vanity:" let them in any little measure realize the crisis that is coming, and the wide-spread and terrible judgments that will precede the rising of the Sun of Righteousness—then the prophetic scriptures that speak of the bright day when "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," will no longer be treated with indifference. The heart will glow as the Spirit leads into deeper intelligence of "things

to come,” and delineates the vast extent of the dominion of Jesus. There is doubtless a precious line of truth more excellent than this, but the neglect of prophecy is proving fatal to the testimony committed to the children of God; for a believer is a “*child of the day*,” and should be now in full possession by faith of the secret of all the GLORIES OF CHRIST that will be displayed in “the day.” (Read carefully 1 Thess. v. 1-11.) Consider the glories of His name—“The Son of Man”—the name by which He always spake of Himself among the Jews. (See Matt. continually.) Why has the Spirit gone so minutely yet so comprehensively into the works of creation in Ps. viii. and why has He connected the name of Jesus with “*the habitable world to come*” in His commentary on it? Above all why does He say of Christians—“WE SEE JESUS” (Heb. ii. 9), if not to connect our thoughts of *all created things* with Him and with *His day*? We see not yet all things in subjection to His rule, but we know they are *put* in such subjection. They are His inheritance and let the present state of things be what it may, it is not to last. The men of science are labouring in the midst of ruins, beautiful indeed in many a feature, bearing witness to a state that is past, but the Christian has a “world to come” of which to speak; not heaven, but this very earth. (See Is. xi. 5-9; xxxv. 5-10; lxv. 22-25; Amos ix. 13; Ps. lxv. 9-13; cxlviii. and many other passages.) The “child of the day” is warned against closing his eyes to the future, as in sleep; or of being intoxicated with the allurements and excitements of the passing moment. Nothing will effectually keep him but present communion with Christ—*seeing Him*—and thus in spirit rejoicing in His day, and this necessitates the study of prophecy.

We have but touched on *one* point—His glory as “Son of man” and that *only* in connection with creation. His dominion over the Nations (Dan. vii. 13, 14, &c.), His royal glor-

ies in Israel (Ps. xlv. ; Is. ix. 6, 7, &c.), His universal supremacy, including not only all on earth, but all in heaven, and all infernal beings (Phil. ii. 10, &c.), and much beside, we can but commend to the reader's serious, earnest, and prayerful consideration. Our space forbids more than a general glance at the vast subject.

The solemn doom of the leaders of the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered to make war against Christ and His army, must not be lost sight of. Twice the Spirit records it (Rev. xix. 20 ; xx. 10) "These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." Surely it will be the standing proof of the eternal doom of the wicked, even as the display of the glory of the heavenly saints, and the deliverance and prosperity of the meek of the earth, will testify to the eternal efficacy of redemption and the blessedness of those who are the fruits of it. What sights will there be for the millennial earth ! Terrible and abiding judgments will be revealed, as well as the heavens opened, to the wondering gaze of "all flesh" in that day. (Is. lxvi. 22-24.)

But the unspeakable grace that will then be displayed will shine most conspicuously in *Jerusalem*, that city which for privileges of the most exalted character, and for sins of the deepest dye, has had no parallel. It will be raised to the highest place of honour among all the cities of the world, as the centre of light and blessing. The sanctuary and the throne of the Lord will be there. "It shall be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord and a royal diadem in the hand of her God." And its name from that day shall be *Jehovah-Shammah*—The Lord is there—What a contrast to its present designation: "The great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified."

Then *the land of Israel*, the Divine gift to Abraham's seed, and emphatically called: "Thy land O Immanuel," will be

peopled with the twelve tribes; "the rebels and they that transgress against the Lord" being removed by judgment. "The house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers" (Jer. iii. 18). "The Lord shall be their everlasting light and the days of their mourning shall be ended." (Is. lx. 20.)

The Gentile nations who shall own the claims of God and of Christ through the proclamation of the everlasting gospel, shall "inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world," and thus settled and blessed in their appointed homes and territories, will render willing service to Israel, and go up to Jerusalem from year to year to worship the King the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles (Matt. xxv. 34; Zech. xiv. 16). "All kings shall fall down before Him." "All nations shall serve him; and men shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed" (Ps. lxxii.).

Creation, the work of Christ and sustained continually by His power, has, as another has said, "travelled her history with the children of men. In their innocency it was blessed, in their transgression the earth was cursed; and now again when they are manifestly glorified, "creation will be delivered from the bondage of corruption unto the glorious liberty of the children of God." (Rom. viii. 19-22.)

The heavens will be wonderful in that day. Even now they declare the glory of God. How much more when the display of that glory in the church will be perfect (Rev. xxi. 10 to xxii. 5.) "and the nations shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honour to it." The vision of Jacob will then be fulfilled (Gen. xxviii. 12). The breach that sin has made between earth and heaven will then be healed. "It shall come to pass in that day, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the

earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil ; and they shall hear Jezreel." (Hos. ii. 21, 22.)

The *fruit of the earth* too shall be excellent and comely. Lovely indeed are the descriptions the prophets give of the marvellous change in the fertility of the soil, watered and enriched with the river of God. "The plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed ; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt." "The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree, and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign which shall not be cut off." (Amos ix. 13 ; Is. xxxv. ; lv. ; Ps. lxxv.)

The nature and habits of the *beasts of the earth* will be changed. As Adam, before the fall, had dominion over them, so shall even a little child in that day. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid ; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together : and a little child shall lead them. (See also the following verses in Is. xi. and lxxv.)

Faint and feeble as is this sketch of the blessings of that day, it may lead to further research, and the reader will find abundant scope, for the Spirit of God enters fully and minutely into them. But let us remember the righteousness of God's ways. It was upon *this earth* that Christ was put to open shame ; was mocked, and scourged, and spit upon, and crucified ; and it is upon *this earth* that He shall be glorified. "The heavenly places" are our portion, but "*the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*" Yes. "The earth shall enjoy the fruits of the victory and faithfulness of the second Adam, and shall be the magnificent testimony of it in the sight of principalities and powers, as it is at present, in the chaos made by sin, of the ruin and iniquity of the first Adam."

“WHO HATH ALSO SEALED US.”

(Concluded.)

(3.) “IN WHOM also after that ye believed ye were sealed.” (Eph. i. 13.) “Now he which stablisheth us with you IN CHRIST, and hath anointed us is God; who hath also sealed us.” (2 Cor. i. 21, 22.) Not only is the dwelling of the Holy Ghost in saved men a new thing, peculiar to the period in which the church is being formed; but the position *in* which the believer is sealed is also altogether new. “If any man be *in Christ*, there is a new creation.” (2 Cor. v. 17, R.V. marg.)

As children of the first Adam we were *in the flesh* before God. It was not only that we had disobeyed God, alas! in our ways and sinned against Him a thousand times; we were sinful and rebellious in our nature. Our condition, position and relations were evil. We were in the flesh, and “they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” The first man rebelled against God, acquired a sinful nature and then became the head of a race. We were of his race, sinners and rebels as he.

Christ by His death has brought in entire deliverance for us. He died *for* us and our sins are pardoned: we died *with* Him and there is an end in righteousness of the whole condition, position and relations in which we were as men in the flesh. “Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” (Rom. vi. 6.) *Now we are not in the flesh.*

But more, Christ, the second Man, has accomplished and finished His blessed work of obedience, and has taken as man a new place before God and has there become the head of a

new race. We are of His race. By His obedience unto death we are made righteous. *In Him*, when His work is complete and accepted, and He is the risen One before God, we have our abiding place. "If any man be *in Christ*." "I knew a man *in Christ*." "And ye are complete *in him*." "We are *in him* that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ." "According as he hath chosen us *in him* before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." What a place for God to choose us for and to put us in! A better place He could not have given those He loves as He loves Christ, His blessed Son. Cloudless favour is there! Perfect love! Abiding, unchangeable delight! *There, i.e. in Christ*—as being in Him before God—He has sealed us.

When Christ, Himself without sin either personally, in His relations or by imputation, took His place in lowly grace with those who were confessing their sins, God singled Him out of the crowd, owned Him as His beloved Son, anointed Him for His holy and blessed service, and sealed Him with the Holy Ghost. "Him hath God the Father sealed." (John vi. 27.) Yet He was alone, and but for His death must have remained alone. If others were to be sealed as God's children He must die. He, the true Aaron, might be anointed without shedding of blood, but He alone. Now the blood has been shed and sprinkled. All that remains on the conscience of the believer to tell that sins were once there, is the blood which has purged it from them. Others, even *all* who are saved by grace through faith, can now be anointed with the same unction, sealed with the same Spirit. The Holy Ghost who rested so complacently on the head of Jesus before redemption was wrought, is come down consequent upon it to be the seal of God upon the believer, and to seal him in the new position of nearness to God—in *Christ*—which is the fruit of the death and resurrection of Christ.

Man put his seal on the stone which was to keep the Prince of life in the dust of death. But his wisdom did "greatly err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." "They knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day." The strength of their seal was vain. *It was broken* by the power of life in the One who lay there and at the same time "by the glory of the Father." Christ is risen. A new place is won for man,—a place of as cloudless favour as that in which the Man Christ Jesus had ever walked and a place in the power of His resurrection. "I knew a man IN CHRIST." There God has stablished the believer; there He has sealed him. *The seal of God can never be broken.*

(4.) It is by giving the Holy Ghost that God seals. His presence *in* the believer is the highest christian blessing, for the simple but most blessed reason that it is the seal of all the rest. The seal is no mere mark or stamp with which God impresses His own, however blessed for us this might be. It is the living God Himself—the Holy Ghost—who is come down to take possession of us before "the day of redemption," before "the redemption of the body." He is come to shed the love of God abroad in our hearts and to be the witness and the power of the closest relationship, the most blessed nearness to God. He is come to take of the things of Christ and make them known to us. He is "the power that worketh in us," the power by which Christ dwells in our hearts by faith and by which we comprehend what is the breadth, and depth, and length, and height, and "know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." He is come to be in us the Spirit, "of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." *Priceless SEAL of perfect LOVE!*

(5.) "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." The purposes of God for the glory of Christ and for the blessing of His children

ever look on to "the day of redemption." His heart is engaged in these purposes—however cold ours alas! may be—for it can never be fully satisfied until the Lord Jesus Christ comes as Saviour to "change our body of humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto his body of glory." Until our bodies shall have part in the salvation which the blood of the cross has purchased, the purpose of God is not accomplished; nor is it until we are with Christ in His glory, "until the redemption of the purchased possession." Both "our body" and "the possession" are *purchased*; soon they will be *redeemed* in power. Meanwhile we are "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body," and we have the Holy Ghost as "the earnest of the inheritance."

The Holy Ghost as the *unction* which consecrates us, as the *seal* which confirms us in Christ and secures us in all the blessings of grace, and as the *earnest* of all we are yet to possess, is in us unceasingly—in us for ever. But seeing that the flesh is in us also, and that it lusts against the Spirit, there is danger, great danger, alas! of our grieving Him. Against this danger we are warned; our God bids us not to grieve that holy Spirit. He does not tell us that if grieved He will depart. Blessed be our God for ever, and blessed be His priceless grace, which says in *such* a connexion, "whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." How this grace binds the heart to Him in whom it is revealed! Nothing maintains the soul in holiness like the sense of grace. It is by this that the Spirit of God works in our souls that we may be kept from grieving Him.

That good Spirit abides with us for ever, the seal and power of sonship, the revealer of the deep things of God, the "other Comforter" whom a risen Christ has sent. Oh, that the Lord may work effectually in our hearts for His own glory by this ever present Spirit! May He produce in us a deep and growing sense of grace which will bind our hearts

to Himself and make us jealous for Him of every thought, desire or feeling which would grieve that holy Spirit of God ! If He is grieved He will be a reproving One, a chastening One ; but He will never leave and never forsake those whom He is leading on to the absent Christ that He may present them to Himself a chaste virgin. May the Holy Ghost be ever free in our heart for the service He loves : "He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you."

Thus our cup is full to overflowing. The spring and source of eternal blessing is *within* us, fruit of the choicest counsels of God by the precious blood of Christ. These counsels have ordained, and this blood has purchased for us, the place and the blessedness before God of Christ, the obedient Man once here below. He was owned of God as His beloved Son and the Spirit rested as a dove undisturbed upon His holy head. Of Him it was said : "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth." The same God and Father speaks to us as "the elect of God, holy and beloved." Of Christ it is said : "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power." Of us : "Ye have an unction (anointing) from the Holy One, and ye know all things." Of Christ it is said : "Him hath God the Father sealed ;" and of us : "Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." And to complete our blessing : "Whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

Well may our longing hearts hail that day ! Brightest day for God, for Christ and for the redeemed ! Thank God, an endless day ! That day will witness the wiping out of the last trace of Satan's sad work from the redeemed of God ! It will witness the peerless image of His Son beaming from every sinless face. Who shall tell the joy of God as He contemplates the full accomplishment of counsels so dear to His heart ! Which of us can conceive the joy of Christ as He

sees of the travail of His soul! And our poor hearts, at length enlarged and filled to running over, what will they prove of restful joy beneath His satisfied gaze!

Redemption, too, in that day of glory will have been extended in its effectual working to creation, so long subject to vanity. The power which will have changed our body is that which subdues all things to Christ. Day of Israel's deliverance and salvation! Earth's glad jubilee! "The restitution of all things!"

"Praise to the Lamb for ever!"
Bruised for our sin and gory,
Behold His brow, encircled now
With all His crowns of glory—
Beneath His love reposing,
The whole redeemed creation
Is now at rest, for ever blest,
And sings His great salvation."

Secured, beloved brethren, for that morning without clouds by the inviolable *seal* of our God, may we give all diligence to be "found of Him in peace!" May we so judge ourselves and so reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God by Jesus Christ, that we may in no wise grieve the holy Spirit of God, "WHEREBY YE ARE SEALED UNTO THE DAY OF REDEMPTION."

DETACHED PORTIONS.

III.

"Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them." Let us look for a moment at this expressive symbol of christian temper and spirit. Here stands this child, placed before us for our instruction by a Master who declares of Himself, "I am meek and lowly in heart." What do we make of this study? Is there aptness in us to seize upon the one ruling characteristic that this living, though unconscion

instructor embodies in every look and way. It is a little child, old enough to understand the Saviour's call, and gentle enough to do implicitly His gentle bidding. Here stands our monitor then, unconscious of its being set to teach us some of the profoundest lessons that a human heart can learn. And, I ask again, what do we make of it? One thing we may well assure ourselves of, that it is practice and not theory that this child is set to teach. Is not a little child the embodiment of a genuine simplicity that is untainted by the guilefulness of art? Is it not the expression of unsuspecting trust, unquestioning candour and unambitious aims?

Are we prepared for such lore as this little child can teach? Or are we impatient to push aside our monitor, that we may turn again to that which we see to be in far higher estimation in the world, and even in the church, and has a readier currency in both, than attaches to the spirit of a little child?

Let us hear on this the thoughts of Him who places before us the child, and sets us down to study the lessons it would teach: "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto *babes*. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." We live in a busy, active, pretentious, ambitious age; and in the world through which we are moving, we cannot fail to see that what carries it with men, is boastful pretention, energy of purpose, and an iron will. In the church too, where nothing should be seen but the "meekness and gentleness of Christ," we are in danger of the contagion which reigns around. But this does not change the ways of heaven nor the temper which heaven approves. It is still on record however, for our instruction or correction, that "who-soever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the *kingdom of heaven*." D.

FRAGMENTS ON THE EPISTLES.

I.

There are three chief subjects in the Epistles, Individual righteousness, Connexion of Christ with the church, and Life. The first we find especially in Romans and Galatians. The Second in Ephesians and Colossians. John speaks of life and its character; Peter of the wilderness and government; in Philippians we get christian experience.

ROMANS i. 4.—When God glorifies Himself, it is by displaying Himself as He is, the source of glory; *the* resurrection from the dead, *i.e.* of *all*, not only of Christ.

Puseyism and Sacramentalism unite Christ with dead men, not with men to whom life has been given.

Verse 16 shows the divine character, the universality, and the dispensational difference of the Gospel. The Gospel is good news—not claim, which is never good news.

The third chapter shows death; the fourth the living man. Faith in the *person* of Christ is essential to a believer—faith in the blood of Christ gives peace of conscience. This the Old Testament saints had not: (Nathan the prophet had to tell David that his sin was pardoned) they were happy only while in the sense of God's favour. A man may be thoroughly unhappy (no peace of heart) without losing peace of conscience, having once known divine righteousness; also one may have peace of heart without peace of conscience, as is the case with ignorant believers.

Regeneration is by grace—life is a gift, Christ is a life-giving Spirit: hence it is wrong that the will of a man is needed for his conversion.

In iv. 25.—Our justification consists in the acceptance of Christ, after having been dead for our sins.

In v. 4.—By experience I know myself, and how faithful and gracious God is. The Holy Ghost always reasons from what God is: we reason from what we are, and so think of God.

In v.—We have a risen man and righteous before God.

In vi.—A risen man living the life of Christ.

In vii.—A risen man free from the law. (Awakened conscience, and renewed affections); but first, a man struggling under the feet of the enemy.

In viii.—A man struggling with the enemy *under his feet*.

J. N. D.

CHRIST IN GLORY.

Marvel not that Christ in glory
All my inmost soul hath won;
Not a star to cheer the darkness,
But a light beyond the sun.

All below lies dark and shadowed,
Nothing there to charm my heart,
Save the lonely track of sorrow,
Where of old He walked apart.

I have seen the face of Jesus,
Tell me not of aught beside—
I have heard the voice of Jesus,
All my soul is satisfied.

In the radiance of the glory
First I see His blessed face,
And for ever shall that glory
Be my home, my dwelling place.

Sinners! it was not to angels
All this wondrous love was given,
But to one who scorned, despised Him—
Scorned and hated Christ in heaven.

From the lowest depths of evil
To the throne in heaven above,
Thus in me He told the measure
Of His free unbounded love.

ON JUDGING RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT.

I have been thinking this morning, and I believe that it came with relief to the mind, how the Lord Himself is in possession of a secret which, to speak after a human manner, enables Him to bear what to us is exceedingly trying in each other.

We find the different tastes and tempers and ways of even brethren running so contrary to ours, that our wretched self-love and self-complacency are ready at once to interpret them all as the fruit of an evil root, the stream of some polluted spring, which rises thus in the heart of another whose ways are not like ours. Our fretting is, therefore, a bad symptom of our own moral state, arguing much self-congratulation, and a disposition to see wrong in others. We are righteous in being hurt with a thing that we judge evil; but we are wrong in judging a thing to be evil just because it differs from our way, and thus, in some shape or other, interferes with us. But the blessed Lord is not subject to all this. He judges *righteous* judgment. No self-love defiles the exercise of His discerning powers. He can perfectly keep apart the precious and the vile, and remains undistracted by much that troubles us, and which we often say must greatly trouble Him, or grieve the Spirit, just because we ourselves have been grieved by it; never suspecting that our grief has come from those workings of self-complacency of which I have spoken.

This thought came as a relief to my mind this morning, for it showed me that the Spirit might not so often be grieved by the saints as I, in my self-esteem, think he must be.

I think I see an illustration of this in Matt. xx. Zebedee's

wife and sons come to Jesus with a request to sit in honoured places in His kingdom.

This desire of theirs was a high offence to the ten. They saw nothing but evil in it, because it interfered with themselves. They tried this action in relation to themselves. It appeared to be, shall I say, a circumventing of them, or a forced occupation of their rights and equal interests, and they unmixedly resent it. But Jesus Himself was free to judge the mother righteously. He could separate what in it was precious from what in it was vile. Self-love had no blinding power over His mind, and He speaks and acts accordingly: for while there was error in those disciples counting thus proudly and ignorantly on their being fit or able to hold the chief room, yet in their *motive* there was a sincere esteem or value for the things of Christ's kingdom; and, therefore, instead of joining the ten in their unmixed indignation, he calls them aside, only to instruct their hearts in the further things of that kingdom whose honours they coveted.

We must, beloved, be patient with one another, and modest in ourselves. The time of perfectness is in prospect, and now, even the very occasions of forbearance, though they show our present imperfectness, may be made the instruments for moulding and fashioning our hearts, and constitute some of the fuel of that fire which is refining us under the hand of the Lord.

J. G. B.

THE WORD OF GOD ;

THE RESOURCE IN PERILOUS TIMES.

(2 TIM. iii.)

An important point is brought out in this chapter; the AUTHORITY, with which our souls are directly in communion, on which our conduct rests, the rule by which it is guided,

and the application to the individual soul of that authority and rule. Is this mediate, or immediate? Is it by the intervention of the church, as an authority between me and God? or is it the direct and immediate connexion of my soul with God, and immediate subjection to His authority in His Word? It is the latter, not the former, This is no rejection of ministry. If another knows the Word better than myself, has more spiritual power, he can help me; and that is according to the mind and will of God. But he does not come between my soul and the Word; but brings me more fully into acquaintance with what God says to me in it. My soul is only the more in immediate relationship with God by His Word. That only is the rule and measure of my responsibility, the expression of the authority of God over me.

Another may be the means of my being more completely so, but he puts me thereby in immediate relationship with God, by the Word, more fully and more in detail, but does not take me out of the relationship. It remains immediate as before and there can be no other. It is direct with God, and God's title is absolute, and embraces the whole of my being in obedience. He exercises His authority immediately by the Word. This may sanction, and does, duties towards others; but these are acknowledged by the authority of, and in obedience to the Word, to God, in His Word. I am to fulfil every relationship in which God has placed me, but by, and according to His Word. My first, immediate and all ruling relationship is with God by His Word. It has precedence of all others, rules in all others, and claims absolute and immediate subjection. We ought to *obey*; is the Christian's ensign; but "*we ought to obey God rather than men*;" is the absolute claim of God, who has revealed Himself fully, and Himself immediately to us by the Word. EXTRACTED.

"I am small and despised: yet do not I forget thy precepts. (Psalm cxix. 141.)

ON PATIENT WAITING IN HOPE.

I have been thinking lately how much the tendency to take up with the world in its present evil and confused condition, and to find in it the kingdom promised (Luke xii. 32.) betrays itself, and has betrayed itself, even among the saints, at all times.

The difference at first is illustrated in Nimrod and Abram: the former being the maker of his own fortunes, as satisfied to have this present world as the scene and measure of all his expectations;—the latter, following the Lord, and entrusting the making of his happiness to Him, waited, without an acre of land in this present world, for the land and the glory which the Lord had promised him.

But there has ever been this Nimrod-disposition to anticipate the kingdom, and to find the world as it now is, a due scene for it. And if we admit that the purpose of God by the church was to regulate this present world, and to produce in it a kingdom worthy of His headship and rule, then all this disposition of course would be divine. Yea more: the assumptions of the church (so to call it) even in the dark middle ages, are then more than warranted; they are but the assertions of the authority and purposes of God. Popes deposing kings and laying kingdoms under interdicts, would be due ministerial functions, if the Lord designed to get Himself the kingdom in this present evil world, and by establishing His name and His religion claim the dominion of it. But this is not so. And there lies, as I judge, the *only* answer to all these assumptions. The Lord God is not as yet claiming

the kingdoms of the world; He is not as yet seeking to establish His name in the earth; though in a smaller or greater measure, and in different ways and expressions, even His own people have been acting as if He were.*

Did not the mother, for instance, in John ii. act on this false principle? Was not her word to Jesus about there being no wine, derived from the secret desire of making Him honourable in the esteem of the world before the time? Did it not savour of the principle of Popery, and of every establishment? So, that of His brethren in chap. vii., they wished Him to show Himself "to the world," and not to be doing His works in secret; and what was this, but a desire that He should possess Himself of manifested power and lordship at once, and get Himself a name in an evil, unpurged world.

We know, also, that the same principle, though in a more hidden form, was in operation at Corinth. "Ye have reigned as kings without us," is a rebuke that shows us the working of this same leaven. Paul has to contradict this principle, and his dear son Timothy he encourages to act on the full contradiction of it. "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David, *was raised from the dead* according to my gospel." The Jews found it very hard to learn this principle. Therefore they were not prepared for *the sufferings* of Messiah. They were slow to learn that the sufferings had to come before the glories.

And so with ourselves, beloved. We are slow to learn that no throne is to be erected in the wilderness—that to give Jesus a throne in this present world, or to seek one for ourselves, is apostacy—practical denial of the fall of man,

* When ordinances take the place of the Word in the power of the Holy Ghost, as channels of grace, and persons are distinguished from others, not by living faith in Christ, but by religious rites of which baptism is the first, this anticipation of the kingdom is the necessary result. How solemn the responsibility—when carnal rites and ceremonies, and all that is pleasing, and therefore attractive, to the flesh are so greatly in demand in the professing body—of guarding against any step in a wrong direction. [Eds.]

and the consequent defilement of the world—practical refusal to bow to the judgment pronounced on it by the Lord : “ Now is the judgment of this world.” (John xii. 31.)

And how hard it is to *wait*, to be prisoners of hope. How hard to know that we must hope to *the end* for our portion—that it lies within the veil—that Jesus could not take glory or a name, in a Nimrod or Babel world. Israel raised a sanctuary, but not a throne, for the Lord, in the wilderness.

Among the rest who had betrayed this evil principle as working in their hearts, it appears to me that David stands. For it is human nature, it is flesh, and therefore we may not be surprised to find it in the choicest of God’s servants.

We find that David proposed to build a house for the Lord (1 Chron. xvii.). This was opposed, as I believe the Lord Himself shows, both to the *full grace* and to the *true glory* of God. It was opposed to His full grace, because David should have known, that ere the Lord God would allow David to build Him a house, He would build David a house. It was opposed to His true glory, because David should have known, that ere the Lord God would dwell in a house or palace on earth, the earth must be purged, and come to another condition altogether from what the present wars and confusions continually keep it in (1 Chron. xxviii. 3). But David was not in the power of either of these truths, when he talked to Nathan of building a house for the ark. And the Lord had to stop the counsel of his heart. It was right in one sense. He had a general desire to honour the Lord ; but that desire was not spiritual, or according to the mind of God.

So with many now ; they think to build the Lord a throne before the earth is purged of blood : they think to fix His name on the gates of episcopal palaces and on the pinnacles of pontifical castles—to even inscribe it on the banners of armies, and on the pages of statute books. But this is, at least, ignorant, unspiritual, undivine attachment to Him ;

And I question if David was not a little beguiled into this wrong *mind* by a previous wrong *step*. For we know how the acts of the hands lead and form the habits of the thoughts. David had already built himself a house of cedar (1 Chron. xiv. 1, xvii. 1). Ought he to have done this? Was not this a little premature? Had the time come for his settling down in this way; for does not the Lord call him away to wars after this? (1 Cor. xviii., xix., xx.) I incline to judge that David was premature and worldly in thus building himself a house of cedar. But this bad *step* threw him into a bad current of thought, into a wrong mind, and he is for making the Lord, if I may so speak, worldly, as he had become himself. I do not find that any notice of his own house of cedar occurs afterwards; and Solomon builds a house for himself, as though David had left him none; for in Solomon's days, we know the time had come (in type) for the establishment both of the Lord and of the king, and houses are rightly built for both.

And as I have already hinted, one great end of Paul in 2 Tim. is to strengthen Timothy against this principle, that the time of the kingdom is come. He warns him that the resurrection being assumed to be past already (chap. ii., v. 18.) christian profession has changed its character; and no longer is it "the kingdom and *patience* of Jesus Christ" in a wilderness world, but the kingdom and glory of Jesus in a new and christian world.....And what does Paul tell Timothy, but to nourish the expectation, rather, of being called to endure hardness as a *good soldier*, than of enjoying present ease as a joint heir of Christ—to endure the sufferings of the gospel, instead of affecting its resulting glories; and to know that "that day," the day of reward and of rest, though in most sure prospect (because of the present "grace that is in Christ Jesus" in which he equally exhorts his beloved son to be most strong), is still *only in prospect*.

But this is plain from all the book of God, as we well know, beloved. Rest for the *conscience* now, through the blood of Jesus, but no rest in an evil world, yet sure prospect of rest in every blessed way in the promised world to come.

What we want is "faith and hope in God"—hearts to prize what He is to us, and has for us, and power to know and to own, that He can make us far happier than ever we could have made ourselves.

J.G.B.

EXTRACT FROM LETTER.

"When God undertakes to sift a thing, He puts it where none can intermeddle with His work. It was so in the case of Job. It was so when the shepherd was smitten and the sheep scattered (Mark xiv. 27, 50). It will be so, as in Dan. xi. xii. But observe the promise: "I will turn mine hand upon the little ones;" HE—not another.

For myself, I have found in this trouble that intelligence, light, capacity are not the things wanted, but *conscience*. The poor, ignorant ones have, when they are near God, the best sight; better discernment and better judgment than the more intelligent—for God is their all, and Christ is their enjoyed portion, and God is faithful to show to the poor of the flock the right of many a case that puzzles "the wise and prudent."

As to yourself, you must accept things as they are around you, accept them as your own burden, as fruits perhaps of past unfaithfulness; but begin afresh to walk with God and Christ in entire separation from the evil. God will justify you if you walk humbly with Him, and He will justify Himself too, and will show that ecclesiastical system will not prevail with "Brethren" better than with Dissent or with the

Church of England or Rome. Indeed their whole position was primarily based upon the vanity of it.

To take a position outside of everything ecclesiastical may be blessed so long as I walk individually humbly with God; but neither that position, nor the blessing which comes from individual faithfulness, can be my encouragement to sustain an ecclesiastical position.

If God is sifting what is nearest to Himself ere the general sifting comes, we have also to remember, that seeing all one's work in the furnace is the trial of *one's own faith and patience* as a workman of God. Paul knew it well in 2 Cor. May your faith, patience, and hope not fail.

There may be pain, and being at one's wit's end, when sifting is nevertheless in present blessing, and there is a sifting such as Peter got, when self-confidence and a good opinion of himself kept his heart light enough (at the testing moment) to be too light for the waters he was in." G.V.W. (1854.)

THREE REQUISITES FOR THESE LAST DAYS, VII.

A SINGLE EYE, FIXED ON A GLORIFIED CHRIST.

After having considered the first two requisites so essential for our days, the first typified in the Lord's prophet of old, and the second exemplified by His handmaid during the earthly sojourn of David's Son and Lord, we now proceed to the third, so beautifully illustrated by His Apostle of the church and of glory, *viz., A single eye to a glorified Christ.*

It is an important thing to have, like the Prophet, the horn filled with oil, honouring Christ and owning His Lordship: it is also blessed to feed in the gospels on the beauties of Jesus, thus getting the heart stored, like Mary's alabaster

box, with thoughts of His goodness, holiness, grace, love, wisdom, power, obedience, patience, lowliness, and meekness, even of all that He was as the perfect Man here on earth. But there is yet a third thing (though closely connected with the two first), it is, to keep the eye of faith wide open and clear, steadily fixed, (like Stephen's) in the power of the Spirit of glory, on a glorified Christ, drawing out towards Him, as the sunflower turns towards the sun, the aspirations, tendencies, and affections of the new nature *heavenward—gloryward—Christward*.

There are three "*one things*" (paradoxical in itself, though the expression may appear), to which I would desire to draw the attention of the Christian reader. The first occurs in a Psalm, the second in a Gospel, and the third in an Epistle.

The first we find in Psalm xxvii. :—

"*One thing* have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to enquire in His temple."

It is the expression of a single eye to God, of the desires of the heart going out towards Him, and the appreciation of His presence—for what? To enquire in His temple, after we have got ourselves into difficulties and troubled waters? No, first of all, "*to behold His beauty*"—It is for *His*, not for *our* sake. We find this blessed quality in Samuel, the prophet. His mother had given him to the Lord, when he was a child. In the house of the Lord, the child Samuel "*ministered before the Lord*," whilst the "ministry was blamed" in the priesthood, the sacrifices of the Lord being polluted by the very priests, who ought to have guarded their sacredness. In the house of the Lord the child Samuel "*grew before the Lord*," whilst everything around was growing from bad to worse, until "Ichabod" was stamped upon it all. In His temple the Lord called Samuel to his important office. It was there

Samuel's heart was impressed with the sense of God's holiness, grace, goodness, and mercy—and when he did "*enquire*," the Lord *answered* him. How different from Saul, whom God did not answer, "neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets," and who then resorted to "*spiritualism*," *i.e.*, lying spirits, only to hear, in that awfully solemn scene, his final doom pronounced upon him by the true spirit of God's prophet.

How much more than Samuel have we, Christian reader, both as to our perfect standing in Christ, and the nearness and intimacy of our relationship to God, and as indwelt by the Spirit of adoption, which crieth: "*Abba, Father!*" Is our eye "*single*" *i.e.*, towards God and His Christ? Are our heart's desires and the aspirations of our new nature drawn out in the power of an ungrieved Spirit, and going out towards Christ? Do we seek after "that one thing," which the Psalmist desired and sought of God? His eye of faith was towards Jehovah, his expectations from Him, and his trust in Him. To him Jehovah was his light in all the dangers and difficulties that beset his daily path, and He who saved him from all his enemies, was his salvation and deliverance out of them all. He was his daily strength, as He provided for Him his daily bread, even though it should be the shew-bread, that the priests did eat!

Oh, how little is that challenge of faith in the Psalmist: "Whom shall I fear? Of whom shall I be afraid?" known amongst Christian saints now-a-days, who yet possess so immensely more than those saints of old. We have heard, alas! too much of the challenges of natural bravado, like that of Peter, which are sure to be followed by a defeat; or of those of Laodicean self-confidence: "we stand in need of nothing"; those who use them forgetting, that they are followed by such words as these: "and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

Faith turns first to God and realises, in dependence upon Him, what He is, (may it be as "*our light and salvation, or the strength of our life.*") Then it turns, and well may turn round, and challenges Satan and all his power, and says: "Whom shall I fear? Of whom shall I be afraid?"—First let us realise what those words mean: "*If God be for us;*" then we may safely turn round and say: "Who can be against us?" If the eye of faith were more fixedly turned to the Lord (as in *vv. 1-3* of Ps. xxvii.) and the heart more constantly engaged with Him, (as in *vv. 4-6*) there would be more of the abiding and confiding childlike trust in Him, who "will take me up, when my father and mother forsake me" (*v. 10*). There would be less of taking counsel with flesh and blood, but instead of it the sincere and earnest prayer to Him: "teach me thy way, and lead me in a plain path." (*v. 11*.) And further, there would be a more steadily increasing sense of the Lord's greatness in this world of increasing violence and corruption and evil of all kinds, and finally a more patient "*waiting on the Lord,*" who bids us "be of good courage," and "strengthens our hearts."

The second "*one thing*" we find in Luke x. 42:

"But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her."

I have offered already a few remarks on this important truth in the third of these papers, when speaking of the difference between Martha's service and Mary's. We would therefore only express the fervent wish, that in these days, when so "many things," and good things too, occupy and engross the minds and hearts of God's people, so that they scarcely know which to choose, we might learn, like Mary, to "choose that good part," that "*one thing needful,*" namely, to sit in the quiet, dependent posture of learning divine truth at the feet of a glorified Christ, as Mary did at the feet of the lowly Jesus in His humiliation here below.

The truth, "as it is in Jesus," can now only be learnt, where His apostle of glory learnt it, at the feet of a glorified Christ (Eph. iv. 20, 21). Christ in His humiliation, that is, Jesus on earth was ever "*the truth*," the perfect revelation of God. But by "truth" I understand also, that which is the exact expression of what man is or ought to be towards God, in dependence and obedience. And by being Himself ever *in* that place, He showed at the same time what man really was, that is, *out* of that place in disobedience and independence. Thus He was always "*the truth*" in this world which lieth in the wicked one, in whom there is no truth. But Jesus as the *Son of God*, was also, blessed be His name!—the truth in being the perfect expression of what *God is towards man*. If He had only been the truth in the former sense, that truth would have condemned us, we should have been lost. But as the only begotten Son, who dwelleth in the bosom of the Father, He has, in His *life and death*, declared God, "whom no man has seen at any time." This latter is the saving truth. He alone could declare God, and He has done so. He was the exact expression of His essential being, and could say: "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father."

Now the "Spirit of truth," who glorifieth Him, who is the way, the truth, and the life, bears witness to what man has been, and is, and will be to the end of the chapter, in the light of God and of His Christ; for He "reproves the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment;" and He also bears testimony to what God is towards men, as revealed in the life and death of His dear Son. But He does this in the word of God, which "*is truth*," which He, the Spirit of God, has written, and which from cover to cover bears testimony to what man has been, is and will be to the end towards God and His Christ, and of what God is, and has given rebellious, ungodly sinners and enemies, and of what Christ has done for them. No wonder then, that the enemy of God and man,

ever has tried and does try to conceal that precious Word, in which there can be no lie, because it "*is truth*," and bears witness of Him, who is "The truth,"—no wonder, I say, if the archdeceiver of souls always attempts to conceal this divine Treasury not only from the unconverted, but also, as far as he can, from believers (especially "The Revelation" *), by occupying them with all kinds of books instead of *the Divine Book*, which alone "*is truth*." And where he cannot succeed in this, he tries to twist and turn its precious divine truths into human doctrines, which have a hardening and deadening effect on the soul, whilst divine truths are quickening, refreshing, and strengthening. Or, he seeks in a still more subtle way, to get Christians occupied with *service*—all kinds of "good works," and even the *gospel* or the *church*—and thus to slip them in, between Christ and the heart.

Alas! alas! how numerous are those "*many things*," about which so many of us are "*careful and troubled*," instead of minding that "*one thing needful*," i.e., sitting at the feet of Christ, drinking in, (in new born babe's simplicity) the sincere milk of the Word which is "*purified seven times*,"—"that we may grow thereby, if so be that we have tasted that the Lord is gracious." †

All other things the Lords calls but "*many things*," if they lead to the neglect of the "*one thing needful*."—May we, like Mary, "choose that good part, which shall not be taken away from us."

J. A. v. P.

* "What a promise of blessing we find in Rev. i. to reading and hearing read the Apocalypse; and yet, how universally has it been looked at as a sealed book, which cannot be understood; and therefore other parts have been turned to instead of it. We need steadiness of heart, to set ourselves, as Daniel did, to understand, and to wait on the Lord for knowledge of *His ways*, as therein made known." D.

† I do not speak here of Bible readings, blessed as they are, and would God they were more appreciated, i.e., where they are under the control of the Spirit, whose "*mind is life and peace*," but of individual reading of the Word of God in His presence, and at the feet of Christ.

ISRAEL AND THEIR RIBAND OF BLUE,

AND

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND CONDUCT.

(Concluded.)

Since Christ has died and is risen, all believers are seen and owned of God as dead and risen with Him. (Col. ii. 20 ; iii. 1.) Consequently they are to "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Not only is the question of death and life fully settled, but the *things above* are the present portion of those thus associated with Christ. If they are not, in the epistle to the Colossians, seen positionally *in* Christ, as in Eph. ii., yet, being risen *with* Him, they are (to use Old Testament language,) across the Jordan, and exhorted to feed upon the things of Canaan. Precious, blessed portion to enter upon, whilst waiting the appearing of Him who is "the Life" and "our life." There are the members upon the earth to be mortified (v. 5), not in order to die, much less to get life, but, "seeing that ye have put off the old man.....and have put on the new man."

This practical mortification, therefore, cannot possibly be to give association with Christ in life and position, but must be the result of it. Should not this be well weighed in this day of outward display, and of worldly and fleshly adaptation in relation to Christian conduct, so that Christ may first be known as "our life," then the life lived? "Christ liveth in me," said the apostle, which was truly expressed by him in walk and ways afterwards. Most timely, therefore, following what has been said as to Christ being the christian's life, and glory with Him the prospect, is the exhortation: "Put on therefore," &c. What is to be worn is, and of necessity must be, in character with what Christ Himself was when in

this world. Nothing otherwise will suit those who are the epistle of Christ, and it is only as the walk, ways, and words of Christ are seen that they can be rightly read by the world. That only which can be a true testimony to the world, is conduct, befitting those having Christ written upon the heart, by the Spirit of God.

Most important therefore is it that the heavenly stamp should be expressed by "bowels of compassion, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness and long-suffering." The lack of these and kindred graces is inconsistent with, nay, a denial of our being a people owned of God as His "elect, holy, and beloved ones." To live therefore in the abiding consciousness of being such must of necessity promote all that is according to it, and no less lead to judging everything opposed to the dignity of the "beloved of God." Thus, and thus only can we rise to the proper platform, and be preserved from the growing tendency to descend to the world's level in its glossed form, as to life, associations, and actions. If Adam and Christ are a contrast, so most certainly are those of Adam and of Christ. Their motives and objects are distinct, for there is nothing really in common between the fallen sons of Adam, and those that are, through grace, "heavenly." The latter being associated with a dead and risen Christ, their destiny is not the earth even as it *will be* when Christ comes and reigns, much less as it now is, a world under judgment, but heavenly glory with Him. (v. 4.) May the truth as to Israel in the past, with their riband of blue, and as to Christ, and His heavenly ones of to-day, read a present practical lesson to us, called as we are to know and enjoy the blessed portion, not only of having "our life hid with Christ in God," but also of this truth—that "when he shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory."

Till then, and while here below, may the passing motto to each other be, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in

the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." G. G.

DETACHED PORTIONS.

IV.

Again, our Lord in this chapter (Matt. xviii.) turns the attention of His disciples to the little child He had set before them: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." (v. 10.)

There is a deep lesson in this. But it is one that is so simple and natural that we are in the greatest danger of losing its point. A disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ must take care not to pass by a little child as an object unworthy of his regard. Is it said, "This is only a feeling of nature?" If it were so, still it has its action and its reaction on the deepest principles by which the christian character is formed.

It is in perfect keeping with the spirit and aims of the world that the simplicity and dependence of childhood should be pushed aside. It is a mere incumbrance when its important business and its ambitions are to be pursued. What can childhood contribute when greatness, or glory, or distinction is in view? Ah! what indeed? But to disciples, who are called by their Lord to disallow these aims, it has its instruction and its voice; and we can never too often or too lovingly look upon an object that the world passes by, but of whom Jesus said: "Their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."

Do we think it is a mere expression of tenderness, designed only to touch the fond mothers' hearts, when He said: "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom as a little child, he

shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them?" No. It is an expression, and it is an action that tells as directly of the *mind of heaven* as the mightiest work that Jesus ever wrought.

In the recognition by us of the important moral bearing of the Lord's instructions in this chapter, it is well to bear in mind the place which the natural symbol all through it holds. If there is found in it much concerning the disciple that is like a little child, there is no less prominence given to the little child which we are to be like; for the Lord Jesus adds: "Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." (v. 14.)

Such then, it appears to me, must be the moral characteristics; such the simplicity of dependence and subjection; such the practical spirit of those who would claim, as their fundamental principle, the promise of the Lord in v. 20:—"Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them." Blessed be God! it is a foundation that will not fail wherever there is simplicity enough in two or three—if only two or three—that are content to rest on it.

D.

THOUGHTS ON THE INCREASING DEMAND FOR MUSIC

IN THE RELIGIOUS SERVICES OF THE PRESENT DAY.

Painful and serious as it is to touch upon existing arrangements among Christians in a time of general failure, and when the most part are peculiarly sensitive as to any interference in those things which they allow, yet if there are questions affecting the glory of God, and a man's eternal destiny, it is simply cowardice to shrink from raising them.

We come in at the close of the dispensation. We are in "the last days," marked by the Spirit of God as "perilous" (2 Tim. iii. 1-5), because mere professors of Christianity—unchanged in heart towards God, loving self, loving money, loving pleasure—take up the *form* of godliness while denying its power. Every period of time has had its characteristic feature. Thus Popery characterised the "latter times" of 1 Tim. iv. 1-3., even as mere profession does these "last days." Precious souls have been ruined eternally by both. The "form of godliness" of to-day has perhaps less of "the blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits" of the "latter times," but it is none the less to be feared. Indeed this "form of godliness" is confessedly becoming more and more attractive. All that music, eloquence, and taste can minister to it is increasingly laid under contribution, and when we think of the solemn fact revealed by the Lord in the parable of the wheat and the tares, that they would both be found in the world throughout the dispensation (Matt. xiii. 30), we are led to ask the question—Will these things minister to the growth of the wheat (the children of the kingdom), or of the tares (the children of the wicked one) ?

Love of music, and the present facilities for its cultivation, (combined, no doubt, with the growth and far-reaching influence of the Tractarian movement), have brought about a great change in the "religious services" of the day. They have not only raised the demand for fine singing, but have gone far to supply it. They have imparted to thousands the power to sing with effect when collected together in numbers, and not a few christian congregations furnish the opportunity for the display of much musical talent which tells powerfully on the feelings of those who have an ear for it. Whatever the pleas put forward in defence of this, an upright conscience must confess, that there is far more reference in the singing in such congregations to the ear of the creature than

to the glory of the Lord. The most solemn words, avowedly addressed to the Living God, are too often secondary as compared with the music composed for them; and when "the service" is over, it is painfully evident that the lips that uttered them are as free as ever for folly. Will not all this greatly help on the growth of the tares for the near-approaching time of harvest?

We know from 1 Cor. xiv. that when the church came together at first, there was godly liberty for singing, as well as for prayer and for the exercise of gift, while everything was regulated by "*the commandments of the Lord*" as therein written by His apostle, and nothing left for developement. (See v.v. 15, 21, 22, and 37). In James v. 13 we have the condition of the heart that can sing acceptably to the Lord, as we see exemplified under most remarkable circumstances in Acts xvi. 25. Still more clear and definite is the instruction in Eph. v. 18, 19., where the Spirit is seen to be the spring and power of worship and joy in the soul (as the Lord taught the woman at the well of Sychar, John iv.): "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in the heart to the Lord;" while Col. iii. 16 guards the words that are uttered in praise, that they should flow from "the word of Christ dwelling in us richly," and thus the hymns, &c. be according to the mind of God as revealed in Scripture. How important at the present moment it is to consider what is here said, and to seek understanding of the Lord in all things; for, while remembering that it is written "Praise is comely," yet if God is not glorified in the melody ascending to Him from the hearts of those who sing, what is the sweetest music but solemn mockery!

And God is not mocked. The natural heart is known to Him. It is too deep a sink of hard, unbelieving and

rebellious enmity against Him to be covered over by any form of godliness, however fair, and the most advanced religious service can make no change in this. The formalist may deceive others, may deceive himself, but he can never deceive God. Who forced the civil power to sentence Jesus to the cross? Formalists. And when? In the midst of their religious solemnities. They thrust Jesus into the hall of judgment, but "they themselves went not in, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover." And when He was crucified "because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was a high day) they besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away." How revoltingly cruel their scruples, and how vain, for Jesus was dead already.

Such were formalists eighteen hundred years ago. What was God's estimate of the observance of that passover, when His Son was lying in the sepulchre, crucified and slain by the wicked hands of those who kept it? And what vital difference can there be in any mere formalist now? His form of godliness is but the poor effort of the natural heart, striving in vain to hide its nakedness. God saw it all at Calvary and He sees it to-day.

But it may be urged that there are "true worshippers" as well as formalists in these congregations. To such then may we address a word? You know in some degree the meaning of that Scripture: "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." To have fellowship with God we must be *real*. Light is no flatterer as men are. There is no darkness in Him or where He is, and wherever we are, we are under His eye. There is nothing more dangerous than *unreality* in Divine things, especially now. Have you hearkened to His word? Have you acted upon Divine counsel? "*From such turn away.*" (2 Tim. iii. 5). From whom? *From formalists.*

Precious to God, as wheat for His garner, *you* have not formalism, but *Christ* and *love* to root in. "Rooted and built up in Christ." (Col. ii. 5:) "Rooted and grounded in love" (Eph. iii. 17.) You know that it is impossible to look to Him for life, eternal life, and not possess it; for pardon, and not receive it; for peace, and not enjoy it; for growth and not make progress, for eternal glory and not gain it. But you also know well, that all this suits not the tares, and Satan has prepared the soil for them—oh, how well! So the formalists grow. But for what? Do you really believe the Lord's words in Matt. xiii. 40, 42?

Can you then sanction that which you know is not "after Christ," and which, whatever the zeal manifested for souls, tends to deceive them? God, in His abundant mercy, does bless the preaching of Christ to souls, and truth in hymns, as in tracts, even where that which accompanies the preaching and the hymns is contrary to His revealed will, but can it be a right thing to make this a plea for disobedience? He has said "*from such turn away,*" and "*to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams.*"

It may however be said that all this is rather dealing with what is on the surface, than going to the root of the matter. This is indeed true, but the conscience is often more directly met by calling attention to the fruit, then to the root, seeing that every tree is *known* by its *fruit*. The predisposing causes for the rapid developement of the present "perilous" phase of the professing church are not far to seek, and may, by God's grace, be considered further on; but the Spirit of God in 2 Tim. iii. has marked out these open, public, characteristic features of our day, and it is the clear and express commandment of the Spirit:—"from such turn away." This is what is pressed now.

No doubt the mass of Christians have not really learnt that "*the flesh profiteth nothing,*" and they are beguiled into

a modified judaism, not knowing that it was by God's dealings with Israel that He *demonstrated* that the greatest advantages and privileges bestowed on man, short of new birth, resulted not in his improvement, but the reverse. God was more dishonoured by Israel than by the idolatrous Gentiles (Rom. ii. 24). Yet even Israel (on whom God imposed *carnal ordinances*, or ceremonies, until Christ came and they met their end in the cross. See Heb. ix and x.) were strictly enjoined not to go beyond the commandment, or to mock God with the lip while the heart was far from Him. (Read Ps. l. 7 to 23; Prov. xv. 8; Ec. v. 1, 2; Is. i. 11 to 15; xxix. 13; Amos v. 23.) May the Lord preserve us from tempting Him as that unhappy people did.

THE STONES FROM JORDAN.

JOSHUA iv. 1.

"Tis but a "lodging place,"
 Where now Thy people stay,
 Waiting until earth's long dark night
 Shall pass away.
 And the memorial stones,
 Taken from Jordan's bed,
 We have them in the poured out wine
 And broken bread.
 They tell a tale of love,
 Of suffering too and woe,
 When thou, Lord Jesus, for our sakes,
 To death didst go.
 And we have died with Thee,
 A ransomed blood-bought band;
 And on the resurrection side
 Of death we stand.
 Oh! 'tis with solemn hearts
 Thy people gather round;
 While in our midst, blest Ark of God,
 Thou'rt ever found.
 And when our children ask
 "What means this wondrous sign?"
 What joy, O Saviour! to declare
 That love of Thine!
 Thus shall it ever be,
 While here Thy people stay;
 Until Thou com'st—then earth's dark night
 Shall pass away!
 And we shall "lodge" no more
 But dwell, O Lord, with Thee—
 How fadeless, everlasting, pure,
 That home shall be!