

THE

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YOUNG BELIEVER'S
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By C. S.

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THE YOUNG BELIEVER'S DIFFICULTIES.

No. I.

James. With your permission, John, before I state my difficulties, may it not be well to see first if we are agreed as to who are meant in scripture by believers? The words of the Lord Jesus you often quote to me, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation"—do not these words teach that a believer is born again—HATH everlasting life? That he has not merely assented with his mind: but receives the words of Christ into his heart, believing God who sent Him.

John. Certainly, James: and as said elsewhere righteousness is imputed, or reckoned unto us "if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. iv. 24; v. 1.) Such then is the believer. He hath eternal life, as Jesus says, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." And,

believing God, he is accounted righteous. He sees his Sin-bearer once delivered to bear his sins, now in the presence of God his righteousness, raised from among the dead : sins all gone for ever, and never to be remembered any more. And, being accounted righteous, being justified on the principle of faith, he has peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ : and therefore always the same peace.

James. Very well ; now then, bearing in mind that *we have*—for, through the mercy of God, we have believed God, and our ears have been opened to hear the words of Jesus—yes, we have these two things, eternal life, and unchanging peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. I will now state my difficulties.

John. Stay a moment first, James. You might have named much more. Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed ?

James. I have been much struck with that question lately. It is a very solemn one. Most Christians seem to go no further than our having life : but I see a great distinction in Acts viii. 16 ; xix. 2. It would be a very important question to examine fully, and I should like on another occasion to do so ; especially the difference between holding the Holy Spirit to be an influence, and, as scripture reveals Him, the very person of God the Holy Ghost. And, oh, to think that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost !

John. Then do I understand you to say that *you* have, since you believed, received the Holy Ghost?

James. It is a very solemn question, through grace I trust I can say so, though very young in the faith, and greatly desiring, in dependence on the Holy Spirit, to inquire more fully the meaning of the word of God.

The first scripture then I would name is Hebrews vi. If we have eternal life, and peace with God, what can this mean, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, &c. . . . If they shall fall away to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame"? There are many who feel this is a very difficult statement.

John. If this meant, should a Christian in an unwatchful moment commit a sin, and thereby fall from Christ, that then there is no possibility of restoration, then indeed the difficulty would be insurmountable. Indeed plainly Christianity would be far worse than Judaism. A Jew could bring a sin-offering and his sin would be forgiven him, as is stated in Leviticus iv. And this was true whether of the whole congregation, or of an individual. Now surely this cannot be the meaning.

James. That certainly is clear; but then what does it mean?

John. It is important to notice that this epistle was addressed or written to the whole of the

Hebrews who professed to be Christians, who were also zealous of the law, as James said: "Thou seest brother, how many thousands of the Jews there are who believe; and they are all zealous of the law." They were in a transitional state. The law was not the perfect or complete truth. It contained the first, or elementary principles, of the oracles of God. The effect of their remaining in this state was, that they could scarcely distinguish between Judaism and Christianity: they were dull of hearing. "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God." (Heb. v. 12.)

James. Then is that what is meant, "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ" (or the word of the beginning of Christ) as in margin, "let us go on unto perfection"? Does this mean leaving the elementary principles of truth as known to a Jew, and going on to the complete truth, that is as revealed in Christ?

John. Exactly so; and that makes all that follows very simple. Let us take up each clause. "Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God." They had done this once if Christians, they had judged themselves as guilty of rejecting the Lord Jesus, and putting Him to death; yet faith toward God had owned Him, in raising up Jesus from the dead. This change of mind in utter self-judgment

had accepted forgiveness of sins in His name, and thus the only foundation had been laid, which could not be repeated. But as they were zealous of the law, they were in great danger of going back when they failed, as of old, to repeated offerings and repentances. You observe, James, Christianity as set up of God the Holy Ghost, was such a contrast to Judaism. The Christian has no temple, no ritual, no sacrifices, nothing for the eye to rest upon. All heavenly : all spiritual worship : no wonder there was such a tendency to give up the spiritual, and go back altogether to earthly visible worship.

James. I had not thought of that : then do you think it was to meet that tendency to give up Christ, and go back altogether to the law that this Epistle was written ? I mean to the washings of the law, the offerings and shadows, and even truth as imperfectly revealed, or incompletely known by the Jews ? Does not the next clause mean christian baptism ?

John. If you look, it is not baptism, but “ of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands.” The same word is translated washings in chapter ix., “ Meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances,” &c.

That is, we must go on to Christ, the one offering, leaving behind the doctrine of all the various washings, of pots and pans ; lepers, and priests of the law. And also all the laying on of hands on

the heads of goats and bullocks. We must go on from all that system of repetition, to the one sacrifice brought out in chapters ix. and x.

James. That is new to me ; but when we think of the object of this Epistle it is clear enough. But tell me, how can we go on from the doctrine “of resurrection of the dead ;” is there anything more complete than that doctrine ?

John. The Jewish doctrine of resurrection of the dead is certainly true as far as it goes, and was held by the Pharisees, and all Jews, except the Sadducees, who, like the heathen philosophers, denied it. But the Lord Jesus taught a resurrection from the dead, or, plainly, from among the dead. (Luke xx. 35.) And have you not noticed this was the very thing that so grieved the Jews : that the apostles preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead ? The resurrection which is from the dead went beyond all their teaching, and greatly offended them. And was not this the mark at which Paul aimed—the resurrection from the dead (not of the dead), at which he longed to arrive ? (Phil. iii. 11–14.) And has not God been pleased to reveal that the rest of the dead live not again until the thousand years are fulfilled ? (Rev. xx.)

James. I had never thought of this important difference between the imperfect, or incomplete revelation to the Jews, and the complete christian truth in Christ.

John. I am glad to hear you put it that way; for though not explained in this Epistle, it is elsewhere. All this is linked with Christ the Head. We are conformed to Him in this, the first resurrection from the dead. It is the resurrection of them that are His. "But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming: then cometh the end," &c. (1 Cor. xv. 23.) I am sorry to say, James, instead of going on, the professing church for many centuries went back to Judaism, and merely held the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead; and quite lost the christian doctrine of resurrection from the dead.

James. I will, the Lord helping me, give this subject a careful examination. But now the next clause, "and of eternal judgment." Is not the doctrine of a general judgment as held by the Jews true? Will not all stand together before the judgment to be tried? Is not this the doctrine of creeds and councils? Does not scripture say somewhere that it is appointed to all men once to die, and after death the judgment? And does it not say that the wicked and the righteous will be raised from the grave together, and be separated as described, the sheep on the right, and the goats on the left? &c. I do not see how these things can be from what we see is said of the first resurrection. But, John, why I ask is this, so many speak in this way, it puzzles one very much.

John. If you examine these scriptures you will find they are very much misquoted. By adding even a word the whole meaning is altered. Thus if we add the word "all" to Hebrews ix. 27, it alters the sense entirely. If you heard a fearful explosion in a coal pit, where three hundred hands are employed, and fifty had just come out, you might say that explosion is certainly the death of the colliers; but would that mean the fifty who had been drawn out? Or if twenty men were under the sentence of death, and three received Her Majesty's free pardon, would that mean that the whole twenty were still under the sentence of death? It is quite true that all have been found guilty—all under the sentence of death.

"And as it is appointed unto men [not all men] once to die, but after this the judgment; so CHRIST WAS ONCE OFFERED TO BEAR THE SINS OF MANY; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin unto salvation." (Heb. ix. 27.) And now, James, if you will read that other scripture where the Lord Jesus describes the judgments of the living nations, there is not a thought of the resurrection of the good and bad together. There is not a word on that subject; it is simply the living nations; it is a judgment of the quick. Surely there must be a great difference between those still under judgment, and those already pardoned, and justified from all things? Her Majesty cannot pardon a man, and hang him

at the same time. Then how can God both justify a man, whose sins Christ bore on the tree, and also bring him into judgment? This does not touch the blessedness of standing before the Bema of Christ, His judgment for reward.

Thus the apostle would go on from the elementary truth, as known to the Jews, to complete truth in Christ.

James. Then is all in contrast between the doctrine of a general judgment as held by the Jews, and Christ having once borne the sins of many; to them there is no judgment for sins but looking for Him without any question of sin unto salvation? All I can say is, if that is the case, it is just the opposite of what I have been taught.

John. The word of God says it, and it must be so.

James. Then what was the difference between those who had *tasted* of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, *tasted* the good word of God, &c.; and the true believers who had eternal salvation?

John. They had been in the shower of Pentecost and afterwards, they had *tasted*, but had not (like the earth in verse 7) drunk in the truth. Like the seed by the way-side, there was no root. The hard ground had not been broken. The heart had not been prepared by the Holy Ghost to receive the word.

James. Then what did they fall away from?

John. If they fell away from the profession of Christ, and went back to the washings and offerings of the law (just the thing they would be naturally), it was simply impossible now for those washings, and offerings, and carnal ceremonies, to restore them to repentance. Yea, for Jews to give up Christianity as a profession, they would, even to this day, have to treat Christ as accursed, as an impostor, "to crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." Will you read this chapter to the end, James? We must part now for a time.

James. I see now it is a question of a Jew who professed Christ going back to Judaism. I should like to look at Hebrews x. 26, If we sin wilfully, no more sacrifice, nothing but judgment, &c. When could you explain this?

John. If the Lord will, we shall look at this scripture the next time we meet.

No. II.

James. I am very glad to have another opportunity of speaking with you about those scriptures which have perplexed so many. Before we look at the question of sinning wilfully, I would just say, I have done as you wished in reading the whole of Hebrews vi., and the end of the chapter strongly confirms the view you gave me—that the

falling away there was going back from Christianity to the washings and sacrifices of the law, which, of course, have now lost all their efficacy, and can never restore to repentance. Would you say that the principle of *promise* and *oath* of God is also in contrast with Judaism, that is, the covenant of works as given at Sinai?

John. Exactly so. For instance, in that covenant there were two parties, and Moses as mediator between them. God, on His part, engaged to bless them on condition of their obedience; and they accepted the conditions, and engaged to obey. We know they utterly failed; and so do all who attempt that principle of covenant. The blessing depended on the faithfulness of two parties—God and man. Man failed. Where it is the principle of promise, the blessing depends only on ONE. If you engage a servant, his wages are dependent on the faithfulness of two: you to pay them, and he to do the covenanted work. Now in this matter of our eternal salvation, God wishes us to have absolute certainty, sure and steadfast. He therefore gave us two things, in which it was impossible for Him to lie—His promise and His oath. The promise and oath of God are both immutable. Nothing can disannul the promise of God. (See Gal. iii. 16–18, 19–22.) What a contrast this is to man under the covenant of law! Our eternal salvation depends solely on the promise and oath of God. Yes, as with Abraham, the promise of

Genesis xii. was confirmed when he received in figure Isaac from the dead, in chapter xxii. So the promise is fulfilled to us in the actual death and resurrection of Jesus from the dead. What certainty! what "strong consolation"!

James. Yes; but that just brings us to the point: if our eternal salvation rests on the faithfulness of One, and that one God, who cannot lie, what, then, is the meaning of Hebrews x. 26-30? "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries," &c. Can this possibly be the doom of one who is eternally saved, has eternal redemption?

John. You put the question strongly, but I am thankful for it. Better to look things fairly in the face. The question, then, again is this: if a true Christian should commit a sin, is there nothing but judgment and indignation for him? Solemn question, for then who could be saved? But then this would contradict the very context of the chapter. Would it not plunge all into despair?

James. I must confess, if this were so, I should be without hope: besides, such a thought would take away all the comfort of what goes before. And, may I ask, would it not deny the effect of the atonement, as stated in this very chapter?

I should like to be a little clearer as to this—what is it to have no more consciousness of sins? (Heb. x. 2.)

John. It is to know that God has not a single sin to lay to my charge. If you met a person to whom you owed a large debt, and had no means of paying, you would be so troubled in conscience, you might want to turn up the first lane you could, so as to get out of his sight. The more you desired to pay it, the more troubled you would be. And if a friend had paid it, and you did not know it, you would still be troubled. It is thus common for an awakened conscience to flee away from God. How can I meet God against whom I have so sinned? Blessed, when the messenger of God meets the fleeing sinner at the other end of the lane, and says, Do you know that that very God from whom you are fleeing, sent His beloved Son to bear your sins on the cross; and, having purged them—put them from God's sight by His atoning death—God has now raised Him from the dead, and received Him to glory? What, says the awakened sinner, have my sins been put away by the one sacrifice of Christ? Yes, and God will remember them no more. What could never be done by all the sacrifices of the law, Jesus hath done by the one infinite sacrifice of Himself. Thus He hath done the will, the eternal purpose of God, and is for ever sat down. “For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” You will notice,

James, that all this is in reference to boldness or liberty to enter the holiest—the holy presence of God in the heavens. As to this, all is done, all is complete.

James. How would you illustrate the contrast of this liberty by the one sacrifice of Christ, with the imperfection of the law?

John. Well, James, if you wanted a pass to travel from Derby to London, and you pay a certain price for a yearly pass, you present it to the guard, and he says, I must inform you that the way into this carriage is not yet made open for you: I cannot admit you yet, this ticket is only typical, a sort of promise of a better yet to come. Now, James, if you renewed this yearly pass year after year for fifteen years, and it never gave you a title to take your seat, it would not be very perfect, would it? The great day of atonement came round, for fifteen centuries, year by year, but never gave liberty to enter the holy presence of God. It was a typical promise, that pointed forwards. If a real friend of yours went to the Midland Company, and said, Cost what it will, I am come to purchase for my friend, not a yearly pass, but an everlasting pass. The pass is granted. The door is ever open, you have the perfect, continuous liberty to take your seat: no veil now to shut you out. Such was, and is, the love of Christ. He came to do the will of God. Yes, it was His will that we should have liberty to enter His holy

presence without conscience of sins. And the Holy Ghost bears witness that the will of God the Father has been done by the Eternal Son of God.

James. Oh, John, there is just one point here I should like to be clear about. Does having no more conscience of sins mean that after we are saved we never sin again, are never conscious of sin? It is all very clear at conversion, but if the evil nature should act, and there should be sins after, what about those future sins?

John. Ah, James, that one point is the point with many an anxious soul. When we are born again, that is, have a new nature wholly of God, and are in the light of His presence, the more we are there, the more conscious we are of failure and sin. In that very epistle where we are looked at as in the light, as He is in the light, both these things run together:—"The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin," and also, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

James. I wish I could see this clearly.

John. May the Holy Ghost enable every anxious believer to see this, for He says, "and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Does not this take in all our sins from birth to glory? It is not their sins up to conversion. If so, what could put those away since? There remaineth no

more sacrifice for sins. Has not the man Christ Jesus borne all our sins? Have they not been judged on the cross? Can God in righteousness ever impute one to us?

James. Then what must I do if I sin? Not that I want to sin, I long after holiness, for He is holy. I am sure I have at such a time lost communion of soul with God. What must I do? Have I *then* boldness or liberty to enter the holiest?

John. Certainly, you have boldness to enter by the blood of Jesus—indeed this is what you must do, come right into the presence of God your Father, and there confess your sins. Think, now, is not Jesus He who bore these sins on the cross, in the presence of God, and, for you, your Advocate with the Father? Is He not the propitiation for your sins—the mercy-seat? Is not the Father righteous or just to forgive? Never forget that He cannot impute or charge the sin on you. He can only forgive.

James. Oh, I see, He cannot impute the sin to one who has been purged by the blood of Jesus. Believing this, I have a purged conscience.

John. Very well; now we will look at our difficulty. What can be the wilful sin spoken of here—this trampling under foot the Son of God? It is compared to one despising Moses' law, to whom there was no mercy; and far sorer judgment must be inflicted on those who commit this

sin. You will notice, as in chapter vi., the apostle spoke of those who had *tasted*, not those who had *drunk in*, the truth of Christ. So here, it is not those who had received the truth in the love of it, but those who “have received the knowledge of the truth.” This is a very different matter. This would, no doubt, for a time sanctify, or separate them for a while, with the company or people separated by the one offering of Christ. There were the two things at that time going on, the temple worship, with all its sacrifices, which can never take away sins ; and the gathering together as believers in Christ to worship in spirit and in truth. Some were evidently giving up thus assembling themselves together. Now, if it were unpardonable of old for any to *despise* Moses’ law, what was it to *wilfully* despise Christ—to trample the Son of God underfoot as an apostate—to treat His blood as unholy? Having shewn the eternal efficacy of the one sacrifice of Christ, and that God had taken away, set aside, all the sacrifices of the law, had no pleasure in them, because they could not take away sins ; he now simply declares that if any sinned wilfully, by rejecting Christ and His infinite sacrifice, there was no other sacrifice for sins : and to all who thus despised Christ, there was nothing to look for but certain fearful judgment.

Is not this so, James? Have you so *despised* Christ?

James. Oh dear no, I want to know Him more and more. Despise the one atoning sacrifice of Christ, and go back to the sacrifices of the law; or to the pretended sacrifices of modern priests; or to despise Him by denying His Deity as Son of God; or His atoning death? No, no; I never thought of so denying my Lord and my God. It is strange I ever had such difficulty in this scripture. It is plain enough. If there is only one infinite sacrifice for sins, to despise it, there can be no other, there can be no remission, there must be terrible, everlasting judgment. Dreadful words, no more sacrifice for sins! Through countless ages of eternity, no more sacrifice for sins—Jesus dies no more—no more sacrifice—no more remission! Surely I never thought how terrible it is to *despise Christ*. What infinite mercy to be able to say, “But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.” (Ver. 37.)

John. We often find, by patient study of the word of God, that what at first sight seems to present a difficulty, when understood is full of richest blessing. Just think now what this chapter x. presents to faith. The atoning death of Christ is seen to be the very eternal will of God. This has been accomplished by the Son of God. The worshipper, therefore, once purged, has no more conscience of sins — for ever perfected by the one offering of Christ. The Holy Ghost bears witness

to all this. Sins no more imputed, no more remembered, and we have boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus.

James. What peace of conscience and heart this gives! The will of God. The work of Christ. The witness of the Holy Ghost. The three Persons of the Godhead engaged in bringing the poor sinner to God.

John. Well, James, have you any more difficulties? as we must part again for a time.

James. I am glad you are willing to continue these conversations. At our next meeting I should like you to explain this: a person in our parts asked me this question. He stated that the apostle said, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway." Now, said he, does not that *imply* at least that even Paul thought there was a possibility of his becoming a castaway, or reprobate? This seems to make many persons question that salvation is not eternal.

John. Well, James, if there really were such a scripture we must honestly admit it would imply the possibility of a true Christian becoming a castaway, or reprobate. In the meantime, will you look if you can find such a text. For the present, good-bye.

No. III.

John. Well, James, have you found such a scripture as the apostle saying, I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway, or reprobate? As we said in our last conversation, such a scripture would clearly imply that even Paul might *become* a reprobate; and this, of course, would shake to the foundation the truth of eternal salvation.

James. But is there not such a scripture in 1 Corinthians ix. 27? And, to tell you the truth, John, it is a scripture that has greatly troubled me, and thousands more. The possibility of a *Christian becoming* a castaway, or reprobate, as I am told the word really means, is no light matter.

John. Read it carefully; and now, where is there a thought in it of a Christian becoming a reprobate? It is, lest "I myself *should be*," not, *should become*, a reprobate.

James. I never noticed that before. Surely that makes a wide difference.

John. You will see this still more clearly, if you turn to another scripture written to this same assembly. "Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me. . . . Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith. . . . Know ye not your own selves how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be [not become] reprobates?" (2 Cor.

xiii. 3-5.) This is the same word reprobates as is translated castaway in the other scripture. Thus, with the apostle, there were only two things before him: either Christ Jesus in you, or ye are reprobates. No thought of a Christian becoming a reprobate. He says, "But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates." Neither had he any personal uncertainty in the first epistle. (Chap. ix. 24-27.) It was the apostle's habit to say I, when he transferred the question to himself, as in 1 Corinthians iv. 6. What he shews is this: it will not do to trust to being a preacher to others. Just as he shews in chapter x. it will not do to trust to merely making a profession by baptism.

James. Then do we understand that a man may be a preacher to others, and yet *be a reprobate*, if there be no holiness of life, the fruit of faith?

John. No doubt that is the fact distinctly taught in the word, in more places than one. There are many such preachers—not a few—who are reprobates; Christ Jesus never was in them, as He says, He never knew them—men held in great estimation, and who seem to have done a great work for God, and yet are reprobates, and will perish everlastingly. You know, James, if a preacher is a reprobate, he cannot *become* one.

James. I was going to say, this is dreadful to think on. Surely it is very heart-searching. It is enough to make every one, preacher or not, say, Am I resting on myself and my doings, and all

the while practising sin? or am I resting in Christ, and, by the power of the Holy Ghost, walking in holiness—keeping under my body? But does the scripture teach there are many such preachers?

John. Hearken to the very words of Christ: “Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. MANY will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I NEVER KNEW YOU: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” (Matt. vii. 20–23.) And did you ever notice, a mark of a reprobate preacher, or one who takes the place of servant, but says in his heart, “My Lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken”? Will not the Lord appoint him “his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth”? (Matt. xxiv. 48–51.) It is rarely a faithful word is spoken to preachers. But you see it is not a question of a true christian minister becoming a reprobate, but of “false teachers among you” who are reprobates. Are there none in this day who say in their heart, My Lord delayeth His coming? Are there no preachers who smite with pen or tongue their fellow-servants, and

who find their pleasure at the world's table? They may not be drunkards, but find their pleasure with the drunkards.

James. This is very solemn truth, it makes me tremble. Just think: a man to be a preacher to others, and yet a reprobate! And not to know it; be trusting to his supposed official character and popularity; and yet at last to hear those dreadful words, "I never knew you." It reminds me of Noah's carpenters, if he had any; what an awful thing, to be so near the ark, and yet shut out. In the ark, or out of it; in Christ, or out of Christ. But, John, you said something about false teachers. If I mistake not, that is in the very chapter I wanted to ask you about: yes, these words have been quoted to me to prove that the Christian has not eternal life, or eternal salvation, but that, after all, he may be lost—that the latter end with them is worse than the beginning. These verses are so often used to perplex souls, I should like to read them over with you. "For if, after **THEY** have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with *them* than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog

is turned to his own vomit again ; and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire." (2 Pet. ii. 20-22.) Does not that really look as if a true Christian, one of Christ's sheep, to whom He gives eternal life, may, after all, be lost? What do you say to this, John?

John. Nay, it is not what I say, but what does it say? Are they Christians at all that are spoken of? Is a dog, or a washed sow, a sheep? All depends on who the "*they*" are. "If, after *they* have escaped," &c. If we read the whole chapter, then we see clearly that the "*they*" are "false teachers among you." What a picture of every feature of false teachers, from that day to this, in Christendom. Jude describes the same persons as natural men, not having the Spirit. One most distinct mark is that they mock and scoff at the coming of the Lord. They cannot bear it. (2 Pet. iii. 2-4.) "Scoffers, walking after their own lust, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" This must be the case when a natural man, not having the Spirit, is educated for the christian ministry. The end is sure to be bad, one way or other. It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness. The difference between mere knowledge and saving faith is very important. It does not say they had believed. There is not a line in this chapter describing the false teachers of Christendom that has not been fulfilled for these eighteen hundred years. Have you not noticed,

James, that wherever the Spirit of God begins a work, the false teachers are sure to try to hinder it? But it would be most unjust to say this was also true of the faithful servants of Christ.

If you read a description of counterfeit, bad, false half-crowns, you would never dream that genuine ones were meant by the description. It might be difficult to tell them asunder, they might be electro-plate, but all would wear off in time. Just so the false teacher ; he may be electro-plated with education, and the knowledge of Christianity, but in the end be like the dog, or the washed sow. How strange that godly souls should have been troubled with this chapter ; there is not a word in it about them, except this, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."

James. I see it is not, to use your figure, the good half-crown becoming a bad one.

John. Just so. Never is there such a thought in scripture as a child of God *becoming* a reprobate. Can your child cease to be your child ? It may become very naughty. It may fail, and you may have to chastise it. Even in nature the relationship is unalterable. If, then, a Christian could cease to be a Christian, the Spirit would never have used such a term expressive of unchanging relationship.

James. Certainly there is a great difference between a servant in a house, and a son.

John. Yes, it is the Lord who says, "and the servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the Son abideth ever." Doubtless this applies primarily to Himself; but what saith the scripture to those who are born again, who are the children of God? Are they to fear that some day they may not be the children of God, but lost? No; "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." (Rom. viii. 15-17.)

Now, James, whilst a servant that is a professor, even a greatly admired teacher, may be a reprobate, and perish everlastingly, yet a child is a child for all that. Do you think, James, if a Christian, a child of God, could be lost, that God would use such language as this?—"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." (Gal. iv. 6, 7.) A servant abideth not in the house; the Christian can no more be on that principle. Oh, the blessedness of that unchangeable

relationship! if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. If Satan and men tell you this is not true, will you believe them, or God? If the Spirit of God dwell in you, you are a joint-heir with Christ. Wondrous unity! He must cease to be Christ, if you can cease to be a Christian.

James. It seems almost too good to be true. That assurance of joint-heirship with Christ is so different from my past state of fear, and doubt, and uncertainty. I do not think, John, you can have any idea of the gloom such teaching as I have had produces. I do not wonder that many who are sincere lose their reason. I have been told I might be a happy, faithful Christian all my life, just about to enter heaven, fail at last—just at last—and go down to endless woe. Like a ship, they say, after having braved the storms of a long, long voyage, and heavily laden with merchandise, is just entering the port with streaming flags; see, she strikes a rock as she enters the harbour. Down she goes, and every hand perishes in sight of home. Now, John, can a man be happy under such teaching as that?

John. Happy! I should say not. All well enough if applied to a mere deceived professor, a reprobate. But to teach the child of God such dark unbelief, must surely be the work of him who long ago urged, “Yea, hath God said?” Will you read Ephesians i.? Has not the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as truly

blessed the believer now even with all spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ, as he will be blest with when in glory? Is he not "sealed with that holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory?" Does not that seal make the inheritance as sure as if we had it now? Think of this, James: joint-heirs with Him who is raised from the dead, "and set at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power," &c. Oh, think of that man Christ Jesus in the glory, Heir of all things, and that we are joint-heirs with Him! If he abideth ever, all the Son's joint-heirs abide for ever. Remember we have been reconciled unto God by His death. (Rom. v. 10.) So far from Paul having such a thought as that he might personally become a reprobate, he says, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. viii.; read vers. 28-39.)

James. That seems unanswerable; but they say, Yes, but there is the rock at the harbour: if he should sin before he gets into heaven, he will be lost.

John. And the scripture says, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." And again, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins." (1 John i. 8; ii. 1, 2.) Oh, precious Advocate and mercy-seat! I may fail, James, but He will never. I dare not trust myself one step of the way; but my heart has perfect rest in Him. He who has sought His lost sheep, and placed it on His shoulder, will safely bring it home.

James. I am thankful there is no such thought as that of a true Christian *becoming* a reprobate in the word of God. If there had been, I should have been certain to become one. I hope now to rest in Christ. There is another scripture I should be most thankful to look at—it is this, "WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING." I can assure you, great numbers are troubled by these few words, and I do not know exactly how to answer them. They will have it, that after all, salvation depends on themselves.

John. We must close here, James, for the present. If the Lord will, we will take up that subject in our next conversation. In the mean time seek to keep your eye on Christ, and not on self.

No. IV.

James. I am thankful for another opportunity of conversing with you on such portions of the word as many feel difficult to understand. The scripture I named was this, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Phil. ii. 12.) Many understand by this that they are by works of their own righteousness to finish, or complete their salvation. Some would say they were regenerated, or saved, by baptism, but that their final salvation has to be worked out by themselves. Others have some idea that they are justified by faith to start with; but still their final salvation depends on their own working it out some way themselves, and they quote this scripture in proof. So that the difficulty is this—How can salvation be eternal, if it depends on our works of righteousness?

John. If we examine the context, the very opening of the epistle shews that the apostle could have had no such thought. He says, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform [or finish] it until the day of Jesus Christ." It is said, too, in connection with these very words, "Wherefore [or so] my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear

and trembling: for *it is God* which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

James. Then the apostle's confidence was in God, that He would finish the work in them unto the day of Jesus Christ.

John. Now, further, James. As you have heard these words explained, did it not look more like words of our own righteousness for salvation?

James. Well, that is what it comes to. I am saved by Christ so far, but never learnt how far; but my final salvation depends on my working it out to the end, so that I must keep the law for righteousness, and the day of judgment will decide whether I have done so.

John. But if on that ground, and if that can possibly be the meaning, we do not need to wait for the day of judgment. If we think we are working out our own salvation by works of law, we are surely condemned: "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse;" and "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." (Gal. iii. 10; v. 1-14.) "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." (Ver. 18.) Indeed, nowhere is this truth more forcibly brought out than in this very Epistle to the Philippians. This doctrine of salvation by works of law is the concision of which we are to beware. (Chap. iii. 2.) And Paul, looking back on

his whole religious life as a Jew, could say, "touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." But what does he say of all that system of works for salvation? He says, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." Yea, he utterly renounces this plan of works for salvation, and counts them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Now mark, this not only expresses his then present state, but that at the very end he should not be found in, or having his own righteousness. He longs for the resurrection from among the dead, and then to be found in Him (Christ), the righteousness which is of God. Therefore Paul cannot possibly teach doctrine the very contrary of all this, as though Christ had saved us in a very limited sense, and we had to complete what He had begun by our own works of law for righteousness. Have I made it clear that he could not mean by "work out your own salvation," that we had not eternal salvation in Christ, but it must be by works done by ourselves?

James. You have certainly made it clear as to what it does not mean; indeed, I remember the apostle says elsewhere, "And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace."

And again, "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." (Rom. iv. 5; xi. 6.) But, John, the question is, what do these words mean, "Work out your own salvation"? I am quite satisfied as to what they do not mean; for if a man could work out his own salvation before God, what need was there at all for the death and resurrection of Christ?

John. Quite true. We will, then, now look at what these words do mean. The Lord give us the teaching of the Holy Spirit. And, first, it is of importance to notice that these words are not addressed at all to an unconverted sinner, nor even to an individual saint or believer, but to an assembly. "To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops [or elders] and deacons." Of course, as the assembly of God is composed of saved individuals in Christ, what is said to the assembly as a whole is said to each individual member, but still in the assembly character. Further, notice, the state of this assembly was such that the apostle could say, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you ALL, making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel, from the first day until now." Now, James, do you see that all this must first be settled in your soul before there is a word about working out your own salvation? Are you a saint IN Christ Jesus? Remember, to

such there is no condemnation, and no separation. (Rom. viii.) All such are accepted in the Beloved. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." (Eph. i. 3-8.) In Him they are complete, made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. For Christ is made unto them "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (Col. i. 12-14; ii. 10; 1 Cor. i. 30.) Thus, if we look at the saint as seen of God in Christ, his salvation is accomplished and eternal, He "having *obtained* eternal redemption for us." And all this fully proved to be without works in Romans iii., iv., v.; Galatians ii. 16. Nay, as many as are of the principle of works for salvation before God are under the curse.

Then, James, are you *in* Christ? If you are, then Christ is *in* you. (Rom. viii. 1-9.) And this is the first statement, the foundation of all that follows. "To the saints in Christ Jesus." Mark, James, *to such there can be no uncertainty as to the final issue.* "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform [or finish] it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Ver. 6.)

You will find it will help to clear the meaning of this difficult text, that as justification before God is the subject in Romans i.-viii., and justification before men the subject of James; thus, the one by faith, the other by works (both

true and important, surely, in their place), and no contradiction, but in perfect harmony; so the subject of the believer's standing in Christ is the theme of Ephesians i., ii., iii. The saints, as seen of God in Christ, having eternal salvation, perfected for ever, as Hebrews x. So, in Philippians, the assembly is presented as seen amongst men, pressing through this wilderness-world to the glory yet to be revealed. So that, James, I do not well see how any believers can understand *this* working out their own salvation, until they have first seen what it is to be in Christ Jesus before God, and that this is secured unto the day of Christ. And, further, they must be on the same ground of the one assembly of God on earth amongst men.

James. I had never thought a word about all this.

John. I dare say; and as little have they thought who try to perplex you with this text. But are not these the facts? Was not this epistle written to such as were in Christ? and is it not chiefly occupied with the assembly's behaviour in this world? much as James and Peter teach works before men. What men see (James ii. 14-24), "ye see."

James. Why, John, already the epistle becomes quite new to me. What a pity it is to jumble the scriptures together, and thus lose thier distinctive teaching!

John. We will now go on, only carefully notice the assembly character of the teaching. "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ; that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel, and in nothing terrified by your adversaries. . . . For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." (Chap. i. 27-30.) I must say, James, I cannot see how Christians can work out these divine assembly principles, unless they are on the ground of the one assembly of God, in the unity of the Spirit. How could the company of a ship work out the orders of the captain in the spirit of unity, if they had left the one ship, and were flying their sails in boats of their own? I do assure you, James, these words are very precious and timely to all who desire to do the will of God. You see, James, it is the assembly of God on earth in the midst of many adversaries. Pursue it, and study every verse. "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." Has not Christendom sadly departed from all this? Yes, even to defend divisions the very opposite of this assembly truth.

Then, James, we have the Lord Himself, as seen as Man on this earth. "Who, being in the form

of God made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant," &c. In this world He took the lowest possible place. Now, is not the aim of the multitude in Christendom just the opposite of this? every one seeking to be a little higher in the world before men. The blessed Lord looked forward to the glory He should have, not in a world where Satan is the acknowledged prince, but with His Father.

"Wherefore [or so] my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Now, whether we look at the verses before or what comes after, it is plain this is not the question of the soul's salvation from sin, the eternal salvation wrought out by Christ; for sin is nowhere the question in this epistle, but the simple point is the difference between the presence and absence of the apostle in the assembly at Philippi. They had had his support in the midst of terrible opposition. He had laboured hard to save them as an assembly from adversaries. Now he was absent, a prisoner of Jesus Christ at Rome. They would now have to work out their own salvation, or deliverance from enemies without or within, with fear and trembling; not with high-mindedness and boasting. Christ was their example. And mark, he does not direct them to a

bishop in his absence; no, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." It is a salvation similar to that meant when Peter said, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation." (Acts ii. 40.) Jude speaks of the same thing, not, however, to make them uncertain as to eternal salvation — no, but "to them that are sanctified by God the Father, AND PRESERVED IN CHRIST JESUS." Then follow directions how they are to behave in the sad circumstances of these last days.

James. Then how were the Philippians to work out their own salvation?

John. Read on, James. "Do all things without murmurings and disputings; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life," &c. Are you satisfied, James?

James. It is altogether so new to me; would you mind having a little further conversation on this subject, and especially as to its present application to those who desire to be on the ground of the assembly of God?

John. It will give me pleasure to do so the next time we meet, if the Lord will.

HEZEKIAH:

OR,

BIBLE LESSONS ON CHURCH TRUTH.

2 CHRONICLES XXIX.

A BRIEF OUTLINE OF LECTURES ON HEZEKIAH.

It is important to notice, that, at this time, both Judah and Israel had utterly departed from the Lord. Sad, and low indeed, was Judah's condition, as described in chapter xxviii.; all was wrong; all apostasy and idolatry. What a hopeless picture! But a picture drawn for us—written for us. Is it not a picture of all around? A man said to me the other day, as an excuse for remaining in what he knew to be wrong, "I have read, and compared the Acts, the early days of the church, with all I see now; and all is so different from what I read, that I have no hope of things being right, and so I go on as I am." In contrast with this man, we read of Hezekiah, "And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord." (Ver. 2.) Yes, in the midst of all that was wrong, he did that which was right; and mark, not in his own sight, not in his own opinion, but in THE SIGHT OF THE LORD. This, then, is the foundation-principle of our present lesson: God can raise up a man, can enable His child, to do that which is right

in the sight of the Lord, in the midst of all that is wrong.

These things were written for our instruction, and how very striking the analogy! Has not Christendom departed as far from the inspired teaching of the Holy Ghost, as Judah had departed from the inspired words of Moses? When the one is seen as a picture of the other, then every verse contains instruction to our souls.

Let us notice three things, as especially illustrating the present condition of Christendom:—

First, “They have shut up the doors of the porch.”

Secondly, “And put out the lamps.”

Thirdly, “And have not burned incense, nor offered burnt-offerings, in the holy place.” (Ver. 7.)

If we look at the established church of God, as found in the beginning, we find the way into the holiest open; every believer, having boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus (Heb. x.); perfected for ever by the one offering; all purged worshippers in the unclouded presence of God. “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” Delivered from the power of darkness; translated into the kingdom of His dear Son; absolute certainty as to redemption and forgiveness of sins; all trespasses forgiven; sins to be remembered no more, *no more*; immutable peace with God, according to all that God is; no longer afar off, but so near, in all the fulness of the Father’s love. (Col. i. 12–14; ii. 13; Heb. x.; Rom. v., &c.)

Compare all this with the state of Christendom for centuries. Read all prayer-books—Roman, Greek, Anglican, and especially the sad, despairing wail of the Ritualists. Yea, hearken to the pulpit

prayers of all Christendom. Is this the worship of divine certainty—that sins have been atoned for, and, having been confessed to God, are all forgiven? Hark, is this the worship of the Christian in the holiest, in perfect peace with God? Has not Christendom practically shut up the doors? and, instead of the worship of the purged worshipper inside the veil, is it not taking again the place of the Jew afar off, crying for mercy, just as the Jew did before redemption was accomplished? Is not this saying we are Jews, when we are not; the sin of unbelief? Is it not like denying that Jesus has come in the flesh, and finished the work—that work of redemption—which the Father gave Him to do? Do not millions still pray as Jewish disciples were taught by the Lord before His death and resurrection, “Forgive us our sins, as we forgive them that trespass against us”?

In contrast with the Christian’s thanksgivings now, “we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.” The scripture says to all Christians, “Having forgiven you all trespasses.” (Col. ii. 13.) Christendom says, No; we must keep praying to God as miserable sinners, hoping that God will forgive us. Oh, how sad our unbelief! Have we not also shut up the doors? This is so solemn, that I must dwell upon it a little longer. If it were sad for Judah to shut up the doors, is it not far more so now? “Then, verily, the first *covenant* had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary,” &c. And there was still the veil that shut man out: no saint, not a David, or an Isaiah, could pass that veil. Now the established church, as found in scripture, was the very contrast of all this. No worldly sanctuary, and no veil to shut out the least of all saints: the veil was rent, and there was boldness to enter

by the blood of Jesus. The believer's calling and worship now is heavenly. Oh, how sad the departure from God's established church! to go not only back to a worldly sanctuary and ordinances, but practically to hang up again the rent veil, and shut up the doors. Not only so, they had "PUT OUT THE LAMPS."

What did the seven lamps of the sanctuary typify? Was it not the Spirit of God in the assembly, or church? The all-sufficiency of the Holy Ghost? Those seven lamps were to be lighted, "that they may give light over against it" (the golden candlestick)—the very command of Jehovah, when He spake the first time, from between the cherubim. (Num. viii.) And was not that golden candlestick Christ? And in that light stood the table of shewbread—the twelve representative loaves, borne on that table, covered with pure gold, and the loaves covered with frankincense. What a picture! The whole redeemed children of God sustained, borne, in divine righteousness, before God, and covered with all the preciousness of Christ. Not now, however, twelve loaves—there were twelve tribes of Israel—there is only "one body," and therefore only one loaf on the table of the Lord. But as all the particles of bread are chemically one loaf, so all Christians form spiritually the one body of Christ. All borne in divine righteousness before God—all covered with the perfections of Christ—one with Christ, the Head.

But where was the beauty of all these golden shadows of Christ when the lamps were put out? All was darkness. Can this be a picture of Christendom? If such was the place and importance of the seven lamps of the temple, what is the place and importance of the Holy Ghost in the divinely established church of God? Did you

ever notice how much this occupied the thoughts of Christ that last night He spent with His disciples?" "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive," &c. (John xiv. 17.) Again, the promise is repeated in verse 26, "He shall teach you all things." Again, chapter xv. 26, and much of chapter xvi., is occupied with this all-important assurance of the coming and presence of the Spirit. It was even expedient that Jesus should go away, that the Spirit might come. And just as the typical lamps gave light over against the candlestick, so the Holy Ghost "will guide you into all truth." And "He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you."

When redemption was accomplished, and Jesus received up to the right hand of God—Pentecost being fully come—the Holy Ghost was sent down to take His place and form the church of God. Thus, as when the lamps were lit, all was light in the sanctuary: so, when the Holy Ghost had His place in the church of God, all was light.

What a reality this was! Take just one instance. The church was gathered together; the Holy Ghost said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them;" and these beloved, honoured ministers of Christ were sent to that special mission by the Holy Ghost. (Acts xiii. 1-4.) And His divine place is fully recognised in the epistles. (See 1 Cor. xii.; xiv., "Dividing to every man severally as he will.") Oh, think of the established church of the scriptures! The Holy Ghost revealing the glory of Christ, using whom He will, in the assembly. The prophets thus speaking, two or three. Oh, sad, solemn fact, for many, many centuries, man, as far

as lies in him, has shut up the doors, and put out the lamps. Yes, as far as possible, the Holy Ghost has been displaced, until Christendom is so conscious of its distance from God, and its darkness, that it is constantly taking the place of the Jew before Christ died, and the Holy Ghost was sent down to abide to the end. Its prayers are those of the Jew afar off—cries for mercy; and on all sides, in the dark, may be heard prayers for the Holy Spirit to come, as though the Father had refused to send Him, and He had not come. Is not all this far more sad than the state of Judah in the days of Hezekiah? Yes, for centuries cries for mercy, distance and darkness, instead of incense and burnt-offerings, worship and adoration, in the full, blessed enjoyment of our acceptance, in all the sweet savour of Christ.

In the first year of Hezekiah's reign, He opened the doors of the house of the Lord. No doubt he lighted the lamps, but this is not recorded. However we may have grieved and set aside the Holy Spirit, He is still here. He has not to come again. We have to own Him, in unfeigned dependence. And has not God, rich in mercy, opened again the doors of the house of the Lord? Has He not restored to our souls, in these days, the discovery, that, instead of saying we are Jews, and standing afar off, we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus? Has He not swept away to faith the rubbish of all human, worldly sanctuaries? May we never forget the all-sufficiency of the Holy Ghost. Again, unhindered, may He ever glorify Christ. Oh, wondrous grace, thus to restore the long-lost worship in spirit and in truth!

Those words of Hezekiah are very applicable again—"My sons, be not now negligent: for the

Lord hath chosen you to stand before him, to serve him." Yes, the Lord has chosen a feeble little band ; may my reader be one of them. And what was the effect when the doors were open, the rubbish taken out, and the lamps burning brightly ? "They brought seven bullocks, and seven rams, and seven lambs, and seven he-goats, for a sin-offering for the kingdom, and for the sanctuary, and for Judah." All these were killed, and the blood sprinkled upon the altar. Hands were laid on the sin-offering, and reconciliation made for *all Israel*.

And what has been the case since our God has been pleased to make known the open way into the holiest, in these days, and to gather again His children in the guardian care of the Holy Ghost ? Fuller and deeper discoveries of the infinite value of the blood of Jesus ! The glories and perfections of His Person !

In each of these offerings the number was seven—the one offering of Christ, perfect in every aspect. The blood was sprinkled on the altar, before hands were laid on the sin-offering, in identification. Oh, my soul, dwell on this—yea, go a little further, for it is the same principle. On the day of atonement see the golden censer, and the sweet incense, beaten small, and the fire from off the altar, and the cloud of incense covering the mercy-seat. That censer had no pattern, its manufacture is not on record. No ; in this figure see the uncreated, eternal Son—the Holy, Holy, Holy One ! as known only to the Father. And why all this first, before the blood is taken in, and sprinkled before God ? Does not God solemnly tell us in this, that no less a victim could make reconciliation for sins ? Such His wrath against sin, no other propitiation for the sins of men could be made.

And, more, nothing could meet the claims of God but that which is equal to God. He who in the beginning was with God, and was God; all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. Just as the blood was first taken in, and sprinkled before God, and then afterwards sins, all transferred to the people's goat, and borne away, so, in our chapter, the *three sevens*—the bullocks, the rams, and the lambs—were first killed, and their blood sprinkled upon the altar, thus presented before God, and then hands laid on the sin-offering. What, then, is this distinction? and what its lesson to our souls? Surely that the death of Jesus has first met the infinite claims of God—His righteous, holy claims. It was taken into the holiest, figure of the heaven of heavens. Yes, the blood of Jesus must be shed, or how otherwise could God have dwelt in this sin-defiled universe? Precious words of Jesus, "I have glorified thee." Oh, the glory of the cross! He must needs suffer. "It is finished!" Dwell on this. God is glorified, so glorified by that one offering once, that Jesus, crowned with glory, is seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Three times seven fulfilled in this one offering.

Let us be clear about this point first. The resurrection of Jesus, by the glory of the Father, proves that God is perfectly, infinitely glorified—immutably, eternally so. For a moment sin had dishonoured God; the death of Jesus has glorified Him through eternal ages. It was not that God only loved us, precious as that is; but He must be glorified, He must be righteous, in justifying us. But if the death of Jesus has met the greater, the first requirement, the infinite claims of the holiness of God: then is it not manifest that He

has met the lesser, the sinner's need? What, then, are those hands laid on the seven goats, killed to make atonement? And, mark well, this was for ALL Israel, not merely Judah, but the revolted tribes of Israel. This is important; the atonement is not merely for those who attain to a certain path of holiness, but for the whole church of God, wherever found—for all believers who have passed from death unto life; though many such may be found in revolted tribes of men. Think, then, of the sins of the whole redeemed church of God, transferred to the holy, spotless Victim, who died, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God! What a sight! What a sin-offering! Did He fail? God is glorified, we ARE sanctified, by that one offering.

I now ask the closest attention to the present place and position of Christ. "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God." (Heb. x. 12.) What do we see here? The One who glorified God on the cross, sat down. The words, for ever, mean in immutable continuity. Nothing can disturb that immutable rest He has, in the unclouded presence of God. But then these very same words are applied to every child of God, in verse 14: "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Mark, *He hath* done it by one offering. HE HATH perfected, in immutable continuity, them that are sanctified. Remember, all the sins of the whole redeemed family of God transferred to Him, borne by Him. And now, as to all charge of sins, perfected in immutability; the Holy Ghost bears witness, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember *no more*"—no more. Oh, why should we doubt God? Why say, No, no, this is not true? I must stand and pray for

mercy afar off. Oh, dwell my soul for ever on the glory of the cross. Is it not remarkable that God should have restored to our souls in these days the very truths typically set forth in the history of Hezekiah?

But not only do we find the sin-offering, but also the burnt-offering ; that is, not only have our sins been transferred to Christ Jesus, and borne by Him beneath the consuming judgment of God, and those sins put away, to be remembered no more, but also we are identified with Him in all the burnt-offering aspect of His death ; a sweet savour to God.

And when the burnt-offering began, the song of the Lord began. Then "all the congregation worshipped." All this continued until the burnt-offering was finished. Yes, there can be no real worship until the Holy Ghost reveals to the soul the immutability of the work of Jesus, and our immutable perfection by that one offering—complete identification with Him, in all the unchanging perfections of His Person, for a sweet savour before God. Will this lift up the heart in spiritual pride? "The king, and all that were with him, bowed themselves, and worshipped." We are thus brought to bow ourselves, and joy in God. "And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads, and worshipped." Is it not even so? Instead of standing at a distance, uttering prayers of unbelief, have we not been brought to own again the presence of the Holy Ghost? Has He not brought before us the glory of the Person of Christ, and boldness to enter the holiest by His precious blood? Yes, and instead of cries for mercy, has He not put songs of praise in our lips, and worship and gladness in our hearts?

"Then Hezekiah said, Now ye have consecrated

yourselves unto the Lord, come near." What is consecration? The margin reads, filled your hands. Yes, if the Holy Ghost reveals the immutable Person and work of Christ, the effect is, we are filled with Christ; and that is consecration. If this is not so, we shall be taken up with men, and things, and so-called churches of men. But if the doors are open, the lamps lighted, Christ revealed, He, He will engross every thought and desire. Oh, to live on account of Christ, as He lived on account of the Father! And if we are thus consecrated to Him, thus filled with Him, then the consecrated things will be in abundance. Six hundred oxen, and three thousand sheep. Nay, we are not our own. Burnt-offerings in abundance, with the fat of peace-offerings, and drink-offerings! What untold delight of heart, filled with all the fulness of Christ! "So the service of the house of the Lord was set in order." When Christ by the Spirit has His true place, then the house is in order. All else that man calls order is simply the house in disorder.

"And Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that God had prepared the people: for the thing was done suddenly." What God did then in Judah, has He not done now in Christendom? Is it the hand of God, or another sect? Has God, during the last fifty years, opened the doors, and revealed the way into the holiest? The believer, by the one offering of Christ, perfected, as to the conscience, in immutable continuity?—and all this in direct contrast with the Judaism into which Christendom had sunk. Has not God, by the Spirit, awakened His people in all parts of the world—in Java, in Russia, throughout Europe, America, Australia? The thing is of God, and done suddenly. Souls are being brought from the dark regions of unbe-

lief to the unclouded presence of God, with joy and gladness. Is there a doubt that this work is of God? To Him be all praise ! Oh, what grace and mercy to us in these last days !

THE PASSOVER.

CHAPTER XXX.

We shall now find some very important church truth typified in this chapter. The order is very striking. We have had the doors open—the full gospel of God ; the grace that brings the prodigal right into the presence of the Father. Then, the lamps giving their full, perfect light; the Holy Ghost taking of the things of Christ, and shewing them unto us ; the infinite value of His one sacrifice ; our immutable perfection by that offering, accepted in all the sweet savour of the burnt-offering, the Lamb of God—the joy, gladness, and worship.

Now the invitation goes forth to come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, to keep the pass-over unto the Lord God of Israel. And in wisdom and counsel, both of the king, the princes, and all the congregation, this must be, not in the appointed time, the fourteenth day of the first month, but in the second month. For they could not keep it at that time, because the priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently, neither had the people gathered themselves together at Jerusalem. (Ver. 3.)

If we read carefully Luke xxii. 1–20, we see how the Lord's supper took the place of the pass-over. "With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." The last pass-over before He suffered : Himself the fulfilment of it. He then presented Himself to faith, no longer the body of the lamb, or the cup of the passover.

The passover looked forwards—the Lord's supper is a remembrance. "This do in remembrance of me." The blessed Lord Himself, our Passover, is slain. It is no longer the wine of the passover, but the cup, in remembrance of His blood shed for us. But they were to come to Jerusalem, to the house of the Lord. Is there any such house of the Lord now? any place of worship, or earthly sanctuary? No, there is no such place now. All this belonged to the first covenant, or to Judaism. "Then, verily, the first *covenant* had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary." (Heb. ix. 1.) What, then, have we now, if all the system of worldly sanctuaries, called the house of God—places of worship with divine service; all this is simply Judaism; not a vestige of which have we in the New Testament. What have we, as the true centre of gathering? Have we not Christ Himself? Jesus says, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. xviii. 20.) I know that in millennial days to come, Jerusalem shall be the city of the Great King. But let us remember that at present He, as their King, is cut off, and has nothing; and that now the only place of gathering is to Him, the rejected One.

But why did they keep the passover on the fourteenth day of the second month?

If we turn to Numbers ix. 1–12, we shall find a very distinct reason given there. The keeping of the passover in the first month is confirmed: but there were some men who were defiled by the dead body of a man, that they could not keep the passover on that day. The question was brought before the Lord; and the answer of the Lord was, that if any were unclean by reason of a dead body, &c., they should keep the passover on the four-

teenth day of the second month. Thus Hezekiah acknowledged the defiled state of Israel. Is it not so with the church of God? Is it in its first condition, or second? Has it become defiled by the dead body of the world? Oh, does it not become us thus to own the sad, defiled, ruined state of the church as a testimony for Christ?

Now we come to a very important point. The invitation and responsibility to keep the passover was as extensive as the atonement. The sin-offering, the reconciliation, was made for ALL Israel. ALL Israel are invited, and responsible, to come and keep the passover. So they "make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba even unto Dan, that they should come to keep the passover unto the Lord God of Israel, at Jerusalem; for they had not done it of a long time in such sort as it was written." This deeply important principle as to the Lord's table, also, is little understood. The analogy is striking; souls everywhere, who have been led to own the Holy Ghost in the assembly, like the lamps in the sanctuary, have been also led next to remember the Lord's death, in the breaking of bread. Nay, more, they have learnt from holy scripture that the church had not done it of a long time, in such sort as it was written. I am not aware of an instance for seventeen centuries, where Christians broke bread as it was written, until within about the last fifty years. There was always something omitted, or added, to what was written. I need not dwell on the Mass. But what were we doing? Take one thing added, which we all thought right—a minister administering the sacrament. Was this written in the inspired word? Where? Disciples came together to break bread, or "we came together." (Acts xx.) In 1 Corinthians x., xi., is there a thought of such

a person at the Lord's table? This is not a question of the gifts of Christ: the evangelist to preach the gospel, and the teacher to teach the church of God. But at the Lord's table, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." Place a man unscripturally to administer, and the communion is lost sight of! It is the expression, essentially, of equal co-partnership in that blood, and in that one body. Blessed fact, every redeemed sinner has equal partnership in the reconciliation; every washed soul whiter than snow! Fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin.

Where it is service, then all are not alike. Just as in a firm—one servant may have a pound per week, whilst a foreman may have three. But co-partners are all equally alike. In the equal co-partnership, fellowship, communion of His blood, communion of His body. There are no servants, and no foreman, in scripture to administer the sacrament. No, for a long time the Lord's supper had not been kept as it was written. Oh, the grace, the love our Father has, to have restored it in these last days, before the coming of the Lord. But have we understood the heart of Christ in this? The invitation, and the responsibility to gather to His name, to break bread as it is written? Is not the invitation to do so as wide as the atonement? The responsibility reaches every reconciled child of God on earth. Not only Judah owning allegiance to Hezekiah, but to every Israelite in the revolted tribes. Not only those gathered, and owning allegiance, to Christ, but every re-

deemed soul in every revolted sect on earth, from Beersheba even unto Dan. As there was the perfect substitution offered, the seven goats FOR ALL ISRAEL: we must understand here Israel as a type of the whole redeemed church of God, whatever their outward position. And this is a great truth, that every believer, passed from death unto life, stands in all the immutable perfection of Christ, accepted in the Beloved—sins and iniquities to be remembered *no more, no more!* Is not the Lord's table, as it is written, the true place for every one of them? Yes, the *basis* of gathering to Christ to break bread, our passover, is as wide as the atonement. Does not Jesus say to every reconciled soul, "Do this in remembrance of me"? And would He not have each one enjoy communion with Himself? Other questions will arise, but the basis of true fellowship is seen to be equal to the extent of the atonement.

So the posts passed from city to city, but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them. Oh, when did not men despise the message and the messengers of the Lord? It was so in the days of Noah, of Lot: yea, when the Son of God walked in the midst of men. And even so now, the present work of God in love is despised of men. Nevertheless, divers humbled themselves and came. Also in Judah, the hand of God was to give them one heart to do the commandment of the king, and of the princes, by the word of the Lord. And is not the hand of the Lord seen now gathering souls to Christ, and giving them one heart? If it is not this, it is only another sect in selfwill. Yes, it is the hand of the Lord. Reader, are you asleep, or awake; can you discern the present heart and hand of the Lord? If so, it is a little thing to be laughed to scorn.

The next point in order is this: when the Lord had thus gathered a company to keep the passover, "They arose, and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem, and all the altars for incense took they away, and cast them into the brook Kidron." (Chap. xxx. 12-14.) Thus, where the Lord has now gathered a company to break bread, as it is written, the first thing is to put away from themselves everything inconsistent with the holiness of His presence. Just as when the doors were opened, the cleansing away the rubbish began in the very holiest.

The holiest we enter in perfect peace with God. There, surely, holiness becomes that holy place. This is a solemn point to all whom the hand of the Lord doth gather, to keep the Lord's supper, as it is written.

SANCTIFICATION.

The effect of killing the passover was, that the priests and the Levites were ashamed, and *sanctified themselves*. It is very important rightly to divide the word of life, as to the subject of sanctification. There are three kinds of sanctification come before me in scripture.

First, the absolute, immutable sanctification of every believer by the one offering of Christ. Immutably perfect, this can never change. This, as we have noticed, is abundantly seen in Hebrews x. 10-19. This is what He hath done; and what He hath done must be perfect.

Secondly, there is sanctification in wickedness; separating ourselves in wickedness—abomination in the sight of the Lord. "They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens, behind one in the midst [or one after another],

eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the Lord." "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." In contrast with, "Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions," &c. (Is. lxvi. 17. 2-4.) No doubt this applies to the Jews, and their cleaving to the man of sin. But it also has a solemn voice to us in these last days. Yes, the very last and worst marks of these last days. Can anything be worse than pretentious separation from others, but only to worse evil? Oh, beware of these mockers of the last time. "These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit." (Jude.)

Thirdly, there is "sanctification in holiness." This is not what we are by the work of Christ; but practical sanctification—sanctifying ourselves. Have you noticed how much there is in our chapters on Hezekiah about this, over and over again? "They could not keep the passover at that time, because the priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently." This is not merely a question of gross sins, but defilement by touching the unclean. This we noticed in Numbers ix. Those who had touched a dead body were unclean. You could not say it was gross sin to do so. Neither could you say, True, that dead body is unclean, but I am alive, and not unclean. This would be to deny the word of the Lord. All these types shew that before the Lord, contact with evil, is evil. To *touch* the dead body is to be unclean. But, say you, what is to be done in the present defiled state of Christendom? If the true ground of being gathered to the name of the Lord to keep the pass-over, the Lord's supper, as it is written, be equal

to the reconciliation, as we have seen ; and if the invitation is also equal, does it not follow that all ought to be together, no matter what defilement ? Is there an express word of the Lord to us on this, in the midst of all the circumstances of these last days ? There is ; and it is very plain. " Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house, there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth ; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." (2 Tim. ii. 19-21.) And then, after describing the very corruptions of these days—yes, of that which bears the name of Christendom around us : " Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." What is the mind of the Lord ? Does He say, Keep in it ; try to mend it : use your influence for good in it ? No ! but " from such turn away." (2 Tim. iii. 1-5.) This is to sanctify ourselves, to purge ourselves, to turn away from all known evil. But, oh, let it not be to a worse thing, but in holiness. The Lord search our hearts, and, by His precious word and Spirit, enable us to sanctify ourselves from all iniquity. Let us test ourselves by the precious words of Jesus. " They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (John xvii.) This brings us to

A SEEMING DIFFICULTY.

There were many that had not sanctified themselves (2 Chron. xxx. 17), had not cleansed themselves ; yet they did eat of the passover otherwise than it is written. How was this difficulty met ?

Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, "The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary. And the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people." This is very beautiful, and important instruction to us. When we think of those balances of the sanctuary, the words of Jesus above, oh, who is cleansed according to this purification? Not of the world, even as He is not of the world.

Suppose a Christian to be in such a place in the world, as a bishop of the church of England. As a Christian, he is a priest—for all Christians are priests. But he has not sanctified himself. He touches the dead body of this world. He is linked with the state, and defiled with all the defilement of this world. And he never kept the Lord's supper as it is written. But he earnestly desires once in his life to obey the Lord, and break bread as it is written. Does he thus prepare his heart? Does he seek to do the Lord's will? Is this really the state of his heart? Who are they, then, whom the hand of the Lord hath gathered in mercy and grace, to hinder him from obeying the Lord this once? Surely there is blessed instruction for us in this. And then, as it was with the priests, so would it be with this bishop. Would he not, when he found the blessedness of the Lord's supper as it is written, be ashamed of the link with the world, and cleanse himself? We ought to expect this. Let us not forget our dear precious Lord looks at the heart. Surely it would be altogether different with those who are deceiving, and being deceived, who do separate themselves, not having the Spirit. These may be easily known by their murmuring spirit, fully described in the Epistle of Jude. Many

dear souls are only, it may be, deceived; and the Lord would have us so tender to these, "and of some have compassion, making a difference; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." The Lord fill our hearts with love to all His own, who have been turned aside by men, and give us constantly to remember them in prayer. Surely we would fully own that none but the Holy Ghost is able to take care of the church of God in these last days.

Well, they kept the feast with great gladness, and making confession to the Lord God of their fathers. And all that came, even the strangers out of Israel, DWELT in Judah, and rejoiced. It is remarkably so now, seldom does a stranger Christian come from any revolted tribe or sect of men; but it is his joy to dwell, to abide, gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus. Rarely can one ever go back that comes with a true heart, seeking the Lord. It is altogether so different. Oh, how little the children of God know what deep, sweet communion of soul they miss. Truly it makes one ashamed—and well we may be—but all is pure, free grace, unclouded and unbounded. And if we confess, it is only now to feast again in His love. Oh, to really meet the Lord Himself! to sit at His feet!—the Holy Ghost present to glorify Him. Yes, deep, deep the joy. Great joy in Jerusalem; untold joy in His presence.

NOW THE HAMMER AND THE AXE.

CHAPTER XXXI. 1, 2.

Yes, "Now when all this was finished, all Israel that were present went out to the cities of Judah, and brake the images in pieces, and cut down the

groves." As with the Thessalonians, they turned first to God, then from idols. We must be purged worshippers first within the veil, before there can be power for testimony without. This is God's way. Then Hezekiah appointed the courses of the priests, and the Levites after their courses, every man according to his service. And did not the ascended Lord give gifts, every man according to his service? (Eph. iv.) The Holy Ghost distributing to every man severally as He will. (1 Cor. xii.) Is He not the same Lord above? Is He not the same Spirit here below? "Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James i. 17.) However the church may have failed—doors shut and lamps put out—have not as many as have been gathered to Christ found the Father the same; the Lord, the Holy Ghost the same? "No variableness, neither shadow of turning." Let us, then, in faith wait on the Lord, and He will put both priests and Levites in their courses, every man according to his service—for worship or service. This brings us to the question of

FRUIT.

READ CHAPTER XXXI. 5-11.

How beautifully the order is still brought out! Now is the time for fruit. And what abundance did the children of Israel bring; of corn, wine, and oil, and dates. And the tithe of holy things consecrated unto the Lord their God, and they laid them by heaps; or, heaps, heaps. As all fruit must be in the power of resurrection to be perfect, so in this type, "In the third month they began to

lay the foundation of the heaps, and finished them in the seventh month." What a principle this is, and so little understood: "Dead to the law by the body of Christ: that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead: that we should bring forth fruit unto God." (Rom. vii. 4.) "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection." (Phil. iii. 10.) The Holy Ghost could not be given to dwell in us until Christ was risen from the dead and glorified. And if the Spirit could not be given until then, how could we have the fruits of the Spirit? What a contrast this is to man under law! But is it not a universal fact, wherever the doors are shut, and the lamps put out? Yes, wherever men are not led by the Spirit, they are invariably placed under the law, for fruit-bearing. Just as the opposite is also true, even as it is written: "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." (Gal. v. 18.)

How little is this true, only resurrection-foundation principle, in the power of the Holy Ghost, for fruit-bearing, understood! We might meditate on this with great profit. Has anything occurred answering to these heaps, heaps of fruits? The doors have been opened again by a full gospel. The Holy Ghost is again owned in the assembly; the immutable perfection of the believer, by the sacrifice of Christ, again revealed. Joy and worship, the result. The Lord's supper again as it is written. The Lordship of Christ owned; and the blessed fact again enjoyed, oneness with the risen Christ. The Holy Ghost known and owned as sent down to lead and guide. All this, not the work of men, but the hand of the Lord. Now, can it be denied that the blessed Spirit, now owned again, has poured forth

such a stream of Christ-exalting ministry, by tongue and pen, as the church never knew since He was set aside at the close of the apostolic age? This, not for money, or worldly applause, but the Holy Ghost, leading the children of God thus to serve in consecration to the Lord. Spiritually, we may say with Azariah, "Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the Lord, we have had enough to eat, and have left plenty: for the Lord hath blessed his people; and that which is left is this great store." Now this is a notable fact, that since the Holy Ghost has been known, and oneness with the risen Christ believed, the most astonishing numbers of tracts and pamphlets, books and periodicals, have been sent forth, without any sectarian motive, but "unto the Lord," and for the food and edification of His people. "Tracts, periodicals," said a brother to me the other day; "I do not know what to do with them; it is impossible to read them all." I dare say it would have been impossible for Hezekiah to have eaten all the oxen, and rams, and heaps, heaps of fruits. But was that God's intention? And, my brother, you may have mistaken the Lord's intention; it may not be that His only thought is, that you should eat all the heaps, heaps of precious fruits, thus laid up in the chambers, or depôts, of the treasuries of the Lord. This just brings us to the question, What is

THE PORTER'S SITUATION?

Observe, in this business of the fruits, each name is known to the Lord, and registered; enough for the servant of the Lord. "And Kore, the son of Imnah the Levite, THE PORTER toward the east, was over the freewill-offerings of God, to *distribute*

the oblations of the Lord, and the most holy things." (Ver. 14.) Let us examine the scriptures on this deeply interesting subject—the trusteeship and responsibilities of the porter. The first thought generally as to a porter in any establishment is, that it is the lowest situation. And it is true here also; if any man would serve the Lord, he must take the lowest place.

Will you turn to 1 Chronicles ix., read verses 17–32. They were keepers of the gates of the tabernacle, keepers of the entry, porters of the door of the tabernacle, porters in the gates. And mark, wherever you find the word "office," the margin reads, "trust." We shall find this is not truth for officials, but for every child of God, as a trustee of Christ.

What is the door now but Christ? Their first service was to keep the door; and have we not now to guard the door; and, not only seek to keep Satan and men from closing the doors again—but maintain the gospel of Jesus, *the way* into the holiest? Mark, they were placed by wards. In four quarters were the porters—toward the east, west, north, and south. Oh, that each beloved servant of the Lord may know his appointment of the Lord! Now we find four chief porters in their trust, "over the chambers and treasuries of the house of God," and their place is to lodge near the house of the Lord. And their charge, or trust, was to open these chambers of treasures of the Lord every morning. And some have charge of the ministering vessels—the fine flour, and the wine, and the oil, and the frankincense, and the spices. And some in their trust over the things made in the pans. And some over the shewbread. Oh, my soul, dwell on each of these types of Christ, and then say, Hast thou ever understood

the porter's trust—all the treasures of the house of the Lord? The opening of those treasures every morning. The fine flour—the perfection of Christ in His blessed humanity. The wine—the joy of heart in God. The oil—anointed with the Holy Ghost. The frankincense and spices—the infinite preciousness of Christ. The meat-offering in the pans—the Person and walk of Christ, as a sweet savour to God. The shewbread—Israel covered with Christ. The frankincense, and borne before God in divine righteousness. Now also fulfilled in the church, as presented in Christ, in all the sweet savour of His Person. One Spirit with the Lord. All these glories and perfections of Christ committed in trust to the porter.

Still more, turn to 1 Chronicles xv. 18–24. Will you notice Obed-edom and Jeiel? Now it is highest praise with harps, in the Sheminith, or eighth, to excel. The worship of the eighth, or resurrection. I heard harpers harping with their harps. What a trust is this, thus to worship in Spirit and in truth. Lowest, as to self, is the porter's situation—highest in Christ, with songs of praise. And these same porters are keepers of the ark. And is not that ark Christ? entrusted to make known the very heart of Christ? As he lived on account of the Father, surely the porter is called to live on account of Christ.

Now read 1 Chronicles xxvi. 1–19. Strong men do these porters need to be. Such were the sons of Obed-edom—"able men for strength for the service, three score and two." (Ver. 8.) These porters were placed in their wards by lot, the then way of appointment for every gate. Now the Holy Ghost appoints to the porters every man his work. (1 Cor. xii.) Some have service in the gatherings, as it says, "To Obed-edom, southward,

and to his sons the house of Asuppm" (margin, "gatherings"). Others have service in the *causeway going up*, ward against ward. Eastward, six Levites; northward, four a day; southward, four a day; and toward Asuppm, two and two. At Parbar, westward, four at the causeway, and two at Parbar. So now each porter has his appointed place and service. Some in the gatherings in fellowship, two and two; others in the open air, the causeway going up; well for each one to know his own appointed Parbar. That service which is of the Spirit will be going up, waiting for the coming of the Lord. That which is of the flesh will be going down to the world.

In 2 Chronicles xxiii., we find the porters are the royal guards of the hidden king. Here they are divided into thirds. "A third part of you entering on the sabbath of the priests and Levites, shall be porters of the doors. And a third part at the king's house; and a third part at the gate of the foundation." What a trust here again during these the days of the hidden King, whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution! To guard the true rest of the saints in Christ; to guard the person of the hidden King of glory; to guard foundation-truth. "And he set the porters at the gates of the house of the Lord: that none which was unclean in anything should enter in." (Ver. 19.) This is a great trust, and questioned by many. Nay, many do practically deny this, by maintaining that contact with those that hold false doctrine does not defile.

Let us now return to 2 Chronicles xxxi. 14. This verse is the key to the whole subject of the porter's trusteeship and responsibilities. Whatever may be the precious treasures committed in trust to the porters, it is that they may distribute the

oblations of the Lord, and the most holy things. Yes, my brother, if you do not know what to do with the heaps upon heaps of tracts, and publications, and precious truths, given unto us by the Holy Ghost, *distribute them*. Does the Lord thus commit to your trust some fine flour, wine, or oil, or frankincense—some unfoldings of the preciousness of Christ? Ah, it is not merely for your own *eating*, important as this is—no, but distribute it to others. But I think I hear a porter saying, I have no gift; I might, perhaps, tell of Jesus to an infant class in a Sunday-school. So it was with these porters in their trust, to give to their brethren by courses, as well to the great as to the small: beside their genealogy of males, from three years old and upward. Thus were they to give to everyone their daily portions. Yes; if you can only speak to one of the Lord's little ones—three years old and upward. Let Christians thus love to distribute. Did not Jesus say, "Feed my sheep." "Feed my lambs"? Do not say this belongs to an official class. All believers are priests to worship, and Levites, porters, to serve. I saw the arrival of the prince at St. Pancras station; not a porter was there but would have felt it a high honour to carry a parcel for him. Will you not rejoice to be a parcel-carrier for Christ? To carry, to distribute the precious truth He has committed? Surely the precious treasures of Christ, committed to His saints in these last days, are for the whole redeemed church of God.

Is not every Christian responsible to distribute according to the grace given to him? Is not this the principle of Romans xii. according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith? "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being

many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." Then follows a list of different gifts, but each one responsible to use that he hath. So, in Peter, "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Pet. iv. 10.) Such, then, was the porter's trust, "For in their set trust they sanctified themselves in holiness." (2 Chron. xxxi. 18.) "And thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah, and wrought that which was good, and right, and truth before the Lord his God." (Ver. 20.) And whatever he began in the service of the Lord, he did it with all his heart. Is He not the same God now—can He not lead His children now thus to do that which is good, and right, and truth before the Lord? Oh, that we may have faith in God, to seek only thus to do His will, and to do it with all our hearts!

Well, and after these things, and the establishment thereof (chap. xxxii.)—

THEN THE TUG OF WAR.

What after the doors were open, the Holy Ghost owned in His true place: the infinite value of the blood of Jesus: the worship and the gladness: the Lord's supper in its true place: testimony against all evil: abounding fruits of the Spirit: the porters' vast range of trust and responsibilities: hearts fully awake to distribute the precious things of the Lord: sanctified, separated to the Lord in holiness: serving the Lord with purpose of heart. Is not this the end? No, indeed, now Satan comes with all his power; "Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came, and entered into Judah, and encamped against the fenced cities, and thought to win them for himself," or, as in the margin, to break them

up. Such is the fact, and it is well to know it; wherever God has gathered a little company to Christ, it is Satan's object to break it up. In Isaiah xxxvi. we learn that he took the cities of Judah—sad havoc, and at such a time! But was it more terrible than the havoc Satan has made in the professing church of God? So early as the third stage of its history, we find, even in Pergamos, Satan's seat was there; yea, where Satan dwelleth. (Rev. ii. 13.) In Thyatira, or Rome, we find the depths of Satan spoken of. And at this moment, the Lord says, "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie: behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." (Rev. iii. 9.) "That I have loved thee"—not that thou hast loved me. But this is very solemn. My reader may be of the synagogue of Satan, or loved of Jesus: which is it? What a question!

Now, as Hezekiah was delivered, we shall do well to study carefully how he meets the power of the adversary. The first thing he did, when he saw the purpose of the enemy, was this: "He took counsel with his princes to stop the waters of the fountains which were without the city; and they helped him." Then, also, they stopped the brook that ran through the midst of the land. It is very easy to see the wisdom of this on the part of Hezekiah; but not so easy always to see our path in this matter—our safety is in dependence on the Holy Ghost—lowly dependence. The moment we act in independence we are exposed to Satan—nay, we give him a handle. He succeeded with the first Adam, he did not with the Second.

But it may be said, Surely it is right for the

water of life to run through the land. Surely it is right for the fountains to gush out anywhere, even without the city. In the unity of the Spirit, and in dependence, perfectly right. But would not that be wrong, however right in itself, if done at the bidding of Satan, or in independence of will, without the guidance of the Spirit? Let us look at the holy dependent One He who was of quick understanding in the fear of Jehovah. "And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." Now, if the Father had commanded Him to turn all the stones on the rocky shores of Gennesaret into bread, would that have been wrong? Did the Holy One listen to the tempter to do that which was right in itself? Did He act independently of His Father's will? Impossible! He answered him, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." We do not find this quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, even in the beloved Paul—well of living water as he was. "After they were come to Mysia, they essayed to go into Bithynia; but the Spirit suffered them not." Jesus never essayed to do anything that the Spirit suffered Him not. On another occasion, when Paul and other servants of the Lord, were together in the assembly, the Holy Ghost said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." And so they were sent forth on a special mission of service by the Holy Ghost. Says Satan, Are you not sons of God, porters of Christ? Then open a fountain of blessing, or form a gathering here or there, outside the unity of the Spirit. Send forth a running brook through the land—turn the stones into bread. You are wonderful folks, cannot you do as you

like? My brethren, is there not special danger here? That which would be most blessed, if done in the unity and fellowship of the Spirit, in lowly dependence, may it not become pride and self-will? The Lord lead us in His own lowly steps, in unfeigned dependence, lest the very truth be used for Satan, like the water for the kings of Assyria. I see great danger in this independence of action. We cannot too much seek the guidance of His eye.

Separation to the Lord is a sacred and special thing. Human reason cannot understand it; and it must be maintained. The next thing was the building of the wall that was broken down, "and raised it up to the towers." Ah, those towers! "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved." (Hab. ii. 1.) Man would say, Come down from the watch-tower, use your own judgment; break down the wall of exclusiveness, and be one with all the false doctrine of the land. Satan hates that wall, and hates to see you sit watching before the Lord, to know His mind, and only do His will. Oh, how much depends on this!—waiting on the Lord in the watch-tower, or doing our own will. But not only must the wall, the hated wall, be built up, but we must put on the whole armour of God. Oh, soldiers of the Lord, ye young men, chosen to stand before Him in these last days, study the word. Take the whole armour. Be well equipped with the word of God, spiritual weapons, and shields, in abundance. It is the last conflict, before we rise to meet our Lord. It is well to be informed of the enemy's intention. Satan is specially occupied with, and determined to destroy, the assemblies gathered to the Person of

Christ. Such was the object of Sennacherib to take the cities of Judah. Give all diligence, in dependence on the Spirit, not to help the enemy in his work in any one thing.

Hezekiah spake comfortably to the people, saying, "Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God, to help us, and to fight our battles." At such a moment, how important to know with certainty that we are with the Lord, and He with us. No doubt, to some, all this will be utterly unintelligible. But we are meditating on the position of those who desire to do that which is right in the sight of the Lord, in the midst of all that is wrong: wrestling, not with flesh and blood, but with wicked spirits in the heavenlies.

Now we will sit down in our watch-tower, and wait before the Lord. See there the hosts of the foes encamped around, even in the heavenlies. Now, if we look within the enclosed walls of separation to the Lord, what a feeble few! But is the Lord there—is the Holy Ghost there? Yes, He who has conquered the adversary is there. The Holy Ghost sent down is there. All is well, more than all against us. . . . Take courage, be strong in the might of the Lord. It is a remarkable sight, this look from the watch-tower. You see that city enclosed in the walls of separation to Christ. That feeble compnay has been besieged for nearly forty years; and, sad to tell it, Satan and his hosts have so deceived Christendom, that nearly all Christendom has besieged that little city. Yea, professing Christians have been notable captains in the attack. Captain C., Captain R.—yea, noble ladies, through

ignorance, have taken service—and not a few run-aways have heated the balls red hot. Yea, some of these have become the veriest Rabshakehs. Now what is all this rage against? A feeble little company, who desire to do that which is right in the sight of the Lord, and, whilst answering not a word, place their entire confidence in the Lord. And thus, through His loving care, they abide in the siege. Now, as we sit in the watch-tower, is not this little city a study? “Thus saith Sennacherib, king of Assyria, Whereon do ye trust, that ye abide in the siege in Jerusalem?” Yes! whereon do ye trust? Dreadful have been the destruction of many nations; their gods have not been able to deliver them. In like manner Satan can point to the churches of Asia. Where is the church which was at Antioch, at Ephesus, and all the assemblies in Greece? Rome also? And all the churches of the Reformation? What is their condition now? And are you the feeblest of all; are you stronger or better than they? Wherein do ye trust, that ye abide in the siege? Solemn questions. But did any of the assemblies of Palestine, Greece, or Europe—or have any of the churches of the Reformation continued in lowly dependence on the guardian care of God the Holy Ghost? No; an arm of flesh, poor puny man, took the place of the Holy Ghost in every one of these—and hence the overthrow. Be it episcopacy, or the popular will, all was of man, and the Holy Ghost set aside. Now, as we look from our watch-tower on that little besieged city, all depends on unfeigned dependence on the Lordship of Christ, and the presence of the Holy Ghost. Mind, all the wall that was broken down must be builded up. Is it not wondrous grace to gather the weakest saints to the Person of Christ, separated to Him by that wall,

and kept in peace, amidst the rage of Satan, and hosts of deadly, and some, perhaps, only mistaken, foes? So useful to us is the study of this siege, that the Spirit has given us a long account of it in Isaiah xxxvi., xxxvii.

As we have noticed here, many cities of Judah were taken. This is humbling. We have known it. Many gatherings were gathered years ago, which had not built the wall of separation up to the watch-towers. A most determined attack was made—first, to displace the Holy Ghost, and set up clericalism; afterwards to introduce and allow, to refuse to judge, heretical doctrine. Being a young soldier during that early war, I just remember how many gatherings were taken. I believe every one, where clericalism had got the least footing. I believe every gathering that really trusted the Holy Ghost stood the siege, and Rabshakeh could not deny it.

Yes, what baffled the Assyrians was this trust in the Lord. And now they cry, and lie, and threaten, and blaspheme. "But they held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not." What dignity in quiet faith! No spirit of defiance and boasting. No, no: rent clothes and sackcloth; deep humility. And though not noticed by Isaiah, yet that little prayer-meeting: "And for this cause Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, prayed and cried to heaven." (2 Chron. xxxii. 20.) Do not forget this: our safety is in prayer in every time of conflict. Some in the siege might not know what to do, when another furious pamphlet cannonade is fired. "Why," say you, "this is full of the grossest falsehoods." What did Hezekiah? "Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the

messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up unto the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord." (Chap. xxxvii. 14.) And how he pleads with the Lord that dwelleth between the cherubim! It is written, they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb. Yes, the mercy-seat between the cherubim is our place of victory. The enemy, with all his power, was entirely defeated. And whilst we plead there, let us never forget to plead for our dear mistaken brethren, who have been, and are, so sadly deceived by the enemy. Should these lines reach any such, let me beg of you to search the scriptures, and ask the Lord, by the Spirit using that word, to lead you into the path that is right, in the midst of so much that is wrong. Ah, if even that path leads to the little besieged city within the re-built walls. The doom of the Assyrian army only illustrates, or foreshadows, the certain doom of Babylon the great. (Rev. xvii., xviii.) Thus, step by step, how remarkably this history finds its answer in the events of these last days! This now leads us to

THE UNSETTLED QUESTION.

You may have thus been privileged. The doors opened. The Holy Ghost known and owned in the assembly. The immutable value of the precious blood known. Joy, and bowing, and worship in public. Gathered to take the Lord's supper as it is written. Testimony in the world. Abundance of fruits. You may know the privileges and responsibilities of the porter—the parcel-carrier for Christ. You may have been preserved through long years of the siege of the city, within the exclusive walls. Great victories of faith and prayer. And yet there may be the unsettled question of Isaiah xxxviii.

“In those days [days of such victories] was Hezekiah sick unto death.” We now come to the inner experiences of the soul—a soul that has not yet learnt the death of the flesh. What a sentence on the old man—“Thou shalt die, and not live.” Ah, now he says, “I beseech thee, O Lord, remember how I have walked before thee in truth.” Very sorely did Job try this, but it would not do. Neither would it do for Hezekiah; no; there he lay, with his face to the wall; and he wept sore. The Lord is very pitiful; He heard those prayers, He saw those tears, and He granted a new term of life. He also assured him of full deliverance of the city, and He gave him a remarkable sign, that the Lord will do this thing which He hath spoken. “Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun-dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward.” “He restoreth my soul.” “If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.” We speak of the sun rising, or going down; as to fact, it is the earth that has turned from the sun. So with our souls. Our constant tendency to depart from the Lord is like the diurnal motion of the earth. The Lord is ever the same, as we always find, when He restoreth our souls.

Will you read Hezekiah's own account of his experience in learning this unsettled question? (Vers. 9–20.) His heart almost sank in despair. Is it not very striking, after such public testimony for the Lord? He says, “I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living.” Yes, at such a time, such is the sense of the vileness of the flesh. And Satan now suggests the terrible thought, that afflictions prove that God is against us. He says, “He will cut me off with pining sickness; from day to night wilt thou make an end of me.” The dreadful working of unbelief.

“I reckoned till morning, that as a lion, so will he break all my bones.” Oh, what chattering, and what mourning! “Mine eyes fail with looking upward: O LORD, I AM OPPRESSED, UNDERTAKE FOR ME.” Was it not just so with Job? “I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” Is not this the very condition of a quickened soul under law? For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.” (Rom. vii.) However earnest the desire of such a soul to keep the righteous requirements of the law, yet no power. “For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.” Hezekiah says, “Behold, for peace, I had great bitterness.” Behold, reader; until the question of the old man is settled, for peace what bitterness of soul you have had. Yes, bitter herbs indeed. You love the Lord—you long for holiness; but, oh, the bitterness, the loathsome flesh. Did I not hear you saying, Surely I must be a hypocrite. What did that deep groan say: Oh, shall I ever see the Lord? Are not all these afflictions a proof that He is against me? Oh, how I loathe, abhor myself! I am oppressed—undertake for me! Oh, wretched man that I am—no better, no better—who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

This lesson must be learnt: and what is the answer? With Hezekiah it is, “What shall I say? He hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it.” With Paul it is the eye turned from wretched self, the old man, to Christ, and then the joyful exclamation, “I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” What a deliverance, when we learn the answer to the unsettled question, as to the old man! He hath both spoken

Himself, and He hath done it. He has been fully judged for us, made sin for us. In the likeness of sinful flesh, and by a sacrifice for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. Thus we accept the death of the old man, crucified with Christ—buried with Him in death. Judicially there is the end of I. No longer I, but Christ. I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. He hath spoken it—He hath done it. There is generally a little more sobbing at the funeral of the old I. “I shall go softly all my years, in the bitterness of my soul,” says Hezekiah. No, not so, Hezekiah! Not so, deeply exercised soul! No, you will have higher thoughts. Sweetly now the Spirit whispers in the heart, “But thou hast, in love to my soul, delivered it from the pit of corruption; for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.” Yes, dear soul, it is true, quite true—rest in it. Oh, think of the love of God in delivering you from the pit of corruption. Had He left you to your wretched self—ah, the pit, the pit. Thanks be to God. Now a little further discovery for you. It is blessed to be brought to the foot of the cross—yes, to the very grave of Christ—dead and buried with Him. This is the answer in part, full answer, to the old man; death, and the grave of Christ. But do not be too sure that that is all—that you are to remain there. No; “For the grave cannot praise thee; death cannot celebrate thee; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.” Is not this also most true? Yes, if Christ be only dead for us; and if we are only dead, and even buried with Him; all is in vain. “If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.” (1 Cor. xv. 17.) “The living, the living,” exclaims Hezekiah, “he shall praise thee, as I do this day.” Yes, we are not only dead with Thee,

Lord Jesus, but risen in Thee. "The living, the living, shall praise thee, as I do this day."

Thus, through the death of Christ, we have passed through death into life. Old things are passed away, all things new, and all of God. What a new creation!

It is not now bitterness of soul, and doubts, and misery. Oh, no, says Hezekiah, "The Lord was ready to save me; therefore we will sing my songs all the days of our life in the house of the Lord." Oh, that is far better; yes, let us sing His praise with adoring hearts.

THE WARNING.

The business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon. If we are left but for a moment, to prove us, alas! all is failure again. What a danger, even in much blessing and prosperity! "Hezekiah was glad of them, and shewed them the house of HIS precious things." (Is. xxxix. 2.) "Mine house;" "My treasures." (Ver. 4.) Yes, if left to ourselves, it will be, "our precious truth," "our testimony," "our table," "our treasures." Rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing. There is only a step from Laodicea to Babylon. We cannot praise our God and Father too much for the precious truth He gives—for the treasures of His word—for the restored table of the Lord. But are these treasures to be boastingly shewn as *ours* to the princes of Babylon? If Hezekiah humbled himself, surely we ought to take the lowest place; nay, not take it—it is ours; The Lord keep us near Himself, in lowly dependence, and enjoying the discernment of the Holy Ghost. Thus may He enable us to do that which is right in the sight of the Lord, in the midst of all that is wrong.

C. S.

SAMUEL.

WHO was Samuel? Of what tribe of Israel was his father Elkanah? Such were the questions put to the writer, a few days ago. Yes, these questions are important, inasmuch as the history of Samuel is so full of instruction for the very time in which we live.

Samuel was not only of the tribe of Levi, but he was of the very family of Korah, whose children were spared, in sovereign distinguishing grace, from going down alive into the pit; at that very time that Korah, and all the men that appertained to him, and the families of Dathan and Abiram, went down into the pit, and the earth closed upon them. The account of this we read in Numbers xxi. From what we find there, we might conclude that the children of Korah perished also in this dreadful judgment on the sin of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. In another chapter we read, "And the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, together with Korah; when that company died; what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men; and they became a sign. *Notwithstanding, the children of Korah died not.*" (Num. xxvi. 9-11.)

Of that family was Elkanah (Redeemed of God). Such was his name. As has already been dwelt upon in the tract on Shiloh,* this

* "From Egypt to Shiloh." G. Morrish, London.

family was the one chosen of God to illustrate what is pleasing to the Lord, in these very last days, after centuries in which the true and only divine principle of gathering to the name of the Lord had been practically lost.

That which preceded, or introduced the restoration of that place, which the Lord had chosen, in the days of Samuel, was the picture of the Redeemer-Bridegroom, in the beautiful book of Ruth. In like manner, that which preceded or introduced the restoration of the knowledge of the Lord present, wherever two or three are gathered in His name, was the re-unfolding of Jesus the Redeemer-Bridegroom.

In this day of rapid increase of wickedness and soul-destroying doctrine, which is coming in like a flood, it is surely of great importance to seek to help the perplexed to understand what is the remedy, and what is really pleasing to the Lord in these last days. Let us dwell a little on the character of Samuel and his family, for present help and guidance.

He was then the child of Hannah (grace and mercy) and Elkanah (God has redeemed). How far, dear earnest inquirer, do you answer to this? Have you been born anew, through grace, the free favour of God, and the depths of His mercy? And can you say that God hath redeemed you to Himself, and at such a cost? And can you say, I am of that family saved from going down into the pit? If God had dealt in righteous judgment on us, might we not have been crying for a drop of water to cool our tongues? If we really believe this, it will make us little in our own eyes.

Such was Samuel. His mother prayed for

him in bitterness of soul, at the only place on earth where the Lord had set His name. (1 Sam. i.; Jer. vii. 12.) And when the Lord had answered her prayer, she brought him to that place which the Lord had chosen, when He had brought His people into the land, and had given them rest. To this very place Samuel was brought. He was a little weaned child, dedicated through the death of an offering, and was a worshipper. How far is all this true of us? Are we little in our own eyes? Are we weaned from this world? Separated from it by the death of Christ? And are we worshippers in spirit and in truth? This is the only condition of soul in which we can have an ear to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Thus was Samuel dedicated to the Lord, at the place which the Lord had chosen to place His name, and which had been almost forgotten. Hannah not only brought him unto the *place*, but also unto the *Lord*. Many in this day may have been brought to the *place*, but not to the Person of the Lord.

Hence, when difficulties arise, they are perplexed, and say, All is lost, all is over. Not so the words of Samuel's mother, in her marvellous prayer of faith. (Read 1 Sam. ii. 1-10.) The Lord Himself is before her soul. "My heart rejoiceth in the Lord." He filled her soul. There was none other, "none holy as the Lord, none beside thee, neither is there any rock like our God." What is the arrogant boast of that day, or of this, to a soul thus before the Lord? Blessed Lord, when Thou shinest forth in Thy glory, all must fade away; all human, or even all created lights, must disappear. The range of

divine truth, now reported to us, is truly wonderful, far beyond the day in which these truths were uttered.

If we ask, How does the Lord quicken a soul and give life? Hannah replies, "The Lord killeth and maketh alive, He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up." And who are they the Lord hath chosen to bring to Himself? "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dung hill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory." Think what is involved in these few words, as revealed to us now by the Holy Ghost. How utterly beyond all human thought. Do the learned of this world know that the whole fallen race of man, however religious, is but a vast dung-heap of fallen humanity? What a discovery was this to the learned Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus! Reviewing his blameless life under law, with all his learning and innumerable advantages, he says, "I do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him," &c. Oh, ye learned Universities; oh, ye bishops, doctors, and divines; oh, ye cultivators of the human mind, how long have ye tried to improve the loathsome dung-heap! Will ye never learn the secret of a Hannah, or a Paul? Will you never know the truth?

In perfect keeping with Ephesians ii., Hannah says what God does, not what the beggar of the dung-hill says or does.

Yes, God raiseth them up. He lifteth them up out of one place into another—from the dung-hill to inherit the throne of glory. God has no lift short of this, from the lowest to the

highest. Oh, my soul, rejoice in the riches of His grace.

God separated Israel from the nations. God sent His Son to that separated nation, His own nation; but they rejected that beloved Son, and killed Him. God knew the enmity of that act of Jew and Gentile; and God looked down on that seething dung-hill of humanity, and right down from that *glorified Man* on the throne of glory: He sent the Holy Ghost, and He said, as it were, I will take out of that dung-heap, out of that loathsome place, the poor, vile, ragged, guilty beggars of that dung-heap, a company, to inherit with my Son, His throne of glory. What a place! What a state of immutable purity and glory! Yes, unblameable in holiness, lifted up to be with God Himself.

Well may the apostle say, "According to the riches of his grace." All this can only have its fulfilment in the church, the bride. And, mark, the purpose of God will be fulfilled. There is just one anxious question some of my readers might like to ask Hannah. Is it this, "May my feet not slip so far, that I may so fail, as, after all, to be lost; and, instead of the throne of glory, like and with my Lord, may I not be lost at last, and sink to the lowest hell?" What says the inspired Hannah? Listen, "He will keep the feet of his saints." Not "I," but "He," "will keep the feet of his saints."

But many say, "We may be lost, and He may fail to keep the feet of His saints." Ah, they do not know Him, or they would not doubt Him. He has given too much for His sheep, to let one of them be lost. He says, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me;

and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no one is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." (John x. 27.)

Some may say, Oh, that is a very dangerous doctrine. What! is there danger in the words and unchanging love of Jesus? Suppose a person is a professor, and yet practising sin, is such an one safe and sure to be saved at last, and inherit the throne of glory? Jesus says, "And they follow me." Is practising sin following Him, the holy and the true? But what says the mother of Samuel? "The wicked shall be silent in darkness." And how terrible that silent darkness of never ending despair. Is it then that some have more strength to endure than others? No, "For by strength shall no man prevail." No, the deeply important question is this, Are you one of His saints, one of His *holy* ones? If so, He has strength to keep your feet. And His love is as great as His power.

It is remarkable how these three chapters (1 Sam. i., ii., iii.) answer to the restored truth of saints gathered to Christ, like the restoration of Shiloh. So these words of Hannah as wonderfully illustrate the *order* of the truth restored. The beggars of the dung-hill lifted up to the throne of glory, come in verse 8, before the time of tribulation on the adversaries in verse 10. And then, in the same verse, the judgment of the ends of the earth, and then the reign of the King.

This, as the reader will see, answers to the order of the New Testament revelations:

1st. The grace of God taking out the vilest sinners, to take them, the church, to the throne of glory.

2nd. The absolute security of all who are the Lord's saints on earth.

3rd. The time of tribulation after the church is taken to glory.

4th. The coming of Christ to judge the quick, and set up His kingdom on earth.

How far Hannah may have entered into these things, or understood them, is not for us to say. This is what the Spirit saith by Peter, "Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into." (1 Peter i. 12.)

All this flowing through Hannah (grace and mercy) has much to do with forming the character of the pattern of the man, who desires to answer to the heart of Christ now, as set forth in His address to Philadelphia.

We will next turn to the deeply instructive principles set forth in the history of our Samuel; and then to the proofs that he was of the family of Korah, and its cheering lessons.

Can we shut our eyes to the fact, that we find Christendom, now at this very time, answering, in the most striking way, to the history and state of Israel in these days of Samuel. And more, just as the only true place chosen of Jehovah for Israel to gather to Him, so remarkably revived, or became again after centuries so prominent in 1 Samuel i. ii. iii.; so now, after

centuries, the *true* and *only* place which God has chosen for His saints to be gathered to, has been revived, or become the only place of safety and real communion with Himself in this very century. We have not the least doubt these chapters were written for our instruction.

Yes, in the midst of all the unrest and ever increasing wickedness, there is still the calm unspeakable peace of His presence wherever two or three are gathered to His blessed name. But mark, this cannot be known, or even understood, where officialism has its sway. This is most strikingly illustrated in chapter ii. The weaned child is in perfect peace. "The child did minister unto the Lord." How blessed is such employ. What a holy privilege to know His will, and have nothing in this world to do, yea, nothing in His presence, gathered to Himself, to do, but to do His will, to minister unto Him.

Not so the official family. "Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord." (Ver. 12.) It is just so now. The greater the official dignity, the less may the Lord be known. We may seek the interest of sect or party; or, as in the case of the sons of Eli, seek how much we can get up by the flesh hook of three teeth, from the pan, the kettle, the caldron, or the pot: self, self, self. Was there any wickedness in Israel to equal the sins of these sons of the priest, at the very place where Jehovah had placed His holy name? And who are bringing in this down-grade, as it is called, this flood of blasphemies? Who are the "False teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift

destruction?" Who are undermining and seeking to destroy the word of God? Who are seeking to set aside God by the horrible and insane doctrine of evolution? Who are setting aside the divinity, the deity, and the atoning work of the Son of God? Is it not the official family, the sons of Eli? Is it not the family of the humanly ordained ministry?—each man with the "hook of three teeth in his hand"?

Is it not awful to contemplate, that the very men who are seeking to destroy Christianity, are deriving their rich supplies from its profession? All this is most strikingly foreshadowed in the life of Samuel, by the priests, the sons of Eli. We are deeply convinced, also, that those who will retain their official position and self-importance will fail to prove, or provide a remedy for, this state which marks the last days of this period of unbounded grace. If we would see the remedy we must turn to God, and see what He did with the *weaned child*. For then, as now, judgment and destruction was at the doors, and the sons of Eli knew it not.

The contrast to all this wickedness was very great in the weaned child. "But Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child, girded with a linen ephod. Moreover, his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year," &c. Oh, where is the little weaned child of this day, clothed with divine righteousness, and constantly renewed by grace and mercy with the little coat of practical righteousness? Happy contrast to the boasting official sons of Eli? Such as Samuel are they alone whom God will use.

Yes, the contrast is very sharp. These two

families illustrate two principles. We may say the principle of the weak and weaned Philadelphian, in Revelation iii., and the boasting Laodicean. These two principles are so opposite that they will not mingle. The first is well pleasing to the Lord; the other is professing Christendom, become so loathsome to Christ that He will utterly refuse it. (Rev. iii.)

Thus we get in Samuel the forecast of the days or century in which we live. But some will say, if a man keeps himself free from practising wickedness, it is no matter what he allows in others, with whom he may be associated. Does not the case of the aged Eli speak out here? He was very old, but his age was no proof that the Lord approved his ways. And mark, he knew of the evil of his sons and all they did. It was the practice of sin. Again, the Spirit points to the little weaned child. It is not to any dignitary of Israel. No, "And the CHILD Samuel grew before the Lord." (Ver. 21.) And again, "And the *child* Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the Lord, and also with men." (Ver. 26.) This always marks the "*little child*" growth, in that hidden wisdom before the Lord. And still to grow on in the knowledge of infinite wisdom and love. Many have found unspeakable blessedness in this growth, of which the official must remain in complete ignorance, and through ignorance will treat it with contempt.

Will God never interfere with this state of things? Yes, He did then. "And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord." Read what the Lord says to Eli. (Vers. 27-36.) What was the chief

thing God had against the official Eli? Was it not just this one thing, association with, and allowance of, the evil he condemned?

And has not God raised up very specially, in this century, a testimony to this very principle? And it is very remarkable that every official in Christendom that has received that testimony has had to give up his position, and become a weaned little child. The substance of this testimony is in verse 30, "*For them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.*" Oh, weighty words! Do we understand them? He says, "Where two or three are gathered together to my name, there am I in the midst of them." Do we honour Him? Do we honour Him as if we saw Him? or do we despise Him, and send for a man to help us to decide a difficult case? Or do we propose a man to preside over such a meeting, and the Lord present? Did John propose that Peter should preside at the last paschal feast? Is Christ not despised? The reader will here observe that official appointment of a man must dishonour and despise the Lord, in many cases most ignorantly, no doubt.

This is the question of to-day that must be faced by all the children of God. We would press the question, Do we honour the Lord as if we saw Him in our midst? It is the most grave question for those who profess to be gathered to His name, because He says, "There am I." Let us not forget such scriptures as 1 Corinthians xii. 4-8; xiv. 29-33.

To others we would also ask, Is it possible to honour the Lord, and set aside these inspired words for our guidance? And we must acknow-

ledge that an ordained minister to preside over an assembly, must, of necessity, set aside these scriptures; and instead of honouring the Lord, sets Him aside. It is necessary to speak plain. The end of the age is upon us, just as the end of that which God had chosen to illustrate these days of the church was close upon them, in our history of Samuel. We shall, therefore, find much to help, both those professedly gathered to Christ, the true Shiloh, and also as to the camp of Christendom. Unsparing judgment was pronounced against the house of Eli, judgment that should sweep them from the earth.

Let us now turn to the child Samuel. Are we of that family, saved from going down into the pit—the very contrast of the house of Eli? “And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision.” Now, if the precious words of Jesus to the assembly at Philadelphia be our copy, then this is our path; and may this be our spirit, as a child dependent on the Holy Ghost ministering unto the Lord; seeking to please Him, to serve acceptably in His sight. Blessed occupation! even before Eli. That is, before the official ministry of this day, that allows the evil which it, in word, condemns. Our path is to go on: all true service is unto the Lord. Yes, whether before those who say they are outside the camp, and allow links with false doctrine, or before those in the camp, with all its last-days evil. The path of the little child is very simple; but its responsibilities are very great in these days, as we shall soon see.

Another blessed mark of the child Samuel in

this day also, to such as walk with God, is this : "The word of the Lord was precious in those days." If this is not the case with you and me, we are not walking with God. You may say, I belong to a society that numbers its thousands and thousands. We do not read that there were thousands of Enochs, before the flood, that walked with God. Is the word of the Lord precious to you? The more that blessed word is attacked, is it still the more precious to you?

Night came on, and now darkness, gross darkness, is settling on the earth. And darkness of infidelity is preferred to the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ. And those who pretend to be the great lights of the church, are themselves darkness itself. What a picture of them was aged Eli. He lay down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see. Is it not so with official Christendom? Their eyes are dim, they cannot see. The Lord is speaking in His word now, but they cannot hear.

Mark what a solemn moment this was. It was "ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down." (1 Sam. iii. 3.) Is it not so at this *moment*? Christendom is refusing the truth in the love of it. And will the Holy Ghost remain and shine for ever? No. Oh, what will be the end of the hosts of infidel ministers, denying the Lord that bought them, and Christendom that loves to have it so? Paul says, "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned [or judged] who

believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess. ii. 11, 12.)

Read also the testimony of the Holy Ghost in 2 Peter ii. 1-3. But who hath an ear to hear what the Spirit saith unto the assembly? Eli had no ear to hear then. The Eli's now have no ear to hear. Indeed, the Lord did not speak to Eli. He called the *child*. He spake to the child. It is remarkable: "Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him." (Ver. 7.) We might easily understand that the sons of Eli knew not the Lord. But what does this mean, that Samuel, the weaned child, did not yet know the Lord?

Is it not that we may know Him as Saviour, long before we know Him as Lord; and as the Lord, speaking to us individually? In our own case it was so; and we believe there are many who have never known Him in that intimacy, so as to have actual communications from Him, and with Him. Where human arrangement has excluded the guidance of the Spirit, this is not to be expected. But even where there is the professed position of being gathered to Christ, this lesson of Samuel the child, and Eli the aged, demands our prayerful consideration. Did the Lord ever thus speak to you? He did speak to the child. Let us carefully consider the message.

The terrible judgment on the house of Eli is announced to the child. "And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. . . . For I have told him that

I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth ; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not." (1 Sam. iii. 11-13.) And still further, mark these most solemn words: "And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever." (Ver. 14.) Can anything be more striking than the judgment of God on this principle, made so light of by men? the allowance of evil, even though you may be personally free from that evil; yet, if you are associated with those that practise sin, or hold false doctrine, you are clearly held as guilty of the very evil yourself. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." "If a man, therefore, purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified [or separated], and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." "From such turn away." (Read Rev. xviii. 4; 2 Tim. ii. 21, iii. 5.)

These scriptures cannot be ignored with impunity. The iniquity of Eli's house should not be purged with sacrifice or offering for ever. Yet this is the very principle defended by so many, who even profess to be gathered to Christ. Just as the house of Eli was, at the only place where the Lord had set His name. Nothing so hateful to them as holy separation from every link with false doctrine as to Christ. We cannot but dwell on this as a truth of the utmost importance. The judgment fell upon Shiloh for this very thing.

And the little child must tell Eli every whit.

“And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him.” However painful, the full truth must be told out. Mark, this was the only fault of Eli. “And he said, it is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good.” (Ver. 18.) Now mark, if we are gathered to Christ, and in the little child spirit, there will be growth. “And Samuel grew.” How oft this is repeated. And more, “And the Lord was with him.” And have we not also seen the opposite? Those who do not in heart know the Lord do not grow. There is no spiritual advance in divine truth. There may be great excitement and activity, but the Lord is not *with them*. I have often said, If there be five meetings in a town, and only one truly gathered to the Lord, in heart owning and honouring His presence, growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord; and if a humble little Samuel was taken blindfold into each, he would have no difficulty in discerning where the Lord was truly present. His presence is so different from every imitation. I am persuaded many have never known it in reality. But that does not alter the fact, “And the Lord was with him.”

Another mark of the Lord's approval was this: “And did let none of his words fall to the ground.” All knew the Lord was speaking by Samuel. It will be so now, just as we are little, and weakness itself, God will use His servants, and their words shall now be heard, far beyond Dan to Beer-sheba.

If we compare this with Revelation iii., the address to Philadelphia, nothing could be more striking. There it is the blessed Lord Himself; what He is to those who have little strength.

It is just the same here in our Samuel. It is the Lord, the true Shiloh, at Shiloh, "For the Lord revealed himself to Samuel, in Shiloh, by the word of the Lord. And the word of Samuel came to all Israel." And this is the case now. Yes, and it will be until we see His face, who whispers, "I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Yes, blessed Lord, in the midst of all the tossings of these last of the last days, this is the holy peaceful retreat of safety, and the only one. Thou still revealest Thyself in the midst of the two or three gathered to Thy name. Yes, it is what Thou art to them. As thou didst weep over Jerusalem, well may we weep now. How few will allow Thee to gather them under the shelter of Thy presence. Well, soon the whole flock shall hear Thy voice, and rise to meet Thee in the air.

No doubt the greatest hindrance in this day is the house of Eli. How many sheep have they met and hindered when seeking the shelter of that place where He reveals Himself. And not they alone. How many an aged saint, who may have been for long years in the place, but never in the state of Samuel; and may never have really owned Christ in the midst. We find it so to our sorrow. But is this a reason why we should give it up? Well might we say, "Lord, to whom shall we go?"

In 1 Samuel iv. 1 we come to an entire change. Samuel is *ignored*, as it were, by Israel for more than twenty years! Whatever he may have done, or however he may have walked with God, or God may have spoken by him, we hear nothing of

him for those years. For some time it has now been the same. There might not be a little company of believers truly gathered to the Lord on this earth, for anything you would find of them in the religious papers or literature of this day. Not even where their words are copied most. Let us look at these twenty years, and see if they throw any light on the days in which we live.

“Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Eben-ezer, and the Philistines pitched in Aphek.” (1 Sam. iv. 1.) The very names of the places have a voice. The children of Israel pitch in Eben-ezer, “Stone of help,” and the Philistines pitch in Aphek, “Strength, vigour.” The Israelites are linked with the house of Eli, with allowed evil, and yet count on help, from whom?

Now whom do the Philistines illustrate in this day? They are in the land. It is not the power of Babylon, nor yet of Egypt, the world. They are like those who are in the professing church, get their living there, but are not of the church of God; if we may so say, not of the Israel of God. This vast army is divided into two immense wings. Just as the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel, so now. The right wing, like a dark cloud, Romish idolatry, is steadily advancing; the Ritual Clergy, no small skirmishing party, everywhere going before. The left wing, a black host of bold blasphemy and cruel infidelity. Their skirmishers, the infidel clergy, ever helping and covering the black mass behind. Such is the army of the modern Philistines, set in deadly array.

You notice, in this case, the children of Israel

go out first against them, *linked as they are with the house of Eli*. Samuel, for the present, is out of sight. And who are the Israel, or who compose the army that is going out to confront the modern hosts of the Lords of Philistia? I think we may fairly take evangelical Christendom, as shewn often on parade in Exeter Hall. Only observe, all that seek to tread in the steps of Samuel, at Shiloh, are out of sight—I trust many in prayer.

Dear brethren, take warning. “And when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines.” No one acquainted with the sword and its use, even the word of God, can help feeling it is handled feebly, and a trained ear would say, The trumpet, on most important foundation truth, gives an uncertain sound. Samuel would take no part there. We shall see him, and hear his words by-and-by.

Verse 3. The elders of Israel are greatly perplexed. They ask, “Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us to-day, before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us, that when IT cometh among us, IT may save us out of the hand of our enemies.” There is no real humiliation before the Lord. No real looking to the Lord. They fetch the symbol of His presence from its true place, as they say “*to us*,” and it is that “*it*” may save them. And who were with the symbol. The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas! Can the Lord associate His holy presence with allowed wickedness? Impossible. Oh, beloved children of God, this is the solemn question for our souls just now. We are all poor failing worms, but what is the remedy? “If

we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity." But can He be with us if we allow wickedness? This question must come to the front. Is it not most true, and sad, that men's abject regard for, and fear of, the priesthood (even the false one, assumed through the history of Christianity), has made them allow every wickedness under the sun? All this pleased deceived Israel well. "And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again." This is man. It may be seen, at times, in Exeter Hall, when thousands stand up, and wave handkerchiefs in wild acclamation. But is this the Spirit of God?

This outburst of enthusiasm may make the Philistines, when they hear the shout, say, "What meaneth the noise of this great shout?" And, for the moment, they were afraid. They said, "God is come into the camp; and they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore." But they quickly arouse themselves, and say, "Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you. Quit yourselves like men, and fight." But it may be said by those who now desire to make a bold stand against the infidel ministers in Christendom, We have not served them. Have you not? Have you not long known that they were infidels, fattening on the land amongst you, paid to preach the gospel, which they sought to destroy? Is not professing Christendom serving these modern Philistines? This present struggle will be no light matter. It will be found that

the clergy will not be able to meet it. The waving of handkerchiefs, and making of speeches of uncertain sound, yea, shouting until the earth is made to ring with the noise, will not win the battle.

“And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled, every man, into his tent; and there was a very great slaughter.” And, still worse, “The ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.” Thus judgment fell upon the house of Eli. Poor Eli, his heart trembled for the ark of God. And the news came to the fine old man, whose eyes were dim that he could not see. He bore the news of the death of his wicked sons; but when the messenger made mention of the ark of God, “he fell from off his seat backward, by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died.” Where now is the shout of that great noise? Is it a light thing to reject the word of the Lord, and remain linked with evil? Remember, to receive one into your house, or even to salute him who brings false doctrine, or goes on in evolution or development, beyond the word of God, is to be a partaker of his evil deeds. (2 John 10, 11.) Ichabod will as surely be written on Christendom, as it was on the house of Eli, at Shiloh. “And she said, the glory is departed from Israel, for the ark of God is taken.”

How deeply solemn is all this, after all the boasting and the shouting! Death and judgment are written on the whole scene. But, assuredly, the type cannot exceed the antitype. What will be the end of boasting Christendom? He, who knows, says, “I know thy works, that thou

art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich," &c. (Rev. iii. 14-18.) The end of Christendom.

Rude Philistine hands were laid on the ark of God; and the Philistines took the ark. They bring it first to Ashdod, "a wild, open place, pillage, theft." Rude Socialist infidel hands may be laid on the word of holy scripture, where God is revealed. It may be taken in triumph to adorn the temple of wild, red, robbing, latter-day blasphemous infidelity. But God can deal with such as He dealt with the men of Ashdod. It may then be sent to Gath, "wine-press." Yes, that holy word may be made the song of the drunkard. Then it was sent to Ekron, "barrenness, torn away." Yes, it may be sent to the poor know-nothings in their terrible barren land. But the hand of God is on every city that dares to profane the ark. Oh, ye infidels of this apostate Christendom, remember God is God. He can give you trouble and judgment in the deep secret of your minds and consciences, far worse than the emerods of the Philistines, for seven months. The ark is never brought back to Shiloh, the place which the Lord did choose. Terrible judgment also fell upon the men of Beth-shemesh, "The house of the sun; or the house of service, or ministry," because they looked into the ark. Yes, the house of the sun, or Baal worshippers, the ministry of idolatry, will surely be judged, though they be reckoned of Christianity, for all their prying, dissecting, reasoning on the word of God. Such,

then, is the end of the principles of the house of Eli.

My reader may say, I am a wanderer. Long have I mourned for real communion with the Lord. The history and principles of the house of Eli do not help me; what will help, truly help the children of God? Thankful am I to say that is our next subject.

"And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim ['a city of woods'], that the time was long, for it was twenty years; and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord." Oh, how many dwell there, just like men lost in interminable woods. They come to lanes, and crossings, but do not know which is right. Reader, do you dwell in the woods of religious confusion? Do you say, I mourn to know with certainty, the way of the Lord? Do you long to return to the Lord? Are you quite sure the ways of the house of Eli will not lead you there? Cannot the clergy lead you there? No. One says, This is the way, and another says, It is not. Can you shew me the right way? Thank God, we have it here before us. Let us now return, after twenty years, to the ways of the little child, grown up a man of God, in secret. (See 1 Sam. vii.)

"And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying"—and thus would we speak to the whole church of God: "If ye do return unto the Lord, with all your hearts." Let us weigh every word. It is not, If ye return, or come to some sect, or party, or church government, or to Shiloh as a place. No, we must return from every sect, and from every man that takes the

place of Christ ; not in outward form merely, but unto the Lord, with all our hearts. It must be to Himself, all else is worth nothing. And what more ? “ Then put away the strange gods, and Ashtaroth, from among you.” Everything of heathenism ; and, oh, how much has been introduced, and mingled with Christianity. All must be given up. “ And prepare your hearts, and *serve him only.*”

All this is intensely practical. If you are a true believer, born of God, nothing can satisfy Him, who died for you, but your heart. To *serve Him only.* This cannot be if you are connected with that which He condemns. How can you serve Him only, if you are serving a sect which He condemns ? Surely we should seek to do His will, as He delighted to do the Father’s will that sent Him. Will you think of those words, “ *serve him only.*” Lord, engrave them on our hearts.

“ And he will deliver you out of the hands of the Philistines.” How simple ! How sure ! Many have proved its truth. To do this we must come out of the camp to Him, to *serve Him only.* There is no other way of escape from the woods of perplexity, and from the hosts of Philistines, led on by Satan and his myriad demon hosts.

Are you weary in the woods ? Jesus says, “ Come unto me and rest.” But there must be the hearty giving up of whatever is inconsistent with serving Him alone. And mere talk will not do. “ Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the Lord only.” Such is the effect of true ministry. The ministry of the little child. What is so sad

in this day is: Ministry still leaves souls mixed up with the world. Yes, mixed up with much that has come from Baal worship, and not from the word of God. What have you put away to serve the Lord only?

If we pursue this important chapter, we shall find the exact opposite to the effect of association with the house and sons of Eli, as seen in chapter iv. Samuel gathers all Israel together for prayer, not for shouting. He says, "I will pray for you unto the Lord." It is not looking to the ark now, that *it* may save them, but to the Lord Himself. Yes, in the one case it was enthusiasm and shouting, until the earth rang, but linked with the evil allowed in the house of Eli. In the other, "They gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the Lord, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the Lord." (Ver. 6.) Yes, Israel shouted until the earth rang. And when the thousands rose from their seats, they clapped hands, they waved handkerchiefs, they applauded in the fullest enthusiasm, until the place rang again. But if we are led into the very presence of the Lord, we shall be as water spilt on the ground. Beautiful figure of our true place at such a time as this. With the sins of Eli, Israel allowed the most fearful wickedness. With Samuel they fast, and confess their sins. To which of these companies do you belong, reader? There was no victory with identification with evil, but the most fearful discomfiture.

The Philistines heard of all this, and how the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh; and the proud lords of the Philistines

went up against Israel. Yes, there is one thing the modern lords of the Philistines cannot endure. They abhor the principle first seen in the church at the beginning, that Christians, as such, should be gathered together to Christ alone. What would be the case if, as all Israel then, all the sheep of Christ were to give up their own folds, and be gathered together to Christ? No doubt the Philistines, the whole apostate professing Christendom, would come up against them. This would be the so-called sect everywhere spoken against. This was not child's play. The children of Israel were afraid of the Philistines. No shouting now, but they said to Samuel, "Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us, that HE will save us out of the hand of the Philistines." And what did Samuel do in this supreme moment of danger? He "took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the Lord; and Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel, and the Lord heard him." It is written of those taken up to heaven, who are there when Satan is let loose on the dwellers on earth, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death," &c. (Rev. xii. 10-12.) This only ground of victory was thus shadowed forth by Samuel. Did not that offered lamb remind them of redemption from Egypt by the blood of the lamb? Their redemption was but a figure of ours. But they were redeemed by the blood of the lamb, brought out of one place, under Pharaoh, into another, to serve the Lord only.

Perhaps there is nothing so little understood in

this day as redemption. Do we know that we have eternal redemption through the blood of God's Lamb? Not man's lamb, God's Lamb. "God will provide himself a lamb," said Abraham. God has provided Himself a Lamb. God is satisfied with the value of the blood of redemption. He needs no other. Is this the ground you stand on? Not on your condition improved a little, as a slave in Egypt; but redeemed to God for all eternity? Nothing to mere human reason could have looked more absurd. The proud lords of the Philistines advance with their serried ranks, as Samuel offers the lamb for a burnt offering. The burnt offering shews also how God sees us in all the perfections and sweet savour of Christ. There the soul can rest in all the unclouded favour and love of God, our Father. Oh, that every child of God knew this, his happy place, brought into favour *in* the Beloved. As to themselves, Israel does not give one shout now. Indeed, as to any strength of their own, they are afraid. They look only to God as the lamb is offered. Are they now overcome and smitten again, as the eye rests on the lamb, and the heart goes up to God? As linked once with the house and sins of the house of Eli, *they shouted*; but now "the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them, and they were smitten before Israel." They were utterly subdued. Such is ever the path of faith. The type of the church, as shadowed forth in Shiloh and Samuel, may be said to close here. Beginning with redemption from Egypt, as pointed out in the tract, "From Egypt to Shiloh," these remarks

may be read as a sequel to that tract. Indeed, they would scarcely be understood without first reading that.

What follows in the book of Samuel illustrates the principles of the kingdom of God yet to be set up in heaven and on earth.

There is one subject we would look at a little before we close. We noticed that Samuel was of the family of Korah, which was spared, in pure sovereign grace, from going down into the pit. A short genealogy of Samuel is given, as the son of "Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph." (1 Sam. i. 1.) If we compare this with 1 Chronicles vi. 22-28, there we have the genealogy traced down from Korah to Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, and to Samuel and his sons Vashni (called also Joel) and Abiah. Grace shines out in the history of Samuel from first to last. In 1 Samuel viii. 1, we read, "When Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. Now the name of his firstborn was Joel or (Vashni), and the name of his second, Abiah. . . . And his sons walked not in his ways, they turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment." Such is man.

In Chronicles we look forward beyond this scene, to the kingdom and the glory. "And *these* are they whom David set over the service of song, in the house of the Lord, after the ark had rest, &c. . . . And these are they that waited with their children: Of the sons of the Kohathites; HEMAN, a singer, the son of Joel (or Vashni), the son of Shemuel (Samuel), the son of Elkanah, the son of Jeroham." And the genealogy is now traced downwards to Korah. Yes,

the highly privileged Heman, the leader of the songs of the Lord, was grandson to Samuel. And we may read further of Heman and his brethren in 1 Chronicles xxv., how David separated them to this happy service of praise, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthan. Here we read how they prophesied with a harp, to give thanks and to praise the Lord. (Verses 2, 3.) And now are recounted the names of the great-grandsons of Samuel: "And God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters." (Ver. 5.) "ALL these were under the hands of their Father for song, in the house of God, according to the King's order to Asaph, Jeduthan, and Heman." The number of them is given in twice 144, that were instructed in the songs of the Lord. (Ver. 7.) Now of the sons of Heman, the grandson of Samuel, you will count sixteen, and each of their families counted twelve—or, in all, of this highest honoured family of praise, out of 288, there are 192 of the family of Samuel, of the family of Korah, saved from going down into the pit. (Num. xvi. and xxvi. 9–11.)

Such is the history of Samuel, the child, the son of Hannah ("grace and mercy") and Elkanah ("God hath redeemed"). From first to last, all is free grace, depths of mercy. Blessed figure, too, of that redemption which is wholly of God. This is but a feeble outline, but how full of instruction to us at this very moment.

Who has not felt the peculiar sweetness of the songs, in the book-psalms of the sons of Korah, the family of the little weaned child Samuel, saved from going down to the pit? We might dwell with rapture on Psalms xliv., xlv., xlvi.,

xlvi., and, indeed, all the songs of the sons of the family of Samuel. And we feel sure, if we read them, expressing the joy of those saved from going down to the pit, they will speak to our hearts of the ineffable delight that awaits those now saved from going down alive into the pit. Yes, though the bodies of the rich man, and the very poor beggar, were dead and buried, yet they lived in all the realities of paradise, or unending torment. Yes, he was alive in the pit. Fellow believer, let us never forget we are like the sons of Korah. We have actually been saved from going down to the pit. You and I, but for grace, might have been there.

When the ark had entered its rest, then sang the sons of Samuel, chief singers in the service of holy song. Soon the church will have entered into its rest, and seated around the throne, in the high kingdom of God. As surely as the days of Saul came to an end, so surely shall the days of the wicked one, the man of sin, come to an end. And as surely as the failing kingdom of David and Solomon was set up, so surely shall the kingdom of the unfailing Holy, Holy, Holy One be set up. "And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the THRONE, and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb, as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures, and four-and-twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers

of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God," &c. (Rev. v.)

A greater than David, a greater than Solomon, shall sit on the throne. The only worthy One. The very Lamb of God, blasphemed now here below, and kissed by those who pretend to be His ministers. There was but one Judas in the upper room, but now their name is legion.

"But there the whole triumphant throng
Of blood bought saints on high,
Shall sing the new eternal song,
With Jesus ever nigh."

Only one more word, WILL YOU BE THERE?

C. S.



ELECTION.

“If Christ did not die for the sins of all men, how am I to know He died for me—that He was my Substitute? And how am I to know that my very sins are forgiven, to be remembered no more?”—Page 12.

“Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”
Rom. ix. 15.

By C. S.

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ELECTION.

It is not for the sake of controversy, or to examine or defend human opinions on this deeply interesting subject, that we take it up; but with a sincere desire to help perplexed souls. A few days ago we received a letter from such an one, and as it is a fair sample of the effect of mere doctrinal teaching, we will give extracts. The writer says, "I have been greatly distressed about '*election*.' I know I am a sinner, and as such quite undone and lost, and that there is *nothing* in me to recommend me to God. . . . I want to be saved. I am often in great fear lest the Lord should come for His people, and leave me behind. I know that the Bible says, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved, but I have heard it said, that it is not scriptural to say that Christ died for the sins of all men; and if He did not die for all, how can I believe He died for me? Because it is no use to believe—I could not believe without a firm foundation for faith to rest upon; I mean, if He did not die for me, how could I believe it? If you knew how very anxious I am, I think you would feel for me, and try to answer me. . . . What I want to know is this—how can persons know that the Lord

Jesus Christ died for them personally, when there is nothing in them to make it likely? As I write, I feel how hopeless it is to try any more. I cannot help feeling in despair about it, because I have gone on so long, and have years ago professed to be a Christian. . . . I fear I am like the ground spoken of in Hebrews vi., that only bears 'thorns and briars.' If you think there is any hope for me, do try and help me."

Is it not most sad for a person to go on in this state of perplexity year after year? It is not often we meet with the same depth of anxiety, but this letter truly expresses the perplexity of great numbers. We are convinced that the root of all this confusion of mind and distress of soul, is occupancy *with self*. Here is evidently a quickened soul, finding nothing but thorns and briars in the flesh, or old self. Not one bit of good in self that could have been a motive for Christ to die for. However painful it may be, this lesson must be learnt; sooner or later the quickened soul must be brought to say, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not." And there is no *help* found for the flesh in scripture; so we cannot help the writer of the letter; it is not, Who shall help me? but, "O wretched man that I am! WHO SHALL DELIVER ME from the body of this death?" The Lord Jesus

is not revealed as the helper of the flesh, but as the complete Deliverer, bringing us into a new creation, giving us eternal life, a new nature, and the Holy Ghost. (Compare Rom. vii. 18-24 with chapter viii. 1-4.)

Before we look at the important subject of "Election," we feel it would be well to examine the difficulties of the writer. We believe it is a sure mark of the work of the Holy Spirit to be able truly to say, "I am a sinner, undone and lost." Can the reader say this, whether of sinful self or religious self? Have you tried, until you are undone, lost? This is a fearful word, yet it was for such alone that Jesus died. He "came to seek and to save that which was lost." "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." The joy of Jesus is this, "I have found my sheep which was lost." If, then, the writer of the letter, or the reader of this paper, has discovered that he is lost, ungodly, without strength, then it is clear from scripture that Jesus died for you; He came to seek and to save you.

We will pass over for the moment "other things, such as strong Calvinists hold," which had always been such a hindrance. More of this by-and-by. Most assuredly the Lord Jesus is coming to take His people, and no pen can describe how terrible it will be to be left behind. With such a certainty,

believing the scriptures which announce the coming of the Lord, we do not wonder at those words, "I want to be saved." These are not the words of the self-righteous, or of the careless professor, or the language of the infidel ; clearly not. But, reader, can you say they are your words? The Lord is certainly coming quickly to take His people—He says so. Can you say, with the writer of the letter, "I want to be saved. I am often in great fear lest the Lord should come for His people, and leave me behind"? If you know you are saved, you cannot say so : your privilege is to wait for Him from heaven. Do you say, I do not know I am saved, and I do not want to be, and I am not afraid to be left behind? Then really you are self-righteous, careless, or an infidel. But to return to the letter.

The writer says, "I know that the Bible says, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved.'" The scripture says this, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." (Acts xvi. 37.) It is not enough to know that the Bible says so ; the devils know that well enough, and the infidel knows that. But does the writer know that God says so—that it is God speaking to us in the Bible? Now, if God says so, is it not true? Then if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as a lost sinner, God speaks to you ; He says *you* shall be saved. Do you doubt Him? The jailor un-

derstood it to mean just what God said, and he was baptized at once. He raised no questions ; “he rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.” If he believed and rejoiced, why should you doubt?

“But,” says the writer, “I have heard it said that it is not scriptural to say that Christ died for the sins of all men, and if He did not die for all, how can I believe He died for me?” &c. It is perfectly true the scriptures never speak of the death of Christ as the substitute, or for the sins of all men. Yet this was no hindrance to the apostles proclaiming the gospel of forgiveness of sins unto all, with the assurance of God that all who believe are justified from all things. There can be no question that this was the character of the gospel Paul preached. He so preached to the multitude at Antioch. “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things.” (Acts xiii. 38.) Here, then, is a distinct message, direct from God, of forgiveness of sins to all men, through the death and resurrection of Jesus. And the question is simply this—Do you believe God? If so, it is most certain that *you* are justified from all things—*you* are accounted righteous before God. And *you* know it is so, for God says it.

But you say, “How am I to know personally

that Christ was the Substitute for my sins? If He were not the Substitute of all men, how am I to know that He was so for my sins?" We will tell you shortly; only mark first, if the scriptures did teach that He was the Substitute of all men, you would be far more uncertain; for it is evident many are not saved, and therefore, if He had been the Substitute of all, and yet many of these were for ever lost, then His dying for your sins would have been no security of your salvation, for after all you might be lost. Surely the scripture truth is better, that "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of **MANY**"—"having obtained eternal redemption for us." And that "by one offering he hath perfected for ever **THEM** that are sanctified." God says, "And **THEIR** sins and iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. ix., x.) Thus the scripture doctrine of the one sacrifice of Christ for the sins of many has secured for them eternal redemption, whilst the human doctrine that Christ was the substitute (or sacrifice) for the sins of all, secures nothing! And hence all the make-weights of sacramental and ritualistic religion of men.

Much of this doctrinal confusion arises from not seeing the order and distinction of propitiation and substitution. On the day of atonement the order was this: first, the blood sprinkled on the golden mercy-seat; then, afterwards, the sins of the people put upon the substitute. Propitiation

first, then substitution ; both, doubtless, pointing to the one sacrifice of Christ. But the first thing to be secured was the righteousness of God in shewing mercy. How could He be a just God and a Saviour? Now, as the victim must be killed, and its blood brought into the most holy, and sprinkled on the mercy-seat before God, so Jesus glorified God by His death. His blood was thus brought before God — sprinkled before Him. “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation [or mercy-seat], through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God : to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness : that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (Rom. iii. 25, 26.) Now in this aspect Christ died for all ; so that mercy and forgiveness is proclaimed to all. It is of immense importance to see this, “even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, UNTO ALL, and upon all, them that believe, for there is no difference.” (Rom. iii. 22.) This is important foundation truth. Such is the value of the atoning death of the Lord Jesus, that the mercy-seat is open to all, without any difference ; and God is just, and the Justifier of all that believe. The efficacy of that atonement, even the righteousness of God, is upon all who believe. God is righteous, is just, is glorified in meeting all, for there is no difference, at that

propitiatory mercy-seat. There is no uncertainty about this as to the propitiation. "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world." (1 John ii. 2.)

Before, then, we go on to the death of the Lord Jesus as our Substitute, do we own the deep need of that atoning death, to maintain the glory and righteousness of God, in proclaiming mercy to all? And, further, this mercy-seat is open to all, without any difference—the propitiation for the whole world. These are the very words of Jesus: "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." So far, then, all is clear: the righteousness of God is revealed in the glad tidings of God to every sinner on earth, for also as to them there is no difference, for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Is the writer of the letter a sinner? Then clearly the righteousness of God proclaims forgiveness of sins to you. Do you believe God? Has this amazing love of God in the gift of His Son, that death on the cross as the propitiation for the whole world, and pardon through that precious blood—oh, has this goodness of God led you to repentance? Have you come, as a lost, undone sinner, to that mercy-seat open to all? Do you believe God? Then God says *you* are

“justified from all things.” How simple ! Are you a sinner ? Then forgiveness is proclaimed to you. Do you believe it ? If you believe God, you may now go on to the second aspect of the death of Christ, and there see Him, the Substitute of His people, bearing their sins in His body on the cross.

This was typified by the people’s goat, the people’s substitute. Read Leviticus xvi. 20–22. The sins of the people are transferred to the goat—all the iniquities of the children of Israel are laid on him—and the goat bears them away, to be remembered no more. Now it is clear that if the Lord Jesus thus bore the sins of all men ; or, if all the sins of all men were laid upon Him, and borne away, to be remembered no more, then all men would be saved. But the scripture never says so. As in the type the substitute bearing away sins was limited to the children of Israel, so the true substitution of Jesus is limited to those who believe and are saved. “He was wounded for *our* transgressions, he was bruised for *our* iniquities.” His “blood was shed for *many*.” “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of *many*.” Thus, whilst the death of Christ, as the propitiation, is for the whole world, and God is infinitely glorified in proclaiming mercy to all, and there are no bounds to His love in the gift of His Son, that whosoever believeth should be saved ; yet, as Sub-

stitute, the sins of all men were not laid on Him, and therefore it does not follow that all will be saved.

We now take up the writer's inquiry, "If Christ did not die for the sins of all men, how am I to know He died for me—that He was my Substitute? And how am I to know that my very sins are forgiven, to be remembered no more?" This being settled, the way will be clear for the full consideration of the important subject of Election.

We have seen that on the day of atonement one goat typified the death of Christ, meeting the righteousness of God, and glorifying Him in shewing mercy to the whole world; and the other goat, Jesus, the Substitute of His people's sins. The glory of God has surely the first place, and then the sinner's need is fully and for ever met. The scriptures speak of Jesus as the propitiation for the whole world, and also the bearer of the sins of many; the righteousness of God set forth in that propitiation in Romans iii. 21–26; the substitution of Jesus for His people's sins in Romans iv. 24, 25; and the effect of knowing and believing this in Romans v. 1–3. We have also seen that the mere human tradition that Jesus died for the sins of all men gives no comfort, for all men are not saved. Then the solemn inquiry is this—How am I to know that Jesus died for my sins?

The answer is in these words, "But for us also, to whom it (righteousness) shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." (Rom. iv. 24, 25.)

Righteousness is declared to be imputed unto us if we believe God, or, believing God, who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. We observe, even here, it is God revealed to our souls to faith, God who raised up Jesus. We can never know that our sins are forgiven by looking at Jesus on the cross *now*: He is not now on the cross. If He be on the cross now, there is no forgiveness. Satan knows this, and therefore multiplies pictures and images of Jesus on the cross. He has died once on the cross, or there could be no salvation. But if He is not risen from the dead, your faith is vain, and ye are yet in your sins. With a Christ on the cross there could be no salvation. Now, who gave His Son? God. Who provided the Lamb, the atoning propitiation? God. Who so loved the world? God. Who has accepted the one sacrifice? God. Who raised the Holy, Righteous One from the dead? God. Who proclaims forgiveness of sins through that glorified Christ? God. Who declares all that believe are justified? God. Who is the Justifier, that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead? God. If you

believe God, then it is most certain that you are one whose sins Jesus bore on the cross once, but who can die and suffer for them no more. God has declared them put away as to any charge on you again, or on Him who bore them in His own body on the tree. If you believe God, then, you say, looking up at that Man in the glory, "Who was delivered FOR OUR offences, and was raised again FOR OUR justification." Jesus, the Substitute; Jesus risen, the Representative. As a believer you can now see your sins were transferred to Jesus when He was delivered for our offences, and as the goat bare them away, no more to be brought back, so Jesus was raised from the dead, and our sins can no more be laid to our charge; thus, accounted righteous on the principle of faith, we have peace with God. The believer knows this is true of him individually, because it is true of all who believe God, and therefore must be true of him.

Some of our readers may say, This is hardly what we expected, it seems to us like setting aside Election. Indeed it is not. If, instead of reasoning, we simply bow to scripture, we shall find these two things run on together—man's responsibility and God's sovereignty.

On God's part infinite wrath against sin, and infinite love to the sinner, have been revealed in the death of Jesus. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his

only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. . . . The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." (1 John iv 9-14. Read also John iii. 14-16.) Is not God's love toward the world fully declared by the Lord Jesus? He must be lifted up, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." These are the words of Him who cannot lie—who is the truth. This, then, was God's distinct purpose in the propitiation of the Lord Jesus. The bitten Israelite had not to inquire, How am I to know that Moses lifted up the serpent personally for me? No ; for it came to pass that whosoever looked, lived. Is it not even so of Jesus, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life?

Now, would it not be most monstrous to say that man is not responsible to believe God? What, not to believe such revealed love, and forgiveness of sins preached through Jesus?

But can the grace of God toward all men, and Election, both be true? Certainly, and equally true, because both are revealed in the word of God. The supper was a great supper, and many were bidden ; all refused, and made their excuse—not one accepted ; but all were not compelled to come in. Here is the whole question in this well-known parable. (Luke xiv. 16.)

The fact is, man is so desperately wicked, that left to his own free choice, he will not believe God ; he will not come to the great supper of God's salvation ; he will not receive Christ as his Saviour. God did not make him so. Man's condition is the result of his own sin. He believed Satan, and disbelieved God. However light man may make of sin, his own condition of hatred to God is the proof of the terribleness of sin. It would enlarge our subject beyond our limits, or we might see how, when the world had become utterly corrupt before God, when left to itself, that but one family was saved in the ark. We might then see how man's free choice built its tower of Babel, and, though they were dispersed, they soon sank into idolatry and wickedness. Then, how God took out one man, and said, I will bless this man Abram. Neither would it be possible to deny that God made him the father of the elect nation of Israel. Strange to say, no one seems to deny this, or that there are elect angels. What men do so hate is the election of the predestined children of God.

We will come, then, to the teaching of the New Testament on this subject. As we said, man left to his own free, natural choice, will not have Christ. He must be born again. This was found to be so, even of Israel, in the most favourable circumstances. God sent His Son to His own

elect nation, to those whose prophets had foretold Him; and what do we read? "He came unto his own, and his own received him not; but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John i. 11-13.) Man has thus been tested. God was in Christ, inviting man, reconciling, not imputing trespasses unto them, but they received him not. Nay, from the manger to the cross, man's hatred and rejection grew worse and worse. And the new birth by the Spirit explains how any believed on Him, and were saved. By man's free, natural choice, not one received Him, though, on God's part, all was infinite love and grace.

Jesus, in the midst of rejection, had perfect rest of heart in the Father's will. What words are these?—"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in nowise cast out." (John vi. 37.) Again, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day. . . . Every man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." "My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." "As thou hast

given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him."

"I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine." What calm repose in the midst of such billows of human hatred and rejection! He knew the righteous Father, and He knew that not one of those the Father had given Him would be lost.

Are not both things, then, equally true—that all that the Father gives to Him shall come to Him, and also, he that cometh to Jesus shall in nowise be cast out? The gospel is thus freely preached to all—"That through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things," &c.; then we read, "and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." (Acts xiii. 38, 39, 48.) Why should we take one of these truths, and not the other? or, why should we seek to alter either? Some would say, Do not preach the gospel to all, only to the elect. Paul preached it to all alike, and declared that all who believe are justified. Others would alter the latter, and say, As many as believe are then ordained to eternal life. But it is not so; "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Surely we have no right to alter God's word to suit human opinions. And yet there is nothing to hinder a truly anxious soul, for forgiveness is preached to all, and all who believe are justi-

fied ; and further, they have clearly been ordained to eternal life, for none else will believe—none else will come to Him that they might have life.

God NOW commands all men everywhere to repent. (Acts xvii. 30.) Men will not either believe what God says, or repent. If God had therefore left the matter in uncertainty, so to speak, to man's free choice only, and man so desperately wicked that he will not have the salvation of God, then evidently none would have been saved. If we turn, however, to some verses expressly concerning God's elect, we shall find that this is not, and cannot be, the case.

Let us carefully note that it is not a question of persons merely, but that God had a most wonderful purpose. "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." Is not this wondrous, that out of a world which has killed the Holy One, and rejected the very mercy of God, and when He might justly have left all to perish everlastingly, that God has taken out of them those whom He foreknew, and predestinated them to such glory as to be conformed to the image of His Son? Surely this must astonish angels. Thus, after man's rejection, we have salvation absolutely of God. The source entirely of God. "Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called : and whom he called,

them he also justified · and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” (Rom. viii. 29, 30.) To accomplish this purpose of infinite grace He spared not His own Son. “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.” This amazing truth bows the heart in profound worship. What a golden chain—predestinated, called, justified, glorified! All of God—accomplished by the death and resurrection of His own Son. “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again,” &c. What a joy to know that God is thus for us, and that He cannot change!

Nothing can separate us from His eternal love in Christ Jesus. But does not this imply that God has predestinated some to be lost? Certainly not. There is no such thought in scripture. The reason why some perish is their own deliberate rejection of the truth. Scripture is quite plain and clear on both these points.

First, as to them that perish, it is, “*because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.*” (2 Thess. ii. 10, and read carefully the context.) Could words be plainer than these? If the reader shall perish everlastingly, then remember, it is BECAUSE you received not the love of the truth. Yes, God is love, and you would not believe Him. You may ask, But if I am saved, is the reason as distinctly stated? Indeed it is; these

are the words, "*Because* God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." (2 Thess. ii. 13.) Thus all supposed merit is taken from man. If left to his own free choice, he deliberately rejects and despises the gospel of God; and the reason why any are saved, is the sovereign choice of God. Such is the distinct teaching of the word of God, whether we believe it or not.

We are very sorry that such dreadful things have been said as those the writer of the letter refers to. There is no such thought in scripture as that God had created some that He might be glorified in their destruction. As to such cases as, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," and the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, we will look at these presently, if the Lord will. No doubt very erroneous things are said about such scriptures. In the meantime we fail to see how the truth of God's abounding, sovereign, electing grace can, for a moment, discourage an anxious, thirsty soul, for to such the gospel of God's free, present, and eternal forgiveness is preached. And God declares all that believe are justified from all things. The whole world still rejects Jesus, as they did at the Jews' feast in John vii.; but did He not, on the last day, that great day of the feast, stand up in the midst of the rejecters, and cry? Yes, Jesus "cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come

unto me and drink." Yes, in the midst of the rejection of this day also, if there be only one man that thirsteth, there is the evidence ; yes, if this is the reader's case, there is the evidence of the Spirit's work in your soul. It is the work of the Holy Ghost to create this thirst for Jesus. Come, then, to His bosom ; oh, yes, Come to me, He says, and drink. And this is not all : " He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (John vii. 3, 8.)

We will now examine some scriptures concerning which strange mistakes have been made. (Rom. ix.-xi.) These chapters are given to explain what appears like a contradiction. The present dispensation of the grace of God, which makes no difference between Jews and Gentiles, would seem to those ignorant of dispensational truth as a contradiction to the abounding national promises to Israel, in the books of Moses, the Psalms, and the prophets. All are now found guilty, both Jews and Gentiles ; and the righteousness of God is revealed to all alike in the gospel. These chapters explain that this is only for a time. And more, that God is now acting in sovereign, electing grace ; and not only so, but that He has done so from the beginning.

No one can deny that it was an act of sovereign

choice when God called Abram, and said unto him, I will bless thee. So again, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." God did choose Isaac; He did not choose Ishmael. These are undeniable facts. This is still more distinctly stated as to Jacob and Esau. Let us read the verse carefully. It is sometimes said that it was written before they were born, that God hated Esau, and loved Jacob; but this is not so. "But when Rebekah also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac (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; as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." It was said unto *her*—unto Rebekah—The elder shall serve the younger. (See Gen. xxv. 23.) But it was more than thirteen hundred years after this that it was *written*, even in the very last prophet, Malachi, "as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Surely God's love to Jacob did not lessen the wickedness of Esau in despising his birthright. Now what is there for man to carp at here, except his own ignorance? How often has this scripture ignorantly (it may be) been misquoted as though it was written before Esau was born, that God hated him, but, when examined, it is found to be altogether dif-

ferent. This does not deny, or alter the fact, that all the natural seed of Abraham were not called to inherit the blessing. Ishmael was not chosen, Isaac was: "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." So Jacob, being unborn, was elected to the blessing. These are simple facts, and to deny the sovereign right of choice to God, would be to set aside God altogether. Equally true is it that the Spirit of God, writing about these two men as men, and their posterity, hundreds of years after, one of whom greatly valued the blessing, and the other most shamefully despised it, says distinctly that God did not approve of or love these two men both alike.

"Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." Can anything be more blessed than this? Man will have no mercy on himself. Man goes marching to everlasting woe. Thousands around us may be seen doing this—old and young. It is a dreadful fact. What, that tottering old man, just about to pass for ever from this scene, with eternity before him, has he no compassion on himself? No, none. He spurns and rejects the love of God. He will have the world; he will have sin. His whole will is against God. "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of

God that sheweth mercy.” This is grace, the free favour of God. He sheweth mercy to the man that has no mercy for himself. It is not man, the sinner, that chooses God, but God that chooses the sinner. There can be no question as to this, even as Jesus said to His disciples, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.” (John xv. 16.) What a spring of everlasting joy to our souls then! It is God that sheweth mercy.” Dear christian reader, ponder this well. Thus in every way it is not what we are to God; neither is it our willing, or running, for our running is only to do evil. (Rom. iii. 10–19.) It is God that sheweth mercy to whom He will shew mercy, or all must perish. No man is found that has mercy on his own soul. God hath chosen those who never would have chosen Him. Oh, the riches of His grace! He hath chosen us when obstinate, ignorant, hell-deserving sinners; and as objects of His mercy, has brought us into His everlasting favour.

Yes, the objector may say, but this scripture not only says, “Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy,” but it also says, “and whom he will he hardeneth.” What about Pharaoh? As this is a butt against which the infidel knocks his poor head, let us carefully examine what is written concerning Pharaoh. “For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose

have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." Who was this Pharaoh that was raised up to such world-wide notoriety, and on whom fell so heavily the judgment of God? For it is indeed written of him that God hardened his heart; and whom He will He hardeneth. One verse of scripture will bring this man in his true character before us. "And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go." (Ex. v. 2.) Here, then, we have a bold infidel king, who defies the living God, who lifts up his voice and puny arm to resist God in the deliverance of His chosen people. Was God unrighteous in punishing this daring rebel against His government and authority? Would it even be consistent for any earthly government to tolerate such a daring rebel? Now, what sheer ignorance it is to make a difficulty about the punishment of this blasphemer against God! And mark, the Pharaohs were the most cruel despots the world ever saw. One was the wholesale murderer of babes. Oh, those cruel words of his! "If it be a son, then ye shall kill him." (Ex. i. 16.) Was it not in righteousness that God destroyed such human monsters? "God heard their groaning." "And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are

in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters ; for I know their sorrows, and I am come down to deliver them," &c. (Chap. iii. 7.) What a record of the kindness of God in delivering from the cruel oppressor ; and yet the natural man sees nothing in God to admire !

We are ashamed to give an illustration, the thing is so plain ; but suppose an infidel blasphemer were to get such power in any country, that he openly defied the government of that country, and he and his followers went about slaying every male infant in the land ; would there be loud complaint if that government destroyed such a monster ? Not only did one murder the infants of Israel, *but the other rejected the message of God.* It is not a little remarkable that these are the exact sins also of the Jews at this day. They too have given up the Lord Jesus to be crucified ; and more, have rejected the message of God. They, too, are given up for the present to hardness of heart. It was not for that awful murder : for that cross which manifested man's deepest wickedness, brought out God's richest grace—free, full, everlasting forgiveness to those who had put to death the Lord Jesus. They would not believe the message of mercy. No, after such wickedness, they went about to establish their own righteousness !!

But what is the meaning of God hardening the heart of Pharaoh ? We shall understand this

better by turning to another Pharaoh that is about to appear in this world, and to the certain doom of the many Pharaohs of that day; nay, do not such Pharaohs already abound? The daring wickedness of this coming wicked one will be terrible, "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God." (Read 2 Thess. ii. 4-12.) Oh, how many shall be deceived by him! and just as Pharaoh rejected the message of God, so do these; and "because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Thus God hardens the heart, gives it up to strong delusion; and why? Because His message of love has been rejected. This is a solemn question for the times in which we live. Are there not many would-be Pharaohs? Plainly this world is as guilty of the murder of Jesus as Pharaoh was guilty of the murder of the infants. Are there not many who are saying, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice? . . . I know, not the Lord." Is not this the very sin that marks these last days? Disputing the authority of the word of God; and this is equally true of the infidel and the professedly religious. The infidel so hates the truth, that he would destroy it if he

could. And, oh, how many secretly say, Who is the Lord that I should obey His word?—we will not hear Him, but we will hear what we call the church! We will not believe the free forgiveness of our sins through the blood of Jesus. We will not believe that His *one* sacrifice for ever perfects those that are sanctified by His one offering; but we will have priests of our own, who shall again continually offer sacrifices that can never take away sins. Yes, all this terrible wickedness is after Pharaoh. Who is the Lord that we should hear His words? This religious rejection of the truth is growing stronger, and will end, as foretold, in everlasting destruction.

Thus not a sentence of God's word shall fail. It is most blessedly true that He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy; and it is also solemnly true that whom He will He hardeneth. Ah, should a careless despiser of His grace read this, beware lest He take you away with His stroke! Remember, it is not God electing you to be lost, but your own wilful, wicked determination to reject His truth. And before you lay down this paper, the church of God may be taken away, and you may be left to be given up to strong delusion to believe a lie. Nay, take care that you are not even now believing a lie. Oh, how long has God borne with the wilful wickedness of man in mercy! as it is written, "What if God, willing to shew

his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory." Thus the despising, defiant Pharaohs prepare themselves for everlasting woe, and God deals with them as they deserve in righteousness. If He dealt with all personally in righteousness, all must be lost. But He can, yes, does, exercise His blessed prerogative, "He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy."

And mark, it is not written that He makes one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour. It is an ignorant, if not worse, mistake to say so. What is written is this, that He is sovereign, that is, that He hath power to do so—hath right to do so. Now, is it not evident, as we are all by nature rebels, sinners, rejecters of God, and despisers of His grace, that if God left us all to our own free will, and dealt with us as we deserve in absolute righteousness, we should all have perished, and thus Christ would have died in vain? Surely, then, it should bow every believer's heart in worship, that "*He hath mercy on whom he will.*" Oh, how blessed! when we should never have chosen God, God hath chosen us in Christ before the world began.

We now turn to the word of God, and our inquiry is this : To what hath the Father in eternity chosen us in Christ? To what is the church elected? That the election of the church was in the beginning in eternity is most certain from scripture. "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth ; whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. ii. 13, 14.)

Thus the ultimate purpose of God was, that these chosen ones should obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. What a salvation ! What a purpose ! Chosen from the beginning. The Holy Ghost, the blessed One by which they were sanctified, as to the new birth, separation to God, and growth in grace—"Through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth."

It may be asked, How could the apostle thus give thanks for these Thessalonian believers? How did he know their election of God? He tells us, "Knowing, brethren, beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. . . . And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of

the Holy Ghost." (1 Thess. i. 5, 6.) Further marks of their election of God were found in that the word of the Lord was spread abroad by them, and they were turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven. Here were the proofs of their election of God. Beloved reader, can you say it is so with you? Has the gospel that Paul preached ever come with power to your soul? You will find the gospel that he preached to them in Acts xvii. 2-4. Has the Holy Ghost ever made known to you the deep need of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus? The blessed news that through Him is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins,—that all who believe God are justified from all things? Have you received the word with joy of the Holy Ghost? Have you cast in your lot with the Lord's people, following the Lord as they did? Is that word of the Lord so precious to you, that it is your delight to be making it known all around? Have you been turned to God from all the idols to which your heart once clung, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven? If you can say, through the amazing grace of God, and by the power of the Holy Ghost, all this is true of you, then these are the same marks as those by which Paul knew their election of God.

All this is so entirely contrary to the natural

man, that it must be of God. You would, like the world around, have refused to have received the love of the truth, that you might be saved, if God had not from the beginning chosen you to salvation. To God be all the praise; to you rest and peace. Before we look at the purpose of God expressly as to the church, we will turn to another scripture that may give strength and comfort to the individual believer.

We will take a scripture in that epistle which describes man's utterly lost and guilty condition before God, and also treats especially of the righteousness of God in the sinner's redemption through the blood of Jesus, and His complete justification by His resurrection from the dead.

Here it is found that man is saved and justified on the ground of the free favour of God. Now, from such a company, where all were alike guilty, what a revelation of infinite grace is this! "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." This was the predestined thought of God—I will have a company out of that world of vile sinners, who shall be like my Son. He shall be the first-born among them; yes, they shall be conformed to the image of my Son! (See Rom. viii. 29–39.) And let it not be surmised that this means that God predestined them after they believed the call,

or because they believed it. No, that would be no predestination, as is further shewn in the next verse, that the predestination surely was before the call. “Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” Now bear in mind, that if God had dealt in righteousness personally with every one of these, they must, as enemies, ungodly, and despisers of God, have perished everlastingly. All, therefore, was pure grace to these. “He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy.” “What shall we say to these things; if God be for us, who can be against us? Yes, if such a God as this be for us—“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all . . . who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died,” &c. Let us pause, and contemplate God predestinating poor ungodly sinners to be conformed to the image of His Son—even now accounted righteous before Him without condemnation. To accomplish this in righteousness, He spared not His own Son. Nothing can separate us from such love as this. Shall we say it is dangerous for the believer to be acquainted with all this?

We will now turn to another epistle, where the church of God is especially revealed; and that,

not only what it will be, but what it is even now, seen in its heavenly character. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, WHO HATH blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” (Eph. i. 3.) What a rebuke to unbelief is this statement! How clear, present, and certain! What a bright contrast with the dark human thought that we shall only get to know at the day of judgment whether we shall obtain such heavenly blessings! Yes, it is all ours now. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ *hath* blessed us thus in the heavenlies in Him. And mark, all this is according to plan and purpose. “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.” Have you ever thought of these words? How far do they take us back? Are we chosen in Christ because of something in our own history or circumstances? No, farther back. We were chosen in Him before the formation of this world in its present state, and before the introduction of sin. Farther back still. When were the foundations of the world laid? We read, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” What vast ages this may have been before the six days’ formation of this earth for man, we know not. Men, with all their learning, can only measure time; they have no language to explain eternity: that laying of the foundations—that creation of the heaven and the earth

—in that vast unknown, “in the beginning.” Yet the heavenly blessing of the church is, “according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.” Men love to speculate about past ages, but here is no room for speculation, but the distinct revelation, that the church, that we who have redemption in Christ through His blood, were chosen in Him before those ages began.

Further, notice, this is not so much a question of the election of persons, though it surely is that, for what would the church, the body of Christ, be, without persons, individual members of that one body? But this wondrous epistle reveals what God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in eternity chose us to and for.

“That we should be holy, and without blame before him in love,” none but God could have conceived such a thought, yet was it His pleasure in eternity! How soon will it be realised in all its fulness by us, even as we are seen by Him now in the Beloved! “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself.” Surely every sentence is full of infinite love. What a contrast to the blessing of Israel as a nation on earth! We were thus predestinated to the higher relationship “of children.” Do our souls enter into this, that God would have us in the blessed relationship of children, and “according to

the good pleasure of his will"? How sweet it was to Jesus to reveal the Father's joy in receiving His long-lost son, in that precious parable of the prodigal son! Oh, that this short paper may be used to lead the "children" to meditate on every sentence of this chapter. Think that the place given us is "to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

Yes, when God is known, then we see how suited to Him is the infinite extent of His grace. The free favour of God, in every sense, is altogether beyond all human thought. We can only understand it by seeing where Christ is, and what is His future glory; and then the overwhelming thought that we are in Him, and all is ours. Yes, all is so suited, so worthy of God. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." (2 Tim. i. 9.) Oh, do we believe these weighty, soul-sustaining words? Let not Satan be listened to for a moment, that if we believe these plain statements of God's blessed word that we have been predestinated to such unspeakable blessings in Christ before the world began, then it implies that others have

been predestinated to be damned. No, no, there is not such a thought in the holy word of God: we have seen that their everlasting judgment is "because they received not the love or the truth, that they might be saved." This is as clear as that our salvation, vast and wonderful as it is, is "because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation." (2 Thess. ii. 10-13.)

Oh, how sad that so many should deny the grace of God, the free, unmerited favour of God, in thus choosing us in Christ from eternity! Be it remembered, that if He had left us to our own free choice, all must have been lost, since all in their natural state reject the grace of God. Man in his natural unbelief will seek to be saved by his own works, will gladly accept any false religion of ritualism and ceremonies. He will seek and go about to establish his own righteousness when he has none. But if the writer of the letter, or the reader of this paper, has been led, as a lost and guilty sinner, to accept Christ, and to believe God, who raised Him from among the dead, then rest assured that you were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy, and without blame before Him in love. Thus may our hearts rest in the eternal love of God in Christ, from which nothing can separate us.

FROM EGYPT TO SHILOH.

“But go ye now unto my place which was in SHILOH, where I set *my name* at the first.”—JER. VII. 12.

“For where two or three are gathered together to *my name*, there am I in the midst of them.”—MATT. XVIII. 20.

BEFORE we can understand the instruction given to us in these last days, contained in the deeply interesting subject of Shiloh, we must take a brief view of the dealings of God with His people Israel, to whom He appointed Shiloh as the only place where He set His name. Their history, written for our instruction, is a type or figure of each believer's history, and salvation.

“GOD IS LOVE.”

If we read Exodus ii. 23 ; iii. 1–10, we see the condition of the people in cruel bondage and slavery, an exact picture of our condition under the cruel bondage of sin and Satan. Their cries and groans came up unto God. Do you remember the time when it was thus with you ? Think of the slave that can by no means escape from bondage. Such is the condition by nature of every man, whether he knows it or not. And

mark, the source of their deliverance was not in themselves. The source of our salvation is the love of God. God is love. He came down to deliver. He sent Moses to deliver. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Yes, God sent Moses—God sent His Son. God is love. They believed Moses. "Then they bowed their heads and worshipped." (Ex. iv. 31.) This, then, is the first mark of a quickened soul. Have you believed the love of God in sending His Son? This bows your head, and you worship.

The next step is the earnest desire to be gone, to escape from the slavery of Satan and sin. Did they escape through believing the love of God alone? No. Have you? No. Their case became worse as to experience. So has yours. So did mine. They were now put on the principle of *more work*—to make bricks without straw. They could not, and were beaten because they did not. And you, were you not put under the law of God? They had no straw, and you had no strength. And you found that word true, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." And you had no strength to do them. Paul describes all this in Romans vii. 14-24. Poor, wretched Israel! Moses said,

“Neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.” (Ex. v. 22, 23.) And you have believed the love of God, and tried to keep the law of God, but are you delivered from sin? What do you say? “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me?”

The next or third thing we find in this picture is the promises of God. (Read Ex. vi. 1-9.) Do read them. Could God give more precious promises? No. Did the promises deliver? Not in the least; “They hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and cruel bondage:” and you have tried to lay hold of the promises. Have they delivered you? No. You say, They do not comfort me. Why? I am such a sinner, such a slave. And this makes you unspeakably miserable.

Now the fourth thing in this picture is the wondrous kindness of God in His providential care of Israel during the plagues of Egypt. From chapter vii.-xi. we have the most tender care in sparing His people. But they were *all* still in cruel slavery.

What is to be done? We too have believed the love of God; we have tried to keep the law of God; we have tried to lay hold of the promises, and to trust the providence of God; and yet no real deliverance from sin—from the cruel slavery of doing what we hate. We are at our wits' end—we have come to the end. We do not know

what to do. Thank God, we have got to the end of ourselves ; we can do no more.

All now is of God, we will see what He has done. What do we get in this picture ? *A Lamb.* Every man's need is met by a lamb. The lamb must now be put forth ; the lamb must be killed ; blood must be sprinkled ; the lamb must be eaten ; God must see the blood. God says, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." Oh, how little redemption is understood. Such is sin in God's sight ; He must send His Son, the Lamb of God. He must be killed, His blood must be shed. And it is what God sees in that blood, it is God's estimate of that blood, which shelters from judgment. We must have redemption through that blood. There is no other means of pardon and eternal salvation.

Now many reach this point who never go beyond, and are utter strangers to all the teaching of Shiloh. Yea, they are not even delivered from Egypt ; they have not yet understood the Red Sea. Until Israel had passed through the waters of the Red Sea, they were sorely troubled about Pharaoh and the host of the Egyptians behind them. (Ex. xiv.) It is so with you, if you have only been brought so far on as being sheltered by the blood. Often you are sorely troubled about past sins, especially sins since you believed the love of God. Does not Satan bring them after you like the armies of Egypt ?

A Christian can never really sing in his heart until he knows he is brought out of his old state through death—death written upon him and all his past. Ah, then the Egyptians are *all* dead on the shore. It is a wonderful thing to reckon ourselves dead with Christ.

But before we reach Shiloh there are two things that must be known—"out of" and "*into*." We learn what we are brought out of at the Red Sea. We get the picture of what we are brought into, when we have crossed the Jordan. Now between these lies the wilderness with all its lessons and experiences. But in the wilderness there is not a word about Shiloh. Let it be borne in mind, none can enter into the lessons of Shiloh but those who have not only been brought out of the old creation, typified by Egypt, but also brought into the new creation, into the heavens, as typified by the passage of the Jordan.

It is most needed to learn the lessons of God's provision for us in the wilderness, by the offerings, &c., of Leviticus. How every failure has been met by the one offering of Christ; yea, how all the claims of divine righteousness have been met to the glory of God. He who came to do the will of God, could say, "I have glorified thee."

If we now read carefully Deuteronomy xii., beginning at chapter xi. 31, we shall see the

immense change that would take place, when they had crossed the Jordan, and were in actual possession of the land, and had rest in all that *God had given them*. All idolatry was to be destroyed. Then God would choose out a place. "But unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes, to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come." To that place they were to bring all their offerings. There they were to worship and eat, and rejoice before the Lord. All this is solemnly repeated. They were not to do there as they had done in the wilderness. "Every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes, for ye are not yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the Lord your God giveth you. But when ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the Lord your God giveth you to inherit, and when he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety : then there shall be a place which the Lord your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there," &c.

What is the antitype or answer to all this? Can you say, It is true of me ; after all my struggles in Egyptian bondage to sin and Satan, God brought me *out* by the blood of the Lamb? Through Pharaoh's overthrow I see now, he that had the power of death is destroyed. Can you say, I am dead with Christ? Can you say, God

has secured His own glory, and provided for all my needs, by the offering of Christ? Can you say, As to my conscience, the whole question of my sins is settled for eternity: I have eternal redemption; He hath by His one offering perfected me for ever, in unchanging continuance?

And much more. Now take the epistles. Look at Ephesians i. Look at the heavenly land, so to speak, our God and our Father hath given us. Here you see the believer clean over Jordan; that is, brought *into* the land God hath given him in Christ, in the heavenlies—out of Egypt, as you may read in Colossians i. 12–14, but into the heavenlies in Christ, in Ephesians. In the one case really across Jordan; dead with Christ, and risen with Him. (Col. ii., iii.) In Ephesians, right up in the heavenlies in the Beloved. In the same favour in the Beloved. Can you say, All this is true of me? Is God so good to you? In His free grace has He given you all this to enjoy in His own love in Christ? Oh, have you taken possession? Have you rest in the unbounded love of God, as thus revealed? Mark, until this is the case, you will be like Israel before they crossed the Jordan: as to all church matters, you will do what seemeth good in your own eyes. You look abroad, and you see many places that men have built, and placed their names, and you will choose for yourself, and not knowing the Lord's mind, you will do

what *you* think best, in what is called liberty of conscience. We will now pass on to

SHILOH, JOSHUA XVIII. 1-10.

The land had now rest from war. Israel were in the land. The Jordan had been crossed, the victory had been won. Surely this points to the resurrection of Christ from the dead. He was risen from the river, from among the dead, but all believers are risen with Him, as *all Israel passed over dry shod*. It is as risen with Christ that we are in possession of the heavenlies, the true Canaan. The risen Christ is Shiloh.

THE MEANING OF THE WORD SHILOH.

In scripture this word "Shiloh" has two meanings. It is the name of a *person* in Genesis xlix. 10. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." The meaning of "Shiloh" here as applied to a person is "whose it is," or "whose right it is." Surely that person is Christ the Lord. It was when He had accomplished the work of redemption, when God had raised Him from the dead, He was the One, the only One, "whose right it is" to gather to Himself. Whether we look at the church of God, or the future gathering of Israel and the millennial nations, or we look up to heaven in

Revelation v., and see one in the midst of the throne, there is only one whose name is Shiloh; to Him, "whose it is," shall the gathering of the people be. He alone is the Shiloh. He alone is worthy. Worthy is the Lamb. Oh, let us never forget His words—what meaning they have—"For where two or three are gathered together to my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. xviii. 20.) And this brings us to

SHILOH AS A PLACE.

The Lord, the true Shiloh, first gathered to Himself, or formed the assembly, by the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. (Acts ii.) Thus Joshua xviii. is a type of Pentecost. The meaning of "Shiloh" as a place is "peaceful tranquillity;" the Lord's own place, the place of peaceful tranquillity. What was it but this when He arose from the dead? What were the first words of the risen Shiloh to His disciples assembled together? "Peace be unto you." And He shewed them His hands and His side. He had finished the work; He had made peace by His blood—eternal, perfect peace—it is His right to speak peace. Have you heard His voice speaking to you?

Shiloh was the place where Jehovah was pleased to place His name at the first. "And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled themselves together at Shiloh, and set

up the tabernacle of the congregation there." What a picture of Pentecost! The true One, "whose right it is," was come, and all believers were gathered unto Him. They were not gathered to Peter, but to the Lord. Peter was the preacher, but Christ, the exalted Lord, was the Shiloh to whom all were gathered.

Thus in the beginning all was done at Shiloh, before the Lord. True there were many who had not as yet received their inheritance, but Joshua was not indifferent: he says, "How long are ye slack to go to possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you." Missionaries were sent out, so that all might enjoy their possession. They went out from Shiloh, and returned to Shiloh, and the land was given to them at Shiloh. "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." Thus He sent them out as missionaries to make known peace and forgiveness of sins. And it is only as we drink in His precious peace into our own souls, and enjoy in peaceful tranquillity the certainty of sins forgiven; yea, that we are accepted in the favour of the beloved One—that we can expect to be used in bringing others into the possession of that present enjoyment of the inheritance which God our Father has given us in Christ. Oh, to go out from His peaceful presence, as He came forth from the Father.

It would be most blessed to dwell more on this, Shiloh as a picture of what the church *was* as built by Christ. We shall find the future history of Shiloh, a true picture of the sad history of the church. During the days of Joshua and those that overlived Joshua, Israel served the Lord. His words are very striking: he says, "Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served, on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose ye this day whom ye will serve . . . as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua xxiv. 14, 15.) What a word to us now! Every form of idolatry in which we trusted, whether in Egypt or in the wilderness, must be put away. If we are dead with Christ and risen with Him, what need have we for all those things in which we trusted? All are now "beggarly elements." If we now look at

THE BOOK OF JUDGES,

we shall there see a most striking picture of the history of Christendom. In chapter ii. we have repeated how "The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and in the days of the elders that outlived Joshua." Joshua then died, and all that generation. "And there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord."

Then the sad history how they did evil and served other gods. They forsook the Lord and served Baal and Ashtaroth ; and for hundreds of years you do not hear a word of SHILOH, the place where the Lord had set His name at first.

Yet God did not forsake His people, but raised up judges ; and though some of them were strange men, yet God did care for and deliver His people. There were Deborahs, and Gideons, and Jephthahs, and Samsons ; but not one of these ever names Shiloh.

It was exactly so after the death of Paul and all that generation. There arose another generation that knew not the Lord and His ways, as at the beginning. Then did the devil teach the doctrine of development. But the Lord in His tender care, raised up individuals, and through them delivered the church from utter ruin, by the loss of all truth. But for centuries Christ is never again known and owned as the true Shiloh. Nay, a man is blasphemously put in His place as the centre and head of the church. And even at the Reformation none of the reformers, so far as we have any record, ever recovered the long lost and only true position of the church as gathered to Him "whose it is." They did escape from much of paganism, but never knew Christ as the only true centre, around which the two or three should be gathered in perfect tranquillity. For the most part they retained the worldly nationalism,

or Babylonian principle, of confusing the church with the world. It is remarkable, that the very same idolatry has prevailed in Christendom, as in Israel during its centuries of darkness. Observance of days, turning to the east, worship of the queen of heaven, images of saints, as formerly Jupiter, Ashtaroath, &c.; monks, nuns, candles, holy water, &c. &c.; all these are real paganism—idolatry, so denounced in the word of God.

But during those centuries of Israel's history, did not the true Shiloh exist? Yes, indeed it did, and God surely remained the same. One verse proves this. "And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh." (Judges xviii. 31.) Has it not been so during the dark history of Christendom? All the time they set up their altars and images which they made; all that time, it was still true that the only true church principle was, Christ in the midst, the true Shiloh, the only One whose right it is to gather His redeemed to Himself on earth, as it shall be in heaven. And no doubt a few of the unknown hidden ones may, in unknown places, have enjoyed the peaceful tranquillity of His blessed presence. This is sure, the Lord remained the same, though the true place of Shiloh was as little known in Christendom, as in the type in Israel.

There is a most sad history of the one man going to the house of the Lord, as he says, "And there is no man that receiveth me to house." (Judges xix. 8.) But so great had been the neglect of Shiloh during these centuries, that few knew the way; indeed, it required the most minute description how to find it! "Then they said, Behold, there is a feast of the Lord in Shiloh yearly, in a place which is on the north side of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah." (Chap. xxi. 19.) Would it not have been the same for centuries: if a man had inquired where was the true place, the true Shiloh, where saints were gathered to Christ, as in the Acts, could any have told him the place or the way to it? Reader, could you tell it even now?

Yet there was such a place then, and even from which a Benjamite might get a wife; and there is such a place now, where many a preacher may get a sermon, though he neither lives there nor ever gives it a good word. "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Last words of Judges. Words also which describe the whole history of Christendom, perhaps the cause of every evil division is just that—the want of the true owning of the Lordship and authority of Christ, in the fear of the Lord. Where this is

not, every man is sure to do that which is right in his own eyes—his own will.

We now come to the first three chapters of 1 Samuel.

THE REVIVAL OF SHILOH.

It is striking that that which introduces this is a beautiful glimpse of the bride of Christ, in the type of Ruth. This brings us to the present century of Christendom in figure. At the beginning of this century the Holy Ghost brought again before us the bride of the heavenly Boaz, and the glorious truth of eternal redemption, to be completed in resurrection. And now after Shiloh had been almost forgotten, all at once we have more in these three chapters as to Shiloh, than in the whole word or history of Israel before.

1 SAMUEL I., II., III.

It would be well now to read carefully these three chapters, so full of our subject, and compare them with Revelation iii. 7–22. In the one case we have the closing scenes of Shiloh, in the other the closing scenes of Christendom. In both we are close on judgment. May the Holy Ghost open our eyes to see the solemn application to the very circumstances of this day.

Here then in 1 Samuel we have two families, both at Shiloh, the place where the Lord set His

name at first. In one family there is nothing that God condemns; in the other, there is nothing that He approves. In the closing days of Christendom there is not one thing the Lord condemns in Philadelphia. (Rev. iii. 7-13.) In Laodicea there is not one thing that He approves. (Rev. iii. 14-19.)

The very names of the two families at Shiloh are most significant; and in their meaning, and all else recorded respectively of them, we learn that it is not enough to be, as is said, on true ground, that is, professedly gathered to Christ, whose right it is, the true Shiloh, the true and only place He approves; but also, what is the real state of soul of those who outwardly are so gathered.

There is then the family of ELKANAH, and the family of ELI. Both are at Shiloh. Everything said in these chapters is about them at Shiloh. No one can deny or fail to admit there has been a most remarkable revival of this very truth, as to the only true place of worship and service of Christians, gathered to Christ, the true Shiloh, in these last fifty years.

As Elkanah is named first, we will first take his name. Elkanah is, "God has redeemed," "possession of God," "whom God created." In this name all is of God. Redemption is an accomplished thing, God has redeemed us to Himself; we are His, and none shall pluck us

out of His hand. We are His possession, we are not our own. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation;" and that new creation is wholly of God. This very name Elkanah indicates the blessed truths God has restored in these last days.

And the name "HANNAH" is equally characteristic. "Grace and mercy." Oh, the freeness of His favour, and the depths of His mercy!

In contrast with all this, ELI means "a foster son," "adopted of the Lord;" and it is very remarkable that in Greek the word "*Diotrophes*" means a similar thing! All this points out officialism, in place of the enjoyed relationship of a child born of God. Is there not a difference between God adopting the flesh, and imparting the divine nature as born of God?

The names of the sons of Eli are equally characteristic of that which is not approved of God.

HOPHNI means "Boxer, pugilist." In Arabic, "To fill both hands full."

PHINEHAS, "Mouth of brass." This boldness may be for good, as in the case of another Phinehas; but what one sees and deplores in some who have taken a place at Shiloh, that is, professedly gathered to Christ, is just what answers to these names. Instead of seeking to help and feed the whole church of God, wherever found, with the blessed truths of a full and

eternal redemption—God's unceasing love and care for His saints as His own possession—and that every believer is God's new creation; instead of unfolding the riches of His grace and the depths of His mercy; instead of these things, nothing suits their nature more than to go into a village, or a town, and fight everybody and every sect like a boxing pugilist, with a mouth of brass that knows no shame. Such then are the names of the two families, *both at Shiloh*. And even in the family of Elkanah, PENINNAH the prosperous and faithful, was not so approved as Hannah, the feeble, yet daughter of grace and mercy. What warnings and divine teaching for us.

Let us now look at Hannah, for the Holy Ghost brings her out the most prominent. We see her at Shiloh, provoked by her adversary, because of her barrenness. She lays all before the Lord at Shiloh. There she weeps in the bitterness of her soul. It may be, my reader, you are barren and unfruitful in the things of the Lord. Have you ever wept in bitterness over this? She wept sore; have we? She asked *at* Shiloh for a man child, and she asked for this *for* Shiloh. Eli, the aged priest, knew nothing of all this; he saw, but did not understand; he thought she was drunken. Yes, there may be two parties at Shiloh, and they do not understand each other. Eli sits on a post, and Hannah weeps sore. But the request of the

weeper is granted. She had poured out her soul at Shiloh before the Lord, and He had heard, and answered. Jesus says to His feeble, weeping Hannahs, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." (John xvi. 23.)

He for whom she had asked was born. "She bare a son, and called his name SAMUEL [asked of God], saying, Because I have asked him of the Lord."

Men delight in what is great and showy; not so the Lord. He says, "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." Is this because thou art become great and strong, and hast done many mighty things? No; "for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." Is not this what the Lord approves in these very last days? Philadelphia (Rev. iii. 8) is the answer.

In our lovely picture of the true Philadelphian, there are four things. Samuel is *a little child*. Jesus tells us there is no way of entrance but "as a little child." (Luke xviii. 17.)

The second thing is, Samuel *is weaned* before he is brought to Shiloh. What sorrow in the assembly caused by persons being brought in before they are weaned from the world! There was more weaning forty years ago.

The third thing was, *Samuel was dedicated* through death, the death of a bullock.

And the fourth mark of this true Philadelphian, was that he was *a worshipper* at Shiloh ; “ and he worshipped the Lord there.”

No doubt two parties, the approved and the disapproved, may both be at Shiloh ; that is, both take the ground of their meeting, to be gathered to the Lord. How am I to know which is right ? Here are four things to guide me : little, weaned, dedicated, and a worshipper. Do these marks answer to the state of our souls, or rather, does our state answer to these marks ? Are we really little in our own eyes ? If not, we are not the children of Hannah, grace and mercy. Are we weaned from the world ? If not, it would be better to go to the church of the world, than bring the world to the Shiloh of God. Are we really dedicated by the death of Christ, of which the bullock was a type ? Think of being crucified with Him. And lastly, Are we true worshippers in spirit and in truth ? Do we delight in God, joy in God ? What is the love of God to you ? Is it so shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost given unto you, that in return you adore Him in holy peace ? Oh, that these marks did more abound wherever souls are gathered to Him, whose right alone it is, the blessed Shiloh, and in that only place of peace and tranquillity of soul.

Before we go on to the further characteristics of the two families at Shiloh, shewing so

distinctly what is pleasing to God at this very time, and what is not, let us ask ourselves, Are we real worshippers? can we sing the song of Shiloh? Yes,

THE SONG OF SHILOH.

Sing, you say, how can we sing, and the church in such a state, and judgment close at hand? It was exactly the same when Hannah sang that song of Shiloh; she was like a lark. You might say to the lark, How can you sing? do you not see what a fog there is on the ground? This way I sing, the lark would say, higher and higher, far above the fog, in the heavenly blue above. Thus sang Hannah, higher, and higher still. Is there a higher swell of joy in the whole scriptures? As the sun fills the sky of the lark, so the Lord Himself was before her soul.

She did not rejoice in Shiloh, as a place, but in the Lord who is the Shiloh. It is the person who makes the place. "My heart rejoiceth in the Lord because I rejoice in thy salvation." In the spirit of Revelation iii., as a Philadelphian, she says, "There is none holy as the Lord: for there is none beside thee." How soon we may slip away from this; how soon get occupied with men! Such was the Person of the holy one to her, that He exceeded all others. What an exclusion, and what a song!

Is Jesus the Shiloh thus before our souls? If

so, how could we leave Him? "Lord, to whom shall we go?" Do our actions shew that He is enough, and we cannot allow any beside Him? "And by him actions are weighed." The mighty men, and the weak, are all made known in His presence. His wonderful ways are known at Shiloh. Read every sentence. How needed to the children of God now at Shiloh! "He bringeth low and lifteth up." Could anything prove more distinctly the inspiration of the Holy Ghost than this song at Shiloh? Hannah's faith and song rises to a theme utterly unknown at that time. The church, of which this is a picture, full of typical instruction, was as yet hidden. (Eph. iii. 9.)

Mark the order of verses 8, 9, 10, in Hannah's song. She sees humanity a dunghill! Out of that dunghill, God lifteth up or raiseth up the beggar, "To set them among princes, and to make them inherit *the throne of glory*." Is not that exactly what God is doing now? Oh, have you been taken as a lost beggar out of the dunghill, as Paul? and is God determined that you shall be set amongst princes, and that you shall, as part of the body of Christ, inherit the throne of glory? Yes; He has no lower thought or purpose for us. But does it in some way depend on my holding fast? May I not turn aside, though a true saint, and after all be lost?

Nothing of the kind, says Hannah: "HE WILL

KEEP THE FEET OF HIS SAINTS." True, she says, "And the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail." Cheer up, my soul! these are weighty words—they are the words of this day of grace, during which God is gathering the church for the throne of glory in the heavens.

Then in verse 10. The next thing is the time of tribulation: "The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces, out of heaven shall he thunder upon them." Then the judgment of the quick: "The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth." After this, the reign of Christ on earth: "And he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed."

It was simply impossible for any one to have invented this very order, then utterly unknown to man; but now become the well-known order, and purpose of God. First, the taking out the church for the throne of glory, kept for that purpose by the power of God. Secondly, the day of the Lord, ending with the judgment of the living nations. And, thirdly, the setting up Christ as the true Shiloh, Messiah, King on earth. Let the sceptic tell me how it came to pass, that Hannah sang of all this, in type, more than a thousand years before it was revealed? This amazing song of Shiloh is an unanswerable proof, then, of divine inspiration. It is the very theme at this moment of the songs of those

gathered to Him, the only Shiloh. Oh that we were more like Hannah, instead of being crushed with the state of things in Christendom, and even at the very place or position that answers now to Shiloh, as a place, the place in His presence, of peaceful tranquillity. Yes, instead of looking at the state of things until our hearts sink within us, may we, like Hannah, and like the lark, thus rise above them, and rejoice only in the Lord.

We have noticed that there were two families at the only true place—Shiloh. One is approved, the other disapproved. What was the difference? This may help us to discern the Lord's mind now, especially where there may be two companies, both declaring they are gathered to the Lord. The words are very plain. "The child did minister unto the Lord, before Eli the priest." This is the first test. Are we ministering unto the Lord, or to self and self-importance? Which is it? Do not evade this question.

"Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord." Yet they were the officials of Shiloh! Is it possible to be so now? We do not ask, is it possible for a true Christian to fail, to fall? Alas! every true Christian knows and owns it is. But is it possible for evil to be practised by those who are in the true place, on true ground, as they say, and that by those who know not the Lord? Yes, and for the very same

motive as that of the sons of Eli. Ah! it is what they can get. It is "the pan, or kettle, or cauldron, or pot; all that the flesh-hook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh," &c. (Ver. 14.) Wickedness was *practised* at the very doors of the tabernacle at Shiloh.

"Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord; for men abhorred the offering of the Lord." This is the root, the practice of evil by those who know not the Lord. Mark again the contrast: "But Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child, girded with a linen ephod." Ah, my brethren, this is the remedy for all the evil at Shiloh, to really minister before the Lord, girded with practical righteousness. Do weigh this.

The Lord now sends a messenger, a man of God, to Shiloh. (Ver. 27.) God makes known the coming judgments on the house of Eli. He now makes known to us the coming judgment on Christendom, on Laodicea. But what was the marked failure of Eli? It was the allowance of evil. He seems to have been an amiable old man himself; but whilst himself condemning the evil, he was loose in allowing and going on with it. And what he allows, he is reckoned as a partaker of. And did this bring down the judgment of God on his house, and on Shiloh, where He placed His holy name at first? It certainly did, according to the word of the man of God.

And has there been no man of God in these days who faithfully warned the house of the amiable Eli, who allowed and went on with what he condemned? Is it not astonishing what light these three chapters throw on our very path in these days? Surely we can thus discern what God approves, and what He condemns. No doubt all the world may condemn the exclusion of evil, and all who bring and practise it. Nothing has been so hated and misjudged in these days, as faithful exclusion of known evil, especially evil doctrine against the Person of Christ. But does God misjudge, like man, or disapprove? Read the message of the man of God to Eli. May we all read it in the fear of the Lord. He says, "But now the Lord saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." (Ver. 30.) This is a most important word to us. We may be too much occupied with the authority of the assembly; with questions of united judgment, or a majority, &c. &c.; but do we know the real presence of the Lord? Do we really know Him as we should if we saw Him? This is the point. Do we really own Him present, and seek His mind? Who would rail and question the decision of a few thus gathered in His presence? Is He not really present to faith? He says it; and it will be found wherever He is truly owned. These He

will honour and preserve. It has been so in every case. But we must hasten on to

CHAPTER III.

“And the child Samuel ministered to the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days: there was no open vision.” It is so now. It is only as we are as little children, we can really serve the Lord. And though there is no open vision, no further development, yet cannot we say that the word of God is precious in these last, closing days of Christendom, as in those closing days of Shiloh? The eyes of Eli began to wax dim that he could not see. It is so wherever known evil is allowed or palliated. Dimness of perception of divine truth is sure to be the result. “And ere the lamp of God went out.” Is it not a solemn thought that the bright testimony of the Holy Ghost will soon cease to shine in this poor world, ere God shall give the rejecters up to dark and strong delusion? The night grows dark, already pagan ritualism covers the land with many a rite of Baal. Is this a time for indifference? Are the Elis and Samuels to lie down to dream, being neither cold nor hot? No, the voice of the Lord is heard, but not by Eli: “He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” But he who allows the evil he

condemns, has no ear to hear. Eli heard not that voice, though it had to say to him.

Samuel, the little, weaned, dedicated worshipper, heard. His ear was open, but at first he did not understand. Do we hear the Spirit say, Give out such a hymn; read such a portion of the word; or lead the assembly in prayer or worship? Well does the writer remember the first time the Spirit said to him, Read the first chapter of 2 Corinthians, and the thoughts that were then impressed on his heart, though much over forty years ago. Like Samuel, he did not then know the Lord after this manner. Yes; if really waiting before the Lord, it is our privilege to be unmistakeably guided by the Spirit, ever present with the saints on earth. But if we allow evil, this cannot be; and the official priesthood never thus hear the voice. Nay, in poor, fallen Christendom, the real guidance of the Holy Ghost, as to what shall be done when gathered together, is never thought of. Oh, to be a little child, and with Samuel say, "Speak, for thy servant heareth."

Now is it not most remarkable that the doom and judgment on the house of Eli is communicated to the child Samuel? And what is the sin that brings down this terrible judgment? Is it not repeated again, as we have seen, this one thing—the allowance of sin which he condemned? "And therefore I have sworn unto the house of

Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever." Very affecting are the words of the aged Eli: "What is the thing that the LORD hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me." "And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good." Yes; in many respects, this seems to have been an amiable, aged priest. Was it not even human kindness, or parental kindness? He might call it love, as many have done in this day. They have called it love to allow and pander to the false doctrine and evil they condemn. Have they not even slandered those who have sought to exclude the evil and give it no shelter? Oh let us all take this solemn lesson of Eli's house to heart! Remember, brethren in Christ, judgment will begin at the house of God, as it swept away the house of Eli, at the close of the history of Shiloh.

We thus learn it is not enough to be *at Shiloh*. We must have the spirit of Samuel the little. Mark these results: "Samuel grew." (Ver. 19.) Where there is the suited condition of soul, suited to Shiloh, there will be real growth. "And the Lord was with him." Are you quite sure the Lord is with you? It is no Shiloh if He is not, for He is the true Shiloh. "And did let none of his words fall to the ground." It is so now, and will be to the end.

(See Rev. iii. 9.) Yes, all shall know this. "And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh: for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh, by the word of the Lord." Nothing could be more cheering to the true Samuels in this day, though just at the end. Yes, up to the end, as at the beginning, the Lord will reveal Himself in *Shiloh*, in the place that He hath chosen. Wherever two or three are gathered to His name, there He will be, there He is. It is not where there is a splendid cathedral, or a splendid organ, or a gorgeous ritual, or priestly robes of cost! Not where riches and fashion are displayed. No, all this is Laodicean, and where that is, He reveals not Himself, but stands outside and knocks. (Rev. iii.)

Hold fast, then, this blessed fact: that to the very end, as the Lord appeared to Samuel in Shiloh, as He revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord, so He will now to the end. Let the house of Eli rail and misrepresent you, the Lord's dear presence is enough the mind and heart to fill.

The house of Eli may often say, "Ebenezer," hitherto the Lord hath helped us. There is much of such boasting in Christendom. It is the spirit of Laodicea. Do not forget that the Philistines are not far off the same place. The Philistines, those who are in the land, but not of it, are gathering and preparing their forces. Shiloh

was destroyed; Shiloh as a place came to an end. Samuel went to Ramah, his home—Ramah, “*the high places*.” Christendom will indeed be destroyed; but the church of God—Samuel, so to speak—will be caught up to the high places, and be seated around the throne of God in glory. From Ramah Samuel judged Israel. (Chap. vii. 17.) Paul says, “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?” (1 Cor. vi. 2.)

We will close these brief remarks with a short review.

1. A redeemed people, not only sheltered by the blood, but *brought out* of Egypt.

2. They must also be *brought in*, through the Jordan, into the land.

3. Then, when they had rest and possession, the Lord placed His name in Shiloh.

4. For centuries Shiloh was almost forgotten.

5. The great revival of Shiloh in 1 Samuel i.—iii. To pursue the type, we have Ruth, the bride before the reign. Then Saul, head and shoulders above the rest. Then follows the reign of David.

Thus also the church is redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Brought out of darkness and slavery, and blest in Christ in the heavenlies. All this must be known ere church position can be understood. The church, or even two or three, are now gathered to the risen Christ, the true Shiloh, He “whose it is.”

Blessed place of peaceful tranquillity. This was practically lost and unknown for centuries. Then, as Shiloh was so remarkably revived in 1 Samuel i.-iii., so in these last few years, the true principle of gathering together has been restored. That is, to Himself, the only One whose right it is. As there were two parties, or families, then, so again now. One who has allowed the evil they condemned, the other desiring to exclude all evil, in separation to Christ, the only Shiloh.

May the Lord apply His truth to us all. May Hannah's song be ours, however reviled as exclusive. May we learn in this lesson what is pleasing to the Lord! May we know the Shiloh, Emmanuel, "He whose it is." May we honour Him, cleave to Him, glorify Him, for He alone is worthy. "Worthy, O Lamb of God, art thou."

In the midst of the redeemed in glory, Thou shalt be the Shiloh. When Thou shalt come to this poor, sad earth, *Thou, whose it is*, shall have the glory. All nations shall worship Thee. Thine be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

C. S.



CLEANSED BY BLOOD,

AND

WASHED BY WATER.

BY C. S.

LONDON:

G. MORRISH, 20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE, E.C.

CLEANSED BY BLOOD,

AND

WASHED BY WATER.

IN Psalm li. you will find the deep need of a soul that has found itself ruined and vile, utterly without power in the hour of temptation. How deep the sense of guilt and sin; and yet the cry for mercy according to what God is! "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquities, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and

take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit." These are the earnest desires of a sin-burthened soul—the groans of a broken heart that longs for holiness and purity. For cleansing and purging: "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." And much more: "Create in me a clean heart, O God." Guilty, guilty, oh, wash *me* whiter than snow! Here is full unreserved confession to God, and faith looks only to Him. Here is man's need—your need and mine, as God sees it—our very condition by nature.

Now if we turn to that day when God shall gather His ancient people from all countries, we find an answer to every cry and desire in this psalm. "And I will sanctify my great name which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you; and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it,

and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel. Thus saith the Lord God: In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded." (Ezek. xxxvi. 23—33.) "Then I will sprinkle clean water upon you." All help comes from God: cleansing, a new heart, and the Holy Ghost. This is the purpose of God for His name's sake. How precious the "I wills" of God! "I will take you." Yes, from His own heart's free grace He will do all this for Israel. And is He not the same blessed God now? Poor helpless, sin-burthened soul, He says, I will cleanse thee, and thou shalt be clean. How very striking are the words of Jesus to Nicodemus: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again [or wholly afresh] he cannot see the kingdom of God." And again, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." There must be a pure and holy new creation.

And this is the work of God, entirely of God. "I will cleanse," "I will give a new heart." There must be a holy new nature. Only, mark, this does not alter the flesh. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the

Spirit is spirit." This solemn distinction of the two natures is our blessed Lord's first elementary lesson. If this lesson is not learnt, nothing can be clearly known. Truly the new quickening birth is by the Holy Ghost—"born of the Spirit." And the thing signified by water is the word: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Pet. i. 23.)

But it is important to inquire why our blessed Lord used the term 'water.' "Except a man be born of water." Does it not express the holy requirements of God? There must be a nature suited to Himself.

Now let us look at a few of the types, where *water* was used for cleansing: indeed, let us notice the relative place in these figures of water, the blood, and oil. Suppose we look at Christ and believers, in the figures of Aaron and his sons in the day of their consecration. In Leviticus viii. 6: "Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed them with water." Then from verse 7—12 it is all Aaron alone. And he put upon HIM the coat and girded HIM. . . . And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him to sanctify HIM. Thus, if we look at Jesus alone in this type, it is the water and the oil; the washing in water, then the anointing of the Holy Ghost. He was the sinless One, the washing with water marked His intrinsic purity. He needed no atoning blood. It was this that so surprised John—that the Holy One should come to be baptized. "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptized of him. And John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and

comest thou to me? And Jesus answering, said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water, and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. iii. 13-17.) He fulfilled this beautiful type of the law. He was baptized with water: and at this John might well marvel. But immediately he was anointed with the Holy Ghost. And God bore witness that He was the Holy One: "my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." From His pierced side there flowed blood and water—blood to atone, and water to cleanse. But you notice He was in His own essential being all that God could require—the Beloved Son. This gives great force to the expression, "Except a man be born of water." He must have a wholly new nature—the very nature of the Beloved Son, the second Adam.

Turn back to Leviticus viii. If Aaron typifies the holy, holy One, who needed no sin-offering—the One on whom the Father could look with perfect delight, and on whom the Holy Ghost could descend; then when Aaron and his sons presented Christ and believers, a sin-offering must be offered. Until the cross He, the corn of wheat, remained alone. Then He became sin *for* us. The holy, holy One, who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Look at Jesus in that figure; Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the sin-offering; and all this bearing the wrath due to our sins, in order that we

might be one with Him in all the sweet savour to God of the burnt offering.

For again, in the next place, the ram of burnt offering is brought; and Aaron and his sons all lay their hands upon its head. Now look at Jesus the accepted of God; and then meditate on the wondrous fact, that all believers are perfectly identified with Him in all His acceptance before God. Nay, still more, the Lamb of consecration is now brought, and Aaron and his sons lay their hands on the head of it also. Oh, look again at Jesus consecrated to the Father: and are we perfectly identified with Him in His consecration? It is even so. By what power, or value, or merit can we possibly be thus identified with Him in His consecration to God? By the power, the value, the merit of His blood. The blood of consecration was first put upon Aaron's right ear, thumb, and great toe; and then put upon his sons. To have His eternally-loved many brethren He must pass through death. And the power, the value, the merit of His blood must be upon them; yes, is upon us. As the blood was put upon ALL the sons of Aaron, so the value of the blood is reckoned to all believers.

Now, mark, this consecration was never repeated; and if the infinite value of the blood of Christ be upon us, our consecration can never cease and can never therefore be repeated.

Then follows the anointing oil, or rather the oil and the blood, sprinkled upon Aaron and his sons. Thus all believers are anointed with the Holy Ghost, the distinguishing mark of Christianity. Blessed abiding witness of the value of the blood of Jesus! Thus we have the divine order: the water, the blood, the oil. It is our complete consecration.

Born of water and Spirit, the Holy Ghost using the word to quicken us—to give us an entirely fresh, new nature, and to wash us from all defilement by the washing of water by the word. Then the infinite value of the precious death, the blood, of Jesus put upon us once and for ever. Then the anointing with the Holy Ghost.

In the cleansing of the leper in Leviticus xiv. the divine order is very striking. There is first the ground on which the leper can be cleansed. There are two birds; the one is killed over running water, the other is dipped in the blood of the dead bird, and that blood sprinkled on the leper. Precious figure! Jesus must die, and must rise again, and His resurrection applies the value of His blood, as the only basis on which the sinner can be cleansed. But now mark the order of the cleansing. Read verse 8 to 20. Again we find, first the water, then the blood, then the oil. Twice is he to be washed with water. The holy pure requirements of God are thus confirmed in the type. Then the precious offerings that set forth the perfections of Christ are taken, and he is presented with the whole value of these before the Lord. Stay, how far have we got? The believer, thus typified, is to be washed with water; he must be cleansed from all defilement. He must be presented to God with all the perfections of the work and person of Christ. Yea, we are thus presented.

Then the blood is to be put upon his right ear, thumb, and toe. The value of the atoning blood of Jesus put upon him. And then the oil is to be put upon the blood. Thus again the type sets before us the water, the blood, and the Holy Ghost. Oh, meditate on the completeness of this wondrous type!

And now look through this Book of Leviticus, and you will find every possible defilement must be washed by water. Even so every possible defilement to the believer must be met by the washing of water by the word.

Read also in Numbers xix., the water of purification. What a lesson of washing by water! Blessed fact, that water derives all its virtue from death. So the water of the word derives all its value from the death of Christ. "In the body of his flesh, through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight." (Col. i. 22.)

We now turn to another scripture of great moment—Leviticus xvi.—the great day of atonement.

Even here the priest that brings the blood within the veil must first wash in water. Nay, more, "He shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil, and he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy-seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not." Yes; such must he be who should come and offer himself without spot to God. He must be pure and holy. Yea, from the fire of the altar he must be the sweet savour unto God. The cloud—emblem of the divine presence—must cover the mercy-seat. Oh, what wondrous shadows of Christ!

I want my reader to fix his thoughts on two things specially in this chapter. The value of the blood before God, or propitiation, and the transfer of the believer's sins to Christ, or substitution. There are two goats to set forth these two things.

One is offered as a sin-offering, and its blood is sprinkled on the golden mercy-seat before the eye of God.

We have seen, and fully admit as proved, that there are repeated washings of water. Now our solemn inquiry is, Are there, or can there be, repeated applications of the blood? How long does that blood sprinkled on the mercy-seat remain? The last verse of this chapter answers the question: "An atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year." Then there required a fresh application of the blood of the goat once every year? Certainly.

Mark, there is no transfer of sins to the sin-offering of propitiation here. No hand of identification was laid upon its head. In propitiation it is what the blood is to God, turning the throne of righteous judgment into the mercy-seat. God meets a world in righteous mercy. Jesus is a propitiation for our sins, and not only so, but for the whole world.

Now look at the other goat—the azazel—the live goat. "And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited."

Nothing could more distinctly set before us the transfer of all our sins to Christ, the Substitute. This is substitution. There is perhaps not a more fatal mistake in modern theology than the confounding of these two truths together. It deceives those who have not faith, and it robs the true believer of the overwhelming comfort this fact gives, namely,

that all his sins and guilt were transferred to Christ and borne away, never to be remembered against him for ever. But to say that Christ bore the sins of the world—that the sins of all men were transferred to Christ—is to imply that all men therefore must be saved; or that His death has been in vain. I need not say that scripture never makes such a mistake. Scripture presents Christ as the propitiation of the whole world, so that God in divine righteousness proclaims mercy and forgiveness to every man. But the transfer of sins is never applied in scripture except to those who believe, where, so to speak, the hand of faith is laid on His precious head, as the hand was laid upon the goat. I make these remarks, so that shortly we may have the full unhindered testimony of God's word to our souls.

One word more. Had this transfer of all the sins of Israel to be repeated? It had to be repeated once every year. And in cases of individual sins, had there to be a fresh sin-offering? Undoubtedly, as Leviticus v. fully states.

Then would not all this prove, one may ask, that the modern thought of constant fresh applications of the blood of Christ is correct and scriptural?

Let us turn to the New Testament and inquire. Will you read Hebrews ix., x.? First, it is fully admitted that under the law there was this constant repetition, a remembrance of sins once every year; and the reason why is given: "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins."

Now, do these chapters present the sacrifice of Christ in comparison, or in contrast, with the offerings of the law? If in comparison, then clearly there must be frequent applications of the blood of

Christ to the believer, and for precisely the same reason. It is like saying, For it is impossible that the blood of Christ should take away sins! Indeed, this is exactly what Satan and unbelief are saying.

But nothing can be more clear than that these chapters present the one sacrifice of Christ in direct *contrast* with the often repeated sacrifices of the law. The offerings of old could never bring man into the presence of God. The veil shut him out; the Holy Ghost signifying that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest. Now the veil is rent, and we have boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus. *Then* the sacrifices of the law could not really take away sins even for a year. *Now* the one offering of Christ hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified.

Look at the sprinkled blood on the mercy-seat of old. Twelve months pass over, and it loses its value; there must be a fresh application of blood. But let faith look at the blood of Jesus before God; now say, twelve months pass over, has it lost its value? Twelve years, twelve thousand, twelve millions, eternity—has it lost its value? Must there be a fresh application of blood before God? Oh, my soul, wilt thou give up the everlasting efficacy of that precious blood? I may need to come boldly again and again to that throne of grace, but to say there needs or can be a fresh application of the blood of Christ is to overthrow the very foundation of Christianity. No! the one offering perfects in *perpetuity* all that are sanctified.

Let us now look at Jesus as the believer's substitute. As all the sins of Israel were confessed over and laid upon the azazel—the scape-goat, we now see Christ once offered to bear the sins of many. What a wondrous reality this is! All my sins and

iniquities transferred to Christ, borne away by Him, never to be remembered against me! All this is made true to my soul the moment by faith I lay my hand on that dear head of Thine. Is this true for twelve months? Does this work of my Jesus-substitute then fail? and then require a fresh work, a fresh application? Oh! my reader, would you thus deny the everlasting value of the blood of Jesus? A fresh application of the substitution of Christ bearing all or any of our sins transferred to him! The thing is impossible. It would make His death of no more value than the blood of a goat! Again and again may the word be applied to my heart and conscience, revealing to my soul the all-stupendous fact that all my sins were transferred to my holy Substitute on the cross. Oh, soul-sustaining truth!

We have then two things certain and everlasting: *the blood of Jesus before God*, never, never losing its efficacy—never, never needing repetition; and the sins of believers once transferred to Him put away for ever.

In all the believer's sins being transferred to Christ the Substitute, the blood must be as perfect and everlasting in its efficacy for us as it is before God; and if *all* our sins have thus been transferred, there remains none for which there can be a fresh death or application.

And now, whether in the cleansing of the leper, or the consecration of the priest, where the blood was *put upon* the person, there was not repetition. The oil was put upon the blood. This is a third important aspect of the blood of Jesus. In the first, it was before God; in the second, it is for us, in our stead; in the third, it is upon us, the whole value of the blood is put upon us: placed to

our account. Now if the blood of Jesus never can lose its value before God, nor for us in our stead; neither can it lose its value upon us. And if it can never lose its value, there need be, there can be, no fresh application of it. A fresh application implies it has lost its value. To doubt this is to doubt the infinite perfections of the person and value of the work of Christ.

This is very wonderful; yes, so wonderful that it must be entirely of God. The believer, then, must be clean every whit in God's sight. That is just what he is, and he need not wash, save his feet. The blood is ever before God: therefore we can come boldly to the mercy-seat. All our sins have been transferred, laid on Christ, borne away. God has put the same blood upon us, the infinite value of the sacrifice of Christ upon us. As to the believer who sees this, and understands these three aspects of the death of Christ, he must know that, though an unworthy sinner in himself, yet cleansed by the blood of Christ, he is whiter than snow in God's sight—without spot, made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. No doubt this was the faith once delivered to the saints a long time ago. Oh, if believers were but in that light now, clear and bright! A change now from Christendom to Christianity, is almost as great as it was of old from Judaism to Christ.

In the blessed Lord's commission to Paul we read—"He was sent to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive the forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified, by faith that is in me." (Acts xxvi. 18.) Oh, how much of that light, the true knowledge of God, has been obscured by the

traditions of men! There was then the complete turning from ignorance to God, to the full knowledge of God in Christ, and of the believer's standing in Him. Thus one can give "thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son," &c. (Col. i. 12.) All this could not possibly be, if we were imperfectly cleansed from sins, and needed further applications of the blood of Christ. And that this is a present thing is evident: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises [or virtues] of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." (1 Pet. ii. 9.)

Much depends on whether my reader enjoys that marvellous light, in all its clear brightness, or not. If you do, if you have God's thoughts as to the blood of Christ before Him on the mercy-seat, and His thought of that sacrifice as the Substitute for you, you must see all your sins have been transferred to Christ, and for ever gone; and more, His thought about the whole value of that precious blood upon you for ever. Then you must see in this wondrous light that all your sins are gone as to their guilt, and that that blood thus cleanses you from all sin. And if so, there can be no repetition, or fresh application, of the blood of Christ.

And to this agree the words of the Spirit through John: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (John i. 7.) Must it not be so? The blood before God; the blood for us: the blood

on us; the blood of Jesus Christ His Son. God sees the blood, and sins cannot be reckoned to us; they have been borne by Jesus. That blood—ever the same in infinite value; ever on us; ever before God—“cleanseth us from all sin.” It cleanseth, in the sense that we are perfected for ever, in perpetuity, by that one offering. To make this a matter of work or attainment on our part would be to deny the work of Christ. He hath perfected in perpetuity. It is the abstract statement of the value of His blood, in the light. And if we are there, in the light, walking in it, we shall have this blessed certainty.

But perhaps my reader will say, I have been told that verse means this—that if “a believer sins, he must come to God again, as he came at first, for a fresh application of the blood of Christ; and it will cleanse him again from his sins.”

Now read the verse carefully. There is no question here of “if we sin,” that is, if we do *not* walk in the light;” but “*if we walk in the light.*” We will look at that question, “if we sin,” shortly. It is of all moment rightly to divide the word of God.

If I said, “The gas lights this room,” this would not mean it is gone out, and needs a fresh application, needs lighting again. If I said, “The sun shines in the heavens, dispelling all darkness,” this would not mean there needs a fresh application of the sun’s light to do so. Nay, such has been the misuse of this precious verse that some have fallen into the fatal error, that if a believer sins he is no longer a child of God. But more of this presently.

A blind man could not see that the gas lit the room, or that the sun lights the heavens.

If a man is in darkness, he cannot see this won-

drous truth, that the blood of Jesus puts away sins, cleanses from all sin. As "Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat. . . . And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited." Even so have all our sins been transferred to Jesus. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isa. liii. 5-11.) "So Christ was ONCE offered to bear the sins of many." "But this man, after he had offered ONE sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God." Oh, if in the light we see Him there by faith; His work done, never to be repeated. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." In this full, complete, everlasting sense, if we are in the light, if we walk in the light, we have fellowship in this one with another; and the blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin.

But my reader may say, This wondrous work was accomplished before we were born.

Yes. Then all our iniquities, from our birth to our departure from this sinful world, were transferred to Jesus on the cross. To the believer this is surely true, or who can be saved? And when is all this made true to the believer? As the hand of Aaron was laid, in identification, on the head of the goat, so the moment the Holy Ghost imparts faith to the soul, there is complete identification with Christ. Then we receive, in living power in our souls, the blessed fact that all our sins have been transferred to Christ, never, never again to be laid to our charge. Nay, much more than this, we are reckoned dead with Christ, and risen with

Him. And as all our iniquities have been transferred to Him on the cross, so now we are accepted in Him, identified with Him in all that He is, the risen Christ, at God's right hand.

The doctrine of a fresh application of the blood—a doctrine nowhere taught in scripture, but taught by men—sets all this aside, and reduces ancient Christianity into modern Judaism.

Neither must we read “cleanseth from all sin” as if it meant an unfinished continuous process, like a woman washing a garment, or a man scouring a pack of wool. This is the Romish view of the work of Christ. If that woman is still washing the spots of dirt out of the garment, then she hath not really perfected it. This error robs Christ of the glory of His finished work, and needs for the Romanist a purgatory hereafter, and for others a purgatory here. An anxious soul, that cannot say, “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,” if he cannot say this, in the light, then he must be in purgatory, in the dark. Oh, my reader, if in the dark, you are tormented with uncertainty as to your sins. If in the light, you know the blood of Jesus Christ has washed them all away; they are all gone. Which is it? This is the true standing of every believer in the light before God, washed in the blood whiter than snow.

Perhaps my reader will say, I had thought these verses in 1 John very difficult.

Indeed, tell me your difficulties.

Well, am I to understand by the blood of Jesus cleansing us from all sin, that therefore we have no longer a sinful nature? That we have here below a pure sinless nature, our old sinful nature changed, or sin eradicated?

How could you have had such a thought? Do you not see verse 8 expressly corrects that mistake? "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Do you not find these words to be truth? "That which is born of the flesh is flesh:" and again, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other." (John iii. 6; Gal. v. 7.)

But how can we be for ever perfected, if there is still a sinful nature?

Because that sinful nature has been fully judged: "God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin [or by a sacrifice for sin], condemned sin in the flesh." (Rom. viii. 3.)

Then we may fully own the truth, as to the unchanged old nature, sin in the flesh; knowing that all this has been judged on the cross?

Certainly, and instead of difficulty, this gives blessed relief to the soul.

Well, one more, indeed the great difficulty to many. If the Christian should sin, does he then lose all this wondrous value of the blood of Christ? is he no longer a child of God? has the blood of Christ to be applied afresh?

Why these very verses answer with the utmost clearness each of these questions. And mark, these truths are not given that we may sin; and God forbid that I should write one line that we may be careless in our walk: "My children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the whole world." Even in this extreme case there is no thought of a fresh application of the

blood. If the believer sins, does he lose the value of the blood? Oh no, He who died for our sins is our advocate, patron, solicitor—the One who undertakes the whole case of our restoration; as we see in that beautiful figure, when He took the basin and poured water, and washed His disciples' feet. But it does not say Advocate with God, but with the FATHER. Oh, what this speaks! The relationship is still there. Not a sinner before God, to be saved again; but a fallen child, to be restored to the Father; and by Jesus Christ the righteous? Yes, He is still thy subsisting righteousness with the Father, and *He is*—not He must die again *to be*—*He is* the propitiation for our sins. This for ever decides the question of a fresh application of the blood. He is the propitiation. With the Jew the blood of the goat was needed once a year to be repeated on the propitiatory mercy-seat. Not so the blood of His Son; once shed, it is for ever before God. Have you sinned? Come boldly to that propitiatory, that throne of grace. Oh, the claims of that blood for us before God! Fearful is the error of admitting for a moment the thought that there needs a fresh application of blood. What! was that sin, which breaks your heart in sorrow and contrition, transferred to Christ on the cross? Is that precious blood on the mercy-seat before the eye of God? Is that blood also on you, as we saw in the cleansing of the leper? Need you more? Need you a fresh application of blood? Does God need more than the death of His Son? Will He deny the claims of that precious blood? “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Yes, whatever dishonouring thoughts we may

have had of the blood of Christ, God is faithful to its infinite value and unchanging claims. Therefore sins confessed are sins forgiven. Thus, through confession, the believer is restored to communion; not through a fresh application of the blood, but because the blood is ever before God. And surely God is faithful to forgive the sins which have been once transferred to Christ, and borne by Him. Oh, my soul, what a provision God has made in His own Son!

Well, my reader may say, all this is very different from what I have been taught. I have been told that to walk in the light was a very great attainment, in fact only attained by very few; and that those few were so cleansed by the blood of Jesus that they were sinless, sin in some way being eradicated. Now I see that to walk in the light is the normal or true place of every child of God; and that the blood of Jesus presents him before God whiter than snow. Though in himself he still finds sin, yea, needs one in the presence of God to be his patron or advocate when he sins, the righteous One, the propitiation; and all he needs he has in Christ. Well, the fact is I am amazed and filled with comfort. Christ is the rock; and the soul built on Him, evidently, never can be moved.

But I should like to name some other difficulties that have been presented to me. I would now briefly refer to the Romanist's view of salvation through Christ. The way to heaven is thus described: "Suppose a traveller, going towards a magnificent city where his family and a brilliant fortune await him, between him and the city there is a fathomless abyss, and impervious darkness covers his way. This traveller has neither guide nor light; over this abyss there is only a small

plank, narrow and very unsteady, and there is no other way by which he can reach the city." Then follows the use of the Decalogue to help the poor souls across.* What a picture! Is it true? Is the Romanist in impervious darkness, without a guide, without light, and to him Christ a narrow unsteady plank across the bottomless abyss?

Well, you say, I have not been brought up exactly in that impervious darkness. But really, I must say, not much better. The sum of the preaching I have heard is this: salvation by Christ is a sand-bank; to-day it is high above water mark, and all is safe; to-morrow the waves of temptation and dark billows of sin may have swept it away, and I, poor soul, may sink in the unfathomable depths of perdition. And I have been taught to regard as the most dangerous error the doctrine of the believer as a stone built on Christ the immovable rock. Now for the strengthening of my faith in Christ, and the value of His precious blood, I will put out some of my old difficulties, and, I may say, the present difficulties of thousands I love and believe to be Christians. This is one. I have known many most zealous members of the professing church, who appeared, so far as one could see, to be sincere Christians; yet at last they have been found to be practising sin, have fallen away, given up all profession, and have never, to their dying day, been restored. Does not this look like the Roman Catholic unsteady plank, or with some Protestants the shifting sand-bank? How is this?

Let the same Epistle answer: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; if they had

* "*Catechism of Perseverance.*" The way to heaven recommended by the bishops of the Roman Catholic Church.

been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." (1 John ii. 19.) The parable of the sower also shews the same thing. Out of four parts that appear to receive the truth, only one receives it in the prepared heart; and, understanding it, brings forth fruit. It is not the assent of the intellect, but the reception of Christ in the heart by faith. Have you thus received Christ? If you have, you will no doubt continue; if you have not, you will sooner or later fall away. How plain the truth of God!

Will you now turn to 1 John iii.? In chapter ii. we have seen the remedy and provision if any man sin. Most comforting to my soul! Now we read: "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not. . . . He that committeth sin is of the devil. . . . Whosoever is born of God sinneth not." Now these passages not only take away the comfort of the former, but they terribly affright many a sincere soul. I have sinned, therefore I am not a Christian at all, I am of the devil. This terror of soul arises from two mistakes; the not seeing the two natures. The new nature, that which is born of God, surely sinneth not. And again, a mistranslation in these verses. It should be, "He that practiseth sin is of the devil." In each case it is "practiseth sin." And there were those Nicolaitanes, who were openly practising sin, and yet pretending to be Christians. In the very twelve, we have a notable instance of the difference. Judas practised sin; he sought opportunity to betray Christ; and he was of the devil. When Peter sinned, sad as it was, yet did that look of Jesus say, There Peter, you have denied Me; you may go; you are of the devil

now? What a contrast! Just such a contrast is there betwixt the believer if he sins in chapter ii., and the practiser of sin in chapter iii. It is not a difficulty, but a solemn heart-searching truth.

Will you now turn to 1 Corinthians ix. 24-27? Does this not look like the unsteady plank, or the moving sand-bank? What! a man may be a preacher to others, and yet himself a castaway.

Terrible as this is, doubtless there are instances all around. But notice this chapter, and this Epistle, is not so much about salvation, but service, ministry, and church order. And surely the Holy Ghost well knew what the future clergy would be. One of the most godly of the reformers said of the clergy in his day, "Whose god was their belly, and whose religion was the kitchen." I trust there is much change for the better. Perhaps no class of men have pampered the body more than the clergy; so that there is not a solemn warning of scripture more needed than this. But because the Holy Ghost foresaw the worldliness of a hired clergy, and forewarned the godly minister of Christ of the need of keeping the body under, I cannot see for a moment that this touches the security of the true Christian, having eternal redemption through the blood of Christ. It does prove this, that preaching to others is no security. Judas again may be cited in proof. He was of the devil, and became reprobate.

Well, I confess I do not see anything here to shake the confidence of the believer in the blood ever before God for him; and the certainty that all his sins were transferred to Christ; and that the blood is upon him; and the Holy Ghost bearing witness, not to his feelings, but to the efficacy of that blood, in putting away all sins; and more,

that if he sins, Jesus the righteous One is his Advocate on high ; and that, he having eternal life, God is still his Father.

Will you now turn to Hebrews vi. 1-6 ? “Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection ; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance ; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”

Oh, the darkness and difficulty many have through misuse of these verses ! Surely then they must misunderstand them altogether. Now, clearly, if these verses mean that a believer, who has eternal life, and is for ever perfected by the one offering of Christ, may nevertheless fall away ; then they also prove the impossibility of such an one ever being restored to repentance. Now this would prove too much, both for the men of the unsteady plank, and the men of the moving sand-bank ; but what do they mean ? If you look at the context you learn in the end of chapter v. that the believing Hebrews had not gone on to perfection, or full mature christian truth. They were still occupied with truths known by them as Jews, such as repeatedly laying again the foundation of repentance, like the yearly day of atonement ; of the doctrine of baptisms or

frequent washings of water, as the priests, and believing priests, were still practising; the laying on of hands on the head of goats and bullocks, &c. Remember, the temple was still standing, and the multitude of them that believed more or less were practising its rites and occupied with its doctrines. As for resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment, all these had had their place; but now believers were to go on to perfection, to the full developed christian truth. And this the apostle does in this Epistle, shewing that christian truth is in direct contrast with the old shadows of the law. And in these very verses the contrast is sharp and striking. The very plan of Judaism, or the law, was constant renewals. If a man sinned, he must bring a fresh victim. His hand must be laid upon it; it must be killed. There must be a fresh application of blood, and his relationship with God (such as it was) is renewed or restored. For a man to leave the one infinite sacrifice of Christ, and go back to the offerings of the law for restoration in case of sin or defilement, nothing could be more certain than that such restoration was now impossible. There was great temptation to do so whilst the temple was standing. No doubt some who had been brought into all the outward privileges of the ministry of the Holy Ghost in the christian church did so go back. Repetition was quite right *before* the one sacrifice had been offered; but *now*, to give up Christ—and not only give Him up but to go back to the very murderers of Jesus, to account Him an impostor as they did—and again to seek renewals by the offerings and rites of the law, was to crucify to themselves afresh the Son of God, and to put Him to an open shame. I fail to see the trace of a contradiction here to the

precious truths we have been considering in 1 John.

You say you have been greatly troubled about this scripture: tell me, Does it apply to you? Have you given up the one offering of Christ and gone back to the offerings of the law? Have you laid your hand on the head of a goat or a bullock? True, you may have had all the advantages of a christian education; yes, some eye may rest on this paper, who has wilfully given up the one sacrifice of Christ, and gone to infidelity or ritualism. Oh! have you thus closed your eyes and refused the truth as it is in Jesus? If this is the case, no words can describe your dreadful condition. I think I hear you say, I never understood it a bit; I have been totally misled about it.

The apostle now goes on to contrast fully developed christian truth with Judaism; imperfect priesthood with the perfect priesthood of Christ; the imperfect offerings of the law, which could never take away sins, with the one offering of Jesus, which for ever perfects all that are sanctified by it.

Oh! stay; this brings us to that other scripture, such a terror to many: "If we sin wilfully." (Heb. x. 26-31.)

Now, what is this wilful sin? Is it not this: As he that despised Moses' law died without mercy, of how much sorer punishment is ne worthy, who hath trodden under-foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood or the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing? Is not this again the Hebrew who, by professed faith in the blood of the Son of God, had been outwardly separated from the Jewish sacrifices to Christ, and who now wilfully despises the sacrifice of the Son of God, and by going back to open sin tramples Him under-

foot? Can there be anything but vengeance for such an one? Have you done this? Have you gone from Christ? Do you despise and trample under-foot the Son of God? Undoubtedly, to give up Christ and go after flesh, and the world, is the same thing in principle now.

I grant that the ritualist, in going to the Mass, is doing as much so as he can. But the sin of apostasy, wilfully rejecting and despising Christ, cannot be the sin of a believer, who clings to Him as his Advocate with the Father. Therefore this sin of the apostate Jew, or the modern despiser of Christ, has nothing to say to the security of the believer, as a stone built on the immovable Rock, and that rock is Christ.

Where have been my eyes, my reader may say? I fear in the dark; and darkness and light make all the difference in reading the word of God.

I will only bring one more scripture—2 Peter ii. 20, 22. Now here it seems evident that there are some who had escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And they have known the way of righteousness, yet the latter end with them is worse than the beginning.

This is a very solemn chapter. But “there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you,” &c. Their character is described at full length. For a time these false teachers had escaped the corruptions of the world, as we have seen. This must be so. They would not have been received into the professing church if they had not been outwardly moral. “But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallow-

ing in the mire." Now is it not sad to use this scripture which thus so solemnly describes *false* teachers as dogs and swine, who thus return to their own evil ways, as if it described true Christians, the sheep of Christ? This wresting of scripture, however, will not shake the foundation of the believer, and that foundation is Christ the rock. Surely no person who thus misuses this scripture can have read the first and last verses of the chapter. Nay; read the whole chapter. Oh! poor soul, tossed by false teaching, look up! the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth from all sin. Thy sins have all been transferred to Him. God is thy justifier. Nothing shall separate thee from the love of Christ.

But, to return, What is the meaning of "to cleanse us from all unrighteousness?" This brings us to the washing of water by the word. "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." (Eph. v. 25.) "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." Is it not remarkable that we rarely hear a single reference to this washing of water by the word? If we remember how the types abound with the washing of water, surely there must be truth of great practical importance signified in them. Let us then inquire what is the meaning of the washing of water that *preceded* the blood, as in the consecration of the priest; and the frequent washings *after* the blood was put upon him. God had no purpose of restoring man's fallen sinful nature, as we have seen, but giving him a wholly new nature, pure and holy. The Lord announced this fact to Nicodemus, that man must be born wholly anew. And hence water is used as the express figure of this needed

purity of the new birth, or new nature. Only the Lord carefully excludes the idea that water imparts this new life: "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." You could not say, That which is born of water is water.

There is no ground in the scriptures for the modern error, that water is the instrument used by the Spirit to effect this new life. The word of God leaves no possibility of mistake as to this. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Pet. i. 23.) Are we born by the water of baptism? No! By what then? By the word of God. Even as Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, HATH EVERLASTING LIFE, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life." Could words be more plain, or more certain? Study this verse well, and then tell me, is it not sad for men to alter all this, and to say baptism and water do all that? I will not copy the dreadful words that even christian men try to justify in their catechisms. Oh, let us return to the word of God. A careful examination of John iii. will convince you that there is no direct reference to baptism in the words, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Nicodemus had not the remotest idea of christian baptism, or its meaning; and yet, if he had only remembered Ezekiel xxxvi. 22-36, he would have well understood that, when God shall bring his nation into the kingdom or reign of God, the very things that Jesus had now said to him were distinctly foretold there. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall

be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you," &c.

It is quite true that baptism, as a figure, gives a deeper and fuller meaning to the wondrous truth of salvation by Christ's death. As Jesus said, "Even so must the Son of man be lifted up." He must die. We must be identified with Him in that death; that the new life must be wholly new to us, even the life of the risen Christ. This is beautifully set forth in baptism; see Romans vi. and Colossians ii.

Have you ever felt the joy of knowing that the eternal life given to you is the eternal life of that risen Man in the glory of God? Oh, how safe your life, hid with Christ in God! and because He lives, we live also. Can He die again? Once He died to put away our sins; but now He lives evermore.

We will now consider the washing with water after the blood. We have seen the washing of water before the blood was put upon the leper or the priest, shewing the absolute need of purification from all defilement. But after this, and the blood was put upon the priest, and the holy anointing oil was put upon the blood, then, even after this holy consecration, the sanctified priest, or priests, must wash their hands and feet whenever they go into the tabernacle or near the altar; they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not. (Ex. xxx. 17-20.) The purification must be maintained or continued; and is not this the washing of the feet in John xiii.?

And if we read through Leviticus, we find that for every possible defilement there must be washing

with water. Most profitable would it be to examine all this in detail, but this would require a volume instead of a tract.*

Now what is the voice of the Spirit to us in this washing by water after the precious blood of Christ has for ever perfected us; our sins transferred to Him; and the infinite value of His blood transferred to us, put upon us; and we sealed, anointed, by the Holy Ghost?

You will find, that just as there was the appointed washing, from every variety of uncleanness, to Israel; so there is a precept for every possible failure or defilement of the Christian. What water is to the body, the word is to our spiritual walk. Israel were called to this ceremonial cleansing and holiness, as the redeemed of Jehovah, from Egypt, because he was Holy. (Lev. xi. 44, 45.) So speaketh the word to us, "But as he which has called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation: because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy" (1 Pet. i. 5); quoting this very text from Leviticus xi.

Thus sanctification by the word, washing of water by the word, is to be to us what literal water was to them. What simple figures our God has been pleased to give us! What a marked difference the use of water makes! You see a poor neglected child, washed, perhaps, once a month, and poorly fed. See another one clean, and well nourished with food. What a difference frequent washing and nutritious food make! Have you seen the photograph of a lost child, taken from the streets, before and after a couple of years' washing,

* This has been done. See "Notes on Leviticus," by C. H. M. G. Morrish, London.

and feeding? It scarcely looks like the same. Are you aware there would be as striking a difference in many a Christian if he were brought to the constant application of the water of the word, at the same time the soul feeding on Christ in the word?

You see a Christian plunged in business, worldliness, and politics—perhaps once a month a little washing for a sacrament—so full of the world, that there is little room for Christ. He gets more and more wretched, scarce knows whether he is saved or not. Suppose the word of Christ comes with power to his soul. He does not doubt the atonement. He does rest in Christ. But all spiritual life is stunted and drooping. Let the Spirit of Christ apply such a word as this—"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (1 John ii. 15.) He awakes to the fact that he is loving the world, and linking himself with it: and all the while that world hates Christ! Ah, never did a London Arab need water more than he finds he needs the word. Thus the water of the word sanctifies him, cleanses him, from the inconsistent associations and spirit of this world. "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." Oh, how we all need this long-forgotten washing of water by the word! To be clean every whit, may we now yield our feet to be washed with water by the precious Lord. The blood can never lose its efficacy, can never be repeated, or freshly applied. Such a thought is Judaism. But for practical righteousness, for

consistency of walk, we need the water of the word at every step. There is no holiness of walk without it. And yet many who teach a kind of holiness seem to know nothing of the washing of water; yea, even put the blood in the place of the water of the word, and so deny the finished work of Christ, the full value of that one offering by which He hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified. It is because we are for ever perfected by that one offering, that we are now called to walk as He walked.

The priest had to wash his own feet; the Lord of glory is girded to wash ours. Shall we refuse Him? Lord, apply Thy word to our walk and ways. When we read that word in His presence, every verse is as water to cleanse us from the defilements by the way.

I thank God our Father that many are yearning more after holiness; but let them seek to be sanctified by the word of truth. Satan will take care to bring false teachers into that holiness-movement, teachers that will call sin holiness. Mark ye, much that is highly esteemed is condemned by the word. I would note sectarianism. (See 1 Cor. iii. 1-3.) Yet it is not long since a teacher of holiness rejoiced that his teaching had never led a single soul to give up this carnality—the sin of sectarianism. Not one through his teaching had given up the sin or his sect. Yea, at a large “holiness” convention an anti-Holy Ghost meeting was to be held each night; a committee was to take care that the Holy Ghost should not have liberty to use whom He would in the assembly, according to the word of God. (2 Cor. xii.) None were to speak but those permitted by the anti-Holy Ghost committee. Oh, beware of such holiness as this! No

one can conceive the rubbish and defilement that needs washing away by the water of the word. The blood is still before God; the believer is accepted in Christ. Nothing can touch that. But oh, our ways! Fellow Christians, awake! awake! Let everything be tried and cleansed by the water of the word. Remember the yearning claim of Christ, "Sanctify them by thy word; thy word is truth." Is anything more needed at this moment than the washing of water by the word?

I press this on my own soul, I press it on my brethren in Christ. Whilst rejoicing in the one offering by which we are for ever perfected, are we not in danger of neglecting the precepts of the word? The Lord bring every line with power to our souls, and to Him be all praise!

C. S.

