



Volume I.

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2 COR. IV. 3-6.

[No. 1.]

SALVATION IS OF THE LORD.

"So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd."

CHOSEN retreat : mine—which God in His mercy had spared me :

Leafy and close—He compacted His wayfarer's bower,

Oh, I rejoiced in the gourd He himself had prepared me,

Child of the night, it grew up like the summer's own flower.

Now, said my heart, let there come what there may come of anguish,

Sheltered I live. . . . If I droop, here no stranger will see.

This o'er my head—shall I fear? shall I faint? shall I languish?

Knowing my grief, God created this palm-crest for me!

Wonderful gourd! shedding shadow of love's own providing!

Yes; but that love, in its wisdom, prepared me a worm!

Next day, at dawn—God's own finger the strange creature guiding—

Blind as it was, to my beautiful gourd it must turn.

Smote it. It withered. Nay more—when the sun was arising,

Came His east wind. Dry against me, exposed there, it blew,

Pitiless heat thus my pride and my sorrow surprising,

Fainting, I shrivelled. I wished, in myself, to die too.

God said to me, "Dost thou well?" "Is thy heart still unbroken?"

Oh—I was angry—too angry for aught but for death!

Voice of the Lord, Thou to me hast triumphantly spoken—

Let me now live : let me eat every word that He saith.

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"Thou"—He explained, "wouldst have saved, in thy shortsighted pity, Life for which thou hast not laboured, nor madest it grow.

Should I not spare that great Nineveh—soul-stricken city?

Babes—and much cattle? Be lowly. My heart thou shalt know."

NOTES ON FIRST TIMOTHY.

1. PAUL, APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST.

THIS is in accordance with what we find in Acts ix. 15, xxvi. 16, 17. "Delivering thee from the people (the Jews) and from the Gentiles (nations) to whom now I send thee." Christ was the Apostle of the Father (John x. 36); and as He had been "sanctified and sent into the world," so He sends the apostles (John xx. 21) "as my Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." But from the right-hand of God—not as on earth—"He gave some apostles" to the Church, and Paul was one of them—the most noted of all, and one who laboured more abundantly than they all. Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ, after He was in the glory of God, for He both called, authorised him, and gave him his commission, sent him and sustained him by His grace and over-ruling providence in the prosecution of His work. "He gave some apostles."

Although Paul, as well as Barnabas, was afterwards separated by the Church of Antioch for a special mission (Acts xiii. 1, 4), yet, properly speaking, as to the origin, authorisation, channel, and title of his apostleship (Gal. i.) as well as his call to it, he was "an apostle" (not of the Church, "neither of man nor by man," but) "of Christ Jesus." This he vehemently affirms and insists on in Gal. i. Here he traces it up to the "commandment of God our Saviour, and Jesus

Christ our hope." In some of his earlier epistles, he styles himself, apostle "by the will of God," the same source as the saints' blessing flowed from. Here, "according to the commandment," shows a more direct and authoritative commission; just as public proclamations are subscribed—"by authority." It contemplates man universally, hence (Rom. xvi. 26) "according to the commandment of the Eternal God made known to all the nations for obedience of faith." Sometimes he spoke only by permission, and not of commandment, as in 1 Cor. vii. 6, 25; 2 Cor. viii. 8. It is not so in these pastoral epistles, as here and Titus i. 3. Apostles were immediate servants of God and His Christ, and had authority in establishing and governing the Church as well as declaring divine truth, whether as to doctrine or duty. It is "by commandment of God our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ," he writes to Timothy (it is not a mere private letter of friendship), that he might show his warrant in dealing with "other teaching" than that which flowed from, and was in accordance with, the "Gospel of the glory of the blessed God." Due authority is thereby conferred on him, to give Timothy a commission to guard the doctrine at Ephesus from any admixture of frivolousness or legalism. With all "authority," the word is translated in Titus ii. 15. From the Saviour God Paul had his apostleship by commandment, to proclaim His dispensation to all men—all nations—"to every creature under heaven."

2. OUR SAVIOUR GOD.

"God our Saviour," or, as it may be rendered, "our Saviour-God," is a phrase peculiar to the pastoral epistles. It is found in the following places:—

1st. "Commandment of our Saviour-God and Jesus Christ our hope" (1 Tim. i. 1).

2d. "This is good and acceptable in the sight of our Saviour-God, who wills all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. ii. 3, 4).

3d. "God manifested His Word in preaching with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of our Saviour-God" (Titus i. 3).

4th. "That they may adorn the doctrine of our Saviour-God in all things" (Titus ii. 10).

5th. "When the goodness and the love of our Saviour-God appears" (Titus iii. 4).

It occurs five times in these pastoral epistles, as "*the heavenlies*" occurs five times in the Ephesian epistle.

This expression, "*our Saviour-God*," looks towards men, and in connection with it you find God in these pastoral epistles having regard to men. In this chapter you find the "Gospel of the glory of the blessed God," and the preaching of this great fact that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." In chap. ii., to pray for "*all men*" is represented as "good and acceptable in the sight of our Saviour-God, who will have all men to be saved," and the "one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all." In chap. iv. the apostle says; "We trust in the living God who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe"—i.e., as the providential Preserver. In Titus i.-ii. 9 servants are enjoined to "adorn the doctrine of 'God their Saviour' in all things;" and the ground of the exhortation is this—"the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared." And all sorts of right conduct in Christians towards mankind is founded in Titus iii. 4 on this "that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man hath appeared," saving us according to His mercy, and not according to our works of righteousness. The ground-level of the pastoral epistles is God saving men—not the body or bride of Christ, or God's counsels carried out in Christ with regard either to the mystery of God in its inner or outer evolutions, although we have the mystery of piety and the mystery of impiety fully disclosed. "God who hath saved us," and "our Saviour Jesus Christ who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," are before us.

3. "AND CHRIST JESUS OUR HOPE."

God hath saved us, and doth save us, and Christ Jesus is our hope. Our hope is not any perfectly sinless state down here in ourselves, nor do we hope for the

conversion of the whole world by the present means and agencies, and the introduction of the millennium and a holy happy world for Christ to come and reign over; nor do we have the reunion of a disunited Christendom, and a pristine condition of the Church as our hope; but "Christ Jesus is our hope."

He is our life as He is our righteousness; and, being owned of God—children of God—we are one with Christ at God's right hand, and He who has redeemed us and given us Himself as our portion has said, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also;" and "we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is"—the dead raised, the living changed, and we all in one glorious company ascending to meet Him in the air, shall be perfected in glory, "and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Himself coming to meet us, and we glorified together with Him—that is "our hope."

As children we shall be in the Father's house with the Son of His love, and as heirs displayed in the golden city with the glorified Lamb in His millennial reign, but, whether in heaven or on earth, our hope is to be together with Him, "*Christ Jesus our hope*."

4. THE GENUINE SON.

"Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith; grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord" (verse 2; see also Acts xvi.)

"My own son," for *own*, the Greek word is *true, genuine, legitimate* son. The word no doubt is employed in addressing Timothy in relation to Paul, because, as a son with a father, he was with him in his missionary journeys, and laboured with him in the gospel. The word is used in Phil. iv. 3, in the sense of *true* or *genuine*—"true yoke-fellow." Paul could trust Timothy, and address him as a genuine young man. In one place he wrote of some—"These only are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God who have been a comfort to me,"—evidently implying that some had been a trouble. Timothy was one of the *true, genuine* sort, who always proved a comfort to him. We may see a confirmation of this in the Apostle's written character of Timothy in Phil. ii. 22:—"But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort when I know your state. For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he has served with me in the gospel. Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me" (ver. 19-23).

It is a high honour for a young man to get a character like this from the first man of his day in the Church of God. His gentleness was seen in several things. First, in his naturally caring for the saints—"for your state" (ver. 19). While all were seeking their own things, not the things which were Jesus Christ's, Timothy took to the care of the Church of God—the welfare of the saints—just as naturally as if they were his own children. I would not give much for the character of a young man who merely did a certain round of things because it was supposed to be his duty; a genuine Christian youth is one who naturally cares for others because they are Christ's; and he is thus the active, practical display of Christ in self-sacrifice for others here below, since He is no longer here. Timothy was a man who had ceased to think of self, because of the Christ-thought filling and absorbing him. And when this is so, one will care for the people and things of Christ. A young man, whom the self-sacrificing Paul called "a genuine son in the faith," must have been no ordinary Christian.

Again, *secondly*, another trait of His genuineness was, that he adhered to Paul with so much fidelity. He had so much of the genuine in him, that he could discern great moral worth in Paul. It is to my mind a sign of genuineness and growth in grace and knowledge and Christian holiness, when young people make up to elderly and experienced Christians—for we are formed by some higher model than ourselves—they thereby gain solidity of character, and learn to deny themselves, and follow Christ for Christ's sake. When there is a constant desire among young Christians to club together, and an irksome feeling experienced as if older Christians were slow, heavy, and too solid, there is imminent danger of religious epicureanism, or the making of ephemeral enjoyment the alpha and omega in religion, and self the beginning, middle, and end. Young Timothys, if genuine sons in the faith, will be found in company with elderly Pauls.

Thirdly, What helped to make Timothy so genuine? He had had a good training as a child in the Holy Scriptures as a foundation, and then had faith in the Lord Jesus (2 Tim. i. 5, iii. 14, 15). His grandmother and his mother were genuine people of faith and piety, and they taught him the Holy Scriptures. The steady Christians—pious, holy, and constant—are, as a rule (there are many bright exceptions), those who have had a godly upbringing, and have been familiar with the Holy Scriptures in a pious family from their childhood, however irksome they may have found it. Unconverted young people do find it heavy and oppressive enough to have Christian instruction forced upon them.

But it is the duty of parents to make them receive it although they may appear to take it as physic rather than as food, and their after life will show the health given by having it.

It is possible that Timothy may have been literally Paul's son in the Gospel (1 Cor. iv. 17), having received it on Paul's first missionary journey to Lystra (Acts xiv. 6, 7). However that may have been, he was taken along with Paul in the work of the gospel (Acts xiv. 1, 2). He went with him to Troas, to Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, where he remained for a time, while Paul went on to Athens (Acts xvii. 14, 15). Then he was sent by Paul to strengthen the Thessalonians, and afterwards joined him at Corinth (Acts xviii. 5; 1 Thess. iii. 6). We find him on Paul's third missionary journey at Ephesus; thence sent to Macedonia and Achaia (Acts xix. 22; 1 Cor. iv. 17; xiv. 10, 11). Timothy was with Paul when he wrote his Second Epistle to the Corinthians from Macedonia (2 Cor. i. 1); went with him to Corinth; thence sends his greeting to saints at Rome (Rom. xvi. 21). On returning through Macedonia, Paul sent Timothy before to Troas (Acts xx. 4).

I need not trace him further. He was one evidently trusted as a right-hand man by our apostle, one whom he could designate "man of God" (1 Tim. vi. 11), not man of men, as many young preachers are, whose whole aim is to please men, which, as Paul avers, makes them not the servants of Jesus Christ (Gal. i.). His connection with Paul from the outset was unbroken, intimate, happy for himself, and a source of refreshment to Paul, as the last letter (2 Tim.) he ever wrote shows. Paul's last earthly work was penning a letter to his son Timothy, in which he acknowledges as his "dearly beloved Son."

"NEVER PERISH."

"NEVER perish!"—words of mercy, coming from the lips of One,
Who, though here a homeless stranger, fills the high eternal throne.
Brightness of the Father's glory, God and man in one combined,
Faithful Shepherd of the chosen, safe are those to Him assigned.
"Never perish!" words of sweetness, dissipating every fear;
Filling all with joy and gladness, who the Shepherd's voice can hear;
Bringing richest consolation to the soul fatigued, oppress'd;
Sweet refreshment to the fainting, and to weary spirits rest.
"Never perish!" words of power; Satan now, I can defy!
Safe my soul beyond my keeping, hid with Christ in God on high.
Come what will, I'm safe for ever—'tis the promise of my God;
Triumph in His word unailing—sealed with Jesus' precious blood.

"Never perish!" words of glory—heaven is mine, and all is well!

O my soul! with rapture burning, on this precious sentence dwell;

Think not of thy faults and failings, nor on thy deservings brood—

What thou art in Christ now ponder, and the purpose of thy God. A. M.

THE SOIL AND THE SEED.

In what various forms the grace of God shines on the pages of Scripture! At times the eye catches some fresh image of this, and looks at it with admiration. An instance of the way of grace will be found in Acts, chapter x.

It is the record of a piece of spiritual husbandry. In the narrative which it gives us, we have the *soil* that is about to be cultivated; then the *sower*, and the *seed*, and the *lord of the harvest* presiding over the whole work from first to last.

Cornelius and his household are the soil, now under the husbandry of God. Peter is the sower; and the words which he spoke in the house of Cornelius are the seed. This is all plain and simple. But the chief thing to be noticed, we may say, is the hand, the divine hand, that presides over and orders all this interesting action.

And in this action we get witnesses of grace in its *tenderness*, in its *strength*, and in its *glory*.

We have two visions, one to Cornelius and one to Peter.

Cornelius, at the time when this scene opens, was a piece of fallow-ground which had already been under the action of the plough. He was prepared for the sower by the hand of God, as all "good ground" is. He had been under certain exercises of conscience. The Father, I may say, had been drawing him. He was not at ease. He did many things religiously, and did them with a heart that would fain bow to God and seek Him. God had found him, but he had not found God. But here, grace shines in its tenderness—for such a condition of soul as this is of price in His sight; so that a special message is now sent from heaven to guide it in the way of peace. The angel tells Cornelius that he had a memorial with God, and that he himself had been sent expressly to put him in the way of hearing words of salvation.

Now this is full of tender grace. The first throbbings of an awakened soul are precious with God—surely so. The parable of the prodigal son witnesses this. The love which the Lord felt for the rich young ruler in Mark x. may also, I believe, witness this. So, His words on the publican in the temple in Luke xviii., and the answer He gives the scribe in Mark xii. The first stirrings of a convicted conscience in the Samaritan of John iv., and so to this

day, all such motions in all hearts are known to Him and by Him. And sweet and rich is that grace which takes such a form of condescending tenderness, and exercises that considerateness of love which listens to these feeblest and earliest cries of infancy. But as it is His own visitation that has awakened them, so does He wait on them to bring them to fruitfulness.

Peter, in this scene, was the minister of Christ. He was the sower, according to the figure I have used. He was the servant of the Lord Jesus in the gospel of God; but his heart needed to be enlarged. It was not of the same measure as the Master's; the Lord, therefore, has to send a message to him. A vision and a voice address him, while in a trance, to prepare him for a sowing time among the Gentiles. He was not up to this. He does not understand it, and he resents it. He must be right of course, and his Master wrong. "Not so, Lord," he says. His eye had never surveyed such distant fields as these, save with scorn, as no part of God's vineyard, or within the range of His husbandry. But the Lord is peremptory, as of old He had been with Jonah, and lately with Ananias. Peter must go with the seed where God had already been with the plough—yea, where He had been, in counsel, ere the world began; for even then He had "chosen" the Gentiles.

Thus, by the *strong* and the *tender* hand of God, the ground and the sower are found together. What forms of grace! Peter is made to visit this Gentile plough-land, this distant field, already broken up, but not as yet sown. Grace, as we saw, in its tenderness had valued the throbbings of a freshly awakened, uneasy conscience; and grace, as we have seen, in its strength and decision, rebukes and overrules the slow-hearted servant, who knew not the riches and the largeness of that truth which had been entrusted to him. Accordingly, these two visions, the one to Cornelius and the other to Peter, have different secrets in them, each very blessed. On the authority of the one, we may tell every convicted, trembling soul, that its trouble is known and marked by God; on the authority of the other, we may tell every sower of the seed, that he may go to the ends of the earth with that which he has, and bear the tidings of full forgiveness and acceptance to every sinner that will, by faith, use Jesus and His salvation.

Light and consolation are here, surely. These two visions turn to blessed testimony; and as we have two visions in this chapter, so have we one seal. The seed of the sower is sanctioned in a glorious manner.

Peter's sermon, so to call it, is the seed. He tells the house of Cornelius,

and all gathered then and there (all were alike welcome to hear), that Jesus had come preaching peace, had been slain by men, raised by God, and that His resurrection was set in the eyes of all men, both for judgment and salvation; for judgment on the world, for salvation, full remission of sins, to all who would believe in Him. The Holy Ghost then falls on all them that heard the word. He had fallen on the disciples assembled at Jerusalem at the appointed Jewish Pentecost, sealing the great fact of the exaltation and glory of Jesus; now, He falls on a distant Gentile household, sealing the word of salvation as upon the ends of the earth.

What glorious grace was this, I may say. If we saw the *tenderness* of grace in the vision or mission that visited Cornelius, and the *strength*, or decision and largeness of grace in the voice and the vision that addressed themselves to Peter, here we see nothing less than the *glory* of grace; the Holy Ghost, who had before sealed the fact of the exaltation of Christ, now seals the truth of the salvation of every poor sinner all the world over, who will believe in Him!

Very blessed, surely. The Spirit endued the disciples at Pentecost, giving them words of life for all the nations of the earth; the Spirit now seals those words of life in this first-fruits of the nations.

May I not, therefore, say, that this chapter gives us the sight of a precious piece of divine husbandry? We see the ground that was to be tilled, and then the sower, the seed, and the hand of the Lord of the harvest, presiding over all in ways of tender, earnest, and glorious grace; and all this to bring sinners back and home to God. It was not to put the Gentile and the Jew together, Cornelius and Peter, but to put God and the sinner together, that all this august and interesting action takes place; and to put them together under such a seal, as no malice or force of earth or hell can ever cancel. And there is no rest for us till this is reached; for our relation to God is, indeed, the great circumstance.

And on the authority of this chapter I may say, with what earnest personal zeal the Lord is seen to apply Himself to the work of salvation; for this chapter illustrates that. Visions, oracles, missions of angels, the presence of the Holy Ghost Himself, here tell us of His zeal. "I will do it," says Jehovah, by His prophet, speaking of the redemption of Israel in the last day. "Assuredly with my whole heart and my whole soul." What words! "The zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall perform this," says another of the prophets, when prophesying of the kingdom; and in the day of the redemption

of Israel out of Egypt, as we read in Exodus ii. and iii., we hear and see the same, the Lord so earnestly listens to the cry of Israel's sorrow. "Their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage, and God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant, and God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them." It is all God, and God in deep personal affection. And then, the vision of the burning bush is the same. It tells us that God was already in Egypt, in the midst of His people's sorrows there, ere He rose to send Moses there.

All Scripture abounds with the witness of this intense personality, so to express it, with which the blessed God gives Himself to the work of salvation. The whole of Luke xv. again shows it to us. The personal *toil* of the Shepherd, the personal *diligence* of the woman, the personal *affection* of the Father, in the three parables there, bespeak this. So, also, the whole of what is seen and heard in Luke i. and ii. All heaven is there earnestly occupied with that great mystery, the birth of Jesus, or the incarnation of the Son, which, as we know, was the preparing of the way for the salvation of God to enter this world of sin and death. Gabriel, chief among those who wait in God's presence, is sent on special messages. Hosts of angels are there, and the glory fills the fields of Bethlehem. Old men and babes, matrons and maidens, youths and widows, shepherds and priests, all are summoned to take their place in the common joy.

Surely we may let our hearts know that God is a cheerful giver. He does not send His blessings, He brings them rather; and brings them not merely in His hand, but with His heart.

Surely, after meditating on this chapter we may say, with what tenderness and strength did God grant "repentance unto life" to the Gentiles! With what a vigorous hand did He "open the door of faith" to them! (See Acts xi. 18, xiv. 26.) He does His things, blessed be His name, like Himself, in ways that tell us it is Himself that is doing them. Such an entrance did He make, in the day of this chapter, upon the nations of the earth, with the grace of His gospel; so that we, sinners of the Gentiles, may sit in His presence, and no longer take of the crumbs under the table, but take of the full feast on the table—take of it as ours by title written and sealed by His own hand. J. G. B.

SUFFERING AND REST.

My Saviour, I can think of Thee,
And rest upon Thy name;
Through changing scenes Thou leadest me—
But Thou art still the same.

When I am feeble than a child—

Too faint to lift a cry—

Thy strength is with me, all the while
I know that Thou art nigh.

O precious Lord! I hear Thy voice,

In accents soft and sweet,

When wearied is my aching head;

And worn my willing feet.

Thou giv'st to Thy beloved in sleep;

In safety I abide;

My hand in Thine Thou still dost keep,

Thou'rt watching by my side.

Lord Jesus, it is sweet to pause

And be alone with Thee;

To prove, shut out from all beside,

How Thou art all to me.

'Tis joy to know Thou wilt complete

The work Thou hast begun;

And oh, how comforting and sweet,

The rest when work is done!

* An gottes Segen ist alles gelegen.

"AS THE TRUTH IS IN JESUS."

"The truth as it is in Jesus," in Eph. iv. 21, is connected with putting off the old man and putting on the new; for you cannot have the *practice* of the Christian life, without the life itself. But *having life*, the commonest duties are connected with this truth of the body of Christ. For example, Lie not one to another! because "members one of another." This is the secret of the elevation of a Christian's conduct.

All our duties flow from our relationships. A child's duties result from what he is to his father; the wife's to the husband, &c. A Christian is put in the most responsible relation; and his highest privilege is to have the Lord brought into everything, because thus his affection to Christ is tested in all. We have our place in Christ before God; and God has His place in us before men; so that whatever does not suit the presence of God, does not suit a Christian.

When man fell, he was *under* the evil. Now we are to be *over* the evil, "renewed after God." "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

The Epistle to the Ephesians supposes the Church to be *with Christ*. It ever views the Church in the Head. First, as to its testimony: "That now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God." 2. As to blessing: "Blessed with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ." 3. As to our place in Christ: "Which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." 4. As to where we are: "Quickened together with Christ, and raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." 5. As to *conflict*: "Wrestling against spiritual wickednesses in heavenly places."

This Epistle never looks at the saints as *apart from*, but as *in Christ*. The whole body is ever so connected with the Head, by the power of the Spirit, that they cannot be separated. "Members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." "No man ever yet hated *his own flesh*; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church."

In Ephesians, whether it is *blessing, testimony, conflict, or where we are*, all is *heavenly*; and the measure and standing of our conduct ought to be the heavenly man—"As the truth is in Jesus."

In chapter i. *the counsels of God* are considered. Chap. ii. *His power* to usward who believe. Chap. iii. the character of His blessing to the Gentiles. Chap. iv. the character of the saints as the body of Christ in heaven, and as the habitation of the Spirit down here. Also the practice becoming such. In chap. v., towards the end, we have the exercise of Christ's love towards those so united to Him. It is not only what is the place of God that we need to know, but what is the exercise of Christ's affections towards us in that place. So here, it is not the plans and thoughts of grace that are presented to us, but the *exercise* of grace. It shows us the way Christ feels in *His* relationship to us.

Whatever we are, divine teaching ever connects the commonest details of ordinary life with the highest privileges. That which loosens the bonds of common life is not the *testimony of God*. Whatever are the privileges of the saints they are brought to the *light*; and it is by the *light* everything is tested. Truth always fortifies conscience in a man, in His common-place duties. The truth would ever lead to the fulfilment of those common duties, *which all own to be duties*.

Again, wherever the grace and love of God act on a saint, they always go back to God. The incense in the holy place always ascended, but the fragrance was not for the priests, but *for God*. It was burnt entirely for God, but the sweet savour was diffused all around. Whatever Christ did He did *to God*, and it was a sweet savour. If it is not so with us it is nothing but *selfishness*.

Christ loved us, and gave Himself for us. Here is the greatest act of love to us; but it was "*a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour*" (ver. 2). Love cannot come down and act in this heavenly, this perfect man, without its perfection being *Godward*. Love having God ever before it, can go on ever according to the mind of God, amidst all opposition. In its perfectness, however, this could be found only in Christ. We have it, but it is mingled with much failure.

Love, however, comes down from God, and must return to God. We know how self-applause, and how many mixed motives creep in with us, *afterwards*, if not at the time. But oh! how earnestly should we seek that our motives may be *single to Godward*. It is a dreadful thing for the grace which God has given to be used for *SELF*. Never did Christ seek His own glory. It was always His Father's glory that He sought. It is indispensable for *internal holiness* (I speak not of external) to have the heart exercised about this.

All our privileges bring us *to God*. God has a certain character, and He cannot allow anything unsuitable to that. "*Ye were darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord*." It is not, we have *got* light, but we are light. The very nature is light. Darkness and light can never be together. This broad truth is laid down in ver. 5, but it rests not here. It adds (ver. 6) "Because of these things the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience," or unbelief.

Mark, how unbelief is the *root* of all sin. It is not the only sin; but all sins deny the character of God. In ver. 8, it is said "*Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord*."

This principle having been laid down, we have the measure and standard of this light (ver 14) even *Christ Himself*. "*Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light*." Christ is the standard, you are *asleep* a little, not *dead* actually, but practically as if dead. Let me awake, then, and get all I can in Christ. But what do I get in Christ? Everything! This awakening does not mean the conscience merely, for the avoiding certain things, but it is the getting Christ Himself formed in us. While I have the *nature* I have also *Christ the object* before me, and He is light! Light is *before* my soul, as well as *within* my soul; Christ is *my life*, and I get in *Christ divine perfection*, as well as *life*.

Christ shall give thee light. Let us take one instance. People think it a great matter if a man has what they call a fine fortune left him! But Christ says, "*How hardly* shall they that have riches, enter into the kingdom of God."

"A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesses." "Woe to them that are rich!" Riches may be the ruin of a man. Is that *light*?

"See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fobbs, but as wise" (ver. 15). We are not only to *avoid* certain things, but there is something to be *gained*. *Divine wisdom to live Christ*. We have to walk with all the wisdom of God. Satan is seeking to trip us up; to dim our testimony; to cause that to be seen in us which is *not Christ*. We are called in a world that is against us, to be waiting

every opportunity to seize it for *Christ*. We are to *live Christ* before the world. That is what is meant by wisdom and redeeming the time. It is not merely not *wasting it*, but seizing it for Christ. The devil seeks to pre-occupy men's thoughts and affections; but we want to redeem time from this, by seeking every opportunity of introducing Christ.

"Be filled with the Spirit" (ver. 18). Nothing but the Spirit—a vessel filled with one thing—the Holy Ghost, the spring and source in the soul, of all you do. If it be so Christ will be the subject. The Spirit may give understanding, and the mind still be working; but when "*filled with the Spirit*," the whole man becomes the instrument in His hands, so that he thinks, feels, utters, only what the Spirit gives. I speak here only of power, not of *revelation*. Thus, filled with the Spirit, the flesh would not meddle with the things of God. But too often we mix up *our own* thoughts, and we introduce things at the wrong time. We want to be as clay moulded by Him.

What a deliverance is this from self! What a consciousness of the power of God in us, when thus filled with the Spirit! All must acknowledge how little there is of this in us, and how all is so *mingled*! so little of the complete setting aside of all that is of man! If we fail, the conscience has to be dealt with; but our normal condition is to be walking with God "*filled with the Spirit*."

Our proper joy also is in God. "Singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord" (ver. 19), while looking *up* or looking *down*, giving things to God and the Father! What, for tribulation? Yes! because the Spirit gives me to see God in the tribulation. Filled with the Spirit, I am ever giving thanks to God. See how Christ rejoices in spirit, saying, "*I thank thee, O Father*," (Matt. xi.) when, as to circumstances of sorrow around, His heart was breaking. The secret of this was, that while grieved with Israel's rejection of Him, He was in perfect communion with His Father, and with the glorious thoughts of God about His Son.

Very often the flesh is not broken down enough to make a man take the place and walk in the truth which God Himself has revealed to the soul. Thus it was with Peter (Matt. xvi. 17, 23), though he had just made the blessed confession of Christ which the Father had revealed to him, when the Lord spoke of His path of humiliation, as the Christ, "the Son of the living God," before the Jews, Peter could not bear it, and beseeches Him not to speak thus. Peter's flesh was not broken down enough to walk in the power of the truth he had received and rejoiced in. So it is with us.

"EVERY DAY."

DEATH all around—

No fadeless flowers : the curse pervades the soil—

Yet, victors o'er the dearth, the barren ground,

Faith, Hope, and Love, pursue their fruitful toil.

Faith works with God,

Endures, as seeing Him man cannot see.

Sows, oft in tears, the precious seed abroad,
Foretasting harvest-gladness yet to be.

Hope waits for One

Whose faithfulness, unfathomed, cannot fail.

In quiet confidence her task is done,

Her eyes intent on Him within the veil.

Love knows no fear—

Love's simple purpose ne'er is put to shame—

Love doth the Father worthily revere :

Thou, God, art Love, Love thinks upon Thy Name,

And now abide

Faith, Hope, and Love—not one alone, but three—

Each challenged often, often let and tried ;
Each more than conqueror, Living Lord,
through Thee.**LOVE, NOT LAW, THE MOTIVE-POWER FOR A HOLY LIFE.**

LOVE, in the Christian's experience, is like the great river Nile that shoots sheer out of the mountain lakes in the interior of Africa, and speeds on its way thousands of miles through the desert, watering and, in some parts, fertilising as it goes, until it falls into "the Great Sea;" for LOVE has its sources in the interior of the new man in the three great spiritual lakes here mentioned—*"a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned;"* and, by overflowing its banks, as it speeds on its way to the sea of love in God, it leaves a sediment of graciousness and heavenly blessing all along its course through the barren desert of this world.

Love, and not law, is the great motive-power for holy living. This is self-evident to all who know what Christianity is; for law can do nothing but command, condemn, curse, and kill, wherever there is fault, imperfection, or failure. Law-teachers do not know what they say when they affirm that Christians should be under law, but it is all one, as if they insisted that they should renounce their Christianity and go back into the world, get again into the flesh, and be sons of Adam, and answer, as under responsibility, for themselves to God as sinners; for law, world, sin, satan, condemnation, death, and hell must go together. (What it is to be under law is seen in Exodus xix. xx., &c.) Law, if any one is under it and fails, must condemn, curse, and kill. If law-teachers say No, a Christian may be under it, fail, sin, and yet neither be

cursed nor killed, then they subvert its authority. They must either allow it to curse for failure, if a Christian is under it, or weaken and nullify its authority. "Love is the fulness (plērōma) of the law" (Rom. xiii.): law's righteous requirement is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit (Rom. viii. 4); but that is in Christ, and after the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made us free from the law of sin and death (ver. 2). When on resurrection-ground, as risen with Christ, in whom there is no condemnation, we are not alive in the world any more, nor yet are we "under the law, but under grace."

Love in God has descended and been embodied and displayed in Christ. We have sins, sin and an unsubject will—and the law condemns sins, kills in the conscience because of lusts, "for by the law is the knowledge of sin," and then our will is not subject to the law, neither indeed can be; and the law can only condemn for that too. But in Christ and in His death "I through the law am dead to the law that I might live unto God." This is how it is—"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live." What then? "Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20). Christ has died, and by faith we have died unto sin in virtue of His dying; and, risen with Him, "we walk in newness of life," and are "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus"—a new sphere of grace to which law does not apply. In fact, our association with Him being in His risen life, after He has ceased to be under law and curse, we have Him as "the end of the law for righteousness." Law's demand is perfect obedience and, on failure, condemnation and death; but love ministers life, righteousness, and the Spirit (2 Cor. iii.) The one is all requirement, the other is all communication. Law promised life on obedience that was never given; love gives life, righteousness, and the Holy Spirit to produce obedience, and grace is the motive; for Christ has died, and He is both our life and our object: "for me to live is Christ" (Phil. i.) Christ not only lived under law perfectly, and gave a perfect obedience to it as to the perfect standard for a man, but He went beyond that, and was "obedient even unto death" in devotedness to God—which law never thought of.

And beyond this (and this is an entirely new thought for man), Christ was here displaying God in grace for man, "for God is love," and we perceive the love, "because He laid down His life for us;" besides, being perfectly obedient as a man—and it is pre-

cisely in this He has left us an example for our walk. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself: and this assumed a form the very antipodes of law. Law, as in the case of a prodigal son, said, Lay hold of him and stone him, and thus put away evil (Deut. xxi. 18-21). Love says, Let him be embraced, kissed, clothed, and feasted with the father's best, and this will not only put away evil, but display the father in grace and love (Luke xv.) And, besides, the Holy Spirit produces graces against which there is no law (Gal. v.); and, as in Hebrews, we are set down before Jesus the perfect pattern of a man of faith in the earthly course,—one who began, continued, and ended His course in perfect faith, dependence, obedience, and devotedness, and whom, as set down in the glory of God in heaven, we are to be beholding with unveiled face, and by the Spirit of the Lord be changed into the same image, from glory to glory. Law puts us on the first Adam line of rails under responsibility, with neither carriages, coal, water, or steam: love sets us down in a first-class saloon carriage, with every comfort, with a powerful engine and steam up, and nothing to do to get to our journey's end, but repose in peace, and trust to our appointments.

Law says, Do everything for yourself, and without a new nature, motive, or the Holy Ghost: love says, Your place is in a risen Christ, who, on God's part, is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption. Everything is found for you by the grace of God. We are lifted clean out of the flesh and the world where law applied, and married to another, even to Him that is raised from the dead, that we might live unto God. The law has power over a man as long as he lives (Rom. vii.), but death ends it. So in Christ's death the law ceases to have authority to curse, command, or condemn the believing sinner. We are in Christ risen, not in Adam fallen; and, seeing that the proper and lawful use of law is not for a righteous man, but for those described in 1 Tim. i. 6-10, the absurdity of putting Christians under it is abundantly proved. And mark, that the Apostle links the law with the sins which it condemns; but love, with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God which unfolds it.

Paul was himself a notable example of a man who came from the line of law to the line of love. He was shunted rather violently at noon, one day, near the city of Damascus, but he kept on the line of grace ever after; and in Philippians he shows how he pressed on, having given up law and all its supposed privileges and advantages for Christ, and having Christ in humiliation as his food, motive, and pattern, that (having the same nature), he might walk

as He also walked, and Christ in glory as his power, object, and goal that he might not rest with any attainment on this side of perfection in glory—being like Christ Himself. We are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit; and instead of settling down with the object of showing what man ought to be under law, we are now aiming by grace, as alive to God in Christ, to be to the praise of his grace, and to be the continuators of the display of God in grace and love in the midst of a graceless and loveless world, the epistle of Christ written, not with ink, but with the Spirit of God, known and read of all men. Christian life is not the life of the children of Adam under law, but the display of the grace and goodness of God in Christ in those who are “all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus”—“not under law but under grace.” This is a very different thing from implementing human responsibility: for as those who are partakers of the divine nature, and are children of God who hath given us of His Spirit; who dwell in love, and dwell in God and God in us; who are the temples of the Holy Ghost, who is the power in us to display the very life of God on earth, we are capacitated to reproduce the very qualities of God in Christ as Col. iii. and Ephes. v. tells us.

Flesh, world, sin, and law, are done with, for ye have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God; and the practical display of that is given in the power of the Spirit in putting off the old man and putting on the new. We are not to be imitators of man—not even of the man Christ Jesus made under the law; for as such we have no connection with Him, however edifying it is to see that He was perfect in that as in all else; but we are enjoined to be imitators of God in grace, for on the back of “*Be good to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another even as also God in Christ forgave you,*” we have this word, “Become, therefore, IMITATORS OF GOD as beloved children, and walk in love even also as Christ also loved you and delivered Himself up an offering and sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell (Eph. v. 1, 2.) Law-teachers confound God in grace with man in responsibility, and thereby lower the Christian life from being an expression of God in goodness and grace to a weak exhibition of man in failure as under law, and instead of superiority over sin and the manifestation of God in love and divinely impelled self-sacrifice, we have man made an object to himself, and no wonder that he never can get farther than “O wretched man that I am!”

Were we the “*epistle of Christ,*” as we should be if living by the faith of the Son of God, then men would behold our good works, and glorify our Father in heaven. Love would actuate and regulate us in all

our relationships, spheres, activities, and services; and while “imitators of God” in being perfectly good to bad people, and having love that never faileth, and going on in the energy of a faith that worketh by love, even when acting under the constraining love of Christ, and in self-abnegation and self-sacrifice towards men, our whole service, like that of Christ’s, will go up to God as “a sweet-smelling savour.” We are of His nature, and are commanded to “walk as children of the light,” for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth (Eph. v. 9). “A good tree bringeth forth good fruit;” but no amount of command would produce fruit. Law gives no new nature; love does so, and against the fruit of the Spirit there is no law; nor is there a measured requirement, but we are enjoined to grow up unto Him who is the Head in all things—“filled with the full knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that ye might walk worthy of the Lord *unto all pleasing*,” blameless and harmless, *the children of God*, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye appear as luminaries in the world, holding forth the word of life (Phil. ii. 15, 16). Love produces the life of Christ risen in those who believe in His name—not the life of man in responsibility as under law. “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do ye*. And above all these things *put on charity*, which is the bond of perfectness” (Col. iii. 12-14).

How very awful, then, must it be to be “teachers of the law!” Truly they know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm! If Christians could be put under law, then its authority is nullified, and Christ has died in vain; the gospel of the glory of the blessed God is subverted, and Christian holiness, as the fruit of love, is rendered impossible! But “sin shall not have dominion over you, for *ye are not under law but under grace*,” and the motive-power for holy living is “CHARITY out of a pure heart and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned.”

The law, the Apostle affirms, is the rule of life to the Christless, but not to the Christian—“not made for a righteous man,” and he is more—but to transgressors it can prove only a ministration of condemnation and death. Law is the rule for a son of Adam, Christ for a son of God. Love ministers life, righteousness, the Holy Ghost—Christ being our motive, object, example, and rule of life. Christ revealing God in grace and goodness, and not the law—holy, just, and good, as it is, measuring man’s responsibility,

checking his badness, and cursing him for failure—CHRIST is our only pattern, rule, and measure of walk in this world; for “he that says he abides in Him ought himself also “SO TO WALK EVEN AS HE WALKED” (1 John ii. 6).

HIS TABLE.

“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till He come.”—1 COR. xi. 26.

In spirit, Lord, we dwell with Thee, above
The changing scenes of time :
We rest beneath Thy canopy of love,
Within Thy house of wine.

And though awhile the vale of death we tread,
This weary world below,—

Thy shepherd care doth still a table spread
In presence of the foe.

Oft as Thy day returns, we love to find
Thou dost the feast prepare.
We leave the din of conflict far behind,
That holy joy to share.

Thy precious death before our heart and eyes,—

We worship and adore :
This broken bread Thy pierced hand supplies,
This wine Thyself dost pour.

Lord Jesus, ’tis Thy soul-subduing voice
That bids us take and eat :
The feast is spread, and we, Thy guests, rejoice,
As in Thy house is meet.

“Eat, O my friends,” Thou sayest to us here—

“Yea, drink, beloved, drink,”
More rich the blessing, as Thou drawest near,
Than e’er we ask or think.

Thy broken body once again we see,
Shown in this broken bread—

This poured wine, O Saviour, tells of Thee ;
Thy blood for sinners shed.

We muse upon the marvel of Thy cross—
Thy love beyond compare ;
O depth of woe ! O all-unfathomed loss
That Thou for us didst bear !

Beholding Thee, the Lowly One who came
To this dark world in grace,

We give Thee thanks, now gathered in Thy name,
A large and wealthy place.

Sweet to Thine own redeemed to feed on Thee,
In whom we died, we live.

Sweet the remembrance-cup must ever be,
That Thou, O Christ, dost give.

The loaf we share proclaims our happy lot,
“One loaf” are we—and Thine ;

Poor as we were, our need is now forgot ;
Exchanged for bliss divine.

One Loaf : one Cup : their witness should be heard,
E’en were our voices dumb :

Yet to Thy praise be every bosom stirred,
Lord Jesus, till Thou come.

"HIS NAME : JESUS."

HIS name is JESUS ! none beside
 Can do the sinner good :
 Far off was I, but Jesus died,
 And I have peace with God.
 His name is dearer to me now
 Than every name beside :
 All glories beam around the brow
 Of Jesus crucified.

The Holy One, who knew no sin,
 God made Him "sin" for me ;
 The Saviour died my soul to win,
 He lives, and I am free.
 His precious blood alone availed
 To wash my sins away.
 Through weakness He o'er hell pre-
 vailed ;
 Through death He won the day.

His beauty shineth far above
 A seraph's power of praise,
 And I shall live and learn His love
 Through everlasting days.
 The knowing that He loveth me
 Hath made my cup run o'er.
 "THE LORD HIMSELF" my song shall be,
 To-day, and evermore !

**MEDITATIONS ON THE ACTS OF
THE APOSTLES.**

(Translated from "*Il Dispensatore*")
 with the sanction of its Editor, Sg.
 Biava.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Acts of the Apostles are a continuation of the Gospel of Luke, and are written by the same Evangelist. The discourses, whether of Peter or of Paul, have their source in the heavenly commission which is found at the end of that Gospel. It is not necessary, I hope, to say that the whole is given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, because each of the Evangelists has been employed by God to present us with a different aspect of the history of the Lord ; and has accomplished, with the help of the Spirit, the work assigned to him by God. For example, in Matthew we find much more the dispensations of God, and the Lord, as Emmanuel in the midst of Israel, on the earth. In Luke, after the two first chapters, we have the Son of Man, and the ways of God in grace, and the blessings of the present time. And again, in Matthew, the ascension of the Lord is not recounted, and the commission given to the apostles comes from a risen Jesus, and is addressed to the Gentiles as though the residue of the Jews were already received in grace. The Lord, in Luke, is about to ascend into heaven, and goes there while speaking to them, blessing them with a heavenly blessing ; and the commission is addressed to all—first to the Jews, then to the Gentiles. The disciples were to begin in Jerusalem ; and this work—the accomplishment of their

mission—is what is found recounted in Acts.

Let us follow the course of this story, which is essentially the history of the activity of the apostles Peter and Paul ; the first among the Jews, and in the foundation of the Church at Jerusalem, and the other among the Gentiles, although he always addressed himself first to the Jews : The first, one of His eleven disciples who had followed the Lord on the earth, till the cloud received Him and took Him from their sight : The last, Paul, an open enemy to the name of Christ, and converted in sovereign grace while he was occupied in the destruction, if possible, of that name, only saw Him in the glory, and went out to call the Gentiles to the faith—marvellous witness of the sovereign grace of God, and of a glory which renders a magnificent testimony to the perfect and accepted work of Christ, to which believers are led by faith in Him and in His work. Both these two great apostles laid the same foundation of the salvation preached, that there is but one Saviour and one work by which we may be saved.

New the grand and important fact, on which all the story depends, is the descent of the Holy Spirit.

Doubtless, in all Biblical history, the responsibility of man is found, as well as the ways of God, through the deeds and the weakness of man ; but, nevertheless, the presence of the Holy Spirit on the earth, sent by the Father and by the Son of Man, and dwelling in the faithful and in the House of God, is of immense importance.

It is only when God has accomplished redemption that He comes to dwell in the midst of men. He did not dwell with Adam in his innocence, nor with Abraham, nor with any, till He had brought Israel out of Egypt, and had rescued them from the hands of the King of Egypt, in whose hands they were prisoners ; then He came to dwell in their midst in the cloud ; and the Tabernacle was filled with His glory.

Thus, as soon as the Son of Man is gone into Heaven to sit down at the right hand of God, having accomplished the work of redemption, the Holy Spirit descends according to His promise of the Comforter, and the baptism of the Spirit is realised. Sent from the Father, He cries "Abba, Father" in the hearts of those who have received Him. Sent by the Son from the Father He reveals the glory of Him, the Man in heaven ; and more than that, forms the body of Christ joining the members to the head, so that he "that is joined to the Lord is one spirit," "dwelling in the believer, and also in the universal congregation of believers, so that they are together the habitation of God. It is evident that this truth is of immense importance, the

spiritual liberty given the Child of God, the unity of the assembly of God, and the union of the children of God, all depend on the presence of the Spirit, as it is all founded on the work of the Saviour on the Cross. Then this truth reveals the state of the external Church, where He dwells, because she has grieved the Spirit, and has been—and has acted—altogether in a manner contrary to what He would have had her do, so much so that the judgment of God is ready to fall upon her.

Since I have spoken of the descent of the Holy Spirit, it must be understood, that the "new birth" is not implied here (though that may be accomplished by the same Spirit), but of the personal coming of the Spirit, when the Son of Man ascended into heaven. The Holy Spirit has worked divinely since the foundation of the world ; He it was who moved upon the face of the waters, who inspired the prophets, who has been the immediate instrument of all that God has done on the earth and in the heavens ; but He only came here below when the Son of Man went to sit down at the right hand of God (John vii. 37, 39), and is only received when we believe (Eph. i. 13 ; Gal. iv. 6). This is seen also clearly elsewhere ; we are sealed when we have believed, and especially, when we have believed in the value of the blood of Christ. Washed in this precious blood, we are fit to be the habitation of the Spirit of God. "Know ye not," says the apostle Paul, "that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit which ye have from God ?" As when the leper was cleansed and purified under the law, he was first washed with water, then sprinkled with blood, then anointed with oil (Lev. xiv. 8, 9 and 14-18)—clear figure of our purification by means of the Word of God when we are converted and born again, then of the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, and finally, of the anointing of the Holy Spirit by which we are sealed for the day of final redemption.

Also all gifts, the exercise of which is found in the Church, are the manifestation of the Holy Spirit who works there. But here in the Acts, the exposition of the operations of the Spirit is not found, but the fact itself of His coming in order to work.

CHAPTER I.

LET US now come to the examination of the narrative itself. This begins with the great truth of which we have already spoken. The disciples were to wait at Jerusalem for the baptism of the Holy Ghost. We shall find again the proof of another precious truth. The Lord, after His resurrection, gave commissions to His disciples by the Holy Ghost. We shall not lose the Holy Ghost when we are raised again ; truth perhaps simple,

but which makes us feel how great will be our capacity for happiness in that state, how a great portion of our spiritual strength is employed to enable us to walk in integrity, in spite of the flesh and the temptations of the enemy; but *then* neither the one nor the other will exist. All the power of the Spirit in us will be employed in rendering us fit for the infinite felicity we shall find there. We shall enjoy it according to the strength of the Spirit, as Christ gave gifts by the Spirit to His disciples after His resurrection.

Remark now the intimacy of the Lord with His disciples; He spoke of the things belonging to the kingdom of God. Christ is now glorified, but His heart, full of divine love, is not removed, is not any the farther away from His own. When He appeared to Saul, He said, "*I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.*" He speaks with Ananias, with authority, it is true, but as with a friend, opening his heart respecting Saul, and sending Ananias to speak to him.

He was not ashamed to call His disciples friends on the earth; He is not ashamed to treat them as friends now. Immense blessing! To feel that the Lord of glory is near to us, that He holds us as friends and loved ones, and that He can feel compassion also for our infirmities.

The disciples expected still the visible kingdom of the Lord in Israel; their hearts were still Jewish. They quite believed that He had risen again, but expected that their hopes of the restoration of Israel as a nation would be realised by the Lord, now that He had come out of the sepulchre. The Lord did not tell them that the kingdom would not be restored to Israel; but that it did not concern them to know the times and seasons which the Father had put in His own power. The kingdom shall be restored to Israel *when*, is not revealed. The Son of man will come in an hour when He is not expected. He sits at the right hand of the Father till His enemies shall be made His footstool. In the meantime He gathers His co-heirs, those who are content to suffer with Him; and caught up into glory we shall reign with Him. It is not revealed then, it was not revealed to the disciples, the hour of the Saviour's return; but they should receive, said the Lord not many days hence, the power of the Holy Ghost, which should come on them, and they should be witnesses to Him in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria, and in the uttermost parts of the earth. And having said these things, He was taken up, while they beheld, and a cloud received Him, and took Him away out of their sight. They were to be eye-witnesses as far as this point of His heavenly glory. The Holy Ghost was sent after Him (see John xv. 26, 27). We shall find later that Saul saw Him

in His celestial glory for the first time, of which thing he was to be the special witness. How the Holy Ghost has rendered clear testimony to this glory, as we shall see in the discourses in the Acts, and again it may be seen in the epistles of Peter and elsewhere.

But here is found, before the coming of the Holy Ghost, a very remarkable testimony rendered by means of angels. The disciples had their eyes fixed on the heavens while Jesus was going there. That was very natural. The beloved Saviour, given back to them from the grave, was, apparently at least, abandoning them again for heaven, it is true, which ought to have strengthened their faith. He had left a promise of the power of the Spirit, which, however, had not yet come; and therefore the consciousness and direction of this power, which was to reveal all the truth, was wanting to them. He had gone away, and what should they do? They must wait.

And as their eyes were then fixed on the heavens, behold two men by appearance, but in reality angels, stood beside them, asking why they looked up into heaven, and making them the revelation of His return. A fact very remarkable, since the Lord, had, after the last supper, made known to the disciples that He was going to the Father; and the first consolation He gave His disciples was that He would come again, and take them to Himself in the Father's house, where He was going to prepare them a place; then He speaks of the presence of the Comforter which was to be accomplished. There He speaks of His coming to introduce His own into the Father's house; here, of His glorious appearing, when He will make Himself seen from the place where He has gone. There, He himself speaks of the special privilege of His own according to His personal affection which He had for them. He wished to console them, His heart had need of them, He desired to have them near to Himself, in the same glory, so that they might see His glory, but specially that where He was, there they might be also; here, it is His return in glory, which would be like unto His going away.

This was the disciples' first consolation, once they were deprived of His presence. Then another Comforter would be given to dwell with them here below meanwhile. But whether in the declaration on the part of the Lord in His love, or in the revelation made by the angels, the first thing in the Saviour's heart, and in the revelations of God, is that He will come again. Immense is the gift of the Spirit during His absence, and for ever immense is the nature of the state in which redemption has placed the assembly of God here below; but its hope is, and the height of its joy will be, to see the

Saviour as he is, to be always with Him, like Him, to see and to be for ever with Him, who has loved us, and has washed us from our sins in His own blood, and to see Him face to face!

Greatest blessing, too great for us, if not the fruit of something still greater—the cross and the sufferings of the Son of God.

Once this blessed Saviour has done that, and the Son of God has been made sin for us, and has died as a man on the cross, nothing is too great; it will only be the fruit of the travail of His soul. He shall be satisfied; His love shall be satisfied in our happiness and in our presence with Him. Look only at Zeph. iii. 17, where the love and the glory are inferior to this, "The Lord thy God: in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love; He will joy over thee with singing." The Father will rest in His love, and in the accomplishment of all His counsels for the glory of His Son; showing, at the same time, in the ages to come, the excellence of the riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

Such is our expectation.

The disciples return to Jerusalem, and live there together in an upper chamber. They persevered with one consent in supplication and prayer, with the women and with Mary, the mother of Jesus, and His brethren. But the effect of the promise of the Father is only found in the second chapter. All that we have at the end of this first chapter is connected with a Jewish situation; that is, with the condition of the disciples before the coming of the Spirit, yet possessing an understanding which had been opened by the Lord to understand the Word. They had not the power of the Spirit, but intelligence of the Word; because their standing was in relation with Christ raised up from the dead; they were enlightened by the Divine light communicated to them after His resurrection.

These verses accord perfectly with verses 14-48 of Luke xxiv. Then comes the promise of the Spirit, the accomplishment of which is found in chapter ii.

The well-known active energy of Peter employs the knowledge given by the Lord, applying Psalm cix. to Judas, whose office, says the psalm, another should take. They drew lots, according to Jewish custom, leaving the decision in the hands of God. Matthias is chosen and added to the eleven apostles. Vers. 13-19 are a parenthesis. The Sabbath day's journey, the lots, and all the circumstances, show clearly the actual state of the disciples and the thought of the Holy Ghost on this step. They work with intelligence of the Word of the Old Testament; but the Spirit had not yet come. It is important for us to understand the difference. The Spirit gives

now intelligence (1 Cor. ii. 14); but this is not of itself power.

The Lord is faithful to lead His own in the path of truth. His grace is sufficient, His strength is made perfect in weakness, and also always gives us the strength necessary to accomplish His will; but the power of the Spirit is another thing. Now, we are specially called to follow His Word, although we may be feeble (see what is said to the Church of Philadelphia, Rev. iii.)

It is impossible for Christ to fail us in our obedience, and His strength is sufficient for us. Faithful to His word, while we wait for Him in weakness, we shall be pillars in the temple of His God, when He sees the hour of glory. Yet the Holy Ghost dwells in the faithful, sealed with Him by the Father, according to His promise. J. N. D.

WHAT CHRIST IS TO THE CHURCH.

WE pass to God's revelation of what Christ is in His relationship to His body the Church (Eph. v. 25). As in Rom. viii. it is in the first part of the chapter God in us; and in the latter part God for us. So here God speaks of what Christ is for the Church. The spring of all is Christ's love. "He LOVED the Church." God showed Him that pearl of great price. Christ must have it, though He give HIMSELF for it! All that Christ is in the perfection of His holiness, wisdom, and grace—all that is Himself—all that He gave for the Church! The shedding of His blood is not spoken of here. Not only what He had did He give—not His life only, but Himself. A man cannot give more than himself. Thus wholly is Christ ours by divine gift and according to the perfectness with which God gives.

Christ loved the Church; but having a bride, He must have her according to His own mind. He does not sanctify her first, and then make her His own; but He makes her His own in order to sanctify her. (See ver. 25, 26.) Hence the washing of water by the Word. The written Word is the mind of God. Thus Christ gives the expression of His own heart and mind to the Church, in the Word, in order to make it like Himself. "Sanctify them through thy truth! Thy word is truth."

This testimony to all that God is in Christ is applied to the Church to conform her to Himself. God must have the Lamb's wife like Himself. Even nature teaches this, and thus Christ applies the Word which is the revelation of God in Christ in order to bring us into this likeness to Himself and to cause God's thoughts to be ours. (See chap. i. 2, 3.) "Holy and without blame before Him in love"—this is what God is, and this is what the love of

Christ is doing for the Church, "that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."

The Word cleanses a man's affections; and not only cleanses, but the end is to make glorious. Even now the glory shines in on us, and we are changed from glory to glory. Thus the apostle saw the light—the light of Christ—at the end, and each step as he approached he got more of that light.

The power of the glory is applied by Christ through the Word. Christ must have the Church FOR HIMSELF. We get this principle in Canticles; not that I think we have the Church in Canticles, but the Jewish remnant; still we get the principle of Christ's love there. The first thought is having got Christ, but then follows, "I am my beloved's and his desire is towards me." I belong to CHRIST.

It is a remarkable and beautiful expression in Gen. ii. 22 with reference to Eve as a type of the Church. The Lord God builded (see margin) a woman. The Lord presents this woman to Adam. The second Adam, being the Lord God, presents this glorious Church to Himself without spot. All the perfection of God became man in order that He might be satisfied as to His Church. Ah, here the heart gets happy and humble! It is when I am dependent on the affections of another that my heart gets humbled and learns to rest in a sanctified way upon the object of affection. Our hearts no longer thirst. (See John iv. 16.) We get our life out of Christ. (Gal. ii. 20.) The life that I live, I live by the faith of the Son of God.

All through this time of weakness we have the unceasing love of One who nourishes and cherishes us as His own flesh; and there is a kind of blessed necessity for this. No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord, the Church, for we are members of His body, &c. (Ver. 28.)

It is most sweet to take the motives of our duties from the pattern we have in Christ. There is not one relationship owned by God for which we fail to find a pattern in the things of God.

In this passage it is the devotedness of love. It is not the blood, but all the perfect, the precious, tender, unceasing care of love (of His love who gave Himself for us), until He shall present us to Himself a glorious Church, holy and without blemish.

How our hearts need to be learning more of this love of Christ which passeth knowledge!

"A few more breathings in this dull and oppressive element, then all will be health and buoyancy, strength and gladness, purity and peace."

IS ANY AFFLICTED? LET HIM PRAY.

ART thou afflicted? O beloved—pray! Why in grief's darkening twilight still abide?

Let not thy spirit 'midst her sorrow stay,
Go forth—like Isaac at the eventide;
Attend the harmonies of earth and heaven,
So gradual peace and joy be to thy spirit given.

There shall yet reach thee, through those distant shades,
Joy, sent of Him who knows thy every need:

Take to thy heart His gift: He ne'er upbraids
The soul that in its feebleness would plead:

Each good, each perfect gift is from above—
God changes never—He is ever Love.

Thy heart, now fluttering like a timid bird,
Should in the sunlight rise on steadfast wing.

Thy cry of sharp distress in heaven was heard—

Shall not the same wide heaven yet hear thee sing?

Shall not the eye that marks the sparrow's fall

See thee rejoicing rise, responsive to His call?

God is not weary: rest thee then in Him,
New strength He gives to them that have no might;

Power when the heart is faint, the eye is dim,

And out of darkness He commands the light.

Wait thou on Him—there let thy spirit stay;
When thou art glad, then sing;—afflicted, pray.

THE BIBLE HERALD.

"Do you think *Bible Herald* a good title for your paper? I do not think it is a herald of the Bible. Would not *Believers' Herald* be better?"

Thus writes a brother in England. It is not of very much consequence what title we have, but surely no Christian periodical ought to be anything else but a herald or preacher of the Bible, and that is what *Bible Herald* means.

As the Lord has enabled us, we have been heralding forth, through the press, the truth of the Bible for more than a quarter of a century, and we mean by God's grace to do so with more precision, fulness, and intensity than ever; and hence we think we could not have a more appropriate title to describe our work than *Bible Herald*.

Believers' Herald was before us, but we dismissed it, for it would be but poor work to make them principal and write of them, though of course what we give will be for them; but we are always safe to write out the things of God from the Bible, and we can never bring forth too many of its holy truths.

It may be interesting to some to know that the word to act the *herald* occurs about sixty times in the New Testament, and the word *herald* thrice; and that to herald is generally translated to *preach*, and a few times to *publish*. Our work then is to preach and publish what we find in the Bible. And it is our intention to give the meaning of such portions of the Holy Scriptures as occupy our attention, in a brief, clear, *expository* way, opening up the Word very much as we should do at a Bible reading, rather than giving long general discourses which teach little; for one line of *precise exposition*—in order that God's truth in His Word may be accurately known, is worth a volume of vague talk about a passage where no living seed direct from the Spirit's store has been dropt into the renewed mind, and where nothing sticks but the memory of the sermon as of a "pleasant song."

We began our spiritual life in the most abject poverty as to teaching, for we had none who could do it, and we then cared for no books but the Holy Scriptures, and we dug away alone, day and night, year after year in the inexhaustible mine of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, with nothing in the way of help but a dictionary for each. It was a very hard beginning; but, cast entirely on the Lord and the Word of His grace, and esteeming it more than our necessary food, we worked away as we could, and the Lord led us on. But it was slow work. It took us seven years to get what might now be had by you in seven months, but it was sure; and the acquisition of the habit of patiently studying the Holy Scriptures for one's self is above all price; and knowing and feeling its value, it is increasingly on our heart to press it upon the attention of our younger brethren and sisters for whose profit we have a special care.

But exact knowledge of God's Holy Scriptures cannot be obtained except at the expensive outlay of much time and toil, and above all, perseverance. But not one Christian in a hundred has the qualities, ability, learning, or time to give to this important painstaking work; but they can all enjoy and profit by the results of it when presented.

In pressing study, it is, of course, taken for granted that there must be spirituality, prayerfulness, faith, and complete dependence on the Holy Ghost.

This, then, is the thing we mean to do for them in this paper, by means of the gifts the Lord may bring around us, as our "true yoke-fellows." It may be a few months before we are able to have the paper according to our mind; but we will begin with what we have, and look to the Lord to sustain us in this work for His name, by giving us, in answer to our prayers and yours, a company of good writers who love the

truth of God; and also many good readers who will delight to feed their souls on the precious truths presented.

But we would give new readers a word of warning, that if any have been accustomed to other pastures than the Word, especially where the food has been prepared and put into their mouths, so that they have had no trouble about it, and, mayhap, as invalids, have been feeding on spiritual extracts and preserved dishes, prepared by the pious care of Christian nurses, they may find it rather unpleasant to go direct to the Word and gather their food for themselves, and roast for themselves that which they have taken in hunting, and be under the necessity of using meditation, prayer, and the Holy Ghost, to get a home-made spirituality and piety instead of having them gratis or ready-made for so much.

A preacher's wife, who was one day accounting to a sister for the difference between her husband's preaching and that of others, who gave beautiful discourses which are not of much use except for temporary entertainment, said, "They give you the bread baked and ready, but my husband teaches you the useful art of making the bread daily for yourselves."

This is the thing we should like to do with regard to the truths of the Bible. If our readers can only get over the first few months, and learn to found their spirituality on the exact meaning of scripture, so that they can point to it as the spring and strength of their piety, instead of being very pious upon nothing but that which may minister to the mere elevation of nature, they will feel the strengthening power of the pure truth of God in such a way that they will grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ, much more solidly than if living otiosely and enjoying an illimitable supply of beautiful summer excursions over a continent of religious commonplaces.

A brother said to us just now, "I have been feasting to-day on that word—'the living God.' It has quite filled my soul all day." And surely the words of God are the only means of filling and feeding our souls, so that we may be strong in the Lord for service or conflict.

It will be our high privilege, in common with you, to meditate on His words, and by the Spirit's grace be breathing fresh life and strength into our souls by means of them. "The words of the Lord are pure words" (Ps. xii. 6); and they make us pure (Ps. cxix. 9; John xv. 3; Eph. v. 26). The Christ was the revelation of God the Father; the Scriptures are a written Christ by the Holy Ghost—God revealed in God's words but in man's language; and when we are formed by "the word of Christ," we are "changed into the same image from glory to glory;" and so all divine knowledge, received aright in the Holy Ghost, gives liberty with God, and makes us "epistles of

Christ." We would follow in this line of light having Christ formed in us, and we formed by, and for, CHRIST, by THE SPIRIT.

"CIRCUMSPICE."

"Eternity, eternity:
How long art thou, Eternity?"

COUNT the gold and silver blossoms
Spring has scattered o'er the lea;
Count the softly-sounding ripples
Sparkling o'er the summer sea:
Count the lightly-flickering shadows
In the autumn forest glade;
Count pale nature's scattered teardrops,
Icy gems by winter made:
Count the tiny blades that glitter
Early in the morning dew;
Count the desert sand that stretches
Under noontide's vault of blue:
Count the notes that wood-birds warble
In the evening's fading light;
Count the stars that gleam and twinkle
O'er the firmament by night.
When thy counting all is done,
Scarce *Eternity's* begun:
Ponder now, where wilt thou be
During thine ETERNITY?

A NEW YEAR'S EUCHARISTIA.

AIR—*Flowers of the Forest.*

My God, to adore Thee, I now bow before Thee!
To praise for the past, for the future to pray;
Remove Thou my blindness to see Thy sweet kindness,
Thy grace through the year that has now fled away.
All helpless and needful, Thou aye hast been heedful
To furnish my wants, both by night and by day;
In danger defending, and over me bending
In love through the year that has now fled away.
Thou e'er hast been near me in sorrow to cheer me,
In darkness my light, and in trouble my stay;
Accept, through my Saviour, my thanks for Thy favour
To me through the year that has now fled away.
My sinfulness owning, and over it groaning,
My burden of guilt on Thy Son Thou didst lay;
While sins of omission have met with remission
All through the past year that has now fled away.
In mercy still guide me, in danger still hide me;
Thou'rt with me, Lord Jesus, on earth while I stay;
To me be Thou nearer, and sweeter, and dearer
Than in all the years that have now fled away.
On Thee still relying, while evil describing,
I put on Thy panoply, fear no dismay,
For strong in the Lord, with His Word for my sword,
I'll stand through the year that's now fleeing away.
I wait the glad morning when, in her adorning,
The Bride of the Lamb with Himself He'll display,
In righteousness shining, all beauty combining,
And reigning in glory till years flee away.
FIFE, Jan. 1, 1876. W.

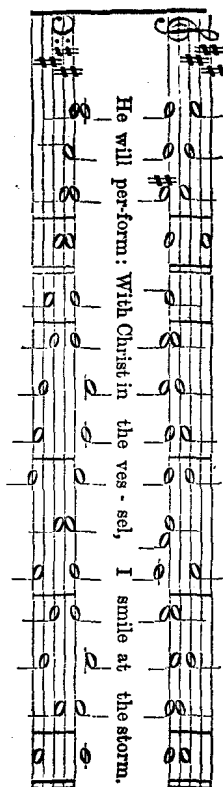
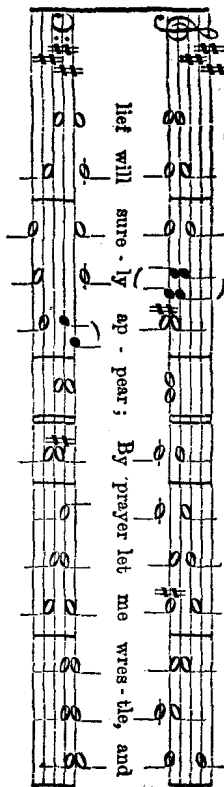
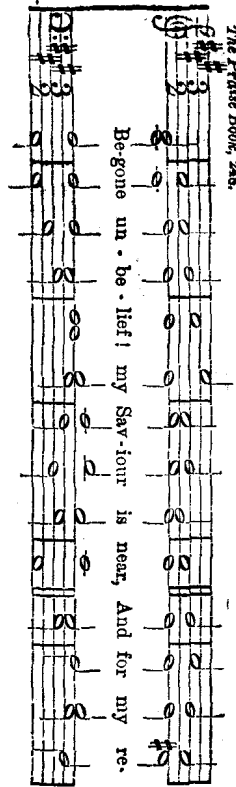
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"Begone Unbelief!"

The Psalter Book, 248.

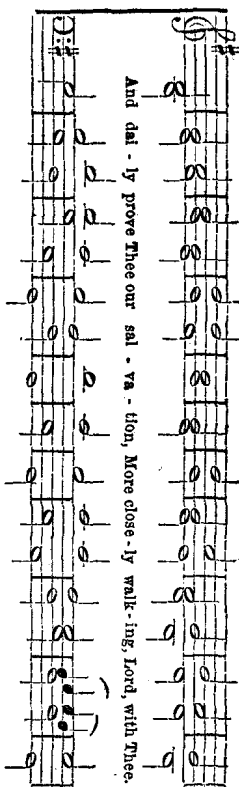
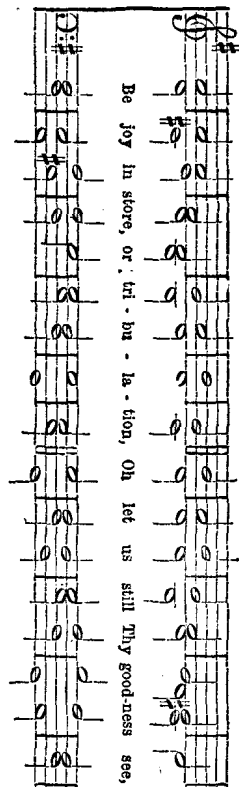
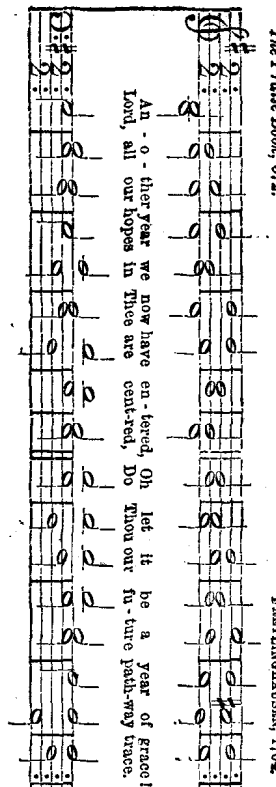


THOUGH dark be my way, since He is my Guide,
 'Tis mine to obey, 'tis His to provide!
 Though cisterns be broken, and creatures all fail,
 The word He hath spoken will surely prevail.
 His love in time past forbids me to think
 He'll leave me at last in trouble to sink;
 Each sweet Ebenezer I have in review,
 Confirms His good pleasure to help me quite through.
 Determined to save, He watched o'er my path
 When Satan's blind slave, I sported with death!
 And can He have taught me to trust in His name,
 And thus far have brought me to put me to shame?
 Why should I complain of want or distress,
 Temptation or pain? He told me no less;
 The heirs of salvation, I know, from His Word,
 Through much tribulation must follow the Lord.
 How bitter the cup no heart can conceive,
 Which Jesus drank up, that sinners might live;
 His way was far rougher and darker than mine—
 Did Jesus thus suffer, and shall I repine?
 Since all that I meet shall work for my good,
 The bitter is sweet, the medicine is food;
 Though painful at present, 'twill cease before long,
 And then, oh, how pleasant the conqueror's song!

Another Year.

The Psalter Book, 372.

FRANKLINSON, 1704.



IKE dreams of night the days are fleeting,
 The vanished years come not again.
 Where human pride thine eye is meeting,
 Thou say'st, "Return, ye sons of men."
 The countless stars by name Thou tellest,
 All flesh is in Thy sight as grass!
 Enthroned in light divine Thou dwellest,
 Thy hand doth bring Thy word to pass.
 Oh give the Holy Ghost's renewing,
 Dear Lord, this newly-opening year;
 For thus, Thy heavenly wonders viewing,
 New songs of praise shall greet Thine ear—
 New tales of faithfulness unfailing,
 Of mercies every morning new:
 Thy grace, mid all our need prevailing,
 Gives power and joy the journey through.
 Thy word, Lord, by Thy Spirit, heeding,
 Let this New Year be spent for Thee;
 Oh hear Thy children's fervent pleading,
 More fruitful branches let us be

Awake the ardent aspiration
 In every heart that loves Thy name,
 To witness of Thy great salvation,
 To bear the cross, not fear the shame.
 Oh let Thy name afresh be sounded,
 In power divine throughout the earth—
 Let Satan's wiles be all confounded,
 Through lowly sons of heavenly birth.
 The holy name of Christ adoring,
 We worship at the throne of grace;
 'Mid scenes of death our praises pouring,
 We wait to see our Saviour's face.
 Give richest peace and consolation
 To troubled hearts now bowed in grief;
 Free guilty souls from condemnation,
 The cleansing Blood be their relief.
 And while with tears we make confession
 How often we have gone astray,
 Lord, of our hearts take Thou possession,
 And keep them with Thee day by day.



Price 1d.]

2 COR. IV. 3-6.

[No. 2.]

MOTIVES WHICH LED THE LORD TO DIE.

THE death of the Lord Jesus Christ is no secret confined to the breasts of a few upon earth. We have not to inquire of the learned if it really took place, nor have we to search through the literary treasures of an oriental monastery to make sure about it. Christendom owns it, the world in general acknowledges it. The manner, too, of His death—crucifixion—is well known. The Roman Catholic devotee by his crucifix confesses it; the Protestant, too, by the cross, whether worn as an ornament for the body, or put as an emblem on his Bible, bears witness to it; and the very walls of our picture galleries, as well as painted windows in churches, give evidence, that the historical facts of the crucifixion are not to be classed amongst things of which there is any doubt.

But why did He die? To answer this question we are shut up to one source of information—the revelation of our God. Turning to that, we can learn the motives which led Him to go to the cross, the purposes to be wrought out by His death, and the practical teaching of His death, as set forth for the instruction of His people. To a consideration of *motives* which actuated Him in dying on the tree, the reader's attention is sought in this paper to be directed.

It was nothing new for man to die when the Lord expired on the cross. Many, doubtless, who saw Him on that tree, must have been familiar with the symptoms which presage the near approach of death. But why was death allowed to work amongst men? The Bible alone can answer this; and it does give the answer in clear unhesitating

language, "By man came death" (1 Cor. xv. 21); and again, "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. v. 12). Death, then, reigned over man, because Adam sinned. And as often as the opened grave receives its tenant, whatever men may have to say about the good deeds and fair fame of the one whose body is thus committed to the dust, we have to acknowledge that it is the corpse of a sinner which is thereby buried out of our sight; else the individual would not have died, the frame would never have decayed, death could not have claimed it as its victim.

For a man, then, to die is no merit. He cannot exclude the angel of death from his presence. He cannot deprive him of his prey. To this Solomon bears a sad yet sober testimony as he writes, "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death; and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it" (Eccles. viii. 8). Every one must say this witness is true. By iniquity a man may elude punishment upon earth; by bribery he may corrupt his jailor, or procure a sentence of acquittal from an earthly tribunal; but he cannot purchase immunity from death, he cannot even delay its unwelcome visit from him. At the moment appointed by God the thread of human life is snapped, and death holds undisputed sway over a body once animated and active. Death has a rightful claim on all who are born in sin. A martyr may, indeed, surrender his life for Christ, but he, least of all, would view that surrender as meritorious. The grace

bestowed on him to die for his Saviour would be uppermost in his mind. His Master had claimed his life, and he would surrender it, that the Lord thereby should be the more glorified, and His sustaining grace be more than ever proved. But his life, the martyr would own, was not his own, and he only surrendered what belonged to another, when called upon to do so by Him whom he served. How different is the language of scripture when it speaks of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. No man taketh His life from Him, the Lord declared of Himself when on earth (John x. 18), and added, "I lay it down of Myself." Scripture keeps this ever in our remembrance, as it tells us three times over that, "He gave Himself." "Who gave Himself a ransom for all," &c. (1 Tim. ii. 6). "Who gave Himself for us" (Titus ii. 14). "Who gave Himself for our sins," &c. (Gal. i. 4). Of none but One could such words be written. He must be man to die. He must be God to give Himself to die. For no mere creature, of whatever order in the universe, has the right thus to dispose of himself, and to treat his life as his own. But the Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself. Then none could have claimed His life. Death could not claim it, for death entered the world by sin, and "in Him," as John writes of the Lord, "is no sin" (1 John iii. 5). Human law could not demand it, for the Jews could establish no charge against Him when He stood before the High Priest. And Pilate, and Judas, and the centurion, all those who had to do with His death, as well as the penitent thief, concurred in confessing His innocence.

But He died. Very different, however, was His death from that of any righteous man. Jacob gathered up his

feet in the bed, and gave up the ghost (Gen. xlix. 33). Stephen commended his spirit to the Lord Jesus, and fell asleep (Acts vii. 59, 60). The faithful Christian can say that to him to die is gain (Phil. i. 21). The simplest believer can prove that the sting of death is gone for him. Death is his, and it is for him annulled (1 Cor. xv. 56, iii. 22; 2 Tim. i. 10), as he enters by faith into the enjoyment of that which the Lord has effected for His people by His cross. Death, however, to the Lord Himself was a very different matter. He was, indeed, straitened till it was accomplished. But read of Him in the garden. Recall His prayer there to His Father. Remember the visit of an angel to strengthen Him. Think of His agony, when He prayed yet more earnestly, and His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground (Luke xxii. 42-44), and say if the anticipation of death on the cross was to Him a light matter. Again, read His words on the cross, recorded by Matthew and Mark, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me" (Matt. xxvii. 46; Mark xv. 34), and let each one ask himself if that death on the cross, not now in anticipation, but in all that He went through thereon before He could give up the ghost, was a thing of no moment, the mere passage from a world of sin to paradise and glory? No; it was to Him an awful reality. None but Himself will ever know what death on the cross was to Him. Many ungodly ones will know what it will be to feel the weight of God's anger resting on them, but what that must be for a perfectly holy being to bear, the Lord alone has experienced. What were the motives, then, which led Him to travel to the end along that road which,

"Uncheered by earthly smiles,
Led only to the cross?"

From His own lips we learn about them, as it is from Himself, we apprehend, but how faintly, what death on the cross was to Him.

Addressing the multitude in Galilee, He acquaints them with the purport of His incarnation, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me" (John vi. 38). To obey the Father He became man. To obey the Father He went to the cross. "Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; mine ears hast Thou opened; burnt-offering and sin-offering hast Thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do Thy will, O my God" (Ps. xl. 6, 7). Obedience to God was His delight, even if divine wrath on the cross was to be borne. "I delight to do thy will." What a motive for His death—God's will to be thereby accomplished. Others

could bring sacrifices; He was to offer Himself. He became obedient, as we elsewhere read, to death—the death of the cross. Death on the cross was not robbed of any of its awful accompaniments, yet He delighted to do God's will. To suffer there was no delight. To do God's will by suffering thereon was to Him delight. He obeyed. That exaltation and dignities should be His in consequence is no surprise. Both Old and New Testaments speak of them. "Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He hath poured out His soul unto death," is the prophetic statement in Isaiah (liii. 12). "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name," is the announcement in the New Testament (Phil. ii. 9), of God's recognition of His obedience.

Disobedience had characterised Adam. Obedience even to death is declared of Him. But other motives we read of. The psalm referred to acquaints us with His intercourse with God about His death. Elsewhere we learn what He publicly uttered about the cross.

Greeks, Gentiles, desired to see Him, and had communicated their wish to one of the Lord's immediate followers, who, though a Jew, bore a Gentile name. These Gentiles, proselytes perhaps of the gate, for they had come to the feast, made Philip the bearer of their request, which, in company with his fellow-townsmen of Bethsaida, he conveyed to his Master. The answer of the Lord is both full and instructive. The hour of His glorification approached, but that could only be effected after His death. And death on the cross was for Him the appointed road to the position of the great centre for all men, which He would one day publicly occupy. But if this is to be His position, why should He die? Why should shame and death be His portion, who would one day be the acknowledged centre for all men? Was He so weak, that He must succumb to the death of a slave? Was He so powerless, that death, which others would naturally strain every nerve to avert from themselves, He would be obliged to endure? No. Fallen man thinks first of himself, He, the obedient One, desired the Father's glory. To ensure that, to have that displayed, He would die.

Was death to Him of little moment? We have seen that when nearer at hand it was not. It in truth never was. So here, whilst openly proclaiming to all a motive for Him to die, He lets all see that He did not desire death for its own sake. "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour, but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name"

(John xii. 27). By the resurrection of Christ the Father's name would be glorified, as it had so recently been by the resurrection of Lazarus (John xi. 4-40). The multitude had often glorified God, when they beheld the wonderful works of Christ. The Samaritan leper, the woman covered with an infirmity, as well as Bartimæus, had given God the glory, when they became the recipients of health, strength, or sight. But the Father's name had been especially glorified when, as Son, the Lord called Lazarus out of his grave; and again would the Father's name be glorified, when He himself, who is the Son, should be raised from the dead by Him. What motives, then, actuated the Lord in dying on the cross? He sought the glory of Him that sent Him, and that at whatever cost to Himself.

A third motive we learn from His discourse with His disciples in that upper room, where they had kept the paschal feast. Death had no claim on Him. "The prince of *the* (rather than *this*) world cometh, and hath nothing in me." Holy, spotless, sinless, He was. Nothing in Him could the devil find to answer to his allurements, or to divert the Lord from His path, by the power of death which he could use. In the wilderness the first had been tried and found useless. The second also would fail. Yet the Lord was about to die. And a motive for it He here sets forth—"That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given me commandment so I do." Love and obedience to the Father constrained Him to die. The motive of obedience we have already touched on. That was as powerful as ever. But He would show to the world by His death His love to the Father. The Father needed not this sacrifice to prove the Son's love. Love can be exemplified by obedience (John xiv. 15, 23). Who then had evidenced love (more we could not here say) but equal to His who had always done the things which pleased the Father? A proof of it was not then demanded by the Father, yet a proof of it He would give by dying, that the world, however much it had misunderstood Him, should have in His death, at once a lasting and the strongest evidence, that love to His Father really dwelt in His heart. What He was the world could know from His death. Such a test, however, of love in Him, and given for that purpose, shows surely what the world was, what men were who composed it. How slow they must have been in understanding, how dull in their perceptions, that motives which animated Him should need, for the world to know them, the overwhelming evidence of His death.

No wonder that angels should make mention of His death, and proclaim that

He is worthy of seven-fold blessing, when from obedience to God's will, to glorify the Father's name, and from love to His Father, and that it should be known, He bowed to death, the death of the cross. It must be natural and proper for them to cry, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." As man He died, and with all that a man could receive He is worthy to be endowed. All who understand about His death must acknowledge that; but would all be satisfied with this acknowledgment? Who of men could join in this tribute—however suitable it is—rendered to Him by angels? The answer is short and decisive, *Not one*. Fallen creatures must view His death in a light very different from that in which unfallen ones can see it; no unsaved soul could speak of Him as angels do. Such language from them would be an open condemnation of their position towards Him. No redeemed soul could be satisfied with the words of the angelic choir; for how could those redeemed by His blood make mention of His death as that in which they have no direct concern? No.

"One string there is, of sweetest tone,
Reserved for sinners saved by grace;
'Tis sacred to one class alone,
And touched by one peculiar race."

For other motives there are which led Him to die, and in these His saints are directly concerned.

Speaking with His disciples on the evening of His betrayal, after Judas had left them to carry out his nefarious design, the Lord said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John xv. 13). What more can any one do for his friends than that? What less has the Lord done? "and hereby perceive we the love," as John writes (1 John iii. 16), referring, it would seem, to those words of the Master, "because He laid down His life for us." From love to God, and that the world might know it, the Lord died; for love to His own, He laid down His life for them. All that a creature as an unfallen one needs, the angels surely enjoy. But which of them could use such language as John does? The elect angels do not need such a manifestation of love; the fallen ones will never enjoy it. For He took not hold of angels (Heb. ii. 16); and those of them who fell are kept in chains of darkness, awaiting their final doom. (2 Pet. ii. 4). But He took hold of the seed of Abraham, and love for His people drew Him to the cross.

But where are such as those called *us* by John to be found? Who can be numbered amongst that company? The Lord declared that, when He drew the contrast between the hireling and the

Good Shepherd (John x. 12-14), the "us" of John's epistle are the "sheep" of John's gospel. The hireling fleeth because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep; the Good Shepherd would not seek his own safety by flight, because he did care for them. Self-preservation was the thought of the hireling; self-surrender that of the Shepherd. To leave them to the wolf the hireling would be content; to save them from its rapacity would be a motive for the Good Shepherd to die. But more. The sheep did not belong to the hireling; but they do to the Shepherd. He therefore has an interest in them; for them—His sheep—He was content, nay, willing, to die, and thereby proved Himself to be the Good Shepherd. But how are the sheep to be known? The Shepherd it is who describes them: they hear His voice, and they follow Him, and they know not the voice of a stranger (John x. 27-35). By these marks they may be known. Varied, then, were the motives which led the Lord to die. To obey God and from love to the Father, a desire that His name should be glorified; from love, too, to the sheep, caring for them, and because they are His He stooped even to death. Holy ground it surely is when we touch on such a theme. May it ever be with solemnised and worshipping hearts that we meditate on so sacred a subject as the motives of the Son of God for dying on the cross.

C. E. S.

MEDITATIONS ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

(Translated from "*Il Dispensatore*.")

THE COMING OF THE HOLY GHOST.

CHAPTER II.

BUT the great event of which we have spoken now claims our attention—the immense fact of the coming of the Holy Ghost to dwell with the disciples of Jesus, in each, and in the midst of all together. Thus in i. Cor. iii. 16, the Church as a universal assembly is the temple of God; and then in i. Cor. vi. 19, the body of the faithful is the temple of God. All those who, steadfast to Jesus, habitually gathered together, were thus assembled on the day of Pentecost. We have seen, Chap. i. 14, that they continued with one accord in prayer while waiting for the Comforter, promised according to the word of Jesus.

Suddenly, an impetuous wind is felt, filling all the house where they sat, as the cloud filled the tabernacle, so that the priests could not enter there (1 Kings viii. 11). But now men themselves composed the tabernacle where God disdained not to dwell. The blood of Jesus had purified them, and rendered them fit to be the habitation of God through the Spirit (in Spirit) Eph. ii. 22.

Marvellous truth, fruit of accomplished redemption! and blessed knowledge that a Man, much more than a man, sits at the right hand of God (John vii. 39). But how beautiful is this truth, this divine fact, that—such is the effect of the death and of the blood of Christ, and of our reconciliation and purification—instead of driving away the priests by His presence, God, in grace, makes us His habitation. What a contrast between the law and the gospel!

But, besides this, a marvellous testimony is found in this fact to the grace of God. The presence of the Holy Ghost depended on the sitting of the Man Jesus at the right hand of God; demonstration and fruit of the accomplishment of the work of redemption. Now, this could not be limited to the Jewish people. This presence was in itself a testimony to that accomplishment, and the earnest of our inheritance, Christ being dead for all, and ascended into glory, thus announcing to all the gospel of His glory. For the moment, the patience of God fulfilled the work of grace among the Jews, people of the promises; but the gospel which should be preached was for the whole world.

When the judgment of God fell on man at the tower of Babel, it dispersed them, confounding their speech; but God took Abraham, separating him from his country, and from his father's house, to have a seed and then a people for Himself. During many years, God endured the iniquity and unfaithfulness of this people, sending prophets, till no further remedy could be found; at last, He sent His own Son, and they, as we know, rejected and crucified Him. Then the nation is put aside till the sovereign grace of God—His Church, the fulness of the Gentiles being gathered out—commences anew on the footing of the new Covenant, and of the presence of the Messiah on the earth.

In the meantime, He gathers together the heirs of Christ, the celestial assembly. Thus—although for a moment the Spirit had separated in the midst of the Jews, spared as a nation by the intercession of Christ on the cross, till they should have rejected a glorified Christ in the same way that they had a crucified Christ come in humiliation; and also to gather together all those among this people that had ears to hear—it is shown by the Spirit how the God of grace was ready to overstep the limits of the chosen people, and surmount the judgment of Babel, speaking to all the people in their own tongue—highest testimony of grace towards the world!

The barriers remained, but God surmounted them—passed over them—in order to announce the Saviour's grace and salvation unto the whole world. We also see this special gift every time that God intervenes anew, as in Samaria

and in the house of Cornelius. In fact, it was impossible that a glorified Saviour should be only the Jewish Saviour. The history of this people was, when they had rejected the Saviour, finished, save by grace; and the eternal redemption of God could not be for the Jews alone.

The visible character that the Holy Ghost takes corresponds to this work. When it descended on Christ, the Spirit was like unto a dove; symbol of the meekness and sweet tranquillity of Him of whom it was written, "He shall not strive nor cry; neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory" (Matt. xii. 19, 20). But to the disciples He said, "That which I say in the darkness, tell it in the light; and that which ye have heard in the ear, proclaim it on the house-tops."

The Spirit came then as an impetuous wind, filling all the house; and as cloven tongues of fire. The partition was symbolical of the diverse languages, the fire of the penetrating power of the Word of God, discernor of the thoughts and intentions of the heart. It seems to us, that not only the apostles, but all the one hundred and twenty, were invested with this power. They were all together, and the explanation given by Peter of the prophecy of Joel, confirms the matter (ch. i. 14, 15; ii. 1, 17).

They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak in strange tongues, according as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now, at Jerusalem men of all countries were present, and the rumour of what had happened brought them together. This great crowd was astonished to hear each his own dialect, speaking together and saying, "Are not all these Galileans? How then do we hear each his own tongue?" They were in doubt, saying, "What meaneth this?" Others, cavilling, said, "They are full of new wine." These were especially the Jews, always prone to incredulity.

To these Peter replied, speaking firmly in their mother-tongue, and makes them understand that this was what Joel had said, prophesying that these things should happen in the last days. It is clear, on reading Joel, I doubt not, that the Holy Ghost will be poured out anew when Israel is re-established in its own land. It will then be the rain of the latter season. Remark that ver. 30 of Joel ii. should come before those preceding. These things will happen before the terrible day of the Lord comes; but the blessings are after that day.

Peter says, in a general way, "in the last days," and speaks of judgment as yet to come, as in fact was the case.

But what is important in his discourse is the presentation to the consciences of the Jews of their actual position; because,

whatever grace may be, God is always clear and positive in the declaration and in the exposition of the sins of those souls where grace works. In short, this was their position; they had outraged and crucified Him whom God had set at His right hand, His own Son. Him they had put to death, and God had raised Him up, besides what had been demonstrated by the power manifested in His works. Horrible position! and we say it not only for the Jews, but for all men. Their Messiah, foundation of all their hopes, rejected; the Son of God put to death—a rupture which seemed irreparable between God and man; and, on man's side, it was in fact irreparable.

All was lost. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and mankind had refused it. Sin was there, transgression against the law was already there; God had come in grace, and man had not received Him. Now He had gone back into heaven, but, blessed be His name, the counsels of God were not frustrated. Far from that, they were accomplished. Grace had won the victory; and where man had manifested his enmity against God, God had manifested His love towards man, and accomplished the work for the salvation of believers in Christ. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."

God has made use of the iniquity and enmity of man to accomplish the work of redemption. The enmity of man and the love of God were contrasted in the same fact on the cross, in the glorious manifestation that His love surpassed and surmounted the enmity of man. Woe to him who neglects and refuses this immense grace, this work alone efficacious for salvation!

JESUS MADE BOTH LORD AND CHRIST.

Peter declares that God has raised Christ from the dead, fully testifying that His justice had been satisfied; for the work that the Saviour has accomplished, He has exalted Him to His own right hand (John xiii. 31, 32; xvii. 4, 5), testifying to the value of His work, of what He merited by it, and of the glory (save His seat at the right hand of the Father, which belonged to Him as the only-begotten Son) which He has acquired for us; and having received from the Father the promised Spirit, He had sent it, of which they saw and heard the effect. And He was to sit there in the heavens till all His enemies should be made His footstool.

Let us remark here, what we have already observed, that Christ, exalted as a man to the right hand of God, has received the Holy Ghost anew, in order to

give it to believers. God only dwells with mankind in consequence of redemption. He did not dwell with Adam innocent, nor with Abraham; but as soon as Israel was set free from slavery to Egypt by means of a redemption, though external, God comes to dwell in the cloud in the midst of the people, and His glory filled the tabernacle (Ex. xxix. 46). Thus, in a way less visible, but much more precious—eternal redemption being accomplished—He dwells, in the person of the Holy Ghost, in the midst of His people. And Christ being glorified as a man—proof of the accomplishment and of the full effect of this glorious redemption—He receives the Holy Ghost from the Father, and pours it out on His own.

The Spirit unites them individually with Himself, and gives them the consciousness of being sons of God; and it is the power which operates in believers for the glorifying of Christ here below, and to work in order to accomplish the counsels of God in His assembly, till it shall be caught up to be with Jesus, and like Him, in glory. The believer and the universal assembly are both a temple where the Holy Ghost dwells. Grace has come, and God dwells there where the work and the blood of Christ have rendered it possible, in a world which has rejected Him.

The house of Israel (and later on, the Gentile world) was to know certainly, from this sign, that God had made the Man Jesus, whom Israel had rejected, both Lord and Christ. Pricked in the heart, and feeling their horrible position in having cast out the Christ, those who heard, demanded, "What must we do?" But, as soon as this effect of the Spirit in their hearts was found, it was easy to give the answer; the work of salvation was accomplished; Christ had been given for their sins; cleansing was already made; they had only to repent, and to recognise the Saviour, in order to have remission of their sins; and, baptized in His name (so that He might be acknowledged in His death); they should receive the Holy Ghost; because the promise was for them and for their children, and for as many as the Lord God should call.

All those, then, that received the word willingly were baptized, and three thousand persons were added. Here we must distinguish between the operation of grace and of the Holy Ghost in the heart in making it receive Christ, and the gift of the Spirit when we have acknowledged Him as Saviour, and as the means of the remission of our sins: The Spirit works in us, makes us feel our sins, the need of a Saviour and of the blood of Christ; and after we have believed in His work on the cross, we are sealed of God by the gift of the Holy Ghost, who comes to dwell in us.

We have the same thing in the prodigal son in Luke xv. The work of God

was done in the far country, and he sets out towards his father, uncertain how he would be received. The work of God was formed in him—he repents, confessed his sins, and spoke of being a hired servant in his father's house. He was not yet clothed with the best garment, had not the ring on his finger, nor the shoes on his feet. He meets his father in his rags; but, from the moment the father has fallen on his neck and kissed him, he dares not speak of being a hired servant. Though he confessed his sins, yet it was no longer time for that. He was not yet fit to enter into the house; rags do not suit well the house of God. But then he is clothed with the best robe of Christ Himself (a robe which was never a part of what had been given to him by his father, which did not belong to Adam innocent); and he is fit to enter into the house with all the honour which the father can put on him. And he is conscious of being recognised as a son, and of having the favour of his father.

It is the same thing with the soul. The Holy Ghost operates in us, produces the need, and we are born of God; and then, convinced of sin, we find Christ the Saviour, and by Him remission of our sins for ever; and finally, we are sealed with the Holy Ghost. "Because ye are sons," says the Apostle, "God has sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6). There true liberty is found, and the love of God is poured into our hearts. Our bodies have become temples of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. vi. 19).

It is very important, then, to distinguish between the operation of the Holy Ghost which produces faith, giving power to the Word in the conscience, and the habitation of the Holy Ghost in us, consequent on, and sealing, the faith which we have.

It is one thing to build a house, and another thing to live in it when it is built. But how we ought to be living in the holiness of this consecration—for we are born of God, and in our bodies dwells the Holy Ghost as in a temple! The fruits of His presence are beautifully manifested. Here, it is not the power that carries the Word of God into the consciences of the whole world, announcing Christ, grace, and salvation; it is the power over self, dismissing self-love; active in love, thinking of others rather than of one's self.

Beautiful is the picture that the Spirit gives of the moral effects of this dwelling of the Holy Ghost in the heart. These effects were of two kinds—piety, or the love of religion; and then practical love among the disciples. First, persevering in the truth, and in the communion of the apostles, they remained attached to those who had been the channels of the testimony of God to their hearts, who

had been the true ambassadors of God; it was true unity, working by the power of the Holy Ghost, of which the apostles were the vessels; and then, in the continual commemoration of the death of Christ, there was a yet more ample expression of unity—that of all the body of Christ. They broke bread together, and also persevered in prayer. Beautiful realisation and expression of the unity of the Spirit, abolishing all differences, because, by the power of the Spirit, all hearts were lifted up above all circumstances, above the things of this weak world. Hearts were not here below, but with Christ, at the right hand of God in heaven.

Those who believed by the word of the apostles were one with the Father in the Son, according to John xvii. 21. Also, the effect of this power which governed all human sentiments, produced itself in the world around them—a holy fear filled all hearts. The world has acknowledged the unfolding of a power not of this world, lifting hearts above the motives that governed it. The presence of God among the disciples was felt by all; and that was also manifested by the miracles and wonderful signs worked by the hands of the apostles. God was there in the person of the Holy Ghost, according to the promise of Jesus.

In the second place, practical love was fully realised. They were all together as brethren, the family of God; all the members of the family participating in common the blessings of the Father, none saying, This is mine. If one had more than another, he possessed love's privilege to give to him who had need of it. But this was not enforced; it was the right of him who was in need; otherwise it would not have been the fruit of love. "Whilst it remained," says Peter, "was it not thine own? and when thou hadst sold it, was it not in thy power?" No; it was full love that felt the duty, as a son of God, not to leave a brother in want. It was the free activity of love, produced by the powerful working of the Spirit of God. As soon as it becomes obligatory, it loses all its value, all its own nature. To take away from another, is not to give. The one is self-love; the other is divine love for others. The thought of rendering it obligatory shows that no love is there.

But to return to our subject. What a magnificent picture of the first meeting of Christians, of the assembly of God, as He established it in the beginning! To think of others, and not of one's self—divine love accomplished in human hearts. It is quite possible that this cannot be realised literally now; Christians are scattered everywhere; the apostles, at whose feet to cast the gifts and the possessions, are no more; but the true Christian can still perfectly well work according to the principles that

filled the hearts of these blessed members of Christ. The Word of God supposes the existence of both rich and poor (1 Tim. vi. 17-19). But this does not hinder me from using in love, as a steward of God, all I possess for the good of the members of Christ. The duty of the man to sustain his own family always remains valid; but what in love he can, the faithful Christian is obliged to do; and what he possesses of this world's goods, entrusted to him by God, he must give for the good of all, and especially for the family of God.

But fraternal love was not all. Their hearts were bound together in the worship and adoration of God. At this time the Gentiles had not yet been introduced into the assembly; and the disciples as Jews still followed their old habits. The patience of God still endured the Jewish system, while gathering out from among the people those who were to be saved. God was ready to take Judaism off the earth, and transfer the remnant of the Jews, whom grace had brought into faith, to the Christian assembly. They united still the Jewish and the Christian worship; went up daily in common accord to the temple to adore Jehovah; then in their own houses they broke bread, taking the Lord's Supper daily in full confidence of the love of God. They ate their meat with joy and simplicity of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people.

The fruits of the Holy Ghost and the manifestation of His power often attract the hearts of the people; and thus God opens a door to the Word, and the hearts of many are truly converted. However, though the testimony be accepted, yet it does not follow that souls are converted. The crowd which followed Jesus afterwards cried, "Crucify Him." But this general favour for the moment stopped opposition, and those that had ears to hear grew in the knowledge of the truth. The truth can only be truly received by grace; but the fruits of the Spirit work powerfully on the natural heart. Every one can understand the love and the abnegation of self, and God makes use of this to spread the testimony of the gospel.

What we are studying here is beautifully presented in type in the bells and pomegranates that adorned the garment of Aaron when he entered into the holy place. "And beneath upon the hem of it, thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the hem thereof; and bells of gold between them round about: A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe round about" (Ex. xxviii. 33-35). But now he has lost the right of so entering there for his children; but I speak of what was at first, before they sinned.

THE CHURCH'S APPEAL TO GOD.*

I. THE APOSTLES' RETURN TO THEIR OWN COMPANY; AND THEIR REPORT.

ON being released, the apostles, Peter and John, return to their own company. The narrative runs as follows:—

"And having been let go, they came to their own [company], and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them" (verse 23). Had matters been as they ought to have been with the heads of the nation, they would have had a very different report to give from that which, we learn from the previous context, they must have given.

We need to be thrown ourselves into the circumstances of the apostles and their converts (as we certainly will be into their difficulties, if faithful) to appreciate the awful impression this opposition of the Sanhedrim to their glorified Master, and the Messiah of their nation, must have made upon them. They had had every assurance that Jesus was the Christ; they had been His disciples in life, and were His personally-commissioned witnesses in resurrection; they had been endued with power from on high—the Pentecostal baptism of the Spirit having come; and they were preaching the Gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, God accompanying their testimony with divine and supernatural success; the mighty work of repentance and salvation had been accompanied also with "wonders and signs;" in connection with the healing of the cripple, the nation had been summoned to repent; and when they were in the act of proclaiming the remission of sins, the return of Jesus, and the introduction of times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and the restoring of all things of which God had spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets, if only the nation would repent and be converted, they were arrested and cast into prison; brought before the high council of Israel, to whom they had boldly testified concerning their Messiah, and that "salvation is in none other;" and now, instead of faith, repentance, and the reception of their testimony on the part of Israel, the very heads of their nation, "the chief priests and elders," had not only definitively refused their Messiah, but forbidden them to preach or teach in His name; and had dismissed them with reiterated and multiplied threatenings to desist from fulfilling the divine commission entrusted to them by their risen Lord, and for the discharge of which they had received the Holy Ghost, and were filled with His presence and power.

* This paper, extending over four pages, is the major part of Lecture XIII. extracted from a volume of LECTURES ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, first series, written by the Editor, and which may be published, if the Lord will, next month.

Are not the heavens to rule? Has not God raised up His servant Jesus, and set Him on His own right hand in the heavens, and made Him "both Lord and Christ?" Is God's purpose to bless the world, by sending back Jesus to judge the habitable earth in righteousness, as God's King, set on His holy hill of Zion, to be frustrated, or indefinitely postponed? Such might have been the questionings of these witnesses; and as they "reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them," we need not wonder that they and "their own" were so overwhelmed by the tidings that they felt their only resource was in prayer to God, as the godly had found it in Israel, in former periods, in times of national crisis (Exodus xxxii., xxxiii.; 2 Chron. xx.; Isa. xxxvii.).

*"And having been let go, they came to their own" friends, who were, no doubt, assembled in prayer in the well-known "upper room," where the Spirit had descended (ch. i. 14, ii. 1) at Pentecost, and where they were so soon to receive further sensible tokens of His continued presence with them. There was now a recognised community of believers in Christ within the Holy City; and the two disciples naturally repair "to their own company." This divine Ecclesia, with the living Shekinah-glory, in the person of the Holy Ghost, tabernacled among them, was God's centre, and the disciples left the presence of the established order that had risen up against them, and found their association in the outside place, with the rejected Christ, and with all the faithful saints in Jerusalem who valued being with God and the Holy Ghost's new testimony to the glorified Christ above the favour of men, or the temporal advantages that might have accrued to them from continuing to go on with the God-forsaken order of things. The power of God's grace had gathered them to this new centre, and the Holy Ghost's presence and blessing now sustained them in it. Living souls, full of the Holy Ghost and faith, draw to living souls; and Christ, known in their midst, makes that spot where they assemble to be holy ground, the happiest place on earth; the place to which all Christ-loving and loyal hearts gravitate, that they may praise and worship their common Lord. There is something even in the very words which tell us this: "*Having been let go, they came to their own company.*" When we feel in the freest circumstances—all restraint removed—where do we naturally go, if spiritual, but to the assembly of God's saints? for our Lord has said, "Where two or three are gathered together unto My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20). The Spirit draws me "to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight" (Ps. xvi. 3).*

THE SOLEMN PRAYER AND THE IMMEDIATE ANSWER.

"And they, having heard it, lifted up their voice with one accord to God, and said, LORD, Thou art the God who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them; who hast said by the mouth of Thy servant David, Why have [the] nations raged haughtily and [the] peoples meditated vain things? The kings of the earth were there, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ. For in truth against Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou hadst anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with [the] nations and peoples of Israel, have been gathered together in this city, to do whatever Thy hand and Thy counsel had determined before should come to pass. And now, LORD, look upon their threatenings, and give to Thy bondsmen with all boldness to speak Thy word, in that Thou stretchest out Thy hand to heal, and that signs and wonders take place through the name of Thy holy servant Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place wherein they were assembled shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and spoke the word of God with boldness" (ver. 24-31).*

The effect on the gathered saints of the report of the opposition, and the threatenings of the leaders of the Jews, was to draw forth their dependence on God, and the expression of it in prayer. There were but few assembled, but the report of the doings of the council would go forth in a short time throughout the entire Christian community. The apostles, and those who were with them, feeling deeply the solemn character of the crisis, and the gravity of their situation, lift up their voice with one accord to God, and addressing Him as Jehovah, they pray both in view of His power and His counsel, as witnessed in creation and expressed in revelation. The apostles gave their report: one of the company led in prayer, all the others praying along with him in the Holy Ghost.

There was no such thing as the singing of the second psalm, and the application of it made by Peter in prayer, as has been alleged; neither was this a form of common prayer in use in the Jerusalem Church, for "in this way you would improperly transfer to the primitive Church the usage of a later time." They needed no formula of prayer then, for they had the Spirit in power, and He was all-sufficient both to sustain them, and to give them the proper sentiments and form of words to use in their prayers. Nature in distress needs no form in which to express itself: neither does grace; and

* If with some we omit "God," we should read "Thou art He who made."

here it must have been the Spirit-given prayer of the moment they uttered, for they refer in it to "their threatenings," as if spread out by them at that time as they prayed in the Holy Ghost.

It has been well said, "The most effective weapons which the Church can employ in distress and persecution are prayers and tears." If the prayer of a righteous man availeth much, the prayer of many righteous men, when offered with one accord, availeth still more.

GOD THE CREATOR IS ACKNOWLEDGED.

THERE is a mighty power in the souls of the saints, when in their extremities they feel they can address themselves to God as the Omnipotent Creator. Here they do so—"Thou art the God who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them." With Omnipotence for us, who can be against us?

Met as they now were in their divine mission to proclaim the Lordship of Christ, and demand of the nation repentance and submission to His name, by the hostile opposition of the lords who were then ruling in Israel, they appeal to God in His character of universal Lord,* the God who made the universe and rules over all creatures; and if those who exercise authority in Israel were assuming a minatory aspect towards His servants, they now appeal from their tribunal to the throne of Him by whom kings rule and princes decree justice, and whence they derive authority and leave Him to judge between them. They were sure that the Judge of all the earth must do right and judge righteous judgment; and, moreover, if He were Maker of heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, He could give effect to His will by the power of His hand, and knowing this they might calmly confide in Him.

It was in this manner they prayed in "the times of old," when, as in Jer. xxxii. 17, they said, "Ah! Lord God, behold, Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power and stretched-out arm, and there is nothing too hard for Thee." And again, in Neh. ix. 6, "Thou, even Thou, art LORD alone.

* Lord here is *δεσπότης*, *Master*, occurring, as applied to God, not to Christ, elsewhere in Luke ii. 29; 2 Peter ii. 1; Jude 4: Rev. vi. 10. To men, 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2; 2 Tim. ii. 21; 1 Pet. ii. 18; it is used as opposed to a servant, the head of a family, having supreme authority therein; and when applied to God it signifies His Lordship and supreme authority. In the LXX. it stands for the three words *Adonai* (Gen. xv. 2, 8); *Elohim* (Job v. 8); *Jehovah* (Prov. xxix. 26); and in profane authors it is applied to kings and emperors (Jos. Ant. I. iii. 1; Herodian I. vi. 4; Xen. Cyr. I. iii. 18). With God as *Despot* we have the only desirable form of government, for He is All-wise, All-good, and All-powerful. And this must be the rule, we are told, of "the world to come" (1 Cor. xv. 24-28).

Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and Thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth Thee." These were trying times for their fathers, and now they, the godly remnant so recently called out to witness for God and His Christ in the face of national defection and opposition, call on God in the same solemn way, laying hold on Him as the Creator and universal Lord; as when Hezekiah laid the threatenings of Sennacherib, King of Assyria, before "the God of Israel" (Isa. xxxvii. 16, 17), saying, "Thou art the God, even Thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; Thou hast made heaven and earth;" even so do the poor remnant in Israel, who have separated themselves to the name of Jesus from the apostate nation of the Jews now pray in deep distress, yet with the strength and confidence of faith.

Heaven, earth, and sea, with all that they contain, came forth into being obedient to the will and word of the omnipotent Creator; and if they obeyed His voice and did His will, He is able to do all things; and the will of man, let him be ever so high in place or authority, ought not to be set against the will of God; and they were strong in faith, giving glory to God because assured that they were doing His will, who created the heavens and the earth. Oh, what strength we gather in the time of trouble as we stand beneath the mighty dome of Night, and gaze aloft into the glorious heavens laden with the rich fruitage of the calm, sparkling stars; or walk forth on the summer eve and listen to the roll of the great ocean waves as they break on the rocky shore; or let the mind take in the thought that these waters girdle the great globe with all its teeming objects, animate and inanimate; and that He who called them into being by His word is still upholding them in being by His power, and that these are but part of His works, for worlds on worlds, still veiled from human eyes by their unmeasurable distances, people the illimitable depths of immensity; and He is "God over all, blessed for ever." And the God of creation being the God of our salvation, we have nothing short of Omnipotence on our side: and Scripture in its first and last books, Genesis and the Apocalypse, gives special prominence to this great doctrine that on opening our Bibles, as well as closing them, we may be reminded that we are "sons and daughters of the LORD Almighty."

GOD THE REVEALER IS ACKNOWLEDGED.

"Who hast said by the mouth of thy servant David, Why have the nations raged haughtily, and the peoples

*meditated vain things?"** "Who hast made" and "who hast said" bring before us the God of creation and the Author of revelation. The living, personal God, the Maker of heaven and earth—not the God of the pantheist—is the God who inspired holy men of old to communicate His truth, and embody in the prophetic Word His counsel regarding the Person, kingdom, and government of the Messiah; and David,† we are here told, was the Lord's instrument to foretell the hostile confederacy of nations, peoples, kings, and rulers that should combine against His Christ. There had been and still is a hostile gathering of men against the Lord and against His Christ; but now a friendly gathering of His followers confronts them and boldly stands up for Him. This is the work of God's Holy Spirit.

Verses 26-28—"The kings of the earth were there, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord, and against His Christ," &c.‡—The horse, in its intractable condition—spirited, and refusing to be managed by the rider—is the source of the figure "raging," which is here applied to "the nations," and which refers to the Romans; and "the peoples" ("the plural, in allusion to the twelve tribes") designates the Jews. Indeed, we have in the prayer itself an explanation of the matter given us in these words: "For in truth, against Thy Holy Servant Jesus, whom Thou hadst anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the nations and peoples of Israel, have been gathered together§ in this city, to do whatever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before should come to pass." This must refer to their opposition to Christ, which led to His crucifixion, and which He will punish when "He comes in His kingdom. And this universal hostility must have appeared to the community the more to be dreaded the more they looked upon a world thus opposed, not as an un-

* The reading here, most likely, should be "Who by the Holy Spirit (through the mouth of Thy servant David, our father) hast said." This is the eighth prophecy expounded in this book.

† The Second Psalm is exclusively a prophecy of Christ, and cannot be applied to David or any other king, even in a secondary way. It is repeatedly quoted in the New Testament, verses 1, 2 in this place by some of the apostles or others; the seventh verse by Paul (Acts xiii. 33; Heb. i. 5); the ninth verse by John (Rev. ii. 26, 27; xii. 5; xix. 15). It furnishes the two appellations of the Lord, *Messiah* and *the Son of God*. It is "suffering and glory" that we get here—the rage of man against the Lord's Anointed, but the Lord's triumphant exaltation of Him.

‡ The present prayer answers to the Second Psalm, as a comparison shows:—

The kings—Herod.
The rulers—Pontius Pilate.
The nations—The Romans.
The peoples—The peoples of Israel.

§ "In this city" is an addition which is undoubtedly genuine, and is inserted by Lach., Tisch., Alf., and others. It answers to "upon Thy holy hill of Zion" (Ps. ii. 6).

ganised mass of individuals, but saw in the front of the hostile array those who were set to be heads of nations and lands—the princes and potentates of the earth.”

It is remarkable how entirely they forget themselves in this prayer, and are absorbed with Christ and His great interests. “The apostles were so thoroughly engrossed with the Person of Christ and His affairs, their own individual concerns were thrown into the background, and it was so exclusively Christ’s cause which appeared to them intrinsically important, that they saw even in their own sufferings nothing but persecutions directed against Christ. Their prayer, therefore, concerned itself only about Him; and their desires looked exclusively to this, that they might be enabled to glorify Him.”

This shows the work of the Spirit of God, for it is His office to glorify Christ: “He shall glorify Me, for He shall take of Mine and show it unto you.” And the spiritual sense—the spirit of wisdom that was in them by the Holy Ghost—showed itself in the appropriate way in which they fixed upon the text with which the Second Psalm opens to form the basis of their appeal in prayer to God with regard to the rulers of their nation, for no quotation could have been found that could have described so vividly the awful situation and the utter impotency of the world to overthrow God’s purpose concerning His Son. It surely teaches us that true spirituality will show itself in the Divine skill with which we can weave Holy Scripture into the body of our prayers; and also that Christ will be uppermost, and self nowhere.

Then the folly of the opposition of men to Christ and His cause is seen in this, that in all that transpired they were but carrying out the Divine counsel. “The hostility of the world is so little able to overthrow God’s plan, that it is compelled to become the means of accomplishing it.”

The confederacy which is here described was formed, as we have already said, when Jesus was crucified; and He will punish it when He returns in His kingdom (see Luke xix.). It is still, in principle, existent—being the course of this world, already judged, but spared through Divine long-suffering. It will be fully developed in all its forms of evil in “the last days”—those days which the Psalms so generally belong to. It acts on the old desire and lie of the serpent (Gen. iii. 5). It would dethrone God. For the present, however, He that sits in the heavens laughs at it all; as was expressed by the angel rolling away the stone, and sitting on it, while he put the sentence of death into the hearts of its keepers (Matt. xxviii.) What was all that but the Lord telling

the confederacy which had crucified Jesus that He had them all in derision? In like spirit the Lord Jesus, from the heavens, challenged Saul, the persecuting zealot, in Acts ix. 3.

But there is much more than this present laughter; for the decree of God, touching the Christ, is the great counter-scheme, and will of course prevail. And while, for the present, the judgment of Rev. xix. 15, xii. 5, is not fulfilled, nor the establishment of Christ’s earthly triumph and royalty in Zion, when the heathen shall be given Him for an inheritance, the government of God turns suffering to spiritual blessing, and restrains the wrath of enemies, and under our Father’s hand we learn patience.

The psalm tells of triumph over all opposition by unsparing judgment, and kings are called to submit before the coming judgment of the earth. Those who object that Psalm ii. cannot be Messianic, because it is not applicable to the Christian conceptions of the Messiah, do not take into account that the kingdom of Messiah is spoken of in this and other Psalms, and that it is in abeyance because of the rejection of Christ, and that we have Him now as Saviour and Head of His body the Church, who, after this period of the world’s hostility and rejection is ended, will come as Executor of wrath and vengeance, and judge the world in righteousness. He is Saviour and Judge. He is God’s King; but being rejected, the kingdom is postponed, and heavenly glory opens, which is now the home we look for after we have passed the time of our sojourning here in fear, and not the earthly centre of Zion with God’s King reigning there.

This is in abeyance, and our place is to be in the midst of this hostile world, looking for our Lord to come and take us out of it to Himself; but while He tarries in the heavens we are to be outside this hostile confederacy, suffering persecution for His name, and committing the keeping of our souls to God as to a faithful Creator, casting all our care upon Him. This is what the Christian community now do.

The Christian community now see by means of this prophetic lamp the hand of God and the accomplishment of His counsel in all the sad history of the rejection and crucifixion of Jesus; and from this they take courage in the present emergency when menaced by “the chief priests and elders of the people,” and forbidden to preach and teach at all in the name of Jesus. Creation, Revelation, and Providence all confirm their faith in God and His Christ, and give them a spiritual conviction that, with God on their side, they need not fear what all the powers of the world can do against them. They have only to have perfect faith in Him, and He will take the whole matter so entirely into His own hands,

that, like Jehoshaphat’s army of old, they will have nothing left them to do but to gather the spoils of a God-given victory (2 Chron. xx. 26). Then comes the brief petitory part of their prayer.

WHAT THEY PRAY FOR.

*And * now, Lord, look upon their threatenings, and give to Thy bondsmen† with all boldness to speak Thy word in that Thou stretchest out Thy hand to heal, and that signs and wonders take place through the name of Thy holy servant Jesus (29, 30).*

There are here three things requested—(1) boldness to speak, and (2) the hand of God with them to heal, and that signs and wonders might take place at the same time that they beseech Him—(3) to look upon their threatenings.

One cannot but observe the meekness and gentleness of Christ in this Christian community, in that they do not ask for any punishment on their enemies, only that God would look upon their threatenings, “according to His watchful Providence, His restraining power, and His protecting care.” Look upon their threatenings; for they had not been few (v. 17, 21). Although the threatenings of the Sanhedrim were like a sword suspended over the heads of the apostles, they do not pray for wrath or vengeance upon their adversaries, for they had heard how their Saviour had prayed: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;” and they had just been seeing the fruit of that prayer of His on the cross in the forgiveness and salvation of thousands of Jerusalem sinners; and knowing their commission (Luke xxiv. 47), and that through His name even these hostile rulers might be saved, they were in spiritual sympathy with the Saviour-God and His exalted Son, and could not have prayed for vengeance like the souls under the altar, who will be all right in thus praying in a day of judgment (Rev. vi. 10).

For the present “mercy rejoiceth against judgment,” and we have such privileges in Christ that now, and to faith, we have our portion ensured without needing to wait and pray for the destruction of our enemies. “Grace reigns,” and instead of cherishing revengeful feelings, we lift

* The first phrase in Greek (*καὶ τὰ νῦν*) mechanically copied would be, *and the (things) now*, which may be an elliptical expression meaning, “and now (as to) the things which have been mentioned.”

† “Bondsmen,” really *slaves*, *δούλοι*, the co-relative of *δεσποτῆς* (v. 24). David is called *παῖς* (v. 25); but the Lord Jesus is distinguished from him by the additional word *ἅγιος*, *holy*. But when they speak of themselves they say *δούλοι*, *slaves* or *bondsmen*. This shows at once their reverence and subjection. See Ps. xl. 4; xxxiv. 15; Jer. xxxii. 18, 19; Amos ix. 4-8.

up holy hands to God without wrath or doubting (1 Tim. ii.); and the very Peter of this crisis teaches us by the example of Christ—"who when suffering threatened not"—how to act in perfect grace towards those who may oppose us for our testimony, or our Christian walk (1 Pet. ii. 11-25). Even Michael the Archangel reads us a lesson not to "despise dominions," or "speak evil of dignities." For when he contended with the devil, and disputed about the body of Moses—I suppose as to the justice of his having it raised for the crucifixion before Christ had died and abolished death, and got it out of His domain—he merely says, "The Lord rebuke thee," and brings against him no railing accusation.*

"With all boldness to speak Thy word." Not only that they might not be intimidated by the declared opposition of their rulers, seeing that no combination of power can prevail against the Lord and His Anointed; but with a spiritual energy which gives power and edge to the word spoken by men full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, even when there is no declared opposition to them or it. The preaching of some men is as different from that of others as night is from day, even when both may be nearly equal in the amount of truth spoken: for the one is speaking from intellect and memory, the other "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Spiritual boldness in declaring God's testimony may sometimes be found in those who are utterly destitute of all natural courage, and whose nature makes them so shy, that they would have blushed and felt put out, in unconverted days, if a child had looked them straight in the face; and this is the God-given boldness for Christ which can alone be bestowed by being filled with the Holy Ghost.

It has been well remarked, "They do not ask that they may be allowed to give over speaking, much less that others may be sent in their stead; for they were sure of their call to the office." (*Thy Word*, ch. x. 36; Heb. iv. 12.)

They were certainly not intimidated by the threatenings of the rulers: who to save their places and their own importance had forbidden them to preach or teach in the name of Jesus: for they pray for all boldness—boldness of the most absolute degree and of every sort—to speak the word of God about His Son, the very thing forbidden. The apostle Paul, though so great a preacher of

the Word, frequently desires the brethren to pray for him—that, as he writes, Eph. vi. 19 "utterance may be given unto me that I may open my mouth boldly (or with boldness) to make known the mystery of the Gospel . . . that I may be bold in it as I ought to speak." This is deeply expressive of his sense of dependence on the Holy Ghost to continue this spiritual power and energy in his soul despite continual opposition. And in preaching, this divine boldness is half the victory: for it makes us confident in the Lord, like Jehoshaphat's host who went against their enemies with a choir of singers unto the Lord, "and that they should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for His mercy endureth for ever" (2 Chron. xx). There must be that Spirit-given courage in us in preaching Christ that makes us feel within us a tone of triumph as we speak: a "Thanks be unto God who always causeth us to triumph in Christ"—if we are so in the enjoyment of God's power in preaching His Word that a savour of Christ shall be felt, and the truth be laid with convicting energy on the souls of men. "Clothed with power from on high" is what their Lord had promised them: and for this they now prayed.

And that signs and wonders may be done, &c., verse 30. This formed a third petition of their prayer: they seek the continuance of miraculous powers as the external signs of their divine commission. In Mark's Gospel we have this commission given, and these signs connected with it thus: "And He said to them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the glad tidings to all the creation. He that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved; and he that disbelieves shall be condemned. And these signs shall follow those that have believed: In My name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they should drink any deadly thing, it shall not injure them; they shall lay hands upon the infirm, and they shall be well. The Lord, therefore, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sat at the right hand of God. And they, going forth, preached everywhere, the Lord working with [them] and confirming the Word by the signs following upon it" (Mark xvi. 15-20).

By the Holy Ghost they were now better instructed and guided into the truth of their Lord being exalted a Prince and a Saviour than to ask Him for fire from heaven on those who were opposed to Him (Luke ix. 54); for, now, that He had been exalted, they had been taught that He was not in Elijah-testimony but in Elisha-power to work deeds of mercy, and not send tokens of judgment. They would have their

boldness increased by seeing the Lord's hand with them, healing, as He had promised; and for this they prayed—"And that signs and wonders take place through the name of thy holy servant, Jesus." That indicates the power by which they expected them to be accomplished. We have read "in the name of Jesus," chap. iii. 6, and again, iv. 10, 18; but this is through His name. In that Thou stretchest forth Thy hand for healing—a continuance of similar healing power is one item in their prayer.

THE ANSWER TO THEIR PRAYER.

And when they had prayed, the place in which they were assembled shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spoke the word of God with boldness (ver. 31).

Their prayer was answered: (1) The place shook: this physical effect was a wonder of itself (see Ex. xix. 18; Ps. lxxviii. 8); for the omnipotent God was there in the person of the Holy Ghost—showing His presence with them besides being in them (for the Holy Spirit is now on earth with the Church, as well as in the bodies of the individual saints): (2) "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" and the result was immediately seen in this particular: (3) "they spoke the word of God with boldness." This was the permanent moral effect. The same sign was not given, "for that first baptism by the Holy Ghost was not to be repeated;" but the shaking of the place—the sign of His continued presence with them; in token of His ability to control all visible objects and persons, and impart to them power to continue their work and testimony to the name of Jesus. "They were assembled" when this happened: it was the assembly of God. Their being all filled with the Holy Ghost was a fresh thing. But some would say if they had the Holy Ghost they could not be more filled than they were: but the language implies a fresh and renewed filling, although the Holy Ghost did not come from heaven to do it. If one might reverently refer to a steam-engine, by way of giving a forcible illustration: there is steam in it, but it is standing quite still; but when the steam is up it is so filled that it works with power: there was nothing fresh put in; but that which was in it was applied with a fresh power. So of the Holy Ghost: He is there with all power and all ability to empower them to heal and speak; but, on the prayer, that power was applied. The form of the words shows it was personal; the Holy Spirit Himself—not an influence of the Spirit, nor yet "new fillings of the Spirit" (see chap. i. 8; ii. 33, 38; ix. 31; x. 45). Filled with the Holy Spirit "they did speak the word of God with boldness." The case

* In what spirit should the Christian mention his enemies in his prayers? (1) Without fear or dread; for he prays to the King of all kings; "if God be for us," &c. (Ro. viii. 31), verses 25-28. (2) Without wrath and hatred, for his prayers are directed against that which is evil, not against evil men (ver. 29). (3) Without pride and defiance; for he prays not so much with regard to his personal affairs as to the cause of God (ver. 29, 30).—Lange.

having been appealed to God, He now hereby declared His approval of their conduct.

NOTES ON FIRST TIMOTHY.

Ver. 2. "*Grace, mercy, peace from God our Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*"

(On the words "*grace and peace,*" see our notes in *British Herald*, No. 146.)

Mercy is individual. We need the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ every hour on to eternal life. It is "*grace and peace*" in Church epistles, as we have seen, but *mercy* is added in these pastoral epistles, which are addressed to individuals. *Grace* for the guilty and dead; *mercy* for the miserable and exposed; *peace* for the troubled and tried (see Gal. vi. 16). As to the expression "*God the Father,*" see Gal. i. 3, Eph. i. 2, 3; Phil. ii. 11, Col. iii. 17, 1 Thess. i. 1, 2 Thess. i. 1, 2 Tim. i. 2, Titus i. 4. This mode of writing belongs to all periods of Paul's writing, but chiefly to the later. The communion of saints is very strong. A strong tie it is that unites fathers and children, but the descending affections are ever the stronger—the father's for the son is stronger than the son's for the father. We never hear anything of Timothy's affection for Paul, we gather it only from the young man sticking to the old man through thick and thin, as we say. May we be in the place and condition of genuine Christians, that this benediction may be ours!

"*As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine*" (ver. 3). Paul states the object of writing the epistle, and characterises law-teachers (ver. 3-7). The lawful use of the law is stated (ver. 8-10). Then he shows how law agrees with gospel (ver. 11). Then he goes on to tell his own conversion, and to give thanks for it (ver. 12-17). Thence he returns from his digression to his exhortations to Timothy (ver. 18-20).

The object of leaving Timothy was that he might charge some that they should not teach heresy (and right teaching is all-important) and heathen or Jewish traditional things that had no connection with the new and gospel dispensation, which is in *faith*, not in *fables, genealogies* and questionings. Timothy being known as a person who was intimately connected with Paul, his presence at Ephesus, where Paul saw with a prescient eye some evil seemed likely to crop up among the elders (Acts xx. 30), would be a restraint on notional men. Curious is it to see that, when the apostle went away, men arose in this very Church professing to be apostles, and were found liars (Rev.

i. 2). That was a fine assumption—apostles! There are not wanting men, in our day, who say they are apostles and are not; they must also be "*liars.*" That is the word used regarding such even by Christ Himself.

"*Besought*" shows the freedom of individual service of the apostolic workers. Paul does not command Timothy, but only besought him;—that every one might be moving in the sphere of faith;—not of mere ecclesiastical authority, for, "*by faith ye stand.*" There were no lordly bishops or authoritative presbyters in those days, compelling men to labour where, when, and how they liked. No! but every man is seen as holding his *gift* from Christ; and all the rest had only to get out of his way, when using it, and give him sea-room. Every labourer was on his own personal responsibility as a servant of Christ—not commanded; and Timothy stayed at Ephesus. On another occasion, Paul could not get Apollos to do a thing he besought him to do, and Paul simply states the fact; never hints that he was wrong in refusing his order. "His mind was not at all to come." Timothy here fell in with the apostolic beseeching, and abode still at Ephesus. It does not indicate a hard and fast way of one servant of Christ, or a set of servants, domineering over others, but all acting as Christ's servants, amenable only to His authority, and to no other. They think that they manage these things better now! but this modern excess in authority does not seem to be very effective in producing spiritual power. I am strongly of opinion that Christ clothed His apostles with authority to command when the emergency required it, but they generally acted morally, not authoritatively.

"*Abide still at Ephesus.*" Paul had been fully three years there. It was said to be the eye of Asia—a city of great importance as a centre (see Acts xix.) The apostle had to leave; and he besought Timothy to keep down the dreaded tendency to evil doctrine. "*Not to hetero-teach,*" is the word, or to "*other-teach,*" as it literally means. He had an eye on some heady men who had perverted ideas, and he had warned of them (Acts xx. 29); and he feared to leave them, lest Satan should get an advantage over them. The Ephesians were in a lively, vigorous, well-taught state. They were all alive—hence the danger. Death needs no watching; the grave no guardians; a corpse is easily disposed of, but life does need guarding—especially young life; and good teaching is the only means of producing good fruit in the life; bad teaching will lead to failure in faith and walk. Churches as well as individuals are known by their fruits; and you cannot get true Christian life and walk

from those who are so ill-taught as not even to have the assurance that they are Christians, or who are heterodox in their views. There is not a little hetero-teaching just now, such as—that man is not totally depraved—not wholly lost, and that there is a something in him by which he can at least lay hold of Christ and be saved; and that when saved that he should be put under law as a rule of life (Chap. vi. 3; Tit. i. 13).

All strange or "*other*" elements that are mingled with the gospel, let it be man's best, and very fine and beautiful, in course of time work, and become hostile to the gospel. Man's teaching is like the ivy that cleaves to the tree, and ends by growing greenly out at the top of it, and leaving it completely rotten.

Paul did not wish any other doctrine than he taught to be given. Nor should anything but the gospel be presented—Paul's gospel, the gospel of God. People are not warranted in teaching anything else for the gospel, nor in adding anything to it (Acts xx. 28-30). "*The other doctrine*" dreaded was likely to be by and by *contrary doctrine*—law in opposition to gospel, verses 7, 11 (see also vi. 3; Gal. i. 6, 8, 9).

That is what the saints are groaning under at the present day. To make doubly sure of making saints walk in holiness, they mix law and gospel, and neutralise both, doing immense mischief, and keeping souls in bondage, and floundering in the mire of their own misery.

Verse 4. *Nor to turn their minds to fables and interminable genealogies, which bring questionings rather than God's dispensation, which is in faith,* chap. iv. 7; 2 Tim. iv. 4; Tit. i. 14; iii. 9. The apostle Paul was thoroughly opposed to all sorts of unedifying and question-raising subjects, such as a man could thrust his head into while his conscience was asleep, and his heart on furlough. When people take up their time with the husk instead of the kernel, they are in a bad moral condition. A good condition of soul is produced only by Christ and His cross; and it is indicated by our being full of the great central truths of Christianity. Things which minister to the mere intellect, and which lead to strife, and do not promote Christian feeling and life, are not "*sound doctrine.*"

NOTES OF READINGS ON THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

BEFORE we enter on the 1st Epistle of Peter, we will look for a moment at Peter himself. There is one very comforting thing to see, in looking at the Apostles: there were three classes among them;—those who were unnoticed but by name, as Thaddens and Bartholomew; others who were occasionally named, and

some who are always prominent, as Peter, James, and John. We find these distinctions still in the Church. We find some very active, and others coming only occasionally forward. Then there were other distinctions. Thomas was a very *reasoning* man; Peter a very *uncalculating* man. Peter, again, was a very *social* man; John very *retiring*. It is very happy to find these modern distinctions in what passed under the eye of Christ.

Among the Apostles we get three very prominent persons; and, even among these three, we get Peter greatly distinguished. Peter was ecclesiastically the first, and as long as the apostleship was the apostleship of the twelve, he was the primate. Now, we have lost sight of the apostleship of the twelve, and are under the irregular Gentile apostleship. And not only so, but Peter was brought into special exercises. He was separated by mistakes and by affection, and we find him distinguished by the Father and by Christ. "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but *my Father*." The rock of the Church was disclosed to Peter by the Father. Then he was distinguished by the Lord at the close. "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee." This is very striking. "And when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren." And now, let me ask, did Peter fulfil this commission? He did, eminently. We see Peter, in the first twelve chapters of the Acts, strengthening the brethren, and feeding the sheep. In the opening of the Acts, he is the man in the gap, as we say. In chapter i. he shows the secret of the 109th Psalm. In chapter ii. he interprets the day of Pentecost for the strengthening of the brethren. In chapter iii. he stands in the face of Jewish persecutors; and so on to chapter xii. When we look at these things, there is something very comforting in them. If we see our brethren more signalled than ourselves let us rejoice. We see, in the Lord's dealings with the Apostles, the same variety that we see among ourselves. Are there not social Peters among us, and retiring Johns? Thaddæus was as evangelically dear to Christ as John, but the Lord was training John for special service. But as to His love from everlasting to everlasting, it is a common affection, though in the midst of its commonness we find this beautiful variety. Peter gives place when we find God about further to unfold His purposes. The Apostle of the flesh gives place to the Apostle of the glory. Those who say Peter was not the chief of the twelve, are ignorantly contending for a piece of Protestant doctrine. But you and I are under a ministry that began from the glorification of the Son of Man (see Acts ix.)

J. G. B.

IN THE HOUSE WITH JESUS.

It is well to trace the guidance of His eye, and feel conscious that He has marked out the path that you tread, and is with you in it. You have the sanction of His own word for the place you are in as regards the Church, and the place you have left as respects the world.

What can alone give a charm to separations of this kind is, that by their means we are brought more into the place of His mind on earth, where, consequently, we may count upon His being personally with us, and this is everything. Where else, indeed, can He be in these last days, or in earlier times either?

The opening of John's Gospel, shows us the mutual delight it was to Jesus and His disciples to be thus together. When two of them said, "Rabbi, where dwellest Thou? He said unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day."

Sometimes I have thought, who was the happiest in this little group? Certainly He was who made them so happy, and whose happiness consisted in doing it. One of the two, in the conscious delight of the house, and who He was that dwelt there, must needs go out to bring others in; and here we learn our first lessons of communion and service. Personal intimacy with Jesus where He dwells, makes up our sweetest compounds in communion, and then becomes the constraining power by which we go forth to bring the outside ones into the house in devoted service.

It is Jesus himself that is thus the source and spring of all joy in the heart that has found Him, and it is this nearness to Himself at the very place where He dwells that makes any like Him. "Andrew first findeth his own brother Simon, and he brought him to Jesus." The most brotherly act he ever did, and which connected him morally with Jesus (in the errand that brought Him down from heaven), was to separate Simon from the place and pursuits which he followed, and bring him into the presence and intimacies of the Christ! One house in the wide world, and one Person who dwelt there, and who made it what it was, became the now gathering centre for this earth. You and I, by grace, have found our welcome in it, never to leave it, except it be in devotedness of heart to tell the outsiders what we have found, and to bring them into it: "Come and see."

I must remark the significance that attaches to the action of Jesus, who wrote upon Simon his new name; for in this introduction on the part of Andrew, Jesus will not know Simon in his old name and state, but says, "Thou shalt be called Cephas, . . . a stone." The way in which Peter holds this precious stone up to the light in his first

epistle (ch. ii.), and how it glistens to his eye and heart as a *living* stone, is evident enough. This, too, is what we individually are by grace, in Church connection with Christ the elect Stone, and the Corner-Stone, and take our places in the spiritual house, as anointed for the holy priesthood (ii. 5), or crowned as a royal priesthood (ii. 9), to show forth the virtues of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light.

The good Lord keep us more in character and consistency with this "*spiritual house*," by our abiding with Him in the intimacies of the dwelling-house, into which He first brought us when He wrote, so to speak, His Father's name upon our foreheads, and gave us to bear His own name along with us, instead of our own!

May you in confiding love be kept in the path till He comes, in the power and sweetness of that new name in the white stone which nobody knows but he that receiveth it.

OCCUPIED WITH CHRIST.

CHRIST did not come to be occupied with the ten thousand vanities filling the hearts and minds of poor sinners down here; but He came from His Father's bosom, to tell out all His Father's love, that He might occupy their hearts with the joys of the Father's presence. "If thou knewest" was ever on His lips. It is in this spirit alone that we can rightly pass through the world; our own hearts pre-occupied with the sense of His loveliness and grace, and so unattracted by all that glitters here, longing to attract away from these things to Him who alone is lovely.

It was in this spirit that Paul went to Corinth. Jews required a sign, and Greeks sought wisdom, but he brought neither the one nor the other; he preached Christ crucified. He well knew that Christ crucified was to the Jews a scandal, and to the Greeks foolishness; but he also knew that to the called the same Christ was the power of God and the wisdom of God. Therefore he determined to know nothing among them save Jesus Christ, and Him (as) crucified.

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Songs of gladness.

The Praise Book, 632.

O H, for the songs of gladness,
 Sweet sounding through the air!
 Oh, for the no more sadness
 Of all the ransomed there!
 Oh, for the glorious meeting
 Of Jesus with His own
 Oh, for the loved, loved greeting
 Of pilgrims in their home!
 Oh, for the sweet reunion
 Of friend restored to friend!
 That loved and long communion
 Which never more can end!
 Oh, for that life immortal,
 For bodies like His own!
 Oh, for within that portal
 Which leads me to His throne!
 Oh, for the no more dying,
 The no more oft distressed!
 The sweetness there of living
 For ever on His breast!
 Oh, for the joy of being
 For ever with the Lord!
 The endless joy of seeing
 How perfect was His word!
 Hymns 69 and 270 in "The Praise Book" may be sung to the same tune.

O H, for more heart devotion,
 More of Thy mind to see!
 Oh, for the sweet emotion
 Of constant love to Thee!
 Oh, for the blood-tipped finger!
 Oh, for the ear to hear!
 The feet that shall not linger
 Thy coming draweth near.
 Let me be up and doing,
 Let me arise and praise!
 My homeward way pursuing,
 Through wisdom's pleasant ways,
 Oh, tell me where Thou feedest!
 Teach me, dear Lord, Thy will,
 To follow where Thou leadest,
 Or lie in pastures still.
 Thy love, O Christ, constraineth,
 Thy love is more than wine,
 My heart all love disparteth,
 That claves not in Thine,
 But Thou art ever living
 To intercede for me,
 And fain would I be giving
 My life, dear Lord, to Thee.

E. J. C.

"I'm waiting for Thee, Lord."

*Very slowly.**The Praise Book, 239.*

I'm waiting for Thee, Lord,
 Thy beauty to see, Lord,
 I'm waiting for Thee,
 For Thy coming again.
 Thon' t gone over there, Lord,
 A place to prepare, Lord,
 Thy home I shall share,
 At Thy coming again.
 Mid danger and fear, Lord,
 I'm often weary here, Lord,
 The day must be near
 Of Thy coming again.
 'Tis all sunshine there, Lord,
 No sighing nor care, Lord,
 But glory so fair
 At Thy coming again.
 Whilst Thou art away, Lord,
 I stumble and stray, Lord:
 Oh, hasten the day
 Of Thy coming again.

This is not my rest, Lord,
 A pilgrim confess'd, Lord,
 I wait to be blessed
 At Thy coming again.
 Our loved ones before, Lord,
 Their troubles are o'er, Lord,
 I'll meet them once more
 At Thy coming again.
 The blood was the sign, Lord,
 That mark'd them as Thine, Lord,
 And brightly they'll shine
 At Thy coming again.
 E'en now let my ways, Lord,
 Be bright with Thy praise, Lord,
 For brief are the days
 Ere Thy coming again.
 I'm waiting for Thee, Lord,
 Thy beauty to see, Lord,
 No triumph for me
 Like Thy coming again!



Price 1d.]

2 COR. IV. 3-6.

[No. 3.]

LEAD THOU ON.

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."—JOHN x. 27.

LEAD Thou on, and we shall follow ;
Safe Thy path must ever be :
We have heard Thee, Saviour, calling,
And, Thine own, would follow Thee:
We will follow where Thou ledest,
Be it o'er the crested wave ;
Though the tempest rage around us,
Able, Lord, art Thou to save.

Lead Thou on : we trace Thy footsteps
Marking the appointed way ;
Deeply hast Thou left them printed,
Lest Thy loved ones go astray.
We can follow as we see Thee
Tread the arid waste, *alone* ;
Sure, if Thou art gone before us,
Smoothed must be the sharpest stone.

Lead Thou on : we hear Thee call us,
Each by name, to follow Thee ;
When the night is at its darkest,
Still Thou sayest, "Follow me."
When the thorns and briars surround us,
'Tis Thy voice the way beguiles ;
Sweetest flowers—an inner border—
Find we in Thy tender smiles.

Lead Thou on, and we shall follow ;
Suited strength Thou wilt supply.
Closer draw us, ever closer,
For the guidance of Thine eye ;
Closer still, O holy Saviour !
Would we follow in the way ;
Thine the path, where'er it lead us,
Shining to the perfect day.

Lead Thou on, Thou chosen Shepherd:
Thine the voice we list to hear:
Pressing on, 'mid hostile legions ;
Fearing nought, for Thou art near.
Onward, onward, would we follow,
Nevermore, through grace, to roam ;
Past the stranger-scenes of sorrow,
We have Guidance, Rest, and Home!
VOL. I.—No. 3.

GOD HIMSELF OUR COMFORTER.

HAVE you never observed, when a little child has been in very deep distress, if a *stranger* has attempted to compose and comfort him, that all his efforts have only increased the anguish of the child ; but that as soon as he has *heard his father's voice*, and felt his father's embrace, his sorrows have been hushed, and a smile of gladness has lighted up his countenance ?

Child of God ! your heavenly Father will not leave it to *strangers* to comfort you. He will not suffer a *stranger's hand* rudely to touch His child. "God HIMSELF shall wipe away all tears from your eyes."

A DIVINE PARAPHRASE.

THE leading thoughts developed in the three epistles to Ephesus, Philippi, and Colosse seem distinctive and marked.

That to the *Ephesians* gives the moral picture of the shooting of the corn of wheat which fell into the ground and died that it might not abide alone—the Church seen in *Christ* in heaven.

That to the *Philippians* is a specimen of what fellowship with the Father and the Son is, as found displayed in the apostle while in the wilderness—Christ's spirit in the believer.

The third, to *Colosse*, gives us God the Father's estimate of Christ. These three letters contain a sort of divine paraphrase on the promise (John xiv. 20) —"At that day (that is now) ye shall know that I am in my Father" (see for the opening of this, Colossians), "and ye in me" (see Ephesians), "and I in you" (see Philippians).

ETERNAL LIFE AND THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY GHOST.

THE possession of Eternal Life and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost characterise Christianity, and it is consequently of the utmost importance for the child of God consciously to apprehend these truths. The two are intimately connected, as we shall see.

What is it to have Eternal Life ? It is to have *Christ*. "He that hath the Son hath life." "This is the record that God hath given to us Eternal Life, and this life is in His Son." Observe, it is the gift of God, and it is "in His Son." It is not in our keeping, but is secured for us in Christ. So we read, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear." Faith believes the record of God, receives Christ, and passes from death unto life, as Jesus says, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation (judgment it should be), but is passed from death unto life." How simple ! May it be yours, dear reader, if not sure of your portion in Christ, to receive what God gives in the simplicity of faith. He has given His Word about His Son for the purpose of removing every difficulty. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have Eternal Life."

It is important to observe that Eternal Life is now in a *risen Christ*. It could be said of Him in incarnation, "In Him was life ;" but of Him *only*. All around was death and darkness. There could not possibly be association or union while such was the case. He was the Holy One, and sin must first be put away. Atonement must be made

before the purpose of God could be fulfilled. So Jesus says, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." He was that solitary corn of wheat all through His life: "Holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners;" but having died, and having met the full judgment of sin on the cross, He rises again, and immediately He can say, "Go to my brethren,"—a style of address He never before used towards His disciples. How sweet to hear Him thus early associating His loved ones with Himself. Can we doubt that He looked forward with joy to that moment? We hear Him saying, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." This was now over, the pressure of that hour was removed, sin was gone from before God, redemption was accomplished, and now the love of God could flow out with unhindered force. What was the result? In the first place *peace*—"Peace be unto you." Blessed result! And then "He breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." This remarkable scene reminds us at once of the manner in which Adam received life. "The Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." We know how soon the life was forfeited, and how, as fallen, Adam became the head of a fallen race. Jesus, then, as the Risen One, Head of the New Creation, communicates resurrection life to His disciples—a life, too, that was to be in the power of the Holy Ghost. This is more than being merely quickened or born again. The new birth was always essential before a soul could have any knowledge of God. The disciples were already quickened souls, yet Jesus says, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." The life more abundantly is now being realised, but it is in resurrection. It was something quite new in character and quality. And in the present day is there not many a soul truly quickened that yet does not know the place which John xx. unfolds? It sees no further than the cross as meeting its guilt, and consequently is troubled with all sorts of difficulties and fears. This surely is not the Christian state, for resurrection consequent upon the complete judgment of the old man is unknown. Such a soul though no doubt safe, as being under the shelter of the blood, has really never entered upon Christian ground. It is a stranger alike to the privileges and the experiences of that state.

But while the scene of John xx. resembles in some respects that of Gen. ii, it is also its contrast. Adam's life was held under conditions, and rightly

so; this life is one that has already been fully tested, and not only so, but is made good for the believer on the other side of death and judgment—beyond, therefore, the reach of either. This is what we get in Romans viii. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." Why? Because judgment has already been executed on the cross, sin has been condemned in the flesh, and the one who bore its judgment is alive again. The believer, therefore, who is "in Christ" is "not in the flesh;" that is, is not in the condition or state to which sin and judgment are attached. He has died out of it. He can now say, "The law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, which has made me free from the law of sin and death." Practically he must learn to "walk in newness of life," reckoning himself to be "dead indeed unto sin," gives me to see what I am in a risen Christ, and judges self or the old I, according to the measure of its utter condemnation in the cross. True, the flesh is in the believer, but faith is never occupied with it, save as judging it, but always with Christ. Christ on the cross is the answer to my old state, and Christ in the presence of God is the expression of my present standing and condition.

Let us look now at the connection between such a condition and the presence or indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

In John xiv. Jesus, speaking of going away, declares that the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, would come to them to abide with them and to be in them. Thus not only must resurrection be accomplished as a matter of fact, but He must go away ere the Comforter could come. So really were the two things connected that in John xvi. He adds, "If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send Him unto you." What would be the result? "At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you." "We know" is what the Holy Ghost enables us to say—"And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us." Founded on death and resurrection the believer is in Christ, and Christ is in the believer, and the Holy Ghost is sent down to make us know and enjoy it. Hence, "at that day ye shall know."

Turning now to Romans, where the whole question of our condition is taken up in detail, we find that the Spirit is not once mentioned in relation to us, until we come to the 8th chapter, which opens with the believer "in Christ." Then the Spirit of God is introduced again and again, and shewn to be the energising power of this new order of things. It was not always so, but the Scripture does not recognise anything

short of this now, for we read, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you;" and it is added, "Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His,"—is not in his true place as a Christian. If "in Christ," then the Spirit of God dwells in you; and if not, you have still to learn practically this distinctive characteristic of Christianity.

Into the various aspects of the truth of the presence of the Holy Ghost in the individual believer, and in believers as the body of Christ, we do not now enter. Suffice it to say, that He is the living power of the new state into which the believer is introduced, and in which the flesh has no place. The Spirit always exalts Christ, and delights to engage our hearts with a risen and glorified Christ, whereby we become transformed into His image—"changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Finally, the Lord Jesus was "that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." If, therefore, we want to see the practical exhibition of Eternal Life, we find the perfect manifestation of it in Him who was the obedient and dependent one. He is our pattern and model, and, as possessors of Eternal Life, we are to be a living expression of Him in our spirit, life, and ways in the world.

"THE WAYS."

IN weakness, power:

Life out of death, and triumph through defeat,
So runs the record every changeful hour:
Light after darkness shining doubly sweet.

My boast be now—

Lord, in the cross I shunned and thought so strange,
Saved through Thy death, with joy to Thee I bow.

Free, chosen, called Thy realms of light to
Beyond the tomb,
Beyond this passing world, by faith I soar
The path of life Thy steps did first illumine
Leads where the storms of time are felt no more.

Eternal One!

Once slain on earth, exalted now on high,
Thou art the gain, Thou for Thine own hast won
Life, where Thou livest; death, where Thou didst die.

WE ARE NOTHING, GOD IS ALL.

The great thing is to remember that we are nothing, God is all, and to consent to it. There is no trouble or anxiety then, for there is only God for it; and more, the heart seeking only His glory, can count upon Him to maintain it. His will is ours, and we do not want things to be otherwise; but inasmuch as He is active in His love in the scene that is, even so are we, through His grace, and then we find rest.

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THE BIBLE HERALD.

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"A SAVIOUR—CHRIST THE LORD."

GREAT indeed is God's salvation,
Wondrous is the way of love,
Published by the revelation
Sent in mercy from above.
God looked down upon the ruin
Wrought throughout the world by sin;
Knowing men, and all men's doing,
Brought, Himself, a Saviour in.

Thus the Heir of Life and Glory
Walked on earth, alone and poor;
Breathed not out His matchless story,
Chose all sorrows to endure.

Thus was Israel's Shepherd smitten,
Thus God's spotless Lamb was slain;
O that Cross! e'en there 'twas written,
He who died must live again.

"JESUS" was the record—"JESUS!"
"JESUS!"—mighty saving Name!
"Christ the Lord," behold Him—
"JESUS,"

Whom the highest heavens claim.
Blessed they who now receiving
Life in the ascended One,
Yield themselves to God, believing
Christ the Head and they are one!

GOD'S WITNESSES AND EARNESTS OF UNFAILING BLESSING.

THE intercourse recorded in patriarchal times between God and Abraham, or with Isaac and Jacob respectively, shows the footing on which it was maintained, and the ways by which they were severally brought into correspondence with the mind of God. Sin and Satan had put man in his life and nature all wrong with the Creator; and none could make him conscious how great the distance *morally* was but God, who came out after the deluge, to walk once more with men upon the earth. A still greater work was needful by which to *bring out* of this moral distance, and to qualify man himself, or make him competent *personally* to "walk before God and be perfect." The horror of great darkness upon Abraham, together with the smoking furnace and the burning lamp—or the severer lessons of the night of wrestling with Jacob, and the sinew of the thigh which shrunk—or the burning bush in the days of Moses—alike pointed to the ways and means by which the Almighty God, and the Jehovah God of Israel, would establish the relations of His people finally with Himself, upon another footing.

MOSES' ROD OF POWER.

THE rod of God's power, meanwhile in the hand of Moses, was the witness and earnest to the people of Israel, that Jehovah had heard their cry, because of the oppression of the enemy, and had come down to deliver them. In the midst of the judgments, which as the "I am" He brought upon the land of Egypt by the plagues, He protected His

people and hid them in the hollow of His hand, till at last Pharaoh's enmity and hardness of heart were judicially met, by the destroying angel and the death of their first-born. It was on that fearful night God sheltered His people under the blood of the slain lamb sprinkled on their doorposts, and passed over them throughout all their habitations—the witness and earnest of "Christ *our* passover sacrificed for us," in the world where we (as knowing salvation) feed upon His body and blood as the Lamb slain, showing forth "His death till He come."

Israel thus brought nigh to God was commanded to leave Egypt, and learn their next lesson, viz., redemption by power (as well as by blood) on their journeying towards the land which God had given them. Pursued by all the hosts of Pharaoh (their enemy and God's), Moses stretched out his hand with "the rod of Jehovah" in it, over the Red Sea, and the Children of Israel passed over dry-shod; which the Egyptians essaying to do, were drowned. The Red Sea thus became a further witness and earnest of the righteous judgment of God upon the great opposing foe (Satan), and of the Cross of Christ, where the full power of the holy judgment of God against sin in the people, spent itself upon Jesus, as the Substitute and Victim. What proved to be destruction to Pharaoh and his captains, was salvation to the people of God, who were taught their own deliverance by death and resurrection, which has been since accomplished in Christ Himself. "He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." Thus the Red Sea teaches the destruction of our enemies, who all sank as lead to the bottom—the righteous judgment of God which Christ bore in our stead—our consequent deliverance from the flesh, the world, and Satan—and our complete justification from all things before God. "He is just, and the justifier of the ungodly, that believeth in Jesus." The Lord hath triumphed gloriously, the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea; so that all Israel celebrated His victory, and sang their song of redemption on the other side of death and judgment. The Red Sea thus takes us out from Egypt, and puts us into the wilderness as pilgrims and strangers to walk with God on the way to Canaan—His land, and ours.

It is now that other witnesses and earnest are to be introduced; and we, like they, have to prove *ourselves*, and discover what is in our own hearts, in this acquaintance with God, Who goes along with the people whom He has redeemed out of Egypt, and brought to Himself. The manna (bread of heaven) and the water from the smitten rock (Christ) which God in grace had pro-

vided for their sustainment, are loathed, and the quails demanded. The murmurings of the people turn the wilderness into "a provocation," notwithstanding they had in their midst the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, the visible tokens of Jehovah's presence, as well as Moses with the rod of God's power in his hand against their new enemy, Amalek.

AARON'S ROD THAT BUDDER.

BESIDES their complainings and discontent, came their rebellions under Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, so that the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up. The power of God in government is *here* against His people, and it is at this point of their history that the witness and earnest of Aaron's rod of priestly grace which bloomed almonds, is added to the rod of righteous power by Moses, that through intercession (in resurrection) the murmurings might be met, and the iniquity of the sanctuary taken away.

These two rods as representing mediation by power and priesthood in grace bring the people through the wilderness up to the river Jordan, though all that generation which came through the Red Sea were cut off, to show what the flesh was, and that (as in it) they could not walk with God. Moses and Aaron likewise died, and were called to give up the people to Joshua, on this side Jordan; for the Law could not carry them into the land of *promise*. In the wilderness they were instructed how to make "the Ark of the Covenant," as the yet further resource (beyond the two rods) by which alone God could establish His people in Canaan, and plant them in the place of His sanctuary. In the leadership of Joshua, this Ark of the Covenant of the "Lord of the whole earth," takes its place and goes before them as the witness and earnest of their *own* blessings through death and resurrection. In distinguishing the river Jordan from the Red Sea, it may be said in brief, that the former fitted the people, and put them into Canaan, just as the latter delivered them from Egypt, and put them into the wilderness. Power and grace are no longer restricted to the rods of Moses and Aaron, but are connected now with the promises and counsels of God, as witnessed by the Ark of the Covenant borne by the priests, and which the people were to follow across the swellings of Jordan as the earnest, too, of all their promised blessings. The flesh, as our fallen nature, which manifested its total incapacity to walk with God in the wilderness, and was condemned not to enter the land of promise, by the cutting off of all that generation except Joshua and Caleb, is now to meet its *own* judgment and death in the river of Jordan. "Our

old man has been crucified with Christ," that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. We become thus suited for a heavenly walk, by death to the flesh (the judicial judgment of God upon the old nature) and our resurrection with Christ; not only has Christ died for us, but *we* are dead and risen. Further, we follow the true Ark of the Covenant (for we have not gone this way heretofore) which stays in Jordan, and keeps back all the strength of the enemy's power in death, when at its height, till all the people are clean passed over, and until everything was finished that the Lord commanded. The twelve stones which were left in the bed of the river, where the priests' feet stood firm, as well as the twelve stones which were taken up out of Jordan, and carried across to its banks at Gilgal, and there built as a memorial, prove that the people were out by resurrection, who had previously been down with the Ark, in the place of death.

ANOTHER GENERATION IN A NEW POSITION.

MOREOVER this new position was owned by God, and taught—for the manna ceased the day after they had crossed, and they did eat of the ripe corn of the land. The Lord also rolled away the reproach of Egypt from them at Gilgal. With us, as having the witness and earnest of the Holy Ghost, this is the truth of the Colossian epistle—We are circumcised with the circumcision of Christ, and are one with the heavenly Man in the heavens. The word to us is, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth." The Ephesian epistle carries us still further in connection with the counsels of God, as bound up in Christ (the Ark of the Covenant), and views us as raised up together, and seated in heavenly places in Christ, as "Head of His body the Church, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." The nature of the conflict is also different, on the other side of Jordan—for we no longer wrestle merely with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and wicked spirits in the heavenlies. As the captain of the hosts of the Lord appeared to Joshua at Gilgal with his sword drawn, so the direction to us in the Ephesians is, "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might," and "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

On the other side of Jordan, the Ark of the Covenant and the priests still held the place of power that they did in the swellings of the river, and were as distinguished in front of the walls of Jericho, the city of the enemy's strength (whose walls reached to heaven), as

when their feet touched the brim of the water, or stood firm in the midst of the river. Then the waters were cut off by Jehovah's power (as the Lord of the whole earth), and gathered themselves up into an heap; and now, after compassing the city seven days, the walls of Jericho fell down flat, and every man went up straight before him and took the city—so was it with Christ, for these were the paths He trod, as the great Captain of our salvation. He not only descended first into the lower parts of the earth, but "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things."

The anti-typical Ark of the Covenant has since passed over, and gone up on high, and is now in His place at the right hand of God; and we who are under the anointing, as kings and priests unto God, have now to be "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might," that every obstacle may likewise fall down flat, and each go straight over to his inheritance. On the descent of the Holy Ghost from the ascended Lord and Head at Pentecost (when the disciples were endued with power from on high), we may trace, in the Acts of the Apostles, how, as the priests of the Lord, they exercised the same confidence and boldness in God. Across Jordan as they then were (by Gilgal, and the true circumcision, and by union with the risen Christ in heaven) they were confronted, as the new witnesses of God, by the opposing power and rage of the enemy himself. Cities and their captains, Satan and the world, prisons and their keepers, present themselves again as an opposing power; but the bars, the bolts, the iron chains, all fell off, or the prison doors flew open, as when Jericho's walls fell down. The anointed ones prayed and sang praises to God, just as in Joshua's time the seven priests sounded (under the direction of the captain, with a drawn sword) their rams' horns before the walls of Jericho, and the people shouted with a great shout. The jailor drew out his sword, and would have killed himself. Whether in Joshua's day or in Pentecostal times, it is important to remark that the original power introduced by God against Jericho, the city of the enemy's strength; or in testimony against the world and its prince now, as to sin and righteousness and judgment; remained in almighty force, till the sin of Achan then, or the sin of Ananias and Sapphira against the Holy Ghost since; turned the order of God's acting in government in the midst of His people. For instance, we lose the priests and the place of prominence given to the "Ark of the Covenant" at Jericho, when Israel attacked the second city, Ai, without asking counsel of God, because it was a smaller one; and instead of the priests bearing the Ark, and

the blowing the rams' horns on the seventh day, and Israel in possession, Joshua chooses thirty thousand men mighty in valour for this siege, and there is an ambush laid, &c. In fact, the heavenly and divine character of the conflict is changed by their neglect of Jehovah and His counsel; as also by the Babylonish garment and the wedge of gold, which marked the sin of Achan, and caused all Israel to be humbled. Then the subsequent combats are carried on more by mighty men of valour, and less by the service of the priests in connection with the Ark and the rams' horns. Even Joshua himself takes a spear, and drew not his hand back wherewith he stretched out his spear over Ai, until it was consumed. The anointed priesthood and the Ark have given place governmentally to what is more human and secondary as to strategy and warlike means, and man gets into a place where his own might and power are allowed to act. Jehovah, as "the Lord of the whole earth," remained faithful to His people, and justified Joshua not only on the earth, but in the heavens likewise, when "He said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon," so that "there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel." "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, Destroy them!"

PRESENT TESTIMONY.

IN Church history it has been the same, for we soon lose sight of the company endued with power by the Holy Ghost, to witness for God on the earth, and who "continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers." Nor do we hear but once of a company so identified with the Lord Himself and His power, as that "when they had prayed the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake the word of God with boldness," and who with great power gave witness to Jesus and the resurrection. Instead of this, judgment begins at the house of God, and Ananias and Sapphira are carried out dead; they kept back part of their possessions, and lied to the Holy Ghost, so that Achan and the valley of Achor are in principle repeated. The next chapter shows the murmurings of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration; and then the dispersion. The fine front of God's witnesses in Joshua's day, and the finer front of the witnesses to an exalted Lord and Christ, are alike turned back

by the craft of the enemy; and what was Gilgal, and the circumcision in either case, soon became changed to Bochim, as in the days of the judges who followed, or into the great house and last times, of which our Apostle Paul warned his son Timothy. But besides all this character of warfare and endurance, we wait, as did Joshua, for the overthrow of the enemy, till Rahab and all her house are got out of Jericho, and the cursed place, by the secret of the scarlet line. In the meanwhile the rights of God and His people are asserted and made good in *testimony* to His grace, and our right and title to the Canaan on the other side of Jordan. We wait, too, for the manifestation of that Almighty power which, having raised up Christ, must expel Satan from the heavenlies as well as the earthlies, and shut him up in the bottomless pit.

In this interval it is in Holy Ghost presence and power that we alone maintain our union with Christ, as the risen and ascended Son of Man at the right hand of God. Bearing the image of the earthy, we live and walk below as those who are one with the heavenly Christ on high; and that, as dead and risen with Him, we are, in fact, though not manifestly as yet, on the other side of Jordan. Whilst in the world, we are not of it; and wait to be caught up as our Lord, and changed into the image of the heavenly; for it was not till Solomon's time of rest and glory, that the Ark of the Covenant was publicly brought into its place in the temple, and the staves drawn out. Indeed, the teaching of the Spirit of God is to this effect, "For if Joshua had given them rest, then would not David afterwards have spoken of another day; there remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God."

CHRIST THE APPOINTED CENTRE.

We are prone to stop at the division of the land by Joshua, instead of remembering Paul's account of the ways of God, by which He brings in the right man, too! "And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He gave unto them judges till Samuel the prophet." But neither the judges nor Samuel fulfilled all Jehovah's will to Israel; "and afterwards they desired a king, so God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, by the space of forty years," who also failed. The judge, and the prophet, and the king were removed, that the promise and purpose of God might take effect according to His own counsel. So "He raised up unto them David to be their king, to whom also He gave testimony, and said, I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will." Thus we reach the one whom God hath made strong for Him-

self, "For this man's seed hath God, according to His promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour—Jesus," who shall fulfil all His will.

The rod of Moses, or the power of God, has done its work in pointing to Christ as the power and wisdom of God. The rod of priestly intercession by Aaron has given place to the Son of God passed through the heavens, Who ever lives to make intercession for us. The Ark of the Covenant, with its deposits of the manna, and the golden pot, and the two tables of the testimony, have been embodied in the Incarnate Christ, and in the glorified Son of Man at the right hand of the Majesty on high. The spear of Joshua, and the drawn sword of the mysterious captain of the Lord's host, are plainly revealed to us in Him who is to come forth on the white horse, clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, whose name is called "the Word of God." The order and patterns of the tabernacle, and the more costly and magnificent ones of the temple of Solomon, have all given place to what the heavens have received back again, and since displayed in "the Minister of the Sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man."

God hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man. The throne, the sceptre, and the kingdom are likewise Christ's, who was the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person, who also created all things, and by whom all things consist. Such is our blessed Lord when viewed in the light of promise and prophecy, types and shadows, relations and offices, which have come in and passed before us in the wonderful records of the Old Testament, the things as Jesus said after His resurrection, which were written in Moses and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Me. "The sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow," revealed the new path to the disciples, which Jesus took when He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. They thought it had been He which should have redeemed Israel by power at that time, and established the nation's blessing upon the earth, according to millennial prophecies and promises; but their redemption by blood, and Christ's resurrection to the right hand of God, were the appointed pathway for "the sure mercies of David." All this has been accomplished, for Christ has entered into the holiest, having obtained eternal redemption, and to them that look for Him shall He come a second time without sin unto salvation. In the meanwhile, the heavens have received Him till the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His prophets since the world began. Israel is thus shut up to

the bright expectation of her national millennium at the second coming of the Messiah, and the out-pouring of the Spirit, when, in all readiness of heart, they will say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." "Jerusalem shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God." "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken, neither shall thy land any more be termed desolate. . . . for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married . . . thy God shall rejoice over thee." "The Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name." Moreover, "Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit, and great shall be the peace of His people, for all shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest." Witnesses and earnesters will have been all thus fulfilled to Israel, and the name of the city from that day shall be, *Jehovah Shammah*—the Lord is there!

It need scarcely be said, we are not now considering the Church of God, or its calling and portion above the heavens, with Christ its Head, who is already seated there; but Israel and its place on earth, in connection with "the kingdom under the whole heaven" in ultimate and established blessing.

"Israel then shall dwell in safety alone; the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew."

J. E. B.

"LIGHT AND LOVE."

Oh the glory of the grace
Shining in the Saviour's face!
Telling sinners, from above,
"God is Light" and "God is Love!"
Jesus Christ, the Shepherd true,
Knowing all that He would do,
Came, in his compassions deep,
Sought and saved His straying sheep.
God in mercy sent His Son
To a world by sin undone;
Jesus Christ was crucified,
'Twas for sinners Jesus died.
Sin and death no more shall reign,
Jesus died, and lives again!
In the glory's highest height,
See Him, God's supreme delight!
All who in His name believe,
Everlasting life receive,
Lord of all is Jesus now,
Every knee to Him must bow.
Christ the Lord will come again,
He who suffered once will reign;
Every tongue at last shall own
Worthy is the Lamb alone!
Oh the glory of the grace
Shining in the Saviour's face!
Telling sinners, from above,
"God is Light" and "God is Love!"

BE OF GOOD COURAGE.

FEAR not, beloved ! Go calmly on,
 God chooseth out thy way ;
 Hath not the Lord of Glory shone
 On this thy path to-day ?
 Acquaint thyself the more with Him,
 And thou shalt be at peace ;
 Bring vessels: fill them to the brim—
 Think not the oil will cease.

When every cup is drained dry,
 Where nature sought to drink,
 God giveth more of His supply,
 Than thou canst ask or think.
 He turns the vessels upside down—
 He shows how frail they be—
 Ere Love's own labour He will crown
 From Love's exhaustless sea.

Ah ! be not troubled. Evermore
 His eye the meek shall guide,
 The desert-need will soon be o'er,
 The Lord doth still provide.
 No, never thee the Lord will leave,
 No, never thee forsake,
 If "this Man" sinners doth receive,
 "His own" His care He'll make.

Rejoice in Him, though all around
 Should charge thy soul to weep,
 The Special Treasure He hath found,
 Trust thou His skill to keep.
 His every jewel, set, shall shine
 Full in His glory's light ;
 Thou Living God, the day is Thine !
 Thine also is the night !

NOTES ON FIRST TIMOTHY.

VERSE 4—One reads "*Fables and endless genealogies, which minister discussions rather than the saving dispensation of God in the faith.*" Another has it, "*Nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than God's administration, which is in faith.*" You will observe that they substitute "*the saving dispensation of God,*" and "*God's administration,*" for the words in the English version, "*godly edifying,*"—thus pointing us to a different word in the Greek from that which was before our translators. The word translated "*edifying*" would be this—*oikodomian*; the right word which means administration or dispensation is *oikonomian*; and the transcriber in copying it had mistaken the *d* for the *n*. See in this the importance of the most minute attention to the very letters of Holy Scripture—for the change of a letter may (and does, as here) entirely change the sense.

"*Fables and endless genealogies*" are styled "*Jewish fables*" in Titus i. 14. They were not direct heresies, but stupidities of the human brain, endlessly spun out, and being useless and vain, being unfavourable to moral earnestness, were dangerous "to the administration

of God in faith," and grace. Anything that pre-occupies the Christian mind with trifles, fables, genealogies, questions and discussions is unfavourable to faith, holiness, and growth in grace; and therefore the apostle left Timothy at Ephesus to forbid the teaching of this "other doctrine," the spoiling of the saints by this *fable-food*! All that was of the nature of fables was sure to injure the constitution of the saints, and was what Paul enjoined Timothy to prevent, and to continue to keep up the solid dietary *regime* at Ephesus which he so fully established. It is very remarkable how little care people have about injuring their spiritual health. They would not be so careless with regard to injuring their bodily health. Suppose you were at some well-appointed dinner, and a number of preliminary dishes came round, looking suspiciously like that which might prove injurious, you would allow them to pass, and wait patiently for the appearance of that fare which had proved physically "edifying" in the past, and which you knew would do you no injury; you would take it when it appeared, and enjoy the strength it ministered, and you would have no reflections on yourself for allowing the suspicious-looking dishes to pass you by. Paul would have the saints warned against taking in teachings that would spoil their relish for the great substantial verities of Christianity; and surely we ought to be as careful regarding what we hear as we are as to what we eat. Paul besought Timothy to abide still at Ephesus that he might discountenance all *unedifying* things in religious teaching, in order that the Christians might be kept in a good state of health; and that they might show by a life of active piety and goodness that they were living on Divine food.

In Titus i. 14, "*fables*" are opposed to "*the faithful word,*" and are connected with the "commandments of men," and in 1 Tim. iv. 7, "*fables*" are opposed to "*words of faith,*" and becoming teaching—that is, such teaching as became the gospel system, and led to godliness. They are called "*profane and old wives' fables*" (1 Tim. iv. 7); but they were connected with religion. This fable-teaching has come to perfection in the Church of Rome—they have "*fables*" in great abundance about the virgin, saints, and relics,—but they are not confined to Rome. "*Genealogies*" as well as fables were things of a Jewish character and origin—not as some would have it, the *aeous* of the Gnostics. By "*endless genealogies*" are meant those things that may be spun out to an endless extent. There is no end to man, when he gets on notions of his own brain—he will spin away till he makes his race proceed from the monkey, or from some ultimate cell by some self-

elective process! The reason why Paul warns against fables and endless genealogies is, that they minister questions, or questionings and discussions, rather than God's administration—they lead the mind away from God and Christ—the gospel and holy living.

"Godly edifying, which is in faith."—This should be read, "*God's administration, which is in faith.*" Man's notions present or minister questions rather than God's administration which is in faith. God's economy is one of facts, not questions, and these facts are for faith to take up, and mould our lives by them. The faith-system of the mystery of godliness comes out at the end of the third chapter. One says truly, "What else can be understood by the administration of God, than that which ought to be the import of all Christian doctrine, namely, the dispensation of God for salvation, which has its means and its realisation in faith."

In Christianity, we are not edified by what we have discussed, but only by what we have believed. The Church is not a lecture-room, or a debating society, but a faith-formed and a faith-nurtured assembly. The land *groans* under religious discussion; but we want only the great facts of God simply stated, and clearly illustrated. The apostle Paul is a model as to this in his preaching to sinners (Acts xiii.), and also in his epistles to the saints. Galatians was written to show that the Christian life was to be conducted not by adding law or ordinances, after faith in Christ, but by living on day by day by the faith of the Son of God. Romans shows that the Christian life begins in faith; Galatians that it is maintained and carried on "in faith." So here, "in faith" refers to our living as Christians before men in the world. The apostle tells Timothy to get them to avoid questions, but rather set forth the dispensation of God which is in faith.

"*The dispensation of God.*"—The word here employed (*δixovouμα*) occurs elsewhere in Scripture in the following places:—In Luke xvi. 2-4 it is translated "stewardship;" in 1 Cor. ix. 17, "dispensation;" and also in Ephesians i. 10, iii. 2, and in verse 9 it should be translated, "what is the administration of the mystery;" in Col. i. 25, "according to the dispensation of God which was given to me to fill out the Word of God." God's administration consequently means God's display of Christianity, as embodied in what Paul calls "our gospel"—or as in 1 Tim. i. 11, "the gospel of the glory of the blessed God." This is the subject which always engrossed his thoughts, and which should be the all-absorbing one for all saints.

The expression "*which is in faith,*" evidently stands in opposition to "questions." As long as a subject is a matter

of question, it is not possible to be in faith regarding it, for faith only begins at the cross, where all human questions end, where every question has been settled, and only faith called for. Christianity is a pure faith-scheme. What a sight does Christendom present at this hour! Teachers of Christ have thrown everything loose; all is question and discussion; and faith in God's administered gospel, revealed and delivered to us once for all, is nearly out of date; and those who adhere to the kind of action Paul here enjoins, are regarded as unphilosophical and old-fashioned. One would like to see Paul down here among us for a year or two, knocking all this modern scepticism and questioning on the head. But a greater than Paul is here—the Holy Ghost in Person; and He is constantly witnessing against it by His Holy Scriptures, containing His economy for man's faith and life, even when the Church gives such witness no longer; and we who see these dreadful things are bound to give a more decided personal testimony against them, and for "God's administration which is in faith" than we may have been doing. Man's inventions, or the evolutions of his own nature, are diametrically opposed to God's holy Word, and faith in it. An undue valuing of man's ideas, and depreciation of the great truths of Christianity, indicate that a person is not "*in faith*," just as a man is not "*in health*" when he does not make a good substantial meal. "A sermon," whose first and last fruit is strife and dispute, instead of the promotion of the Divine way of redemption, is thereby self-condemned; and a hearer who likes the historical, philosophical, or literary part of the discourse, but not the great things of God's salvation, is not "*in faith*." "That's a bad sermon," Duncan Matheson used to say, "that edifies an unconverted man." Whenever we feel our imagination or mental nature gratified, or the intellect informed and satisfied, but our moral nature not moved, there is the absence of "*faith*." Faith, when in living power, gets solid truth down on the conscience and the heart, and there is a moral moulding of us into the image of Christ. "Faith" is all important as a receptive condition of the soul. "Faith" occurs about 245 times in the New Testament Scriptures, showing its great prominence in "*God's administration*." It is the mouth of the soul by which every morsel that is to nourish us must enter. Then: "*open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it*" (Ps. lxxxi. 10).

"*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me*" (Gal. ii. 20).

MANY MEMBERS: ONE BODY.

LORD JESUS CHRIST, Thy living grace,
Thy beauty and Thy glory,
Diffused in countless beams, we trace
Now in Thine own before Thee.
One spirit with Thee where Thou art,—
Thy light and Thy perfection,
Reveal, endear, to mind and heart
Whate'er is Thy reflection.

From Thee, anointed, crownèd Head,
The oil of gladness flowing,
Descends where "feet" must wayworn tread

This earth, Thy harvest sowing;
And "hands" at Thy behest that toil,
In love's employ untiring,
Thou, guiding, guardest pure of soil,
Thyself their skill inspiring.

To Thee, who gavest us Thy rest
(Thy Father's name declaring),
Are we of all things now possessed,
Thy home, Thy kingdom sharing.
For Thee Thy Father wrought, to give
To Thee Thy Bride, Thy glory,
Brought thus to God, Thy God, we live
For ever to adore Thee.

Built through Thy death, in Heaven's sight,

To be Thy meed, Thy treasure;
Thou hast us for Thine own delight
(Thy God's good-will and pleasure).
O wondrous Saviour of the lost!
In light, where Thou art dwelling,
Shines all the glory of Thy cross,
The tale that passeth telling.

MEDITATIONS ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

(From the Italian of J. N. D.)

CHAPTER III.

THE third chapter of the Acts is remarkable in the ways of God. The declaration is not found, as in the second, of a present introduction into the blessings of the remission of sins, of those who repent and confess the name of Jesus,—nor of the gift of the Holy Ghost. Peter shows, as in all his other discourses, that the death of Christ was the effect of the thoughts of God, though He was put to death by wicked hands; but rather as the accomplishment of prophecy than as the fruit of the counsels of God. The Spirit descends in virtue of the proclamation by the gospel of God's ways with Israel. The Lord, interceding on the cross for the people, had said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." His prayer was heard, and the judgment of God suspended in the design of presenting repentance to the people once more.

God knew well that the Jews, hard of heart, would not receive the merciful voice of the long-suffering of God; and

had warned those who had ears to hear (ii. 40) to save themselves from this untoward generation. But He would not come to judge till everything possible had been done, and they had rejected a glorified Christ, as they had rejected a Christ come in humiliation here below. The Spirit, therefore, by the mouth of Peter, starting from the intercession of Christ, proposes repentance to the people, saying, that then Christ would return. The apostle enters more particularly into the sin of the Jews, and presents the facts with great power to their consciences.

It may seem strange that the apostle should speak of the repentance of all the people, and of sparing them, when the Christian assembly had already commenced, and he had warned them to avoid the judgment which was ready to fall on a people which had crucified the Lord of glory.

But God knew well that the rulers of the people would render His grace vain; and reject the testimony of a glorified Christ, as they had put to death a Christ present in grace. He prosecuted His counsels according to His own knowledge, but He did not carry out the judgment of His government till everything possible had been done to spare men, inviting them to repentance.

Thus Abraham was told that his seed must descend into Egypt because the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet accomplished (Gen. xv. 16). And Jeremiah (vii.-xiv., and in other places) does precisely what Peter does; he says clearly by his prophetic knowledge that the people and the vessels of the temple would go into Babylon; at the same time exhorting the people to repent, and that thus doing they would be spared. And it is laid down as a principle that when Jehovah had pronounced the condemnation of a people or of a city, if that people or that city should repent of its wickedness, He would turn away from the judgment that He had pronounced (Jer. xviii. 7-11). Thus, then, the apostle exhorts the people to repent, and Christ would return.

Going up to the temple, the Apostles Peter and John had healed a man lame from his birth who asked alms at the gate called "Beautiful." The man goes up together with the apostles, leaping and praising God; a crowd naturally gathers, as the man was well known. Peter takes advantage of the occasion to put before the eyes of the people what had been done. It was not by his own power. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of their fathers, had raised up His servant Jesus, whom they had put to death.

Horrible position! what open opposition! fatal—if grace had not been there among the people of God.

It is thus that Peter always presents the truth. They had rejected Him, and God had recognised and glorified Him. And here he enters much more particularly into their sin, more than in chapter ii. He presents the facts with great power to their consciences. They had betrayed the Lord, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate when he had decided to let Him go. They had denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer, and killed the Prince of life. But God had raised Him up—once more opposition between the people and God. The name of the risen Saviour at the right hand of God had given to the cripple the perfect health in which they saw him. And here the Spirit responds in grace to the Lord's intercession; and the apostle attributes to ignorance the terrible fact of having rejected the Lord, whether on the part of the rulers or of the people.

That which had been foreordained by God was now accomplished—the sufferings of Christ announced before by their prophets; and if they repented, Jesus would come back; God would send Him from heaven. Those times of blessing that would be fulfilled on the earth by His presence they would have; times that might come on the Lord's side, but for which the repentance of Israel was absolutely necessary, and for which it is still necessary. That always remains true. Their house, said the Lord, should be left unto them desolate, until they should say, "Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. xxiii. 38), quoting Psalm cxviii.

When Israel repents, the Lord will come, and it will own that He whom they had rejected was the Lord Himself; and it will be full of sorrow and shame, but shall be pardoned and liberated; and all the blessings, of which the prophets have spoken shall be fulfilled. Meanwhile, heaven retained Jesus hid from the eyes of men.

But Peter presents this repentance to the Jews, and the present return besides.

But before he could finish his discourse, the rulers of the Jews arrive, take possession of the apostles, and throw them into prison. Jesus glorified is refused as completely as Jesus in humiliation. All is finished for Israel, with respect to its responsibility—the marvellous patience of God, and the grace that had made intercession for the beloved people on the cross. Nothing more could be done, it only remained to carry out the judgment of a people who would not have grace. Such is the history, alas! of the natural man!

Let us mark this, that here the Holy Ghost is not offered, as in the discourse in the preceding chapter, which began the new order of the ways of God; but he speaks of the return of Christ Himself

to accomplish all that the prophets had said. The presence of the Holy Ghost distinguishes the time between the first and the second coming of Jesus—the present interval. I do not say that the Spirit will not be poured out after the second coming; but the coming and presence of Jesus distinguish that period, and His absence the present, as, moreover, the presence of another Comforter instead of Him. And this reveals to us a Christ glorified in the heavens, makes Him the object of a living faith, unites us to Him, makes us understand that we are children of God, joint-heirs with Christ, that we are in Him and He in us, and makes of us members of His body, while we wait for Him to take us to Himself. The love of God, too, is shed abroad in our hearts.

Although Peter never speaks of the rapture of the saints to be with Jesus, yet we may turn to verses 11, 12, 13, of 1 Peter i., where we find the testimony of the prophets, that of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, and the accomplishment of the promises, happening on the appearing of Jesus—the three things which appear here. It is not a question of gathering believers to Christ, nor of the coming of the Holy Ghost; we find ourselves entirely on Jewish ground. And God having first raised up His servant Jesus, He had sent it to bless them; that is, down here in the world; and as they would not receive it, repentance was offered them. But the rulers interposed, resisting the Holy Ghost, just as they had refused Christ on the earth, thus sealing their own judgment. The final sentence will be found in the history of Stephen.

Another truth is introduced here, which is not wanting in importance in the ways of God; though it may not be equal in importance to the moral state of men which led them to reject the Lord come in grace. After this moment, the throne and the government of God cannot be found on the earth. The providence of God watches over all; not even a little bird falls to the ground without His hand. But this throne does not exist on the earth, and will no more exist till the Lord Jesus, the Son of David, establishes it, till He comes to whom it belongs. The throne of God, between the cherubim, was taken away from Jerusalem when the Jews were led away captive into Babylon, but a little remnant of the Jews was brought back to Jerusalem, in order to present to them again their true King, the Son of David, Jesus of Nazareth. But they would not receive Him. Thenceforward the kingdom of God is changed to the kingdom of heaven; the King is in heaven, and the kingdom is like the grain of wheat, which, once sown, springs and grows, without man's hand being applied to it (Mark iv. 26). Christ works; without

His grace nothing would be done; but He does not appear. He sits on the throne of God, and has not taken His own throne; He will take it when He returns.

Thrones are perfectly established by God; the Christian recognises fully the authority of princes and governors as ordinances of God, and submits to them. But it is not the immediate kingdom of God. From the captivity of Babylon till the coming of Christ, are the times of the Gentiles; and God gathers the joint-heirs of Christ, who are not of this world, as He was not. They are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; they will reign with Him in glory, joint-heirs by grace of the inheritance of God.

There are two great subjects in the Bible after personal salvation; the divine government of the world with the Jews, as centre under Christ, and the sovereign grace that has given those who are content to suffer with Him the same glory that Christ enjoys as man, predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He may be the first-born among many brethren. Already we enjoy the same relationship with His God and Father. "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." Already children and heirs here below, when Christ comes we shall rejoice with heavenly joy with Him, and we shall reign with Him.

The Jews, and with them the Gentiles on the earth, will enjoy the peace and blessings resulting from the reign of Christ. Chapter ii., though it does not go any farther than to the presence of the Spirit here below, speaks of the first and heavenly position; chapter iii. of the second. The Word of God in chapter ii. brings forth its fruit in gathering souls for God's assembly, and for heavenly glory.

In chapter iii. the call to repentance is refused on the authority of the people; and the Lord sits at the right hand of God in heaven till His enemies are made His footstool.

And the work of God goes on here below. The reign of Christ on the earth is deferred because of the unbelief of the Jews, and the presence of the Spirit, Christ being in heaven, to gather together the heavenly citizens, and to put them into a new, eternal, and celestial relationship with God—this is the foundation of the history recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. The following chapters unfold the progress of the work, its difficulties, and their causes.

"Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."

MARCH 1, 1876.]

THE BIBLE HERALD.

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"THAT IN ME YE MIGHT HAVE PEACE."

THOU art burying thy sorrow,
Saying, "None on earth shall know;"
Thou art blinded to the morrow
By a present gloom of woe.
Thou art weeping, broken-hearted,
Saying, "None my grief shall share;"
Groaning over days departed—
Tombs and epitaphs they bear.

There is One who knows thy sorrow,
One who comforts all who mourn;
Lord is He of the to-morrow,
He our very sins hath borne.
Long ago He read the story
Of the burden thou dost bear;
Blessed Saviour! King of Glory!
Trust Him! watch thou unto prayer.

Look to Jesus, lonely weeper!
He endured the depths of woe;
Is not He the wondrous Reaper
Of each harvest here below?
From on high He doth behold thee;
What compassion His, and grace!
To His heart He doth enfold thee,
Oh, what rest in His embrace!

NOTES OF READINGS ON THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

HAVING said this, we will address ~~ourselves to our chapter.~~ The first twelve verses of chapter i. are the foundation of the epistle; because we enter then on hortatory matter at once. The Apostle addresses himself to *strangers*. Now the moment you get God looking at Israel as a *stranger*, you get everything on earth out of order. That is the secret of James's epistle. We get the twelve tribes exhorted to poverty and patience. If things were in order, the twelve tribes would be *at home*. Now things are out of order in the earth, and while they are so, the saints should be prepared for poverty and patience. And they should be prepared for heaven. Heavenly calling is a relief. It is *more* than a relief, because it is God's necessary way to bring a better thing out of a ruin; but it is a relief. Consequently Peter addresses us as having "an inheritance reserved in heaven." He is looking at strangership,—a terrible condition. Shall Israel be in Babylon and I not mourn? No; but God is working in grace all the time. All that the earth can give to the foot of the people of God is a *travelling* place, the scene of wearied travelling pilgrims, looking for an inheritance reserved in heaven. And we see they are separated into two things, obedience and the blood of sprinkling. Then he blesses the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has begotten us again "according to His abundant mercy." It is *abundant* mercy, because, let man fail as he may in the earth, mercy abounds over it

all. We are glancing back here over man's constant failure, and looking for God to be weary. Is He wearied? No; by His abundant mercy, He is still at work, and He has now established a *lively* hope—a hope secured by the resurrection of Christ from the dead. It is not now the garden committed to Adam, the new world committed to Noah, or the land of Canaan committed to the Israelites. It is a *lively* hope through the Lord risen from the dead. God has now found eternal relief in Christ, and He invites you to partake in that relief. That is faith. Christ now has secured in heaven for you "an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." A rich exposition of the divine mind Peter gives us here! His very *communications* are lively and abundant. Then he says, as the inheritance is kept for *you*, *you* are kept for it. It is now unrevealed—it is kept for you, and you are kept for it.

Then he gives us an *individual* thing. The inheritance is a common property; there are no eldest sons in this family estate. But now he looks at individuals. "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than the gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." The trial of faith does not work the incorruptible inheritance; Christ worked that. The trial of faith works praise and glory. Let the dear martyr company go on to that! We must distinguish things that differ. We shall have an inheritance in common, and we shall rejoice to see the crown of glory that may never be on our own heads.

Then he comes to look at us again in our proper place. Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of "your souls." You have got to the end of your *faith*, but not to the end of your *hope*. There are two salvations. The first is the end of your *faith*, you are at peace with God. The salvation which is the end of your *hope* is to be revealed in the day of His appearing. There is a salvation already accomplished, and a salvation about to be revealed.

Then he closes this beautiful preface by another wonderful communication—that the things of which we are talking have been the gaze of prophets and angels. We have been carried along in a current of most wonderful revelation. A travelling company of Gentiles are bound for glories, into which prophets have searched diligently, and angels have desired to look! Verse 12 closes the foundation of the Epistle.

Now, if we were to read from chapter i. 13 to chapter ii. 3, that is the way I would separate it. Here the hortatory part begins. We have had the didactic teaching in the first twelve verses.

Peter is eminently a nourisher of *hope*. Paul establishes the conscience in peace and the certainty of *faith*. Peter opens to the eye of hope the glory to be revealed. Well, the girdle (verse 13) suits a *hoper*, because the girdle is the symbol of the thing that denies present enjoyment. The girdle and the lamp are the symbols of an expectant. The girdle refuses to let the affections dally with present objects; the lamp signifies that I am a traveller along a dark road till the day dawn. So the first exhortation is, "Gird up the loins of your mind." Do you and I daily do that business; or do we think we may let the eye, and the thoughts, and the imagination sport themselves as they please? I am sure I have no business to be a servant to my thoughts and imaginations. They may surprise us, but we are not to serve them. Then, "hope to the end." Not till to-morrow or the next day; but till the journey is over; because the object of hope lies on the other side of the journey.

We are addressed here in three relationships: as children, as brethren, and as newly born. We are to be obedient as children (verse 14). That refers to verse 2, "*Sanctified unto obedience*." The Holy Ghost has separated you to obedience, as well as to sprinkling, and what God has joined together, let no man put asunder. Consequently, in verse 14, He addresses us in the character which He had attached to us in verse 2—as "children of obedience," which is the force of the word in the original, a well-behaved family. "And if ye call on the Father," &c., "pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." In that fear which would become a child walking in reverential love in his father's house.

As children, we are to walk as knowing we are under discipline; as brethren, we are to love one another; and in our persons, as newly-born, we are to lay aside those poisonous ingredients that would hinder the action of the unmixed milk of the word.

So we have had a preface and a first series of exhortations, and there we will stop. It is the first section of the Epistle.

HOW TO STUDY CHRIST.

IN order to study Christ two things are necessary: first, the eye must be on Him in spirit, and secondly, the ear must be open to, and occupied with His word, the gospel narrative especially. The gospels are the foundation of the testimony to Him, as He said to the twelve, "Ye also shall bear witness, for ye have been with me from the beginning." It will not do to have the ear open to the word, or the account of our Lord's ways and mind on earth, unless we have our eyes fixed on Him where He is. There

is no union but with the ascended Christ, and your power here flows from your being united to Him there. And unless this sense of union be preserved, you will not be in power to act. A child must have power to act first before you can point out to it what course or manner it should adopt. Now, if you only have the receptive ear as to what you are to do; that is, if you are studying the gospels without having your eye on Christ above, and consequently without a fresh sense of the power of action, the consequence will be that though you will know how He acted, you will never be able to act so yourself. You will be like a child looking at a picture-book, where the most interesting and useful activities are presented, unable to practise them. The child may tell from his picture-book how many steps are necessary for an active person in this thing or that, but he cannot do one of them himself. But how different it is when the same child has power to act and walk; the picture-book is then a pattern to him to follow, and the steps are those which he can practise day by day.

If on the other hand the eye only is used, and the ear remains inactive; that is, if I only think of union with Him above and do not study His ways here, then, though there is a sense of power, there is no direction given to it. I am like a locomotive without rails; or a child with power to walk but without any instruction. In the one case it is knowledge of how a great many things should be done, but inability to do any of them; while in the other, it is ability to act, but entire ignorance as to how the power to act is to be employed. It is only in the combination of both that there can be a true study of Christ, and conformity to Him. The eye of the soul must be open to see Him by faith, and the ear must be open and receptive to learn of His ways and walk here.

THE FOUNTAIN OF THE WATER OF LIFE.

"A river the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God; the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High."

"God's River!" Lord of glory,
Those depths pour forth from Thee!
And channelled to adore Thee,
Life's water-brooks we see:
A ceaseless sparkle flowing
Down Judah's happy hills;
One spirit in their going,
The river and the rills.

"God's River!" Living waters
Shall in His temple rise;
Behold! below the altar
They pass, those pure supplies;
Proceeding at His pleasure,
They vivify the land;

Their volume who can measure?

Their voices who withstand?

"God's River!" Let His city
O'er all the streams rejoice;
Where He, Most High, is dwelling,
'Tis bliss to hear His voice.
The river of Thy pleasures,
We drink at Thy behest;
And where Thou hast Thy treasures,
Our God, with Thee we rest.

THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY GHOST ON EARTH.

I EXPECTED to hear from you again on the subject of our correspondence—viz., a common ground on which we could both stand in looking at the doctrines you indicated, and any others.

We desire to have only the truth of God, as I doubt not you also do, and we may both reach it; but we can do so only as we travel by the same path, and are guided by the same "*Spirit of truth*."

Taking one thing at a time:—What do you say to that proof sheet I sent to you on the Holy Ghost? We believe that all who pray for the coming afresh of the Holy Ghost ignore the fact of His presence on earth, and consequently deny Christianity, and reduce believers in Christ to the level of believing Jews under the law, and before redemption!

It might have seemed a small thing to "certain of them of the circumcision," who "came from James," for Peter to withdraw, separate himself, and refuse, under the circumstances, to eat with the Gentile saints at Antioch; but his refusal to dine with the "uncircumcised" was firmly resisted by Paul as a giving up of the gospel of God; and it may seem a small thing, in the eyes of those who are "zealous of the law" in our day, to continue praying for the coming of the Holy Spirit; but it is of all importance to resist it as *unscriptural*, for if the Spirit has yet to come, it is tantamount to a renouncing of Christianity.

It is not a mere mistake, then, to teach praying for the coming of the Spirit, but the evidence of a radically-wrong system of interpretation, as well as an indication of non-intelligence in the dispensational ways of God.

I would be well content to confine our correspondence to this one subject:—

(1) We believe in the presence on earth of the Holy Ghost, the promised Comforter, and aim at "*praying in the Holy Ghost*." But (2) you ignore the *abiding* presence of the Spirit in and with the Church of God (John xiv. 16, 17); and therefore you pray for Him as if He had never come, or at best, come and gone, and as if the promise of the Father of which Christ spoke, had not been fulfilled. Is this not so?

The two elements of Christianity, as indicated by John the Baptist, are—

1. *That Christ was the Lamb of God.*

2. *That He should baptize with the Holy Ghost* (Matt. iii.).

Christ has died for us as God's Lamb; and after He ascended up on high He baptized, on the ever-memorable day of Pentecost, with the Holy Ghost, sent down from heaven, which was once for all, not continuous; for as an individual is baptized with water-baptism but once, and not continuously, so the collective individual, the "*ONE NEW MAN*" of Eph. ii. was baptized with the Holy Ghost at his birth, and it has not been repeated. Is this not so? What sense, then, could there be in praying for "a fresh baptism" of the Holy Ghost? Why not also pray for a fresh coming of Christ to die on Calvary a second time. To pray for either would be a denial of Christianity and the Church of God. This, then, is vital; for to ignore the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church is destructive of "*the Faith*."

MORAL CONDITION WANTED FOR TAKING ONE'S PLACE IN THE CHURCH OF GOD.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—We must have a care lest we mix "flesh" and "spirit" in judging of the things of God; in fact, we are not to judge them at all, but rather let them judge us. And we must never forget that all truth comes in to us poor sinners through the wholesome channel of an exercised conscience; and, consequently, that we will never see the truth of Christ as the centre of gathering, nor our place in Him, in the one body, so as to be endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, by the mere cognition of the mind—conscience must be exercised,—so that it is the mere forwardness of the "flesh" for any man to profess to know or to keep the Spirit's unity who has not come to an utter end of himself in the cross of Christ, and knows himself as dead and risen with Christ, and not in the flesh, but in the spirit; and no man who has the truth by the Holy Ghost as to the Church presented to him, and who does not receive it, and shows he does so by taking that position down here which that knowledge necessitates, can really have known death and resurrection with Christ, and does but fondly dream when he professes to have real God-given scriptural intelligence as to the body of Christ, which is on earth only, and is never said in scripture to be partly on earth and partly in heaven. Moral condition is essential to the practical knowledge of true Church-position.

I am glad you found "*The Feasts of the Lord*" helpful; for if we are to be intelligent in the things of God, we must

know the dispensational ways of God; but until we truly know the moral glory of God in Christ's Person and Cross, we will never be able to take the right place before Him of men utterly annihilated morally, nor to get that spiritual condition of heart and conscience that will cause us to cease working with our own minds on God's truth, and make us submit to let the Holy Ghost form us in the mould of the truth, and bring us out true representatives of Christ, and as those whom He is "not ashamed to call his brethren," accepted in Him above in the heavens before God—rejected with Him below, "epistles of Christ," and "consciously members of His body." Read "What is a Sect?" in December *Herald*, and if you see the truth therein set forth, you will be right in a moment, and confess that it is idle to talk of seeing the oneness of the Church of God and yet not be practically with the members of Christ, who alone are acting upon it. Why does a man tell me that he sees no difference between one way of gathering and another? Because the truth of God's Church has never for one moment got hold of his soul and conscience. The heart is not right towards God and His Christ as to that which is nearest to Christ, and dearest to God next to the Son of His love. Whenever a man sees not that difference, let him say, "What a sad moral condition I must be in that I cannot see what tens of thousands of the best-taught and most deeply experienced of the saints of God see so clearly, and walk in at the cost of giving up all. What a frightful state I must be in to be so blind! My eye cannot be single, or else my whole body would be full of light! If the light that is in me be darkness, so that I call evil good, and good evil, how great is that darkness! I must pray God to give me the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him." And with that he would fall on his knees, deeply sensible of his sad condition, and pray God to open the eyes of his heart, and give him divine illumination, and he would get it; and, on rising, would say, "Oh how blind I have been, but, thank God, I now see light in His light."

I am thankful that you have written, "I am willing to submit to the Word and Spirit of God." If you really are so, give a practical proof of it, by identifying yourself with those saints who, as to gathering, have done so, and are prepared to go on doing so until the light of the morning of resurrection break, and Christ Himself shall descend from heaven to take up his saints, to be with Himself in the Father's house. Nothing else for you could be submitting to the Word and Spirit of God. Truth is only fully known in its sweetness and power when it is practically carried out,

I can testify to this. You love the truth; but if you would show you love Him who says, "*I am the truth*," you will "*Go forth unto Him* without the camp, bearing His reproach." That is what you have not yet done, but which I have good hope you will do. Why not enjoy your privilege of sharing the only position He can possibly own with those saints whom He has graciously permitted, through much weakness and failure, but with a true heart to Christ, to stand in his one place of true testimony for His assembly in this world for nearly half a century? This is the closing day of the dispensation. The midnight cry has been raised, "Behold the Bridegroom! Go ye out to meet Him." How far "*out*?" As far, says the true heart, as ever I can get: "if there be one right thing—one God's thing—let me have it; one place outside of all evil, let me stand in it." Then go down on your knees and pray God to show you whether what we tell you is right; and if you find it is so by His Word and Spirit, continue to pray that you may see and take the place in His assembly that God has even now waiting for you. "These things are spiritually discerned," and we get at them by *being*, not merely by *knowing*. "The spiritual man discerneth all things." When a man is born again he will not fail to believe and live as a Christian; and so when a Christian has Christ formed in him by the Holy Ghost, in any good measure, he will press on towards Christ in glory, outside of everything that is not of Him.

ABSENT FROM THE BODY—PRESENT WITH THE LORD.

"If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto my Father."

COLD silent still

Repose: how deep: unbroken by a breath!

No beating pulse, no subtly-stirring will;

Calm sleep, the sleep of death.

Those faithful eyes,

That, keeping vigil, spoke strong hate of sin,

Are closed until the Lord Himself arise

To bring the glory in.

Those lips that taught

Wise lessons, garnered through long hours of pain,

Bear tranquil witness that the good they sought

Was everlasting gain.

That even voice,

That fell like well-known music on the ear,

Through memory's chambers echoes still,

"Rejoice!

Give thanks! yield not to fear."

That furrowed face,

Deserted index, lit with faith's last smile,

Tells gravely of the Saviour's grace for grace

Known through earth's little while.

Where is thy sting,
O Death? thy conquest, O thou conquered
Grave!

Tears flow, wounds bleed, but "Victory" we
sing.

The Lord is strong to save!

Now nevermore

Thy spirit falters in its yearning quest.

Thy home is reached, thy strangership is o'er;

Sweet toil, yet sweeter rest.

The Father's heart,

Thy blessed refuge, is our shelter too;

We see thee still, are with thee where thou art,

Hid but from mortal view.

Gone unto God!

Gone to the Father, in His house to dwell;

Gone through the shadowed vale that Jesus

trod—

Beloved, it is well!

In Memoriam, 1869.

WRITINGS BY THE EDITOR.

As inquiries are made what writings of Mr REID's are to be had, we subjoin those that are still in print, and may be had by order of any bookseller:—

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Grace and Glory.

The Praise Book, 231.

Adapted and Harmonised by J. K. S.

Musical score for 'Grace and Glory' in G major, 4/4 time. The score consists of four staves. The first staff is the melody, and the subsequent three staves provide harmonic accompaniment. The music is a hymn tune with a simple, flowing melody.

I WEEP as I read of the days
When all who believed were as one,
Yet, Lord, in my heart are the ways,—
Thou endest what Thou hast begun.
It is vain to lament o'er the past,
To sigh for the time that is o'er;
But Thou wilt unite us at last,
Unite us to sunder no more.

How blest, in the flowings of grace,
Thy saints "of one heart and one soul!"
Yea, gather'd to Thee in one place,
Thy Spirit their only control!
It is sad to look round on the change!
Oh, how can I choose but to weep!
Far on the mountains they range,
The beautiful flock of Thy sheep!
Ah, once they were happy and free!
Not one had a claim of his own!
Their voices gave witness to Thee,
Thou Shepherd! Thou Chief Corner-
stone.

They reposed in Thy pastures so green,
They drank of the waters of life;
And walking in truth they were seen,
Afar from division and strife.

O Saviour! in pity look down,
Behold the extent of our grief!
The clouds of calamity frown,
Thy coming is certain relief!
We are watching, expectant for Thee!
The dangers are thickening fast;
Lord Jesus, we pant to be free!
Our Rending art Thou from the blast.
No more would we weep for the days,
Or sigh for the hours that are gone,
By grace we would chant to Thy
praise,
The glory is hastening on!
To lament o'er the ruin is vain,
The time for repairing is o'er;
Unalter'd Thy Word doth remain,
Our Portion art Thou evermore!

"I Gave My Life for Thee."

The Praise Book, 295.

Harmonised by J. K. S.

Musical score for 'I Gave My Life for Thee' in G major, 4/4 time. The score consists of four staves. The first staff is the melody, and the subsequent three staves provide harmonic accompaniment. The music is a hymn tune with a simple, flowing melody.

"I GAVE my life for thee,
My precious blood I shed,
That thou might'st happy be,
And quicken'd from the dead.
I gave my life for thee:
What hast thou given for me?

"I suffer'd much for thee,
More than the tongue can tell,
Of bitterest agony,
To rescue thee from hell.
I suffered much for thee:
What canst thou bear for me?

"I spent long years for thee,
In weariness and woe,
That an eternity

Of joy thou mightest know,
I spent long years for thee:
Hast thou spent one for me?

"My Father's house on high,
My rainbow-circled throne—
I left it all to die,
In darkness and alone.
I left it all for thee:
Hast thou left aught for me?"

My years shall all be given,
My life for Thee be spent;
Time's fetters all be riven,—
I run for Thou hast sent.
I hear Thy gracious voice,
I make *Thyself* my choice.



Price 1d.]

2 COR. IV. 3-6.

[No. 4.

NOTES OF READINGS ON THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

I. THE MYSTERY OF THE STONE.

WE read to chap. ii. 3, and now if we go on to chap. iii. 9, I think we shall find there is a connection. There are two things here. It begins by a wondrous and beautiful piece of teaching, and, upon that, a very distinct exhortation. From ver. 1 to ver. 10, is a profound piece of teaching, that lets you into dispensational light, but it does not touch on what we have in the Ephesians, the elect body.

This mystery of the *stone* occupies the whole book of God. We find it in Genesis, the Psalms, the Prophets, the Evangelists, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse. A *mystery* is a divine revelation. I will just remind you of the passages. Jacob's words to Joseph, in Gen. xlix., begin this great subject. He says in a kind of parenthesis: "From thence is the Shepherd, the stone of Israel." The moment he was looking at the sorrows and glories of Joseph, the Holy Ghost takes him, in a kind of rapture, to look at Christ as reflected in Joseph. We see here the quarry out of which the stone was formed; the sorrows and glories of Joseph. This mighty rock was formed in the death and resurrection of Christ. The moment the Spirit touched on the story of Joseph, He thus glances forward to Christ.

In the Prophet Isaiah, we find the stone again taken up, "Behold I lay in Sion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone,

a sure foundation." There is no sure foundation that is not a *tried* stone. The true stone was tried to the uttermost, and glorified to the uttermost. When Isaiah takes Him up, he goes beyond; Jacob had spoken of Him as a *stone*. Isaiah tells you additionally that the tried stone is laid down as a foundation. Now what did Israel do with the stone? This tried stone was laid down as a foundation, and *they disallowed it*. This the Lord tells us in Matt. xxi. He is quoting Psalm cxviii. So the Psalmist tells me something of this wonderful stone. It was rejected by the builders; and the Lord quotes that, and says, "Here I am, and you have rejected me."

Then, what did God do with this disallowed stone? He took Him up and exalted Him to the highest heavens. That is the meaning of "the head-stone of the corner."

Psalm cxviii. anticipates this, and Peter speaks of it in Acts iv. And there we see the stone, at this very moment. How blessed and delightful an operation it is to be tracing out these things, picking up the mystery at these distant parts of the Book, bit by bit. And how wonderfully exact it is! God is not afraid of showing His perfect blessed mind thus in parts. He is not afraid of making a mistake. If I taught in that way, how I should be looking back, to see that I had made no mistakes! But these scattered rays at last shine as the noon-day sun in glory and brightness. It is as if the Spirit had written a treatise on the very subject.

So we have travelled with the

stone from the quarry where it was formed, in death and resurrection (it would never have been anything without that), till God takes up the rejected stone, setting Him in the highest place of dignity in heaven. And what is God doing with Him now? Having been rejected by Israel or Zion, He is offering Him to *all the world* as a stone of foundation. He is offered to you and me for life and salvation, and Peter comes to tell me what He will be to me if I receive Him. He tells me two things about myself. I shall become a *living* stone as He is, and a *precious* stone as He is. "Unto you who believe is the preciousness." He communicates His preciousness to us as well as His life. I become a living stone; but I become also a precious stone; and when we come to the Apocalypse, we find these precious stones glittering in the New Jerusalem. So I see Christ, firstly, formed in the quarry of death and resurrection; secondly, offered as a foundation; thirdly, rejected by Sion; fourthly, seated in the highest heaven by God; fifthly, offered for life and salvation to every poor sinner; and sixthly, what He will be to those who accept Him. He will impart His life, and He will impart His glory. He will make them pearls, topazes, emeralds, &c. But now, what of those who still reject Him? He will fall from the elevation where He now is, and grind them to powder. The blessed God offers Him to sustain you for eternity. You say, "I will not have Him." Then He says, "You must meet me from my head of the corner-

place, and I will grind you to powder. Then, this stone not only crushes the unbelieving sinner, but it smites the nations, as I read in Daniel. He will fall, in the day of wrath, on the whole image. This is national, not individual. Then this stone is to become a great mountain, and with its glory fill the whole earth. Now, what defect is there in the story? You carry it on from the quarry to its character of a mountain-kingdom to fill the whole earth; and you are carried along with it. Every individual has to do with the stone—in preciousness or in crushing.

But now I must speak a little particularly of the chapter before us. The Peter of Matthew xvi. reappears here. In Matthew xvi. he owned the person of the Lord Jesus. He was given of the Father to own Him as Head of Life. The moment Peter acknowledged Him thus, Christ said, "On this rock I will build My Church." Peter now, as it were, went beyond his Master. Christ did not say what He would do with His Church. Peter goes on to tell us that we are built up a spiritual house—a holy priesthood—"to offer up spiritual sacrifices." Is it not exquisite to see the Holy Ghost's light advancing on the teaching of the Lord Jesus? The time had not come when He was here for letting out all these divine secrets. "I have many things to say unto you; but ye cannot bear them now." Peter, by the Holy Ghost, advances beyond the Son's teaching, and tells us what He will do with His house.

There is another thing. We find that Peter stumbled in Matthew xvi. He made a beautiful confession; but he could not understand the disallowance. "They will cast Me aside," said the Lord. Oh, Lord, that be far from Thee. Would *we* allow them to do such a thing? "Get thee behind Me, Satan."

Now, that same Peter who, with decision and strength, denied that the Lord should ever be rejected, delights in the thought of the disallowed stone, and, with decision and strength, he takes Him up as such, and tells us that we shall never build on Him aright if we do not build on Him as a disallowed stone.

II. AS STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS.

Peter addresses us in the beginning as strangers and pilgrims, and now, in the hortatory part, he cannot look at us in any character that he does not tell us to have a *subject spirit*. That is the very quality that

suits strangers. If I am a king in my kingdom, I may exercise authority and dominion; but, if I am a cast-out stranger, the temper that suits me is a spirit of subjection all my life through. Put the stranger in company with what relationship you please, the Spirit of God expects this spirit of subjection, as James challenges a spirit of poverty and patience. How we mistake Christianity in its moral qualities! We play the hero when we should play the part of a girded servant. Christendom has mistaken Christianity; and I boldly say, if I do not understand dispensational truth, I shall never build aright on the foundation-stone. So here begins: "Abstain from fleshly lusts." Is not that a spirit of control? Then, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man." Do not be talking of your rights. As one has said, "If you talk of your rights, I tell you your only right is to go to hell." Then, "as free," but not using your freedom for anything but service. How beautiful to see the free man bound as a servant! Then you are told to love the brethren. If you love another, will not you serve him? Then, "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow His steps, who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not." Is not all that a spirit of subjection—putting a rein on the ways and tendencies of nature? Then, "Ye wives be in subjection to your own husbands." "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them, according to knowledge." The husband should be the bearer of light in the domestic circle. "Giving honour unto the wife." The husband is in the place of authority; yet he is to gird himself with this spirit, and to be the informing principle of the house. So, whatever the relationship we are in, this is the spirit He girds us with. Will that be the style when Christ is on the throne of glory? We may then ungird our loins and give loose to our affections; but now, in company with a rejected Christ, we are to behave ourselves in a holy spirit of restraint. "Finally, be ye all of one mind: love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous, not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but, contrariwise, blessing, knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing." That brings us to ver. 9 of chap. iii., and there we will leave it. The Lord give us light in these things? They are written for our learning.

I would rather love Christ that know a great deal about Him. But it is beautiful to love Him in the light of His own mind—to *know* the person that we love.

DURABLE RICHES.

"For wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence, but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life unto them that have it."—ECCLES. vii. 12.

Manknoweth nought, his best 'Well done'
Is therefore nothing worth.
A wreath of thorns begrudged to One
Who wrought for God on earth.
Man's last two mites he madly spends
On that which is not Bread;
And, missing all his vaunted ends,
Falls down among the dead.

God knoweth all. His wisdom cries.
Aloud where all may hear,
"O fools and slow of heart, be wise!
The risen Christ revere.
Your hearts may well within you burn
Beside Him in the way;
But oh, Himself through death discern:
He turns the night to day."

Ah, with Himself we have to do;
The Son of God hath come;
We know we are in Him, the True;
Where He is, our home.
The Life eternal we possess;
The Father we adore;
Thyself, O living God we bless,
In Christ for evermore.

MEDITATIONS ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

(Translated from the Italian.)

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT we read in this chapter is very sad, but full of instruction. The state of Israel is frightful, and the contrast to the Apostles, and to all the believers, marvellous. There is ecclesiastical authority and hatred of the truth and of the Lord on one side, and the presence and power of God on the other. Authority, depending on public opinion, is timorous at this juncture, and for a moment by this means held in check by the hand of God; and the courage of faith, given by God, is sustained by the powerful presence of the Holy Ghost.

The priests deliberately resist the action of the Holy Ghost though admitting that the power of God had been manifested. Is it not frightful? Of what audacity, of what malice is the heart of man capable when abandoned by God, and left to its own hatred against Him! "The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes. For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful" (Ps. xxxvi. 1, 2); and for what follows see also

Luke xii. 1-12. Horrible and vain opposition, for the Word of God will be fulfilled in spite of men. If we suffer, it is our glory. Our portion is to be found in Psalm xxvii.; and then in Ps. xxxvii.—“Fret not thyself—trust in the Lord—delight thyself also in the Lord—commit thy way unto the Lord—rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him—cease from anger and forsake wrath; fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.”

We shall see the path of the Apostles; what courage, what tranquillity, what clearness of judgement, doing exactly what became servants of God, those who, in the testimony of God, represented Him on the earth. Doubtless an extraordinary power was displayed in them, but the principle is just the same for us all. Moreover, the Word did not remain without effect, the number of men who had believed became about five thousand.

We have seen that the chief priests had put the Apostles in prison. The morning came, they meet at Jerusalem, and make the Apostles appear before them. They demand by what power and in what name they had done the miracle. The old story is again repeated—official authority opposed to the power of God. Thus the high priest and the rulers of the people demanded of the Lord by what authority he worked. But what madness, what hardness of heart, what lack of conscience! A miracle had evidently been performed by the Apostles; it was known by the people, and they could not deny it. It is God Himself who works, but they will not allow the knowledge of it to spread among the people. It was not convenient that the power of God should be manifested outside their office, for if divine power operated outside their office, they could no longer secure authority to themselves. But it was not for them to command God; and not only this, but they were directly opposed to that power which was of God.

In such cases, absence of all conscience is always found, as when the Lord did not reply to their questions, but, in His divine wisdom, asked them what the baptism of John was. And they, fearing the people, dared not say that it was not of God, because public opinion was against them. They were forced to acknowledge their incapacity; evidently, then, the Lord was not bound to account to them for what He had just before done.

Here something more is found.

What the Apostles had done was an act of power and not of authority, and the priests place themselves in open opposition to God. They would have suppressed his power if they had been able; otherwise they were humiliated. This was necessary, for the miracle had been performed in the name of Him whom they had crucified. They were adversaries of God, and adversaries consciously and willingly, for they had acknowledged that it was impossible to deny the miracle. This was indeed the power of Satan, but also of an office destitute of the power of God. Whenever man finds himself in such a position, he is unwilling that God should work. But what a state of soul, what a frightful condition!

Let us contemplate the spectacle of an unlettered and ignorant man, but believing in Jesus and full of the Holy Ghost. He announces openly, and with frank candour, not only that it was by the name of Jesus that the man had been cured, but that He was the stone set at nought by the builders, now become the head of the corner, and that there was no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. The position of the rulers is clearly established, such as we have seen it. The man there present had been cured by the name of Him whom they had crucified, and whom God had raised from among the dead.

But alas! the will of men was not moved, though they had nothing to say against the facts. The power of God was there; the testimony could not be refuted; but they would not have divine testimony. And having conferred together they dismissed them, “straitly threatening them that they should speak henceforth to no man in this name.”

Their part was taken against God and against His Anointed. They commanded the Apostles, therefore, when they had brought them in again, never to speak again in this name. Peter does not boast, does not insist on his rights or on his liberty, does not threaten the priests and the council, does not show on his part any of his own will; he remains tranquil in obedience, but in obedience to God rather than to man. God was with them; the others were only men. They must obey God. He appeals to the priests themselves, if it was not right to do so. Again they threaten them and let them go; witnesses were before them who glorified God for what had been done.

It is well to remark that the

Apostles do not assail the Jews—they do their duty; and when these oppose themselves, conscious of doing the will of God sent by Him, they declare that necessarily they were doing His will—that when God willed and sent they had to obey. It is the calm, the tranquillity of him who does not think of himself, either through fear or through human ardour. It is full of the Holy Ghost; what is said, what is done, comes from Him. Such a man works perfectly on God’s side, because the man is put aside, and God by His Spirit, works in him. Though it may be the man who presents himself perfectly in the position in which he finds himself, yet it is that Spirit that produces the perfection in him. “It shall not be you,” said the Lord, “who speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.” If man works, then there is imperfection. God works in man, and then man is what he ought to be. It is always thus.

But the miserable position of the Jews unfolds itself only too clearly. God was no longer to be found among the chosen people, who had rejected their Messiah, the Son of God, in whom are all the promises of God; and now they were abandoned. God dwelt by His Spirit among the Christians. God will fulfil His promises to the nation in the last times, but then it will be in pure grace. He is faithful, whatever may be the iniquity of His people. What Peter proposed to Israel in chapter iii., repentance, will be accomplished in their hearts by grace, when the assembly of God shall have been taken up into heaven; then they shall see Him whom they have pierced, and shall be blessed; but meanwhile, they are put aside, kept apart, however, till the fulness of the Gentiles be brought in. Then Israel, as a whole shall be saved. But now they are displayed as resisting the Holy Ghost, as having rejected the Messiah. Now we see the power of the Spirit, and His presence manifesting itself in the midst of the Assembly.

The Apostles returned to their own; for now there existed a company, a society, the house of God; composed it is true, of Jews, but apart, outside the national pale. There they recount what has happened. Then, moved by the Holy Ghost, with one heart they raise the voice to God, acknowledging the accomplishment of the second Psalm, where the rejection of the Messiah, the Son of God, is announced, and the absolute power of God, whatever might be the wickedness of men who

did nothing but fulfill the counsels of God. Nevertheless they do not ask that the kingdom should be established, according to what is said in that Psalm, of which kingdom the Father has put the times into His own power (i. 7); but the manifestation of the power of the Holy Ghost is pronounced in the same place; whether in the full courage to announce the word, or in the works of power done in the name of the holy servant of God, Jesus, His Son.

After they have prayed, the presence of God is manifested in their midst, and the place where they are assembled shakes. Here, too, is seen, in an exterior way, the difference between the new birth and the presence of God by the Spirit. Many more important proofs of it are to be found; but I speak of it, because here it is an outward sign, impossible to confound with the work of grace in the soul. Their prayer is heard. They are all filled with the Holy Ghost, and speak the Word of God with great boldness. But it is not only in the gifts of speech; it is the faith which does it all, that shows the effect and the power of being filled with the Holy Ghost. We find a work of the same character in that description in chap. ii.: there was but one heart.

No one retained his own property, but distributed to those who were in need. With great power the Apostles bore testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was on them all. None among the disciples lacked anything. Those who possessed lands or houses sold them, and laid the prices of the things that were sold at the Apostles' feet, who distributed to every one according to his need. Beautiful testimony of the power of love, the love of God shed abroad in the hearts by the Holy Ghost of those who were filled with it! Among the others we find Barnabas, specially noticed here, because we shall find him soon occupied in the work of God, the companion of Paul; so that he is called an Apostle. But God has not forgotten the others.

Such is the scene which passes before our eyes when the Church was established in the beginning—when the Spirit, ungrieved, displayed all the effect of its presence. Most blessed scene, giving us to understand what it is to be filled with the Holy Ghost! He dwells in every true Christian; but it is another thing to be so filled with Him that He may be the source of all that is thought, all that is done, and that all that the heart, which is His vessel, produces

may be the fruit of His presence; that there may be no doubting, no shutting up in the career of love, that Jesus may be faithfully confessed before men. The heart is set free from its own love, and loves according to the love of Christ. Liberty, true liberty, is found, and the practical life, with its fruits, are the fruits of the Spirit.

What a blessed state! And whatever may be the ruin of the Church, in principle this state belongs to-day to every Christian; circumstances may hinder the form that existed in the days of the Apostles; but the Spirit of God, at the bottom, is more powerful than circumstances.

THE CHRISTIAN CONFLICT.

"CHAPTER I.—STRONG IN THE LORD, AND IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT."

"FINALLY, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." "*Finally*," i.e., "all that remains"—is now, that we should realise that we are "*in the Lord*," as united to Him in heaven, and that we should "*be strong*" in Him, by the Holy Ghost now on earth—"the power of His might."

We are "*in the Lord*," and therefore *alive* in Him. Only a living, healthy, strong man was fitted to be a soldier, and carry the ancient armour, at least the panoply, or "whole armour." We are alive, for we have been "quickened together with Christ," and we are here enjoined, as living men, to "be strong in the Lord," as a branch is strong in a tree, or as a limb is strong in a living body. As the vigour of our members is derived from the strength of our bodies, so we, who believe, being "members of His body," should be "strong in the Lord."

The Christian conflict is to be maintained by us as already *in Christ*, and as living Christians, and not in order to be made Christians. Israel's tribes were redeemed, brought out of Egypt, preserved, fed and trained in the desert, taken through the parted waters of the Jordan, and put in possession of the land of Canaan; and then they were enjoined to maintain themselves in the possession of their inheritance, by determined and uncompromising warfare with the original inhabitants of the country, who would not go out of their own accord, but must be driven out. These inhabitants had taken unrighteous possession of that land, and meant to keep it, and hence the needed warfare to dispossess them of it. But it should be observed

that their warfare was according to their calling and place—an earthly warfare with "flesh and blood"—in earthly places, where they had their inheritance. Our warfare is according to our calling and standing. It is not like theirs, "with flesh and blood," or men; nor is it in an earthly inheritance we are placed and fight, but in a heavenly one; for we are "in heavenly places," and are blessed "with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ;" and "we wrestle with principalities, and powers, and spiritual wickednesses, in heavenly places." But just as Israel's tribes had passed through the Jordan, and were actually settled in Canaan by the grace and power of God, and "ate of the old corn of the land" before they engaged in a single battle with their enemies therein; so we, who have died and risen in Christ, are quickened together, and seated in Him in heavenly places, and are actually enjoying the precious fruits of the heavenly land, which has been made our own, before we are called upon to enter upon the spiritual conflict.

This shows us very clearly that there is no fighting of ours needed to obtain the very highest position and the most exalted blessings that God can bestow upon us; for they are all given us "freely by His grace," "in Christ Jesus;" but our standing in the conflict is necessary in order to the experimental enjoyment of these privileges which God has bestowed upon us in Christ Jesus.

The enemy of our souls strives, by his plausible wiles, to induce us to give up our title to so high a place as God has given us. Everything that he can do, either by force or craft, will certainly be attempted by him to entice, allure, and ensnare us; and then by our failure to challenge our standing and privileges: and human wisdom, strength, or skill are of no use in meeting him; our only hope of success is to be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might," and to "put on the whole armour of God"—the *panoply* of His providing.

Generally speaking, it may be said that to live in the Spirit, in the living power of the precious truths contained in the Epistle to the Ephesians, as giving us a knowledge of what we are by the grace of God in Christ Jesus, is, "to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might: the Holy Ghost given us."

"The wiles of the devil." Principalities, and powers, and spiritual wickednesses are all opposed to God

and Christ; and as good angels in their variety of grades have all been spoken of in connection with the exaltation of Christ, as Head of His body, the Church, in chapters first and third, evil angels in their various grades are now spoken of.

The light of God is in full blaze in this epistle. It is the fullest discovery of God (and "God is Light"), the fullest display of God's counsels, grace, and ways, which the Word of God contains, and consequently the opposing kingdom of darkness is also brought out in its full range and power,

This world of ours is enveloped in moral darkness. Just as there was light in the dwellings of Israel in Goshen, when darkness was over all the land of Egypt, so now there is light only in the dwellings of the "Church of God," and darkness over all the world besides; and demons rule in this moral darkness. The age, or "world," is theirs, though God overrules; they have access everywhere, and it is the display of their power in the sphere which they now occupy, as allowed by God, that makes this present time to be to us the "evil day."

This time of the absence of our Beloved is to us an evil day throughout. The kingdom of heaven is going on in a mystery, and the enemy is at present corrupting Christianity by a great variety of means and practices, and by this corrupted thing, degrading men more than by any other instrumentality. He is deceiving men, and this he is doing generally by means of religious appearances and specious pretences to religiousness. The power which made the world reject its King is still in force, and Satan brings all his power against us, and we have no power to resist his evil influences, except by the Spirit, which we have of God (1 John ii. 20, 21). The place which we who believe, and are "blest with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in Christ," at present occupy, is that of being "accepted in the Beloved;" and what is now expected of us, in spite of Satan and all his wiles, is that we live in consistency with that: "That ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."

The whole thought of unregenerate men, when they become alarmed about their state, is how to act in a religious and holy way, so as to get into the position of righteousness and security before God; but this is ours already, for our standing before God is *Christ*. This gives us "boldness and access," and strength in

conflict, and ensures holiness in the small things of life as well as in the great; for Christ is the measure of our separation from evil. In having Christ, we have every grace that is in Christ, but the *realisation* of it is a matter of personal attainment; and it is against *this*, and the making good our portion in Christ, that Satan fights.

The necessary result of being saved in Christ, and having holiness, is to put us in direct antagonism to the powers of darkness; for we now stand *with God* for us against them all. It is God's purpose that His glory should be displayed in us. God is causing us to triumph even now over the power, and even the snares and "wiles of Satan," making it manifest that He has a people upon the earth who not only belong to heaven, as being "born of God," but who also are, in the spirit of their mind and walk, *heavenly*.

It is against the wiles of the devil that we are here warned—"that ye may stand against the wiles of the devil." We are delivered out of Egypt and from the wilderness, and placed in the land; we are in fact, "saved by grace," and "created in Christ Jesus, so that it is not deliverance from Satan's power that is spoken of, but the maintenance of our ground as Christians against his many "wiles." He will practice his "wiles" in every variety of form; they will be found such as are suited to engage our hearts, and to suit our circumstances—like his "wiles" in the case of Achan and the Gibeonites of old, when the Israelites were in conflict in the land of Canaan.

"*This present world*," as has been already said, is practically Satan's world, for Christ calls him "*the prince of this world*," and of the "power of the air," and the Holy Ghost in Paul calls him "*the god of this world*;" for he makes, guides, and rules it, having power in unregenerate men similar to the power which the Holy Ghost has in Christians. He is called "the spirit which now *worketh in the children of disobedience*." But, blessed be God we are now "*obedient children*," who have been "delivered from the power of darkness," and "translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son." We are no longer in bondage to Satan, as if we were mere men "in the flesh," "under law," "in the world," or "in our sins;" but as delivered from his power by Christ Jesus, we are now in conflict with him, death and resurrection having taken us clean out of Egypt, and delivered us completely from its

bondage; and as the nation who were once the slaves of Pharaoh fought, overcame, and drove out the Canaanites after they were put in possession of that land, so is it with us. The Canaanite is "still in the land;" but God hath delivered them all into our hands. "He will bruise Satan under our feet shortly."

But we must not forget that, although God gave Israel the land, they had themselves to go over the Jordan, stand in it, and fight their enemies in detail before it was in their possession. The principle on which they took possession of it was thus laid down by God: "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you:" so, in the spiritual warfare, we possess, *morally* and *experimentally*, only as much as we stand on, and thus make our own. The principle to us for possession of heavenly things, is the same as theirs for earthly things. God says to us respecting them, "Every place that *the sole of your foot shall tread upon*, that have I given unto you."

"The devil," by his "wiles," would keep us from enjoying and living in the power of the blessings which God has given us; and now that we have only to stand against his "wiles," let us not be "ignorant of his devices." The deceit of his "wiles" is that against which we have especially to watch. He is always ready to give us something that will afford present pleasure to the flesh; and he will even use *religion*, translating himself into an angel of light, in order to deceive us. He may present redemption apart from holiness, and tempt us to *Antinomianism*, or holiness apart from redemption, to tempt us into his snare of *Legalism*. His "wiles" are to disproportionate, dislocate, or dissociate the truth of the Gospel. The great thing for us in conflict is, therefore, to have Christ as our *centre* and our *all*, and to know that all He is, and all that is in Him, are ours, and that he is to be reproduced in our lives. When our hearts have their legitimate object, *Christ Himself*, "the flesh" is practically set aside and neglected; and for want of a basis of operation, Satan is defeated, for the knowledge of redemption and acceptance sanctifies us. We are "called" from our low state of ruin to the exalted condition we occupy, to be God's witnesses of *practical* deliverance from the power of Satan. We are "not of the world," but redeemed out of it, and we belong no longer to Satan's kingdom, but to Christ's body. The world is called "*this present evil*

world," and as to our moral character, we being pilgrims and strangers in it, to us this must of necessity be an "evil day." Our portion, our object, and our inheritance are not here. Christ had His "evil day" when on earth; but He was prepared for it in the place of obedience and lowly dependence. He was "anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power," and He lived as a man on earth, in continual fellowship with, and dependence on, the Father, as was manifested in His constant *prayerfulness*. We are in Christ saved by grace, and we know that God is *for us*, and we shall never perish, but have "everlasting life;" and ours is the place of dependence, obedience, and strength.

The Scriptures give us Divine *certainty* for our faith, and we need certainty, for uncertainty as to our state cannot stand in conflict with Satan. If you are inquiring, "Am I the Lord's, or am I not?" you are gone at once, so far as success in the Christian warfare is concerned. In conflict with an enemy, it could not be otherwise, in the very nature of things. If a powerful enemy were invading our shores, our army could not oppose them if the soldiers were individually debating the question, whether they were this country's soldiers or not. So we are to be in the Lord, and know it too, and be living by faith, and "always confident" that the Lord is on our side; for it is only as we are "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might," that we can overcome. Let us, then, be strong in Christ who died for us, and strong in the Spirit, who dwells in us. "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." "STAND, therefore!"

MY REFUGE.

"Until calamities be overpast."

Thy light, my God, is sweet to me,
Thy wisdom's way I love to see,
Thy witness I therein would be;
Thy word is very pure.
The hearing ear discerns Thy voice;
The seeing eye approves Thy choice;
The filial heart can aye rejoice
And peacefully endure.

O God of truth, to know Thee near,
To walk with Thee in holy fear,
To seek Thy righteous kingdom here,
To keep Thine end in view,—
Be this, through Christ the Lord, my gain,
My study both in ease and pain;
From other works may I refrain,
One thing alone to do.

It pleaseth Thee to choose the weak,
By babes and sucklings still to speak;
To give discernment to the meek,
To lead them in Thy ways.
Thou dost in grace vouchsafe to take
The frailest vessel Thou canst make,
And fill it, for Thy glory's sake,
To thine eternal praise.

'Tis thus Thy light to me is sweet,
Thy word esteemed my pleasant meat;
Thus would I be, at Jesus' feet,
Intent on things above.
Thou fillest thus the hearing ear,
The eye, the heart, that Thee revere;
The mind attentive in Thy fear,
And restful in Thy love.

Thou, God of hope, art thus my stay,
My guide throughout my pleasant way,
My solace in the evil day,
My portion evermore.
To Thee with heart and voice I sing,
To Thee the first-fruit dues I bring.
Thy Christ the Substance and the Spring,
The Basket and the Store.

NOTES ON FIRST TIMOTHY.

"Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned" (1 Tim. i. 5). The Apostle's aim in this whole exhortation to Timothy was *love*. The charge he was giving Timothy touched the truth of the Gospel; it was, in fact, jealous care for the true doctrine, for only by guarding truth could there be love, and the administration of the economy of God, bringing out the true Christian life.

In the pastoral epistles, "a good conscience" is joined with soundness in "the faith." Faith is the root; the trunk, a good conscience; the leafage on the branches, a pure heart; and the fruit, charity—*love*, the bond of all the Christian virtues. This is against the modern notion that if you have what men call charity, you may dispense with *faith*, indulge in all sorts of mental questionings, and throw loose the whole of the doctrines of Christianity.

But love must have *faith*—not doubt or questionings—for its root; but most people would have fruit from an imaginary tree. However, the foundation or root is faith (v. 4), the end or aim is love (v. 4)—(Tit. iii. 15). Contentions are unfavourable to this love.

We have a *pure heart* also in 2 Tim. ii. 22; Tit. i. 15. A *good conscience*, in chap. iii. 9; 2 Tim. i. 3; 1 John iii. 19. See 1 Tim. i. 19, iv. 1, 2—faith and a good conscience.

It is wonderful how faith purifies the heart, and gives a good conscience; and how essential it is above all things to keep a good conscience—a conscience not only once purged

by the blood of Christ, but kept good by faith and proper conduct; living in the holding or practice of nothing that one condemns one's self in, for the conscience thereby gets defiled, and if not purged by honest confession, and the Fatherly forgiveness (1 John, i. 9), it may lead to shipwreck of faith (1 Tim. i. 19).

The end and aim of practical teaching should be love out of a pure heart and good conscience, and unhypocritical faith: "Having purified their hearts by faith" (Acts xv. 9). "Faith worketh by love" (Gal. v. 6). If love be present in good, unhampered, working order, out of a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned, wonders will be wrought by it. A professor without love to God and man is of no manner of use in Christianity; but if love be present in power, the love of Christ constraining, the Christian goes to the discharge of all practical moral duties with vigour and determination. Nothing is a trouble to him; he can do all things through Him that strengtheneth him. But an impure heart or a bad conscience is like a hair in the balance-wheel of a watch; the watch either stops or keeps unreliable time—going by fits and starts.

"From which some having swerved, having turned aside into vain jangling," &c. From which dispositions or qualities, some having failed or missed their mark—or rather, have not had regard to the proper mark—have turned aside. They have neglected the three sources of love—*heart, conscience, and faith*—and have run all to intellect, or mere mental notions, instead of heart-work. They have turned aside from the aim and end they ought to have ever had before them, to *foolish talking* (literally), or speaking—viz., the foolish and empty questionings about the law which so fearfully troubled the early Church—wishing to be law-teachers (one word in Greek).

There is nothing more wearisome than to hear or read a man who is not truthfully teaching the Word of God. Faith is not nourished with its divine "words," or exercised in sound doctrine, and therefore, not in exercise, it grows not; and can find, in fact, nothing to live by, under such a *foolish-word* ministry. Law-teachers to this day do not understand the subject they discuss, nor the things concerning which they make affirmations. No man that wishes to put Christians under law is to be trusted in his exposition of Holy Scripture, for, not knowing Christianity, and not holding "the form of sound words" he must be hazy and

unintelligent on every point of doctrine. If he were intelligent, he would desire to be a *Gospel*-teacher—not a *law*-teacher. He would be wide awake enough to know what o'clock it is dispensationally; that the sun of Christianity is striking the dial at twelve noon, and that the shadows of law had fled away at its rising eighteen hundred years ago.

Besides *law-teachers* are not honest men, speaking from conviction, for when a man does that he speaks lucidly. It is difficult to make a lying story appear coherent; a thing that is straightforward can be lucidly put, and it carries conviction; but a wrong teaching does not hang together in the preacher's mind or discourse, and of course the hearers get only *vain jangling*—mere words—foolish and empty words. There is a fundamentally right state of spiritual and moral health needed (as in ver. 6) for right teaching. It is from the want of unfeigned *faith* and a *good conscience*—a conscience not only purified by the blood of Christ, but in harmony with the divine mind, and will, and truth, and a pure heart—that “*vain jangling*” proceeds.

They say the Judaisers cannot be referred to, for they would know all about the law. But they do not, to this day. Take any man who would put Christians under the law as a rule of life, in opposition to God's Word (Rom. vi. 14), and he makes a perfect jumble of both law and Gospel. He does not know what he says, nor whereof he affirms; he cannot make the two things square; he does not know what he would be at; he cannot make such legalism harmonize with Christianity. “A good teacher ought to be intelligent, and at the same time well-informed,” says Bengel, but a *law-teacher* is always steeped in the grossest ignorance of great foundation truths.

These *law-teachers*, or men who wished to be so, were still in the Church, or else Timothy would have had no authority over them; but Paul left him at Ephesus to put them down, or keep them from getting up their heads. Much need is there of a few Timothys in our day in these lands! The teaching of the law with the Gospel confuses sinners regarding what to believe to have peace with God; the mixing of law for the life of the Christian confuses as to practical living, and lowers and enfeebles Christian walk.

At creation God sent the planets straight into space when they proceeded from His creative hand, and by the great central attraction of

the sun, they have kept moving round him ever since, in the most perfect order, not by any written law, but by the very law of their being—a law within; and so Christians may sing—

“Free from the law,
Oh happy condition,”

and though free, “not under law but under grace,” they are the only people who, by love, give “*the fulness of the law*” (Rom. xiii. 10); “*the righteous requirement (δικαιοσύνη) of law* is fulfilled in us who walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Rom. viii. 4). Man's plan for ensuring holiness is to put Christians under law; God's plan is to prove in the most careful manner that “we are not under the law but under grace”—not in the flesh to which law applied, but in the Spirit, where law can never come. Law never yet made a bad man good or a good man better, but grace both saves and sanctifies (Tit. ii). The holiest saints are the people who have the deepest consciousness of their place and portion in Christ, and the strongest sense of being in the full favour of God, and led of the Spirit, who implants and develops graces “against which there is no law.”

IS THERE A RE-APPLICATION OF THE BLOOD?

I FEEL the subject of the greatest possible importance, and therefore do not let it drop. Many dear souls do not see clearly the truth on the point, and suffer by it. They have not the liberty before God they might have, and true holiness suffers by it; but it is want of light, and that is not a subject of reproach.

To be reduced to such an argument, taken from a possible but uncertain illustration, as one coming up from bathing having to wash his feet, dirtied in coming up, to prove that since the first washing was by blood the second must be, is to show that a person has not much to say.

There is a cleansing or washing by water as well as by blood. I have little doubt that the real allusion is to the priest, whose whole body was washed when they were consecrated, and afterwards washed hands and feet—here only the feet. But weak as it is, the whole of the argument is founded on the first washing in John xiii. being with blood, which it surely is not. All blessing is founded on the value of Christ's precious blood, from the cleansing of our conscience from sin, to the new heavens and the new

earth; yea, the glory of God Himself and the Son of Man's glory above. God's glory, our peace, and the immutable stability of all blessings depends on it. That is not the question, but whether our consciences are cleared *once for all* by the sacrifice of Christ, known, of course, by faith. [The article in question insists, though enveloping the matter in a mist, in substance, that we are not so cleared once for all—that the blood must be re-applied for this purpose.] The Epistle to the Hebrews declares that we are perfected for ever, and that God remembers our sins and iniquities no more; that there being only one offering, implies that the worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins—that if it were not so, Christ must have often suffered. Now I do not call in question the putting or sprinkling of the blood on us. He has washed us too, it is said, from our sins in His own blood—only, He has done it. In the Old Testament we have the covenant sealed by the sprinkling of blood, or putting it on the person—the leper cleansed by it, the priests consecrated by it; but these, once for all. But there is another aspect of the blood, which is that insisted on in the Hebrews, namely, its being *presented to God*. You have not the application of it in the Hebrews, but its being taken within the veil. No doubt the value of this is enjoyed by faith, but the great subject of the epistle is its being presented to God. On the great day of atonement referred to (Hebrews ix. 12), there was no sprinkling of blood on the people, but on and before the mercy seat, where God sat between the cherubim, and the transfer of the sins to the scapegoat, and this, note, was what cleared their sins; and it is this these chapters insist on, adding an allusion to the red heifer, of which I will speak. Hence, note, so far from the sprinkling of the blood of bulls and goats in the first part of the 15th verse of Hebrews ix., necessarily involving its being the sprinkling of blood in the latter part (as both included in the anti-type in verse 14), there was no sprinkling of the blood of bulls and of goats at all, on the great day of atonement referred to, except on the mercy seat; it was not any sprinkling of the blood on the people which cleared them. There is no foundation for this argument at all. Sprinkling of blood on us is not spoken of in the passage. The whole argument in it is founded on Christ being *offered* only once, and

then sitting down, having entered in once by His own blood. The only sprinkling with blood in the chapter is in verse 19—the blood of the covenant at Mount Sinai; which was certainly not repeated, and is not the question indeed before us. In the 14th verse even, no sprinkling or application is spoken of, but of the value of it to purge the conscience—He having offered Himself without spot to God. It is always this that is insisted on. *Shedding* of blood is what is urged—the *value* of the sacrifice, not its application by sprinkling. From verses 24 to 28, we have carefully urged, in a manner that leaves no question as to it, that it is Christ's offering Himself and entering into heaven to appear in the presence of God for us, which is the subject the Holy Ghost insists on; suffering once, appearing once in the end of the world to put away sin, bearing the sins of many, and being now at the right hand of God—in the presence of God for us—after accomplishing it once for all, or He must often have suffered. This is what is set before our minds—the value and character of the one act, and Christ being gone up on high—and this only.

The 10th chapter is equally clear. It is the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all that sanctifies by God's will. Christ is not, as the Jewish priests, ever standing occupied with a work which *can* never finish. He is *set* down when He had offered one sacrifice for sins, having no more to do for His friends till His enemies be made His footstool—"for by one offering He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified;" and to this the Holy Ghost testifies. God's will, Christ's work (now set down), the Holy Ghost's testimony concur to give constant assurance in coming to God. There is no thought of sprinkling or applying the blood to us in the passage. It is another order of thought—*many* offerings, which can never take away sins, or *one*, offered once by Him who is now gone to God. Another remark is needed here, the force of "for ever." It is continuous or continual. It is translated rightly in verse 1—"offered continually." It was constantly going on. Now, Christ having offered one sacrifice of Himself, sits down continuously, and we are continuously perfect: our conscience is as constantly perfect as Christ is constantly sitting at God's right hand. The solemn warning which follows confirms, in the strongest way, the same truth, and

the true sense of the passage. If this sacrifice be given up, if we sin wilfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there is no more an offering for sins, but a fearful looking for of judgment. It is not re-application—the value of the blood sprinkled on us being lost—but an impossibility of repetition of what has been done, because it has been done once for all. The whole passage is the urgent insisting on this, that this blessed efficacy cannot be repeated. Indeed this is universally the case in the Hebrews. Sin, if returned to, is always looked at as finally fatal. It is drawing back to perdition—impossibility to renew to repentance. At any rate, the point here is not repetition of sprinkling to cleanse, but the impossibility of repetition of that which cleanses, as that which is done once for all. Nor is it exactly justification, though akin to it; justification has judgment in view—is judicial in its character. This contemplates entrance into the holiest, and a present and constant cleanness suited to and necessary for it—a perfect conscience—no more conscience of sins—or a new sacrifice must be offered, and repeated suffering of Christ, which is impossible. By one offering He has perfected for ever—for a constant state—them that are sanctified. I do not see how anything can be clearer or more definite and positive. I am as constantly perfect as Christ is constantly sitting at the right hand of God—and, indeed, because He is, appearing in the presence of God for me, the perpetual living witness that all my sins are gone, for He is there who bore them, and all the value of His blood who has cleansed me by it.

But I am told that the washing of the feet in John xiii. is by blood. The simple answer is, the chapter speaks of water, not of blood—"The Lord poured water in a basin;" that is not blood. What Peter looked for when the Lord said, "If I wash thee not," was water, not blood; and to this the Lord answers, "He that is washed," replying to Peter, who referred to the water He had in the basin, "needeth not, save to wash his feet." The whole chapter speaks of water and of nothing else. It is what He had in the basin—what He was *cleansing their feet with*, and what the whole chapter is about, the Lord actually using it then, and referring to it. I speak of the word, as signified by it, because, as the Lord, referring to this water-washing which was before their eyes, says, "Ye are clean, but

not all," Judas being there; and in chap. xv., Judas being gone, "Now (already) ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." It is a gratuitous and mischievous alteration of the passage to apply it to blood, when the Lord had the water there and was speaking of it. A man cannot be converted and born twice of the word, any more than he can be justified and cleansed with blood twice.

The Red Heifer remains. One thing is perfectly clear—there is no sprinkling the man with blood in the account given. The blood was sprinkled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, seven times, as it was on the mercy seat on the great day of atonement. As a fact, the man was sprinkled with running water with the ashes in it. If it is merely meant that the blood of Christ is the *basis* of all cleansing, I receive it fully. But the sprinkling of the blood is brought in here definitely and positively, elsewhere than on the man the blood was sprinkled with perfect efficacy, seven times, at the door of the tabernacle, where the people met God. There was no sprinkling with blood to cleanse, and what was noted was, that the sin had been dealt with long before, and consumed, so to speak, when the heifer was killed and burned. The thing the man was cleansed with was running water, and the ashes which were a witness that this was so. There was no application or sprinkling of blood as blood, but the witness that that had been done long ago, the blood was gone in the fire, shed and sprinkled at the door of the tabernacle—the sin gone—according to the holiness of God's nature, and the efficacy of Christ's offering, and the value of it, perpetually before God, at the place where the people met him. There was no sprinkling with blood, but the witness of the unbearableness of sin to God, according to that which had consumed and put it away as to us long ago; and the blood had disappeared in the sacrifice which had been consumed, and in which sin had been judged, while its efficacy remained constantly under the eye of God, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, where, and where only, it was sprinkled as shed blood. For the rest, as made sin, all had been consumed in the fire of God's judgment.

This is all they have to say to deny the plain statement—the blessed statement—that we are perfected for ever. No instance, no word of re-application of the blood, or re-sprink-

ling with blood, can they find. That is quite certain. It is only an effort to make out that what is expressly water, in Scripture, means blood, in order to deprive us of what Scripture gives—a perfect conscience—no more conscience of sins when once purged.

As to the remarks on our washing one another's feet, forgiveness has nothing to do with it, that is only as to what concerns ourselves. We cannot apply blood to another, but we can, by grace, apply the word and not suffer sin on our brother. What is said is hardly worth the words I have spent upon it. The statement that the passage quoted from the Hebrews applies only to the objective efficacy, not the subjective condition of the soul, is met by the simple remark, that the passage speaks of the objective efficacy in its effect on the subjective condition, namely, no more conscience of sins.

I never saw a more hopeless effort to get rid of the direct statement of Scripture, a more utter absence of apprehension of what it says, in any comment in my life. I insist on its being its objective efficacy, not application, here; but the whole object of the passage is to show that this, known by faith, has complete efficacy on the subjective condition, namely, that it purges the conscience; in this sense making us perfect for ever—continuously. Is not that a subjective condition? I wish for no greater testimony that the opponents of this blessed truth are denying what Scripture states, and have not apprehended God's testimony at all. If you want a proof of the incompetency of unbelief, you have only to read this paragraph and compare it with the 9th and 10th of Hebrews.

A purged conscience—a perfect conscience. This, they say, is "conscience as to objective efficacy of the sacrifice, not the subjective condition of one's own soul." The whole object of the passage being to show that faith in the objective efficacy has this subjective effect. Such is unbelief. That should draw out only gracious diligence to remove it. The effort to cultivate unbelief in the blessed word, and hinder souls receiving it, is a graver thing.

As to hypothetical circumstances for a Jewish conscience, as is alleged as to Hebrews x., they are Christianity, as it there goes on to explain. This is all very bad. But I repeat here, the question is not treated judicially in Hebrews. It is a question of boldness to enter into the holiest, and that is always ours. Psalm xxxii. just proves the contrary of that for which it is cited. The

confession spoken of—led to being forgiven, and no imputation left. The confession was not of sin committed subsequent to the forgiveness spoken of in the first verse, but what led to it, as plain as words can make it, and then no sin was imputed. He had kept silence, was at last brought to confess, and so had forgiveness; and the apostle uses it to show a state of no imputation of sin. There, too, the Apostle urges, the objective faith gives the subjective state of peace with God.

The whole paper, then, is simply a denial of the truth of the purging of a believer's conscience—a perfecting us for ever in an uninterrupted state as to this before God. It seeks with vain efforts to make the water mean blood, leaving no place for the scriptural use of the water—plunging the believer back into uncertainty of conscience before God, instead of applying the judgment of failure to a question of holiness, for one who walks in the light as God is in the light, never allowing the soul to get beyond the question of guilt, and making it content when that is settled, falsifying, as has been done ever since the Scriptures have been closed, the whole truth of Christianity for the souls of men. Unbelief in the true force of Hebrews x., and the truth contained in it, as to the true subjective condition of the Christian, was the real origin of all the superstition and corruption of the Church.

I knew the case of a charitable institution in Ireland, where New Testaments were left to be read by those for whose advantage it was carried on, where Hebrews ix. and x. were torn out, and when the guilty ones were discovered, they said if that were true the priests misled them, and that they did not believe. And now Protestant teachers are trying to do away its force; but this began immediately after the Apostles' decease. The utter weakness of the effort here to get rid of the truth is more manifest than usual, by the attempt to say that the conscience being purged, and we perfect as to it, is not a subjective condition of the soul. It is tantamount to a confession that they have no ground to stand upon.

Other points I might notice, but my object, and only object, is to keep, by answering this paper, this great truth before the soul—that by one offering Christ has perfected us for ever; and that the worshippers once purged through that offering should have no more conscience of sins.

J. N. D.

Christchurch, New Zealand.

A SONG BY THE WAY.

The pilgrimage cares and calamities past,
Divine compensation awaits us at last;
The desert her thistles and thorns shall
entomb;
The brier shall perish, the myrtle shall
bloom—
Destruction and death shall no longer
have place.
Once banished the field by the God of all
grace.

The pilgrimage cares and calamities now
May sadden the spirit and furrow the
brow,
The thorns and the thistles may harass
our feet,
And tears may be often our sorrowful
meat;
But every oppressor our Lord shall abase:
The trophies are we of the God of all
grace!

The pilgrimage cares and calamities prove
How sunshine the heaviest clouds can
remove.
Though weeping perchance may endure
for a night,
Joy comes in the morning and lasts with
the light.
Ah, when we the ways of His wisdom
retrace,
All glory we give to the God of all grace!

THE FEASTS OF THE LORD.

(Read Leviticus xxiii.)

In the 23d chapter of Leviticus, which we now invite you to read and study, we have a succinct account of the Feasts of the Lord, which afford us, in their typical aspect, a brief history of the ways of the Lord with His people on earth, from the Cross of Calvary to the millennial glory. They were seven in number.

The *Sabbath*, which is first mentioned, occupies a peculiar position, as at once included and excluded from the number. For the Holy Spirit begins afresh at verse 4th to specify the different feasts:—"These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons;" and then He mentions the *Passover* as the first.

The reason why the Sabbath is thus dealt with, is because it prefigures the end to be accomplished after the full year of the evolution of God's purposes towards His people has been fulfilled. The true Sabbath or rest of the Lord is, in its essence, the gathering together around Himself, as the great source and centre of "grace and peace," rest and blessing, of all those who shall be gathered by all the other feasts, as including the means and operations by which they shall be assembled. That is the rest that remaineth to the people of God.

Man in innocence had participation in God's rest, and after he fell, his only mode of getting the rest restored

was by sacrifice; and hence we find the rest of God, the Sabbath, placed next to the Passover, that through God's Lamb we might enjoy God's rest. To men in the flesh a Sabbath may be enjoined, but cannot be enjoyed.

After the Israelites were delivered out of Egypt, they had the Sabbath given them as a memorial of deliverance, and the sign of God's covenant with them. It was the outward symbol of His gracious assurance—"My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." (Ex. xxxiii. 14.) When God confers any new relationship with Himself, the Sabbath is always added. (Ex. xvi. 23; xx. 10.) Now, the Son of man being "Lord also of the Sabbath-day," and having passed it in the state of death, He rose on the first day of the week—showing to the Jews that, as a sign of their covenant, He had removed the seventh, and introduced the first, the Lord's day, as a sign of a rest in resurrection to all believers who are saved by grace—not of a rest as the termination of labours under the Law.

Just as in the old creation, man began his natural life in the enjoyment of God's rest—for the Sabbath was man's first day on earth after his creation—so in the new creation we begin our spiritual life by entering at once upon God's rest in redemption accomplished. We are "begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven." (1 Pet. i. 3, 4.) We who believe have got rest through Christ's blood now; but there is also a promise left us of entering into God's rest when all our toils, sufferings, and labours in the wilderness are over. (Heb. iv.) Thus, we begin and end with rest—the rest of God which is *prefigured* to us by these feasts, beginning and ending with a Sabbath.

I. THE PASSOVER.—The first of these feasts, properly considered, is the Passover: "In the fourteenth day of the first month, at even, is the Lord's Passover" (v. 5). Rest is the ultimate object aimed at, and the first of the feasts mentioned is that which tells of rest in the midst of judgment, and rest beyond the sphere of judgment. The prominent matter of the Passover was the lamb slain. When the Israelites were to be not only sheltered from the sword of the destroying angel, but also delivered from the terrible bondage of Egypt, a lamb was slain, and its blood

sprinkled on the door-posts and lintels of their dwellings; and so the very first thing the Lord does in the Antitype, is to present Jesus as the Lamb of God, the Redeemer from wrath, and the pledge of the deliverance from Satan's power of all who have faith in His blood.

In all God's deliverances of His people, there is always, as the dark background of the picture, the incurable wickedness of His enemies, and their consequent destruction! When these very Jews took the position of "the kings of the earth" "against the Lord and against His Christ" (Acts iv. 26), then the "wrath came upon them to the uttermost" (1 Thess. ii. 16), at the very time when thousands of delivered ones were screened from wrath, and going forth from bondage in all the fresh and exuberant joy of saved and emancipated men, who could say with Divine intelligence, "*Christ our passover is slain for us*" (1 Cor. v. 7).

Dispensationally, the Passover typified redemption by Christ, which was effected by the sacrifice of Himself at the conclusion of the ages (Heb. ix. 26), for nothing effectual was done towards laying a foundation for God's rest being enjoyed from the institution of the Sabbath, the symbol of creation-rest in Eden, until Christ abolished sin, which had marred the rest of God. It was not in the present dispensation, but at the close of the past, that Christ the Passover-sacrifice was slain.

II. THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD.—This feast commenced on the evening of the Passover, and this accounts for the latter being termed in the Gospels (Matt. xxvi. 17; Mark xiv. 12), the *first* day of unleavened bread. And as this feast is so closely related to the Passover, it must have its place of fulfilment, as it, properly speaking, had, in the Jewish dispensation. It had its primary fulfilment in the experience of the believing Jews, mentioned in the first chapter of Acts, who, after hearing the utterances of the risen Jesus concerning the kingdom of God, and having seen Him ascend from earth to heaven, waited for the Day of Pentecost, in accordance with their Saviour's injunction—"Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke xxiv. 49). This was typified by the tarrying of the delivered Israelites on the Egyptian side of the Red Sea, within the territory of Pharaoh, and in danger of being pursued and destroyed by him.

In regard to those believing ones

in the city of Jerusalem, they had separated themselves to a risen Christ; for as the sheaf of first-fruits was presented during this feast of Unleavened Bread, so this brings in the element of a risen Saviour to enhance the joy and produce separation (Luke xxiv. 52). And by His ascension from Olivet they had been made strangers and pilgrims, but they had not consciously got the Red Sea—death and resurrection—between them and their enemies. They had real joy—they did no "servile work" in their own strength, but waited for the power from on high; and they also knew what it was to feed on the slain Lamb, but they ate it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, as men who, though possessed of begun deliverance, were yet in danger, fear, and anxiety.

I am convinced that there are many Christians who are trusting their salvation to Christ, and assembling with His Church in great attachment to Him and their brethren, who are in exactly similar circumstances to those one hundred and twenty disciples who waited in obedience to their Lord's command for the baptism of the Holy Ghost. They know Christ in resurrection, but they do not know the *power* of His resurrection as it was given by the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

And just as the fresh experience of a common deliverance, the fear of a common overthrow, and the possession of a common joy, kept Israel united, so we read of the disciples,—"These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren" (Acts i. 14). There was no leaven there—at least none visibly working. The moral application to us is, "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast (of Unleavened Bread) not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. v. 6-8). No leaven—no servile work, but an offering made by fire unto the Lord!

III. THE SHEAF OF FIRST-FRUIITS (v. 9-14).—This refers to the *barley*-harvest, for it only was ripe at that season. This harvest the Israelites found ripe on the very week of their entering Canaan, so that "the *first* employment of Israel in Canaan was

preparing the type of the *Saviour's* resurrection, and their first religious act was their *holding up* that type of a risen Saviour." The *Sheaf* of First-Fruits is manifestly "Christ the first-fruits" (1 Cor. xv. 23), the earnest and pledge of the coming harvest of resurrection saints. "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. xv. 20).

Christ is "risen indeed." And He has risen from the dead, leaving myriads behind Him; and so will His people, for their resurrection shall be similar to His—a resurrection from among dead ones. We shall have part in the *first* resurrection, which is pledged to us and sure by Christ's rising. "*Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming*" (1 Cor. xv. 23).

On the morrow after the Passover-Sabbath the sheaf was to be waved—so Christ, the first-fruits, rose on that day, and was presented before the Lord by the Spirit of Holiness that raised him from the dead. When He stood at the open sepulchre in resurrection-life, the God of judgment, but now "the God of peace," accepted of the first-fruits" as the pledge and earnest of the entire harvest. Were *He* not risen, none of us could think of a harvest-day (ver. 14); nothing could be ours.

The passage of the Red Sea gives us entrance upon the wilderness, and we have our experience of the flesh there; but the passage into Canaan through the dried-up Jordan, and tasting the harvest of the land in connection with a risen and glorified Saviour, puts us in possession of a heavenly life, and we have to maintain a heavenly warfare. It is in the power of our life in Canaan that we can pass through the wilderness, witnessing a good confession in our daily circumstances.

IV. THE FEAST OF WEEKS, OR PENTECOST (ver. 15, 16). The paschal lamb has been slain, the sheaf of first-fruits has been waved, and now the two loaves are presented. The Passover describes the dispensation of the Law, or the Jewish; Pentecost, the dispensation of the Gospel; and the feast of Tabernacles, that of the Kingdom during the millennial age. Jesus was forty days on earth and ten days in heaven, presenting Himself in both as One who had fully poured out His blood and ended the Jewish dispensation, in which blood flowed to make atonement for sin. "Ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that you

brought the *sheaf* of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a *new meat-offering* unto the Lord" (15, 16).

Israel's system—its "*seven Sabbaths*," a complete period—had its *full* manifestation; and now the new meat-offering inaugurates the new or Christian dispensation. This meat-offering was to be of *wheat*, and not in the form of a *sheaf*, but of *two loaves* of bread, consisting of double the quantity of flour generally used for the meat-offering. There was leaven allowed also in them.

What do these loaves typify?

"They typify *something made out of wheat-seed*. We find in John xii. 24, that Jesus is the *corn of wheat*; and here we will have *what was produced from that seed of wheat*. The *two loaves* made out of the wheat-seed are *His Church*, which sprang from Him who died."

The formation of THE CHURCH of Christ at Pentecost, in virtue of His having *ascended* and shed down the Holy Ghost, is surely here prefigured. The Pentecostal Church was denoted by the *two loaves*, the fruit of the one Corn of Wheat that had fallen into the ground and died. Jew and Gentile are both gathered into *one* Church by the action of the Holy Ghost. There was *leaven* allowed, which indicated the presence of corruption; but it is said, "Ye shall offer *with the bread* seven lambs *without blemish* of the first year, and one young bullock and two rams,"—a very full burnt offering, "with their meat-offering and their drink-offering" (18). Thus the perfection of the spotless Christ, as sacrificed for us, is presented to the eye of God, and not us. There was also a kid for a sin-offering, and "two lambs of the first year for a *peace-offering*" (19). The *sin-offering* answered for the *leaven* in the loaves, and the loaves were then waved over the two lambs of the *peace-offering*, and thus the type cried aloud in its own symbolic language, "*He is our peace*" (Eph. ii). "We have peace with God," notwithstanding the *leaven* of corruption in us, for God has answered for it in the sacrificial death of the Son of His love; "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (Rom. v. 11).

The Church is presented to God the Father in connection with all the unutterable excellency and preciousness of her ascended Lord.

We are accepted in the perfect acceptableness of Christ, whose per-

son and sacrifice perfectly glorify God, and are the food of His people here, and will be so hereafter and evermore.

Verse 22 is difficult of interpretation. Primarily it is obviously intended to teach considerate care for the poor. But what is meant typically by their leaving patches of corn in "the corners of the field," and gleanings over the entire field for "the poor" and "the stranger"? Is it the remnant from the Jews gathered into the Church in this dispensation that is intended? or is it the *Gentiles* gathered into Judaism in barley-harvest (Israel's dispensation), and the *Jews* gathered into the Church in wheat-harvest (the Christian dispensation)? *Neither*, we think: but the gathering or gleanings of souls, saved by grace exceptionally, after both dispensations have run their course, after the Church has been "caught up" to meet the Lord in the air, and when quickened Jews, like John the Baptist, have gone forth to preach the *Gospel of the kingdom* among all nations, in the brief interval between the rapture of the Church and the reign of Christ and His saints over a ransomed, subject, happy world.

V. THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS (ver. 23-25).—This *seventh* month had many *feast* and fast days in it. It was the beginning of the civil year, and it commenced with the blowing of *trumpets*—"the joyful sound" referred to (Ps. xxxix. 15); a time of special gladness, principally because of the coming of the two great solemnities—the day of *Atonement* and the *feast of Tabernacles*, which took place in that month. This was the commencement of a month that put away all defilements, and brought them afresh into acceptance and the hope of future joy and glory.

The *Passover* fell on the first day of the *sacred* year, and celebrated *redemption*; this fell on the first day of the *civil* year, and was a memorial of God being their *Creator*. "This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth my praise," also was indicative of something in the future, and, in the latter day, will be to the remnant of the house of Israel a stirring of them up to assemble themselves before the Lord. It prefigures those times when, as by sound of trumpet, Israel shall again return to their own land, and recommence their *civil* year—their corporate life as God's earthly people. When this takes place it will be God's solemn voice to His people, "beloved for the fathers' sakes,"—

"Behold the Lamb of God!"—"Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him!" The trumpet sounded all day long from morning till evening; and to us the *feast of Trumpets* represents the voice of God in the preaching of the Gospel during this "day of salvation," proclaiming the *sufferings* of Christ, and the *glories* that should follow. The feasts of Trumpets is intimately associated with the next great solemnity.

VI. THE DAY OF ATONEMENT (ver. 27-32).—Eight days pass after the feast of Trumpets, and then we have the day of Atonement, mourning for sin, and a Sabbath of rest. Were we taking it as an illustration, we might say it meant that those who listened to the Gospel and looked on Jesus, mourned and found redemption in His blood, while they enjoyed entire cessation from work—a Sabbath of rest for their souls.

But taking it as referring to Israel after the close of the present age, as well as in the transition period between this and the millennial age—the Lord shall pour out His Spirit on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and they shall look upon the Saviour whom they as a nation formerly rejected and crucified, and they shall mourn for Him, and be in bitterness, and shall find in Him a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness (Zech. xiii. 1). When "blindness" is removed, and "the veil" taken away, then shall the glory predicted necessarily follow. They shall then celebrate the true *feasts of Tabernacles*.

VII. THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES (ver. 39-43). This feast was commemorative of Israel's dwelling in tents in the wilderness, with the tabernacle of God their Saviour in the midst of them, after their deliverance from the house of bondage; and it is typical of the dwelling of their God in the midst of His people in millennial days, if not beyond them, as in Rev. xxi. 3—"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God." This feast was celebrated after the harvest "had been gathered in, and also the vintage;" it thus combined in it "the joy of harvest" and "the shouting of them that tread the wine-press," with the gladness peculiar to the feast itself.

This was "the harvest home" of happy Israel, "a people blessed of the Lord," and the type of the great harvest-day, when "all Israel shall

be saved," and shall be joyful in their King.

On the Transfiguration-mountain Peter spoke of making tabernacles as if to preserve the joy of the feast of Tabernacles—heaven and earth met, and Jesus in the midst! And so here, the feast runs on for seven days into the eighth day, as one truly calls it, "an extraordinary day of a new week which went beyond the full time, including, I doubt not, the resurrection; that is, the participation of those who are raised in that joy. Thus the feast of Tabernacles is the joy of the millennium, when Israel have come out of the wilderness where their sins have placed them, but to which will be added this first day of another week, the resurrection joy of those who are raised with the Lord Jesus, to which the presence of the Holy Ghost answers meanwhile.

"The Passover has had its anti-type, Pentecost its also; but this day of joy is yet awaiting the coming of Him who is to be the centre and the impulse of it, the Lord Jesus, who will rejoice in the great congregation, and whose praise will begin with Jehovah in the great assembly.

(Ps. xxii. 22-23.) He had already done it in the midst of the assembly of His brethren—"I will declare thy name unto *My brethren*" (verse 22); but now the whole race of *Jacob* is called to glorify Him,—("Ye seed of *Jacob*, glorify Him," verse 23;) and "all the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the kindred of the nations shall worship before Thee, for the Kingdom is the Lord's." (Verse 27, 28.) (See also Zech. xiv. 16.)

It is remarkable that this feast was never once kept according to the directions of the law, from the days of Joshua to the time of Nehemiah. Israel had ceased to remember that they had been strangers in the wilderness, and to look forward to more glorious times than even the reigns of David and Solomon; and it was reserved for the remnant that returned from Babylon to keep it as God had enjoined,—"*and there was very great gladness*" (Neh. viii. 17). How prophetic their neglect of the general neglect of the coming King and the coming glory among ourselves! "Where is the promise of His coming?" is the prevailing thought both in the professing Church and the scoffing world. But "He that shall come will come;" and while the heavenly Alleluia is rolling like the voice of many waters and the voice of mighty thunderings, they shall say one to another, "Let

us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the MARRIAGE of the LAMB is come, and HIS WIFE (*the Church*) hath made herself ready" (Rev. xix. 7). "THE RANSOMED OF THE LORD (*the Jews*) shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. xxxv. 10). "Men shall be blessed in Him; ALL NATIONS shall call Him blessed" (Ps. lxxxii. 17).*

W. R.

HE HUMBLLED HIMSELF.

WE make a mistake about the Apostles, we often think of them as if they were eagles soaring above all. Paul says "I was with you in weakness, and fear, and much trembling." There were great people at Corinth. Paul was a blessed vessel, but the vessel must be made nothing of. What we have to learn is being nothing, that Christ may be everything. If a person is humble, he does not want to be humble; but if he is humble, he must be. Are we content to walk in the secret of God? The Lord gives us to learn practically what it is thus to pass through this world. You can get neither the Christian nor the Church in a state that Christ is not sufficient for. The Lord give us to know our nothingness.

[* *The Feasts of the Lord* is now published separately in a small book by R. M. CAMERON, 22 St. Giles Street, Edinburgh, and may be had either from him or W. B. HORNER, 27 Paternoster Square, London.]

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2 COR. IV. 3-6.

[No. 5.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

A MEMORIAL OF CHRIST.

THE Lord's Supper is to be eaten as a memorial or remembrance of Christ.

This is His own interpretation of it. The bread was mystically His body, the cup His blood, accomplishing the remission of sins. To eat and to drink of this feast was to partake of the virtues of His sacrifice, or to express such participation (1 Cor. x. 18); and it was thus eaten in remembrance of Christ in token of the soul's fellowship with what His sacrifice had accomplished for sinners. It was therefore to be eaten simply with thanksgiving. The remembrance of what the sacrifice of Christ had accomplished would properly be accompanied with nothing else. No supplication would be needed, because it is a finished work, a full remission which the table records.

To pray about the forgiveness of sins would be discordant with the voice of the table. It might be quite unintended, yet really a reproach upon the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. It would be building again the things which Christ had destroyed, and in the language and sense of Gal. ii. making Him the minister of sin, making His blood like the blood of bulls and goats, only the *remembrance* and not the *remission* of sins.

But to surround the table with thanksgiving, to wait on the feast with praise for redemption, this would be knowing the work of the

Lamb of God which the feast sets forth; and accordingly it is always as thus accomplished that the Scriptures present it to us. Jesus, on taking the bread and the cup, gave thanks. (Matt. xx.; Mark xiv.; Luke xxii.) He did nothing else.

The Lord's blessing and giving thanks are to all moral intents in the same sense; and in the like mind the Apostle calls it the cup of blessing, which we bless, the cup at the taking of which we bless, or speak well of the Lord, because by that cup, or by the death and bloodshedding of Jesus, which it sets forth, He has rightly entitled Himself to praise, or to hear Himself well spoken of; and again speaking of it he says that, when the Lord parted the bread and cup among His disciples, He simply gave thanks (1 Cor. 23-26).

It may be accompanied with confession of sin, because it implies our utter death in trespasses and sins, and therefore that would not be in discordance with the Supper.

But still we do not find this attended to in any of the passages that refer to the Supper, but in them it takes the simple form of a eucharistic feast, or a season of thanksgiving for the remission of sins. It says, as another once observed (at least the table has this voice in it), "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto them that be heavy of heart: let him drink and forget his poverty and remember his misery no more."

This is so indeed. It is this precious strong drink which reminds us that our misery is gone, and our heavy

hearts have been lifted up. It tells us not, like the blood of bulls and goats, that sin is *remembered*, but it is *remitted*. This is its peculiar characteristic voice. To give thanks in company with it is harmony, to pray about our sin is discordant.

But the service of self-judgment or self-examination, may well wait on this feast, because we are by the remission of our sins called to holiness; just as of old the feast of unleavened bread accompanied the Passover. And as the Israelites celebrated the redemption from Egypt, they also searched the house for leaven; that they might put away all that offended Him who had redeemed them. This was most fitting, and indeed without this the Passover was not kept.

So with us, if we do not walk in a self-guiding spirit, we are really not the blood-redempted people, we do not discern the Lord's body; in other words, I believe we do not keep the feast of the Lord aright, if we are not honestly and holily searching for, and removing all, that would grieve the Lord (1 Cor. iv. 11).

This is in as full harmony with the Table, as thanksgiving is; and the cleansing out of the leaven should be done both from the congregation (1 Cor. v.) and from our individual selves (1 Cor. xi. 28). For we are one in our standing, an unleavened lump, and so should we be in our *desires* and *diligence of soul*. For the Lord's Supper shows forth the Lord's death, &c.

The death of Jesus had this twofold sense. It published remission of sins and all God's hatred of sin.

It releases the sinner and condemns the sin, and the Supper eaten, both with *thanksgiving* and in the spirit of self-judgment, will be accordant with this. Eaten with prayer *about our sins*, or with a careless heart, or indifference to our sins, it will be utterly discordant.

It is to be a Passover in truth with feast of unleavened bread, and therefore there is to be the expression of conscious redemption from Egypt, the place of death, and scene of judgment, and this is *thanksgiving*; there is also to be the expression of renouncing that which has brought us into death and judgment; this is self-judgment. Such I believe to be the simple character which the Scripture puts on the Supper of the Lord.

Many indeed, and various, have been the additions which human religiousness has attached to it, but the word of God reproves them.

There is no warrant for consecrating the elements or separating them by process to the service of the Lord's table.

The bread and the wine are laid on the table as bread and wine; broken and poured out to figure the broken body and shed blood of Jesus; but no form or process is needful to give them title to lie on the table for this use.

Neither, do I judge, have we warrant for asking God to bless us in the observing of His service, simply because it is our worship, or setting forth of His praise, rather than a waiting upon Him for some benefit to ourselves, either in soul or body. We bless Him in this act, rather than ask Him to bless us; we speak good of His name in it, by setting forth the memorial of what *He has done*, and do not supplicate Him to bless us or to speak good to us by conferring some fresh favour upon us.

I believe, if the word of God were very simply attended to in this matter, this beautiful service would be relieved of much that religiously encumbers it, and the table would give forth no uncertain sound.

Supplication about sin silenced is utterly discordant with the service of this table; confession of sin might be made, but there would be no felt need of it; consecration of the elements would be altogether refused; seeking a blessing would not be thought of by the worshippers.

These common things would be laid aside, and the service would be an act of *worship*, giving the Lord the honour due unto His name, in this age, until He comes again to

gather fresh honours from the lips of His countless redeemed ones.

And it is this *service or worship* that ought to gather us to His house every eighth or resurrection day, and then things may be there given us of the Lord, such as the word of exhortation or of teaching, or of the voice and spirit of supplication.

But we should go there *to give to the Lord His praise*, such as the table (which publishes through the riches of His grace the remission of our sins) does give Him.

This is entering His house, duly entering it, *with praise*, because He has already blessed us, and not with supplication for a blessing; entering it in the spirit of conscious victory over our enemies; tearing asunder all bonds, and silencing every tongue that would charge or condemn us.

It would be entering His house in a way worthy of that house where mercy has rejoiced against judgment, where the sword of the destroying angel has been gloriously staid; where, therefore, the spirit of the worshipper says, as he enters, "In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavillion, in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me. He shall set me upon a rock, and now shall my head be lifted up above my enemies round about me. Therefore will I offer in His tabernacle sacrifices of joy, I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord" (Ps. xviii).

May His courts be thus entered in spirit now; for the bread and cup are there, and the veil is gone.—*From unpublished MS. of the late J. G. B.*

"WRITTEN IN HEAVEN"

LUKE xi. 20.

WHAT a very beautiful lesson is conveyed to us in these simple words of the Lord Jesus, and how blessedly they fall upon the ear of those who, in this day of work, of activity, of restless energy, have been led to see that there is something that should be known and enjoyed even though *work* for Christ—blessed as it may be—is left for other hands to carry out. This is a day when the actual state of a man's soul before God, when his full entrance or otherwise into God's purposes in Christ, when his knowledge of "the certainty of those things in which he has been instructed," is not by any means so much looked after as the fact as to whether he is *doing* anything. Is he actively engaged in some "religious movement?" Has he attached himself to some "cause?" Has he taken

up any "Christian work?" If these questions can be answered in the affirmative, it is enough. His own soul may be starving; he may himself never have experienced what it is to know his full place in Christ; or, worse than all, he may really never have been himself brought into the presence of God, to learn what he is; to learn his own utter need of salvation.

How sad all this is, and how detrimental to the true testimony for Christ down here in the world! Now if those I am addressing have been, in God's grace, brought out of it all, have been brought into a purer and better atmosphere than that which surrounds them—like as into a true Goshen in the midst of Egypt's darkness—yet surely it is blessed to be reminded of what the Lord said under circumstances so nearly identical with those which are around us at the present moment.

We see the seventy disciples coming back to the Lord in all the flush of the success which had attended their mission—that is to say, the success of the *outward* manifestations of power, for we hear little about the truth they were sent out to preach. Their whole thought seemed to be absorbed (like the Corinthians a little farther on) with the striking character of the gifts which were entrusted to them, forgetful that those gifts were only accessories or accompaniments, of that "word of life" which they were to hold forth.

How does our Lord deal with the exultation of His disciples, occupied as they were with what they had themselves done? "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." The very highest form of gift, that gift which up to that time had been exercised only by the blessed Lord Himself, even that gift was put into the shade completely in the presence of that deep and mysterious fact that their names were "written in heaven."

Let us try for a moment to enter fully into the blessedness of what this means. Another Scripture will illustrate it. "For our citizenship is in heaven" (Phil. iii. 20). That is, though we are found down here mixed up with the world, and working in it, having to take our share, and perhaps more than our share, of its troubles, its difficulties, its temptations, yet our blessed place as Christians is away there as citizens of a country where none of these

things ever enter, where there is nothing but peace and sunshine.

Do not we get a faint picture of this in what we see in some continental countries where the names of all the citizens are enrolled? whose citizens may wander far away, among people of different blood, different habits, different nature, but their names are still kept enrolled in the records of their own native land, and they wait to be called back at any time, should their presence be required.

Just in like manner are our names—the names of all those whose portion is in the Lord Jesus Christ—enrolled in those records in heaven, “in the book of life” (Phil. iv. 3); kept continually before the eyes of the blessed God, though we ourselves may be wandering far away, as true “strangers and pilgrims” here on earth, where, like Noah’s dove, we can find no rest for the sole of our foot. How wonderful is the thought, that *my* name, perhaps an obscure one on earth, perhaps unknown outside the little narrow circle of my daily life, should be written by the finger of God in His book, kept up there in heaven for a perpetual remembrance before Him! How overflowing should be our love to the One through whom it has all come about, and how infinitely higher should be our rejoicing that our names are enrolled up there than at the result of any efforts of our own here on earth, however successful, however striking!

What a comfort, too, to those whose work for the Lord Jesus Christ is apparently *not* successful, is *not* appreciated by those around them, those to whom the “spirits” are *not* subject; they have always the one blessed thing before them, that, notwithstanding their feebleness, their inability to cope with the rough details of this wilderness scene, there is the assurance that their names are “written in heaven,” kept in that book of life, in which, blessed be God, there is not a single erasure!

How do our hearts answer to all this? How far do we keep before us the blessedness of being little and unknown here, but well-known and recognized up there? How far do we enter into and realize the fact that the Father and the Son, in that wondrous communion existing between them, delight to read together over the pages of that book in which our names—my name, your name—are written!

Just one word to any dear soul who might read these lines who may be working—it may be with apparent success for the Lord Jesus Christ,

and yet who does not know whether or not his or her name *is* written in that book of life, kept in heaven. To such a one I would say, before you move another step, before you speak another word for Christ, do cast yourself before Him, and lay everything at His feet—your work, yourself, everything you have got—and do not leave Him until you possess the assurance, the certainty, that you *have* passed “from death to life,” that henceforth for you “there is no condemnation,” and that your name is indeed “written in heaven,” in that book of life which God Himself keeps, and from whose Almighty hand it is never taken away for a moment. Oh, if Satan could only get that book into his possession! what would become of our names? But he cannot! It is in the Father’s hand, and it is kept there by a power before which Satan quails, before which the “accuser of our brethren” dares not lift up so much as a finger!

Oh that we might all have a more abundant entrance into the blessedness of knowing that our names are “in the book of life,” are “written in heaven,” and of waiting for that time, now coming quickly, when the record will be gone through, and when every one whose name is found written therein will be summoned into the presence of the blessed Lord, there to remain for ever!

MEDITATIONS ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

(Translated from the Italian.)

CHAPTER V.

ALTHOUGH a man may be truly a Christian, yet the flesh always remains in him; and it is just as ready to shew itself in the assembly as in the world. The desire to have a good reputation among men may arise in the heart, although such a reputation may merely be sought for among Christians. Thus too it happened when the assembly of God first began. Love produced the inclination to think of others rather than of themselves. But the flesh also would have the reputation of doing so, without denying itself, deceitfully thinking to keep back its money, and at the same time to gain the benefit of a reputation for giving it away. But here also the great truth of the presence of the Holy Ghost is the subject of God’s revelation given in this book.

Ananias and Sapphira have lied to the Holy Ghost; this is the gravity

of the sin of Ananias and his wife. God dwelt in the midst of His own in the assembly. Deceived in heart and conscience by cupidity, whether of money or of human glory, Ananias did not recognize His presence. But still another was acting in this sad event. Satan suggested to them the means of keeping back the money, and still of winning fame. But the Holy Ghost was there, and the folly of men, and malice of Satan, did nothing but make manifest the truth, and the power of His presence, in a sad way, it is true, but in a way that could leave no doubt of it.

Ananias, whose sin being thus, unexpectedly to himself, revealed, falls dead by the judgment of God, who was there! But what a solemn judgment! And it is not surprising if, not only the Christians, but also the outside world, were terrified at such a testimony to the presence of God, that was entirely unmistakeable. Moreover, the sin was not a simple failure. Ananias and Sapphira had agreed together, in their eagerness to endeavour to deceive God, forgetting that He knew everything, and that He was there.

But however sad and solemn the fact might be, it was a testimony from which it was impossible to detract, that God Himself was present; a testimony to the great truth that God, in the person of the Holy Ghost, had come down to dwell in the midst of His people, and for ever (John xiv. 17), so that they might be taken up to dwell in the Father’s house. The Apostles were filled with it; everything at that time was in the power of it. But the assembly of God has been unfaithful; the Spirit has been grieved, and therefore we see no longer those actions which bore testimony to His presence.

This, nevertheless, does not in any way render it invalid—that would be impossible. The word of Christ is—*shall dwell with you*; and the Spirit is as able to accomplish the will of God in His children now, as in the time of the Apostles, though it may not be shewn in the same manner. But it is more blessed, says the Lord, to have our names written in heaven, than to cast out devils; and by the true work of God in souls, and in all His ways, He manifests His presence in the assembly, and in Christians who depend on Him, and are filled with Him, just as much as He did in the days of the Apostles. It is not proper that it should be shown outwardly in the fallen Church as in the faithful assembly not long ago established by God Himself, as though He sealed its fall with His

approbation. But God changes not, and His grace and power are the same, and are as available as ever for all that is necessary and all that is suitable to the state of the Church; and He still does all that is requisite for His glory, and our full blessing. He works in His own with the same power, according to the circumstances in which they are placed.

Now many signs and wonders were wrought by the hands of the Apostles, who were to be found habitually (it seems to us) in Solomon's porch in the temple. The great and the rulers did not dare to identify themselves with them; but the people, convinced in their simplicity, increased the number and importance of the Christians in the holy city. We see always fear on the part of the great and of the ecclesiastical rulers, they could persecute, but they could not join the Christians, because then their power would be compromised. As Paul says, "not many mighty, not many noble, are called." The reproach of Christ is always linked to His name, wherever there is fidelity.

But still the power of God manifested itself, in such a way that in Jerusalem and in the cities round about they brought sick folks, so that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them; and the sick of the city and those vexed with unclean spirits, were all healed. But all this excited the envy and indignation of the chief priests; the divine power and authority had evidently passed away from their hands, and they were unwilling that they should be found elsewhere. They could not prevent God from manifesting His power, but they could take possession of the persons who exercised it, at least when God allowed it. They do so, and throw the Apostles into the common prison.

But that did nothing more than prepare the way for another display of the hand and power of God. When God is working, vain are the efforts of men. We have seen, and shall see, the internal power of the Holy Ghost. Here we find angels, the servants of God in favour of the men who preach the good news of salvation through Christ. I do not doubt that they ever minister, according to the will of God, to all His children who walk in the way of His will; and they may be employed otherwise, if it please God, as it is written in Heb. i. But here they operate in a visible way. The angel opens the doors of the prison, leads the Apostles out, and tells them to go

their way, and to speak in the temple all the words of this life, which they do at once at break of day.

Meanwhile the high priest and they that were with him, meet together in the great council of the Jews, and send the sergeants, commanding them to bring the Apostles before them. They go therefore to the prison, which they find shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors, but no prisoners within. The priests confounded, know not what to think. Who can make war against God, and not find himself discomfited? Satan can do much, he can persecute and exercise great influence over unbelieving souls, but where the working of the power of God is present, he cannot surmount it. Confidence is found on the part of God's servants; and, at the bottom of their heart, the adversaries are afraid and perplexed. See Phil. i. 23; Josh. ii. 9; 1 Pet. iii. 6. Satan had the Sadducees ready to resist the work of the Apostles who presented the resurrection as the Pharisees to oppose Christ who preached true righteousness.

But the work of God goes on in the midst of suffering: He allows His own to suffer, it is given to them to suffer for the name of Christ; but He accomplished His counsels in spite of man. The officers then brought them without violence, fearing the people, lest they should have been stoned. The Apostles appear before the council, and the High Priest reproves them, because they had preached Jesus, in spite of the prohibition, and that thus they thought to bring the blood of Jesus on them. It is apparent that their conscience was ill at ease. The simple truth was that they were responsible for the blood of Jesus; but when a man is spurred on by Satan to commit a crime, he does not fear to do it, but once committed, the deceit of Satan leaves him; the crime weighs on his conscience, and Satan cannot alleviate it, before often goading him to desperation, as he did with Judas.

The reply of Peter to the rulers is very brief and decisive; already they knew it well. "We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them who obey Him."

When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.

But here again the hand of God appears; and as he had miraculously used an angel to let Peter out of prison, so now He employs the hand of man to arrest the hand and the malice of the elders and high priest. The human prudence of the Pharisee Gamaliel, a man much esteemed, gives them to realize, by several examples, the peril of putting themselves in conflict with God. The Pharisees were always opposed to the Sadducees, and the high priest belonged to the sect of the Sadducees, so that the Pharisee could always employ his human sagacity to gain a hearing. And God could use it to preserve His servants from the wicked hands of their enemies.

They consent to the counsel of Gamaliel, but without any fear of God. The will is not changed, the enmity against the testimony of God remains in all its force; but they are afraid of compromising themselves, and know not what to do. The Apostles are beaten, and forbidden to speak in the name of Jesus. Enmity without strength, without conscience, and without knowledge, blind from unbelief, and resisting in vain the power of God! The Apostles continue their work, teaching and preaching both in the temple, and in every house.

THE CHRISTIAN CONFLICT.

BY THE EDITOR.

"CHAPTER II.—THE GIRDLE OF TRUTH.

"The loins girt about with truth" is the truth *applied* producing *truthfulness* in us as a practical thing. In order that we may have our "*loins girt about with truth*," we must know that we have been redeemed from the whole power, and sphere, and rule of the enemy. The *sin-question* must have been no longer a doubtful one, but a settled one in our experience.

We must be like the Israelites, after having been sheltered from the sword of the destroying angel by the blood of the paschal lamb; they stood with their "*loins girt*," and ate the feast within their dwellings with their staves in their hand in the attitude of travellers.

"*The loins girt*" supposes us to have been rescued from sin and Satan, and made "*strangers and pilgrims*" passing on to the land of promise. Those Christians who do

not *know* that they have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, even though quickened in their souls with the very life of Christ, will feel no *deliverance* in their spirits, and cannot gird themselves with the truth that they are the Lord's, and start for *another* country, "even an heavenly," leaving the world behind them, because they do not know for certain that heaven is theirs.

But "we are begotten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in heaven for us" (1 Peter i. 3, 4). And it is not only our *duty*, but our blessed *privilege*, to enjoy the knowledge which is thus imparted to us, and act upon it. The full knowledge of having redemption through Christ, that He is our Saviour, that God is our Father, that heaven "with eternal glory," is ours in Him, delivers us from this present evil world, and fixes our affections on the things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.

Christ said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself." And so when we are redeemed we should deny *our old selves*, and all that in this world would minister to the gratification of the old man. Knowing ourselves to be the Lord's, His redeemed, purchased, peculiar possession, we should recognise it, realise it, gird ourselves with the truth of it, walk in the strength of it, and thus "girded with truth" stand in the conflict with Satan.

The joy of the Lord as our Redeemer is our strength. Never are we so far out of Satan's reach as when we have the new song put in our mouth in praise of our God, on the ground of having been redeemed, and taken conclusively out of the horrible pit and from the miry clay.

The loins girded about with truth means, that we are not only to know truths about redemption and salvation intellectually, but so to realise those precious truths that they turn us away from self and Satan's world to the throne of God, where Jesus sits, that we may feed by faith on a precious Christ there for us, our heart's affections being fully occupied with Him, and our minds formed by what He now is in "the Glory" before God. We can afford to want "this present world," for our new nature thus formed by the truth concerning Jesus instinctively turns to the new things which we have in Christ; and there is, therefore, no moral vacuum produced by giving up the world, because Christ fills our

hearts instead of the world—our Beloved engrosses the affections, and they have entire repose in Him.

If Satan comes and tempts me by asking how I know that I have another world; I gird me with the truth which I find in the Word of God concerning Christ Jesus, and meet him with such words as these:—The Son of God has come in the flesh, unfolding the Father's love to me, a sinner; and He has said that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life, and that I believing in Him shall not come into condemnation, for I have thereby passed from death unto life. I believe it, and rest in it; Christ is mine, and I am His; He is not of this world—I am not of this world; my portion is heavenly, not earthly; my inheritance is satisfying and enduring, not unsatisfying and evanescent.

And if Satan tempt me again in another form, and say—Seeing you have another world, and are sure of it, you had better enjoy the things of this; I answer, Christ "hath redeemed us from this present evil world according to the will of God and our Father;" and as Christ enjoys not His rule over this world, but is for the present expecting till His enemies be made His footstool, I wait for God's Son from heaven, and for the glory that shall follow, and know that if I suffer with Him now I shall reign hereafter. Having our loins girded thus with TRUTH, we can meet the enemy and successfully resist him.

And as *all truth* contained in the Word may at one time or other be a girdle for the loins, the more we know of the Word of God (if we get it from the Lord in holy fellowship), the more prepared will we be to meet the enemy in conflict; but it must be obtained not by the mere exercise of our own minds, but by the "unction from the Holy One that teacheth all things." The precious truths of accomplished redemption by the dying Lamb of Calvary—life in resurrection in Christ risen from the dead, our completeness in Christ, our oneness with our glorified head in heaven; His coming the second time without sin unto salvation; and the eternal glory that shall be ours with Him, are such truths as keep our hearts and minds from wandering in search of a satisfying portion here below. "Our hearts are with Him on the throne," and cannot any more come down to the poor trifling joys of earth.

That the loins may be "girt with TRUTH," we must have spiritual ex-

perience of all that Christ is to us, and of all we have in Christ. The truth in order to its being a girdle to us, must be obtained in living union with Christ risen and in communion with God, and not obtained by the precept of men. Men may be used as ministers of His grace; but if we obtain the truth only from men, it will hang loosely about us. We may be said to hold it, but it will never *hold us*! We need to be held together spiritually by the truth, especially as to our affections. "The flesh" can be taken up with *men's thoughts* about God's truth, but it is only when the truth of God itself comes to our souls in demonstration of the Spirit and with power that "our faith stands, not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." The truth of God was quoted even by Satan to lead the Lord Jesus from the path of entire dependence; but He had His "loins girt about with truth"—it was not merely a thing outside of Him, but He had it in His heart—He was girded with it, lived, walked, and fought in it.

There is nothing in our day that is more employed by Satan in his wiles than setting one against another, on account of their various thoughts about God's truth. This is not to be girt about with truth, but to give place to the devil. As a general rule, if you find a man anxious on all occasions to fight for certain tenets and views, you may be very sure that they are either unscriptural, or he is *holding them* in the flesh, and they are *not holding him* as being the "girdle of the loins of his mind." It is no doubt our duty, as it is our privilege, to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; but "the flesh," "the old man" in us, can be occupied about the truth in an intellectual and controversial way quite as much as about pleasure or mammon; and it is by partial thoughts respecting God's truth, and indirect lies, of which men are not conscious, that Satan seems to be deceiving so many persons at the present time, and it is against "the wiles of the devil" that we are specially guarded; and to be able to stand against these wiles we must see to "having our loins girt about with truth." Satan, in order to dislodge us from our confidence in Christ, and alienate our affections from Him, will never present himself and say, 'I am the devil, and I am come on set purpose to deceive you about this truth concerning Jesus, and thereby to injure, and if possible destroy your souls.' He always appears *out of character*, and when he

comes to deceive Christians, who soar the highest in their affection for Christ, he appears as an angel of light, magnifying the importance of this little thing and the other little thing connected with Him, until we lose the due *proportion* of truth; and as he assailed our first parents in the serpent, so he is now using his subtle wiles, and endeavouring to deceive us even by the exaggeration, distortion, and dislocation of truths, which, sad to say, are so frequently propounded by deeply-taught, earnest and good men, "whose praise is in the gospel in all the churches of Christ." In seeking to circumvent devoted and experienced Christians, he will thus be found fishing with good bait, and with such bait as completely hides the hook.

If, again, he can succeed in getting us to *hold* and to contend for the real truth of God out of living, spiritual fellowship with God himself, instead of truth holding us, and we girt as to our affections with it, his end would be accomplished.

In order that we may have the truth as the girdle of the affections of the soul, and be able to minister the truth in love and power, we must have it given to our own souls as an *experimental thing*, and that which binds our affections together and centres them on Christ himself; otherwise we who minister even God's own precious truth concerning His Son Jesus Christ, will become, morally, like a pipe that conveys water to a city—not ourselves living men, and living in the Spirit, and drinking the living water, and having it flowing out of us in rivers for the refreshing of others and the conversion of perishing souls.

And let us never think that we can know too much of God's truth. We need all truth, and our Lord prays, "Sanctify them through *thy truth—thy word is truth.*" And the more of God's truth that we know, and are girded with, the more shall we be separated from the specious *truth-seeming* lies of the devil, and the more safe shall we be against his wiles and allurements; and the more useful by His grace shall we be in bringing others out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, and getting them planted safely in a risen Christ in the land of promise.

Beloved, let us earnestly pray that the Holy Ghost who is come and abides with us to guide us into all truth, to take of the things of Christ, and show them to us, may not only give us to *know* the TRUTH, and by the truth to be made *free*, but also to be so sanctified thereby, that our

affections and every motion of our minds may be so *bound* by the truth, and our souls so knit to Christ through means of it, and so entirely and constantly in the presence of God by virtue of it, that we shall be moulded into a state of *trembling truthfulness of spirit*, that makes us give up all our human notions about truth or duty, and lean for everything in *quiet dependence* on the guidance and teaching of "*the Spirit of truth*," the written Word alone being our directory.

I leave with you, my dearly-beloved and longed for, a word from God by Isaiah which has just thrilled my own soul:—"To this man will I look, even to him that is *poor and of a contrite spirit*, and THAT TREMBLETH AT MY WORD." This is precious! Oh that it may be ours! But what follows is fearful, as depicting God's mind about those who do not tremble at His word, and are not "having the loins girt about with truth," but, on the contrary, are holding their "*views*," and walking in "*their own ways*." "*They have chosen their own ways*, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. I WILL ALSO CHOOSE THEIR DELUSIONS, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called none did answer, *when I spake they did not hear*, but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not."

"*Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at His word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified; but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed*" (Isa. lxvi. 5).

HIS JOY.

PSALMS xxi. 6; HEBREWS xii. 2.

How sweet to know His joy will be
Unutterable then;
Whose visage once with grief was marred
More than the sons of men.

Exceeding glad that heart will be
(Once broken here with woe),
And o'er that Head, once bound with
The oil of joy shall flow. [thorns.

To gaze upon the radiant throng
The purchase of His love;
He leader of their joyous strains,
Mid the bright choir above.

On earth to view His chosen race
For whom His tears were poured,
Bowed by His mighty love, at last
Him owning, God and Lord.

The nations, freed from Satan's chains,
Shall Him alone obey;
His name from sea to sea adored,—
From pole to pole His sway.

The Father, whom He glorified
'Mid scorn of wicked men,
Has willed each knee to Him shall bow,
Each tongue confess Him then.

Ah, joy unmingled shall be His!

Exceeding every thought;
Transcending e'en the bliss of those
His precious blood hath bought.

His joy the climax of our own,—

His glory aye to see,—
Will fill each tuneful harp with praise,
Each heart with ecstasy.

R.

NOTES OF READINGS ON THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

III.

We will read now from chap. iii. 10 to chap. iv. 11.

This Apostle is eminently carrying on the education of the saints. He does not take us as Paul does to heavenly places, and tell us to look around, and see the place in which God has put us; but he is educating the saints for their passage onwards, and charging them to exercise patience, wherever the pressure may come from. He opens the epistle by speaking of the *trial of their faith*. That is the general way in which trial comes. Then in chap. ii. he begins to look at trial in the *details of life*, as in the case of servants with froward masters. In chap. iii. it is trial arising from righteousness, and in chap. iv. trial for the name of Christ. In chap. v. it is trial arising from the immediate pressure of Satan himself. So, from beginning to end, the Apostle keeps you in company with trials. He is educating a stranger people; and a stranger people passing through the earth should count on passing from wave to wave.

But there is a form of trial that we should not encounter. Did not Lot incur a trial in Sodom that Abraham could look down upon? Lot fell into trials that Abraham escaped, because Lot had his eyes on Sodom; and the more you and I handle pitch the more we shall be defiled by it. He tells us to count on trial; but there is a trial we ought to escape. Do not suffer for anything morally wrong. There is a way in which we *may* love life, and that is by not making trouble for ourselves. Then he shows us that two things will attach to this way of loving life. The eyes of the Lord will be over us, His ears open to us; and no one will harm us. These two things will rest on us if we avoid these self-made trials.

In ver. 14 he looks on us as *asserting righteousness*. We ought to be both practising what is good and asserting righteousness. If you only practise what is good, you will get loved and respected in the world.

Who is he that will harm you if you give all your goods in charity? But we must take care to be *righteous* as well as *good*—that is, we must stand in fidelity to Christ, and assert the rules of Christian righteousness as well as practise the ways of Christian goodness. The Spirit here tells that righteousness will provoke suffering. The moment we assert the peculiarities of Christianity, and stand apart for righteousness, we shall suffer.

Well, suppose you suffer, what are you to do? "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts." Do not be troubled. It only presses you a little more closely into God's presence; and, forth from that sanctuary, be ready to come and give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you. What an exquisite attitude for a saint of God to take! Pressure from around forces him into the sanctuary of the divine presence, and forth he comes in full peace of conscience to answer every man "with meekness and fear." Meek in carriage, giving respect to others, and carrying all through a good conscience before God.

"For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing." It is *well* to suffer for evil-doing. Do not you count it so? If you go astray, would not you rather God visited you than that He let it all pass? It is among our privileges that He should visit us for it, but it is *better* to suffer for *well-doing*. There is no honour if I suffer for evil-doing, though there may be healthful discipline; but in suffering for *well-doing* the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. Then he brings forward the Lord Jesus, who is the grand prototype of suffering for well-doing. The first order and character of it is seen in Him, having this great purpose in His sufferings, "that He might bring us to God." "Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." He died in the flesh, as thoroughly as any of us, but He was quickened because of what He was in the spirit. And then the Apostle directs your attention to what He was doing of old in this resurrection-character. This glance back at Noah is exceedingly beautiful. Two things occupied Noah for 120 years. He was preaching to His fellow-sinners, and, in his own person, he was getting everything ready to pass into the new world. Every knock of the hammer had that in it. Could anything be finer than to see a saint of God undistractedly going on with

these two businesses? And it was the Spirit of Christ in Noah preaching righteousness. Noah in himself had no capacity. It was the Spirit of Christ that animated him, and he preached to the spirits in prison. It was an imprisoned generation—that is, it was *under sentence of death*, though the sentence was not executed for 120 years.

"The like figure whereunto, baptism, doth now save us." But there He checks. Baptism is a beautiful figure of death and resurrection; but here the Spirit puts in that check—"not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God." Now let me ask, have you been simply and undistractedly put into that secret,—"that the resurrection of Christ has given you an answer to God?" What was the resurrection of Christ? It was deliverance from death. Death is the wages of sin. Would death ever have been conquered if sin had not been put away? When the Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead, He rose as a divine witness that sin was put away; and, if sin is put away, I have a good conscience. Does not guilt make cowards of us all? It is the very opposite of a good conscience. Now if I read in the resurrection of Christ that sin has been put away, I read in it my title to a good conscience before God. I can look up now without being abashed, in the blessed sense that God has settled every matter between Him and me. This is divinely magnificent, yet simple to the plainest understanding.

Then an uncommonly fine thought attaches to this. "Who is gone into heaven and is on the right hand of God, angels and principalities and powers being made subject unto Him." He has your conscience *there* with Him. He has not got your *person* there yet. Paul teaches me that I shall be there by-and-bye. Peter, in his more homely epistle, teaches me that everything that might startle me is rolling under my feet, and that my conscience is up in the highest heavens with Christ; and there I sit, smiling at every accuser, taking up the language of Romans viii.:—"Who shall condemn?"—"Who shall separate?" Angels, principalities, and powers are rolling under. This is a state of *justification*. There will be a state of *glorification* by-and-bye. There is a moral glory in the Gospel we know very little about. God comes, in the Gospel of His grace, and answers the necessity of sinners.

He will come, by-and-bye, in the kingdom of His glory, to answer the expectation of saints.

Now we come, in chap. iv., to another form of trial, the trial of *holiness*. "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind," etc. *There* is a cultivation of holiness. And do not we all know what it is to contend with our lusts and vanities, and the spirit of this carnal world? We could not be saints of God if we were not conscious of the battle. It is a trial within,—a trial that everyone knows for himself. "For the time past may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles"—he is talking in Jewish language here a bit. "Who shall give account to Him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead." Nothing is indifferent to God. You may say, "it is over and gone." There is nothing that is over and gone. There is not a scintilla of moral activity that God *as a Judge* will look over. He is perfect in every glory that attaches to Him—perfect as a *Saviour*—perfect as a *Judge*.

"For this cause was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." We ought to let the flesh know, as we go along, that it is a doomed thing already.

"And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins." James uses that word, "hide a multitude of sins," in connection with justification. Preaching and restoring of souls hides a multitude of sins *from God*, and you and I should so walk, one with another, that charity should do the same office *between us*.

Then he goes on still to keep us in the place of service. "Use hospitality one to another without grudging," and it should be used in a spirit of service. A great deal of hospitality is the hospitality of vanity. It ought to be used in the spirit of those that cordially wish well one to another.

Then be a servant in your *gifts*. The Corinthians were making a display of their gifts. Many of us (as I remember one sister used to say) array ourselves and adorn ourselves in the gifts of God. How pure and searching the word is! It is "gold, seven times tried." Things sometimes may look very like one another to us, but try them by the seven times refined gold!

"If any man speak, let him speak

as the oracles of God." I believe there ought to be the authority of an oracle. What was an oracle? It was a mere voice. "The voice of one crying in the wilderness." An oracle is the mere utterance of the mind of God.

"If any man ministers let him do it as of the ability that God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified, through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." He could not let the Lord Jesus pass as a medium, without giving Him His divine honours. He is the *channel* to bring down every blessing to us; and He is also the *source*, from which all blessings flow; and when the Apostle mentions Him as the channel, he ascribes to Him His divine glory. And there he pauses for a moment.

What moral glory attaches to us in our calling! When we think of it we may well cry, "Ah, my leanness, my leanness, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously."

NOTES ON FIRST TIMOTHY.

[Dear reader, I would refer you to an article in our January number headed "Love not law, the motive power for a holy life," and request you to read it; for though printed then, for a special purpose, this is the place it naturally comes in. Having read this, we now proceed with the exposition].

"Now we know that the law is good if any one uses it lawfully, knowing this, that law has not its application to a righteous person, but to the lawless and insubordinate, to the impious and sinful, to the unholy and profane, to smiters of fathers, and smiters of mothers, to murderers; to fornicators, Sodomites, kidnappers, liars, perjurers, and if any other thing is opposed to sound teaching according to the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted (1 Tim. i. 8-11).

The law is good, that is beautiful—just the right thing in the right place (*καλος*)—when applied to the characters enumerated. We, Christians, know it would be an unsuited application of it to apply it to "a righteous person." The law which is chiefly prohibitory and condemnatory is not suited to a Christian with a new nature that has spiritual tastes for the very opposite of those things the law prohibits, and who, found as he is in Christ risen, cannot be cursed, for the Spirit testifies "there is therefore no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." The law could neither stop the sinning, condemn the sin without condemning the sinner, nor

ensure obedience; but all these have been accomplished by Christ dead and risen proclaimed in the Gospel; and therefore the law is not needed to accomplish that which is done already. "I through the law am dead to the law that I may live unto God;" and this is how it has come about—"I have been crucified with Christ—and no longer live I, but Christ liveth in me."

In virtue of Christ's blood-shedding in atonement I have remission of sins: in virtue of Christ's death and by being planted with Him in the likeness of His death and also of His resurrection, my *standing* is changed from being that of a fallen child of Adam in a state of sin, to that of one who shares the standing in risen life of the second Man—the last Adam risen from the dead; again by identification with Christ crucified, I have got rid of the old life and old man, besides having a new self in Christ who is my life.

The clearness with which God teaches us the total end of our sin, our standing, life and self in Christ's death and cross is very remarkable; so that it is only a man who does not know the nature, reality, greatness, and thoroughness of God's work in Christ, removing us outside of the sin-sphere, the law-sphere, the world-sphere, the self-sphere, and placing us in the Christ-sphere, would think of placing Christians under law. Law has not its application to a righteous man; and Christians are not only "made righteousness of God in Him" but "the righteous requirement of law (*δικαιομα*) is fulfilled" in such only as are not under law, "who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit (Rom. viii. 4). The law applies to the unrighteous; but Christians are no longer such. It applies to those who are alive in the world; but Christians "no longer live there;" for "ye have died and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 2). The law is not used "lawfully" if it is applied to Christians so as to put them under it; or to deal with them as if they were "alive in the world" or "lawless." "We know that the law is good if any one uses it lawfully" i.e., agreeably to the design of it. He speaks of the use of the law in teaching, not of the law's intrinsic excellence, when he says "we know that the law is good." Law out of its place is bad. Its application, not its essence, is in view. The word here used for good is different from that used in Rom. vii., when the law is said to be good; there it is its essential nature: here the propriety of its application. These two words are largely employed in this Epistle:

good as a quality (*αγαθος*) occurs in the following places in 1st Tim. i. 5-19; ii. 10; v. 10: good as a propriety or a fitting thing (*καλος*), 1 Tim. i. 8-18; ii. 3; iii. 11-13; iv. 4-6, twice; v. 4, 10, 25; vi. 12, twice; 13, 18, 19. The last, indicative of that which is fitting, is that which preponderates, and which characterizes this epistle.

The fitting life "according to the gospel of the glory of Christ,"—the proper conduct produced by whole-some teaching ("sound doctrine") is the "piety" inculcated and contemplated in "the gospel of the glory of the blessed God." "Sound" or healthy as applied to teaching is peculiar to the pastoral epistles—1 Tim. i. 10; vi. 3-4; 2 Tim. i. 13; iv. 3; Ti. i. 9-13; Ti. i. 2-8.

The law is linked with the things it condemns: it is fitting that it should be so and condemn them, but not that it should be applied to "a righteous man." That was the law-teachers' error. The Apostle gives a list of characters to whom law most fittingly applies. There are six classes of the unrighteous adduced.

1. Lawless and insubordinate.
2. Impious and sinful.
3. Unholy and profane.
4. Smiters of fathers and smiters of mothers, murderers.
5. Fornicators, Sodomites, kidnappers.
6. Liars, perjurers.
7. General evil:—Everything opposed to sound teaching.

"By the law is the knowledge of sin," and it is therefore fitting it should have its application to sinners, not to the righteous." The law is good if a man who is teaching "uses it lawfully," by directing its keen edge against such wickedness as the above list indicates.

The apostle Paul, when in Romans iii. 20, he writes, "By law is knowledge of sin," does not go on at once to shew how it works so until he has first brought out grace, righteousness, and life in a risen Christ; and then in Romans vii. he expounds and illustrates his thesis, and in so doing shews law in its application to a guilty man,—it kills him in his conscience, see verses 7-13; and then he shews the effect of law on an undelivered man,—it brings him to despair of self-strength for deliverance, and then, as he cries, "O wretched man!" he also continues "who shall deliver me?" when he finds deliverance in Christ and becoming then and thus free in Him (Rom. viii.) he leads thereafter a life of practical righteousness under the grace of the Holy Ghost—not by fear of consequences as under law, but as "fruit

of the light"—"fruit of the Spirit:" for "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, self-control; *against such things there is no law*"—(Gal. v. 22.)—so that it would be a wrong application of the law to give it an application to "a righteous man," who is bearing such a beautiful grape-cluster of the "fruit of the Spirit."

"And if any other thing is opposed to sound teaching," the law has its application to it, let it be ever so small an offence: for although the gross sins against God and society are mentioned, the law condemns all the lesser sins too. It applies, as the same apostle informs us it did in his own case, even to the *inner man*, for he writes to the Romans,—"I had not known sin (*i.e.*, had conscience of *lust*) unless the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."

The teaching of the grace of God has regard to every part of man's nature, heart, conscience, mind, and body. "For the grace of God which carries with it salvation for all men has appeared, teaching us that having denied impiety and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, justly, and piously in the present course of things"—(Tit. ii. 11-12). Grace teaches the saints how to live: we do not fall back on the teaching of law as if it could bring out morality comparable to that of the gospel. "Sound teaching" for the conduct of our daily life is largely given in the Apostolic epistles: even those which begin, as Ephesians and Colossians, with the highest Christian doctrine as to Christ and our place in Him and our portion with Him, descend to the minutest injunction to act a Christian part in all the varied relations and spheres of every-day life. Grace teaches its own morality in a deeper way; and it acts with better moral effect than law could do. Of course we distinguish between the *Contents* of the law and its *principle*: and grace may use its contents (Eph. vi. 1-2) while not admitting its principle: for as to our relationship with God and the new life of holiness "We are *not under law* but under grace" (Rom. vi. 14).

It would be an entire misinterpretation of the passage, to say that in our preaching we are not to use all the word of God, the contents of the law as well as other parts; and if we know the contents of the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, we will be able to wield the contents of the law with all the more mighty effect "as a sword for the conscience": for we stand in the light of "that glory of the blessed God,"

which has not tolerated one particle of evil but has been fully satisfied by the death for sin of the Lord Jesus. God visited sin with its due punishment on Christ, and He more than glorified all that God is about sin. Hence a preacher standing in the full light of this glory of God made good on Calvary as to man's sin, can use with the mightiest effect all that the law says against sin. He is the only man who can do it. He would be a poor preacher of the gospel who could not wield the law with superior power and intelligence against all those things the gospel forbids; but he would be a sorry teacher of the truths of the Christian faith and life who gave the law its application among the *saints*; for while law has its *use* among them, it has its *fitting* application only among *sinners*, condemning all that is contrary to healthy moral teaching "according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God."

THE KINDNESS OF GOD.

NOTES FOR A BIBLE READING.

WE have "*the kindness of God*" illustrated in a striking and memorable way in 2 Sam. ix. and in Luke xv. The kindness of "David the king" to Mephibosheth illustrates the sovereign grace of God to sinners. The reader is requested to read 2 Sam. ix., and keep it before the eyes as we go on.

I. *It was absolute grace.* (1) *Who* was the party contemplated? "Any that is left of the house of Saul" (verse 1). Saul had been David's chief enemy: so "when we were yet *enemies* we were reconciled by the death of his Son" (Ro. v. 10). (2) *Where* was the object of David's kindness? "In Lo-debar." Hid in a distant place beyond Jordan. So we were Gentiles in the flesh and "far off." The Prodigal (Luke xv.) in the distant land of famine tells of the sinner's distance, destitution, and misery. (3) *What* was he? A member of a fallen house—an outcast—dependent—lame. He was "in the house of Machir." We were "without strength—sinners—ungodly—enmity against God." Fallen in Adam and exposed to wrath (Eph. ii. 3).

II. *It was seeking grace.* "Where is he?" (v. 4). It is God's kindness that seeks sinners. He is first in this. "Adam, *where art thou?*" God sent His Son (Jo. iii. 16, 1 Jo. iv. 10, 11.) "The Son of man is come to seek" (Luke xix. 10). See parable of the good Shepherd, Luke xv. 4-7. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Co. v. 19). See also Mat. ix. 10-13. John's gos-

pel is the Son "full of grace" seeking the sinner, and in that gospel he is specially seen with the sinner alone: Nicodemus, ch. iii.—the Samaritan, ch. iv.—the man at the pool, ch. v.; the woman, in ch. viii.: the blind man whose sight was restored, in ch. ix. "*He saw a man who was blind from his birth*": also v. 35-38, "Go ye . . . preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark xvi. 13).

III. *It was fetching grace* "Then king David sent and fetched him" (v. 5). When a sovereign invites he commands, and a subject has no choice but come (1 Jo. iii. 23). In the great supper (Luke xiv.) we have "*compel* them to come in." The Holy Ghost works by the word in the soul. "You hath he quickened who were dead." "God who is rich in mercy for his great love where-with he loved us even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." The dead Prodigal is alive again—the lost is found—see Eph. ii. 10, i. 12-13, Luke xv. 21-24, Titus iii. 3-7. The Holy Ghost comes and fills the disciples—the wonderful works of God are spoken—thousands are fetched by grace through repentance and faith in Christ and his work unto God's presence. "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (1 Pet. iii. 18). "Ye who sometime were far off are *made nigh* by the blood of Christ" (Eph. ii. 13). When Mephibosheth was come unto David, he fell on his face and did reverence—see Peter, Luke v. 8: Saul, Acts ix. 3: or in Rev. i. 17. He was also called by name, "David said, *Mephibosheth*." Jesus said to the persecutor from the glory, "*Saul, Saul!*" Mephibosheth answered, "*Behold thy servant*." Saul said, "*Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*" and ever after he styles himself "Servant of Jesus Christ." "A called Apostle" he was, for there was a voice heard by him alone (Acts xxvi. 14-19), but also a sinner called by name by His grace (Gal. i. 15-16, 1 Tim. i. 12-16). "And they that were with me saw indeed the light and were afraid, but they heard not the voice of Him that spake to me" (Acts xxii. 9). There is always "the voice of Him that spake to me" heard when there is the hearing of faith and a sinner is *fetch*ed into His presence to experience "*the kindness and philanthropy of God*" (Tit. iii. 4).

IV. *It was unconditional grace* (verse 7th). "And David said unto him (1) Fear not, (2) I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, (3) and will restore thee

all the land of Saul thy father, (4) and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually." "Fear not," is a gospel word spoken by angels at the birth and resurrection of Christ (Luke ii. 9, 10, Mat. xxviii. 9), often used by Christ Himself (Mat. xiv. 27, xvii. 6, 7, Mat. xxviii. 10, Luke v. 10, xii. 32, Rev. i. 17, ii. 10). Naturally sinners have just cause for fear when brought into God's presence, knowing Him only as holy and a judge. At Sinai "so terrible was the sight that even Moses said, I do exceedingly fear and quake" (Heb. xii.) Yet the voice of God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself was "fear not." The Saviour's presence on earth, His death, resurrection, glorification, all say to sinners "fear not." When man fell and failed under every means by which God tried him, He fell back on his sovereign reserve of unconditional grace in Christ, and in connection with Him and His work and death He can save according to that which no failure of man could touch "his own purpose and grace" (2 Tim. i. 9, 10.) And as there was a covenant between David and Jonathan to show kindness to Saul's house (1 Sa. xx. 14-17); so of God and Christ it may be said, "the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zech. vi. 13); for "his purpose and grace" dates from before the world began; "according as he hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. i. 3-5, Rom. viii. 28-34). (2) "For Jonathan's sake." "God for Christ's sake"—rather "God in Christ hath acted in grace to you" (Eph. iv. 32); see also Rom. iii. 21-26, v. 6-11, 2 Co. v. 16-21, Eph. ii. 8-10. (3) Inheritance restored to Mephibosheth; we are begotten again to a better one (1 Pet. i. 3-9, Eph. i. 3, 11, 18). (4) A place at the King's table (Luke xv. 22-24). This leads to this further remark—

V. *It was ennobling grace* (verse 11). "As for Mephibosheth, said the king, he shall eat at my table as one of the king's sons." He has rank conferred on him as well as privilege. He had said, "Behold thy servant;" but David set him down at the royal table, and said he is seated there "as one of the king's sons." God does not only bless us with all spiritual blessings, but He has raised us up together with Christ, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, as sons—"Having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of his will" (Eph. i. 3). See also Rom. viii. 15, 16, 1 Jo. iii. 1-3,

Gal. iii. 4-7. God will have us at His table only as sons—"This my son, &c. (Luke xv.) Sons are we by His grace as to rank; children as to our relationship, for we are born of God (Jo. i. 13); of the Spirit (Jo. iii. 3-7); of the Word (Ja. i. 18, 1 Pet. i. 23, 25). Beloved now are we the children of God. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God" (1 Jo. iii. 1).

VI. *It was continuing grace* (verse 13). "So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem, for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet." The royal clemency was intended to be perpetual. The grace was continuous on David's part. He knew he "was lame on both his feet" before he sent and fetched Him, and his lameness was no reason for putting him away. God has made provision in His grace for keeping us in the enjoyment of His fellowship, notwithstanding that sin is in us (1 Jo. i. ii. 1, 2). We have the advocacy of Jesus Christ the righteous, with the Father, if any man sin; and we have the Word and the priesthood of Christ to take us safely through the trials, difficulties, weakness and temptations of the wilderness journey; mercy and grace in time of need; for as our intercessor with God He ever liveth to make intercession for us, and is therefore able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. Therefore, neither sin in us nor weakness can break our fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. Sins allowed would interrupt our joyous consciousness of it; for it is in the light, and "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." We dwell in God's presence where sovereign grace has placed us; and eat continually at His table. God has His gratification to have us there, and he will not lose it. "Let us be merry:" "children by Christ Jesus to Himself," that he may have his joy in us. It gratified David in a higher degree to see the lame son of Jonathan at his table, than it could gratify Mephibosheth to be there. We joy in God when, by having the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, we know that He joys in us. (See Luke xv. 10, Zech. iii. 17, Jude 24, 25, Rev. xix. 7.) No fear of the perseverance of the saints, seeing that such is the perseverance of the Saviour. The found sheep is brought home. "Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation" (1 Pet. i. 1, Jo. vi. 44, Jo. x. 27-29, Rom. viii. 29, 30). Herein is love with us made perfect, that we may have

boldness in the day of judgment, for as He is so are we in this world" (1 Jo. iv. 17). David's grace made Mephibosheth secure and safe in the day of judgment (2 Sam. xxi. 7). "But the king spared Mephibosheth" (Mal. iii. 16-18). "And the Lord added to the church daily such as 'should be saved,'" for they will be caught away before the judgments come (1 Thess. iv., Rev. iii. 10). The church goes not through the great tribulation (Mat. xxiv. 21, Rev. vii. 14), it is caught up Enoch-like before the judgments are poured out. It will be grace to the last, for we are "caught up," and we hope perfectly for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. i. 13). And grace that now reigns through righteousness will reign along with righteousness in the day of glory, for the perfect love of God will be enjoyed by us in heaven above, and the river of grace or the free love of God to man will flow down to and bless a prodigal world; and we who are now in such a wonderful place, and shall be displayed in it in that day, and be to the glory of His grace, will have this word fulfilled in us—"that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus (Eph. ii. 7).

VII. *It was heart-winning grace* that ensured a life of loyalty and obedience (verse 8). "And he bowed himself and said, what is thy servant that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am." The king would remember the day when he humbled himself, and used the same expression to Saul. "After whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea?" That was the day of the outcast and persecuted David when we read "Saul went home; but David and his men gat them up unto the hold" (1 Sam. xxiv. 14-22). Jesus too had such a day, "And every man went unto his own house. Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives" (Jo. vii. viii). David was now in power, and had fetched Mephibosheth into his own presence to show him kindness; and when he heard of his kingly grace, he bowed himself, and expressed the sense he had of his own worthlessness in comparison with David. Thus were the thousands in Jerusalem led to regard themselves as dead dogs (Acts ii. 37) in presence of the glorified "Lord and Christ." The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance (Ro. ii. 4). So when the Jews shall look on him whom they pierced, in the coming day (Zech. xii.) they shall mourn. Paul is a

pattern, (1 Tim. i. 13-16). How he bowed himself under a sense of the kindness of God! "The love of Christ *constraineth* us" . . . to live for him, who died for them and rose again (2 Cor. v. 14, 15). Peter also when restored (Jo. xxi. 15-17). The love of God realized leads us to the judgment of ourselves; and when the heart is won the life is secured. Mephibosheth was not only pardoned, preferred, and privileged, but he was separated to the person of David by his kindness that associated him with himself as a son. The person of David was his separating object: he had been made to him the power of separation from all associations adverse to him and his interests. For when Absalom's conspiracy took place, and Zeba had deceived him (2 Sam. xix. 25, 26), Mephibosheth kept himself apart from Absalom and his rebellion, and he showed his regard for his exiled sovereign by not only keeping out of all those things that were opposed to David, but by living as a mourner until the day of his return (2 Sam. xix. 24). "And Mephibosheth, the son of Saul, came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes from the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace." And we know who has said, "And for their sakes sanctify I myself that they also may be sanctified by the truth" (Jo. xvii). "Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us . . . sanctification" (1 Col. i. 30). See Paul, in Phil. iii., separated from all beneath the sun and pressing on to the goal of the glory to win Christ. Mephibosheth in his mourning is a picture of what the saints should be now that Christ is absent. Fellowship with Him where he is the power of separation. The question is not what we may do, or with whom we may go, but risen with Christ, born from above, and united with Him in the Holy Ghost where he is, we seek those things which are above—the heavenly, not the earthly things. A heart for an absent Lord to whom we owe ourselves, all we are or hope to be, gives the spring of action in keeping apart from the evil world that rejected Him. Our whole character and ways should speak the language of a mourner, a Nazarite, who will have none of this world's joys as long as the anointed of God is by man's "Away with Him," an exile from his own dominion. "*He is not here*," should move our hearts, regulate our conduct, and make us live in character until he return (2 Sam. xix. 24-30).

"He is not here!" the One my heart loves best,
Then can I join the giddy thoughtless throng,
Who heedless of His absence careless rest,
Or fete that absence with gay mirth and song?
No! He is gone! and not the brightest ray
Can gild the scene to me while He is away.

"He is not here!" I want Him every hour;
My soul would weary of His long delay,
Save that like perfume from a hidden flower,
The fragrance of His spices cheers the way;
Yet fills my heart with more desire to prove
The fulness of Thy presence Lord above.

March 24, 1876.

W. R.

ALLURING AND CRUSHING.

THE greatest evidence God gives to us of His favour is that He manifests Himself to us. He does this more especially when we are suffering for Him. It was when Abraham returned from the slaughter of the kings that God appeared to him.

From Abraham's history we learn there are two ways in which Satan attacks saints, and two kinds of reward connected with overcoming. Satan seeks to allure the heart with the things of this life and he seeks to crush the soul when in trial.

In Gen. xiii. 9, Abraham gave way to Lot, his relative. Their herdsmen had quarrelled and they must separate. Abraham let Lot choose his place for a dwelling. "Is not the whole land before thee, if thou wilt take the left hand then I will take the right," such was his language. Lot chose the plain of Jordan and dwelt in the cities of the plain. He pitched his tent towards Sodom. Abraham could afford to give up all, to refuse the pleasant things of earth. He could say "I have nothing to seek or to choose." Satan's first effort is to beguile the saint with the things of this world, things which do not belong to the heavenly calling of the believer. The Apostle exhorts "Set your affection on things above, *not* on things on the earth" (Col. iii). If Satan succeeds in alluring the heart with the things of earth, he is content. Christ is not pre-eminent in the soul, so He lets the one that is thus allured go on quietly. The path is an easy one, and little to the glory of Christ.

If Satan fail in his effort to beguile the saint, he will try in another way to bring him under his power. Trial comes in the pathway, and he seeks to crush when the soul is under pressure. He has, as it were, two barrels to his gun—if the saint refuses the beguilement, the next effort is to crush the heart with sorrow. Abraham refused the will of Satan, when the king of Sodom met him and laid his goods at his feet. Abraham said, "I will not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abraham rich." He had his reward, for Melchisedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine and blessed him. If you refuse you will get manifold more in this present time. Of this the Lord assured Peter when the apostles said, "Lord we have left all and followed Thee." Jesus answered, "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren or sisters, or father or mother, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred-fold more in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, *with* persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life." If you give up anything for Christ, you will get much more; not, perhaps, of the actual thing you have given up, but manifold more of that which is of value to you. If you talk of what you have given up, it shows you have not done it yet.

Then comes another thing the saint has to endure. Now is "the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ," and the apostle says, "ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." The same Lord that enables you to refuse the beguilement of Satan gives power to endure. Keep looking to Him "who endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of God. Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" (Heb. xii. 2, 3).

In Gen. xiv. we find Abraham, who had refused the allurements of Sodom, going forth to the help of Lot, who had not refused. Lot had pitched his tent toward Sodom. He got into trouble. "If we sow to the flesh, we shall of the flesh reap corruption." His trouble opened the door for Abraham, who had denied himself to come forth in the strength of the Lord to his rescue. He took his three hundred men, and went out by night, and the Lord was with him. Lot was rescued and all his goods.

Abraham risked all to save Lot. He acted as the servant of the Most High God, and if you take your place as a servant of Christ, you must risk everything—power from above will be given you. Be strong in the Lord was the charge to Timothy. Abraham had the known presence of the Lord. "After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abraham in a vision, saying, 'Fear not, Abraham; I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward,' as if Jehovah had said, I will come in with Mine own presence to delight your heart. Abraham's reward was the sense of association with God. He had gone into conflict as the servant of God on Lot's behalf, and we must be ready to serve, in the day of trial, those who have lagged behind. He endured the trial, and the Lord rewarded him with a fresh manifestation of Himself. 1 Peter iv. 14, presents what is analogous to this. "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you."

Saints complain of lack of joy, but joy follows service and is linked up with suffering and fruit-bearing. In the xiv. of John there is no mention of joy. In John xv. there is—"Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear much fruit. If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love. These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full" (John xv. 8, 10). Joy is invariably the result of suffering. "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so also our consolations abound by Christ" (2 Cor. i. 5). "Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (1 Peter iv. 13). There is present reward in suffering for Christ. You receive manifold more in this life if you refuse the allurements of Satan.

Occupation with Christ, who refused and who endured, is what gives motive power now to do as He did. Think of Him who died and surrendered all that you might be blessed. He will be with you if He call upon you to suffer for Him. He will deepen in your soul the sense of the glory in which He is and to which He leads you, whilst by the way you bear His reproach. The thought of all this cheers the heart. The Son Himself is the spring of joy. There is nothing like

having His company. Having Him the loss of present things can be easily endured. To judge by circumstances one would say Lot had the better part, that he was the favourite, but in whom did God express His delight? In Abraham, who only had his tent, which was pitched in the Plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron—that spot which was afterwards given to Caleb because he wholly followed the Lord, where also the kings were wont to rendezvous, where David was crowned. Abraham built an altar there and the Lord appeared to him. God found His delight in him, and Abraham's condition was such that He could give expression to it. It is only as we walk with God that He can assure our hearts of His pleasure in us. "Enoch walked with God—was translated that he should not see death—before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God." The way he leads us may be rough and thorny, but if we sow in tears we shall reap in joy. Such was the experience of the remnant of Israel, as they travelled up from Babylon, the land of their captivity, to the House of the Lord at Jerusalem. They wept as they came up, but when the land of their desire was reached they reaped a harvest of blessing. The 126th Psalm speaks of the state of their souls. It is often applied to those who are labouring in the Gospel, and in principle this may be done, but it is not the correct interpretation of Scripture. It is one of the songs of degrees, and gives the record of the passage of the returning remnant on their way to the House of God and shows the spiritual condition which characterised them. "The Lord has done great things for us whereof we are glad. Turn again our captivity as the streams in the south, they that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." They had wept; but the time of songs had come, and their mouth was filled with laughter. Satan in their case was foiled in his effort to crush the saint when under pressure.

When our Lord was in the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil, these were the two ways in which Satan attacked Him, but Christ resisted the allurements, and defeated Satan's effort to crush Him. In Gethsemane Christ endured, though His sweat fell as great drops of blood. "Not my will but Thine be done," was the language of His subject soul. We are exhorted to consider him who endured.

If you refuse the beguilement of Satan, opportunity will be given you to endure—you will receive power, and Satan will be defeated in his effort to crush you. The children of the captivity refused the king's wine, and they were able to endure the furnace seven times heated—one like unto the Son of Man walked with them in the fire. God sent His angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him. If Satan can beguile you, he will not seek to crush you. He will leave you alone, and not trouble himself farther with you. Christ endured the full enmity of Satan at the moment when the judgment of God on sin culminated on Him. He refused to save Himself, that the will of God might be fully done by Him.

Does anything lie in your path that would interfere with your fully following the Lord? If there is, refuse it. This may involve suffering, but it will bring sure reward. If you have to suffer, the Lord promises you shall reign with him, and enjoy His presence whilst you suffer.

It is with the will of the Lord you have to do, and if your eye is on Him, Satan will fail in his desire to dishonour Christ in you, a member of His body.

J. B. S.

Edinburgh, April, 1875.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE READINGS.

ON FELLOWSHIP.

The following are the passages classified about fellowship or communion. The idea is sharing in common:—

1. *The fellowship of the Christian community* (Acts ii. 42; 1 John i. 3; Gal. ii. 9).
2. *The fellowship with the Father and the Son* (1 John i. 3, 6; 2 Cor. i. 7).
3. *The fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord* (1 Cor. i. 9; Phil. iii. 10. See also the verb 1 Pet. iv. 13; Heb. ii. 14. Eph. iii. 9, should be administration).
4. *The fellowship of the blood and body of Christ* (1 Cor. x. 16, 17).
5. *The fellowship of the Spirit* (Phil. ii. 1; Philem. 6; 1 John i. 7; 2 Cor. xiii. 14).
6. *The fellowship of Christian beneficence* (the verb Rom. xii. 13; Rom. xv. 26; the verb 27; 2 Cor. viii. 4; ix. 13; Phil. i. 5; Heb. xiii. 16; verb Gal. vi. 6; the verb Phil. iv. 15).
7. *The fellowship of incongruity* (2 Cor. vi. 14-18; verb 2 John 11; 1 Tim. v. 22).

The word for a person who has fellowship is *koinonōs*. It occurs in the following places:—

- Matt. xxiii. 30.—*Partakers*.
 Luke v. 10.—*Partners with Simon*.
 1 Cor. x. xviii.—*Partakers of the altar?*
 1 Cor. x. 20.—*Ye should have fellowship with*.
 2 Cor. i. 7.—*Ye are partakers of the sufferings*.
 2 Cor. viii. 23.—*He is my partner and fellow-helper*.
 Philem. 17.—*If thou count me therefore a partner*.
 Heb. x. 33.—*Companions*.
 1 Pet. v. 1.—*Partakers of the glory*.
 2 Pet. i. 4.—*Partakers of the divine nature*.

FULL-ASSURANCE.

THIS word—for it is one word, *plerophoria*—occurs four times in the New Testament. It refers to:—

1. *Full-assurance of mind*—1 Thes. i. 5, for giving the *mind* confidence.
2. *Full-assurance of faith*—Heb. x. 22, for giving the *conscience* peace.
3. *Full-assurance of understanding*—Col. ii. 2, for giving the *understanding* the full truth of the mystery of God.
4. *Full-assurance of hope*—Heb. vi. 11, for giving the heart an object and the life an aim. Our profession is nothing short of Christ in glory.

* * See also in this number "Notes of Readings on First Peter," "Notes on First Timothy," "Meditations on the Acts of the Apostles," and "The Kindness of God." All these will be of use in guiding you in your Scripture readings if there is no teacher present.

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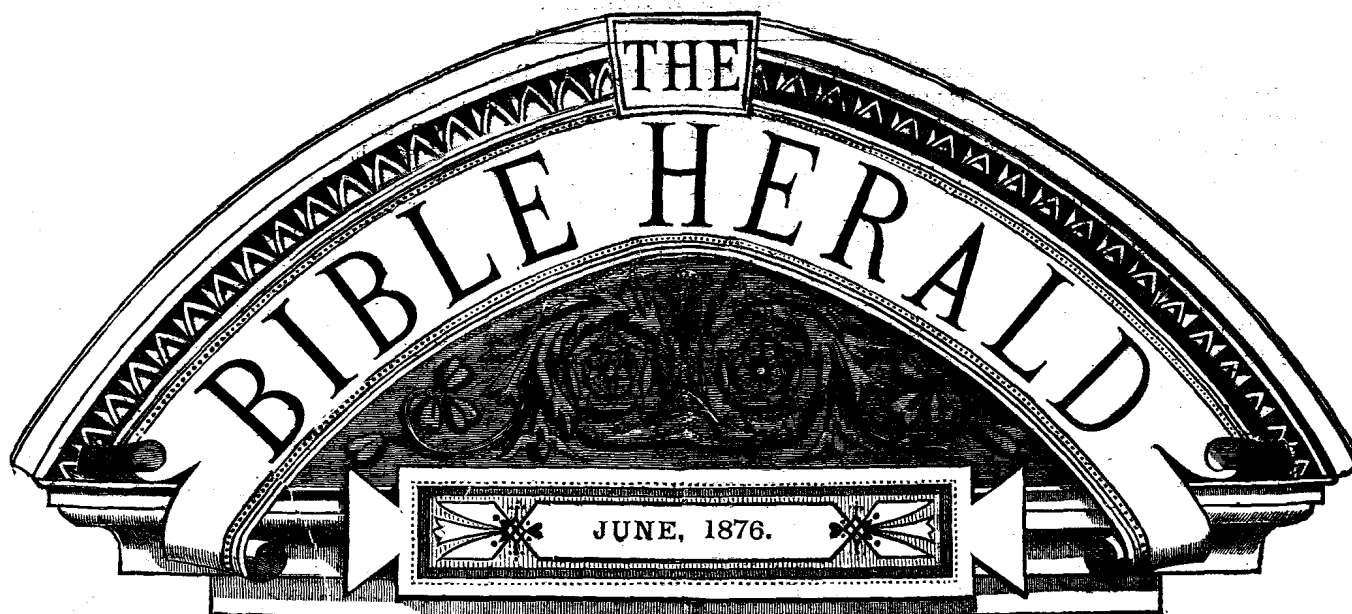
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2 COR. IV. 3-6.

[No. 6.

SHALL WE KNOW EACH OTHER IN HEAVEN?

Matt. xxii. 29.

Will there be no "recognition"
When we know as we are known?
When we meet, in full fruition,
Glorified, around the throne?
There each other's faces seeing,
(Bright with beauty all of grace);
Shall we not the former being,
In the new perfection trace?

Star from star, in varied glory
Set, distinguished—we shall shine.
Small and great rejoice before Thee,
Saviour-God! in light divine!
Full assurance Thou hast given
To the objects of Thy choice,
Writing all our names in Heaven
Ere we heard the Shepherd's voice.

Thou didst at Thy first creation
Call Thine every star by name,
For the heirs of Thy salvation,
Thou wilt more than do the same.
Individual is the story
Of Thy ways with every heart;
Here in grace, and there in glory,
Giving each his several part.

Oh, how brilliant the diffusion
There of the celestial light!
Past the shame of sin's confusion;
Past the shadows of the night!
Love in purest fervour burning,
Knowing neither let nor change,
Whilst, Thy counsels all discerning;
Saints Thy universe shall range.

Here, across our time-condition,
Heralding a future scene,
Flit the gleams of "recognition"
Where the Saviour's feet have been.
See him in transfiguration,
See those prophets marked by name;
Speaking, both, of God's salvation
Ere His Lamb, led forth, was slain!

Witness of the Christ's rejection,
Witness of the Father's care;
Lazarus, in resurrection,
Can Death's hidden things declare.
Mary, Martha, recognizing
Him whom Jesus put to sleep;
Is it to their faith surprising
Lazarus "by name" to keep?

VOL. I.—No. 6.

Was the "man in Christ," in Heaven,
Thence no longer known as "Paul?"
Did the crowning favour given,
Make God's former favour small?
Shall we doubt the "recognition,"
Each of all, around the Throne?
No! 'twill be complete fruition—
"We shall know as we are known!"

"GOD IS LIGHT."

THERE is nothing more dangerous than to use the word when it has not touched my conscience. I put myself into Satan's hands if I go beyond what I have from God, what is in possession of my soul, and use it in ministry or privately. There is nothing more dangerous than the handling of the word apart from the guidance of the Spirit. To talk with saints on the things of God beyond what I hold in communion is most pernicious. There would be a great deal not said, that is said, were we watchful as to this, and the word not so used in an unclean way. I know of nothing that more separates from God than truth spoken out of communion with God; there is uncommon danger in it.

RECKON YOURSELVES DEAD.

As long as I am alive I require food and clothing, but when I am dead I shall be wrapped in a shroud and put out of sight. I was alive in the flesh a few years since: this was my judicial standing before God as a member of the family of the first Adam. Then I fed and clothed the flesh, listened to its desires, and

pandered to its lusts; but I have died out of that standing—"I am crucified with Christ (Gal. ii, 20); and no longer live I, but Christ liveth in me." Now my standing is changed, Christ liveth in me, and I live in Him. I am introduced, through death and resurrection, into the family of "the last Adam, the Lord from heaven." The first Adam brought himself and his family under the curse of God; the last Adam removed the curse, and brought His family into eternal life and blessing. But have I nothing left, then, belonging to the first Adam? I do not see any visible change in my body; and, moreover, I still feel the strivings of an evil nature within. How is this? If I turn to Romans vi., 11th verse, I read, "*Reckon* ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." This little word "*reckon*" tells me that my death and resurrection are at present *judicial* only and not actual, else I should not be told to "*reckon*" myself dead. God looks at me as standing no longer in the flesh, or the first Adam, but "*in Christ*," the last Adam; and by faith I see my position as God sees it. But what about these strivings of the flesh which so harass the believer and mar his testimony for Christ? I am to "*reckon* myself dead," to keep self with its affections and lusts wrapped tightly in its shroud, not to heed its voice or pander to its desires; to treat it, in fact, as I would a corpse, give it nothing to feed upon, but bury it out of my sight and come away from it. Scripture tells me I

am not in the flesh but in the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 9), though the flesh is not yet *actually* dead, and as long as I remain here in the wilderness, it will "lust against the Spirit" (Gal. v. 17). But thanks be to God we who believe have this Spirit within us to strive against the flesh, and "greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world" (1 John iv. 4); "Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh" (Gal. v. 16). I must seek daily for spiritual food then that I may walk in the Spirit and "mortify the deeds of the body." The conflict is only for a little while. The bright resurrection morn will soon be here, then He who has brought us into this wonderful new standing and acceptance before God "shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God" (1 Thess. iv. 16), and in the twinkling of an eye He will "change these vile bodies, and fashion them like unto His own glorious body" (Phil. iii. 21). The flesh with its affections and lusts will be cast aside for ever, and there shall be no more death, neither crying, nor sorrow, nor pain (Rev. xxi. 4).

MEDITATIONS ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

(Translated from the Italian.)

CHAPTERS VI. AND VII.

BUT the flesh manifests itself in Christians, and the more so if their number be large. Now we find a new event happening; in the multitude, the power of faith and the fruits of the Spirit begin to grow feeblér. Love and confidence—love's constant companion—diminish; but at the same time, the strength of the Spirit found in the Apostles takes its stand against difficulty. And not only this, but an opportunity is given for securing greater regularity in the daily ministration of the assembly. The preaching of the word is separated from the care of the poor. In this case the Apostles desired that the people should choose those who might care for the widows. We shall see farther on that the Apostle Paul himself, with Barnabas, appointed elders, but, when it was a question of money, neither the twelve nor Paul would take any part in it, nor confound the divine service of the Word with the administration of the money furnished by the faithful. (1 Cor. xvi.)

The twelve desired to be occupied

only with the Word, and Paul would not charge himself with the money for the poor at Jerusalem, unless brethren appointed for this purpose were with him. But, although the flesh showed itself, the Spirit was enough to overrule circumstances. In the case of Ananias and Sapphira, this power, and the presence of the Spirit, is manifested in judgment against hypocrisy; here we find it seeking to make place in the assembly, producing order and right where danger of disunion was manifested in the midst of the disciples.

But another principle respecting the Holy Ghost, easy to believe, but often forgotten, is now made evident—His full liberty; as we read in 1 Cor. xii., "dividing to every man severally as He will." We have seen up till this moment the activity of the Apostles, established in their office by the Lord Himself, if we accept Matthias. We find now seven men, full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom, chosen by the people to serve at the tables where the distributions were made to the poor widows; and among these were two specially used by the Holy Ghost in the preaching of the Gospel; and, at this moment, Stephen. In 1 Tim. iii. 13, we find, "For they that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Stephen was already a man full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, but now his gift is unfolded. He does signs and wonders; even his adversaries could not resist the power and wisdom with which he spoke. The Holy Ghost here works freely as in Philip. He also was obliged to give up his office for the work of evangelisation, for he went to Samaria. By the liberty given by the Spirit, he is a minister of the Word, and not of the tables. It is a new phase of the work of grace and of the Spirit. We shall find still other proofs. It is a very important principle, the truth and force of which extend to the present day. They are not sent by the Apostles, but directly by God. It is the strength of the Holy Ghost that urges them to the work, consecration to Christ, and love of souls.

It seems, also, that Stephen had said more, and spoken more openly than Peter. The latter ever bore testimony to Israel's open opposition to God, for they had crucified Him whom God had exalted to His own right hand. We know not how Stephen spoke; but at all events he

gave rise to the accusation of having said that Jesus would destroy Jerusalem, and change the customs which Moses had established. Evidently he always preached Christ and His glory, as did Peter; but he said more—he warned the people of the consequences of their sin. Peter laid down the fundamental truth that shewed the state of the Jews before God. Stephen, taking lower ground, and speaking more familiarly, announces the consequences of non-repentance. Both testimonies were fully of God, and inspired, but differed in character.

The accusations being brought before the council, Stephen is seized, and forced to appear before the high priest and his accusers. To these there only remained enmity against God, and the power of death, for God allowed them to fulfil their purposes. But the occasion produces the magnificent defence of Stephen, indicating the position of the Jews with the utmost precision, and closing the history of humanity, of man before God here below. Before the flood, God bore testimony, but He established no institution. We have Abel, perhaps Adam, Enoch and Noah, godly men, but not one of them was the head of a race according to God; but after the flood, God began, in the new world, to found institutions for the government of the world, for the blessing of man, and to unfold truth and His ways.

At first, no promise was made to man. In the judgment pronounced on Satan, we find a prophecy of the final work of Christ, the object, by grace, of Adam's faith, and also of ours, the eternal Gospel; but God made no promises to the first man. But after the flood God began to unfold His ways. In Noah He established government in order to restrain violence. Then when man fell into idolatry (Josh. xxiv.), not only was he wicked, but he chose demons as the power of the world in place of God—God called Abraham to be for Himself, and the father of a race that He might on earth recognise as His, whether after the flesh or after the Spirit. The great principles of election, of calling, or of the promises are established. Then the law is given on Mount Sinai, by which man is put to the proof in a still more definite manner. Then, after long patience, in which prophets were sent to recall the people chosen according to the flesh, to the obedience of the law, and sustain the trust of the few faithful by the promise of the Messiah, God sent His only-begotten Son, His well-beloved, say-

ing, in the words of the parable, "They will reverence my Son;" but we know what happened. The history of man was finished on the cross. Not only had he sinned, but he had rejected grace when the Saviour had come.

Now they reject the testimony that spoke of a glorified Saviour, sent in virtue of His intercession on the cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." As we have seen, God replied to this intercession in the testimony of Peter and of the Apostles; and in the announcement by the Holy Ghost of a glorified Saviour, Him whom they had rejected; but, as we have again seen, they refused the testimony of the Holy Ghost by the mouth of the Apostles.

And here we have a kind of *resumé*, an explanation of their state, their history from the time of Abraham till that day. It is the history of man from the moment that God began His dealings with him—in the beginning, in giving the promise, whether to Israel or to Christ, the true offspring; then in the law, the prophets, and, finally, in Christ Himself. All this time the Spirit was working, and now especially, after Christ had been glorified in heaven, as we have seen. Stephen recounted this history—grace in the call of Abraham, what happened to Joseph and to Moses, wherein the Spirit worked and had been rejected by Israel; then the law violated at the outset in the calf of gold; then the prophets; then Christ himself; and, finally, the testimony of the Holy Ghost. They had broken the law, persecuted and put to death the prophets who had spoken of the coming of the Just One, of whom now they had become the betrayers and murderers. And more than this, they still resisted the Holy Ghost, as their fathers had always done.

All the dealings of God pass before our eyes: the law, the prophets, Christ, the Spirit. In all, the people are found in enmity against God. Meanwhile they confided in the temple, of which God had declared by the prophet that the Most High dwelt not in temples made with hands. Such is the history of Israel—of man. Conscience is hardened, will is unchanged in the Sanhedrim, and nothing but hate and opposition to the testimony of the Holy Ghost is revealed; their hearts are goaded to resistance, and to put the witness himself to death. They were unable to answer him; it was indeed their history, of which they so loudly

boasted—and what a history! Man always resists the testimony of the Spirit; and, if the conscience be stung, hatred breaks out violently against the witness.

On the other hand, we see a man, a Christian, full of the Holy Ghost, doubtless here manifested in a very special way; but that which was visible to Stephen is the object of faith for us. Mark first the perfect tranquility of the servant of Christ; with beautiful simplicity he tells a story familiar to all, a story, however, which carried with it the condemnation of the Jews. To reason with him was needless, for they could not deny the facts. Then, kneeling down quietly amid the stones which fell on him, he prays for his enemies. What moral power! How entirely it overcomes all circumstances, and displays the man of God in the presence of the fury of his adversaries!

But let us examine not only the character of Stephen's testimony against his enemies, but his own state. He is the embodiment of a man full of the Holy Ghost, and his enemies are the embodiment of men who resist the Spirit. First, heaven is opened to him; he is enabled to keep his eyes fixed on the heavens—touch-stone of the state of the soul—and sees the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. He saw indeed the glory of God, but does not speak of it; the new and blessed thing was that Man, in the person of the Son of God, stood there.

I believe that here He does not sit; because, until the Jews had refused the testimony of his glory, the Saviour was expecting to come back, according to the address of Peter. As soon as Stephen is slain, this testimony is at an end; and a single soul in heaven, the gathering of the spirits of the redeemed begins, which will continue till the Lord comes to reunite the bodies and spirits of His own, and bring them into heavenly glory. Thus, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is said that Jesus is set down at the right hand of God, expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. He sits now on the throne of the Father, and not yet on His own. This is what rouses the hatred and fury of the Jews. They cry out "blasphemy," and stone the witness of God, of the glory of Jesus.

For Stephen, heaven is opened, and Jesus is seen in divine glory; and this is what forms his soul in such a beautiful way into the likeness of Jesus. As He prayed for His enemies, so also Stephen prays for his; and as the Lord Jesus com-

mended His spirit to His Father, so Stephen exclaims, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." Not only does he pardon his enemies, but quietly kneels down to do so. The view of Jesus transforms the heart into His likeness. That which was seen by Stephen is the object of faith for us, made clearer by what happened to him.

NOTES OF READINGS ON THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

IV.

WE have reached chap. iv. 12, so we will read from that to the end. This Epistle, we find, maintains its own character to the very end, and as we have said, it is the Epistle of the *girdle* and the *lamp*, and, we may add to these, of the *furnace*, that being the symbol for trial; as the girdle is for holy self-government, and the lamp for hope.

When we come to look at the furnace, we get it in very large detail. In chap. i., it is shown you in the *general* way, "The trial of your faith;" but when he goes on, he shows you the *peculiar* heat of the furnace from day to day. In chap. iv., he shows us a heating of the furnace by martyrdom, and in the last chapter, by the direct assaults of Satan himself. It is very important to see what the Spirit is about here and there. When a writer shows me that he keeps his original intent in view, and is true to it from beginning to end, I say that man's heart is in his subject. In this Epistle it is eminently so. If we come to read the second Epistle, we shall not find anything of the kind as we have here. It is not a time of *suffering*, but a time of *seduction*, so that while the Spirit is true to His object, His subject may be very different at different times.

Now we see in chap. iv. 12, we are in the furnace as heated by the fires of *martyrdom*, not by the maintenance of integrity or holiness, but by direct putting to trial as the test of faithfulness to Christ. Then, "Count it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you." I have often said that a saint does not die a natural death, if he dies in his bed; because the saint is to be an unresisting witness against the world, and do you think the world will be insulted without resenting it? If we properly behaved ourselves as saints, we should die at the stake. "If any man *will live godly*"—not if any man is a saint, but "if any man *will live godly*—in

Christ Jesus—he must suffer persecution;” that is, if a saint will behave as a saint *ought* to behave. Therefore the Spirit says, “Do not count the fiery trial *strange*.” No, indeed; I may be very little prepared for it, but I do not count it *strange*. Pray what was the death of the Lord? He was a *martyr* as well as a *victim*. The world that crucified Him knew nothing of His victim character. They put Him to death just because they hated Him; and in that martyr character of the Cross it is that Paul gloried. “We preach Christ crucified.” I believe he meant the Cross fully understood, as the place where the *martyr* bled, and where the *victim* bled. Are you prepared to glory in the Cross as the place of rejection? Paul had communion with the Cross, as one in companionship with the *rejected* Christ. We want to have communion with it as those whose sins have been blotted out, and as those who are the companions of a rejected Christ.

Then we have spoken, again and again, of that which is *common* and that which is *peculiar* in Scripture. For instance—the glorification of the body is common property to me, and to all who are in Christ. Yet the New Testament abundantly tells us of that which is peculiar. We get it in Peter’s 2nd Epistle, where he speaks of the “abundant entrance.” Do you think that *that* is common property? Sohere. “That when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.” This is a thing peculiar to those who have known the fiery trial. What poor things we are! How little divine ambition we have! Will not it be something to rejoice before Him by-and-bye with exceeding joy? No, it is not common; *entrance* is common, but *abundant entrance* is not common.

So in the next, “The Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.” If at any time we suffer reproach for Christ, suppose we were just by a simple act of faith to say, “Is God now impressing on me some pledge of the coming glory?” These things stand out before us as living realities; should we read them as the flat page of the book?

Then in ver. 15, he shows out what we saw before in chap. iii., after speaking of the dignity and glory attaching to certain kinds of trouble. Now, he says, “Do not suffer as an evil doer.” We instanced Lot as having made trouble for himself. Do let us encourage one another to avoid self-wrought sorrow.

Then he enters on a very serious matter—judgment beginning at the house of God; and he asks, “What then shall the end be of those that obey not the Gospel of God?” This proves to me very much that the spirit of Peter was impregnated by Jewish associations. If you read the prophets you will find that God deals in that way. He begins His judgments with Israel for purifying; and ends with the Gentiles for destruction. “Though I make an end of all nations, yet not of you;” and again in Jer. xxv., where the prophet says, “I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my name, and shall ye be utterly unpunished?” That is judgment beginning at the house of God; and here the Spirit turns round and applies it to you. So Peter’s mind was eminently formed on a Jewish model. Well, it passes on to us, and I am perfectly sure that many a child of God, as soon as he is quickened, finds the hand of God dealing with him in a way it never was before. “For if the righteous scarcely” or *with difficulty* (that is through these purifying judgments), “be saved”—therefore, the beautiful close is, “Commit the keeping of your souls to Him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.” As much as to say, Do you believe, that God has re-created you for final destruction? No; but He purifies the vessels He has formed for Himself. That word “Creator,” there, is very beautiful. What were you created in Christ Jesus for? You were created for final glory. Though the vessel may pass through the potter’s hand in a certain skilful way, that which his hand was dealing roughly with in forming, the potter’s eye will rest on by-and-bye with satisfaction and delight.

Well, he tells the Elders to feed the flock of God. This is the first business of an Elder. The combination here is beautiful. When a teacher can stand out as a witness of the suffering of Christ, that is to be an Elder indeed. “Not for filthy lucre—neither as being lords over God’s heritage.” The Spirit of God has no eye for such nobility. There is no more attraction to Him in it, than in the seeker for filthy lucre. The two-edged sword does not spare corruption. And would you have your corruptions spared? Do not you rather say, “Make enquiry between joint and marrow, search me and try me.” I do not understand a saint of God wishing to have his corruption spared. Then there is something *peculiar*, “Ye

shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.” There is nothing more fruitful than to be looking into the world of glories. If now we want intimacy with the Lord Himself, we want, next to that, intimacy with His home. If we love a person, he himself is our first thought; our next is the things that surround him.

Then he comes to the girdle again, ver. 5; “Likewise ye younger submit yourselves unto the elder; *yea*, all of you be subject one to another.” He will have the girdle on *every one*. The flight his spirit takes here is beautiful. He could not be satisfied with telling only the *younger* to submit themselves; “*Yea*, all of you put it on.”

Then in ver. 6 there is another form of humbling. We are not merely to humble ourselves to one another, but to humble ourselves “under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time; casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you.” That reminds me of Joseph. He treated his brethren roughly enough; he kept them in hold for a day and a night. Yet all the time his heart was yearning over them and taking a very different direction from what his hand was doing. So God has a mighty hand which seems to be pressing you, but all the time His heart is making your sorrow its care. And there is the deepest consistency in a mighty hand working in company with a careful heart.

Verse 8 opens the furnace for the last time. There it is heated by the devil, who “as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” What are you to do with this? Be sober, be vigilant, resist the devil, take (as Paul tells you) the shield of faith to quench these fiery darts, that come at times we know not from where. Hold up the shield of faith. As that fine hymn says, “What though the accuser roar of ills that I have done;” and then the answer, “I know them all and thousands more, Jehovah findeth none.” Then he beautifully closes. “The God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.” The doubt here attaches not to God being the God of all grace, or to His having called us to eternal glory, but to the strengthening. He prays that we may have grace so to use the furnace, that we may find it strengthening. That God is a God of all grace, is an

eternal verity; and that He has called us to eternal glory. But there is a condition attached to this; whether by being thrown into the furnace, we shall come out perfected, established, strengthened.

"By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you as I suppose." Silvanus was a constant companion of Paul. "Paul and Silvanus and Timotheus unto the Church," etc. Peter does not pretend to know more of him than he does; and he speaks of him, not at all in the way Paul would, who knew him better.

"The thing in Babylon." What! is it possible that Peter, who represented the circumcision, can for a single moment strike alliance with Babylon, the sworn enemy of Jerusalem. Ah! this is the true grace in which we stand. For this age Jerusalem has lost its sanctity, and Babylon has lost its apostacy.

Then he says: "Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen."

It is a deep and precious Epistle, true to itself, keeping constantly before our souls the furnace, the girdle, and the lamp. Ah! we are rebuked. The Lord teach us, strengthen us, and help us to get a little bit outside the camp, and blessedly, sweetly, inside the veil! Amen.

RIGHTEOUSNESS IN SECOND PETER.

2 Pet. i. 1-2

Peter calls himself a bondsman as well as an Apostle of Jesus Christ. He is going to speak of those who cannot bear any to have authority over them; but unlike such, it is his joy to look up to Jesus Christ as the one who has absolute right to his every faculty. This indeed lies nearer to his heart than ever did his Apostleship, and so comes out first.

The righteousness referred to here has been identified with what theologians call "the active obedience of Christ," that is, his meeting the full requirements of the law during his life, which surely he did, and of which we assuredly get all the benefit. Those who do not see that the Lord Jesus gave Himself for us "to take us out of this present evil age," think about a redemption which, as it finds them "living in the world," leaves them so; and, as the justification they need must be suited to persons in that condition, it seems to them that the legal obedience of Jesus Christ while not

yet dead is so suited to be their justifying righteousness that it could have no other use or end. Thus, it has come to pass with so many that "baptised into the death of Christ" means only washed; and, as washing is indicated simply by using water, and not by the quantity used, or by the manner of using it, it is all one whatever way you take, even though it should be one quite different from that indicated in Scripture. Thus also, being "dead to sin" merely means being forgiven, though here Calvin differs from those that bear his name in our day. In this way the proper force of redemption has been lost, and a Christ in flesh for the benefit of the world is preached, rather than a Christ risen and glorified who loved the Church and gave Himself for it.

It is not that the cross is denied, or even not preached, but rather that it is made of none effect. Incarnation and the work therein are, by that systematising which ever strives to bring revealed truth into a mere human order, made so prominent as to thrust backwards from notice the force of the decess which was the subject of conversation in the glory on the Mount. And even when the value of the blood is in a good degree declared, yet the force of its *shedding* is not seen. In effect, life in the world is retained, and whereas it is said in Scripture, "*likewise* reckon yourselves also to be *dead* indeed unto sin," such theology says, reckon Christ to have died for you so as that you are *not* dead. No wonder that, contradicting the word here, it should contradict it again when it tells us that there is nothing so sure as death except judgment!

Searching Scripture to support such a notion of justifying righteousness, this passage has been pressed into service, there being a feeling of dearth; and hence this notice seemed called for. But it is obviously here a question of obtaining not righteousness but faith; and as they own faith to be merely the hand that takes the righteousness, there is surely a great difference between a man with no hand getting one, and one who, having a hand, grasps something with it.

And again, looking at the three other occurrences of the word in this epistle, the two in his first epistle, and where he employs it in Acts x. 35, we find that Peter always uses it, not in what is called its forensic sense, but practically; that is, not to describe relationship or condition, but character or conduct. What grace is indicated here! Sin-

ful sons of men obtaining so great a boon, and that too in the righteousness of God! And if our Saviour Jesus Christ be associated, this is in perfect keeping not only with the intrinsic dignity of His Person, but with the special character of the epistle which has for its object to shew the doom of those who deny His supreme Lordship.

V. 3-4. It is not merely that all things pertaining to life and godliness have been given freely, but they have been given by *power*, so that they may be actualised. And this is by the knowledge of God as calling us by glory and virtue, for it is thus that the Christianity of Scripture knows God, and not merely as proclaiming peace.

Virtue, used once by St. Paul and thrice by St. Peter, means moral courage or energy. It is applied to God in 1 Pet. iv. 9, and there also in connection with God as calling us. What it conveys as used of Him will be better understood as we increase in His knowledge. It is not in redemption as it was in creation—plastic power over matter, or even making man a living soul; but in corruption, in moral ruin, we get deliverance by the moral perfections of God; and thus He whose Almightiness prostrates us with awe, by excellency as transcendent as His power, commands that willing adoration of the whole inward being which is its highest blessedness. It is by moral energy (shall we say, by moral courage?) He meets our case. He comes so near to us though in such a state! Surely the more we know Him, and the more we know redemption, the more shall our loving adoration be called forth.

The object for which these "greatest" promises are given is very generally forgotten. God's promises are for the most part regarded as merely morsels of comfort in the midst of inevitable sorrows. But as the sorrows are not there merely because they are inevitable, so these greatest promises have a far higher end than comforting, and for that reason comfort all the more. That object is not to restore us to the state of innocence which indeed is absurd; for innocence is ignorance of evil, and it never can be true of us that we never sinned. Such a notion, however, is and must be held in the confused darkness that looks upon the Christian as one "living in the world;" for where "the old" is clung to, redemption can only be regarded as setting it up, not setting it aside, however high the language held about the new accompanying im-

provements. But something is given us far better than innocence which may be lost, viz., a standing in Divine righteousness, and along with that what is set before us here—participation in the divine nature. We are not made gods certainly; but the words are “divine nature.” It is to be taken morally. We judge and feel as God judges and feels. Hence the transcendent moral worth which is associated with glory in our calling is the first quality we are to add to our faith. Seen in its infinity in God it draws out our heart’s deep and blissful worship. How could it do so—how could we see its excellency if we were not partakers therein?

It is through lust that corruption has come in. Man desired and took what God had withheld from him. The heart had already sought what was not God. There was independence and a craving for things created. Thus it is now man’s nature to covet, that is, being turned from God, to be always craving for more than he has got. But having been made partakers of the divine nature, we are turned to God, and the desires are for Him, His will is our delight, and independence of Him would be the sum of all horrors. And what demands the gravest consideration is, that between this and the corruption there is no third thing, as between condemned and justified there is no neutral position. It is in vain to speak of escape from the world’s doom if there be no escape from its corruption, and that is enjoyed only in being made partakers of the divine nature.

MARY.

LUKE x. 38-42. JOHN xi., xii.

She sat, withdrawn, at Jesus’ feet:
Was with Him in His own retreat:
Himself beheld and heard.
She learnt what He came forth to do—
The Father’s Only One and True;
The Everlasting Word.

“One thing is needful.” Mary’s heart
Drank in that good, eternal part.
She hung upon His voice.
His path, His steps would she attend?
Her Shepherd, Guardian, Saviour, Friend
Therein confirms her choice.

He bid her live what He had said:
Bid storm-clouds darken o’er her head.
The Lord!—Where is He now?
Far, far from sight. To Mary, near;
Her Lazarus to Him so dear
That Death his frame must bow.

“Beyond the Jordan” Jesus passed;
There dwelt, to come again at last,
In power the lost to save.
He answered thence the mourner’s cry;
“He whom I love, I use, must die;
Must learn Me by the Grave.”

Death shadows Bethany. But still
For Mary, in the Father’s will,
Is solace as before.
“He knoweth all.” “He loveth well.”
“Earth’s many waters rise and swell:”
“He liveth evermore!”

He comes! He suffers Martha’s haste
His own thrice-precious words to waste;
All lost they seem to be.
And yet those pearls are strung again
By Love’s own fingers, and remain
Faith’s priceless legacy.

And Mary, quickly, at the call—
“He calls thee,” rose—arose to fall—
Falls down His feet beside.
She came unto Him; saw Him; wept:
“Hadst thou been here, Lord, ere he slept,
My brother had not died.”

“Where have ye laid him?” Jesus wept!
He who the keys of Hades kept,
Since first death came by sin.
He who, by agonies and blood,
Would bear the Judgment; own His God;
Spoil Death; destroy its sting.

“Father, I thank Thee!” Jesus said;
Then, speaking to awake the dead,
With mighty voice He cried,
“Come forth!” and Lazarus, the same
Who saw corruption, called by name,
Came, with Him to abide.

Nor quickened only. Raised, released
He sits with Christ: shares thus the feast:
Is with Him in His fame.
But Mary, having felt what woe
Attends the Sent One’s path below,
Bears witness to His name.

The House is with one fragrance filled,
From God’s most costly Plant distilled,
Through grace to Mary given.
She pours the ointment on “His feet,”
So beautiful to God, so meet
To traverse Earth and Heaven!

THE CAMP AS IT WAS AND WILL BE, AND CHRISTIANITY AS DISTINCT FROM EITHER.

THE Scriptures read were Lev. xvi. 27, and Heb. xiii. 10-14.

Second Peter, chap. iii., gives us the outline of God’s dealings with creation in three divisions. There are the heavens and the earth *that were*, which have been destroyed by water—the flood; the heavens and the earth which are now, which are reserved unto fire; and the future, or the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. These will last for ever.

We are not to speak of the heavens and the earth which have been, nor of those which are to be, but of the heavens and the earth which now are. With these we have specially to do, and we find them again divided into three distinct parts:—the camp that was established on earth, embracing the days of Judaism; the camp that will be, spoken of in Rev. xx. 9; and Christianity, which comes in between these periods. It is with it we have to do—not with the camp as it was, nor as it will be. We are in the days of Christianity.

Scripture is most plain in defining these things, and if one is but simple and obedient, he may know the truth and how to walk in it.

I will now seek to trace the establishment of the camp as it was, when God set it up at first—i.e., of the system or order of things, technically called Judaism (Gal. ii. 14). Leaving the false religious systems which man has built up may be mistaken for “going outside the camp;” but when the camp was first instituted, it was not a false human system, but a divine one. The camp was then the only right, the only blessed place on earth, so that the thought of leaving the systems of man for liberty of ministry or the like, does not necessarily touch the kernel of the truth. For you may leave all these and carry with you the spirit of the thing you profess to leave, and rear it up again in your very midst. The camp was the proposition by a God-given machinery for the improvement of the first man—man in the flesh. The camp was God’s meeting-place with man in the flesh. Christ is now the only meeting-place between God and man; but it is with the Christian, and not with man in the flesh. The history of man in the flesh came to an end in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. God’s dealings with him are over, and it is unto Jesus we go forth—the man on the other side of death: who was in death, but is now in glory. God now only recognises Christ the second man. It is outside the camp you meet Him. He “suffered without the gate” (Heb. xiii. 12). Christianity has reference to Christ and to man *in the spirit*, not in the flesh in any way. The apostle says, “Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more” (2 Cor. v. 16). The flesh therefore must be ignored by the one who goes forth unto Jesus outside the camp.

Let us look at the camp as instituted by God at the first. What was it then, and what has its history been? As instituted by God it was beautiful, but in man’s hands it became horrible. It was the most beautiful place—a scene of beauty and order, and designed to be so by God. To prove this I refer you to Num. v. 2, 3, “Command the children of Israel, that they put out of the camp every leper, and every one that hath an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead: that they defile not their camps, *in the midst of which I dwell.*” Then in Deut. xxiii. 10, we have fuller instruction as to the

character to be maintained in the camp. "If there be among you *any* man that is not clean, then shall he go abroad out of the camp, he shall not come within the camp: for the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp; therefore shall thy camp be holy; that He see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee." If obedient to this the Lord promised to deliver the children of Israel from their enemies (verses 9-14). The camp was the dwelling-place of God and His parade ground. God walked there, so there must not be a speck of defilement in the camp; and if purity had been maintained, this Scripture tells what God would have been to Israel. The camp was the place where God, so to speak, took man in hand, to train him, and prove if by a Divine institution and His own commandments anything could be made of man. The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ tells what the result of this trial was. The Jews, spite of all these privileges, preferred the robber Barabbas to the Son of God.

The first break-down in the camp we find recorded in the 32nd chapter of Exodus. When Israel made a calf of gold and worshipped it as God, Aaron, that he might be a popular man, fell in with the desire of the people. Man's will worked—that was the root of the evil—the foundation of everything went, and Israel dishonoured God *in toto*. Instead of the command, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve," the word went through the camp, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt." This was the break-down before God, and "the Lord plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made," but His mercy endured towards Israel, and Moses proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin;" and thus the system was kept going. God by this means kept the camp together in order to show that, with man in the flesh, nothing could be done. Corruption and failure went on till, in Amos iv. 10, we read, "I have made the stink of your camps to come up unto *your* nostrils." It had done so in the nostrils of God in Ex. xxxii.; but in Amos iv. the wickedness is so great that it is abhorrent to the very people who corrupted it. There is no capacity in man to recover himself. You may put a fine gloss upon corruption, but that does

not remove the root of the evil. It is there still. Man in the flesh is utterly bad; death must be his portion, through death recovery by Christ. The death of Christ has ended the history of the first man, and out of His death has arisen the man that can bear fruit to God. Israel's fall was complete, but they would not own it, nor turn to God. Had they done so, He would have had mercy on them and set them right. They were a stiff-necked people. He gave them laws, and said if they would do them they should live in them, but it was to no purpose. There was no good in man, nor any ability to do good. It is the same still; and if God has failed to improve man in the flesh, need we spend time trying to do so. Christianity begins with Christ the second man. His death ended the first man, and death must be written on the flesh and all its workings by those who believe in Him and go forth unto Jesus now.

But the camp will again be set up. Of this we read in Rev. xx. 9. Then the camp will stand and not fall as did the camp of Israel. Though even then it will not be a perfect order of things, yet integrity will be maintained by the manifested glory of Christ, not by the beauty or perfection of man in the flesh. For a thousand years it will be so, and then Satan will again come and seek to destroy the camp. Speedily he carried his point in the camp of Israel, but when he comes with all the strength he can command against "the camp of the saints," he will himself be destroyed. The glory of Christ will be the victory that day.

There are two verses in Lev. xvi. which reveal to us the means by which God could keep the camp of Israel going, after it had broken down before Him. We should not have been able to tell their meaning had not the Spirit of God interpreted them for us in Heb. xiii. On the great day of Atonement, Aaron offered the bullock and the goat for the sin-offering *without the camp*, and their blood was brought into the holy place. The verses I refer to are the 27th and 28th of Lev. xvi., and, but for this ordinance, the whole Jewish system would have collapsed from its first failure. It was a failing system, but kept together by virtue of that which took place *outside* the camp. This went on till the antitype of the bullock and goat of the sin-offering, the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; and as the saving ordinance, whose efficacy affected all the camp of Israel, was offered outside the camp, so the Lord

Jesus, the antitype of this, "suffered outside the gate." That which preserved the camp in its existence, was an act done outside its precincts, and it pointed to Him who should suffer the cursed death on the cross, that death which is to be the basis of everything when righteousness will reign in the camp of the saints, and the glory of the Second Man, the Lord from heaven, will be manifested. Am I then to go back to that system which has come to an end (Heb. ix. 26), or reintroduce principles and shadows which found their fulfilment in the cross *thereon* and the work of Christ? Heb. xiii. 12.

Christianity gives us a heavenly, not an earthly, order of things. The cross of Christ is the end of the system that was, and through it are introduced the things that now are. It puts me outside the camp and all its types, but it puts me also inside the veil, where Jesus is, who died on the cross. It is with Christ, in the glory of God, I have to do. I am by the Holy Ghost linked up with Him.

You may try revivalism, teetotalism, anything you like, but these have to say to the first man. You will find all such things fail. Do not seek to recover the man God has ceased to deal with, on whom death is stamped and not recovery. God went fully into all that which people are now in vain seeking to do. He used a divine system when He made trial of man, and it failed. Will you succeed better, when you have only human means at your command? You must fail, and the sooner you believe it the better. You must begin at the cross of Christ, and from thence go on with Christ and Christianity.

Christianity begins with Him who glorified God on the cross, and by whom God was more glorified as to sin than if sin had never been in the world. As a Christian, I am outside the camp with Jesus, the One who suffered for sin without the gate. I must bear His reproach. There must be reproach. I must share Christ's fortunes. If I am linked with His glory, I must accept His rejection. From man, or for man in the flesh, I must seek nothing. But is this the spirit of the Church in general at this moment? The moral features of apostacy which crept into the Jewish camp until it reached the picture in Amos iv. 10 (2 Thes. ii.), are flagrant now in Christianity. They exist in the generation that is, as they did in the generation that's past (Ps. lxxviii). You may call the people Jewish or Christian, it is all the same—you find similar principles

at work. The professing Church has not set aside that which God judged on the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The first man is rampant even in Evangelicalism: God's judgment on man in the flesh is not accepted by it as a system. The forgiveness of sins they are glad to have, and this gives peace of conscience—but this is not holiness. Nothing will give holiness but that which sets the flesh aside and brings in Christ. In Rom. v. you have forgiveness, but there is not a word about holiness; but in Rom. vi., where death with Christ is brought out, you find holiness enforced. "He that is dead is freed from sin." "Let not sin reign in your mortal body." "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead." "Yield your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." It is important to see that, till death is accepted, and self seen to have no place, there cannot be holiness; happiness there may be, but Christianity is more than that. "It is *Holiness*, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. xii.) It does not say, without happiness. There should be happiness, but holiness is the thing that is sought. God looks for this in His people, and it is inseparably linked up with the acceptance of death on self and the workings of the flesh.

Let us now see how the Church departed from this line, and how failure came in.

In Acts xv. 5, there is manifestly the desire to bring in that which recognised the flesh as having place in the things of God. It was *believers* who did the mischief. "Then rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees *which believed*, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses." It was Gentile Christians upon whom those burdens were imposed; but how does the apostle act with reference to the proposal? Verses 10 to 19 show. He treats it as seeking to subvert their souls. The departure began with the introduction of that which was Mosaic—adding Moses to Christ; and to add thus was to spoil. This could not be tolerated by the apostle; but mark, it was *believers* who did it, and it is believers to-day who are diverted from the simplicity that is in Christ. The Epistle to the Galatians shows how the evil worked, and in what strong language it was condemned. It is even called another gospel, this mixing up of Moses and Christ. It is this spirit we have to watch against in our own day. The little sprout

soon grows into a luxuriant branch. You may say there is no fear, but there is every cause to fear. If you fear, then there is no fear; but if you do not fear, you will fall most certainly. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." "Our God is a consuming fire." Moses' God was not so pre-eminently. Hebrews xii. (22-29) does not end with the blood that speaketh better things than that of Abel, but it goes on to the shaking of all things and the consuming fire. He is set on the destruction of that which is sown in the flesh. "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." It is the fashion in some places to give out that Christianity is for the sinner, and thus God is forgotten; but God has His part in Christianity. The sinner is blest most surely, but it is the goodness of God he is brought to share. It is the glad tidings of the love of God's heart that goes forth. The prodigal hears them, and he is brought to feed with God upon His food. It is God's food that is shared—God must not be forgotten. The whole of the fat, the excellent part of the offering, was for God. Let us then take heed lest we spoil that which God looks for as His part in Christianity. It was the Pharisees who believed who led the vanguard of defection in Acts xv.; and in Gal. ii. it is an apostle who dissembled and led another to do the same. Peter had given up Judaism, and yet he sought to carry the Gentile converts back to it. Paul withstood him to the face. These early records of Christianity need not surprise us, for we see the same thing occurring now. It requires the continuous energy of the Spirit of God to go on. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." It may be a difficult thing to put right, but it is not less difficult to keep right. The enemy is ever on the watch, and we are so unsteady. We get a glimpse of Christ for a moment, but strength lies in having Him ever as "the mark" before us. To this we are called. To have the eye ever and only on Christ. With the Apostle Paul it was so. "I press toward the mark for the prize of the calling on high" (Phil. iii.) Peter was losing this singleness of heart and aim, and he was leading others with him; but the reproof entered his soul. Paul stands out as the only one who maintained the glory of Christ against those who would have brought in with Him something else.

In Gal. iv. 9, we read, "How turn ye *again* to the weak and beggarly elements wherunto ye desire *again*

to be in bondage" (Gal. iv. 9). It was to Gentiles who had professed Christianity the apostle spoke thus, "Why turn ye *again*?" but it was Gentileism they left! Now they were adding Jewish principles to their profession of Christ, and the apostle classes it as a return to heathenism—"again—*anew*." "If ye be circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing." The introduction of that which was of the camp into Christianity, or seeking to improve the first man, is that which forms the camp now which we have to beware of.

Col. ii. 1 shows how earnestly the apostle desired the saints might be preserved from all that savoured of the camp, and grow up fully into the full truth of Christianity, "I would ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea; that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the *full assurance of understanding*, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, *in which* are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." They had doubtless the full assurance of faith, and of hope; but what they needed, that they might stand in the truth of Christianity, was the *full assurance of understanding*, the full knowledge of the mystery of God—*i.e.*, the present connection of the saint with Christ. It is the knowledge of the mystery alone that will keep one out of evil now. In the 2nd chapter of Colossians we find that by which we may be carried off the true ground of Christianity, or, as it is expressed, "made a spoil of." When the sportsman has made the game his own, he takes it off the field and carries it home, and so the enemy of Christ now seeks to lead souls from simple occupation with Christ. Thus they become his prey, and are taken from the ground of Christianity, and that ends in apostasy and infidelity.

There are two highways which lead from the profession of Christianity to that of open infidelity. These are rationalism and ritualism—or, in other words, the philosophy of the mind of man in the flesh, and the religiousness of his nature. These two will bring in the apostasy of the last days. There are many Christians, and true believers too, who have not the knowledge of the "mystery." They have been made a spoil of, and are not really on the ground of Christianity. Clever men there are amongst them, who can lecture well and preach beautifully; but it is the mind and wisdom of the first man that is at work in all that is short of Christianity. It is

not Christ simply, nor the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which are hid in the mystery of God. All real knowledge, all spiritual teaching, is linked up with the truth of the mystery. That which is popular to-day is not coupled with bearing His reproach who suffered outside the gate. It is unto Jesus, *outside* the camp, we are to go forth. The spirit of the camp cannot be added to Christ. The shadows which pointed to Him must not again be brought in. Now we have the substance—"The body is of Christ." We no longer need the shadow: the fulfilment is ours in Him who is the Head in heaven of His body, of which we are on earth the members. To know the connection between the members of His body with Christ the Head in heaven, and to walk as such, was the truth which the Colossian saints were in danger of losing. We stand in danger now of letting it slip from us. The word of God must be allowed to judge us, and not the reason of man. "Let no man judge you," says the apostle. Do not be made a spoil of. Let not the enemy carry you off divine ground. Christ the Head in heaven, and man in the Spirit, is the truth you have to maintain. Seek grace to walk in the power of that. What characterised Judaism is that which we must avoid. "Beware lest your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." If dead with Christ, you are out of the old thing—you are risen with Christ, and you must not revive that which has now no place in the Divine presence. Your standing is in Christ in heaven, and in the Spirit on earth. You have now to do with the things where Christ is, and to "walk in newness of life."

From 2 Thess. ii. we learn that there is to be an apostacy, and not a wide-spread reception of the gospel of Christ. There will be the abandonment of even the profession of Christianity before the ushering in of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, or, in other words, before the establishment of the millennium. Such is not the general belief, but it is what Scripture plainly teaches. "That day shall not come except there be a falling away first" (2 Thess. ii. 3). What, then, are we to do? Verse 15 tells us—"Stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle." Remember what the Apostle Paul has said. Hold to the truth of the mystery, and to "the full assurance of understanding therein."

In Ezekiel we see, chap. xliii., the

camp will again be reinstated on the earth; and you ask, what about the sin-offering then? It will be offered, but not *outside* the camp, as in Lev. xvi. Christ will then be the centre of all things. "In the dispensation of the fulness of times, He (God) will gather together in one all things in Christ." The camp will be under the sway of the Lord Jesus, then the acknowledged Messiah of Israel, and the savour of His name will spread to earth's utmost bounds.

Divine order in the camp will be maintained by the presence of the glory of Christ; and the bullock and goat of the sin-offering, *commemorative* of Him who suffered the sacrifice for sin outside the gates of Jerusalem, will be offered *in* the house, outside the most holy place, in the appointed place (Ez. xliii. 21).

This seems in keeping with the place Christ will then have as Head and Centre of all things. Still even the millennium is not a final and perfect order of things. It belongs only to the second great division of 2 Pet. iii. The new heavens and new earth are beyond it; and so, it would seem, the sin-offering, while offered *in* the house, is still without the sanctuary. In Rev. v. 6, we get further on, for the Lamb as it were slain, is in the midst of the throne, and of the four beast and of the elders. The centre and support of the whole system of divine glory is Himself, my title to be there.

The pillar and support of the millennial camp will be the Divine glory of the Lord Jesus Christ; but we are in the days of Christianity, and it is unto Jesus, who suffered without the gate, that we go forth. In fellowship with His rejection, we bear His reproach.

THE MYSTERY OF PIETY.

THERE are certain lines of truth traced out in different epistles of the New Testament, and the student, versed in the general tenure of God's word, will know where to turn for special instruction on certain subjects. We mean not, however, that Scripture truth is arranged as a dictionary, or like a formal treatise on theology; but epistles were written to meet certain errors, by presenting the truth specially suited for those saints, for whose profit they were in the first instance penned by the apostles. Of this Jude is an example, who, when wishing to write of the common salvation, was led to warn Christians of apostacy, the germs of which had already appeared in their midst.

But, besides being able to mark the distinctive character of an epistle, there are at times, as is natural, certain terms met with in one or more of these divine communications, which are, as it were, keynotes to the matter in hand. Thus in Romans, which treats at length of justification, we become familiar with the word *righteousness* (*δικαιοσύνη*), which recurs again and again in its pages. If we peruse the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, which unfold the mystery of the Christ in its two parts—He the head, His people the members of His body—we find pretty frequently the word "*body*" (*σῶμα*), which elsewhere is met with but three times in that same connection (Rom. xii. 5; 1 Cor. x. 17; xii. 27). Again, in the 1st Epistle to Timothy, which teaches us how individuals should behave in the house of God, a word, *εὐσέβεια*, *godliness* or *piety*, not often met with in other apostolic writings, is in this one repeatedly kept before us (1 Tim. ii. 2; iii. 16; iv. 7, 8; vi. 3, 5, 6, 11). Piety, then, it is clear, is most important, and a Christian desirous of serving his Master must by no means neglect it.

What, then, is piety, as dwelt on by the Apostle? It is a reverence for God, which is operative in its character. It is not righteousness, or faith, or charity, or patience, or meekness, or gravity, or brotherly love. It is, viewed by itself, distinct from all these, yet can be combined with each and all of them (1 Tim. ii. 2, vi. 11; 2 Peter i. 6, 7; Titus ii. 12). To live piously in Christ Jesus will expose such as do it to persecution (2 Tim. iii. 12), so it is clearly regarded as something hostile to the world, not because it is inimical to man's best interests, but because it really judges those who do not practise it. Hence Christians are exhorted to pray for all men, for their rulers, etc., that they may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty, or gravity (1 Tim. ii. 2). This piety must not, however, be sacrificed to secure tranquility of existence, nor is the believer to neglect its acquirement; for, being essentially practical in its nature, Timothy, and surely every Christian, is expected to exercise himself unto it (1 Tim. iv. 7, 8). Again, there is a teaching which is according to piety (1 Tim. vi. 3), and there is a teaching which, professing to have godliness in view, leads its scholars along a very different road (1 Tim. iv. 1-5). How wily is the enemy, ensnaring souls through leading them for gain to profess godliness

in this world, and to have the form of it whilst denying its power (1 Tim. vi. 5; 2 Tim. iii. 5). Appearances, however, will not do for God, though they may, and that successfully, hoodwink men.

Form without power, doctrine without practice, are very different from true Christian godliness, which must be in accord with sound doctrine, and in harmony with the full knowledge *ἐπίγνωσις* of truth, which is according to godliness (Titus i. 1). No wonder, then, that the Apostle insists on it; and though he could, and did, write of dispensational truth, and dwelt on the person of Christ, and of what flows from His atoning death, he did not end his epistolary labours without inculcating the practical side of Christian teaching—piety, which has the promise of life that now is, and of that which is to come (1 Tim. iv. 8). Dispensational teaching is most needful; the truth of our standing in a risen Christ every Christian should learn, and most jealously retain: but godliness is equally necessary; so the same Apostle, who especially teaches the former, also dwells on the latter. And this fact is instructive; for men are apt to be contracted in their views, and narrow in their teaching, holding tenaciously to certain doctrines, which they cannot, indeed, too carefully guard, but neglecting others which are essential likewise. Hence schools of doctrine arise, tending to create and perpetuate divisions amongst the members of the one Body of Christ. Very different was it, however, with Paul, who was led to take a large and comprehensive view of the range of Christian truth, ever desirous to lead souls, if able for it, into teaching fitted for saints who have grown up to manhood (Heb. vi. 13), but never forgetting, or thinking lightly of the outflow of Christian life in practice. With him the teaching of the deepest truths was in perfect keeping with the inculcating of religion in common life. So, in the same Epistle, in which he expatiates on the mystery of the Christ, he reminds a converted thief that he should cease from his old evil propensity.

And here, writing in all freedom to his own child in the faith, familiar doubtless with the apostle's teaching, and one in whom he had the greatest confidence (Philip. ii. 20), Paul reminds him of the importance of piety. Had he been addressing a young convert, just fresh from the pollutions of heathenism, or instructing a neophyte as to what was consistent with Christian profession, all

would have understood the propriety of his calling attention to the practice of godliness. It was not so, however. Timothy is the one here addressed, who as a child had been carefully educated by his mother in the written revelation of God, and whose walk, from the commencement of his Christian life, had been decided, and was well reported of by those with whom from the first he had consorted (2 Tim. iii. 15, Acts xvi. 1, 2).

And further, the line of teaching, on which the apostle enlarges in the First Epistle to Timothy, is well fitted for calling attention to this subject. For Paul does not here dilate on dispensational truth, but writes of God as the Creator and Saviour (1 Tim. iv. 10, ii. 3). Hence relationship to Him as His children is not developed in this letter, though the truth of it is recognised in the salutation at its commencement (1 Tim. i. 2). And the exhortations are based on the ground that it is God with whom we have to do. If he speaks of the Gospel, he styles it the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God. If of salvation, he reminds Timothy of the Saviour-God, who will have all men to be saved, between whom and man there is one Mediator, the Man Christ Jesus. The Church, or assembly, Timothy is reminded, belongs to the living God. It is also His house, who provides as well for the wants of His creatures. Before God, too, or in the sight of God, Timothy is solemnly charged to be faithful, and active in the ministry entrusted to him. God then being so frequently introduced, and Timothy being reminded how he should behave in God's house, it does seem a suitable opportunity for insisting on that *well-directed reverence*, as *εὐσεβεία* translated *piety*, simply means, which is operative in its character, and should certainly characterise every servant of the living and Saviour God.

But so far the heathen would be in accord with the Christian, for he too would inculcate piety, as that which befitted man in his relations with those he called gods. The piety, however, of which this epistle to Timothy treats, is a plant of peculiar growth, and, to keep up the metaphor, is never met with outside the zone of the assembly of God. For the well-directed reverence of which Paul writes, has the living and true God for its object, and practical conformity to His mind as its end, thus sweeping away as a cobweb all thought of man's attaining to it by following in the footsteps

of the ancients, or by sitting down as a disciple to drink in the teaching of a religion, which may boast of having grown hoary with age, ere Christianity was first preached amongst men. Now, were it some abstruse teaching on one or more peculiar points to which the Apostle would direct us, men might pass on without concerning themselves about it, leaving it to be investigated by the curious, or by those who had leisure and intellectual ability for such a task. But the question of piety, which is pre-eminently and essentially practical, the duty, too, of cultivating which even a heathen would admit, and the want of which amongst men all must acknowledge, cannot be summarily dismissed; for it should certainly be the concern of every man upon earth, who acknowledges the existence of the Deity. Now, if Christianity alone can rightly teach it, all these religions tried by this one test are condemned, as found wanting.

Is it then really so? Must we come to this, that true piety, which God now desires, can be found nowhere else, and be taught by no other religion? What bigotry! some may say. What narrowness! others may exclaim. Where is your proof? it may be asked. In the third chapter of the First Epistle to Timothy, should be the Christian's response. For as the church, or assembly, of the living God is the pillar and ground, or base, of truth, and as true godliness must be in accordance with truth, to learn about it we must turn to that in which the truth can alone be found, which is God's house. God has a house on earth, not a building like the temple of old, but something which has the characteristic of a house—His habitation in the Spirit (Ephesians ii. 22), and this is the assembly of the living and true God.

But what language to use when writing to one who was sojourning in that city, which prided itself on being the temple-keeper (*νεώκοπος*) of Artemis the great—the Ephesian Diana—language at once suggestive and peculiar. For, had any stranger in the city enquired of the Town Clerk, or of Demetrius and his fellow-craftsmen, where God's house could be found, would they not have pointed to him the world-renowned temple of Diana? Had such an one on the other hand met Timothy under the shadow of its walls, and enquired of him about God's house, he would surely have turned his questioner's eyes and thoughts from the structure before them, and have

taught him about the living God's assembly, and of the privilege of forming part of His house—a truth, an idea too, both new and peculiar. For, though the votaries of the Ephesian goddess could adorn her shrine, they could never form part of her pretended dwelling-place. A Jew, too, would think this language equally strange, and would never term his nation God's house. The congregation of the Lord he might maintain that they were; but God's house was to him local in its character, and material in its structure. Imagine, too, a pantheist meeting with this language of the Apostle. He might utter a cry of Eureka! and proceed to set forth his doctrine as the explanation of the Divine statement; but all in vain; for none, but those who accept the New Testament as God's Word, have the clue to explain the Apostle's language in this letter to his child in the faith.

For the universe is not God, though He does in a sense dwell in it. It is His house (Heb. iii. 4). But the house of which we read in Timothy is neither a local habitation, like a shrine, nor the universe which bears the impress of the Creator's hand. It is the living God's assembly, not restricted in its boundaries by local features, or national barriers, though less extensive in its limits than the universe in which He also dwells. And the thought of such an habitation belongs only to Christianity, and the truth of it is only acknowledged by those who form part of the assembly of the living God, who is thus described in contradistinction to idols. In the wilderness God had both a habitation and an assembly, which, though closely connected, were nevertheless quite distinct the one from the other. Now His house is His assembly, in which he dwells on earth by the Holy Ghost, a truth which man would never have thought of, and of which in no false creed has the enemy ever attempted an imitation. In this, then, Christianity stands alone; and in this house, composed of those who bear the name of Christ, the truth has its resting-place on earth. So Timothy is instructed how to conduct himself "in God's house, which is (the) assembly of the living God, (the) pillar and base of the truth."

We should note the terms here employed. House, assembly, pillar, base, are all characteristic, and so are what is termed anarthrous, i.e., without the definite article, which, however, is here prefixed to truth. For, as God has a dwelling-place elsewhere in the universe, the assem-

bly of the living God is not His house to the exclusion of any other habitation, though it is His present abode on earth, as well as pillar and base of the truth. For it is not merely of truth that it is pillar and base, but of the truth, intimating that on earth the truth can be found nowhere outside the walls of this house, or the limits of this assembly. Truths there are which are not the subject of dogmatic Christian teaching, as truths of history and science, of astronomy, geology, botany, medicine, etc.; but the truth has its only support and resting-place on earth in the assembly of the living God; for therefrom only is Christ, who is the truth, made known, as well as therein does the Spirit, who is the truth, abide.

What, then, is the truth? it may be asked. "It is," to quote the words of another, "the right and perfect expression of that which a thing is (and, in an absolute way, of that which all things are), of the relation in which it stands to other things, or in which all things stand toward each other." (*Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*, vol. iv. p. 438.) Now Christ is the truth (John xiv. 6), and the Church of God is the pillar and base of it. It supports the truth, and is its resting-place on earth. Hence we are shut up to Christian instruction if we would hear about the truth, and be taught about piety or godliness.

But was piety unknown till the Church existed? Was it never seen till the Lord Jesus displayed it on earth? By no means. Godliness in measure was known (Ps. iv. 3; Luke ii. 25; Heb. xi. 7), though the mystery or secret of it remained undiscovered. Now, however, by the incarnation of the Lord Jesus, and His walk on earth, the mystery of it remains a secret no longer; for we learn about it as seen in Him, that it is the acting of divine life in men. To Him, then, our attention is directed. "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, or piety, who* 'was manifested in flesh, justified in spirit,'" etc.

The passage then should be read, "Great is the mystery of piety, who was manifested in flesh," etc. Of course the statement that God was manifested in flesh is true of the Lord Jesus Christ. "The Word was God," and "the Word was made flesh." Scripture is clear in its witness, that He who was the Virgin's Son was truly, fully God. That such, however, was not the statement of the Apostle in this passage the best witnesses certainly attest, though,

were He not God, the language we here meet with could not have been used. Believing then that the Apostle wrote "who," and not "God," we hope, God willing, to look into the bearing of this passage of the Word in our next number.

* But here we are confronted with a question of textual criticism, as to what in all probability the Apostle really wrote. Three readings of the passage are extant, (1) "God (Θεός) was manifested," etc.; (2) "which was δ manifested," the relative pronoun referring directly to the mystery; and (3) "who δs was manifested." The first of these readings has both uncial and cursive MSS. in its favour, but lacks the support of any ancient version. Of the uncial MSS. KLP unhesitatingly support it, and CDM as altered by correctors. Most of the cursive MSS. likewise read "God." The second reading is weakly supported by MS. authority of any kind, the original reading of D, an uncial MS. of the sixth century, being the solitary witness in its favour. Most of the ancient versions, however, may be cited on its behalf. In support of the third reading, the masculine pronoun, the uncials AFG are cited, and with them CN as originally written. A few cursive MSS., and some versions, complete the witnesses of this class in its favour. With the evidence before us, the second reading δ may be safely dismissed, since it lacks so markedly the support of MS. authority. The first also we believe must give way; for though later uncials unhesitatingly exhibit it, the testimony of all ancient versions, that a relative pronoun and not a substantive stood in the text from which they translated, should not be lightly passed by in this conflict of evidence. And since the oldest uncials do exhibit in their different texts a relative pronoun, though in the masculine and not in the neuter, it seems pretty clear that as a pronoun was probably penned by the Apostle, the masculine relative pronoun δs, which they certainly support, is the true reading, the very word used here by the Apostle.

AN ALPHABET OF BLESSING.

ABRAHAM, stranger-like, goes here and there. He pitches his tent and builds an altar. It is all he has in the land. Happy and quiet, he rests in the promise of God, and this is also what we ourselves have to do. Perhaps it will happen to us as to Abraham to buy a sepulchre (ch. xxiii), and that is all.

BOAZ ("in him is strength"), upon whom the Remnant had no direct claim, and who typifies Christ risen, in whom are the sure mercies of David, undertakes to raise up the name of the dead, and to re-establish the heritage of Israel. Acting in grace and in kindness, and encouraging the patient, humble faith of the Remnant, the meek of the earth, He shews himself faithful to

fulfil the purposes and will of God, with respect to Naomi's poor, desolate family.

CYRUS, king of Persia, commands the people to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild the temple. A type himself, in some respects, of a far more glorious Deliverer, he confesses Jehovah, the God of Israel, to be the true God. He is "the righteous man raised up from the east, who treads down the princes like mortar." Called of the Lord by name for this purpose, he favours Israel, and honours the Lord. Distinguished and blessed by the favour of the mighty God, his conduct was certainly under divine guidance. His personal character did not interfere with its being the times of the Gentiles, notwithstanding that God had put it into the heart of one of these Gentiles to favour His people.

DAVID and Abigail walked in the world which was *faith's* world, when they met in the wilderness of Paran. The kingdom, in spirit, was entered. The wilderness of Paran was the kingdom, in the communion of the saints. The solitary place was glad for them. The needy, hunted, persecuted fugitive was, in his own eyes, and in the eyes of Abigail, the lord of the coming kingdom, and the anointed of the God of Israel. Abigail bowed before him as her king, and he, in the grace of a king, accepted her person. The provisions she brought in her hand—the bread and the wine, the clusters of raisins, and the cakes of figs—were not her bountifulness to the needy David, but faith's tribute to the royal David. Faith has indeed a world of its own.

ELIEZER thinks always about Abraham, who had entrusted everything to him. His thoughts are upon this as he sets forth before Rebekah the privileges and the good tidings of his master's house. If our hearts are filled with the Holy Spirit, it will be the same with us. It is very important for us to bear in mind that God has confided to us the glory of Jesus. It is He who works in us, and we have but to let Him act. It is His will to be glorified in us by the presence of the Holy Ghost.

(To be continued.)

"WE SHALL SEE HIM FACE TO FACE."

1 COR. xiii. 12. 2 COR. iii. 18.
REV. xxii. 4.

We shall behold Him face to face!
Blest joy that shall be ours!
This hope now sheds its heavenly rays
O'er sorrow's darkest hours.

We shall behold Him as He is,
Nor ever from Him part;
And homage perfect as our bliss,
Shall flow from every heart.

We shall behold Him as He is!
His glory forth shall shine,
Reflected in His countless saints,
A radiancy divine.

For ever with Him at His side,
Wherever He shall be;
His chosen, spotless, glorious Bride,
To all Eternity.

We shall behold Him face to face
Whom God hath glorified,
Crowned with His many diadems,
Extolled and magnified.

The glories of a kingly line
Shall radiate round His Throne,
And all as King and Conqueror
The Lord of Glory own.

We shall behold Him face to face!
Oh, great and wondrous sight!
The Holy City then His Place—
The Lamb is there the light!
Effulgence of God's glory, He
Shall beam on all around,
Until the universe shall be
With love's own lustre crowned.

We shall behold Him face to face;
Those love-lit eyes shall beam
On each receiver of the grace
That made us joy in Him.
In Him, the One who hath been slain,
Exalted thus on high,
A new creation, we His name
Shall praise and magnify.

We shall behold Him face to face!
We yearn to see the day,
That gives Thy Bride with Thee her place,
In all her bright array.
"The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.'"
"Quickly," is Thy reply,
Whose presence gives its fullest joy
To that blest Home on high.

We shall behold Thee face to face!
Though faith and hope be tried,
We prove the more the living grace
Thou spendest on Thy Bride.
We long for Thee, thou Coming One,
And daily learn to trace
The fulness of Thy perfect love,
Ere yet we see Thy face.

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2 COR. IV. 3-6.

[No. 7.]

"HIS OWN RECEIVED HIM NOT."

Lord, Thou hast known rejection,
Man's scorn was here Thy lot;
Once to Thine own Thou camest,
Thine own received Thee not.
In birth no royal palace
Thy resting-place was made,
But in a lowly manger,
The King of kings was laid.

And though Thou cam'st to suffer,
Thy blood 'twas *man* who shed,
Not knowing that the Victim
Was offered in his stead.
Unheeded in Thy coming,
E'en though it were to save,
Naught could the world afford Thee,
Naught but a cross and grave.

Ah! Lord, 'twas love unbounded,
Moved Thee such shame to bear;
Love to the One who sent Thee—
God's love to man brought near.
For me, Lord, Thou wast wounded,
Thy stripes have healed my soul;
For me Thou wast rejected,
That I might be made whole.

What depth of loving-kindness
Thus brought Thee here below;
Led Thee in full obedience,
E'en to a cross to go!
Thine only was the suffering,
Mine, mine alone, the sin;
Thou with the dead wast numbered,
New life for me to win.

Thine was the cup of sorrow—
Unmingled joy *my* share;
Though here they may not know me,
My name One knoweth there.
Still onward would I follow,
Close in thy footsteps go,
Learning Thy love more fully,
Each moment here below.

And finds my heart no praises,
For mercy so divine?
For grace past human telling,
For that great love of thine?
Yea, *here* would I be singing
This theme of matchless grace,
Soon *there*, in strains more worthy,
When I behold Thy face!

VOL. I.—No. 7.

THE REVELATION OF GOD.

1 JOHN iv. 9-16.

It is an immense thing to have a *revelation of God*. I do not mean merely a revelation *from* God, but a revelation of God Himself. God has given us both: revelations, again and again; revelations of the most varied character; revelations in the most suitable order; but, most of all, and specially with a view to this, the revelation of Himself, the revelation of Himself *in this world*.

For little as this world may be, compared with other parts of the creation of God, it is here that man is—here now; and this is a very solemn consideration for you and for me; it is here that we are put to the test as moral beings, here lost or saved.

Men may speculate about other worlds, but no man has any real ground to say that God has ever revealed Himself except here, or indeed that there are others to whom He *would* reveal Himself as He has revealed Himself here. May I go farther, and venture to say this: He never revealed Himself *anywhere* as He has done here? It is here that He sent His Son; it is here that He sent Him to be a man (unspeakable witness of His grace towards man!), and, remember, when man was *fallen*. Not till then was there the very smallest word of it from God, but man was no sooner fallen than He speaks; and *now* the word that God spoke so long past is become a great substantial fact, that puts every heart, every conscience, of every man, woman, and child, completely to

the proof. Do I prefer sin to God? Do I prefer my selfishness, my misery, the darkness and guilt of sin, to God and His grace?

For when God did send His Son into the world, it was to deal with *sin*, it was to deal with *Satan*, it was to bring in what man could find nowhere else, *LIFE*. Eternal life! Life that could feel according to God. Life that could have pleasure in the presence of God. Life that could take delight in the will of God. Life capable of knowing and enjoying God! And where was this found? Where is it? In man's heart? In ordinances? Nowhere but in the Son of God; but, wondrous to see now, the Son of God a *real man*; certainly much *more than a man*, but a *man*. He was God, from everlasting to everlasting, but He became a *MAN*. Assuredly He did not cease to be God; nor will He ever cease to be a *man*; and there it is that God has given in itself the most astonishing pledge and proof that He had no designs against man, nay, that He had the fullest love towards *man*.

This was what man was so slow to credit. And why so? Most of all because he is a sinner. He has a bad conscience; he is *afraid* of God. And good reason has he to be afraid of God; as far as he is concerned, the best reason has he, if there be none other than he. But there *is*! There is One man that is God—I will not say *like* God. He is never said to be "like God," and I will tell you why. Because He is God. He is said to be "the image of God;" He has given me to see what God is. He has brought the very image of God

before my heart, before me *in this world*. He is the image of the invisible God, but He is never called His likeness, for this were to deny His glory. He is God's very transcript. He is the true God and eternal Life; and *this* is the One that God sent into the world to save, to save all that believe—not to be a judge, yet He *will* judge. Every man, as man, nay, every man absolutely, must give account; I do not say be judged. Every man as man must be judged, but every soul, every saint even, must give account of all that he has done in the body.

You observe that I have spoken of a difference in these two things, and there is one. It is not understood, but I will tell you what and why it is. Because *salvation* is not understood! Thanks be to God, people do not lose salvation because they do not understand it. Wretched were it so, that is, if God only blessed according to their measure; but He blesses according to CHRIST, and is there any measure there? Fullness, fulness infinite, according to Himself, according to all His grace and His truth.

Such is the Saviour! Is He yours? Do you know Him? Tell me not that He cannot be known. Are you a heathen, or a Jew? You, a *Christian*, and say that God cannot be known! What sort of Christianity is that? More guilty than Judaism or even heathenism. A heathen, just because he was a heathen, had not the knowledge of God. He had therefore gone after false gods—gods that were no gods. No wonder he should say, God cannot be known; but even a Jew knew something about God, though he did not know God Himself. And *you*, you who take the place of being a "Christian," even if it be on the slenderest confession, be it so! But what Christianity is based upon is this, that God has revealed Himself; yet *you*, you call yourself "a Christian," and do *not* know Him? Perishing, in the presence of the richest abundance; dying, although eternal life has come here in the person of the Saviour.

For *sinners*? Life has not come for those that have life; though I grant all that can strengthen, all that can fill the heart, all that can guide and bless, is found in that same One who is Eternal Life. But I ask for whom was He sent, and for what? Here we have it. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us; in that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." And this

is so true that no man can see the Son and believe in the Son, without having eternal life. So this very inspired writer says; and you must remember an inspired writer means one who gives the sure unfailing truth of God. God cannot lie, and this is the way He speaks in His word. Surely there is One who had the words of God when He was here. He is the Word of God. But the Apostle says, "He that knoweth God heareth us." He *could be known*, then. They were raised up, they were inspired, for the very purpose of communicating God's word.

"Heareth us." One does not pretend to be above the Apostles or to do without the Apostles, but *hears* them. "He that is not of God heareth not us." And do you hear *not* the Apostles? When you say that God cannot be known, you certainly do not hear the Apostles. You never learned that from them. On the contrary, you have learned it from men who speak of the world, and the world hears them. I will not say "for" the Apostles; for they speak *against* their word, if they call themselves ever so much their successors; and this is exactly the state in which Christendom now is. These high pretensions always go with denying the sure present knowledge of God by faith.

I. THAT WE MIGHT LIVE THROUGH HIM.

But let us hear what he says who writes *these divine words*: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, in that God sent His only begotten Son into the world *that we might live through Him*." This was His very object. There was no life here, nor could life be got through any other. It was not enough to point to the Son of God in heaven; that would not satisfy God. No, God sent His Son into the world that we might live through Him; and it is in this way that souls do live. He points Him out, and tells us who the Son of God is—even Jesus, undoubtedly the Son of man, but the Son of God, the only-begotten Son of the Father, but God just as much as His Father. You are a man if you are the son of your father. In a still more glorious ineffable way was the only-begotten Son of God Son of the Father. And there it is God triumphs, because man had only believed a lie, judging of God by himself—the sure way to be lost. You cannot by searching find out God. The Son of God, the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath de-

clared Him. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." Thus the simplest believer knows the only true God; there is none he knows so well. He is known by my need, by my wants, in His own divine love and skill meeting me where I am, and spite of all that I am.

It is evident that, if the only-begotten Son was sent into the world that we might live through Him, there was no life without Him, for life does not mean mere existence. True, the soul is immortal, but the immortality of the soul does not hinder the soul from being lost. The soul is immortal, and, further, the body will be raised. Oh! it is an awful thought, that the body will be raised to be bound to the guilty soul, that both soul and body should prove what it is to have despised God—to have hated Him—and to have proved it by despising the Son. It is not merely for His sins he is lost, but because he refused this unspeakable love of God who sent His Son. He is too proud, too given up to selfishness; he does not want to give up his sins, above all; he will not be beholden to God; he would rather risk it.

There it is the Spirit of grace works to touch the conscience of the sinner. Where does he turn then? To the very God he has wronged, avoided, dreaded, hated too. There is no surer proof of hatred than that you never care to see the person's face. Now you who have not the knowledge of God, is not this what you would like best—if you could be only sure you could always escape God; if you could go on as you like; and never face God, never have to give account of your sins? If you could go on with your pursuits, your pleasures, without being cast into hell, would you not like that? You are dead!

Now the Spirit of God, when He works, makes the truth quickening. "I am a sinner. I am ashamed to think of my sins, ashamed to tell it to God. I feel I have been most guilty." Yet such an one turns by Christ to God. He confesses his guilt, cost what it may. If God were to cast him into hell on the confession of his guilt, it is *true*, and he must justify God. He tells it all out to God. He must draw near, the consciously shameful, shameless, guilty soul, and pour out the confession of his sins into the ear of God. And what does God tell out to him? "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, in that God sent His

only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."

II. THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS.

Is that *all*? Most blessed, but not all. Then we find immediately, in a still fuller way, God coming in to that poor soul, feeling its state, its incapacity to love God, and it learns, "Herein is love, not that we loved God," but the very reverse. We endeavoured to escape God, desired not the knowledge of His ways. Such was our wretched history. But "He loved us and gave His Son, the propitiation for our sins." It was not enough "that we might live through Him;" because if we lived, if we felt what was due to God, if we had a desire to do the will of God, it must still be immense misery, and constant fear, in the sense of His holiness and of our utter unfitness for His presence.

When there is no life, one tries to get rid of God's presence—to drown oneself in pleasure; one turns even duties into ruin by occupying oneself with anything to shut out the sense of having to do with God. But where there is conscience, one must go to Him. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him," said one of old. There is the distinct desire after Him, while one maintains His righteous character. But how little is He known as Saviour, for this is what He is—One who has thoughts of good, and not of evil—One who (when a man thus espouses the cause of God against himself, when he heeds the word that condemns him out and out) sent His Son for my sins! Thus not only does He give a nature that hates sin, but the mighty work of the Lord Jesus Christ is to take away all my guilt out of His sight. Ah! there is love indeed—not merely that I might have spiritual feelings instead of natural religion, not merely that I might groan over my evil, but that I might be justified. It is secured by the work of Christ atoning for me. I see it in all its perfection. He sent His Son for me to live, for Him to die. What does He give me in His death? Propitiation for my sins. In this twofold way God has proved His love.

It is in this world. In no world but this is eternal life given. It is not to any other world, but here that He came. We have not the smallest ground to believe that the Son of God ever came, ever died, in any world but this. God is not looking for great people, but for wretched sinners. He is not looking for great worlds any more than people,

but a sinful earth. He is seeking wretched sinners. But now that the Son is come, and I believe in Him, He is my life, and my sins are sent away. Is not that enough? No; He is coming to take me on high. Would you like to be in heaven? No place you would enjoy so little. You would dread it, although you do not like to say so, more than any spot in God's creation. The light, the love, the holiness of God, would be unbearable to you. But God, who has searched you through and through, sent His Son: why? He has but one Son, the Only-begotten, yet His Son was spent on sinners. He is the "propitiation for our sins." Why fear if you believe on Him?

The glory of His person is maintained. Take a poor guilty woman caught in the vilest sin—the moment Christ speaks a word, they who had accused her were the first to turn from His presence. Thus the glory of the Lord, the light in His person, is far more confounding than in the law. One ray from Him, they fled from His presence. What will it be with you when you stand to give account of yourself to God? Stand and give account *now*. Faith does not wait for the day of judgment. Those who believe are willing to tell out their sins *now*. What do they find? Judgment? *Life eternal*, a new nature, the knowledge and love of God, their sins forgiven.

Men say, I know, that they believe in the remission of sins. Well, are your sins gone? Oh no, they will answer. Is there then no such thing as the certainty of the truth? If I do not not know them gone, can I say truly that I know God? It is not a question of activity or depth of mind. Thank God, the gospel is for the poor, and for persons of feeble mind too, for God has saved many such. It has nothing to do with any particular power of this kind; but I will tell you with what it has to do—with my bowing to God's word that condemns me and puts me down, as a sinner without life, who yet has his sins, and there they are crying out for the judgment of God. My being such a sinner is a shame to me; but to believe in His Son is life and glory. Oh, what delight God has in having souls to believe in His Son! Do you suppose it honours God to wait, to hesitate? Do you suppose that not to receive His word is the way to believe? May God give you to hearken, to believe, and to know that this is by the Spirit of God. Naturally you are afraid, and indifferent or hostile, because you are full of self-will, and bent

upon pleasing yourself, and that with consciousness of sin, with judgment before you, but in presence of God sending His only-begotten Son to bless you in His love if you bow to Him now.

But there are those that receive Christ, and what is the result? They possess the fulness of God's love. Who are they? Every believer. There is no believer that has not life according to it. It may be very feeble—that is, there may be what is of himself, which shrouds and enfeebles; and God has His way of taking down all that thus hinders His own work; but I affirm that every soul thus born of God loves God. He does not say 'we ought to love God,' because we *do*. It is a necessity of that new nature, of the life of God in every believer. But He does say, "we ought to love one another." We love Him; but as to one another—well, one sees plenty of faults, and surely, if conscience is in the light of God, most in oneself. Doubtless this hinders, but God has His way of using all for good, while humbling us for the faults. Do you think God loves His children less because they are faulty? You have a child that other people don't think much of, whatever *you* do; but do you love that child less because of its faults? It may be you spoil the poor child. I scarce ever knew a parent that had not his affections, his heart, drawn out by those faults of the child. God loves us, and this love is so real that our faults 'only draw out the wonderful resources of His love. If you love a child of yours, it is thus with you. I do not mean God makes light of anything wrong; but He never turns aside His love, and people who think so do not know God as He has revealed Himself. They have a very feeble knowledge of who and what He is.

"No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us." When Christ was here, He was the great witness. And now, wonderful to say, Christians are the witness. Oh, how ashamed of ourselves we ought to be when our levity blots out the testimony God looks for in this world!

III. HE HATH GIVEN US OF HIS SPIRIT.

"Hereby know we that we dwell in Him and He in us." It is a great deal more than knowing the love. Now if one of us had written these words, he must have been thought most presumptuous. Yet are they true. Hereby we know, "because He hath

given us of His Spirit." I admit it is a very strong word, and that no man could ever have said it or gathered it except by divine teaching. The Apostle writes it calmly and quietly, as the real truth about the Christian, "because He hath given us of His Spirit."

It is not merely "the Spirit," because the Spirit was given occasionally to persons who were not renewed. Mighty power wrought in people said to be partakers of the Spirit who were not born of God. Here it is more than that. "He hath given us of His Spirit" implies not merely power, but communion of nature, and that is the force of the difference. It is what characterizes God's own nature, and that in divine power, and this is what belongs to the Christian now. It is not only life. The Lord Jesus is eternal life, and we live by Him. Perhaps there is some soul miserable enough here, yet that has eternal life. If I do not give Him credit that He has truly blotted out my sins, I cannot have peace. If I really believe God's love that He came down for it, why am I troubled about my sins?

"But I don't walk as I ought." Well, but, my dear friend, let us settle one thing at a time. There is no such encouragement for walk afterwards as that all is secured between God and the soul. The Holy Ghost is given, sealing the person and working in this new divine nature. That is what I call the communion of nature, the Holy Ghost being the power. Now the result of this is, that we not only go to God but we dwell in God. Is not this much more than going to Him in time of trouble? It is not merely occasional visits, nor merely that life is eternal, but, as the Holy Ghost dwells in us, so we dwell in God.

IV. THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD.

Verse 14. "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." That is the effect of being thus blessed of God. We have a special testimony, to which we are called. All through this, though he does not speak about the law, he has put the Christians on an entirely different ground. It is not commandments, though there are commandments that are most suited, because there is a living person to obey. There is a Divine Person that has quickened us, sealed us, and come down as power; not merely to cheer us, not merely as comforter: the Holy Ghost is always the Spirit of power. It is

in communion with God, with His mind and His affections; and *this* is what characterizes the Christian. "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." "We have seen"—What a sight! greater than Moses ever saw. It was never made known till He came (the Lord Jesus) that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. *Now* it is the testimony of every Christian. The believer who does not testify this does not understand Christianity. The truth has been spoiled; there is that which is wrong mixed up with it. Half Jewish, half Christian, are their thoughts; but here it is *Christian* testimony, that "the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour," not merely of Israel but "of the world." No matter how bad, how distant, how dark, the individual sinner might be found, He is the Saviour; and such a Saviour could not be confined to any portion of mankind.

V. CONFESSING JESUS THE SON OF GOD.

Verse 15. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." Whosoever shall confess! Oh weigh it well, you that have never yet confessed. Here is what will save your soul. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God (not merely shall be saved, but) *God dwelleth in him and he in God.*" Oh, what a wonderful thing! Is this true? Nothing more so. How is it made true? The Holy Ghost has taken His place in that man, that woman, that child. "God dwelleth in him," and as a consequence of it, "he in God." The heart has an abiding rest in God. I am certain of God; I can be certain of no one else. You may have perhaps the most faithful, blameless, devoted friend. Ah! you are not always certain of your friend. There will come the moment when you may be disappointed; but never in God. The simplest Christian knows it. I do not say they may not be foolish and forget, but they know it is their folly. The Apostle is looking at the consequence of thus confessing that Jesus is the Son of God. It is there that God dwells. It was not miraculous outward power, but what was always greater, what could not be seen. "Jesus died and rose again." Is that all? "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, *God dwelleth in him, and he in God.*"

VI. WE HAVE KNOWN AND BELIEVED THE LOVE.

Verse 16. "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us." He goes back to the same great truth. "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Now, observe the change of order here. The reason is this. Where he is speaking of the confession of Christ, the object is to give the soul confidence in Him who fills the soul with His own pure grace. He has received the Spirit; the consequence is that his heart goes out to God. But now he is walking like a Christian; he is dwelling in love. Instead of being occupied with evil, he is occupied with love, and dwelling in love. What is the consequence? "He dwelleth in God;" he rises above all that is here; and the result is that God puts fresh blessing upon him, working in power. God dwells in him.

Not merely is it the fact of the Holy Ghost dwelling in him, true as it is. First of all, God gives him the Spirit. God dwells in him, and he in God. "Hereby we know that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit." Then, as the effect of that, my heart goes to Him; I have confidence in Him; I spread out great or small into His bosom. But if I am walking in love, in the midst of all that is calculated to act upon the flesh and distract, God makes me enjoy fresh blessing, acting in me by the Spirit. It is not merely the fact of having the Holy Ghost, but God working in us by it; and not less than this is the Christian's portion. The least Christian should say that God dwells in him and he in God; but the most spiritual cannot rise beyond this, that, as he dwells in God, God dwells in him. *This* is the privilege of communion; as *that* is of faith. And if I know the one, I ought to seek the other. If blessed by grace, let us walk in the fellowship of His love (Gal. v. 25).

O! may those that confess Jesus to be the Son of God not fear to take their stand, that this is the truth, that this is their portion. Blessed portion! for if God dwells in me, and I in Him, He is training me in that which will be the greatest joy for eternity. Of course then only the hindrances will be all gone, and the circumstances in which we now are; but I am not talking of circumstances, but of God dwelling in me and I in Him. There is the portion that grace gives to the simplest confessor of Jesus. Fear not then to take it, fear not to confess Him.

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This honours God, if I speak and act upon the truth of God. If this be the case, I can confide in Him for everything. It is not only a hope; it is not merely cherishing desires. It is a great, glorious, divine fact for faith only. It is not that blessedness first, and *then* I believe: I believe first, and then the blessedness comes. Next follows deep enjoyment, which becomes powerful in our dependence on God, and works according to God.

May the Lord bless His own word, both to those who do confess, and to those who have never yet confessed, that Jesus is the Son of God. Amen.

Malvern.

W. K.

"HIS LIFE IS TAKEN FROM THE EARTH"

ACTS viii.

JERUSALEM! most favoured spot,
Of brightest glory once the scene,
Now scene of darkest, foulest blot,
That e'er in human page hath been—

From thee, a stranger sadly turned
To Ethiopia's distant land;
Unwon the prize for which he yearned—
And eager crossed the desert sand.

Yet not unwon,—for now there lay
A priceless gem within his hand;
And as he speeds upon his way,
Its page with wondering gaze he scann'd.

He reads of One beyond compare,
By earth refused, to heaven how dear!
God's plant of beauty, oh, how fair!
Despised, rejected, trampled here!

Like gentle lamb to slaughter led,
As unresisting sheep when shorn,
So bowed that Blessed One His head,
And meekly bore man's cruel scorn.

He reads of earth's unequalled day,
The sun disown'd it, lent no ray,
Creation trembled in dismay,
While man and Satan had their way.

Unequalled in its guilt and shame,
Unequalled in its bitter woe;
Unequalled in the bosom's fame,
The joy eternal, thence to flow.

Oh, wondrous story! depths of woe
Unfathomed! heights of love, of bliss—
He only could on man bestow,
Nay, only win for man, through this.

But who shall tell, in desert drear,
Of Him who suffered on the tree?
Who whisper in the sinner's ear,
He died, He rose, He lives for thee?

Ah! what can stem the gushing tide
Of love divine, eternal freed—
At last, and flowing far and wide,
Wherever wretched man has need.

The sands the ocean's tide may blind,
The rocks fling back the surging wave,
But earth or hell no power can find,
To check the love that wills to save.

The servant hears his Lord's command,
And from rejoicing crowds must part,
Must seek out one in desert land,
For Love and Light have claimed that heart.

A ray from glory reached his soul,
Drew him from Ethiopia's night;
He now must follow to the goal
Love won for him in glory's light.

Oh! what a tale that day was told
In Gaza's distant lonely waste,
As Philip "Jesus" did unfold,
And all His blessed path retraced!

He "preaches Jesus"—what a theme!—
God's tender Plant, God's stricken Lamb;
No painter's fancy, poet's dream,
But Heaven's one, eternal psalm.

That Name, for every page unrolled,
Is found the only fitting key;
'Tis His,—this bitter path foretold,
The Man of grief and sorrows—He.

Though hidden all His early days,
One brief, bright glimpse alone is given,
Enough to prove His perfect ways,
To man on earth, to God in heaven.

But not unnoted, not unnamed,
Is that unwritten path of light;
For God from opened heaven proclaimed
His own unbounded, deep delight.

And let us flow with rapture gaze,
As traced His life through this dark earth;—
That lowly life, whose glorious rays
Oft through the veil of flesh burst forth.

He speaks, and devils yield their prey,
And fevered natured health regains;
His touch defilement drives away,
His word removes the leper's stains.

When faith lays weakness at His feet,
He speaks, and rising to obey,
The helpless one, with praises meet,
Now carries that whereon he lay.

'Twas not His power divine to prove,
That drew from Him one mighty deed;
Nay, but to tell out God's deep love,
In meeting all man's varied need.

As through this shadowed scene He went,
His lovely ways must all declare,
Although the veil was yet unrent,
That He,—the God of grace was there.

Resplendent on the mount, behold
The Perfect, Holy, Spotless One,
Whom Heaven with glory doth enfold,
And claims as God's "Beloved Son!"

Ah! blessed Lord, Thou couldst set free,
From sin's effects the helpless one,
But if his guilt removed shall be,
Thy beauteous life must be laid down.

So, once more, glory laid aside,
Unswerving from the mount He goes,
Descends, to meet the rushing tide,
Of Satan's hate, of human woes.

He met, and triumphed; stood alone
Forsaken: life, through death, He won.
In glory, on the Father's throne
Behold Him now! His work well done.

His lowly path of service o'er—
But now in glory serving still—
While angels wonder and adore,
The Servant's place He loves to fill.

And once again, if watching here,—
His waiting people faithful prove—
He'll gird Himself and yet appear,
To serve them with unceasing love.

The weary heart which sought repose
In Jewish rites, but sought in vain;
Has found the Stream of life which flows
From Smitten Rock, through desert plain.

With Him, that Smitten One, henceforth,
His place, his part, he boldly takes;
"His life is taken from the earth,"
Then every link with earth he breaks.

Death's shadow rests on all around,
But joyful now he onward speeds;
For ah! his heart in Christ hath found
Its life, its home, yea, *all* it needs.

And shall we hear with hearts unmoved,
And clinging still to earthly things,
This matchless tale of God's Beloved,
From whose deep woe our blessing springs?

Forbid it, Lord! to earth we die—
As those, who, crucified with Thee—
Can say, "I live, and yet not I,
But (wondrous truth!) Christ lives in me."

To win for man in heaven a place—
Thy love, on earth, unwearyed sought—
How saints, on earth, shall run the race,
Is now, in heaven, Thy care and thought.

The path is one Thyself didst make,
While here below, revealing grace;
Now, we that wondrous grace partake,
Oh! may our steps Thy steps retrace.

From glory to the cross, 'twas Thine
Each downward step to tread; but we,
Sprung from Thy death, in life divine,
Press on to glory, and—to THEE.

THE UNERRING PILOT.

How often among the children of God some principle or line of conduct is brought in, that is inferior in nature to the excellence of that work which is going on in the purpose of God; but which, as long as the power of God is working according to this purpose, does not disengage itself, so to speak, from the work, so as to assume any prominence and produce uneasiness and sorrow. But when this divine stream becomes shallow, in consequence of man's unfaithfulness, then bitter fruits appear; spiritual declensions, weakness, heart-burnings, divisions, which flow from the impossibility of reconciling that which is *spiritual* with that which is *carnal*, and of maintaining a spiritual testimony while conforming to the ways of the world. But this testimony belongs to the other side of Jordan. The two tribes and a half may follow this course if they will, but we cannot come out of Canaan to join them—alas! these beautiful meadows, well suited to feed their flocks, have joined but too many Lots and tribes of Israel to settle in them, to their loss. The shoals that are met with in our Christian voyage may perhaps be safely crossed at high tide; but at low tide, skilful pilotage is needed to avoid them and to float always in the full current of the grace of God in the channel it has made for itself. There is a sure and steadfast pilot, and we are safe if we are content to follow Him. God has given us what we need for this. Perhaps we must be satisfied with a very little boat; but the unerring pilot will be in it.

THE WAY AND THE END.

Ps lxxxiv.

O Lord of Hosts ! Thy dwelling-place how fair !
 Where Thou art known 'tis all my joy to be :
 A longing pilgrim, fainting to be there,
 My heart, my wearied frame, cries out for Thee.
 Despised on earth, yet have I found a home ;
 Still on the wing, the swallow knows her nest ;
 There is a place where she may lay her young,
 And in Thine altars I have perfect rest.
 The blood declares the spotless One hath died ;
 The Incense, now my God is satisfied !

How blessed they who in Thy house abide !
 Their whole employ is praise.
 How blessed he whose goings Thou dost guide ;
 Who loves and keeps Thy ways.
 They in the place of weeping make a well ;
 In Achor's thirsty vale receive the rain ;
 Stage after stage Thy faithfulness they tell,
 And where grace reigneth they at last remain.

'From strength to strength,' throughout the scene of tears,
 Till each at length before his God appears.

Lord God of hosts ! by whose goodwill we stand
 Secure, through grace, and near—
 Thou lookest on the Man of Thy right hand,
 Thy Christ, whom saints revere.
 To taste Thy presence is delight so high
 I turn no more to past resorts of sin ;
 Yea, at Thy threshold rather would I lie
 Than in those guilty tents be chief and king.
 Life, incorruptibility, are mine,
 Now, through Thine own outshining,
 brought to light,
 Both grace and glory ! Lord, the gift is Thine.
 Thou in Thy righteous bounties hast delight.

Thou only Lord ! now in Thy House I see
 How blest the man who hath his all in Thee !

DIVINE RIGHTEOUSNESS.

NOTHING short of *Divine righteousness* will clothe the sinner suitably for the presence of God. Human righteousness is but "filthy rags" in God's sight. Divine righteousness is not Christ's life of obedience down here imputed to us. "If righteousness came by the law" (either by our keeping it or Christ keeping it for us), "then has Christ died in vain" (*ὁρῶν* gratuitously) (Gal. ii. 21).

Christ's perfect obedience and holy walk, as a man under the law, was necessary to constitute Him a suitable victim (a "lamb without blemish and without spot") to bear the penalty due to us; but Scripture nowhere states it is imputed or reckoned to us. Had He sinned,

He must have died for Himself; but being entitled by virtue of His perfect obedience to go straight to glory, He was free to lay down His life for others. Accordingly, and in obedience to His Father's will, He went to the Cross. 'Twas *there* "Jehovah laid upon Him the iniquity of us all," and thus established a righteous ground upon which He could meet the sinner in grace, without compromising holiness and justice. It is *Christ Himself*, in resurrection, who is "made unto us righteousness" (1 Cor. i. 30); and we become "the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21). What strength and security this gives the soul !

TWO GARDENS AND THEIR FRUIT.—A CONTRAST.

Two creations form the theme of the Spirit of God mainly in the Word: over these in both cases man is set as Head. Two gardens come also prominently before us in connection with them. The Old Testament history, beginning with man in the garden of Eden, records for us the history of the first creation, closing in Malachi, by looking out for the coming of the Lord as the resource of the faithful. New Testament history, that more especially which records for us the beginning of a new creation, begins with a grave in a garden, and closes likewise in the Revelation, by looking out for the *second* coming of the Lord. God moved in that garden, in that scene of death where the Lord lay, as He had before, when the earth was without form and void. Thence sprang the new creation in eternal beauty and fruitfulness. The first man, Adam, is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. What fruit has God from each and from that creation over which each is head. "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly."

If we look at the first creation we see that everything there was prepared for the enjoyment of Adam and his wife. Every animal was in subjection to them, every fruit, save God's reserve, was given to them for their enjoyment. What God reserved He kept to test man's obedience and dependence on Himself, fruits which surely God had a right to expect. God gave to man the fruits of the garden; man himself was to bring forth the fruits of obedience and dependence for

God. On this ground only was he at liberty to enjoy all that surrounded him. Failing in this, he lost all right to the other. *Rights* he had in Eden, dependent on his own obedience and dependence; rights to the enjoyment of all, based on the sure word of God. And now, where man is, outside of Eden, his *rights* are based on the same sure word. They are these: "*In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee, and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return*" (Gen. iii.) *Sorrow* is now his portion instead of *enjoyment*, and death is man's *right* now. Solemn truth is here before us, for man is helpless and *hopeless* except the Lord provide; for the New Testament adds, that "after death" comes "the judgment." But if the head of creation is thus unfruitful, the result is around us to-day: "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." All is a ruin—all is lost—and man is dead to God. God had thus entered the first garden, as read of in Scripture, to seek fruit. He cast forth from it the unfruitful tree, the masterpiece of His first creation, him whom He had made in "His own image," and, by so doing, He declared to us that all expectation of fruit from him was at an end.

But what was God's resource when the first man had thus failed? God turned away to an animal that He had provided for this moment, and in its skin He clothed Adam and Eve. In that animal God looked on to Christ, who, Head of a new creation, would glorify Him and establish all in permanent blessing.

Does man admit his ruin and turn to God's resource? Man refused then, and man refuses *now*, to bow to the truth of God. Consequently we find Adam's first child Cain, bringing of the fruit of the ground "an offering unto the Lord." All will not do, and God will have none but Christ. "And the Lord had respect unto Abel *and to his offering*, but unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect, and Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell." Many go in the way of Cain to-day, of whom Jude speaks; they do not see that man is rejected, and that Christ only is accepted. He is God's fruitful One, He who was looked upon as "a root out of

a dry ground." When there was no fruit in the garden God spoke of "the seed of the woman." He is God's "Plant of Renown."

After God has given to us His history of the first man without law and under law in the Old Testament, He shows us what He was under grace in the New Testament. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Did man produce fruit under grace? In all he was proved unfruitful. Israel was His choicest vine, and it brought forth *wild* grapes. They rejected and slew His servants, and fairly sought to gain possession of the inheritance, and to be independent, by slaying God's beloved Son. They killed Him and cast Him out, and crowned their iniquity by rejecting the Holy Ghost. Yet He whom they thus rejected was ever among men the fruitful One, delighting the heart of God in all His ways. Never had God found His full delight in man until *He* was born. At His birth the angels proclaimed, "Good pleasure (or delight) in *man*." Heaven opened as He walked among men again and again to testify of *Him*. Since the fall, God's eye had, in types and shadows, in sacrifices and offerings, delighted in Him; now in person He was before Him. Who can fully enter into the preciousness of these shadows wherein, in the past, God saw Christ; who can measure what Christ's preciousness was to Him? Surely none then saw that in them that God saw, as no saint now can fathom God's value of Him. Yet in *Him* we are accepted. And as He was God's fruit then so is He to-day.

And as God in the morning of creation thus entered the garden of Eden to seek fruit, so, in its evening, He entered Gethsemane. And so fruitful, so delighting to His heart was the blessed One kneeling there, that (His final work accomplished) God took Him to sit with Him on His own throne. In the garden of Eden Adam followed his own will. In Gethsemane the Lord said, "Not my will, but Thine be done." In the one case He drove out the man and barred the way to the Tree of Life; in the other He showed the fruitful One the "path of Life" (Psalm xvi.), saying, "Sit Thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Night closed in on this world—a solemn night of judgment—ere the dawn of the morning without clouds—the day of the new creation. We look on to that brighter day.

But if we have had the Second Man—head of the new creation—thus tested and proved in the greatest

extremity to be wholly fruitful for God, what is the result? What can it be, but unreserved eternal blessing to the creation pertaining to Him? As Head of the *first* creation, Adam brought in death, and, of necessity, unfruitfulness as a result. As Head of the *new* creation, the Lord abolishes death, and establishes life and fruitfulness. And the life, the blessing, is *eternal*. In that garden wherein the Lord accepted the cup from the hands of His Father, there was a sepulchre; there they laid Him: His creation gave Him a grave, but He was truly "the Tree of Life in the midst of the garden," and a dying thief could and did partake of it, and eat, and live for ever. The Lord that day entered Paradise in the company of one who had partaken of the Tree of Life. Thus have we as saints all partaken also of Him, for he is the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever" (John vi.) Blessed be His name, who, except He had died, had ever abode alone; but, having died, has brought forth "much fruit."

Man well knows that he ought to bring forth fruit to God. The savage owns it as he brings to his gods of wood and stone his gifts and offerings; civilized man owns it, as he builds and endows "churches" and "charities"—both seeking thereby to quiet the increasing demands of a conscience not at rest. But, believer in Christ, have *you* learned what kind of fruit God will accept? Have you ended with the unfruitful Adam, and have you begun with the last Adam, God's fruitful one? Have you started from Eden or from Calvary to bring forth fruit? The old man starts from the first. He brings to God of the fruit of the ground for His acceptance, and having done so, begins to make the world a happy place for himself in the family of Cain. A happy place, outside Eden, without God! Music, and science, and invention—all have their origin in the man who brings the fruit of the earth. On the other hand, the new man has started from Golgotha, and the grave of the old man. He has learned that he was there judged and condemned in the cross and person of Christ. And now, to us who have thus started, the story God has taught all through the ages He teaches us; it is, that there is nothing God will accept but Christ. But we, the new creation, have life from and in Him. And if our ears are opened, as we stand in life on the resurrection side of His

grave in that garden, we hear His voice to us, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear *much fruit*; so shall ye be my disciples (John xv.) Does God see Christ in you and in me as we walk along on earth day by day, each one of us in the path which God has marked out for us to tread?"

MEDITATIONS ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

(Translated from the Italian.)

CHAPTER VIII.

AN important fact, which renders the signification of our narrative still clearer, is here presented to us. Here we find Saul taking part in the death of Stephen. We have seen that the death of Stephen was the end of the history of the enmity of the human heart against God, when God had done everything to try it, and also to restore it; its incurable enmity was manifested, and the end of man before God. There was no longer hope of finding any good, since God Himself had made use of everything,—judgment in the deluge, the law, the prophets, His own Son, and the testimony of the Holy Ghost. All was in vain. The more God worked, the more man's enmity manifested itself.

Here for the first time we find Saul. Not content with taking part in the death of Stephen, he goes into distant cities in search of Christians, to bring them bound to Jerusalem. He is the Apostle of man's enmity against Christ. If the history of man was finished, that of the sovereign grace of God was beginning. The spirit of the first martyr takes its place in the presence of Jesus. But the entire number must be completed before Jesus can come and re-unite them with their bodies.

Here we find the first general persecution, which, however, in the hands of God, served to scatter the seed of the Gospel. This also is a proof of the free activity of the Holy Ghost to make use of whomsoever He sees fit to select. Still another important fact. While all the Christians are scattered by the persecution, the Apostles remain at Jerusalem. The special mission of Matthew x. 23 was not accomplished. It will be by the power of God hereafter, I doubt not; but not at the moment of which we read here. It is the multitude of Christians scattered by the persecution who preach the Gospel in Palestine, and afterwards among the Gentiles. Saul

persecutes the assembly with cruel zeal; and the Christians leave the city. It was neither the settled design of man, nor the spiritual zeal of the Apostles, but the fury of the enemy, which, according to the wisdom of God, first disseminated the Gospel outside the gates of Jerusalem. The spirit of Stephen gone up to heaven, the Gospel of grace is carried into the surrounding districts by means of the enmity of man, and the providence of God, who makes use of it, leading the scattered ones to communicate in love the gifts they possess. What is man? and what the wisdom and grace of God?

Another example of the free activity of the Spirit is found in the person of Philip, chosen to take care of the widows. His service is finished with regard to the widows; but he has acquired a good degree, and great liberty in the faith in Christ Jesus. Setting out from Jerusalem, he goes down into Samaria; and there, by the power of his word, and by the miracles given him to do, the people are liberated from the influence of a notorious instrument of Satan—Simon, who exercised the arts of sorcery, and had been held to be the great power of God. "Then Simon himself believed also; and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done."

It was the miracles which had exercised this influence over his spirit, not the seed of God, the divine Word which had entered into his heart. To believe by means of miracles alone, is not the faith which operates by the Holy Ghost, although God may work miracles and signs in order to confirm His Word. The end of the second chapter of John shows that Jesus did not trust those who had believed in this way. When the Spirit of God works, requirements are produced in the soul which Jesus alone can satisfy. Thus Nicodemus was under the influence of the miracles when he went to Jesus. To the others, reasonable conviction sufficed, and they remained where they were.

The sole desire of Simon is to possess the power of conferring on others by the imposition of his hands the ability to work miracles and signs. He wished to buy it with money, thereby showing that there was no work of God in his soul. He had "neither part nor lot in this matter." He was in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity; his heart was not right before God. His sin excited the indignation, not

the compassion of Peter. "Thy money perish with thee," said he.

But still his heart is not touched with compunction. He asks only that what had been said might not come upon him; not that his thought might be forgiven, or that the state of his heart might be changed.

Here we find still other things which we shall do well to consider. The difference between the operation and the sealing of the Spirit is very clear. The Samaritans had believed and had been baptised, but had not received the Holy Ghost; for He had not yet descended upon them. He had worked by the Word in their hearts; men and women were converted, born again, had confessed the name of Jesus; but they were not yet sealed. Then it belonged in a special manner to the Apostles to impose hands, and confer the gift of the Spirit. In Acts xix. we see that Paul conferred it; he was a true Apostle. Ananias was sent that Saul might receive it; this was a special mission of the Lord himself. The Spirit might also come without the laying on of hands, as on the hundred and twenty, and on Cornelius; but not one had the power of conferring it save the Apostles. It is said, "of the Apostles' hands" (verse 18).

It is possible, too, that the Spirit might come on a man in this way without an internal work giving life. The Lord does not habitually work thus, but cases of it are not wanting in the Old Testament, such as Balaam, king Saul, and others, where the question of conversion is not raised, showing that that is another thing altogether. In the New Testament we do not find a case of it, but the thing is supposed (1 Cor. xii., Heb. vi.); and the power to do miracles with the aid of the Holy Ghost, and without conversion and life, is clearly presented by the Lord himself (Luke xii. 26, 27), where the Lord does not deny the fact, but declares that he knows not those who have done them (see Deut. xiii.) Judas at least was sent to do such.

We see then a new character of the apostolical authority; then the free activity of the Spirit clearly displayed in Philip.

By his means the Gospel is communicated to a distant country through a proselyte come to Jerusalem to worship the true God; a man in whose heart the word of God possessed full power. It is beautiful to remark in Philip the readiness of his obedience—how he allowed himself to be led by the will of God.

He is the object of all attention in the city of Samaria; a notable work had been done by means of him. "Arise," said the Spirit, "and go to Gaza, which is desert;" but he was not told what he was to do there. And he goes there immediately. There he finds the treasurer of the Queen of Ethiopia. The Spirit says to him, "Go near, and join thyself to this chariot; and he runs immediately to it. The treasurer was reading the Word of God, but the key of faith in Jesus was wanting. Philip mounts the chariot, and preaches faith in Jesus to him. All was ordered by God. He was reading that which was immediately connected with the sufferings of the Lord; and, by the power of the Spirit, the explanation of the passage is sent him by the mouth of Philip. The Eunuch, with the heart prepared by grace, and already having faith in the Word, becomes a Christian. He is baptised by Philip, and goes on his way rejoicing. It is remarkable that the name of Christianity remains to this day in that country, much corrupted, it is true, but in the form which this man implanted. They believe as to the profession of Christ, but practise circumcision—(verse 37 is not authentic).

The Spirit of the Lord catches away Philip, and, by the miraculous power of God, he is found at Azotus. Time and space are nothing to God. From Azotus, he evangelizes in all the cities till he comes to Cæsarea. Further on we find him stationed with his family at this city. He had by this time obtained the fair name of *Evangelist*. J. N. D.

CHRISTIAN CORRESPONDENCE.—REAPING.

It rejoices me to hear that our brother is such a good reaper, and that the wheat was so ready for the barn. Surely we can all be glad with you in your harvest-home at —, especially as the sheaves include some so dear to you.

It is greatly refreshing to the hearts of the saints to see the Lord bringing many to Himself in present joy and peace and everlasting blessing; for no growth in grace, or increase in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, ought to supplant the original delight of the soul, when it was first brought to look on the Saviour and live.

As to instrumentality, the Lord knows how to use all His members;

"If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? if the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?" When "the unity of the Spirit" is really understood, the effect is wonderful. We may remark one (and not the least either), "that the members should have the same care one of another." What a remedy this would be for many an outbreak, and many a heartburn; or rather, how would the common interest of each in the whole supply the motive for "growing up into Him in all things, which is the Head," even Christ. Very often the Lord uses an evangelist of a certain growth, to meet the state of multitudes in the North, South, East, and West, and to bring them upon the same meridian, so to speak. For certain it is, that if the gift puts the man who has it over the heads of people, he had better carry less canvas in his sails, and let others come up within range and reach of him.

Those are most used among us who are bent on knitting souls to Christ in one way or another. First, think of the Lord Himself in this light, coming down to the level of the woman at the well. But then He was perfect in every grace; and it is this which makes it so refreshing to be with our true Boaz in such a barley-field as John iv., and another Ruth of that day.

How touching it is to hear Him let His disciples into the secret of His own thoughts about the Samaritan, when He says, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." And again, what handfuls He lets fall for her, that He may win her confidence and heart, till like a true Ruth she casts herself at His feet, and asks this "near kinsman" to spread His skirt over His handmaid! Very precious it is to take our places with her (as we have long ago), and receive the assurance of His personal love, "Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter," and to let our Boaz tell us what a kinsman's part He has taken by revealing Himself to us at the cross as our Kinsman-Redeemer, and all besides that He has purposed in His glorious resurrection, "to raise up the name of the dead upon His inheritance."

How suitably does the veil drop upon this picture till the coming day of His renown. He takes the people (so to speak) that were in the gate, and the elders, as witnesses of the plucked off shoe; and she "goes her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man that told me all that ever I did: is not this the Christ? Then they

went out of the city and came to Him . . . and said unto the woman, now we believe not because of thy saying; for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

What remains but the fulfilment of the cry of ten thousand times ten thousand voices—"The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel, and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel; and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem."

And so He was, for in none of these prophecies, nor in any other expectation, will our Boaz fail in the heavens above, or in the earth beneath, in their appointed seasons.

Your reference to—has turned me into the barley-field, and to the day when sower and reapers, young men and maidens, shall rejoice together. "For how great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty! Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids." (Zech. ix. 17.)

THE MYSTERY OF PIETY.

1 TIMOTHY iii. 16.

Of a mystery, and of a person, Paul here writes. For the mystery of piety is He who has been manifested in flesh. Looking then at what He is, the Apostle writes of the mystery. Remembering who He is, he tells us of the Lord's manifestation in flesh. Something analogous to this we have from the same pen. When addressing the Thessalonians, the Apostle calls attention to the power which restrained and the One who restrained—the power and the person—being both of them the Holy Ghost. Viewed however as the power, Paul speaks of Him as *τὸ κατέχον* in the neuter; mentioning Him as a person, he writes *ὁ κατέχον* in the masculine. Now of truth about the Lord Jesus the Scriptures are full. They reveal to us things about Him ere He became a man; they describe Him in His life on earth; and they further dwell at length on the future in store for Him. But here the light is concentrated on that part of His history which lies between His incarnation and ascension; for, as the mystery of piety has been disclosed for the guidance of God's saints whilst they are on earth, of that part only of His history are we here reminded.

A mystery or secret it is called, because at one time it was not

known; but, since the Lord has appeared in flesh, it is a hidden thing no longer. For He has been manifested in flesh, justified in Spirit. The secret of piety, then, is a secret no longer, and the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ stands out, not only as a miraculous and unique fact, but also as something which is of practical value to His people. In the manner of His birth, He stands alone; but in His life on earth, He is the example for His people. Clearly, then, piety cannot be produced by human effort or fleshly energy, for the Lord as incarnate is the mystery of it. Yet it can be displayed in man, for He who is its mystery has been manifested in flesh. Till He appeared, however, its spring, its origin remained undisclosed. Now in Him we learn about it, and see that it is the divine nature active in man.

And will this be pleasing to God? Hear what the Word says—"Justified in Spirit." God by the Holy Ghost has put the seal of His approval on the man Christ Jesus, who was declared Son of God in power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection of the dead. (Rom. i. 4). How different is God's estimate of piety from that of man's. Men, religious men so called, the Chief Priests and Scribes, crucified the Lord Jesus as a blasphemer and malefactor; but God raised Him from the dead, and thus openly attested His righteousness. Is piety then to be desired by man? Is it to be produced in us? It can only be as we have Christ, who is the secret of it, for our life. Apart from that, how can we bring forth any of the fruit, which was seen so fully matured in Him.

But this admission deals a death-blow to human pride; for since the secret of this piety is the incarnate One, its source is not in man un-fallen any more than in man fallen. Its spring, its source lies far away above man; yet it has been, it should be, displayed in men. But how? Were it a fruit only of a man in innocence, it could never be found in any of us. Were it a property of man un-fallen, we should be just as far from it as ever. That it does not belong to man fallen, is but too evident. In truth it is not a property essentially belonging to man at all, although men should not be without it. In a man it has been fully manifested. In men it should be daily seen. For all those who have Christ as their life are partakers of the divine nature, of which piety is a fruit; so that which we could never

have manifested by nature, is within our reach through grace.

But for this the Lord Jesus Christ must be made known to us. So the Word not only tells us of His manifestation in flesh, and justification in the Spirit, but further sets forth where He has been made known, and by whom He has been received. As regards the first of these, "He was seen of angels, was preached among the Gentiles, or nations." Thus to all ranks of intelligent creatures has He been made known, though not to all in the same way. Angels beheld Him. Yes! and under what circumstances? As a helpless baby in the manger, and on its mother's breasts (Psal. xxii. 9). As a tempted, but faithful, though hungry man in the wilderness. As an obedient, dependent man in conflict in the garden. Angels saw the mystery of piety as they gazed, and surely with wonder and adoration, on Him who was here as a man. But to Gentiles He was preached. Why this difference. The interest taken in Him, and in what would result to God from His incarnation, their notes of praise on that winter night, within ear-shot of the Shepherds, most clearly set forth, as well as their inquiring attitude, described by Peter, when scanning and pondering over the predictions of His sufferings and glories (1 Peter i. 12). To arouse their interest, then, no message could have been needed. But more, as elect, and free from apostacy, they stood in want of no atonement, nor did the Lord take hold of angels. With men it was different—"Christ was in the world, and the world knew Him not." So to men, nations, was He preached. To save men He came, so men were to hear of His life, death, resurrection, and ascension. Yet not simply to hear about Him as a wonder to astonish, or dazzle, but to learn about Him, and of Him, as the example for all who should believe on Him. And not to Jews, but to Gentiles was He preached; for piety was that which man confessedly lacked. Hence, whilst seen of angels, to Gentiles was He preached. Angels would learn about piety, as displayed in Him. Men were to practise it by following Him. And not in vain was He preached. For He was believed on in the world, who was also received up into glory. As the mystery of piety to all men could He be preached; for, viewed in this light, He was not presented in a dispensational aspect. King of Israel He was: the Christ, the Son of David, His birth proclaimed Him to be. As David's Son, and

Israel's Messiah, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel was He sent. As the mystery of piety, however, He could be presented to Gentiles; and God's acceptance of this One His place in glory declares. But though now He has been received up into glory, hearts on earth have opened to Him—object of faith to such, though in person present on high. What a history is this! Of what importance, too, to men is the record of the sojourn on earth of the Lord Jesus—a pattern for men! Yes, but more! Viewed merely as an example, the history of His life would land us in despair; for it shows what a man should be, without giving the power to conform to it. As a pattern simply it brings out into full relief the sad results of the fall; for the fact of His being a pattern shows how far men have come short. Learning, however, that He is our life, if believers on Him; that as partakers of a new, the divine nature, He is in us; and that the Spirit too of Christ dwells in us—what He was on earth becomes of the greatest value, teaching us, as it does, of that which will be produced in those who are led of the Spirit, having first been born of the Spirit.

(To be ended in next issue.)

RECOVERY AND RESTORATION.

IS THAT THE AIM OF THE GOSPEL OF GOD?

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—In the letter which you left here last night, for my perusal and comments, your sister says a good many things that are true in their consequences, as we know them in ourselves, and see them in the world around us. Her idea is consistent enough with her theory—namely, "recovery, from an existing state; and restoration to a previous, but lost one."

For instance, were I to ask her to distinguish the endowments of man (of which she is so enamoured) from his nature and being, and to tell me whether a fallen nature can be recovered by its endowments, to the primitive and Adamic state, what could she say? These very endowments of "intellect, heart, and will" on which she so depends, are the three energetic powers and proofs of a fallen nature; so that these tools with which she is going to work, are wrested out of her hands. Another has got hold of them; she is already "sold under sin." The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Of what avail is it for her to talk of these "three parts

of our nature, being reinstated into their original place; and that a man is not harmoniously developed, nor that which God intended him to be, till this is accomplished."

Is it possible that your sister supposes this harmonious development to lie upon the bright horizon of her *hope*; or is it not rather the sad story of what once existed in the garden of Eden, where God walked with the man, whom afterwards *He drove out*?

Again, are we going on to a point in advance of us, where man by nature may reach what God intended him to be? or, are the Scriptures the history of a ruined creation; man's fall, and consequent *loss* of the likeness of God in which he originally stood? What does Genesis v. say, "For the day that God created man, in the image of God made he him." And is not this a thing far back, and left in the past? Listen again, "and Adam lived a hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in *his own* likeness, after his image." And what was *this*, but that of a fallen creature?

I have put these two things as questions, in the light of these Scriptures—which your sister makes in the way of assertion, and would ask her is "harmonious development" behind her, or before her? Is what God intended man to be, the point of his sad departure, or the point of attainment? May the Lord keep her from an idea, that her own fancy paints bright in the future; and give her to own the depths of man's departure from God, by seeing *her own ruin* in the dark shade of the Cross, where with wicked hands the Christ of God, was crucified and slain! Who can talk any longer of man's harmonious development, or agreement with God, that sees the crowd around the cross, and hears the cry, "away with Him, crucify Him!"

But to pursue your sister's letter—"the wrong *use* of our reason (she says) may lead us astray." Here again she is caught by the consequences, instead of getting at the cause—reason in itself, is no longer to be trusted—for what is reason *now* in a fallen creature, but fallen reason? I should not be a fallen creature as a man, were it not so. Moreover, the word of God settles this point of our reason, just as it decides the others of intellect, heart, and will—"So then *they that are in the flesh cannot please God*." Shall I depend upon my endowments, after what we have been considering, or dare to plead them in the face of a scripture which forces upon me a far

deeper enquiry—Are you in the flesh? If so, you *cannot* please God. What does history prove to us, but this same great fact, or else why was the deluge? Were those days of vengeance on account of harmonious development centuries after the first man had been driven out? Was the receiving the Lord Jesus Christ back again into the heavens, on account of mankind reaching what God intended man to be? or, because the carnal mind was *enmity* against him? Solemn and searching inquiries these!

Again, what is God's order with fallen man, since redemption in a ruined creation has been wrought out by the atoning blood of Christ? Will He be satisfied with the washing of the hands, or of pots and cups and tables? or does He say, "make the tree good, and his fruit shall be good"? Was it right that a man like Job should be made to abhor himself, go to dust and ashes, and repent before the Almighty? Of what had he to repent and humble himself, looked at as to his endowments among *men*? Was it right in later times that a Nicodemus should be laid low as to all *his* advantages, and this Master of Israel take his place at the foot of the Cross, to be born again of the Spirit? Was it in accordance with truth and holiness that Paul said, "if any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more—but what things were gain to me those I counted loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord?" Was this the harmonious development of his own nature, any more than that of Nicodemus or of Job, and a reinstatement into their original place, by the endowments of intellect, heart, and will? "Marvel not that I said unto thee ye must be born again," tells out another and far happier lesson. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, do what you will with it; but that which is born of the Spirit is spirit; born again not of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but born of God.

Once more, your sister says, "our will, our hearts, our affections, must find in God their centre; our reason, also, must be rescued from the error by which it was led astray." Here let me ask, was it mere reason and the faculties which were led astray, or was Adam *himself* led away from God, so that he drove out the man? It is not my endowments that can recover me, for they are but part of myself. It is *I* that must be born again—it is *I* who am to go down to the foot of the Cross in conscious

ruin, sin, and wretchedness—to take forgiveness through the worthiness of another—salvation through the blood of my Saviour—healing by His stripes and no condemnation through the sufferings which He bore in my stead. Oh! to be "found in Him"—what a translation! neither having my sins between me and God for punishment; nor having mine own righteousness, for judgment; but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is *of God* by faith. Now that the fulness of time is come (and past) for God to send into the world, His Son—now that Christ has been made *sin for us* who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him—now that the last Adam has come in, to set aside the first Adam—now that the second man from heaven has superseded the first, shall I build again the things which He destroyed? What does Christianity teach me? Not merely that a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit, so that my bad deeds must be atoned for, but more, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" It is not only that my intellect, heart, and will are all astray from God, so that there is none that doeth good, *no not one*—but my nature, my very being, which has done what it ought not, and left undone what it should have done, is at fault. It is no longer a question of the endowments of my nature, but the nature itself! Nor is there any remedy for *this* but death, which has put it aside—nor any resource but Christ; "Our old man has been crucified with Him," is the key-note of our deliverance. *The tree itself*—from its root to the boughs and outermost twigs, with all its fair show, has been judged where my sins were judged, and on Him who bore the whole in His body on the tree. No, it is not by recovery of my faculties, nor by the delusive idea of a fallen nature restoring me, so as to make God their centre once more (the very God who has driven man out), but by totally other ways and means than these! "God so loved the world, that *He* gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Here is God's philanthropy towards man. It is no longer a disappointing inquiry, of what *I* must be, but of what Christ is; no longer, what *I* must *bring* to God, but of what He has brought to me; no longer, what *I* must *do* to be saved, but what my Saviour has finished on the Cross, and what *I* can render to Him who *has saved me*. As

a *new* creature, partaker by grace in another life with Christ risen and glorified, I mortify my members which are upon the earth. Partaker of the divine nature, I walk above my fallen self in the conscious strength of the mighty power of God, that worketh in me "to will and to do of His good pleasure." By the body of Christ in death, I am taught to reckon myself *dead* unto sin and to the law; and I am *free* to be married to another, even to Him that is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit to God. Made conscious by the indwelling Spirit through the Word, that "ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God," we can look at ourselves as the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body. This is true Christianity, and worthy the name of Him who has laid its foundations upon His own sufferings and death. A Christianity which bids us "stand fast in the liberty where-with He has made us free," introducing us as the true circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, who rejoice in Christ Jesus and have *no* confidence in the flesh. A Christianity final, but which gives this Christ to us, as passed into the heavens the first begotten from the dead, and Head of His body the Church; giving us the blessed hope of His speedy coming to receive us to Himself, and of introducing us to the presence of the Father, faultless and with exceeding joy. The perfection of our blessedness is to be found in *this* assurance, "we know that when He shall appear, we shall be *like* Him, for we shall see Him as He is." May the Lord in the little while we tarry for Him, make us know the practical power of this blessed expectation, "he that hath this hope in Him, purifieth himself even as He is pure." This is what such a Christianity provides for us, now and hereafter. May your sister learn it and receive all as the fruit of Christ's travail, and the purchase of His precious blood, that she may be filled "with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

If she still lingers over the wreck and ruins of human nature, and dwells on the endowment of mind, heart, and will, let her at least be honest with her own self, and add to them the words of rebuke from scripture, which denote their *present* quality. If she will speak of the

mind let her listen to *this*, "a reprobate mind—a carnal mind—the mind and conscience defiled." Will she speak of the heart? Let her remember this: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked—who can know it?" Will *she* claim this prerogative—or shall He who says, "I, the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give to every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." Will any dare to meet God on this footing? Who can answer Him when He riseth up out of His place? Lastly, as to *will*—let her ponder the terrible significance of those words, "Then Pilate delivered Jesus to their will!"

Our only refuge is Christ, and Christ crucified, and risen. The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin. May your sister turn from the creature, and learn the love of God in calling us *out* to be one with the Son of man, at His right hand in glory—the last Adam, Head of the new creation.—Faithfully yours, J. E. B.

IN THE HILL COUNTRY OF JUDAH.

("SAVED BY HOPE.")

Gen. xxiii.

Death, the *Grave*, and RESURRECTION.

Death and Burial: hence the Tomb.

Christian! in thy recollection

Let this truth have ample room.

Art thou, dumb with sorrow, sleeping?

Are the weeds about thy head?

Art thou mourning sore and weeping?

Stand up from before thy dead!

All is woe and lamentation

Whilst our dead are in our sight.

Bury them, and Expectation

Rises,—spreads her pinions bright.

Abraham, the pilgrim-stranger,

Learnt this mystery of old.

Death, the world's entire Deranger,

Showed to him "the place for gold."

Silver then how freely spending

In the purchase of a Tomb,—

God, the work of faith commending,

Made for him, in Hebron, room.

Grace ensures the like confession

'Mid the Hittites of to-day;

O'er the covenant-possession

Where we hide our dead away.

Faith, not sight, by intuition

Knows that Eshcol's vale must bloom;

Gathers grapes, in prime condition,

Figs, pomegranates,—round the Tomb.

God Himself the vigil keeping—

Do we watch beside our dead?

Do we traverse Canaan weeping?—

Like a bulrush bow the head?

In the Land, as strangers, sowing,

Though in weakness, precious seed.

To the Golden City going,

Not with flesh and blood we plead.

If the Ark went on before us,

Took in Jordan's bed its stand,

God hath spread His Banner o'er us,

In His name we hold the Land.

Long before the full fruition,
"Bethlehem" is seen to bloom;
"Sychar" shines, in recognition,
Joseph, of thy faith, thy Tomb.
Dreary is the desolation
While on Death alone we gaze;
Fair the scene, a new creation,
As we view God's living ways.

Human love was loudly wailing
E'en in presence of the Cross;
Jesus there, o'er Hell prevailing,
Triumphed, mid creation's loss.
Israel's Shepherd hath been smitten,
Death's full cup He drained dry;
Died—was buried, it is written;
Rose, and lives no more to die.

"I am" . . . "I" . . . "the Resurrection
And the Life" . . . "Thy dead shall
To the seed of His election, [live];"
"Each its body" God will give.
Past the former days of weeping,
Nevermore a tear to shed;
Now is Hope this Charter keeping,
"Jesus liveth, and was dead."

ABOUT NOT PRESSING THE LORD'S COMING.

In reply to what a correspondent wrote to us, Mr. J. B. Stoney has written the following, which he allows us to use here:—

MY DEAR BROTHER,— . . . As to the construction put on my statement at Quemerford, I said I did not press the Lord to come, though I never lost the expectation of His return out of my mind. I looked for it during my lifetime, but I could not *press* it, seeing the state of preparation of the saints, and that I did look for more of the bridal character in separation from things and people which would not suit Him. I was contending against the sentimental refuge or cloak for every mixture and incongruity—"Oh, I wish the Lord would come," or "O the Lord is coming, and when He comes all will be right." Doubtless all will be right then, but he will hold each one responsible, and the teacher in a double way for the way the saints are when He comes. I certainly would say "Come" to Him *in reply* to His saying "I come quickly," but in doing so I should trim my lamp, and exhort others to do so, or I should not think this "Come" a genuine, truthful expression. I say there are "marks" so distinct and palpable in those waiting for the Lord, that I can't believe that anyone who has them not is waiting for the coming or return of the Lord. When I insist on the coming of the Lord it is to provoke a going forth to meet Him with trimmed lamps: like Elijah's last day, and effected *in a day*. Is it not?—Yours affectionately in the Lord,

J. B. STONEY.

PROSPECTIVE PARDON.

WE know of no intelligent Christians who hold the absurd dogma of *prospective pardon*, or, in other words, that sins are forgiven before they are committed. Mr. Kelly writes—"Prospective forgiveness, which I have always denounced." It is one of the many inventions that have been found out and fathered on such as go entirely by the Holy Scriptures. Nor do we object to ask, as believers, for the forgiveness of our sins; though we consider confessing our sins to be essential to our forgiveness, and a much deeper thing. In his lecturing on the "Lord's Prayer" Mr. Kelly says, "There is not a clause of that prayer, I believe, but what one might prefer now, even to 'forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.'"

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2 COR. IV. 3-6.

[No. 8.]

**"THE SPIRIT AND THE BRIDE
SAY COME."**

That bright and blessed morn is near,
When Christ the Bridegroom shall appear,
And call His bride away :
Her blessing then shall be complete,
When with her Lord she takes her seat
In everlasting day.

The days and months are gliding past ;
Soon we shall hear the trumpet's blast,
Which wakes the sleeping dead :
"The dead in Christ" shall first arise,
Then we with them shall reach the skies,
One body : Christ the HEAD.

What wonder, joy, and glad surprise
Shall fill our hearts ; "caught up," we rise
To meet Him in the air—
To see His face—to hear His voice,
And in His perfect love rejoice,
Whose glory then we share.

No more deferred our hopes shall be—
No longer through a glass we'll see ;
But clearly, face to face.
We'll dwell with Jesus then above,
Whom absent we have learned to love :
Rich trophies of His grace.

Well may this hope our spirits cheer,
Whilst waiting for our Saviour here—
He said "I'll come again :"
Well may our hearts "look for" that day,
And to His word responsive say,
"Come Jesus Lord—Amen."

G. W. F.

AT HIS TABLE.

Saviour, thus around Thee gathered,
Joying with a joy divine ;
Yet with awe do we remember
Thee in death, that death of Thine.
Wondrous is the power that frees us ;
Everlasting, perfect, sure,
Is thy living love, Lord Jesus ;
Life we have in Thee secure.

Thou art worthy—"we adore Thee ;"
Thou art the Eternal Word !
We ascribe to Thee the glory :
Thine the cross, O Holy Lord !
Of the loaf, the cup, partaking,
We recall Thee in that hour ;
Give Thee thus, around Thee gathered,
Blessing, glory, honour, power.

VOL. I.—No. 8.

**MEDITATIONS ON THE ACTS
OF THE APOSTLES.**

(Translated from the Italian.)

CHAPTER IX.

WE have glanced at the history of the free activity of the Spirit in those who were dispersed by the persecution, in Stephen, and in Philip. Then follows the deeply interesting narrative of Saul and of his conversion. We saw in that of Stephen, that man had reached the extreme end of his iniquity, not only in crucifying the Lord, but in refusing the offer of grace and of His return, in virtue of the Saviour's intercession on the cross. There, for the first time, we find Saul ; but he is not content with this quiet hatred. "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that, if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem."

He is the Apostle of his own will, of hatred against Christ, and of the persecution of His children. Now the Lord allowed this, in order to make him the witness and apostle of the sovereign grace which opened his eyes, converted and pardoned him. Here, it is evidently sovereign grace meeting the fury of the ardent enemy of truth and grace, who sought, as he himself says, to destroy Christianity, and banish the name of Christ from the face of the earth. While occupied in this very purpose, the Lord stops him on his way and

reveals Himself to his soul, and also to his eyes, so that he might be an eye-witness to His glory. A light from heaven shone round about him—"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

But two very important truths are contained in this remarkable scene. The Lord's glory is revealed. Saul had not seen the Lord—had not followed Him when present in the flesh. The twelve Apostles had known Him in the days of His flesh, and had seen Him disappear in the cloud ; they knew by faith that He was seated at the right hand of God, but they could not be eye-witnesses of His glory. It is then that Paul begins. He saw the Lord's glory, but knew not who He was. One thing he was certain of—the glory and the voice of the Lord Himself had appeared to Him. He asks, therefore, "Who art Thou, Lord?" then the Lord replies, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." He was not a man on the earth, nor the Messiah gone up to heaven, but the Lord of Glory, recognizing Himself still as Jesus, and also Jesus of Nazareth.

The starting-point of the doctrine is different ; the same redemption, the same Saviour ; but the revelation given to the twelve is that the man Jesus is gone up to heaven ; God has exalted Him. The revelation given to Saul is that the Lord of Glory is Jesus of Nazareth. It begins with heavenly glory ; then, in the second place, that all Christians are united with Himself, members of His body. This doctrine is not unfolded, but it is not said,

"Why persecutest thou my disciples as a doctor or a rabbi;" but "Why persecutest thou *me*." And this is the Lord of Glory. "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

Such are the fundamental points in the history of Paul, the enemy of the Lord of Glory, converted, pardoned, justified, necessary witness of sovereign grace. The Gospel of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, of the glory of the Lord, is confided to him; then the truth of the union, of the unity of Christians with Christ, glorious Head in heaven. Peter preached that God had glorified Him whom the Jews had crucified, and invited the rebels to come to God by the sacrifice which He had perfected; and to those who repented Jesus would return. Saul preached that this salvation was for all men; and that God, as Saviour, could not limit himself to the narrow bounds of Israel, but that He announced Himself to the whole creation under heaven; then, that the assembly of God was united to Jesus, His body.

We shall see that God did not permit disunion, but desired that there should be a single assembly. But it is not the less true that Paul was a witness that there was no difference, that all men were lost, all children of wrath, one just as another; and that Jesus, by the gift of the Holy Ghost, had united all in one body—a truth which the Jews (and also the Christian Jews) always resisted, tormenting the Apostle in his work. Peter himself dissimulated, so that all the Christian Jews, led by his authority, which was only the fear of man, sided with him. Not one of the Apostles speaks in his epistles of the assembly, the body of Christ on earth, save only Paul. The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; sovereign grace, by which he was the example to all those who should afterwards believe in Christ Jesus; and the whole in virtue of the cross—such was the Gospel confided to Paul.

His travelling companions were witnesses to the truth of the vision, but did not know of the revelation confided to Paul. The bright light shone around them, but they did not see the Lord. They heard a voice, but not the words of Him who spoke. Paul was a witness of that which he had seen and heard. Paul's companions were able to testify to the vision, which was a real thing, and not an invention of Paul for his own glory. The whole was confirmed by the mission of Ananias, to whom the Lord revealed what had happened, sending him to Saul to open his eyes,

and receive him into the Christian assembly by baptism, and by the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the sudden light had blinded Saul.

God had drawn him away from all communication with the outside world, in order that he might be entirely occupied with his soul, and with the state in which he found himself. In fact, his situation was without a parallel. Externally, he was a man without spot, of irreproachable reputation according to the law; he had a good conscience. He believed it his duty to do much against the name of Jesus, and he did it. The authorities of the religion of the fathers encouraged and sent him, and in every way supported him in what he did with such zeal; conscience, legal justice, religion, all that formed his moral life, had made him the fierce enemy of the Lord of Glory. But at one blow, all the foundations of his moral life were ruined. It was by these very foundations that he became the enemy of the Lord, but resisted the Spirit who called them to repentance by the testimony rendered to His glory. Saul had assisted in an active way in this opposition, when the Jews stoned Stephen. But that did not satisfy him. His zeal required that he should persecute also those who believed in distant parts. Thus occupied he meets with the Lord, whose name he was seeking to extirpate. He was therefore the head, the chief of sinners; in ignorance, it is true, but nevertheless willingly. Where was his good conscience according to man? where his legal justice? where his religion, of which the priests and religious authorities had for him been supreme before? All had led him to discover himself an enemy of fiery zeal to the Lord, face to face with whom he found himself now, but still the object of his grace, at the very moment when he was occupied so thoroughly in destroying His glory. What a revulsion; what an overturning in his heart! Who can tell what passed in him during those three days?

And yet the Lord does not send Ananias to him till this internal, moral work was completed. Old things have passed away, and now all things have become new in his soul, in the bottom of his thoughts, all is of God who has revealed Himself in the glory of the face of Jesus Christ. He is no longer a Jew, although he may be one externally; but he has not become a Gentile; joined to the Lord of Glory, Jesus Christ, he knows henceforth no man

any more after the flesh. He knows the Lord, he knows His people as united with Him, Gentiles and Jews alike, lost sinners, children of wrath; but he knows the sovereign grace towards himself which has called him, has revealed the Son of God to him, and has given him eternal life, even while engaged in destroying His name. All was grace, pure and sovereign grace, grace which went so far as to make of Christians one body with Christ in heaven, and to give them to know it. How marvellous the revelations we find unfolded in the epistles of the Apostle. The Gospel of the glory of Christ is easily understood when we realize how and when the Apostle was converted.

But it is worth while considering some of the circumstances which accompanied the conversion of the Apostle. The Lord made use of a converted Jew, hated by his countrymen, to convey to Paul the formal testimony of His grace, and receive him into the bosom of the Assembly, in order that, as we before said, he might never more fear, the vision having passed away, that he might be mistaken. Here is a quiet man who had received a communication from the Lord, fully confirming what had happened to Saul. Moreover, Saul is made by another revelation to expect Ananias, so that he may receive his sight by the laying on of his hands.

But I should like to call attention to still other circumstances—the full liberty, and, one may say, the familiarity with which Ananias speaks to the Lord (with reverence and submission, of course); and, in the same way, the Lord with him. When the Lord calls him, he replies immediately, "Here am I." Nevertheless, the Lord, the Man who interests himself in His own as friends whom He loves, speaks with an open heart to Ananias; shews him not only the way, the house where Saul was to be found, but that which was necessary to identify him, viz., that Saul prayed, and that he had seen Ananias coming to him to lay his hands on him and restore his sight—just as one tells a servant what to say, or to a friend what is in the heart.

Thus the Lord took knowledge of what Paul was doing, and speaks of it to Ananias. And we see in the answer of Ananias a perfect trust in this goodness of the Lord. He begins to reason with the Lord. He had heard that this man was come to bind those who called upon the name of the Lord. And the Lord

does not reprove him. Of course, he had to go and do what the Lord desired, but he explains the matter to him, and communicates to him His thoughts concerning Saul, that he was a chosen vessel to bear His name, and that He would show him what things he should suffer for His name's sake. In a word, the Lord opens his heart to Ananias, as to a friend whom He treats with full confidence, speaks naturally, but confidently; tells all He feels to Ananias.

It is very important to remember that Jesus is always man. If He were not God, His humanity would have no value; but being God, the fact that He interests Himself in us as a man, as men whom He is not ashamed to call His brethren, is infinitely precious. He can feel with us, take part in all our circumstances, trials, difficulties, and troubles. He loves us as the Father loved Him, a man and Son on the earth. His love has divine perfection, but He feels as a man, as a man on the earth, tempted in like manner as we are, yet without sin. He is ever a man; thinks of us as One who has passed through all these things with divine love and human sympathy. Not only does He know everything as God, but He has had the experience of a man. Precious truth, unfathomable grace!

We have no need of saints—if they could hear us—to move His heart to favour us, to render His love warmer, His interest more profound, or His knowledge of our condition more intimate. But He has had the experience on purpose to be able to understand and sympathize with His own in every circumstance of the life of God in man on the earth. How great is the intensity of the Saviour's love! how near to us! how intelligent and intimate is His heart in the conflict of faith! He knows all, feels all, and is with us in everything to help us. Blessed be His love!

It is possible that He may not reveal Himself to us in visions, but His heart is not colder to us than to Ananias; His wisdom is not diminished, His willingness is not weakened to help us, neither is His arm shortened. The intimacy and the confidence of our hearts ought to be the same to tell Him everything; certain it is that His ear is open to listen to us.

Thus sent and encouraged, Ananias obeys, and goes in perfect confidence towards him who not long before breathed out threatenings and slaugh-

ter against the Christians; lays his hands on him, saying, "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." Immediately he receives his sight, and rises, is baptized, eats, and walks with the disciples at Damascus. Without delay, he preaches Christ in the synagogues, declaring Him to be the Son of God. Although the lion had become a lamb, yet he had not lost his energy; but his object is different; now he preaches what he had formerly sought to destroy. The subject of his preaching differs a little from that of Peter, and responds to the revelation of Christ, which was made to him. Peter preached that God had exalted the Jesus whom they had rejected; Saul, that Christ was the Son of God.

But the pungency of Saul's preaching stirs up the animosity of the Jews. It is always the religious who oppose the truth, because their own importance and traditions are compromised. The rancour of the flesh, particularly in religious things, knows of no giving way. They seek to stone Saul, making conscience and religion their plea. But God watches over His servant; their plot is made known to Paul; and, while they wait day and night for him at the gates, the disciples take him by night and let him down over the wall in a basket. Thus he escapes out of their hands.

The following verse (26th) does not, I think, apply to an immediately succeeding period. When, however, he arrives at Jerusalem, they are still afraid of him, not yet knowing all that has happened to him; but the good Barnabas introduces him to the Apostles, and makes known to them the whole truth of his conversion. Here again the Apostle bears faithful witness, and again religious men seek to put him to death. But the time had not yet arrived for his own special mission. The brethren bring him down to Cesarea, and he sets out for Tarsus, his native city.

The narrative now returns to the work of Peter. Although Saul was called to preach the Gospel to the nations, and was set apart to this mission by a special dispensation of God founded on a more perfect revelation, which left the Jews behind as sinners by nature as well as the Gentiles, and taught that there was no difference, since all had sinned, bringing in the new creation, and knowing Christ no more after the

flesh; yet there were not to be two assemblies, the oneness of the Church was to be maintained. Peter is employed, after the conversion of Saul, to bring the first Gentile to the knowledge of Christ.

But he never taught what the Church was as the body of Christ; that is not revealed in the case of Cornelius; that the Gentiles should take their place among the Christians without becoming Jews, or being circumcised, was something that Peter and the other Jews had great difficulty in believing.

As to the progress of the Gospel, let us see what is taught us in the sequel. We shall find that those who had been scattered, being Hellenists, or Jews, who had lived in foreign countries, and accustomed to maintain daily intercourse with the Gentiles, spoke with these; so that the free action of the Spirit also communicated by this means the Gospel to the Gentiles. Paul had a new formal mission to every creature under heaven, and then he taught what the Assembly was—a truth set forth by no other (see Col. i.) And he himself was to be a member of the Assembly, already founded and established on Christ, which was His body, the habitation of God through the Spirit, though he alone taught this doctrine.

It is not without importance to remark that the Romish system is founded on the authority of Peter, and draws all its pretensions from him; but the doctrine of the Church was never confided to Peter. Peter was not the Apostle of the uncircumcision, but of the circumcision (Gal. ii.); full of power for the work among the Jews, he left that among the Gentiles entirely in the hands of Paul. Peter does not speak of the body of Christ how we are Gentiles; and the instrument whom God adopted to establish the Church among the Gentiles, was Paul. (1 Cor. iii.)

The foundation is one, that is Christ; the Gospel of salvation, one (1 Cor. xv. 2). Moreover, God Himself founded the assembly on the day of Pentecost by the gift of the Holy Ghost; but, as a human builder, Paul it was whom God employed to establish the Church among the Gentiles, and unfold what it was. The other Apostles never speak of the body of Christ, nor of the presence of the Holy Ghost on the earth. Peter then goes about continually, and the power of God manifests itself in him. Eneas is healed; Tabitha is restored to life. The effect, however, of the

first miracle is greater than that of the second. All that dwell at Lydda and Saron, rich countries on the sea-shore, turn to the Lord. At Joppa many believe on Him; and there Peter tarries many days.

J. N. D.

ON RECONCILIATION.

RECONCILIATION is, to use familiar language, making all straight; and even primarily, I believe, used in money-changing as that which makes the sum even, so that there is satisfaction of the parties in the matter; and thence passing into the more ordinary sense of making all smooth between alienated parties, and reconciling one who is alienated or at enmity. But it is not simply the change of mind from the enmity, though that be included; nor is it justification. It is the bringing back to unity, peace, and fellowship what was divided and alienated. We must not confound in scripture "Making reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Heb. ii. 17), with "reconciliation" in 2 Cor. v.; Col. i.; Rom. v. 10, 11. The former is making propitiation, atonement, *ἀπαρεσβασίαι*, and *ἀσάμωτος*, propitiation (1 John ii. 2); while on the contrary "atonement" in Romans v. 11, should be *reconciliation*, *καταλλαγή*. Compare 1 Corinthians vii. 11, "Let her be reconciled to her husband;" where it is not merely her mind being restored to affection and good feeling, but matters made straight between them—the relationship made good. So it is between us and God; but the alienation was on our part. It was not *alienation* on God's part, but righteous judgment against sin in His creature, and that righteousness must be met in order to bring back the alienated creature into relationship with God. Only now it is much more than bringing back, because of the purposes of God in Christ, and the infinite value of the work by which we are brought back to God. Still it is an establishing a blessed and peaceful relationship with God, and us in it.

Reconciling God to us is quite unscriptural in expression and thought. No act or dealing could change God's mind, either in nature or in purpose, but He acts freely in what is before Him according to that nature, and is bringing about that purpose; and though His mind be not changed, yet the meeting, satisfying, and glorifying His righteousness, is according to that mind and the imperious claim of His nature and authority, is necessary in the highest sense,

that is, according to that nature. His holiness too is involved in reconciliation. Reconciliation is the full establishment in relationship with God according to His nature and according to the nature of that which is reconciled. It now acts in redemption and a new nature, and, as regards all around us, a new state of things, so that it is more than re-establishment. It is re-established inasmuch as the old relationship was broken and forfeited, but it is not the returning to that, but the establishing a new one which has the stability of redemption and is the accomplishment of the purpose of God. Still it is a bringing back into the enjoyment of divine favour that which had lost it. This reconciliation is twofold in scripture—of the state of things and of sinners. Thus in Colossians i. all the fulness was pleased to dwell in Him, "and, having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself, by him, whether they be things on earth, or things in heaven; and you that were sometime enemies and alienated in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in his sight." The force of the word is evident from the first case. Then there is no question of changing the disposition of the reconciled things, because the purposed reconciliation spoken of in verse 20 refers to all created things as to the vast majority of which no such change can take place. It is the bringing of the whole created scene of heaven and earth into its true order and right relationship with God, and to its right standing and condition in that relationship.

The first passage which suggests itself, when we come to inquire into the use of the word in scripture, is 2 Corinthians v. 18-20, particularly verse 19: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." It is not God *is* in Christ reconciling. The passage states that the apostolic ministry had taken the place of Christ's personal ministry, founded on the blessed Lord having been made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. It is the aspect of Christ's ministry down here. God was in Him reconciling the world. Man would not have Him, but this was the service and aspect of His ministry. He was proposing to the world a return to God in order and blessing, not imputing their trespasses to them. If man had received Him, it would have

proved that man in the flesh was recoverable, though he had sinned; though such indeed was not God's thought, the result proved he was not, and the Lord had to be made sin for us. Man had to be redeemed out of the state he was in, and justified on a new footing, not recovered from his ruin as man in the flesh still. Lawlessness and ease had both proved men sinners in fact. God was in Christ saying, I am not come to judge; return, and I will forgive; return to order and to God and nothing will be imputed. But the mind of the flesh was enmity against God, and the true state of man was brought out. The sin of the world was demonstrated by their not believing in Christ; righteousness in their seeing Him no more and His going to His Father. No doubt a change in us is needed to our being in order and peace before God; but reconciling is more than a state of feeling, it is a being brought back to the condition of right relationship with God. In Colossians i., already quoted, we find it the purpose of God to bring all things in heaven and earth into this order and condition. All things were created by the Son and for Him, and all the fulness of the Godhead which dwelt in Him will bring all created by and for Him into its due condition and order, into a normal state of relationship with itself. But we, the apostle adds, are reconciled, Christ being our righteousness, and we the righteousness of God in Him. We are, as regards the very nature of God, in our normal place with God, according to the efficacy of Christ's work. Being moral beings a new mind was needed for this, and Christ is our life, perfect according to what He was for God, that we may have it. The believer is reconciled in the body of Christ's flesh through death. We are before God with the entire putting away in His sight of our old rebellious nature, and by a work and obedience which has perfectly glorified God Himself, so that we are the righteousness of God in Him. Nothing is wanting to our place and standing in Christ, our old state being gone, quickened together with Him; dead, and the old man put off; risen, and the new man put on, we are in Christ before God according to the efficacy of His propitiation and work. We are so consciously by faith and the presence of the Holy Ghost by which we are sealed, for our being presented "holy, unblamable, and unreprouvable in his sight."

Hence in Romans v. 10, reconciliation is attributed to Christ's death, not to a change of mind in us. "If

when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." And, "We have received the reconciliation." (Ver. 11.) Remark here that the Christian is spoken of as being reconciled. Now it is quite true this does not and cannot take place without a work in man by which the peace Christ has made is appropriated—it cannot take place without faith. The Spirit of Christ works in quickening power in us, makes us know our state, gives new desires, makes us judge our old state, and finally shews us the value of Christ's death and our standing in Him, but peace was made, God glorified perfectly when Christ was made sin, so that His love can seek us and grace reign through righteousness. It is not that God is changed, but He can freely work in love according to righteousness for His own glory in virtue of that which has been presented to Him. Propitiation has been made; and hence, according to righteousness and abounding in love, He can bring the sinner to Himself according to these, and, faith being there, has brought back—has reconciled. That which is the foundation of reconciliation has been offered to God, but it is not God who is reconciled or brought back into a normal place with man, but who reconciles in virtue of that which has been wrought by Christ and presented to Him. Propitiation is the foundation of reconciliation, the reconciliation of the sinner; and in due time that of the universe. Thereupon the gospel beseeches men* to be reconciled to God, to return to Him in true relationship in Christ, who has been made sin for us. It is not then propitiation, it is not at all reconciling God, nor is it merely a change in man or his feelings; but it is the standing of man (when applied to him) in peace with God according to the truth of God's character in virtue of redemption, man being brought morally back in a new nature which by the Holy Ghost appreciates that redemption and enjoys the peace—joys in God as well as has peace with Him.

There is one passage which remains of these wherein the word is used, which has to be considered. But, rightly apprehended, it confirms and clears the sense given. "If the casting them away be the reconciling of the world" (Rom. xi. 15). Now the sense is more vague here it is true, but it confirms what we have

said. The Jews had been in ordered relationship with God though unfaithful to it, the world out of all relationship, men were utterly without God in the world, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, without hope, without God in the world. On the fall of Israel this state of things ceased. God now called all persons everywhere to repent. God took up the world again, no longer winking at the ignorance. The world was again put in relationship with God, so that His grace and gospel went out to deal with it as that which thus far stood in relationship with Him, not as it did when Judaism was owned. These are all the passages where the word is used.

It is important to note that the Christian is always treated as being reconciled. It is more than being justified—this is being authoritatively pronounced righteous by God, whether from sins or now actually in Christ. It is more than the restoring of the heart to God, though both have place in order to reconciliation; for to be with God fully revealed in joyful and settled relationship with Himself, all in order between us, it must be as justified according to His righteousness and the objects of His love as those who have tasted it. We have been brought into both by Christ's work, but with hearts livingly renewed and tasting that love, or we should not as moral beings be in it. It is thus a word of great power and blessing. Nor is there an expression more full or more complete connected with our restoration than that of our reconciliation with God. It supposes God revealed in all that He is, and man in a perfect place and standing with Him according to this revelation—reconciled to God.

READINGS IN SECOND PETER.

CHAPTER I.

THE second epistle of Peter takes us into a different character of truth from the first. Of the first the symbols were, the lamp, the girdle, and the furnace. In this we have (ch. i.) the husbandry which is to be our security against corruption; then (ch. ii.) the corruptions unfolded; and finally (ch. iii.) the judgments which follow and the glory. We live in the midst of the second chapter. If there are different forms of glory, so there are different forms of corruption, and they fill the present world. That is what is anticipated here, and the

story of Christendom has verified it all.

We shall find the structure of this epistle to be less *evangelic* than *moral* and *prophetic*, as in verse 3, "According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and *godliness*, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us unto *glory* and *virtue*." Observe, also, that the *promises* in verse 4 are the occasion, not of *gladness* but of *purification*. Thus does the Spirit keep Himself true to His purpose.

"Exceeding great and precious promises, that *by these* ye might be partakers of the divine nature." See what beautiful instruments God is using to fashion you to His hand! "Divine nature" *here* is the *moral* nature of God. If He puts us down to our husbandry, it is not at our own charges. (Ver. 8) "If *these things*," etc., that is, these features of godliness; and mark what they are. You need not go to the end of the world to be fruitful to Christ. (Ver. 9) "But he that lacketh these things," etc. If he is feeble in present things, he has neither an *eye* to apprehend the coming glory, nor the *memory* of what Christ has done for him. The whole moral man has his strength reduced.

(Ver. 10). "Give diligence to make your calling and election *sure*." In other words, "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." "*Sure*," not abstractedly; the Book of Life has done that. "If ye do these things ye shall never *fall*" or trip; but, instead, an *abundant* entrance shall be ministered. An abundant entrance is not the common property of all saints. The Spirit links it with the cultivation of "these things." An abundant entrance I believe to be a *natural* entrance. The more the journey savours of the *end* of the journey, the more easy and natural the entrance on the glory will be. The world to come has many characters. If on the way to it, *as the Father's house*, we are not cultivating *brotherly* love, is that the way to get an abundant entrance into it? Would not those that I should find there be moral strangers to me? *Rest* is another character. The moment I say "there *remaineth* a rest," I am not consistent if I take my rest *now*. Do not let me talk of *future* rest, if I am enjoying *present* rest. Again it is a place of *purity*; and if I am careless about the cultivation of purity on the road, am I in moral company with the glory I am looking for, and can I expect an

*The "you" and "ye" should be left out of 2 Corinthians v. 20.

"abundant entrance" into it? Let us see to it that we are cherishing those things that have a welcome for Himself.

(Ver. 16). Now he opens the distant view. "Eye-witness of His *magnificence*" it should rather be. "Majesty belongs to Christ as Son of David. What was seen on the holy mount was more than this. It was *heavenly* majesty.

(Ver. 18). Observe in this word "*holy*," how the purpose of the Spirit breaks out. Naturally it would have been called the *glorious* mount, but His business here was to keep the thoughts of the saints in company with that which was to be their security against the corruptions which He was about to unfold. So (ver. 21) "*Holy* men of old."

(Ver. 19). "More sure" may mean as in contrast with the vision. "Till the day dawn"—till all struggles between light and darkness be over, and prophecy gives place to that which shall be its fulfilment.

MORAL CORRUPTION.

2 PETER ii. and iii.

THAT which we get in the foreground of these chapters is corruption. In the middle we have the judgments which are to clear the scene, and the kingdom that is to succeed shines in the distance. Because God is Holy, judgment must come after corruption; and because He is God, glory must follow the judgment. If we doubt this necessity, we have not, as Paul speaks in 1 Cor. xv., "the knowledge of God." The corruption that is to fill Christendom is not doctrinal merely. In Galatians the Apostle lifts up a standard against doctrinal corruption; but that would not *dispose* of the history of Christendom. Here we have apostacy from the *godliness* of the truth. The *promises* of Scripture have reared one class of watch-towers, and the *admonitions* have erected another. We must build various watch-towers, and plant ourselves on each of them.

The most prevalent form of corruption in these days is moral relaxation: "turning the grace of God into lasciviousness." We do not read here of a denial of grace, or of the value of the blood, but of the *lordship* of Christ (ver. 1), as though it were not fitting that those who have refuted in Him as *Saviour* should bow down to Him as *Lord*! There is a character in these days which should put us all on the watch-towers that Peter builds for us. We

see terms made with the flesh, vanities, covetousness, and the various spirits of the world; corruption intruding into the place of holiness. "They promise them liberty." Aye, and the liberty of the gospel, too! But am I to be the servant of my eye, my imagination, my covetous nature? Do we not know that we have a *present* Christendom before us when we read the 2nd of Peter! It has been remarked from a comparison of the Romans i. and the 2nd Epistle of Timothy, that the same pollutions attach to corrupt Christianity as to heathenism.

"For, if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world" (*i.e.*, escaped from heathenism into Christianity) "through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour" (*i.e.*, through the *Christendom knowledge*)—the 22nd verse showing that the *nature* (dog and sow, *not* sheep) was still unchanged.

The opening of chap. iii. sets down the saints to the cultivation of their *pure* minds—the *new*, not the *old* nature. There was plenty abroad to stir up the *impure* mind; so he would put remembrances before them.

Scoffers should come, wise in their own conceits, their own wisdom and conclusions—taking their own analogies. "Since the fathers fell asleep, things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." Why should any interruption be looked for? All is simple cause and effect. For this they willingly are ignorant of—that God *interferes how and when* He pleases; that, *by the word of God*, first came the flood, and secondly, "By the *same* word" the world is "reserved unto fire."

When we look at things, are we in company with God's word or with our own wisdom? "But, beloved, be not ignorant," etc. We ought to know how to interpret the long-suffering of God. (Long-suffering is patience under injuries.) The delay is not indifference. How beautifully He puts out human thoughts, and brings in divine! It is not slackness; it is long-suffering—it is grace. He is not imputing trespasses to the world, in order that this aspect of Him may lead sinners to repentance. Grace is gratifying itself now. Amid all the expressions of what God is, the Cross is the greatest. *Love* gratified; *righteousness* satisfied.

(Ver. 10). "But the day of the Lord will come"—as the great surpiser. "The *coming* of the Lord" is as a *bridegroom*. "The *day* of the Lord" is as a *thief*. As a bridegroom He will come to the Church;

as a thief He will come to the world. These are the correspondencies. Could the cry of "Come, Lord Jesus," be answered as by the coming of a thief in the night? Assuredly not!

(Vers. 11 and 14). Two things are looked at here: the dissolving of the present world, and the coming in of the new world. And we are to be looking for and hasting unto the day that is to consummate this—the glory that is to be, the eternity of God and us.

J. G. B.

GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH.

IN the course of our Lord's journey on earth, we see Him in the following ways:—

1. As the born One—holy, meeting God's mind in the nature or human material (Luke i. 35).

2. As the circumcised One—perfect under the law, meeting God's mind in it (Luke ii. 27; Gal. v. 3).

3. As the baptized One—meeting God's mind in dispensational order and righteousness (Luke iii. 21, 22).

4. As the anointed One—meeting God's mind as His image or representative (Luke iii. 22).

5. As the obedient One—doing always those things that pleased the Father (Jo. viii. 29).

6. As the devoted One—meeting God's mind in the covenant of grace to sinners (Luke xxii. 19, 20).

7. As the risen One—sealed with God's approval in victory for sinners (Luke xxiv.; Jo. xiii. 31, 32).

Thus does He meet all the mind of God while providing for us. All was magnified in Him and by Him, all made honourable. God's proposed delight in man, or glory by him, has been richly answered in the blessed Jesus. While in His person He was "God manifest in the flesh," in the succession of His stages through the earth He was accomplishing all the divine purpose, delight, and glory, in man. Nothing unworthy of God was in the man Christ Jesus, His person, experiences, or ways. "*To Him be glory both now and for ever—Amen.*"

EARS:

AS THE SYMBOL OF SERVANTSHIP.

IN Psalm xl. we have the expression, "Mine ears hast thou opened;" and in the margin, "digged." This has been rendered by the Septuagint—"A body hast thou prepared (or fitted for) me."

1. *Ears digged in incarnation.*—The word "digged" means sunk like a well, and it refers to the forming

of the ears; that is, in the Lord's case, to His miraculous conception and birth as Jehovah's servant. The root-thought is that He came to do the will of Jehovah. All His will could be done only by Him as manifested in the flesh; and as we say, in a figure, we have such an one's ear—meaning we have the service of his person—so we are to treat the “digged ears” as poetically representing the person of the servant of Jehovah's will: so that it is not an unnatural rendering of “Ears hast thou digged for me,” to render it by “A body hast thou prepared me,” as we have it in Hebrews x. 6. The Holy Ghost, by adopting the translation of the lxx., has, indeed, sanctioned this as the true meaning.

2. *Ears opened in life-service.*—In Isaiah l. we have this regarding the Lord as Jehovah's servant: “The Lord hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear as the learned. The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, nor turned away back. I gave my back to the smiter, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair.” This tells us of the obedient One in His humiliation and life-service, and affords a deep insight into His hidden life. Every morning—i.e., when His sleep is over—Jehovah comes to Him, awakens His ear, by making a sign to Him to listen, and then takes Him, as it were, into the school, after the manner of a pupil, and teaches Him what and how He is to preach. “The Lord Jehovah hath given me a disciple's tongue, that I may know how to set up the wearied with words. He wakeneth every morning; wakeneth mine ear to attend in disciple's manner.” This was the way of our blessed Lord when He gave Himself up to do the Father's will in docile susceptibility and immovable obedience. And even in view of the scorn and rejection of His own, and with the cross full in view, He set Himself stedfastly to go to Jerusalem, and submitted to every insult, indignity, and cruelty, and endured the cross, despising the shame. Even in view of “the cup” He gave Himself up to do Jehovah's will, and He was obedient even unto death. His ear was ever open to do His will, and His tongue was a disciple's tongue. He waited for Jehovah's word; and He could say, The words which I speak are not mine; but as the Father hath given me commandment, so I speak.

3. *Ears bored in redemption.*—This is brought out in Ex. xxi. 2-6 (read it). The Father hath given Jesus “a wife,” for we read of “The Bride, the Lamb's Wife;” and He has also “children,” for we read—“Behold I and the children which God hath given me.” Through redemption He becomes His servant for ever, and having been pierced for them on the Cross—loving His own which are in the world, He loves them to the end. He is now continually occupied about them. In John xiii. the washing of the disciples' feet is the symbol of His constant ministry in priestly service for them during His absence. This is the heavenly service of devoted love until He present the Church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing—but that it should be holy and without blemish, as Eph. v. 25-27 declares. And when He has His saints in His own presence in glory He will still continue to them His service of love. “Verily I say unto you that He shall *gird Himself*, and make them sit down to meat and He will come forth and *serve them*” (Luke xii. 37).

Our blessed Lord had His ears *digged* in incarnation—*opened* in His life-service—*bored* in His redemption-work, whereby He has bound Himself to perpetual service: He has served on earth and fulfilled all God's will, being obedient unto death—He now serves in advocacy and intercession in Heaven itself: and He will serve God in the administration of His kingdom in the coming day, and when that is done and He has delivered up the kingdom, “And when all things shall be subdued by Him unto God and the Father, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him that God may be all and in all” (1 Cor. xv. 28).

[The following paper treats the subject more fully.] W. R.

THE HEBREW SERVANT.

THE great thing for us to do, is to look how the Lord Jesus served.

These verses (Ex. xxi. 1-7) are not properly a part of the covenant—“now these are the *judgments* that thou shalt set before them.” In Ps. xix. 7-11, we get several distinct things mentioned—testimony, statutes, commandments, judgments; these last I apprehend to be God's decisions on certain points—“the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.”

The very first thing God has decided here, is a particular about ser-

vice—“*If thou buy an Hebrew servant.*” If he were a captive, he would be in the power of his master; but this judgment is concerning one under the law, an Hebrew servant: the Gentiles were never under the law, and I do not find this judgment brought into the New Testament; the Apostle Paul only gives direction of unqualified submission to the master, whether a believing or an unbelieving one; this judgment applies to those who are under the law, and not to those who are not under the law.

The Lord Jesus Christ is presented to us as “made of a woman,” and “made under the law.” As “made under the law” he “magnified it and made it honourable.” The law, that was “the letter which killeth” to all else, was not the letter that killeth to him, it drew out the response from his heart, “I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea thy law is within my heart.” The application of the law to the heart of man only works out the enmity that is there; but there was no enmity in the Lord Jesus.

The Lord Jesus having thus been made under the law, and fulfilled it entirely, shews that it was a most suitable thing for God to give; if there had been failure it was only in those to whom it was given, and not in the law itself; it was “weak through the flesh;” before God could put it aside, He must show that He had not dispensed a bad thing. The law has been removed by Christ, and thus he has made a free passage for God's love to come forth to us.

In another way I find the Lord Jesus presented as a faithful *servant*—“Behold *my servant* whom I uphold; mine elect in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles” (Isa. xlii. 1); and again—“Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; the Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath He made mention of my name. And He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of His hand hath He hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in His quiver hath He hid me; and said unto me, thou art *my servant*, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified” (Isa. xlix. 1, 2, 3). He is here brought before us as the *servant* of Jehovah, and so he constantly speaks of himself—“I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me,” and that is just the *servant's* place,—the Lord

Jesus Christ spoke as it were his Master's word.

"Being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men"—he humbled himself to become a servant; and blessed was it that he did so, for if he had come in his native dignity, he never could have said, "*I am among you as one that serveth*," he never could have washed our feet. His native dignity, it is true, broke forth every now and then; but the mystery of redemption is, that the eternal Son of the Father has become the servant of Jehovah, and the servant of our necessities. These are the things that angels desire to look into, that the prophets have enquired and searched diligently concerning—"the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow."

He was the "*Hebrew servant*," and the faithful servant, who had served his time unto Him, whose servant he came to be; and he might have said, now I can "go out free;" I have served my time, and I can "go out free" (verse 2); and indeed he did say, "Father, I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do; and now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." But he might have acted on this judgment, and gone out by himself.

All his service seemed in vain, as to any present result—"I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God" (Isa. xlix. 4). But what is the answer? "And now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be His servant, to bring Jacob again to Him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength; and He said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth" (verses 5, 6). All his service seemed to be thrown away. "Though he did so many miracles among them, yet they believed not." They said he was Beelzebub—the friend of publicans and sinners—and at last crucified him.

He "came in by Himself," and He might have "gone out by Himself," (verse 3). He was the only one who

could ever have "*entered into life*" by keeping the commandments (I am speaking of him now in his mediatorial character—"There is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus"); he had a right to enter into life. Law knew nothing about saving a person, it promised life through obedience to it; "the man that doeth these things shall live in them." The Lord Jesus Christ alone had earned life by obedience in every jot and tittle of the law, and he might have "gone out free;" but He would not go out free for the reason here assigned.—"If his master have given him a wife, and she have borne him sons and daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, '*I love my master, my wife, and my children*,' I will not go out free; then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door-post, and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall serve him for ever (verses 4, 5)."

When Jesus, on His rejection by the chief priests and pharisees (John xii. 10-19), heard of the desire of the Greeks to see Him, He said, "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." He was the only grain of principal wheat. Had He not died He would have remained alone, precious in himself, but He would have borne no fruit.—He might have "gone out free," but it would have been by himself. He might have "entered into life," but it would have been alone. He would not, therefore, but He became obedient unto death, that He might "see the travail of his soul;" that He might "bring many sons unto glory"—that He might have His wife and children. This was a voluntary act—though free, he was free to serve; He is the One who has come and had His ear bored, that He might serve for ever.

I desire to look at this a little more. The Lord Jesus Christ at the right hand of the Majesty on high, is there still as the Servant; and when coming out in glory by and bye, he will be still as the Servant.

I need not tell you how that the Lord Jesus Christ speaks of Himself in a subject character, and that this is voluntary. He came not in His own name, but in the name of Him who sent Him. They would have

taken Him by force, and made Him a king (John vi.) but He would not be a king in their name or in His own. As *Jehovah's Servant*, He was *His King* also; and as they would not own Him as coming from God, He would not be owned at all. We receive Him not, unless we receive Him as *the Christ of God*.

In verse 5 we read, "If the servant shall plainly say, I love my master." O how plainly did He say it when He cried, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt!" The servant is one who does not his own will. It was the love that Jesus had to Him that sent Him, that brought Him down into death, as he says, "therefore does my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again; this commandment have I received of my Father." Beloved, we are sanctified by His having done the will of Him that sent Him—"by the which will we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." He said, "*Lo, I come to do Thy will*"—I'll do His will, cost me what it may. He was free to go to "the glory which He had with the Father before the world was;" but He would not go out free. "I love my master, my wife, and my children," I will not go out free. It was love that actuated Jesus in His work on the cross.

I find in that aspect Jesus doing the will of Jehovah; in another place, Jehovah's sword awaking "against the man his fellow." In one sense the death of Jesus on the cross is the "*burnt-offering*," a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour; in another, the "*sin-offering*," which was to be burnt outside the camp.

The heart of Jesus could not be satisfied unless he had his wife and children with him where he was, and therefore he must carry his service down into the depths of death—"If his master have given him a wife." The bride is given to Jesus, just as God gave Adam a wife. I can never separate the love of the Father in this, the gift of the Church by Him to Jesus, and the love of Jesus for the Church in giving Himself for it. So it is with the sheep (John x.), they are the gift of the Father to Jesus; and Jesus, as the good Shepherd, has laid down His life for them. If He love His wife, He must serve for her. Well, Jacob served for a wife a long service, but the Lord Jesus serves for ever; He is the constant minister unto the Church, as He has won her—as He has died for her, so he serves her now.

And so with the children—"I love

my children—"behold I and the children whom God hath given me." Because he loved the wife, because he loved the children, he serves for ever.

In his personal service when here, he was the servant of everybody, he was always going about doing good, but ever so in the Father's name. Shortly before going out of the world we see (John xiii.) that "having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end; and supper being ended, the devil having now put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God, he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded himself; after that he poureth water into a bason and began to wash the disciples' feet." We find him doing the most servile act. It was the *service* of love, and how did his love make him stoop?

If I were asked, is Jesus serving now? yes, washing His disciples' feet. "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet, for I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you"—the example of His own willing service to the Church,—a pattern indeed to us, but a specimen of what His service is, now that we are walking through this weary, filthy world. We need to have our feet washed, and Christ does this by His priestly ministry for us. He still retains the place of ministry and service, to which He has bound Himself from love to His Master, love to His wife, love to His children. But surely He is still our Lord and Master; we can call Him Lord, own Him as Lord, pray to Him as Lord, and thus see that the One who "upholdeth all things by the word of His power" is the very One who daily *ministers* to our necessities. He has had His ear bored to the door-post—He is a *servant for ever*. I find the Lord of glory is able to *serve*. He does not need to be served Himself; people always think that God needs to be served, instead of seeing the wondrous thing that He wishes to serve us.

In Luke xii. we find that still this service is carried on when the Lord Jesus Christ comes forth in glory; "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when He will return from the wedding; that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open unto Him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find

watching: verily I say unto you that He shall *gird Himself* and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and *serve them*." No one will be able to deny His Sonship then—His Godhead then; but even there He is still *the servant*: I do not mean to explain how; I only carry forward the thought of service. It will be our blessed place to serve Him; yet still it is our security to know that He will serve us. He still delights to sustain that character into which He voluntarily came.

We get from this decision of the Lord the principle of service. In this day, when many saints are awakening to a desire of service, there is a danger of getting off the ground of *grace*. We are all apt to make the connection between service and glory, instead of seeing that the connection is between grace and glory. The blood is our title to glory, even as it has saved us,—even as it has redeemed us. I see in the countless multitude who surround the throne that they are there because of "the blood of the Lamb."

The servant always hides himself, puts himself aside, that the Master may appear; the great danger in any service we are able to render, is lest the servant should appear. Simon Magus gave himself out as some great one; but if we serve according to this judgment, it will be very unobtrusive service. Joshua was servant to Moses—he abode in the tabernacle outside the camp (Exodus xxxiii. 11), but how little prominently does he appear. Joshua is hid, and Moses is the actor.

Our place of service will ever be, in God's wisdom, the place of trial, though the place of comfort too. So was it with the Lord, He did always the things that pleased the Father, and thus proved His love; but He had to set His face like a flint. Our service is not occasional but continuous. If we are in the place of servants, it is because we are sons. The ear is to be "opened morning by morning." Domestic duties are to be taken up as service to the Lord,—He is to be glorified in them: the service we mostly fail in is domestic piety. Many would desire more time for serving the Lord; but why not make *all we do* service to Him—"Ye serve the Lord Christ."

The principle of our service is love to the Master. Paul says, "for though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all."—I may "go out free," but "I love my Master," and *therefore* I'll serve them. It is the service of love and not obligation. "We are," it is true, "not

our own, we are bought with a price; therefore let us glorify God with our bodies and spirits, which are His." But the Lord does not address us with that claim: he says, "*If ye love me, keep my commandments*." God loveth a cheerful giver because He is a cheerful giver. Some persons say, Oh, I wish I could serve the Lord more. Well, let your soul enter more deeply into His love, and then you will serve Him,—it is impossible to love Him and not to serve Him; but it may be a service of a kind which we do not like, because we too often serve to exalt ourselves. The Lord said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one toward another." "Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty, only use not that liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." The moment I come with a claim, I damp the main-spring of service; it is *by love* we are to *serve one another*. I do believe that this ought to be my feeling,—I am a debtor to every saint, because the Lord, by His grace, has made me free—free indeed.

When the saints are in glory by and bye, it will be still to *serve*, to *minister* to the world, as well as to the Lord—"His servants shall serve Him." Just as angels serve now, so by and bye there will be the visible ministry of saints.

How blessedly has love been the servant to our necessities—how has God in His love given His Son for us—how has Jesus served us—how does He still serve us—how will He serve us by and bye. The active spring of service in the Church ought to be *love*. May we trace in Jesus the exhibition of it. What a blessed thing is it to serve,—may we serve, not in self-will, but doing His will. Service in the Church will never make us of any esteem among men, it did not make *the perfect servant* so; but still the word was, "He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high" (Isa. lii. 13). And what a blessed thought,—what a thought of grace, to hear one mourning over his unprofitableness and wretched service, addressed in these words in the day of the glory, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

May the Lord grant us, beloved, deliverance from law service, and lead us to happy, blessed service, according to this judgment of the Hebrew servant. "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. v. 2).

THE MYSTERY OF PIETY.

1 TIMOTHY iii. 16; iv. 1-5.

Important then as this teaching was from the days of Pentecost onward, it has become, since apostolic times, in one way of yet greater importance. And evidently in view of this, Paul drew Timothy's attention to it. "But the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons speaking lies in hypocrisy (or of demons in hypocrisy of those who speak lies), having their conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received of thanksgiving by them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer." (1 Tim. iv. 1-5.)

Several points of interest should here be noticed.

(1) God's watchful care of souls is manifested. "The Spirit speaketh expressly," etc. Before the evil would be manifested the Holy Spirit clearly foretold it. To a communication perhaps hitherto unwritten (*ἀγραπτός*) the apostle directs Timothy. The Spirit was setting forth in a clear manner something about the future—the apostasy of some from the faith. Now no creature can fathom the divine mind, and disclose God's purposes till He is pleased to make them known. (1 Cor. ii. 11.) From Him, however, nothing can be concealed. So, though the devil cannot read the thoughts of God's heart, God can read him through and through, and acquaint us with Satan's devices or plans before they are put into execution. This He does here, the Apostle Paul being here the channel of communication to God's people. Prediction of what God will do in future ages seems natural enough; for He must be well acquainted with His own wise plans, and therefore can easily, if so minded, speak of them before the time arrives for their fulfilment. Such, however, is not the purport of this clear revelation by the Spirit, who here exposes to view beforehand what the devil would attempt at a future time. Deep-laid may be his schemes, and successfully may he conceal his purpose from man; but God knows it all perfectly, and shows His full acquaintance with it by fixing the time when this demoniacal plan would be executed.

"In the latter times," etc. (*δοτεροῖς καιροῖς*). This is a form of speech met with nowhere else in the New Testament, and implies an age posterior to the apostolic, but anterior to those called the "last days" (*ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις*) of 2 Tim. iii. 1, and "the close of the days" (*ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν*) of 2 Peter iii. 3. How fully does God know the future, when He can thus fix the times of the starting up of different forms of evil! And are we not witness of the correctness of the Spirit's statement about the future? For the evil of the "latter times" we know has long been unblushingly manifested. And must we not add, that the characteristic features of the "last days" are increasingly common in the age in which our lot has been cast?

But (2) not only are God's people warned of the enemy's plan, and the time for its execution definitely stated; but the powers which were to be at work are as clearly set forth—seducing spirits would be active. This was nothing new—lying spirits had been found working amongst the children of Israel. To demoniacal influence the heathen had long been exposed. Satanic power too had been manifested in a marked way when the Lord was on earth, enthralling wretched men, making an open show of its victims before their fellows. Now, however, it is not demoniacal possession in the shape of dumb spirits, as those which tormented the body in which for a time they abode, of which Paul writes, but seducing spirits, ensnaring and leading some astray who profess to have been emancipated from lying teaching by hearkening to the truth. Seducing spirits and doctrines of demons would work havoc amongst those who bore the name of Christ. With what persistent malice would the devil be working. Heathen practices would have lost their power and charm for those who had been enlightened by Christian teaching. So the enemy must work in a new way; but, as ever, it is God who originates, the devil who imitates. The Holy Spirit teaches God's saints, and works in and through them. So seducing spirits with their demoniacal teaching would be working amongst professing Christians, and that through the agency of men.

(3) Men would be the instruments outwardly at work, but, alas, energized by these active emissaries of the devil; and so close, so intimate, would be the connection between the demons and their human agents, that the word passes from the one to the

other without the reader being conscious of having crossed any perceptible line of demarcation; for though seducing spirits, it is clear and quite distinct from the men whose consciences are cauterised. The distinction between the demons and their human instruments, who speak lies, is not so clearly marked in the original, for the words may be translated either "doctrines of demons speaking lies in hypocrisy," or "doctrines of demons, through the hypocrisy of those that speak lies," etc. In the former case, the active powers and the instruments are not clearly distinguished, and we can understand this even; for the demons will work not only on men, but through men, leading them to ensnare and seduce some of their fellow-creatures, and professedly fellow-Christians, to their everlasting ruin and perdition. How clear is the word on demoniacal agency, however much some may ridicule the thought of the existence of the devil and of demons. And certainly the written word is not so framed, as to make us think that principles only exist which are evil. Powers there are which are evil; powers which are antagonistic to God and to Christ; powers which are inimical to men, and which can work through men to carry out their nefarious purposes. Hence some will apostatise from the faith—"some," not all—for this is not a prediction of the great apostasy of which Paul elsewhere writes (2 Thess. ii. 3), and of which Jude also gives clear warnings. Then the outward profession of Christian truth will be surrendered. In this, however, Christianity is still professed, not in words surrendered, though distinctive teaching in connection with it is surely denied.

And (4) this was to be effected in the most subtle ways; for the demons working as men, through their admitted lack of piety, would pretend to help them to procure it, and foster it by a diligent resort to ascetic practices. Abstention from marriage, or from meats, would be their stock-in-trade, as an effectual cure for man's sad state. What craftiness, what malice, in beings thus alluring their victims to destruction! Poor man! How blind, unless his eyes have been really opened by God! How easily led of the enemy by anything which makes much of himself! How can abstention from marriage, or asceticism in any form, produce piety in a fallen creature, who needs a new nature to please his God? But these practices blind him to that solemn truth of which he has urgent

need to be informed. Moreover, such a system denies the helpless condition of man as a child of Adam, who, alas, possesses only a nature which is sinful. It denies that the seat of corruption is within him, as the Lord taught (Matt. xv. 18), and would make him think that all his defilement proceeds from something external to himself. It denies, too, his inability to recover himself—in a word, refuses to own that he is lost; and it throws upon God, as Adam did to His face in the garden, all the blame of his condition by nature, when it teaches that abstinence from that which God has given will foster the piety of which it is too evident man is lacking. To unconverted men such ascetic practices may seem rational. In God's eyes, however, they are doctrines of demons, for they contradict His word, and inject into the mind of the creature a distrust of the Creator.

For (5) whence came marriage? It was God's institution for His creature in innocence, hence it cannot be in itself productive of impiety. What, then, about meats? It is true man unfallen did not eat flesh, and after the fall, even the fruit of the trees was taken from him, and his provision was found in the herb of the field; but the moment the Lord smelled the sweet savour of the burnt-offering, after the flood, He made a free grant to man of every animal and vegetable on earth for his food. To Israel he did enjoin a curtailment of these privileges, but He never withdrew from man, as man, that full grant given to the race unconditionally, just after the flood. And again, subsequent to the ascension of the Lord, the Spirit placed on record, that "whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat; asking no questions, for conscience sake;" adding the significant words, "For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof" (1 Cor. x. 25, 26). The teaching of demons, therefore, when tested by the written word, is found to deny what God has permitted, and pursuing the tactics of the serpent of old, would make souls believe that they knew better than God what suits man, and if they submit to their guidance, will infallibly teach them how to acquire it. Thus was Eve seduced of old. Thus are men seduced now. The written word, however, throws light on the whole question, and is the safeguard provided by God against the error here exposed.

And (6) what class of men are seen to be here the object of their attack? Not the ignorant heathen, but the

professing Christian, and this under the specious guise of guarding such from pollution and defilement. Yet this is the class which ought to be proof against these lying doctrines. For these creatures God has "created to be received with thanksgiving by them which believe and know, or acknowledge the truth." "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." God's word has set it apart for man's use, and nothing is to be refused, if received by the faithful in the spirit here stated.

Thus the error is exposed; but exposing an error will not of necessity lead us into positive truth. It is needful to learn what is wrong, but it is also needful to be taught what is right. Now men often stop at the first, satisfied with showing up what is wrong; but Scripture does the work thoroughly—it shows up what is wrong, and ministers the truth. The aim of these doctrines is seen, when God's wisdom as Creator is impugned, and His provision for His creature is denounced as the cause of man's lack of piety. Yet the mere exposure of the falsehood will not furnish the truth, to promote that which it is universally acknowledged that man wants. The mystery of piety, however, is the key to the subject. Man needs to be partaker of the divine nature, ere the stream of pollution within him can be checked, for he has a fountain of corruption in his evil nature, called the flesh. If Christ, then, is his life, what man lacks he can have, and He is the life of all who are born of water and of the Holy Ghost (John iii. 5; 1 John v. 11, 12). Any other plan of acquiring piety betrays its origin. It is not of God. From whence, then, does it spring?—C.E.S.

THE GIFTS OF GOD.

NOTES OF A BIBLE READING.

Romans. xi. 29; James. i. 17.

1. *His Son*. Jo. iii. 16; Rom. viii. 32; 2 Cor. ix. 15; Rom. iv. 25; Jo. vi. 39. (Christ gave Himself for the Church, Eph. v. 25; for us, Eph. v. 2. The Saints given to Christ, Jo. xvii. 6-9.)
2. *The Spirit*. Jo. iii. 34; Luke, xi. 11-13; Jo. iv. 10; with Acts, i. 14, ii. 1-4; Heb. vi. 4; Jo. vii. 39; Acts. ii. 38; v. 32; viii. 17-20; x. 45; xi. 14-17; Rom. v. 5; Acts xix. 1, 2; xv. 8; 1 Thes. iv. 8. (See Heb. ii. 4; with 1 Cor. xii. Heb. iv. 12; *dividing asunder* is the same word as *gifts*, or, as margin has it, *distributions*, in Heb. ii. 4. There is no such expression as *gifts of the Spirit*. God gives all into Christ's

hands 30, iii. 35. As ascended and having received *gifts* for men, Eph. iv. 7, *He distributes* them by the Holy Ghost, as Himself the gift of the Father and the Son. See Jo. xiv-xvi, for full teaching of the Lord about the Holy Spirit.)

3. *Salvation*. Eph. ii. 8. The saving, faith and all, is the gift of God (1 Co. iii. 7; Ja. iv. 6).
4. *A dispensation of the grace of God*. Eph. iii. 2-10; Rom. xv. 15; dispensation . . . *given* me, v. 2. The gift of the grace of God *given* unto me, v. 7; is this grace *given*, v. 8. This was a special thing to St. Paul.
5. *The gift of righteousness*, Ro. v. 15-17.
6. *Eternal life*, 1 Jo. v. 10-11; Ro. vi. 23; 2 Co. iii. 6. (See what the Lord says of this in Jo. x. 28).
7. *The gift of suffering* on behalf of Christ, Phil. i. 29; iii. 10; Col. i. 24; Mat. v. 11;
8. *All things*, Acts xvii. 25; 2 Pet. i. 3; 1 Cor. iii. 21-23; Jo. xvii. 7; Rom. viii. 32.
9. *Promises*, 2 Pet. i. 4.
10. *Victory over death*, 1 Cor. xv. 57.
11. *Glory*, Ps. lxxxiv. 11; Jo. xvii. 22; Rev. xxi. xxii. 5.
12. *The power of intelligence* in the deep things of God. Mat. xiii. 11; Mark iv. 11; Luke viii. 10; Mark iv. 24; Jo. iii. 27; vi. 65; 1 Co. ii. 12; (1 Jo. ii. 20, 27) (Ja. i. 5); 1 Jo. v. 20.

Were I referring to the gifts of Christ as Head of the Church, I should have to refer to other passages, such as Rom. xii. 6; 1 Co. xii. 4, 9, 28, 30, 31; 2 Co. i. 11; 1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Ti. i. 6; 1 Pet. iv. 10; Eph. iv. 8, 11, &c. There are nine Greek words in the New Testament translated *gift* in the Authorised Version—viz. :—

charisma—Ro. i. 11; v. 15, 16; vi. 23; xi. 29; xii. 6; 1 Co. i. 7; vii. 7; xii. 4, 9, 28, 30, 31; 2 Cor. i. 11; 1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6; 1 Pet. iv. 10.

charis—2 Co. viii. 4.

doron—Mat. ii. 11; v. 23, 24; viii. 4; xv. 5; xxviii. 18, 19; Mar. vii. 11; Lu. xxi. 1; Eph. ii. 8; Heb. v. 1; viii. 3; xi. 9; viii. 4; xi. 4; Rev. xi. 10.

dōrea—Jo. iv. 10; Acts ii. 38; viii. 20; x. 45; xi. 12; Ro. v. 15, 17; xx. 9, 15; Eph. iii. 7; iv. 7; Heb. vi. 4.

dōma—Mat. vii. 11; Luke xi. 13; Eph. iv. 8; Phil. iv. 17.

merismos—Heb. ii. 4.

anathema—Luke xxi. 5.

dōrēma—Ro. v. 16; Ja. i. 17; every perfect gift.

dosis—Ja. i. 17; good gift.

These, I think, are all the places corresponding to *gifts* or *gift* in our English New Testament. Not all the times the Greek words occur—e.g., *charis* occurs 139 times.

The word from *dōrea*—*dōreân*, generally translated *freely*, may be interesting. It is literally *giftly* or *in the way of gift*. See Mat. x. 8; Jo. xv. 25=*without a cause*, i.e., gratuitously. Ro. iii. 24; 2 Co. xi. 7; Gal ii. 21=*in vain*. 2 Thes. iii. 8=*for nought* (as a gift, or gratuitously). Rev. xxi. 6; Rev. xxii. 17. FREELY.

WHAT IS OUR PROFESSION?

OUR state is that of travellers, and our attitude is that of expectants; and, knowing that we cannot enter either into the mansions prepared for us in the Father's house, or on the promised glory of the kingdom with Christ until He come, we are looking for Him, and on the tiptoe of hope waiting for his advent (Heb. ix. 28). If any one had asked Moses and the exulting hosts of Israel when they were singing their triumph-song on the shores of the Red Sea, What is your profession? would they not have said, Jehovah's good land, the promised Canaan, that all may be blessed there with all temporal blessings under the good hand of our great Deliverer, Jehovah of hosts? And if any ask us what we are holding fast and confessing—what is “*our profession?*” Would we not say, “*Glory with Christ above.*” “We are his workmanship”—the new, sanctified, saved, rescued “house” over which He as Son has been set, and which by His word and priesthood He is conducting through the world; and as He has “passed through the heavens” to the throne of God, and is there “crowned with glory and honour,” we expect erelong, at His glorious advent, also to pass with Him through these heavens to the perfection of the Father's house, the crown and the kingdom. Glory with Christ in undying perfection has been promised, hence glory is “our profession;” nothing short of “the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Tim. ii. 10). “His rest shall be *glory*” (Isaiah xi. 10). That is the *rest* that remaineth to the people of God (Heb. i. v).

It was no easy thing to get “Hebrews” who had been settled down in Jehovah's land, and set up there in fullest temporal blessing, with a full equipment of “divine service,” the only favoured nation with whom God had entered into covenant, to forsake every vestige of that old divine system, and confess a new divine system, with Jesus in the heavens as its centre—a system, too, which gave nothing upon the earth and for sight; but placed all in the heavens and for faith, and made residents in Canaan to become as really “strangers and pilgrims,” as their father Abraham in his day had been.

And if the Jews felt it hard to live purely on the faith-system with a tangible Levitical system of God-ordained ordinances before their

eyes, is it not as difficult for us to know, hold fast, and profess Christianity with the semblance of Christian churches, doctrines, and institutions before our eyes? Could we confess this thing called Christendom that we see all about us to be Christianity? No, indeed; but we shut the natural eyes upon all these simulations and imitations, and open the eyes of faith and exclaim: “*We see Jesus*” through the new and living way, through the opened heavens, and we confess His name and see a new system of worship there which we are fitted and invited to share in; and having boldness “to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus” we draw near with true hearts in full assurance of faith. Our great High Priest is there, the minister of the true sanctuary, which God hath pitched and not man at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. But do you not confess any other name? And do you not worship in places on the earth? “None other name,” no place of worship now is ours beneath these heavens. We go in with Jesus as far as He has gone inside the veil, and we go out with him as far as he went outside the lamp. That is Christianity—a religion of extremes; for we go as far as the Throne of God for our *worship*, and as far as the Cross—the place of judgment of man in the flesh—to reach the sphere of our *witness*. We confess now that our place and portion are with Christ where he is, and our place of witness-bearing, confessing His name, the Cross of Shame “outside the gate.” The system of Christianity is a perfect *contrast*—not a continuation of Judaism; for the one was for the cultivation of man in the flesh, the other association with the second man, and life with Him in the Spirit risen from the dead and now gone into heaven; while Judaism never placed its worshippers with perfected consciences within the veil, nor with a testimony to a rejected Jesus without the camp, Christianity does both. We confess to being the sanctified brethren of Jesus, the Son of God, who, in the day of His tender love and grace, was cast out by man and slain; and professing like Him a good profession (1 Tim. vi.), we will know whether or not persecution has ceased. “All who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” As it is written, “*For Thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter*” (Rom. viii. 36). E. B. H.

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2 COR. IV. 3-6.

[No. 9.]

CREATION AND REDEMPTION.

("VOICES IN THE WORLD.")

Creation spoke Thy power, O God !
 But Thou were still unknown,
 And Adam in the garden walked
 Till eventide alone.
 Man could not, by the creature, rise
 Creation's God to know ;
 Though innocent awhile he stood,
 God's image here below.

Sin wasted soon the work so fair,
 And fallen man is seen ;
 Nor can he rise, nor breathe a prayer,
 Until God intervene.
 Man unto God would never turn—
 A rebel, and undone—
 But God in love could o'er him yearn :
 God sent, in grace, His Son.

Creation's voice is little heard ;
 It sank through Adam's sin.
 God wrote redemption in His Word ;
 The lost He thus would win.
 Man never unto God has soared,
 Before nor since the fall ;
 But, ever be His name adored,
 One lives who died for all.

The God who knew His creature's guilt
 As mountains deep and high,
 Sent forth His Son ; His blood was spilt ;
 He freely came to DIE.
 He died, was buried, rose again,
 The Holy Scriptures show ;
 Whoever will, made pure of stains,
 That Saviour's worth shall know.

WHAT HAS THE BLOOD OF
CHRIST DONE FOR US?

HEBREWS ix. 7-14.

No pen can write, no tongue can tell, what the blood-shedding of Jesus has accomplished. The wondrous fruits of that one sacrifice, both God-ward and man-ward, are infinite in their variety. The intrinsic value of that blood has fully and fairly met all the claims of God—every

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demand of the law—and the whole need of man. It has laid a foundation, or rather, in itself forms the foundation for the full display, throughout eternity, of the glory of God, and the complete blessedness of His people. Its virtue is felt throughout the highest heights of heaven, and appreciated there in a way that we can have no conception of here. But in due time its power shall be manifested throughout the whole universe. The vernal bloom of every leaf, and flower, and blade of grass—the playful lambkin, and the harmless lion—the reign of peace and plenty throughout the whole creation—in the day of His millennial glory, shall alike proclaim the redemption-power of the blood of the cross. And on the other hand, the awful consequences of sinners despising that precious blood shall be endured for ever in the deepest depths of unutterable woe. Its power must be felt everywhere.

But to the *believer*, the *truster* in that precious blood, it has opened the pearly gates of heaven, and shut for ever the gloomy gates of hell. It has quenched the flames of the burning lake, and opened up the everlasting springs of God's redeeming love. It has plucked him as a brand out of the fire, cleansed him from every stain of sin, and planted him in robes of unsullied brightness in the immediate presence of God. For none has the blood of Christ done so much as for the hell-deserving sinner. And no order of beings in the bright world above, can ever know the value of that blood, or appreciate the heart that it flowed

from, like the redeemed sinner. It was an *elder*, not an *angel*, as one has sweetly said, that told the weeping prophet of the One who had prevailed to open the seven-sealed book : "And one of the elders said unto me, Weep not ; behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath *prevailed* to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof" (Rev. v. 5). There are depths in that blessed word *prevailed* which only a saved sinner can know.

But of all the precious, happy fruits of the blood-shedding of Jesus for us, there is one peculiarly sweet to my heart. Perhaps it is wrong to speak of choosing where all are divinely perfect and flowing from the same source ; but now, tell me, beloved friends, have you ever thought much of the wondrous blessedness of being brought back to God ? I do not mean *into heaven* merely, but *unto God*, and that, too, in companionship with Jesus—as one with Him. O, is there not something that comes so home to our hearts, in the knowledge that we are brought back from our wanderings in the far country to the Father's house—the Father's home—the Father's heart—the fulness in blessing of the Father's presence ? I have often thought that the prodigal would be so overcome with the Father's love that he would neither see nor think about anything else. Had his eye and his heart rested on the robe, the ring, and the feast, more than on his Father's love, would you not be ready to cry out, Unworthy, unworthy ? Oh what are jewels,

however sparkling—robes, however fair—crowns, however bright—or feasts, however sumptuous—compared with the deep and changeless affections of the heart—yes! and of a Father's heart too? This will be our heaven, and the very consummation of heaven's blessedness. With Jesus, and like Jesus, at home in the Father's presence, and finding all our happiness there. The apostle has reached the climax when he says, "But we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 11). Higher than this he can never go, and better than this he can never get.

There are three things which the blood of Christ has done to accomplish this deeply blessed end for us, namely, to bring us back to God.

I. *The way into the presence of God was opened up for us by the blood of the cross.*—(True, it was always open to the sinner by faith for salvation. Here, it is more a question of worship.) Up till that time the way into the holiest of all had not been made manifest, or laid open (Ver. 8). God dwelt behind the veil, and His people Israel worshipped Him outside. But the same stroke of judgment that slew the Lamb, and shed His blood, rent the veil from top to bottom, thus laying fully open the way into the immediate, unveiled presence of God. The blood of bulls and goats never could do this. We read in the 16th of Leviticus that on the great day of atonement Aaron sprinkled the blood of the young bullock on the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat seven times, thereby maintaining God's relations with the people, and the ground of their approach to Him for twelve months to come. But there was no rending of the veil, or liberty to draw near to God, save by the high priest alone, and that only once a year, and never without the blood of atonement.

But the blood of the Lamb which flowed on Calvary has accomplished all for us. The veil is removed. The mercy-seat above and the way up to it are, as it were, sprinkled seven times. The number seven signifies perfection. All has been perfectly accomplished by Jesus. From the cross to the throne we have a blood-sprinkled pathway. Oh! what a truth this is. Every step of the way is tracked with the Saviour's love. Oh! how this should strengthen our faith, and bind our hearts to Him. The way to God is now open at all times, for Jew and Gentile—for the chief of sinners. In the faith of this precious blood the guiltiest may

come. Come! where to? Into the Holiest of all. He will find the blood there before him. God is satisfied. His character, as well as His claims, have been glorified in the work of His Son. He reposes with divine complacency on the blood-stained mercy-seat. But how is the sinner met when he comes? In judgment for his sin? No; that was executed on the cross. Love alone remains to welcome the returning sinner. What! nothing about his sins? No; that question was settled on the cross. God will never raise it again with the poor sinner that trusts in Jesus. He both forgives and forgets. Did the father say anything about sin to the prodigal? Not a word. The prodigal confessed his sins, and that was a right thing for him to do. But God settled with Christ on the cross about his sins. Love, boundless love, flows out to meet the sinner and welcome him home. No barrier intercepts his way. It is perfectly clear. Christ Himself has laid it open—laid it open for ever. Oh! then, my fellow-sinner, come. Come now. Return to the Father's house. Thy return will make Him glad, and His arm around thy neck will banish fear, and fill thy soul with a new and heavenly joy. Better far to dwell in heaven than in hell for ever. Christ has opened the way. The blood of reconciliation is there. Fear not, only come. Come depending on that soul-saving, peace-speaking blood. Why delay? Only trust in the blood of Jesus and thou art safe for ever. All who honour the blood of Jesus with the confidence of their hearts get the highest and the best place in heaven.

II. *The blood of Christ has fitted the believer to enter the open way, and to stand with a "perfect conscience" in the presence of God* (ver. 8-14; chap. x. 1-2).—Blessed truth! No sin is left on the conscience. There is no more conscience of sin; although, of course, we shall have the consciousness of sin in us while we are here. But the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all, not some sin. As a young convert so simply but truly answered me the other day, when I was saying to her, "What a blessed thing to know that our sins are all forgiven," "O, yes," she replied; "why, if there was one left, we could not get into heaven." Sin is as far away from the worshipper in God's presence, as from Christ who bore it. We shall never need to be ashamed of our robes in heaven, or seek to hide ourselves behind a myriad of

radiant ones. Our clothing is the righteousness of God. The highest angel will never have such a robe. Could envy enter the bosom of an angel, it would be because the saved sinner's robe is brighter than his. The blood-washed robes will be the whitest in heaven. They will be the same as Christ's, blessed be His name; and more than this we can never say.

But there is another thing, beloved friends, that I would notice about our being fitted to enter heaven, and that is, *we enter by the same title as Christ Himself.* He entered by His own blood. (Ver. 12.) In virtue of His own blood. So do we. He would enter, not now on the ground of His own intrinsic righteousness merely, but by the same title as His people. Blessed Jesus! what grace! Having been "numbered with transgressors," He enters heaven by the title which equally serves for them. Hence, clearly, the same welcome, the same place of nearness to the throne, as Christ Himself, await all who come in the faith of that blood. The gates were lifted up, and the doors wide open flung, when the victorious Jesus returned. We have the same title—the same right of entrance—the same joyous welcome as Christ Himself. But where, beloved friends, does this precious blood set the believer? Not within the threshold of heaven merely, but in the Holiest of all—near as Christ is near. I was speaking the other day about the place of nearness and dearness into which we are brought in Christ, when a Christian friend replied, "O, I do not aspire to that; I shall be satisfied if I be only a door-keeper." But would Christ be satisfied? was my reply. What! a loving bridegroom allow his bride to be a door-keeper! What would you think of such a thing? The bridegroom to keep his seat at the joyous table, and allow the loved one of his heart to stand behind the door to open it to every one that knocks! This is a false humility; such thoughts are not honouring to Christ. True, in this world, it would be better far to be a door-keeper in the house of God than to have the highest place in the tents of wickedness. But the bride of the Lamb must be where He is, and as He is, and that for ever.

How did the saved thief enter heaven? With Christ and in all His perfectness. "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." He was not merely to be within the door, but with Christ wherever that might be. O! these blessed words

"with me!" they settle and define everything as to our heaven. "With me"—"with Christ"—"with the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." When He is on the throne, so shall I. When He is on the mountains of myrrh, so shall I. When He is in the shady grove, so shall I. When He is in the banqueting house, so shall I. O! what a heaven ours will be! always with Christ, and as Christ. Heaven would be a dreary blank to us without Christ, and it would be a dreary blank to Him without us. We can never be separated throughout eternity. The members must be where the Head is, and the bride must be where the bridegroom is. But, oh! the assurance of His love makes our hearts long to be with Him.

Are all here ready to go with Jesus, were He to come to-night? Oh, make friends with the Lamb now. His love is sweet—His blood is precious—His home is dear. With arms extended wide, He waits to embrace and welcome to His heart every soul that will trust Him. It seems to me a small thing merely to trust Him. I want you all to love Him. To love Him for His own sake. Happy, happy they who love the blessed Lord Jesus.

III. *The blood of Christ has obtained for us "eternal redemption"* (Ver. 12).—Oh! beloved friends, what a word this is to an immortal soul! And, oh! to find it written in God's book. There it is, read it for yourselves. "*Eternal redemption.*" It is enough! Jesus has obtained it. All the blessedness we have been speaking of is to be *eternal*. Not only has the blood of Christ opened up the way into heaven for us—fitted us to be there, and given us a right and title to all its blessedness; but it has engraven that divine word, "*eternal*" on all that it has made us, and on all that it has brought us into. Not only is all perfect, but all is permanent. Oh! this just suits immortal souls—does it suit yours? It sweetly suits mine. "*Eternal redemption.*" That will do. It overflows the heart. My soul is eternal,—God's glory is eternal,—heaven's joys are eternal,—the love of Jesus is eternal,—yes, the sweet love of Jesus shall endure for ever—shall shine in my soul, and in yours who believe, throughout the countless ages of eternity. No wonder the redeemed in heaven sing so much about the blood of Christ. It seems to be the principal note of their song. "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His

own blood." This is a note which no angelic voice can ever reach. It is too far above the line for angel choirs. They will have a theme of holy adoration, for they do love Jesus. But they must all sing seconds to the ransomed from hell. O, how loud, and long, and rapturous will be our note of praise to Him who drained the cup of wrath for us—who washed all our sins away—who lifted us out of our low estate, and set us in the highest place in heaven—who has chosen us to be the companions of His ways, and the sharers of His eternal glory.

Oh! now, my fellow sinners, tell me, is there a soul present that can yet refuse the Saviour's love—that can slight this precious blood, despise all this coming glory, and neglect so great salvation. God forbid! His love is ready to receive you—His blood is ready to cleanse you—His salvation is ready to bless you. All things are ready on God's part. Are you ready? ready now—ready to-night? Ready to embrace the Saviour—ready to give Him your heart? Does it require time to consider whether Jesus and all His love and glory, or the world, and sin, and hell are to be your choice? You must make a choice. And you have only to choose between the way to hell and the way to heaven. Can you hesitate? Oh! love the Lord Jesus, trust in the Lord Jesus, and choose the new and living way, which leads to glory, honour, immortality, eternal life.

"THE FORMER TREATISE."

ACTS i. 1-4.

In calling attention to the opening verses of this chapter, I desire, beloved friends, to ask what "the former treatise" was, as respects Christ? I need hardly say, it refers to the gospel of Luke; but what was it, as to the scope of its records?

The answer may be imperfect, which I give for myself; but I reply, it contains the account of the way by which Christ won the earth back for God, by His coming into it, in His own proper title as "Son of Man," the promised "seed of the woman." He made good this claim too, in righteousness as a man, by His living obedience; when the heavens opened over Him, and the Father's voice accredited Him, as "the Beloved Son, in whom God was well pleased." We lose the one great charm of Christianity, if we do not maintain the dignity and glory of Him who was also the sinless One!

When I think of who the Son of Man was, and from whence He came, and what He has done, the former treatise declares throughout that He had won the earth, and His people; and was then "taken up into heaven." Has He done it or not? It cannot be a little question, when connected with the Christ of God! The creature Adam had lost everything; but who has regained it? Who would or could go away and say, I have won back a lost world; and now I take it in redemption; and hold it under my title, as second Adam, and in the Headship of the new creation? That is not only a glory, but a double one! It is the glory which He gets in accomplishment by His cross; so that He not merely redeemed the creation which Adam lost (when he fell), but everything promised or covenanted by God afterwards is gained and secured by Him for ever in His own resurrection.

If I mention for a moment what He has thus established in Himself, it is to show that not only had He won "a groaning creation" out of the hand of Satan, but God Himself has exalted Him as "the beginning" of the New Creation in the glory; which place God owns and assigns in righteous title to Him who had worked these rights and titles out upon the Cross. You see the Son "taken up" in Acts i., and seated on the right hand of God, made higher than the heavens, and a "name given to Him which is above every name, not only in this world but also in that which is to come," as in Eph. i.

Another thing has been accomplished by Christ's death and resurrection—for "the obedient One" came into this world not only to make an opening for Himself, but to find an outlet too. Suppose I give an illustration. When the expedition sailed which Great Britain sent out last year to discover what the Arctic regions were, its object was to find an entrance in the first place, and then a way out. If I look at the Lord in the heavens I know who has found an opening into this earth by the mystery of the Incarnation, and also made a triumphant exit. How was it done? This carries us back to the former treatise for an answer. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore, also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." He makes an opening for Himself by which to enter into these dark and desolate

regions down here, and to explore the world into which He had come throughout its length and breadth; as also to make Himself acquainted with all that was in it, and thus bind Himself in truest sympathy with the human family. He was known as "the Man of sorrows" and acquainted with grief. I need not give instances—read the former treatise, which is the narrative "of all that Jesus began to do and teach" in connection with Acts i. He not only found an entrance, but by His righteousness gained a title to everything—and by His obedience added another character to the ways of God in His government of the world—for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous (Rom. v. 19). I must, before I get comfort or satisfaction here, know that "God has got glory" from Christ's obedience unto death; and the former treatise tells us that this has been acknowledged "at the Mount" by the voice from the excellent glory, He having won everything which had been lost, and infinitely more; for "He received from God the Father honour and glory, &c."

I have spoken thus of the opening He had found and what he had recovered; but how could he make an outlet? No one could come in by that entrance except Himself, and He came in.

If a man in his misery looked at the One who had thus come out from the Father, and believed on Him for deliverance, then what a guarantee was Christ to such a soul, in the certain knowledge that He puts *him* into the bosom of that love out of which he came! These are His words—"For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God." I am come into the world—again I leave the world and go unto the Father—these are the pathways He made! He was the most feeling man upon the earth—there was no heart like His; and He thus became acquainted with the depths, necessities, and sorrows which were daily around Him, and then went to the Cross to put away the causes (as well as their consequences) and dry up their sources. All this He did by expiation, and brought in life and peace by his sufferings and death and precious blood, thus laying down a righteous ground for God to come in upon, as "the just God, and yet the Justifier of the ungodly that believeth in Jesus." God is satisfied and God is glorified, so that I get not

only relief (which only finds and leaves me where I was), but something far higher and better *with* Christ in the Father's love.

Turn now to the xxiv. chapter of Luke, 26th verse: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory? . . . He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." I read it, beloved friends, that we may come to the sepulchre and learn another lesson *there*. The manger was the opening, and the sepulchre is the outlet. Has He made a way out for you or not by *that* open door? "The former treatise" began with the opening which He made to come into this earth, and by which the purchase was sealed to Him by right of inheritance. Now, this last chapter shows us the outlet by which he measured everything, and where the undisputed possession would be evidenced and subscribed on the third day. Can he meet and discharge *all* the liabilities and encumbrances, and put away for ever these penalties of death and the grave? Does He do so? Yes, He goes into the darkest spot which was upon this earth, with God as a Judge, to endure the wrath, cost Him what it may. In the intensity and agony of that moment (when giving up His life for us) He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Where was He from eternity? He was in the bosom of the Father! Where is He in time? In the desolate regions of this world, where God was excluded because of sin. The One who was the only begotten of the Father, and "who knew no sin" came in, and was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. He was the desolate Man upon the earth, but *this* was the only path that such an One must tread, who would make an outlet for Himself that God could own! What do we owe to Him? Shall any doubt Him? In the case of the Arctic expedition, what would England say and do when they *have* found an opening and another way out? What would an Englishman say to his neighbour if there was any one who dared to doubt respecting the truth of it, or the glory of the enterprise?

I pass from the sepulchre, and read from Luke xxiv. 46th verse, to the end of the chapter. I ask you to observe this Scripture, and see Christ come up out of this death, that our hearts may "have the certainty, touching the things which are recorded, and wherein we have been instructed," and that they may "burn within us," because it should be

heart-work from beginning to end, between a believer, and Christ, and God. What am I to think of Him who took my sins upon Himself, so that He might redeem me to God by His blood? How dare I think of Him, in any *other* way than God thinks of Him and me too, as the trophy of His grace. He has won the earth, and won the people by His sufferings and death, and then in triumph He goes to His own glory with the Father. He passed through these regions, that He might explore them, and make a way out of this wretched world, into which by His own love He came. Where is He now? Gone! and in what character? He goes up in the character of High Priest, with our names upon His breast, and makes an opening into the heavens for us, as worshippers in the holiest, where God dwells. It was God Himself who rent the veil for the Priest and us. He not only wins the earth, but the heavens; and the Holy Ghost has come down to take of the things that are Christ's, and shew them to you. God thus gives everything to His Christ. He opens the heavens, then associates us with Himself in the hour of His departure—"while He blessed them, He was parted from them"—so that by redemption, we are one with Him where He now is in life, and righteousness, and glory.

Thus the former treatise being completed, we come to Acts i. verse 2, "Until the day in which He was taken up." Here we get the next great wonder to the incarnation—viz., the first man out of death—about to make a new history for Himself, for He ascends up where man never was before, and goes to unexplored regions above. Who but He could find an opening into the heavens, and possess by righteous title and reward, as "The Son of Man," everything the Father hath to give. From the heavens there can be no outlet, except to return in blessing to this earth; but the heavens welcome us, and make us at home with their "new object." He has made a righteous opening into the heavens, and it will do your hearts good, and make them "burn" as you look at Him as He goes up, beloved. I do not want to apply this to ourselves further, but to the "glory of God." I trust all here know what it is to app'y Christ to themselves, in His finished work below. Having believed in that precious blood, I look at it in its double aspect. The guilt goes with the sins, and the blood purges the conscience, according to the holiness

of God. It is not merely purged *from* guilt, but purged according to "the glory of God," and where Christ now is, in "the Holiest of all."

"Till the day He was taken up" is more than resurrection. We may look at the many infallible proofs of that, of which there are plenty. If we turn to John xx. we see Him there come in as "the quickening Spirit," and breathing upon them, so that He might begin this *future* upon the earth; but He is not yet ascended to the Father. Afterwards He is "caught up and received out of their sight;" and this is the beginning of our new and heavenly history, as one with and united to that Man who is gone there. The Holy Ghost comes down as the Glorifier of Christ; and the new creation opens with a further revelation of the "hidden things" of God, because there is Christ as Head gone up to "His right hand," who has associated the Church with Himself by "the baptism of the Holy Ghost" (verse 5). Although Christ has left us and the earth as to His Person, yet He puts it, so to speak, "in commission" under the Apostles, to whom He had given commandments, because all His interests are in it. He has made a new place for us in heaven, and gone to make ready "the Father's house;" and in the interval He has sent His servants into the world, putting them under commissions, which are variously given in the end of the Gospels. "Go ye and preach" in Matthew. In Mark He gives the "power to cast out devils," and He bestows this on the twelve when upon the earth. So unmistakeably has He given out these commissions from Himself that the Lord on high was working with them in power, and "confirming the Word with signs following," upon the earth.

Two wonderful things are opened in the Acts—"the Church," and the things pertaining to "the kingdom of God." Christ wins the earth, and when He comes back He connects His interests again with it until He subdues it to Himself. In verse 4 of this chapter they were "to wait for the promise of the Father," which, saith He, ye have heard of Me. I do not think we are alive to the glory of the Son of Man, as Second Adam, who is up there. He is gone to heaven, but what titles and prerogatives to His dominions has He got? Shall *we* be indifferent to His glories, and the Father's delight in glorifying the Son, and selfishly limit Him and His blessed work to our own state, and be content to know that *we* are accepted? No, God

forbid! Do I undervalue acceptance? It is indispensable. But *how* has God glorified His Son in the heavens, who so glorified God upon the earth? is our inquiry. For this is the new ground of our communion. There is *now* an occasion for God the Father to display Himself in glorifying Him who has so fully glorified God! Look at Him in the heavens if you would be morally changed into the same image! Follow Christ to the heavens as *one* with Him in the Spirit. Follow Him to the heavens with your hearts, that you may be *really* there. The Holy Ghost is the earnest from God of our portion with His Son, and that *now* as the indwelling Spirit, true to God, and to Christ, and to us, He may set "our affections on things above (and not on things upon the earth), where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

Think what God has done with that "Son of Man," as Head of the new creation, and as the bringer in of the blessing and the glory with which the earth is to be filled. I look up at Him there, and find rest and satisfaction whilst below, in the knowledge that He will come to bring forth this present creation out of its groanings. Do we believe that this is His *next* work when He comes to deliver this creation "from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

But it is not merely the beginning of a new creation, nor the relief and deliverance of the old one, which completes the Son's glory. There was yet something left undisclosed in the mind of God, and which tarried for the ascended Son of Man. Now that He is on "the right hand of the Father," this secret has been revealed and the Holy Ghost come to disclose it—even "that hidden mystery," the Church, the Body and Bride of Christ, to be made ready for Him. God Himself owns that there was a thought in His heart which was kept secret from the foundation of the world. You get this in Acts, what the Church is to Christ upon the earth. We are the members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, and He has to do with each one. Do you believe it? What other operation is going on like *this* in the world? Let us be true to the Holy Ghost who is come down—this promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of *Me*—as set forth by Jesus when on earth in the xiv., xv., xvi., and xvii. chapters of John's gospel, in which He opened out this wondrous truth. Till He does come the Holy Ghost takes

possession of us in the Father's name and in the Son's name, and dwells in us individually likewise, in the name of Christ. We are *this* people, each one of us. Mind this, beloved friends. If we hear wonderful truth and wonderful things, as we surely must and ought, they are intended to be carried out in "the power of the Holy Ghost," that we may be a wonderful and "peculiar people, zealous of good works" even amongst men.

Let us be like those who have looked into this world with God in a different light. "These times" are only making complete the revolution which was begun and headed by Satan. But now God's set time is at hand, when He will make good the rights of Christ, and avenge His wrongs. He will bring in a revolution in the heavens above and the earth beneath, by which Satan shall be cast out, and all His enemies made to lick the dust—"For I will overturn, overturn, overturn, saith the Lord, and it shall be no more." Satan shall be completely and for ever set aside, and the wickedness of the wicked brought to a perpetual end. It is He who made an opening into the earth, and an outlet from the earth, and the inlet into the heavens. It is *He* whose right it is to reign from the river to the ends of the world. "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings, be instructed ye judges of the earth, serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him" (Psalm ii.)

MORTALITY SWALLOWED UP OF LIFE.

MUCH more to the purpose, and more in agreement with your own expectation will it be, to speak to you about the "house *not* made with hands, eternal in the heavens," which a Father's love has provided for each beloved one, and which the power of God will put us into, presently.

If this earth is the witness by its cemeteries and graves, that life is at length overcome by death, the heavens are to be ere long the witness "that mortality is swallowed up of life."

The risen and glorified Son of man, whom they have already received, is but the first-fruits; and presently, the caught up Church, with her Lord and Head, will give

the everlasting contradiction to the law of sin and death, in the world where Adam the fallen one was a driven-out man.

The triumphs of grace at the cross, and the victories written out in resurrection life, and displayed in the unfading characters of the coming glory, many will charm your eye and rejoice your heart, as I am very sure they do.

God grant that all over your head may shine the brighter, as everything else becomes heavy and cumbrous to you where you are.

IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE.

(Comp. LUKE, xv. 25-32.)

Light, music, dance, and song,

All in that home above,

Harmonious move the radiant throng;
They dwell in love.

Light, music, dance, and song;

No discord there, no night,

No tear, no groan, no shade of wrong;
All pure delight!

Light, music, dance, and song;

God evermore the theme;

Each note the air shall waft along,
Declaring Him.

Light, music, dance, and song;

Diffusion, varied praise,

Bliss more than could to heaven belong,
Before earth's days!

Light, music, dance, and song;

No entrance save by blood;

Soon shall I join that ransomed throng;
Brought now to God.

SAUL OF TARSUS.

1 TIMOTHY i. 15.

IN contemplating the character of this most remarkable man, we may gather up some fine principles of Gospel truth. He seems to have been peculiarly fitted to shew forth, in the first place, what the *grace* of God *can* do; and, in the second place, what the greatest amount of legal effort *cannot* do. If ever there was a man upon this earth whose history illustrates the truth, that "salvation is by grace, without works of law," Saul of Tarsus was that man. Indeed, it would seem as though God had specially designed to present, in the person of Saul, a living example, first, of the depth to which a *sinner* can descend; and, secondly, of the height to which a *legalist* can attain. He was, at once, the very *worst*, and the very *best* of men—the chief of sinners, and the chief of legalists. He travelled down to the lowest point of human wickedness, and climbed to the loftiest summit of human righteousness. He

was a sinner of the sinners, and a Pharisee of the Pharisees.

Let us, then, in the first place, contemplate him as—

I. THE CHIEF OF SINNERS.—"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom *I am chief*." (1 Tim. i. 15.) Now, let the reader note, particularly, that the Spirit of God declares, concerning Saul of Tarsus, that he was the chief of sinners. It is not the expression of Paul's humility, though, no doubt, he was humble under the sense of what he had been. We are not to be occupied with the feelings of an inspired writer, but with the statements of the Holy Ghost who inspired him. It is well to see this. Very many persons speak of the feelings of the various inspired writers in a way calculated to weaken the sense of that precious truth, the plenary inspiration of Holy Scripture. They may not mean to do so; but, then, at a time like the present, when there is so much mental activity, so much of reason, so much of human speculation, we cannot be too guarded against aught that might, even in appearance, militate against the integrity of the Word of God. We are anxious that our readers should entertain the very highest thoughts respecting the inspired volume; that they should treasure it in their heart's affections, not as the expression of human feelings, however pious and praiseworthy, but as the depository of the thoughts of God. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter i. 21.

Hence, therefore, in reading 1 Tim. i. 15, we are not to think of the feelings of man, but of the record of God; and this record declares that Paul was the chief of sinners. It is never once stated that any one else was the chief of sinners. No doubt, in a secondary sense, each convicted heart will feel and own itself the vilest heart within its entire range of intelligence; but this is quite another matter. The Holy Ghost has declared of Paul, and of none other, that he was the chief of sinners; nor does the fact that He has told us this by the pen of Paul himself, interfere with, or weaken, in the smallest degree, the truth and value of the statement. Paul was the chief of sinners. No matter how bad any one may be, Paul could say, "*I am chief*." No matter how low any one may feel himself to be—no

matter how deeply sunk in the pit of ruin—a voice rises to his ear from a deeper point still, "*I am chief*." There cannot be two chiefs, for if there were, it could only be said that Paul was one of them; whereas, it is most distinctly declared that he was "*chief*."

But let us mark the object of all this dealing with the chief of sinners. "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in *me first* Jesus Christ might shew forth *all* long-suffering, for a *pattern* to them who should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." The chief of sinners is in heaven. How did he get there? Simply by the blood of Jesus; and, moreover, he is Christ's "*pattern*" man. All may look at him and see how they, too, are to be saved, for, in such wise as the "*chief*" was saved, must all the subordinate be saved. The grace that reached the chief can reach all. The blood that cleansed the chief can cleanse all. The title by which the chief entered heaven is the title for all. The vilest sinner under the canopy of heaven may hearken to Paul saying, "*I am chief*, and yet I obtained mercy. Behold in me a pattern of Christ's long suffering." There is not a sinner at this side the portal of hell, be he backslider or aught else, beyond the reach of the love of God, the blood of Christ, or the testimony of the Holy Ghost.

We shall now turn to the other side of Saul's character, and contemplate him as—

II. THE CHIEF OF LEGALISTS.—

"Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, *I more*" (Philip. iii. 4). Here we have a most valuable point. Saul of Tarsus stood, as it were, on the very loftiest crag of the hill of legal righteousness. He reached the topmost step of the ladder of human religion. He would suffer no man to get above him. His religious attainments were of the very highest order (See Gal. i. 14). No one ever got beyond him in the matter of working out a self-righteousness. "If *any* other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, *I more*." Is "*any*" man "*trusting*" in his temperance? Paul could say, "*I more*." Is "*any*" man "*trusting*" in his morality? Paul could say, "*I more*." Is "*any*" man "*trusting*" in ordinances, sacraments, religious services, or pious observances? Paul could say, "*I more*." Is "*any*" man proudly wrapping himself up in the pompous robes of orthodoxy, and "*trusting*" therein? Paul could

say, "I *more*." In a word, let a man mount up the hill of legal righteousness as high as the most towering ambition or fervid zeal can carry him, and he will hear a voice falling upon his ear, from a loftier height still, "I *more*."

All this imparts a peculiar interest to the history of Saul of Tarsus. He lay at the very bottom of the pit of ruin, and he stood on the very summit of the hill of self-righteousness. Deep as any sinner may have sunk, Paul was deeper still. High as any legalist may have stood, Paul stood higher still. He combined, in his own person, the very worst and the very best of men. In him we see, at one view, the power of the blood of Christ, and the utter worthlessness of the fairest robe of self-righteousness that ever decked the person of a legalist. Looking at Him, no sinner need despair; looking at Him no legalist can boast. If the chief of sinners is in heaven, I can get there too. If the greatest religionist, legalist, and doer, that ever lived had to come down from the ladder of self-righteousness, it is of no use for me to go up. Saul of Tarsus came up from the depths, and down from the heights, and found his place at the pierced feet of Jesus of Nazareth. His guilt was no hindrance, and his righteousness no use. The former was washed away by the blood, and the latter turned into dung and dross, by the moral glory of Christ. It mattered not whether it was "*I chief*," or "*I more*." The cross was the only remedy. God forbid," says this chief of sinners and prince of legalists, "that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. vi. 14.) Paul had just as little idea of trusting in his righteousness as in his crimes. He was permitted to win the laurel of victory in the grand legal struggle with his "equals in his own nation," only that he might fling it, as a withered, worthless thing, at the foot of the cross. He was permitted to outstrip all in the dark career of guilt, only that he might exemplify the power of the love of God and the efficacy of the blood of Christ. The gospel has a double voice. It calls to the slave of vice who lies wallowing in the mire of moral pollution, and says, "*Come up*." It calls to the busy, self-complacent religionist, who is vainly endeavouring to clamour up the steep sides of Mount Sinai, and says, "*Come down*." Saul was no nearer to Christ as the chief of

legalists, than he was as the chief of sinners. There was no more justifying merit in his noblest efforts in the school of legalism, than in his wildest acts of opposition to the name of Christ. He was saved by grace, saved by blood, saved by faith. There is no other way for sinner or legalist.

Thus much as to Saul of Tarsus, in his twofold character as chief of sinners and chief of legalists. There is one other point in his history at which we must briefly glance, in order to shew the practical results of the grace of Christ wherever that grace is known. This will present him to our notice as—

III. THE MOST LABORIOUS OF APOSTLES.—If Paul learnt to cease working for righteousness, he also learned to begin working for Christ. When we behold, on the road leading to Damascus, the shattered fragments of the worst and best of men—when we hear those pathetic accents emanating from the depths of a broken heart, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"—when we see that man who had just left Jerusalem, in all the mad fury of a persecuting zealot, now stretching forth the hand of blind helplessness, to be led like a little child into Damascus, we are led to form the very highest expectations as to his future career; nor are we disappointed. Mark the progress of that most remarkable man; behold his gigantic labours in the vineyard of Christ; see his tears, his toils, his travels, his perils, his struggles; see him as he bears his golden sheaves into the heavenly garner, and lays them down at the Master's feet; see him wearing the noble bonds of the Gospel, and finally laying his head on the martyr's block, and say if the Gospel of God's free grace—the Gospel of Christ's free salvation, does away with good works. Nay, my reader, that precious Gospel is the only true basis on which the superstructure of good works can ever be erected. Morality without Christ is an icy morality. Benevolence without Christ is a worthless benevolence. Ordinances without Christ are powerless and valueless. Orthodoxy without Christ is heartless and fruitless. We must get to the end of *self*, whether it be a guilty self or a religious self, and find Christ as the satisfying portion of our hearts, now and for ever. Then we shall be able to say, with truth,

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
More than all in Thee I find."

Thus it was with Saul of Tarsus.

He got rid of himself and found his all in Christ, and hence, as we hang over the impressive page of his history, we hear, from the most profound depths of moral ruin, the words, "I am *chief*"—from the most elevated point in the legal system, the words, "I *more*"—and from amid the golden fields of Apostolic labour, the words, "I laboured *more abundantly* than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

THE RELIGION OF FAITH.

A LECTURE ON GALATIANS.

THERE is a character of truth in the the Epistle to the Galatians very seasonable at this present time, and very strengthening to the soul at all times. It teaches us to know, that the religion of *faith* is the religion of *immediate personal confidence in Christ*. A truth which is, again I say, seasonable in a day like the present, when the provisions and claims of certain earthly church forms, and a system of ordinances, suggested by the religious, carnal mind, are abundant and fascinating. To learn, at all times, that our souls are to have their immediate business with Christ, is comforting and assuring. To be told this afresh, at such a time as the present, is needful.

The Apostle is very fervent in this epistle—naturally and properly so—as we all should be, as we all ought to be, when some justly-prized possession is invaded; when some precious portion of truth, the dearest of all possessions, is tampered with.

In this epistle, in the first instance, as at the beginning, the Apostle lets us know, with great force and plainness, that he had received his apostleship *immediately* from God; not only his commission, or his office, but his instructions also; that which he had to minister and testify, as well as his appointment and ministry itself. He was an Apostle immediately from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; and what he knew and taught he had by direct, immediate revelation.

And, in connection with this, he tells us, that as God had thus dealt immediately with him, so had he, in answering confidence, dealt immediately with God. For, having received the revelation, having had the Son revealed in him, he at once withdrew from conversing with flesh and blood. He did not go up to Jerusalem, to those who were Apostles before him, but down to

Arabia, carrying, as it were, his treasure with him; not seeking to improve it, but as one that was satisfied with it, just as it was—that is, with the Christ who had now been given to him.

And, here let me say, this brings to mind the Gospel by St. John; for that gives us, before this time of Paul, sample after sample of the soul finding its satisfaction in Christ. Every quickened one there illustrates it. Andrew, and Peter, and Philip, and Nathaniel, in the first chapter; afterwards, the Samaritan and her companions at Sychar; and then the convicted adulteress, and the excommunicated beggar—all of them tell us, in language which cannot be misunderstood, that they had found satisfaction in Christ—that, having been alone with Him in their sins, they were now *independent*—having had a personal, *immediate* dealing with Him as the Saviour, they looked not elsewhere. Arabia will do for them as well as Jerusalem, just as in the experience of the Paul of the Galatians. They never appear to converse with flesh and blood. Ordinances are in no measure their confidence. Their souls are proving that faith is that principle which puts sinners into *immediate* contact with Christ, and makes them independent of all that man can do for them.

How unspeakably blessed to see such a state of soul illustrated in any fellow-sinner, in men “of like passions with ourselves,” like corruptions, like state of guilt and condemnation. Such things are surely written for our learning, that by comfort of such Scriptures we may have assurance and liberty.

And what is thus, in living samples, *illustrated* for our comfort in John’s Gospel, is *taught and pressed upon us* in this fervent Epistle of Paul to the Galatians. Having shown the churches in Galatia the character of his apostleship—how he got both his commission and his instructions immediately from God, and was not debtor to flesh and blood, to Jerusalem, the city of solemnities, or to those who were Apostles before him, for anything; and having discovered, as it were, his very spirit to them, telling them that the life he was now living was by faith of the Son of God—he begins to *challenge* them, for they were not in this state of soul.

He calls them “foolish,” and tells them they had been “bewitched.” For how could he do less, than detect the working of Satan in the fact that they had been withdrawn from the place where the Spirit and

the Truth, the cross of Christ and faith, had once put them. But then, he *reasons* with them, argues the matter, and calls forth his witnesses. He makes themselves their judges, appealing to their first estate. “Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” He cites Abraham, in proof that a sinner had *immediate* personal business with Christ, and through faith found justification. And he rehearses the character of the Gospel which had been preached to Abraham, how it told of *Christ*, and of *the sinner*, and *blessing* being put together and alone. “In thee (Abraham’s seed, which is Christ) shall all nations be blessed.” Precious Gospel! *Christ, and the sinner, and blessing, bound up together in one bundle.* And he goes on to confirm and establish this, by teaching them how Christ bore the curse, and, therefore, surely was entitled to dispense the blessing.

Surely these are witnesses which may well be received, as proving the divine character of the religion of faith, which is the sinner’s immediate confidence in Christ.

But then, he does further and other service in this same cause. He goes on to tell us the glorious things faith works and accomplishes in us and for us. “After faith is come,” he tells us in chap. iii. 25-27, “we are no longer under a schoolmaster—for we are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Here are precious deeds of faith! It dismisses the schoolmaster, it brings the soul to God as to a father, and then it clothes the believer with the value of Christ, in the eye and acceptance of God. And “God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (iv. 6). And “we are redeemed from under the law” (iv. 5). Can any more full and perfect sense of an *immediate* dealing between Christ and the soul be conceived, than is expressed and declared by such statements? We are brought from under the law—the schoolmaster, and, with him, tutors and governors are gone—we are children at home in the Father’s house, and have the rights and the mind of the First-born Himself put on us, and imparted to us! Can any condition of soul more blessedly set forth our independence of the resources of a religion of ordinances, and the poor sinner’s personal and immediate connection with Christ Himself?

But Paul finds the churches in Galatia in a backsliding state. They had turned again “to weak and beggarly elements.” They were “observing days, and months, and times, and years.” It was all but returning to their former idolatry, as he solemnly hints to them, “doing service to them which by nature are no gods,” as they had been doing in the days of their heathen ignorance of the true God (iv. 8). What a connection does he here put the Christianity that is merely formal, and observant of imposed ordinances into? Is it not solemn? Was it not enough to alarm him? And does it not do so? “I am afraid of you,” says he to the Galatians in this state, “lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.”

But, dear man, as he was, gracious, patient, and toiling, according to the working of Him who was working in him mightily, he consents to labour afresh—yea, more painfully than ever—to *travail in birth again for them.* But all this was only to this end, that *Christ* might be formed in them. Nothing less or more, or other than this. He longed for restoration of soul in them, and that was, that they and Christ might be put *immediately* together again; that faith might be revived in them, the simple, hearty, blessed religion of personal and direct confidence in God in Christ Jesus; that, as in Himself, the Son might be revealed in them; that, regaining Christ in their souls, they might prove they needed nothing more.

How edifying it is to mark the path of such a spirit under the conduct of the Holy Ghost! How comforting to see the purpose of God, by such a ministry, with the souls of poor sinners! How it lets us learn what Christianity is, in the judgment of God Himself? The going over to the observance of days and times, the returning to ordinances, is destructive of this religion. It is the world. “Why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,” as the same Apostle says in another place. Confidence in ordinances is not faith in Christ. It is the religion of nature, of flesh and blood. It is of man and not of God.

And surely it carries in its train the passions of man. Man’s religion leaves man as it found him, rather, indeed, cherishes and cultivates man’s corruptions. This showed itself in Ishmael in earliest days—nay, in Cain before him—but in Ishmael, as the Apostle in this same epistle goes on to shew. And he declares

that it was then, in his day, the same; and generations of formal, corrupt Christianity in the story of Christendom, the prisons of Italy some few years since, and the prisons of Spain still later, declare the same. "As then, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so is it now." Man's religion, again I say, does not cure him. He is left by it a prey to the subtleties and violence of his nature, the captive still of the old serpent, who has been a liar and a murderer from the beginning.

The decree, however, has been pronounced. It was delivered in the days of Isaac and Ishmael, of Abraham and Sarah; it is rehearsed and re-sealed by the Spirit Himself in the day of the Apostle Paul; and we are to receive it as established for ever. It is this, "Cast out the bondwoman and her son" (chap. iv. 30).

What consolation to have this mighty question between God and man settled! And, according to this consolation, we listen to this further word: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (chap. v. 1).

All, surely, is of one and the same character. The Holy Ghost, by the Apostle, is preparing the principle, the great, leading, commanding, principle of divine religion. It is faith. It is the sinner's personal and *immediate* confidence in Christ. It is the soul finding satisfaction in Him, and in that which He has done for it. And such a religion as this, the sinner in possession of this faith, is set, as I may express it, next door to glory. The Apostle quickly tells us this, after commanding us to stand fast in the liberty of the Gospel: for he adds, "We, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith" (v. 2). This hope is the glory that is to be revealed—"the glory of God," as a kindred passage has it (Rom. v. 2). We do not wait for any improvement of our character, for any advance in our souls. Should we still live in the flesh, only fitting will it be, to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." But such things are not needed in the way of title. Being in Christ by faith, we are next door to glory. "Whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. viii.) "Being in the kingdom of God's dear Son, we are meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col.

i.) As here, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, we wait only for glory. Glory as the *immediate object of our hope*, as Christ is the *immediate confidence of our souls*.

It is all magnificent in its simplicity, because it is all of God. No wonder that Scripture so abundantly discourses to us about faith, and so zealously warns us against religiousness. The "persuasion," as the Apostle speaks, under which the Galatians had fallen, had not come of God who had called them, and the Apostle sounds the alarm, blows the blast of war on the silver trumpet of the sanctuary, uttering these voices in their ears—"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Again, "If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law" (chap. v. 8, 9, 18).

And in the happy structure of this epistle, as I may also speak of it, the apostle ends with himself, as he begins with himself. We have seen how he told them, at the first, of the peculiarities of his apostleship, how he had received both his commission and his instructions *immediately* from God, and how he had then, with a faith that was an answer to such grace, at once conducted himself in full personal confidence in Christ, and independently of all the resources of flesh and blood. And now, at the close, he tells them, that, as for himself, he knew no glorying but in the cross of the Lord Jesus, by whom the world was crucified to Him and He to the world.

And he tells them, further, that no one need meddle with him or trouble him, neither fret him nor worry him, with their thoughts about circumcision and the law, or the things of a carnal religiousness, the rudiments of a world to which He was now crucified, for that He bore in His body the marks of the Lord. He belonged to Jesus by personal, individual tokens, immediately impressed on him, as by the appropriating hand of Christ Himself, and no one had any right to touch the Lord's treasure.

Precious secret of the grace of God, precious simplicity in the faith of a heaven-taught sinner! It is not, beloved, knowledge of scripture, or ability to talk of it, or even teach it from Genesis to Revelation—it is not the orderly services of religion—it is not devout feelings—but, O, it is that guileless action of the soul that attaches our very selves to Jesus in the calm and certainty of a believing mind.

MEDITATIONS ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

(Translated from the Italian.)

CHAPTER X.

WHILE Peter remains in Simon's house, God is occupied with the Gentiles, of whom Peter was not thinking, and even when he did think of them, was not disposed to admit them among the believing Jews. The angel of God appears to Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, faithful according to the knowledge he possessed, fearing God, and praying continually. He was then converted, but did not know that salvation which had been announced by grace in Jesus, obtained for us on the cross. There are many people who, though they may have learned more than Cornelius, and who bear the name of Christians, have not got beyond his state. These are like the prodigal son (Luke xv.) when he repents and arises to go to his father. He was on the right way, but he did not know how he would be received by his father. Such people possess perhaps more light, but as to their relation with God, they are in the same state.

But the conversion of Cornelius, and his introduction to the Christian assembly, was evidently of great importance. The Gentiles were to participate in the grace and blessing of the gospel. The promises had been given to the Jews—none of them to the Gentiles; but the revelation of the grace of God could not be limited to one people. In His government of the world, God could choose a people for Himself when mankind had abandoned Him and had altogether fallen into idolatry, in order to maintain on the earth the knowledge of one true God, and to put the heart of man to the test, shew what it was, and unfold His ways in the midst of mankind. But God, revealed in grace according to His nature, could not in any way be the God of a single nation.

Hidden behind the veil, He could give a perfect law, promises, and prophecies; but at the death of Christ the veil is rent in twain, God is fully revealed in grace and justice, and could no longer be the God of the Jews only. Moreover, at the death of Christ, the Jews as a nation were set aside till they should repent. Yes, it was God's will that the Gentiles should take part in the new blessings of grace. All were sinners; but God purified by faith one as freely as another.

Independently of the Jews, He

sends His angel to Cornelius. His prayers and alms are recognised as being acceptable to God. He is told to send men to Joppa to call for Simon, who, the angel tells him, lodged with one Simon, a tanner. He would tell him what he ought to do. Here is a new and important fact. God was thinking about the Gentiles, and desired to admit them to the assembly without their becoming Jews or submitting to the law. Cornelius, a truly devout man, humble, and fearing God, acts immediately according to the word of the angel, and calls two of his servants and a devout soldier, and having declared to them all that had happened, sends them to call for Peter.

As they travel God prepares Peter's heart for a mission, to accomplish which he, till then, had been by no means ready. But God desired to have the Gentiles. Peter was praying on the roof of the house where he lodged, and becoming very hungry he would have eaten; but while they made ready he fell into a trance, and saw as it were a great sheet let down from heaven to earth, full of all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air, which it was not lawful for the Jews to eat. And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Rise, Peter, kill, and eat. Peter, faithful to Judaism, refuses to do so; he had never eaten anything common or unclean. Then the voice said to him, What God hath cleansed, that call thou not unclean.

As Peter seeks for the interpretation of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius come to the door and ask for him; and the Spirit tells Peter to go with them, doubting nothing; for, said the Spirit, I have sent them. Peter, therefore, brings them in and lodges them, and on the morrow goes away with them, only taking the precaution of getting certain brethren to accompany him. Arrived at Cesarea, Cornelius throws himself at his feet, as the messenger of God. Peter lifts him up, and asks for what reason he had sent for him.

Many relations and intimate friends of Cornelius were gathered together. All doubt as to the meaning of the vision was now removed. By the authority of God Himself, Peter found himself in the society of the Gentiles, which was unlawful for the Jews. He acknowledges God's willingness to receive those that feared Him, and worked righteousness among all nations, not only among the Jews. While Cornelius and his friends listen with godly faith, he

recounts the mission of Jesus, how the Jews had crucified Him, and God had raised Him up, of which thing the apostles were the witnesses, having eaten and drunk with Him after His resurrection; the proof that He was still a true man, though He possessed then a spiritual body, and that He was the same Jesus whom they had known alive on the earth. At the end of the gospel of Luke, the basis of every record of the Acts, it is remarkable how Jesus, in perfect grace, takes pains to make the disciples certain that He was the same Jesus whom they had known. There, we are told, that He eat and drank in order to demonstrate it (Luke xxiv. 36, &c). "And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them" (Luke xxiv. 40-43).

Still the principal thing remained. Cornelius was already converted, devout, faithful, and full of the fear of God, according to the light he possessed. But he did not know salvation, the work of the Saviour, and its efficacy. Led only by the grace of God, he received with faith what Peter told him. Now it was declared to him that according to the testimony of all the prophets, he who believed in Jesus received the remission of his sins. The Holy Ghost seals by His coming this truth received with simple faith into the hearts of Cornelius and his friends. The Holy Ghost is given then to the Gentiles, without their becoming Jews or being circumcised. Henceforth it was impossible not to receive them into the Christian assembly. God had received them, and had put His seal on them. Peter commands them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

We have here four distinct points. The conversion of the soul by grace. Cornelius was already converted, and his prayers and alms accepted by God; then the testimony of the remission of his sins by faith in Jesus, the victim by whom propitiation was made for us on the cross; then the seal of God in the gift of the Holy Ghost; and, finally, the formal reception among the Christians. This order is not that which is found elsewhere; because God was shewing that it was His will that the Gentiles should be received. But it is important to distinguish the four things, and to observe the true force of each of them.

THE TWO MOUNTS.

(A LETTER TO A FRIEND.)

"For our God is a consuming fire."
—HEB. xii. 9.

I WAS pointing out the other day to some saints here how remarkable it is that, in Num. xv., we have—(1) Directions about sins of ignorance; (2) Sins of presumption; and (3) The ribband of blue, to keep in mind to do all the commandments of the Lord, and "that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes," just before the awfully presumptuous sin of Korah in chap. xvi. We need to keep in mind Num. xv. 27-29 while judging of an "ignorant" brother and his ways. There is an atonement for sins of ignorance, even "when he sinneth by ignorance before the Lord" in regard to deep and holy things. Certainly we ought not to suffer sin in a brother, but point out to him the error of his ways, that he may have "the fear of Christ" upon his spirit. *Fear* is one of the most valuable things for a Christian (see Acts ix. 31; xvi. 2, 3; 2 Cor. v. 11; vii. 1, 11, 15; Eph. v. 21 ("the fear of Christ"); vi. 5; Phil. ii. 12; 1 Peter i. 17; ii. 18; iii. 2, 15; Jude 23; Rom. xi. 20; Col. iii. 22; Heb. iv. 1; Rev. xv. 4).

Did you ever observe that in Heb. v. 7, "*in that he feared*," is the same word as Heb. xii. 28—"godly fear;" and the root-meaning is "foresight, caution," and that in both places it might be that "deliberate hesitation or delay" which would pervade the mind of one who had to act before God with a holy awe, desiring fully to meet His mind. We are to have this same mind in us that was in Christ Jesus when He was in the place of a servant. "*Reverence*," in Heb. xii. 28, is translated in the only other place in which it occurs in the New Testament (1 Tim. ii. 9) by "*shame-facedness*," from a sense of our unworthiness. I should tell you, however, there is a different reading well attested, giving a translation like this: "*With reverent admiration and fear*" (Alf.). But Delitzsch holds by A. V., which is, as I have said, that which places us in a sense of our true state before God, and acting as having a care lest we offend Him. They all agree, that "Let us hold fast grace" is not correct; and it should be, "Let us have thankfulness." I think it must surely be *God's grace* (in some way), not "our thankfulness," looking at the scope of the chapter and the scope of Hebrews—"Lest any man fail of the grace of God." I do not mean by *grace* something within us (does it ever mean

that?), but favour shown us by God—His whole dealing in Christianity as opposed to law in Hebrews. Hence the Mount of Law and the Mount of Grace are put in sharp and well-defined contrast (chap. xii.)

There are seven things said of Mount Sinai:—

1. *A mountain that may be touched* (tangible, &c.; therefore connected with man in the world and with material things).

2. *And to a kindled fire* (Deut. iv. 36; the perfect is used as showing it a merely transient phenomenon connected with the material world).

3. *And to cloud-gloom* (allusion to Deut. iv. 11).

4. *And darkness* (Deut. iv. 11).

5. *And storm* (Ex. xix. 16; xx. 18).

6. *And trumpet-sound* (Ex. xix. 16, &c.).

7. *And a voice of (spoken) words* (Deut. iv. 12), which they that heard entreated that no more speech might be addressed to them (verse 19).

The top of Sinai, as seen by Israel at the giving of the Law, burned with fire; lower down it was girt with dark, impenetrable cloud, out of which came (according to the Sep. rendering of the Hebrew at Deut. iv. 11, and v. 22) mutterings and bursts of storm, like pre-announcements of divine wrath (Del.). Verses 20, 21: "For they could not bear that ordaining" (word): "And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned." And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." The Law says, Stand back! even to a beast—much more to a man, who, sinning, brought down the beast with him. So terrible was the manifestation that Moses, too, the friend of God, was likewise filled with fear. This is an expansion by the Spirit of Moses' word (Deut. ix. 19) spoken with reference to a different occasion (Ex. iii. 6). The word "quake" occurs twice else in the New Testament—Acts vii. 32; xvi. 29). One must stand quaking personally, and behold alone the holiness of God, before he can be in it with God for others: the bush first, and then the mount. Only we can stand unfearingly when we know love and grace in perfection (1 John iv. 17, 18).

"But ye have not drawn near," &c. The Christian's approach and presentation are in contrast with that of Israel, when we read: "And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God" (Ex. xix.) But their drawing near was a shrinking back. The mount was unapproachable: all the arrangements told of a God of infinite majesty;

but so terrible in His holiness that they in the flesh could not get near Him and live. And, besides, it was only by the visible and tangible forms of Nature that God was manifested, or behind which He hid Himself. The effect of such a revelation or manifestation of the fiery or wrathful side of His glory was fitted to inspire with terror, and to make them feel their utter unfitness to approach Him as thus revealed.

"For ye are not come," &c. Why "for?" It arises out of any man failing of the grace of God, with Esau for an example of it.

The Sinaitic revelation of Law is then contrasted with the Zionitic revelation of Grace; and we are instructed as to our approach to God being according to the latter, and not the former. "Come," or "drawn near," occurs in chap. iv. 16; vii. 25; x. 1, 22; xi. 6; and here, chap. xii. 18. Then, again, in ver. 22: "But ye are come nigh unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, Jerusalem the heavenly, and myriads of angels, the festive assembly, and the church of the first-born enrolled in the heavens, and to God the Judge of all, and to spirits of just ones made perfect, and to the new covenant's Mediator, Jesus, and to a blood of sprinkling, speaking more mightily than Abel." What are the precious realities and persons we are come to here? Each division on Mount Zion is pointed out by the conjunction "and":—

1. *And to the city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem,*

2. *And to myriads of angels—the general assembly,*

3. *And to the church of the first-born enrolled in the heavens,*

4. *And to God the Judge of all,*

5. *And to the spirits of just men made perfect,*

6. *And to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant,*

7. *And to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.*

These are the seven *heavenlies* on Mount Zion, in antithesis to the seven *earthlies* on Mount Sinai. It is curious that that remarkable expositor, Bengel, a hundred years ago, pointed out these sevens in their antithesis; but he was not at all clear about the saints of this dispensation being separate; for at one time he mixes them with the angels into one general assembly, at another with the spirits of just men made perfect. And yet he sees clearly that general assembly is of angels; "The Church of the First-born." He clearly makes the Church

consist of all saints—Old Testament and New Testament. A man of spiritual insight like Bengel would have done much more to clear Scripture from theological glosses had he known "the mystery of God!"

It is refreshing to read in a sentence like this, in the work of a living German, "*We conclude, therefore, that by Church of the First-born the present living Church is meant.*" He supports this view by several considerations—(1) The use of the term *ecclesia* is always applied in Scripture to the religious community on earth. (2) It accounts for the epithet written in heaven, as designating the heavenly character of the Church. (3) It accounts for *first-born*, a term suggested by the foregoing warning about Esau, who despised his *first-born-hood*. Allusion also to Israel, no longer the first-born—nor enrolled in an earthly register (Nu. iii.)—but in heaven itself. Also, perhaps, with the thought of ancient rights of the first-born to priesthood and royalty, so (Rev. i. 6) kings and priests. The spiritual right of primogeniture of all Christians, because of connexion with the Son of God, is here set in contrast to the right of the first-born in Israel; and the assembly of Christ is contrasted with that of Judaism. And (4), This will account for myriads of angels being near the Church of the First-born; for, according to chap. i. 14, they are ministering spirits to them. Both are heavenly, though the assembly is here on earth. (5) This is naturally followed by "God, the Judge of all," the key to which is found in chap. x. 30. Let us pass through as many oppressions as we may, it matters not—as the Lord committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously, so do we. And naturally follows (6), "and to the spirits of just men made perfect"—for "without us they could not be made perfect" (chap. xi. 40). Their perfection comes to them in resurrection and glory, in virtue of the descending and ascending Jesus (Ep. iv. 10); hence (7), "and to the Mediator of the new covenant" is brought in. New here is *recent*, newly *formed*, and is of ever fresh and vigorous *youth*, in contrast to the old, which was now antiquated, and about to disappear. He is called *Jesus*, as the Perfected One (chap. ii. 9, 10); and the Perfector (xii. 2); and again, in chap. vii. 22, as surety of the better covenant.

It is the name *Jesus*, containing in it *Jehovah-Saviour*, not the *Christ*, which is in contrast to *Moses*. The mention of the covenant is naturally

followed by that of the blood that sealed it—"And to the blood of sprinkling," etc. In chap. ix. 18, 22, we read that no covenant is inaugurated without blood, and no forgiveness without blood-shedding. As Moses, the Mediator of the Old Covenant, finds an infinitely exalted antitype in Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant, so the blood of sprinkling under the one finds its antitype in another sprinkling of blood, sealing a New Covenant under the other (chap. ix. 19). Not "better things;" but "is more powerful, penetrative, and prevailing," as it is not the blood of a dead man like Abel, but of One who, in virtue of it, is raised from the dead to the super-celestial tabernacle, and seated on a Mediatorial and high priestly throne. The great antithesis is in the *speaking*—the last thing, "the voice of (spoken) words" on Sinai, is in contrast with the voice of the sprinkled blood on Mount Zion. This appears from what follows, verse 25, "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh," etc.

There are, then, in the latter half of Heb. xii: (1) Two mounts; (2) two voices—two speakings, in law from Sinai, in blood (grace) from Zion; (3) two shakings; (4) two kinds of things—the shakable and the unshakable. All connected with man and his world is shakable, and will be shaken; but all connected with God's counsel and grace, for the setting up of His kingdom, administered by Jesus in the world to come, is unshakable. The conclusion drawn, and exhortation in connexion with these things are, "*Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire.*" We do not receive this kingdom on earth, and now; but we are the parties who receive it, with the Lord Jesus, when the time of his Melchisedek reign over the world to come arrives; and as antecedating that, by faith, and in spirit, we receive it now. It will be made out of the things which cannot be shaken—the things connected with Mount Zion.

Because of getting, in grace, such a place with Christ Jesus in the glory of His kingdom and reign, we should, he exhorts, entertain and shew grace (thankfulness) whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. To find grace is an act; to have grace is a state. To have grace passively would be to be under the power of grace (Luke xvii. 9; 1 Tim. i. 12); but 2

Tim. ii. 3, to entertain and shew thankfulness. Thankfulness is the chief thing in all true service of God. "Whoso offereth thanks," we read in Ps. l. 23, "glorifieth me, and follows a path in which I will shew him the salvation of Elohim." But we must take in the whole sentence containing the exhortation. With thankfulness would be combined *shame*, like that of the Seraphim when they veil their faces and their feet with their wings, and *personal circumspection* and attention, that avoids carefully anything unseemly or offensive. Hab. ii. 20, has the verb, in Sept. (ἐυλαβεῖσθω)—"The Lord is in His holy temple: *Keep up a reverential awe* before Him, all the earth." With *shame*, on account of our unworthiness; with *fear*, from a perception of the Divine majesty. *Hope* is tempered with *reverence* and *fear*, lest we should be too bold and familiar.

"For our God is a consuming fire." In Deut. iv. 24, we read, "*For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.*" This is spoken in connection with a warning against graven images—He was "a jealous God," a consuming fire, to idolators. "As a consuming fire He shall destroy them," i.e., the nations of Canaan. But the God of the Jew is never said to be "a consuming fire" *dispensationally*, as the Christian's God is here said to be; at least I am not aware of it. As a leper the Jew is now put outside the camp—not consumed—and there is yet restoration for him.

But the judgment of Apostate Christendom will be unsparing, universal, and final: "she shall be *utterly burned with fire*, for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her (Rev. xviii.; see also Rev. xix.)

Grace teaches the very opposite of lawlessness, irreverence, or unholiness. Tit. ii. 11-14—"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." There is a riband of blue on the fringes of the Christian's garments (see Col. iii.)—a reminder of the heavenly nature of the holiness of grace, in keeping with the heavenly dispensation, which is from heaven and leads to heaven.

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2 COR. IV. 3-6.

[No. 10.

"HOLD FAST."

THERE are some things mentioned in the Bible we should not "hold fast," and there are other things which we are exhorted to "hold fast." We will consider at present—

I. THINGS THAT SHOULD NOT BE HELD FAST.

1. *Hypocrisy*.—We read in Job viii. "The hypocrite's hope shall perish; whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web (or house). He shall lean upon his house but it shall not stand: he shall hold it fast but it shall not endure." The hypocrite's hope is little worth. If you only bring your hand through a spider's web, it is gone! His hope is that he can impose upon God! Vain hope! The Lord exposes it in Matthew vii., where he likens such men to a foolish man who built his house upon the sand. "And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it." The house on the sand fell! So the hypocrite's hope shall perish! "For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?" (Job xxvii. 8.) This is the solemn question which our Lord asked (Matthew xvi. 26), "For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Think of the terrible judgment on Ananias and Sapphira for lying to the Holy Ghost in order to gain a little honour in the Church! (Acts v.) Think of "Thy money perish with

thee," spoken to Simon Magus! Think of our Lord's withering words in Matthew xxiii., "Woe unto you, scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites!" Think also of the end of the evil worldly servant (Matthew xxiv. 50, 51). "The Lord of that servant shall cut him asunder and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

2. *Self-Righteousness*.—Job was "perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil (Job i. 1). But when God allowed circumstances to go wholly against him, he discovered a spirit of self-righteousness that God had to use the rod to drive out of him. He was an upright and righteous man, but he knew it, and prided himself upon it. "*My righteousness I hold fast*," he says, "and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me as long as I live" (Job xxvii. 6). This was not a good condition of soul for Job, and God must reveal himself to him. He did so. "Then Job answered the Lord, and said—Behold I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer; yea twice, but I will proceed no farther. . . . Therefore have I uttered that I understood not. . . . I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes (Job xli. xlii). Where now is his proud boast, "my heart shall not reproach me as long as I live?" It is the revelation of God in his holiness that gives the true

light in which to see our own vileness. When Isaiah saw the Lord, and heard the veiled Seraphim proclaiming, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts," he cries out, "Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts (Isaiah vi.)"

Saul of Tarsus is a notable instance of a self-righteous man whose heart reproached him quickly and poignantly when the Lord Jesus revealed Himself to him and challenged him as His persecutor (Acts ix.); and in Phil. iii. he tells how very righteous he was—"touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless;" "but," he adds (quote Phil. iii. 7-9), when he was "in the flesh" he had his "own righteousness, which is of the law;" but when he had seen the glorious person of the Christ he had "no confidence in the flesh," and he would have that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Why did he let go "his own righteousness?" because he had got a better. This is the simplest lesson we teach an infant who has grasped anything dangerous—we present him with a bigger and better thing, and the other is dropped. Are any of you saying, "my own righteousness will I hold fast; my heart shall not reproach me as long as I live?" If the Lord reveals himself to you, then you will be like the holy apostle who reproached himself as long as he lived, as 1 Tim. i. 13-16 shows. "I am not meet to be called an apostle," he says in 1 Cor. xv., "because I

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persecuted the Church of God." He was the very Job of the New Testament for self-righteousness and for making it his boast; and yet in comparison of Christ and God's righteousness he counted it dross and dung!

3. *Deceit*.—The Lord says of Israel by Jeremiah: "*They hold fast deceit, they refuse to return. I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright; no man repented him of his wickedness and said, what have I done?*" (Jer. viii. 5, 6). Deceit was the first bad thing that Satan got into the race (1 Tim. ii. 11, 14); and the last thing that is likely to be got out of it; in fact it is so ingrained in human nature, that nothing but utter judgment will get it extinguished (2 Thes. ii. 10; Rev. xviii. 6, 23; xx. 3, 8). "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, *deceiving and being deceived*" (2 Tim. iii. 13).

This evil of *self-deception* is that which finds a sad illustration in the last phase of the Church on earth, as we find it symbolized in "the Church of the Laodiceans." This is the aspect of things we see around us in our day, though it will become more pronounced before perishing. As in Jeremiah "they spake not aright," so here: "*Thou sayest I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*" (Rev. iii. 17). Pride, emptiness, and ignorance, always go together. What self-deception! This is the state of things that will become more and more developed, now that the truth of Christianity has been recovered, preached, and published. What characterises Laodicea? It is known by being lukewarm as to Christ, but fond of enriching itself for its own selfish ends with the truths which belong to another sphere and state; but Christ is kept outside. Their condition is characterised by holding fast deceit, and keeping Christ outside their doors. What could be more loathsome.

And yet the Lord lingers over them, and takes more pains with them than with any other Church. For mark how he seeks entrance by every door! (1) He tries the door of *conscience* by exposing their lukewarmness. (2) He knocks at the door of the *understanding*, for *counsel* is for the understanding, and He says "I *counsel* thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white linen that thou mayest be clothed; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve that thou mayest see." And (3) he also seeks entrance by the door of the heart,

for He says, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent." And as if His self-sacrifice would shame them out of their indifference, He continues "Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. iii. 19, 20). It is as if He came from Calvary, having with Him all that would make "a feast of fat things" would they but allow Him to come in. O, patient, loving, long-suffering Jesus! O, heartless Laodicea, to keep Him standing, knocking, speaking outside the door, until His head is wet with the dew, and His locks with the drops of the night!

We may consider the things which Scripture says we ought to hold fast, in our next month's paper.

MEDITATIONS ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

(Translated from the Italian.)

CHAPTER XI.

THE difficulty to the Jews of receiving the Gentiles was a great one. To do so, was to give up all their privileges, all that remained of the ancient glory of Israel. Peter, therefore, on his return to Jerusalem, is reproved; he had eaten with the Gentiles. Peter narrates all that had happened, and how God had given them the gift just as to believing Jews; how then could he hinder God? The Spirit had sent him to the Gentiles; the Spirit had been given to them. It was the accomplishment of the words of John the Baptist; and other brethren were witnesses to the gift of the Holy Ghost. The Jews could no longer resist the clear evidence of the will of God. Grace overcoming in their hearts, they exclaim, "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

It is important to ponder deeply the difference between conversion and salvation. I have already spoken on this subject, but it is one that is so much neglected, and Christians are so accustomed to be content with a low state of soul, and are so uncertain with regard to salvation, that I shall take the opportunity of adding a few more words. Cornelius was already converted; his prayers and alms were acceptable to God. He was to call for Peter, who would tell him words whereby he might be *saved*. God had been working in his soul, but he did not yet know the value of the work accomplished by the Saviour. It is the

same in the case of the woman in Luke vii.; she loved the Lord deeply, had felt the height of His grace and the depth of her sins; but knew not that all was pardoned. The Lord tells her so. The prodigal son was converted, confessed his sins, and turned towards his Father, but he was not yet clothed with the best garment. His Father had not yet fallen on his neck, he knew not His love; he hardly hoped to be admitted as a servant, and was not in a fit state to enter into the house. Every privilege awaited him, but he did not possess them.

I doubt not that He who has begun the good work will continue it till the day of Christ Jesus. As long as a soul reasons about its state, seeks to know whether it is saved or converted, and judges by its own heart of what is in the heart of God, it is under law; salvation for such an one depends on his own state, not on the love of God and the efficacy of the work of Christ. He may perhaps say he is truly converted; he feels the need of salvation, and believes that others have found it; but he does not himself possess it; just as Israel was not out of the land of Egypt till the sea was crossed. Two things, which cannot be separated, are necessary; faith in the work of Christ, and the knowledge that it is finished. I say they cannot be separated, because, when we believe in the work of Christ, and by faith trust in it, we are sealed by the Holy Ghost; we enjoy peace, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, we are reconciled with God, and in Christ are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; and we know it by the Holy Ghost given to us. In spirit we are in the Father's house, partaking of the food with which He nourishes His beloved children. Not only has the heart turned towards God, but Christ is our righteousness, who also appears for us continually before the face of God.

Before the narration of the mission of the Apostle Paul, we find once more the free activity of the Holy Ghost in all the members of the body of Christ. Those who had been dispersed by the persecution raised against the Christians on the death of Stephen, were preaching everywhere, but for the most part to the Jew only. It never occurred to them that the grace and the thoughts of God could overstep the limits of His people after the flesh. A few of them, however, who, living in Gentile districts (especially at Antioch), daily came in contact with

the Gentiles, and desired their salvation also, preached the Lord Jesus to them. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number, having believed, were converted to the Lord.

Thus we find that no sooner is the unity of the assembly secured by the admission of Cornelius to it by means of Peter—he first making use of the keys of the kingdom, to admit, according to the Lord's promise, the Gentiles also—than the free action of the Spirit is reproduced. The Gospel is spread among the nations, not by means of Peter, nor of Paul, who afterwards became the great minister of God towards the Gentiles, but by means of the faithful, stirred up by the love of Christ reigning in their hearts, and giving them the desire that His name should be glorified. It was not a question of ordination, nor of human consecration. All, except the Apostles, had been scattered, and all were preaching. That there are especial gifts, is evident in the Word, but it was love to Christ and souls that opened their mouths.

And observe, the fact is not merely recorded in the Word, but their activity is approved by the Lord. "The hand of the Lord was with them." The Gospel was first preached to the Gentiles by private Christians, moved by the grace of God to communicate to others the blessing which they themselves enjoyed; and they sought to establish the authority of Christ over mankind, and glorify His name—an important principle, clearly demonstrated in this narrative.

Let us bear in mind that the first dissemination of the Gospel among the nations was effected, not by means of official preachers, but by ordinary Christians; not sent out by men, but moved by love to Christ. Subsequently Paul was sent expressly by the Holy Ghost, and received apostolic gifts; but he was not sent by the other Apostles, but directly by God and by Jesus Christ, by means of the Holy Ghost. Moreover, in the providence of God, the free activity of Christians became the occasion of his mission. "Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem; and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith; and much

people was added unto the Lord." Then Barnabas goes to seek for Paul, whom the brethren had brought to Cesarea, from whence he had gone to his native city, Tarsus. We have seen that Barnabas was a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, but he was not a man capable of taking the initiative, of starting and maintaining such a work as that of the conversion of the Gentiles. Thus, though blessed by God, he is not His instrument for this work. He was himself conscious of this, and so, with kindness and simplicity of heart, and doubtless led of God, seeks the instrument chosen and called by God. He had already introduced him to the Jews at Jerusalem, who were afraid of their late persecutor.

The power of Saul's call had separated him from everything to be for Christ alone. He awaited only the formal message from the Lord, a new source of courage, and the effect of the spirit of humility and obedience. In our times, it is a difficulty that there is no clear and open call like that of Saul; but we have seen that all were free to evangelize; and moreover that they were bound to accomplish the work according to the strength of the love of Christ working in their hearts. And if there is a special gift, this gift is unfolded in the exercise of it.

Besides, we have the promise and the precept, "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." Such were the first disseminators of the Gospel among the Gentiles. Apostolical gifts were indeed wanting, and that was a great loss; but it is an honour to be thus dependent on God, and that activity should be the fruit of the spiritual state. We shall experience our own weakness, but also the unwavering faithfulness of God. We have also the warning of the same James, "Be not many masters." The Word of God is enough for all times; if it is not enough for us, it will be for our condemnation. The grace of God must work in us. Let us bear it in mind.

• We see, however, the greatest liberty in the exercise of the ministry. Barnabas seeks Paul; Saul takes Silas, Timothy, and others; He wished Apollos to go to Corinth, but Apollos did not wish to go there. Saul, then, and Barnabas, exercise their ministry together; they assemble themselves with the church, and teach much people. It was thus that a Christian assembly was founded at Antioch, the capital of the

Gentile world in that quarter, and the point from whence the Grecian world was evangelized.

But it was important that this assembly should not be separated from that of Jerusalem, and so we are suddenly taken back to that city. It is still lovingly recognised; and we shall see that God makes use of the very strength that sought to bring the Gentiles under subjection to the law, to set them free, maintain unity, and preserve liberty. Now the union is strengthened by the fruits of love. A prophet, and there were such in the new assembly, announces that there should be a great dearth throughout all the world; and the disciples determine to send aid to the brethren in Judea; which is done by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

CHAPTER XII.

THE Spirit now takes us back to Jerusalem. He was not willing to forget it, neither the testimony of God found there. The Spirit here records an event which sets forth the care that God, in His providence, had of His own (and especially, by means of the angels, for Peter), working in them by His Spirit. He permits that James, the brother of John, should succumb to the malice of Herod, the enemy of the Gospel. That this was pleasing to the Jews gave the king a further pretext for continuing in the path of his opposition. Little mattered the death of a few Christians, if their death gave him popularity with the Jews. He, therefore, seizes Peter and puts him in prison, purposing after the feast of the passover to give him up to the people.

But the thoughts of God were otherwise. The night before he was to be led out to the people, Peter slept in perfect peace under the protection of God, although, so that the hand of God might be shown in his liberation, he was strongly guarded by men. He slept between two soldiers, bound with two chains. Sentinels before the door guarded the prison likewise. But we are more secure in the hands of God than when exposed to the violence of men, even though they may seem to have us firmly enough in their grasp.

The angel awakens Peter, and at the sound of his voice the chains fall from his hands.

Every detail is minutely recorded. At the word of the angel, Peter binds on his sandals and girds himself. The care of the angel is most minute. And when, after having passed the two guards, they reached the

outer gate, it opens to them of itself. The angel accompanies Peter through one street and then disappears. Peter, who till this moment imagined he saw a vision, now becomes conscious that God has delivered him from the hands of Herod, and from the expectation of the Jews. Observe here how visions resembled the reality, since Peter believed the reality to be a vision. Thus considering the things, he comes to the house of Mary, the mother of Mark, a place probably often the scene of the meetings of the Christians. It was the home of the sister of Barnabas. Mark had gone with Barnabas on his separation from Paul; but Mark is again found in Colossians, and in 2 Tim. iv. 11 his service is recognised as profitable for the ministry. Sweet it is to see how grace, shut out for a while by failure, hastens to recognise the brother brought back to the path of devotedness, and to renewed usefulness in the work of the Lord.

Peter does not remain there, but, telling them to make known to James what has occurred, departs, and goes to another place. But here we shall do well to remark a few particularities. The refuge of the faithful is in prayer. They had come together to ask God for the preservation of Peter, and God had heard their prayer. They did not know how, but they had put trust in God. It seemed to be the natural resource of the hearts of these believers; and the feeling was a common one. In the difficulty which had occurred, the danger of the beloved Apostle, they meet together to look to God. Prayer was given to their hearts by the Holy Ghost as a refuge in adversity; and though they might not know how God would respond, yet they were always answered according to his own counsels. Peter is set free according to their desire; but we see how little the heart, though by grace it may have confidence in God, and turns to Him in its need, believes that its supplications will be granted. Here, their need had been expressed to God, but when the answer came, they could not believe it was possible.

Peter is set free by the intervention of the angel, and Herod is struck by the judgment of God when he sets himself up against Him. Can we expect similar interventions now? I do not believe that miracles are performed to-day; angels no longer appear; it was not a gift that could continue. In Eph. iv. no miraculous gifts are to be found. But I fully believe, according to the

Lord's promise, that prayer is heard, and that the angels work in favour of the Children of God as much now as in those early times. As to prayer, the Word of God is clear. The condition is made, however, that what we ask be according to the will of God, and that prayer be made in faith; and we are told that if the words of Christ abide in us, we shall ask what we will.

The Lord and the Apostles exhort us to prayer without ceasing, in confidence, never letting our faith fail. We do well if we make known our requests to God in every case; but it does not follow that we shall always receive what we ask—as, for example, it happened to Paul with regard to the thorn in his flesh. It would not have been good for him for God to have answered him. But the result of our prayers is that the peace of God which passeth knowledge shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Phil. iv.) His throne is not disturbed, neither is His heart burdened by our solicitations; and the peace in which He dwells continually shall, when we have placed these requests on His throne, work effectually in our hearts. The outward manifestation of the power of God, the testimony rendered at the beginning to the Word of God, does not repeat itself, but God's care, His answers to prayer, and the blessed service of angels, still remain to the children of God. (For the angels, see Heb. i. 14.)

We find then, here, God's care for the assembly at Jerusalem; but we shall not again see any activity on the part of Peter. That such was to be the case is demonstrated by the fact of this intervention. We know that he went to Antioch, probably for the work of the Lord, but that is not stated. There he was unfaithful to the Lord, and is reproved by Paul. He wrote to the Jews in the provinces of Asia Minor, but it is not known whether he went there. It is possible that he lived in Babylon, but it is uncertain; many Jews lived there. In his epistle he salutes on the part of the saints there, but we possess no account of any of his doings. He was the first to introduce the Gentiles to the public Christian assembly, in order to preserve unity.

At this period, ordinary Christians, in their dispersion, disseminated the truth among the Gentiles. Unity was still preserved; and the wisdom of God declared, by means of the assembly at Jerusalem, that the Gentiles were not under the subjection of the law. But as for Peter,

no more is heard regarding his activity; for the divine work was now to leave Jerusalem. He is fully recognised here by the care of the angels, but the power of the Holy Ghost is only found in Paul and in his companions. Antioch is the starting-point, and not Jerusalem; as for Rome, it is the last place where the Church is established, and it was not founded there by the Apostles. Before the arrival of Paul, Christians, who, like many others, had gone to the capital of the world, met together there; and Paul wrote to them before going. What became of Peter is not recorded, and, save in chapter xv., where what he had previously done is mentioned, he now entirely disappears from the narrative. Paul, sent from Antioch by the Holy Ghost, is the instrument of God for the preaching of the Gospel among the Gentiles, and to teach what the Church was, the mystery which had been hid from ages and generations. (See Col. i. 23-27). It is his history which follows in chapter xiii.

WITH HIM OUR BRIGHTEST HOPE.

CHRIST looked to return to the glory He had left from the path of humiliation down here: the reward for it would be glory as a crown. This applies to us: when we see Him, we shall be like Him. The highest and most blessed thing is to be with Him in the Father's house; this will be infinite, unspeakable joy; but there will also be the crowning with glory and honour. Paul speaks of this: "The crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me in that day, and not to me only, but also to all them that love his appearing." But his brightest hope was to win Christ. As the reward of walking with Him in communion, there will be joy in His presence; as the reward for faithful walk, it will be the place in glory.

He will come to set everything to rights in power; "judgment will return to righteousness, and all the meek of the earth shall," &c. That has never been known yet. When Christ comes in power, judgment and righteousness will go together. Power will be given to the Judge, who will act in righteousness. Is that all I am looking for? No; I am going up to meet the Lord in the air; the hope is founded on righteousness of course, but I am not looking to be justified. What

the church gets in the rapture is (as Christ was raised up by the "glory of the Father," and so taken up into His presence), we shall have the blessed joy of being with Him for ever. (1 Thess. iv). No getting righteousness is there; the best thing is looking out for Himself—to see Him as He is—to be ever with the Lord. When responsibility is spoken of, it is always connected with the appearing; there is the crown, the principle of integrity and faithfulness owned (Ps. xvii.), connected with the life down here. When speaking of going to be with Christ—the rapture, all go together to enjoy the grace and presence of Him who has done it all. It is very important to lay hold by faith of the truth of the rapture to Christ of the church of God.

Receiving crowns differing each from each is one thing; but all going together is another thing, all alike being associated in His own blessedness, as He said, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also."

THE PROMISE FULFILLED.

2 Chron. xxii. 10; xxiii.

ATHALIAH was a daughter of the wicked king Ahab, and daughter-in-law of the good king Jehosaphat. This was a connexion entirely opposed to the mind of God, and He marked it, in His righteous judgment, with His sore displeasure. One disaster after another befel Jehosaphat and his house, because "he joined affinity with Ahab."

When he commenced his reign, it is said that he "strengthened himself against Israel, and placed forces in all the fenced cities of Judah. . . . And the Lord was with Jehoshaphat." But afterwards he greatly erred in forming an alliance with Ahab to recover Ramoth-gilead, which all ended in disaster and confusion (2 Chron. xvii., xviii.).

Jehoram, the son of Jehosaphat, who reigned in his father's stead, had Athaliah "the daughter of Ahab to wife." She was filled with the cruel and persecuting spirit of her father's house, and lent herself to Satan to do his work. She was an instrument of cruelty in his hands. For, although her immediate object in killing all the seed royal, was to take possession of the throne herself, the object of Satan was very different.

From the beginning, his aim had been to cut off, by means of death, the line of the promised seed, and thereby frustrate the purpose of God, destroy the faith of His people, and break them off from trusting in His word.

God had promised to David that He would establish his seed for ever, and build up his throne to all generations (2 Samuel vii.; Psalm lxxxix.) Hence, Satan's great object now was to prevent the accomplishment of this promise by destroying all the seed royal. "But when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal of the house of Judah." Having thus, as she thought, got completely rid of the true heir, she took possession of the throne herself, and "reigned over the land."

This was indeed a sad sight in Judah, and most trying to the faith of the faithful. God had promised the throne, in solemn covenant, to David and to his sons for ever, and now a wicked usurper of the apostate house of Ahab occupies it. But faith endures as seeing Him who is invisible. The enemy may appear for a time to triumph, but it is only in appearance, and for a short duration. "The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, and the thoughts of His heart to all generations" (Psalm xxxiii. 11). God is over all, and above all. His word can never fail. Let us "only believe," and trust in Him. Faith, in due time, will be answered, the promise fulfilled, and every enemy utterly confounded.

Satan had now done his utmost: he could do no more. Death is the full display of his power; but God is the God of resurrection. Where Satan ends, God begins. He quickens the dead. At this very moment, when the hopes of the house of Judah seemed lost, He was watching over, in His faithful love, the true heir of the throne of David. Accordingly, we read, "But Jehoshabeath, the daughter of the king, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons that were slain, and put him and his nurse in a bed-chamber. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of king Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest (for she was the sister of Ahaziah), hid him from Athaliah, so that she slew him not. And he was with them hid in the house of God six years." Thus Joash, the true heir, was preserved by the intervention of God. "He was rescued from among the king's sons that were slain." He was like one that

had been raised up "from among" the dead. It was a resurrection "from among" the slain ones. The power and instrumentality of Satan end when he has brought in death, but the power and instrumentality of God come into operation just where his end. All his malignant efforts, and the cruelty of his instruments, only prove, more fully, the unchangeableness of God's purpose, and the eternal stability of His Word.

There are several points of special interest in this instructive narrative which I desire to notice in order.

1. In the wonderful deliverance of the infant Joash from the hand of Athaliah, we have a striking illustration of the resurrection of Jesus, by the mighty power of God. Joash was stolen "from among the king's sons that were slain." Jesus was raised up from among the dead. The former was hidden in the house of God—the latter is hidden in His Father's house on high.

2. In Athaliah, on the throne of David, we have an equally clear illustration of the present position and guilt of the world, with reference to the crucifixion of Christ, the heir of every promise. The world, led on by Satan, killed Christ. God holds it guilty of the deed. It "is condemned already." When the Jewish "husbandmen saw the Son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance" (Matt. xxi. 38). The religious Jew and the godless Gentile joined hands to shed the blood of Jesus. They, together, crucified the "heir of all things," the Lord of life and glory. "The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together" (Acts. iv. 26, 27). Here we find gathered around the cross of Jesus, the representatives of every class; namely, Jew and Gentile, king and subject, priest and people. The whole world was, representatively, at the cross, and took part in the crowning act of man's sin. Christ refers to this when He says, "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John xii. 31). The world was judged in the death of Christ, and its prince cast out. They go together. God will keep every man to his colours. Those that fight under the banner of the Prince of

life will at last enter into the joy of their Lord; but those that fight under the banner of the prince of this world must be cast out with him.

The whole power of Satan was concentrated at the cross. He brought up all his forces to this point. He staked everything—the power of the world, and the power of darkness (Luke xxii. 53). He had ever watched with most malignant jealousy, God's chosen vessel of wondrous grace to man. He missed Him when he slew the babes in Bethlehem. He was overcome in the temptation in the wilderness, and bound by a stronger than he. But he returned to Him again. "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me." He had no power of death over God's unblemished Lamb. He laid down His life of His "own voluntary will." "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself" (John x. 17, 18). His death, then, was not the result of the power of man or Satan over Him, but of His own perfect subjection to His Father's will. At the same time it clearly proved the extent of Satan's power in the world. As the obedient One He lays down His life. In appearance the enemy triumphs. But it was not so. "Through death he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. ii. 14). This was absolute victory. He bore the judgment of God against sin in His death, and thereby completely annihilated all the rights and power of the enemy. Morally, judicially, totally, and absolutely, the true seed royal triumphed over the great enemy of God and man. True, "He was crucified through weakness." But He entered the regions of the dead as "the Son of God with power." His presence was felt throughout the deep caverns of the grave. He burst its bars asunder, and carried off in triumph the spoils of the enemy. "He ascended up on high, leading captivity captive." A risen Christ is LORD OF ALL.

But my reader may be disposed to ask, On whom, at this period of the world's history, does the guilt of the death of Christ rest? Most assuredly, we answer, on all them who side with the world. God has not yet publicly vindicated the honour of His beloved Son, or judged the world for its awful guilt in murdering Him. If the blood of Abel cried to God for vengeance on

Cain, surely the blood of the holy, spotless Jesus cries for vengeance on those who not only shed it, but despise it. If we are not justified by faith in the shed blood of Jesus, we are condemned by it. There is no such thing as neutral ground between Christ and the world. There is not a single line of middle ground for any soul to stand upon. If we are not by faith on the side of Christ, we must be with the world, and, as it were, approving of what the world did, though we may not say so in words. In the sight of God, we are on the world's ground, and under the world's guilt and condemnation.

In vain did the chief priests remonstrate with Peter and John on this point. They said "Behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us" (Acts v. 28). It is quite plain, from this and other passages, that these divinely-qualified preachers brought home, to the consciences of their hearers, the truly solemn charge of blood-guiltiness. But the same precious blood speaks of the love of God, as well as of the sin of man. All who have faith in the blood of Christ are cleansed from all their sins, justified in the presence of God, and "accepted in the Beloved."

3. If Athaliah illustrates the present position of the world, Jehoshabeath illustrates the present position of the Church. She was hidden in the house of God with Joash, the rejected and unknown king, whom all the world thought to be dead, but whom she knew to be alive. Of the Church it has said, "Your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 1-4). The eye of Jehoshabeath rested in the fulness of hope on the true and living heir. "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. ii. 9). "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Col. iii. 4).

And now, let me ask, what sympathy could there be between Jehoshabeath and Athaliah? Surely none whatever! Could the former take any part in the schemes, plans, or principles of the latter? Could she assist her, in any way, in the administration of her affairs, or conform to the fashion of her court? Oh, no! There was not a particle of fellowship between them. Athaliah was a murderer and a usurper; her garments were deeply stained with the blood of the sons of David. Besides, Jehoshabeath knew that the moment Joash was revealed, the

usurper would be hurled from her throne—that his appearance would be the deathblow to her reign; therefore, she was content to wait until then. The "six years" would soon run their rapid course: it was but "A LITTLE WHILE," and God would place the true heir upon the throne of David.

The application of all this to the church is very easy. Whole-hearted separation from the world is her true place; and holy, happy, living association with Christ, her divine Lord and Bridegroom. If the believer is indeed enjoying communion with Christ, he can have no fellowship with the world, either in its spirit, principles, or ways. "For I am jealous over you," says the apostle, "with godly jealousy, for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin (an earthly virgin) to Christ" (2 Cor. xi. 2). And again, "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, 16). May we have no sympathy with either the mother or her children. The first blast of the last trumpet will be the death-knell to them all.

4. If, in Jehoshabeath, we see *heart* for Joash; in Jehoiada, her husband, we see *faith* in activity for him. The *affections* of the former were gathered around the person of the prince—the *faith* of the latter was energetic, in making every necessary arrangement for the glory and stability of his throne. He was a man of faith, energy, and devotedness. In leading so many to make a covenant with Joash, while yet unseen, he illustrates the present energy of the Holy Spirit, in connexion with the preaching of the gospel, in leading souls to trust an unseen Jesus, and to rejoice in hope of His coming kingdom and glory.

"And in the seventh year Jehoiada strengthened himself, and took the captains of hundreds. . . . And they went about in Judah, and gathered all the Levites out of all the cities of Judah, and the chief of the fathers of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem. And all the congregation made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And he said unto them, Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the Lord hath said of the sons of David."

At this point of our narrative, I would most affectionately ask, Have

you, my dear reader, embraced, by faith, the unseen, but risen, living Jesus, as your Prince and Saviour? This is a personal question of eternal importance. All that believe in Jesus are within the sure limits of the everlasting covenant. "The God of peace brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant" (Heb. xiii. 20). Have you, dear reader, for yourself, before God, faith in this precious blood? The blood that was shed on Calvary is the foundation of every blessing. There is nothing but judgment, overwhelming judgment, before the sinner, that has not been washed from his sins in the blood of Jesus. Oh! can you say to Jesus, with all your heart, "I am thine, and on thy side: I cleave to thee, and trust to thee alone. The world is guilty. I am guilty, being of it. But thou art righteous, O holy, spotless, blessed Jesus. Yet thou sayest, Come! 'Come unto me.' By faith I come, I come to thee, and bid an eternal farewell to this doomed world of ours. Thy word is plain and sure—"He that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. 'Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David'" (Isa. lv. 1-4). Through grace, I rest in thy word, rejoice in thy work, confide in thyself, and wait for thy coming. "SURELY I COME QUICKLY; AMEN. EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS."

5. The position of the Levites illustrates the future position of the Church in glory, with reference to its place of nearness to the Person of Christ. They were, typically, a dead and risen people; and also typical of the Church in its priestly character as "a royal priesthood." "And the Levites shall compass the king round about . . . but be ye with the king when he cometh in, and when he goeth out."

The bride of the Lamb, the beloved Eve of the second Adam, will have her own special place of blessed nearness to the Person of Christ in millennial and everlasting glory. She has the temporary title of "bride," but also the permanent one of "wife." The affections of the bride will be as lasting as the relationship of wife.

Oh! wondrous grace! wondrous glory! What a "BLESSED HOPE" the Christian's is. To be chosen by a greater than Jehoiada—"to compass the king round about . . . to be with the king when he cometh

in, and when he goeth out." Is the heart of my reader established in this most blessed truth? Is he looking, not for an *advent* merely, but for a *Person*? His true place, and proper hope is, "To serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven." "But we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 Thess. i. 10; 1 John iii. 2). We shall see His glory, witness His power, hear His wisdom, and enjoy His love, "for we shall be like Him;" shining in His grace, and reflecting His glory.

6. Every needful step having been taken by the active and faithful Jehoiada, *all things were ready*. The seventh, or millennial year was come, and now Joash, the rightful heir to the throne of David, is brought forth from his secret hiding-place. He comes in the glory of his father's house. He is surrounded with the "spears, and bucklers, and shields, that had been king David's"—the bright memorials of the victories of David. "Then they brought out the king's son, and put upon him the crown, and gave him the testimony, and made him king; and Jehoiada anointed him, and said, God save the king. . . . The king stood at his pillar at the entering in, and the princes and the trumpets by the king; and all the people of the land rejoiced and sounded with trumpets, also the singers with instruments of music, and such as taught to sing praise."

This was a day of great joy and gladness of heart to Joash, to Jerusalem, and to all who waited for his appearing. Faith was now answered, patience rewarded, and *the promise fulfilled*. "Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the Lord hath said of the sons of David." But if it was a day of light and joy and rejoicing to Joash, and to all who had sided with him during his rejection, it was a day of darkness, and gloom, and terrible despair to Athaliah, and to all who had sided with her during her reign. The day of vengeance was come, and oh! what a day to the despisers of the true heir! "Now when Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she came to the people into the house of the Lord. And she looked, and behold the king stood at his pillar." The pillar of immovable promise. This was enough; the first glimpse of Joash filled her whole soul with the terrors of judgment. . . . Then Athaliah rent her clothes, and said, Treason! treason! But Jehoiada answered her vain cry

with, Judgment! judgment! "Have her forth of the ranges," was the imperative word of command; "and whoso followeth her let him be slain with the sword, . . . and they slew her there."

Thus, judgment, unmitigated judgment, closed the six years' reign of the guilty Athaliah and all her deluded followers. Solemn, awfully solemn, foreshadowing of the final doom of this guilty world and all its deluded followers, who are willingly ignorant that the true heir is alive in the house of God on high, and justly claims our allegiance!

The scene being now completely cleared of the usurper and her followers, the king is peacefully, gloriously, and triumphantly placed on the throne of his father David. The nobles, governors, and people of the land "set the king upon the throne of the kingdom. And all the people of the land rejoiced; and the city was quiet, after that they had slain Athaliah with the sword."

What a solemn lesson we learn from these concluding words! "The people rejoiced, and the city was quiet." When? After that they had slain Athaliah with the sword. When, oh! when will this groaning creation rejoice? When will the city of the whole earth be quiet? After the judgment already passed has been executed. After the vials of God's wrath have been poured out. But not until then. Could Joash have reigned in fellowship with Athaliah? Impossible! The scene must be cleared of the enemies of the king before he sits upon his throne.

Christ's "hand will take hold on judgment" before He takes hold of the sceptre of righteousness. "Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with Thee?" (Ps. xciv. 20). The whole scene must be cleared of His enemies, and Satan bound. Then "the prince of the kings of the earth" will ascend His throne of righteousness, and sway His sceptre of peace over a restored and delivered creation. Then, unto Him "whose right it is" to reign, shall all its tribes and tongues roll their loud, and long, and rapturous Hosanna, around a peaceful, happy, and rejoicing millennial earth. "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness . . . and the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings,

and in quiet resting places." (Isaiah xxxii.)

O blessed hour! when all the earth
Its rightful Heir shall yet receive;
When every tongue shall own His worth,
And all creation cease to grieve.
Thou, dearest Saviour! thou alone
Canst give thy weary people rest;
And, Lord, till thou art on the throne,
This groaning earth can ne'er be blest.

THE PEERLESS ONE.

THERE is Man, a glorified Man, sitting now on the throne of God in heaven—that man is Jehovah's Fellow. To Him, God, the Holy Spirit, has borne testimony in the Scriptures; to Him He calls the sinner's attention; to Him He guides the eye of faith of each believer, and there He will fix it. For He, the only begotten Son of the Father, is the sole One on whom and on whose life and works as Saviour, God, even the Father, can rest in complacency.

The life, those works, were unto Eternal Salvation and Redemption for sinful man. In Him, and through His life and death, and resurrection and ascension, the sinner can now, through faith, find rest with God in His glory, and receive the free gift of the Holy Spirit, and grace to be full thereof and walk therein.

Men and Brethren! permit one whose name is not worth naming (save as found in him) to beseech you to think of Him—for His sake who has claims over you, and for God's sake who is a jealous God, and who insists on the claims which He has recognised in the Son of His love being recognised by you, own Him *alone* as worthy. He is the only Man worthy of God's thinking about, and worthy of any man's thinking about. But He is worthy—for His name of Jesus means "Jehovah-saving."

Do not, I beseech you, go on setting one fallen man's name against another fallen man's name, sinners' names against sinners' names, as you have done in your intercourse about questions in which the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit alone should be cared for and the honour due to God. You have done so, till you seem to me to have well nigh forgotten the Sinless Man, the One who, because He knew no sin, could be made a sin-offering, and who was made and did make Himself such, that so, through faith, we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Unconsciously, it may have been, at first, you have been setting one merely human name against another merely human name, until the name of "Jesus," and the revelation in it,

has been forgotten amid talk about men and their doings and claims, which are of as little worth and meaning as would be any letter from the alphabet (as an M, or a D, or a W), in comparison with that blessed person (Jesus) and His works.

The Spirit has thus been grieved and quenched among you; and blindness, and the fervour of party spirit has got sway among you, and a heavy fog of mystification broods over your actings; humbling is it to think of.

It is a poor sinner in himself, and not a prophet, who writes to you; but, in the light of the Sinless Man (Peerless and without equal, He!); 'tis one who fears lest—*under that cloud of mystification* which rests upon you as a company—there be another Spirit (not man's), far more subtle than Ahitophel's of old—far less scrupulous than he, and at his rear, dangers as to the *honour* of Christ. For if His name be used by any as a cover for darkness and evil, and the name of "the Church" be used as the name of a place where those on earth, who are indifferent to Christ's honour and to holiness, in faith, doctrine, morality, or walk, may congregate, His name is put to shame and the Holy Spirit dishonoured.

Would that I were mistaken as to your danger. If not, may God give you deliverance, and victory over every lie and delusion of the Wicked One. So prays yours, in brokenness of spirit,
G. V. W.

NEW CREATION.

THERE is a deeper purpose and nobler work in God than creation. Creation occupied His hand, and displayed His power and Godhead, and was then, in some sense, left at man's disposal, so that its condition was to be determined by the allegiance or rebellion of man. But there was another work ordered in the counsels of God before the world, to be accomplished in due time, with which God joined Himself, and thus never suffered it to fail. This purpose and work are laid in and effectuated by the Word, who is with God, and is God. The opening of Genesis shows us the work of creation, and creation entrusted to man; the opening of St. John shows us the Word, who was before creation, and the Work accomplished by Him. Blessed joy to look at either Himself or His work! May our souls now taste this while doing so. It is grateful to the heart to turn that way when wearied with self—with

man and his doings—with the world and its vanities. The living waters then, as it were, recede to their native bed, for such indeed is the action of the Spirit in the saint when he retires to God and his Word. The new mind finds its home there.

I would follow this work of redemption or New Creation by the Word through a few meditations which lead the thoughts of the soul that way. But it is not the effort of mind even on Scripture which I desire to trust, but the more artless confidence that can follow where His Word and Spirit lead, remembering the while assuredly that the diligent soul shall be made fat, and that Paul has counselled Timothy to meditate on these things.

THE SUBJECT OF SIN.

Our meditations, then, on New Creation may lead us, in the first place, to the subject of *sin*. St. Paul treats it in a very lively and energetic style in Romans v., vi. He gives it a kind of life and office, as it were; treating it as a person and as a king. He shews us that it entered this world through man's disobedience; and, having entered it, at once took the seat of government, and death became both the power and character of its kingdom.

And this is the aspect of "this present evil world." It is the place or scene of the reign of sin and death, and nothing is left untouched by its influence. Such has been the entrance, and such is the present power of sin in this world. But there is another action in this same world, as our Apostle further shews us—of which the *grace of God* is the source, as the disobedience of man has been the source of the presence and reign of sin. And this grace through Christ has brought in righteousness and life; as disobedience in Adam opened the door to sin and death. And having entered, the Apostle shews us still further that righteousness does more than merely measure the power of sin, for sin came in upon one offence; but righteousness comes in, and sweeps away from the scene thousands of offences which followed in the train of that one, and accordingly it has its kingdom now also. Life has its action here as well as death, but it is not visible like the other. The reign of sin is *felt*, and the power of death is *seen* all abroad—the reign of righteousness which brings life with it, is as yet only known to faith. But grace is triumphant—it has brought in a gift, a righteousness which asserts,

through Jesus, its supremacy over all the aggravated power of sin and death. And how was this? How could grace thus take its way? How could righteousness and life enter a scene where sin was reigning unto death, and had title so to reign? Our Apostle shews us that a victim has been provided by grace, and rendered up to the claims of sin. Sin reigned unto death. Death may bound his empire, but up to death he has title to exercise his power. And Jesus, the Son of God, has owned his title—"He died unto sin;" He took the penalty—He received the wages of man's departure from God. "In the day thou eatest thou shalt die." Man did eat, but Jesus also died. And thus Jesus owned the rights, and yielded to the exactions of sin. He had to do with it in His death. He was then dealing with it—righteously bowing under its dominion. But all the while He was the Son of the living God. He had life in Himself, life untouched by Adam's disobedience; and thus He outlived the stroke of sin, and destroyed him that had the power of death; and asserted a kingdom of righteousness and life, in which not only He reigns, but all those reign with Him who by faith rejoice in His victory.

Thus sin and death in their dominion are overthrown. The Son of the living God has asserted His supremacy in the very region of the power of sin. Sin has reigned unto death—even to the death of Christ on the cross: but there sin was met by righteousness—there death was abolished by life. All that sin could command, and that was death, it got there—there it exacted death of Jesus; but Jesus carried a life in Him which remained untouched by all this, and in that life, and the righteousness from whence it flowed, He and His saints reign for ever together.

Thus has sin been disposed of. It entered and reigned, but has now been set aside; and we have not to own it in any wise, but to be dead to it. For we are in union with the Son of God, and as His death was "unto sin," His resurrection was "unto God." As it is written, "In that He died, He died unto sin once, but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God;" and our union with Him being in resurrection as well as in death, we are thus "alive unto God," and should so account ourselves. We should assert our places in the risen Son of God, and know that we are dead to sin, our old man being crucified, and that we have nothing

more to do with it. Sin may seek to have to do with us, but we are to reckon ourselves as dead to it—to see it as sunk in the flesh—as deposited in that pit out of which we have risen in Christ, separated from it, leaving it to perish in its own corruption; and, in the faith of our place in Christ, to say of it and all its workings in the flesh—"Yet not I, but sin that dwelleth in me." Sin was once a king, as we have seen, reigning unto death, and using the members of man as the instruments of its power, but now faith apprehends it as imprisoned in the flesh, sunk in that pit where all shall perish.

THOUGHTS ON THE FLESH.

We are thus introduced to thoughts on the *flesh* thus in close connection with sin. And the Scripture teaches much upon it, shewing us clearly, as indeed our last meditation might lead us to anticipate, that the saint has entirely renounced it. May it be so more and more in our conduct, beloved, as it is thus fully in our calling.

The flesh of Jesus, I judge, carried in it the real enmity between Jew and Gentile, inasmuch as it was the only flesh that was ever really *circumcised*; or inasmuch as Jesus was the *only real Jew* who ever lived—the only child of man that *ever really separated or consecrated the human nature to God*, keeping in Himself the "law of commandments contained in ordinances." And thus in Himself He separated flesh from all beside, and that was the true "partition wall," the true witness against all else that was of man as uncircumcised. (Eph. ii.)

But His flesh—or flesh in such a One—is now gone. We do not know Him after the flesh. All His perfectness in it led Him to the cross, contributing with other personal worthiness to His fitness to die there for us. But having now died there, His cross is the end of all flesh. That cross was endured for us. It was the wages of sin that was in our flesh, and slew the enmity that was between God and men accordingly.

But something beside or beyond flesh is therefore to be looked for now, and so we find it; for now Christ is found in resurrection, and Jew and Gentile are equally and together presented to God as *spirit*, or as *New Creation*—"a new man in Christ Jesus"—"one body"—the body of their risen Christ. The law had previously come to seek something good *in the flesh*—to get out of it fruit unto God. But it found none. The Son came, on the other

hand, not looking for good in it, but to make atonement for it—to hang on the cursed tree as the representative of it. (Rom. viii.) Paul had in his doctrine accordingly done with it altogether. Could he return to it when he saw it thus disposed of by the Son of God? He could not. He saw it to be a mighty wreck—it may be as yet not entirely buried out of sight, or gone to the bottom—but He was no longer *in it*, but in the *risen Son of God*. He had been cast on a new world, where God's eye rests with delight for ever—he was in a new creation with the risen Son of God.

And if he had done with the flesh, he had done also with the law; for they were one, as being bound together—the old husband and wife, as he speaks in Rom. vii. The law—with its strictures, and forbiddings, and demands—was as the ropes and tacklings, and the rudder-bands of that which, as I have said, he had now left as a wreck, and if the vessel be behind him, so is all the provision.

And as he would not glory in his own flesh, neither would he in that of another. If he were crucified to the world, so was the world to him. And it is, indeed, edifying to observe the strength with which he renounces the flesh. There is nothing which the flesh has incurred, or is exposed to—nothing that it possesses—nothing that it can do—that he does not declare his *escape from* or renunciation of, in fullest strength and confidence of faith in Jesus. Thus, is the flesh subject to *condemnation*? Yes, but Jesus has borne the judgment of it, and the believer, through grace, is not regarded as in the flesh but in the spirit—it is not he who does the deeds of his own condemned flesh, which is thus exposed to judgment, but it is "sin" that dwells in him (Rom vii., viii.) Has the flesh its *religion*? He counts it all as loss and dung—its ordinances and observances, and legal circumcision; its bonds and fears he renounces, and is found only in the righteousness of God by faith. (Gal., Phil., Col.) Has the flesh its *wisdom*? Yes, the world has its princes—the wise, the scribe, and the disputer—but Paul insists that God has made it all foolishness, and desires only that wisdom which the Spirit alone could search out and reveal, and which no eye, nor ear, nor heart of mere man could converse with (1 Cor. i., ii.). Has the flesh its *excellency of speech* and other advantages which ministry of the Word might use? Yes, but he would use none of them; but as he was a

minister of the Spirit, so would he be a minister in the Spirit only (2 Cor.) Thus he escapes from it, or renounces it in *all* its pretensions and in all its exposure. It was an attempt to revive the wisdom of the flesh, or the power of the flesh in ministry, with which he had to contend at Corinth; and it was an attempt to revive the religion of the flesh, which he withstood in Galatia and at Colosse. But he put no confidence in anything that was of it. He was not in it, but in One who was raised from the dead. He was in Christ, in New Creation or the Spirit. He had his justification in the blood of the Son of God, and his personal graces and ministerial powers in the Holy Ghost, and there only. And this glorious act of faith, which thus leaves the flesh—in its condemnation, its religion, its endowments, its everything—behind us, is our strength against its *lusts* and its *tempers*; for when such arise to tempt the soul, the soul should gird itself with this remembrance, that we have done with it altogether. And the same thing is our strength in walking in the charities of the gospel, for it accustoms us to look at that which is of the flesh in our brethren (and which is the trial of our Christian charities) as not being properly themselves, but something which they have in real principle renounced.

And it has struck me from Gal. i. 13 to 16, that St. Paul tells us that God's great purpose by him was to give proof of the profitlessness of the flesh in its best estate, and of the entire renunciation, accordingly, by the divinely taught soul. For after there shewing his advantages in fleshly religion (as he does also in Phil. iii.), he tells us God had "separated him from his mother's womb,"—then "called him"—then "revealed His Son in him"—by which separation I judge that he means his election to be the minister and representative of a Gospel that was not to allow any conference with or confidence in the flesh at all; and accordingly all his previous life—before he was actually called to such ministry—had been a gathering together and exhibiting of advantages in the flesh, that now he might make a more glorious renunciation of them. Hence he was born a "Hebrew of the Hebrews." Hence he was "circumcised the eighth day." Hence he "profited in the Jews' religion," and persecuted the church though fleshly zeal. Hence he was "touching the law" blameless. All this had marked the man who had been separated from his mother's

womb, and thus fitted him for shewing out afterwards the vanity of all that was fleshly; so that when he was actually called into ministry to do so, he might be able to tell us how much in it, and of it, he had had—that his renunciation of it might be the more marked. It was like the fitting of the vessel for the glory it was destined to carry, or the instrument for the work it was ordained to execute, so that we might be able to see that if *flesh* in Paul was *nothing*, flesh in any other must surely be *nothing*. Paul was apprehended to make the greatest attainments in it, that he might renounce it altogether, and thus expose its utter and certain vanity. And I would here notice two instances in our Lord's ministry, in which He, in like manner, strikingly denounces the flesh.

John iii.—He sets the flesh aside in the words, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," because He connects with this the need of man being born again of water and the Spirit. John vi.—He again sets the flesh aside in the words, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." And from His conversations on these two occasions with Nicodemus and with the multitude, we learn how we are to renounce the flesh, and that is, by learning God or Christ as *sinner*s. Neither Nicodemus nor the multitude came to Jesus as *sinner*s, and therefore He had to tell both of them of the worthlessness of the flesh.

And this leads us to this most needed and precious lesson very simply and very surely. It is the *sinner* who comes to Jesus as such, under conviction of sin, that renounces the flesh. Happy, simple, and precious result for our souls of all this needed primary truth—the worthlessness of the flesh and its consequent renunciation—that the way to attain this truth is to learn God as *sinner*s.

Our death is the judgment or end of the flesh—"the body is dead because of sin." There is judgment afterwards, but that belongs to God, and is the trial and condemnation of the secrets of the hearts, or according to man's works, as written in the Books; but of flesh or fallen nature of man, as injured and tainted by disobedience, death is the judgment: the flesh perisheth in its own corruption.

THE LAW AND THE FLESH.

As connected with this which we

have just meditated on, I would now for a little consider *the law*.

The law addresses itself only to the *flesh*, for it has dominion over a man only so long as he liveth. But as in the flesh dwelleth no good thing, all the application of the law to it only serves to bring out increased evil. This is the 7th of Romans. It is like cultivating a piece of ground which has only noxious seed in it; the more you manure it, the more abundant harvest of thorns and thistles you get from it. So the more exact we are under the law, the more actually are we cast at a distance from God. St. Paul seems to have this thought in Phil. iii. All the features of his former condition, or when he was under the law, or in the flesh, were in his favour, or to his praise. He speaks of them as being so—and among these was his *zeal*—a right zeal under the law, but directly contrary to God, for it exercised itself in persecution of the church.

For zeal under *the law* must exercise itself against the church—for the church lives in *grace*. Zeal in the *flesh* must exercise itself against the church, for the church walks in *the Spirit*. And thus the more praise Paul had from the law or the flesh, the more was he in collision with God. It is quite true that there is a certain using of the law which is, on the other hand, according to God. Thus Zecharias and Elisabeth walked in all its ordinances and commandments blameless. But that was owing of it simply as *God's dispensation for the time*, as the school-master, till faith came. That was according to God. But taking up the law as *the thing* threw Paul (and must so throw all who do it) into direct enmity with God and His purposes, and into a denial of His truth; for it denies the corruption of the flesh, the grace of God, and God's purpose from the beginning to act on promise. It exalts man: it nourishes that nature of which the truth says, "In it there dwells no good thing." And all this did Paul when under the law, so that when he was enlightened and came under grace, his estimate of himself was altogether changed; then he says of himself that he had been a blasphemer, a persecutor, the chief of sinners (1 Tim. i.). Then he learns the value of his former *gains*—that they were all *loss* (Phil. iii.) They had been advantages in the flesh, but the flesh being *evil*, the more it is advantaged and nourished, the further are we from the *good*. And this good thing he

now learns is only in Christ, in the Spirit, or the new life; to nourish and exercise which became from that moment his one great care and business (Phil. iii.)

In the 7th chapter of Romans, to which I already referred, the apostle, as it were, entertains the claims of the law upon the believer, and he shows that they have been already answered and disposed of. And he does this very simply. He says that the authority of the law addresses itself only to a *living man*—that is, a man *in the flesh*. It is the flesh, or man as born of Adam, that the law was given to. But the *believer* has ceased, *in this sense*, to be a living man, has ceased to be of Adam, inasmuch as he has died and risen again; and consequently, being a *dead and risen man*, and not a *living man*, the law does not address its claims to him—he is not *the object* of the law.

But in this the law is not spoken of in the same *relation* to us as sin had been. Sin had been spoken of as a master or a king, but the law is here spoken of as a husband. And in the close of this chapter, having thus shewn how that both sin and the law have been disposed of or set aside—the one as a master, the other as a husband—the apostle tells us they have been discharged with very different characters indeed. Sin has been discharged with as *bad*—the law with as *good* a character as ever the inspired pen of an apostle could write for them. All evil in us is declared to have come from the one, while from the other nothing flowed but that which was holy, just, and good. And the moment the real character of the law was understood by the quickened soul, a grievous state of things arose: the commandment came—sin revived—and the man died. The law was felt to urge one thing upon the conscience—sin was felt to exact another thing in the old man or the members—and this state of things drew forth the sense of death in the soul and cry for deliverance; and the answer came in Jesus, revealed in the power of His death and resurrection.

Thus the law, coming to act on flesh or man in moral corruption, was found altogether unequal, through the inbred, essential evil that was there; and rather aggravating the mischief by shewing sin also as transgression. It has been disclaimed. The Lord has disclaimed it as His instrument; and the believer, who stands in the mind of the Lord, has disclaimed it as his confidence, and Christ has come, the

instrument in God's hand instead of the law, and the object of the believer's confidence instead of it also.

Man, and the law that acted on him, being thus put aside, *God* is introduced into the scene, and His instruments and ordinances. And as thus introduced, I desire to look at God for Himself a little moment, as Scripture may blessedly shew Him thus in the gracious service of poor ruined man.

God is that glorious One (not to speak of Him merely in Himself, or in creation and providence, or amid the powers and thrones of angels) who has resources for our need, and remedy for our mischief, though we be those helpless sinners which the law has proved us to be. To carry such in Himself is His prerogative, and our owning it by faith is at once His praise and our blessing. It is as such He is proposed to faith. It was "God Almighty," that is, God the all-sufficient One, that was revealed to the Patriarchs. Abraham and Sarah were *dead* as to their bodies; but *I* am the "Almighty God," says the Lord, and their faith owned it. "I have resources to meet the dead state of your bodies," was the language of God, and His servant bowed his head (Gen. xvii.)

This was claiming *divine* glory on the one hand, and giving it on the other. And as the reverse of this, the apostle charges some with not having "the knowledge of God," because they questioned the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. xv. 34). For such questioning shewed that they had not apprehended God as *God*—that they had not given Him due divine glory—otherwise they would have believed that He had *resources* even for a state of *death*, as Abraham did. As the Lord before condemns the Sadducees on the very same point, as not knowing the power of God (Matt. xxii. 29).

We are thus to give God His honour; we are not only to refuse our confidence to any beside, but we are to give it Him. Just as in Israel. It was not only that the land was to be cleansed of idols and groves, but a house or tabernacle was to be raised to God. Idol deities were to be removed, but the one true God Almighty was also to be brought in. It would not have done simply to clear the land of abominations without also bringing in the true glory, and so exactly with us now. We are not only to flee idolatry, but to become true worshippers: we are not only to refuse our confidence as sinners to all beside,

whether to our works, or our penances, or the church, or righteousness of man of any kind, but we are to give our confidence, as sinners, to God. We do not know Him or worship Him *as God*, if we do not apprehend Him as worthy of that confidence, as One who has resources in Himself for our condition, though it be like Abraham's, a condition of death, even of death in trespasses and sins. For God is One who can meet *all* necessities. That is His divine glory. A mere convicted sinner may have cleared the land of idols—the thought of saving himself by the law may be hateful to him—he may renounce it with all zeal. Like the sword of Joshua, he may go from city to city, and from king to king, and demolish and kill all that he finds in the land. But it is only the *believing* sinner that finishes Joshua's work, by putting the tabernacle of the Lord at Shiloh; and thus while, Ashtoreth and Baalim are removed, Jehovah is brought in—the full and worthy honours which are God's are given Him.

To come short of this is really to come short of knowledge of *God*. It is for *God* the Apostle pleads in 1 Cor. xv. It is not for the Father, nor for the Son, nor for the Holy Ghost. The rights and honours of each of the Blessed Persons in the Godhead, the Apostle, as instructed, knew how to maintain in their due place. But there it is *God* he pleads for—and that is the highest thought in some sense: and accordingly he touches, in the holy argument, on the closing dispensation of "God all in all." The glory that first broke out is seen at the *last*. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." "When he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, that *God* may be all in all." But with this ineffably, inconceivably excellent advantage, that in the march of this glory, from the beginning to the end, it has unfolded and displayed itself in such ways as are never to be forgotten; but which the rather have left their traces, their indelible traces, behind them for ever.

The glory has passed before us, shewing itself to us increasingly in its progress: and when at the end we see it, the glory *still*, it is as having thoroughly opened itself, so that we may enjoy it in all its fullness, in its inner parts and secrets, through the eternity of the new heaven and the new earth.

And I might refer to Gal. iv. 8. as giving this view of God, that the disciples there, by returning to ob-

servances, and in that way sustaining their confidence as *sinner*s, were shewing that they were leaving God and the knowledge of Him, because, if known duly, they would have seen that He had all that was needed by them even as sinners, and that days and months and years would therefore add nothing to them.

We all come short, sadly so, for our own soul's joy, in this knowledge of God according to the revelation of Himself—which is the only true or divine knowledge. He is of unspeakably blessed perfections, and most glorious is His goodness. He is love, as we read; and, therefore, every defect or mistake in the understanding of Him must reduce our joy and blessing, for love secures them to perfection.

The glory and delight of God in the works of His hands do not result so much from their own proper excellence, or because they display His handiwork. But His glory and delight are rather in them, because of their either imparting or receiving blessing; for such are the delights of love.

Thus the heavens, with the sun running its course through them, glorifies and delights Him, chiefly because they set themselves forth in blessings to the earth. And they are called His "*witnesses*," because they give the fruitful seasons which fill the heart with gladness.

So the church. It is not the gifts of His Spirit as displays of His power, but as serving His saints and edifying them in light and comfort, that forms His value of them and delight in them. Accordingly St. Paul, carrying the mind of God with Him, says, "I would rather speak five words with my understanding—that I might teach others also—than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." Tongues were more the exhibition of *power*—prophesying for the edification of the saints—and the Apostle, having the mind of God, did therefore value the latter. And the nearer we are in spirit to God, the more we shall find our delight thus in blessing. Look at Gabriel. He stood "in the presence of God." In what character then did he come forth from that presence? As the messenger of glad tidings to the earth (Luke i. 19).

So the Beloved. He dwelt in the the bosom of the Father. In what character and for what end did He come forth from that bosom? To give Himself up to the death of the cross for the rescue and life of sinners.

The nearer the Son the Beloved lay, the brighter was the expression of love or of God. The bosom was a place more intimate than the presence: and so was the *death* a richer expression of God than the *message*. But all this, and the like to it, abounding in Scripture, shews us God. *God is love*—and His glory, or the ways of His shewing Himself, are accordingly. *They are ways of blessing*. All that properly came from Him—be it from the outer courts of His presence where servants wait, or the sanctuary of His bosom, where the Beloved lay, the divine, the eternal Son; be it in the gifts of His spirit in the Church, or in the works of His hands in creation—all in their divers measures and glories come forth to tell of Him in *blessing*, to reflect His person in diffusing fruits of liberty and gladness around.

Thus we reach our God in divine understanding. And it is *very blessed* thus to see that the *knowledge* of God once associated itself with the *certainty* of *our own blessing*, so that to be without "hope" is to be without "God" (Eph. ii.) And to refuse salvation, that is, not to obey the gospel, is the same, and will be judged the same as not knowing God (2 Thess. i.) God is NOT KNOWN when the gospel is preached, if that gospel be not received by faith or obeyed. But all this is blessed. It casts the soul, as it were, on the necessity of blessing. God must be given up otherwise, for to know *Him* is to know *blessing* from Him. If I refuse the salvation of the gospel, I refuse God. I am without God in the world. If the soul has apprehended Him, it has apprehended One who blesses. And thus, as Scripture teaches, to know Him is life eternal (John xvii. 2). To know Him more and more is only the increasing communication of grace and peace (2 Peter i. 2). Sad it is, that He, being such a One, our souls have such short, and cold, and weak tales to tell of Him.

(To be continued.)

CHRIST THE TRUTH.

THE Lord Jesus was the manifestation of truth, and everything is made manifest by the truth. There is no real truth anywhere but in Christ. If I knew what God is, He is not known really but in Christ. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The truth shall make you "free indeed;" and then, a little lower down in the context, the "Son shall make you free."

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[No. 11.]

MEDITATIONS ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

(Translated from the Italian.)

CHAPTER XIII.

BARNABAS and Saul, having accomplished their mission, return to Antioch, from whence they had gone to Jerusalem with the contribution for the poor. Now, in the assembly at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers. These ministered to the Lord, and fasted. While thus engaged, with hearts consecrated to the Lord, the Holy Ghost said—"Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."

(Doubtless the command was given by the mouth of one of these prophets, for this reason called such; but the important fact to remark is that these two apostles were called by the Spirit Himself.) Then, under the impression of the seriousness of the call, having again fasted and prayed, they laid their hands on them and sent them away. And it was on a mission of the greatest importance. The Gospel, and the revelation of the assembly, is now formally given to the Gentiles, they and the Jews, as believers, being united in one body on the earth and for the heavens. Let us consider a few particulars.

Already Paul had been called by the revelation and the authority of Christ, and more precisely by the revelation of a glorified Christ. Saul had not known Christ on the earth. Of this we have spoken. He had been separated both from the

Jews and from the Gentiles. As regards religion, he did not belong to the one class any more than to the other, but was united to a risen and glorified Christ. Henceforth he knew no man after the flesh, not even Christ—that is, as a Jew who awaited a Christ on the earth, according to the promises given to the nation. As a witness called by God his starting point was the glory—Christ in heavenly glory, the same who had suffered by the hands of those who were still persecuting His members on the earth. For him the cross was the end of his Adamic and Judaic life. He was dead to the world, to the flesh, to the law. He laboured as an apostle of, and one who belonged to, a new creation.

Moreover, he drew neither his authority nor his mission from the apostles who preceded him; his mission did not even originate at Jerusalem, and was not dependent on the sanction of the apostles there, nor of the Church at that place. His mission was given directly from God and from Christ. Personally called by Christ three years before, he is now sent by the Holy Ghost, and departs from Antioch, a Gentile city, from the bosom of an assembly where the Gentiles had first gathered together. He did not go to form another assembly. The superstition and legality of the Jews very nearly did so, but God did not permit it, as we shall see. His mission was nevertheless entirely independent; it was dependent on the authority of Christ alone, and on the power of the Holy Ghost. The apostle insists much on this point in the first two

chapters of the epistle to the Galatians.

He desired to be absolutely independent of Peter and the others; and not only did he assert his having been sent from God Himself, but he was obliged to rebuke Peter, who, for fear of those who came from Jerusalem, had been unfaithful to the truth and to his own convictions. Paul was free from all men, subject to Christ, and in love the servant of all; a model and example for all Christians, as, indeed, he himself tells us. He fully recognised the mission of Peter to the Jews, as well as that of the other apostles; but though he preached the same Gospel as they, his mission was directly from God Himself.

Barnabas and Saul are not only called, but sent by the Holy Ghost. They depart, therefore, to Seleucia, and from thence sail to Cyprus. But here the state of the work is manifested—a new aspect of affairs. The Gentiles are disposed to listen. Judgment falls on the Jews for a time, on account of their opposition to the Gospel, especially on its proclamation to the Gentiles (see 1 Thess. ii. 16). Till now, all the light that was in the world the Jews possessed; but, having rejected the true and perfect light of the world, they had fallen into darkness, and hated the light, and all the more because jealousy filled their hearts. The Apostle never denied their privileges. In Salamis he began by preaching in their synagogues. He did not give up the Jews till the Jews rejected the Gospel.

Now John Mark, the son of her

in whose house the disciples had met together to pray for Peter, was with them. The relationships of the Apostle were still Judaic, for though himself free, Paul profoundly loved his nation as the people of God. Having gone through the island, they find with the governor a certain Jew, a false prophet. The governor, a prudent man, desires to hear the Word of God. The sorcerer Elymas, however, withstands the apostles, seeking to turn the deputy away from the faith. But if the hurtful power of the enemy was with the sorcerer, the power of God was with the apostles. They strike the false prophet with blindness. Such is a remarkable picture of the state of the Jews, and of the power of God shewn in the propagation of the Gospel. The deputy, astonished at the doctrine of the Lord, believes.

Saul now assumes the name of Paul, having, we are not told how, changed his Jewish name for a Roman one. The moment was a convenient one. The word literally signifies "to work;" but I do not think that is either the source or the intention of it.

After crossing the sea, John Mark leaves them. His relationship with Jerusalem was too strong for him, and the difficulties and dangers of the work of the apostles too great for his faith. Barnabas was his uncle, Cyprus, the country of Barnabas. Alas! how many there are whose faith depends on circumstances! They go on steadily while surrounded by these circumstances, but when the path leads to simple dependence on the faithfulness of God, their steps at once begin to flag.

The power of the Spirit of God creates His instruments, and adapts each for His work; and, sent forth by the energy of the Spirit, they are sustained by His power in the midst of all circumstances, whatever they may be. We shall see that even Barnabas could not continue always with Paul, nor consent to know no longer any man after the flesh. But it is sweet to see how, as I have already said, Paul in the end recognises Mark as profitable for the ministry (2 Tim. iv. 11). So Mark goes away, and Barnabas and Paul continue their journeying in strange lands, where the Gospel is unknown.

Leaving Parga, they come to another Antioch, in Pisidia, where they enter into the Synagogue of the Jews. Called on by the rulers of the synagogue to exhort the congregation (for the ministry was freer among the Jews than in modern Christian churches), they announce Jesus and

the resurrection. Let us notice certain points in this address. As was generally the case, it was composed of facts. The apostle briefly relates the history of Israel till the time of David; and then lays down the two fundamental parts of the Gospel—namely, the fulfilment of the promises, and the powerful intervention of God in the resurrection of Christ, by which He was shown to be the Son of God. In this way also he begins the epistle to the Romans. All the narratives of the Acts depend on the mission given at the end of Luke. The subjects are repentance and remission of sins. For Israel the way had been prepared by John the Baptist. Then God, according to His promise, raised up (not raised from among the dead) a Saviour.

But they of Jerusalem had accomplished all that the prophets had spoken, knowing neither the Saviour nor the voice of the prophets, which, in crucifying Jesus, they had fulfilled. But God had raised Him from the dead, and He had been seen for many days by those who had accompanied Him from Galilee. Thus was the promise of Psalm ii., of the coming of the Son of God, the King of Israel, accomplished. But, we would add, as to the responsibility of Israel, it is lost on account of the rejection of Christ; but on the part of God, all the promises were firmly established in His resurrection, according to Isa. lv. 3; and as to His person, the prophecy of Psalm xvi. is accomplished. All that the Jews were now to receive was to be given in pure grace. On this foundation the doctrine of the Gospel is established. The remission of sins is announced, and justification from all things, from which the law of Moses could not justify. The basis of the new covenant has been laid, and the blood of that covenant shed, though the covenant itself be not yet established. It will be with Judah and with Israel in the last days, but founded on what has been already accomplished.

The apostles then exhort their hearers not to neglect the salvation which had been announced to them. The fundamental truths of the Gospel ever remain the same; the remission of all the sins of believers; the person of Christ proved to be the Son of God by this resurrection; and the fulfilment of the promises made to Israel, though that people be for a time set aside. But this justification being for believers, it was for the Gentiles also.

The Gentiles then ask that these words may be preached to them on the next Sabbath. The fame of this new

doctrine quickly spreads, and nearly the whole city comes together to hear it. But the poor Jews, moved with jealousy, cannot bear to be surpassed in religious influence, and that another religion than theirs should work on the Gentiles. Oh, poor human heart, always stronger in religious people! The truth it has already believed in (and believed in because received by many, themselves unconverted; and because, besides being the truth, it does them honour to profess it), does not put the heart to the test. But truth is always truth, even though it be not received by the many; it does put the heart to the test, and must be received only because God gives it.

The Jews now begin to contradict and to blaspheme. Paul at once takes his stand, and acknowledging that the Gospel ought first to be preached to the Jews, as heirs of the promises, openly declares that he turns to the Gentiles; taking the remarkable prophecy in Isa. xlix. as the commandment of the Lord. There the Spirit presents Israel as the nation in which God should be glorified. But then the Messiah had laboured in vain, for Israel was not gathered in. Still, it was but a small thing to bring back the tribes of Israel; the Messiah should be a light to the Gentiles, and the salvation of God to the ends of the earth. On the ground of this declaration of the will of God, the apostles turn to the Gentiles.

Such was free grace, poured out to all, leaving the strict confines of Judaism, and directing itself to the whole world. But still the grace of God, mingled with faith, was necessary to make the truth enter the heart, so that it might be born of God. This is what happens here. The power of God accompanied the word, and "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." The result is this:—opposition on the part of the Jews, testimony throughout all the earth (except at Jerusalem, chap. xv.), and the operation of grace in the heart, whereby it is led to the acceptance of the Gospel.

Already, on the first Sabbath-day, many Gentiles and proselytes had followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. The Jews, however, on account of their failure, are put aside. The spiritual energy of Paul now places him at the head of the work. Till this moment it has been Barnabas and Paul, henceforth we shall find Paul and Barnabas.

The Gospel is shed abroad in all these regions; but the opposition of

the Jews increases. They "stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts." Similar scenes are enacted everywhere. By the permission of God (He, however, still holding the reins in His own hand), the devotees of the old religion, and the devout women, with the chief men under their influence, seek to cast out the Gospel. The apostles shake off the dust from their feet, in testimony of the justice awaiting those who rejected the grace and salvation of God. "And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost."

Such is the varied picture of the work of the Gospel in the world, and the first public exhibition of its result, when announced in the face of the opposition of the old religion, which still exercised its power over unconverted hearts, in presence of the need and unbelief of mankind. And such, in spite of conflicts and difficulties, is the power of the Gospel, under the influence of the Holy Ghost. It is first preached to the Jews, because they had the promises; then it is given to the Gentiles, because all believers are justified by faith in Christ. A dead and risen Christ is for all. Opposition springs up from the hatred of the Jews, of the devout women according to the old religion, and of the principal men of the city. Judgment, though not executed, is pronounced; and then grace, working in the hearts of the believers, leads them to faith and joy in the presence of the Spirit; those who do not believe being left under judgment. Expelled from Antioch, the apostles prosecute their labours elsewhere.

OUR PLACE IN CHRIST BEFORE GOD.

CHRIST said, "I go to my Father and your Father." (John xx.) "In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you." (John xiv.) The congregation must not jar with His praise, and are therefore placed in the same position with Him before "My Father and your Father." Our place before God now is in Him, the Christ in glory. Such is our place, and we are predestinated to bear the image of the heavenly. This gives us power of hope; we are excited by it to run the race; it is not so much dependence marks it (although we must always be in dependence or fall), but the energy

and joy of hope. We wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. We do not hope for righteousness, we have it, or rather we are it. Christ is the righteousness; He has entered into the glory, and this is the consequence of the righteousness. "We wait for the hope of righteousness;" we wait for the glory. The Spirit now takes of the things of Christ, and shews them unto us down here—then in glory. The law was a ministration of condemnation, the Spirit is the ministry of righteousness. When Christ was glorified, He sent the Holy Ghost down to seal our persons and make us partakers of the glory to come; the effect of this is, that beholding Him we are changed into the same image from glory to glory. This is practical realization, and it becomes fruitful in us. Seeing Christ glorified, by the Spirit, has this effect on our hearts—we are confirmed to Him. It is through looking at Christ in glory.

THE NEW CREATION.

(Continued from page 120).

THE WORK OF REDEMPTION.

OUR thoughts are thus led up to God as acting in a fallen world where man had been found out by the law to be helpless as well as evil. It now becomes us to look at the way and action of the blessed God in such a world, and for such a creature as man; and that has been, and is *redemption*.

Redemption is God's principle in this world. Creation was for redemption, and not redemption after creation—because in counsel the Lamb offered Himself before the world was (Ps. xl., Heb. x.) And the saints are chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. i.) And in the garden of Eden itself, before the transgression, in the sleeping man, and the woman taken out of him, there was the type of redemption or life drawn out of death (Gen. ii.); and the moment sin entered, the secret of redemption was published (Gen. iii. 15).

But beside all this, Leviticus xxv., which is the special Scripture upon redemption, shows us, as I have observed, that redemption was God's principle; for there we are taught that neither the people nor the land could be sold for ever, but always subject to redemption, or, as we say, by way of mortgage. And if the Israelite had no kinsman able or willing to redeem him or his land, the Lord Himself would redeem both

in the fiftieth year, or year of jubilee. Thus it is clearly apparent that redemption is God's principle. But what does it imply? The paying of a price, a full price for the thing or person sold. The purchaser of an Israelite, or of his possession, was to have the full money weighed out to him ere he could be required to restore the man or his land to the kinsman. The Scripture shews, in like manner, that our glorious kinsman (the God of heaven and earth, manifest in the flesh) has by Himself paid the full price of our redemption, paid the debt that lay upon us and our inheritance. For in the balances of the throne of God (where righteousness was seated) the price was weighed, and weighed with the nicest hand, that no wrong might be done to any one through man having sold himself and all that he had by his sin. And thus Scripture calls Jesus a *redeemer*, in the sense of this glorious chapter on redemption (Lev. xxv.) He visited and redeemed His people. And the price that He paid was His blood, or Himself. "He gave *himself* a ransom for many"—"a ransom for all—to be testified in due time." "By his *blood* having obtained eternal *redemption* for us." "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." And many such passages tell us.

And the scales of the throne of God tested the weight of this price before it was paid. They had before tried the weight of the blood of bulls and goats, but they found all such blood to be light and insufficient. But when the blood of God's own Lamb, God's divine Son, was put into that balance, which was thus held by the hand of Him that sat on the throne, Who judges right—the balance stood, the will of God, the Great Creditor, was satisfied. And by the satisfying of that will we are sanctified (Heb. x.) By the payment of that price our persons and lands are repurchased by our glorious Redeemer or Kinsman.

I do confess, to touch the doctrine of repurchase or redemption appears to touch the *dearest* thought in the mind of God, for it is, as Lev. xxv. blessedly shews us, as I have said, His *own* principle. And why is it so dear to Him? Because it glorifies His love, that is, Himself, above everything; for it shews such a way of self-sacrifice in God, that though this ransom, this price of redemption, demanded the Son from His bosom—the Isaac—yet the Isaac was delivered.

And what comfort to the conscience to know that the full price

has been paid. What comfort to a poor redeemed Israelite it must have been to know that his creditor, to whom he had sold himself, had been paid *the uttermost farthing* of his demand by his gracious Kinsman. The heart gets comfort from knowing that God's *love* was gratifying itself in the work of our redemption. But the *conscience* gets ease from knowing that God's *righteousness* has been honoured and secured, that the demand of His throne has been fully answered. And the adequacy of this price of our redemption is variously witnessed to us. I would exhibit the testimonies to it thus:—

(1.) Before the world began it was *fixed on* at such a price in the covenant. Its sufficiency was even then recorded in "the volume of the Book" (Ps. xl.; Heb. x.)

(2.) From the beginning of the world it was *pleaded* at such a price, whether shed on the altars of the worshippers, or put on the lintels of the houses of the redeemed (Gen. iii. 8; Ex. xii.) And as such price it was owned of God.

(3.) At the end of the world it was offered on Calvary, and then in the rending of the veil God *publicly* owned (as before in the volume of the Book He had secretly or in counsel owned) the value of His blood as the ransom or price of redemption.

(4.) It is now preached by the Holy Ghost in the Gospel as such sufficient remission of sins (Heb. x. 13).

(5.) Finally, through eternity, its simple value is to be *our praise*. And thus is the price of our redemption variously witnessed to us. God delighted to own it, it is true. He was glorified in this well-settled purchase: His love was gratified also. The heart, as led by Scripture, may indulge itself in all these blessed thoughts and assurances. But I speak now only of the value that the soul finds in looking at the blood of Jesus as the money or the price paid down for our ransom. The *conscience* gets its desire from that fully answered. As such price, I again observe, the blood is to be trusted. And as such price it is called the "blood of the everlasting covenant," being that consideration—full, adequate, well ascertained and settled consideration—on which the covenant stands; which ratifies it, therefore; which gives it its character of being at once a *holy* and yet *gracious* covenant preserving the holy rights or righteousness of God, and yet providing abundant grace for sinners. "This is the new

covenant in my blood." No other blood could do. That of bulls and goats had been tried under the law, but it was found light and inadequate. And let me add, that no thoughts of God's love are to interfere with the demands of His righteousness. These demands must be answered, as they have been indeed in this redemption of sinners by the blood of Jesus. God's love, it is true, is without measure. But that love is not a mere emotion, a mere sentiment that can exercise itself as it will. It is rather that which, at an unutterable cost, provided redemption for the guilty, a *righteous* ransom for sinners. Love in God was that which sat down and counted the cost of making *sinners* its object. If we think of love, without believing the provision it made for the demands of righteousness, we are dealing with a sentiment of our own, and not with the blessed revelation of God.

But this rather by the way. I have here principally been considering redemption as that which marks God's purpose, and is the principle of His action in our world. It was His counsel before the foundation of the world, and will be celebrated in the praise that is to surround the throne for ever and ever.

But in the Scriptural character of redemption there is more than mere repurchase or ransom. In the ordinances of Israel a redeemer was a well-known personage, and his services, as set forth under the law, were various:—

(1.) He had to ransom the person or land of his brother if sold (Lev. xxv.) This I have been noticing.

(2.) He had to avenge the blood of his brother if shed by a murderer (Num. xxxv.)

(3.) He had to raise up seed to his brother if he had died childless (Deut. xxv.)

Our blessed Lord Jesus fulfils all these duties, having in grace made Himself our *Kinsman*, by taking on Him the nature and the cause of the "seed of Abraham," through "God our all":—

(1.) He has ransomed or repurchased both us and our inheritance, which had been righteously forfeited to God by transgression, paying the full price, weighing out the uttermost farthing to His most just demands upon us, not indeed in silver and gold, but in His own most precious blood. (See Acts xx. 28; Rom. iii. 24, 25; Eph. i. 7-14; Col. i. 14; 1 Tim. ii. 8; Heb. ix. 12; Heb. x. 14; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19).

(2.) He avenges us on all our

enemies, regarding us not as debtors (as in the previous case), but as injured, and as such standing up to judge our wrongs upon them that are against us, whether it be sin, the devil, death, or hell. See 1 Cor. xv. 54-59; Col. ii. 15; Heb. ii. 14).

(3.) He *quickens* us or raises up seed to His brother—rebuilds His kinsman's house, by making us children of God again—a seed which Adam never produced, creating us anew, giving us to be the sons of God, which the flesh never did. (See Rom. ix. 8; Gal. iii.) And this is all. These things contain deliverance, life, victory, justification, and all we need; whether we look to ourselves dead in sins, but made alive to God, whom we have wronged and offended, or to the devil, who has beguiled us. This doctrine of a Redeemer is the ancient religion—the only religion from the beginning—to unfold which, in all its incidents and results, is the great theme and purpose of the Book of God.

Thus the Redeemer is the great personage in the Book of God from beginning to end. His work sustains the praise of God for ever. He was revealed long before the law, and has now survived the law—for we are now "dead to the law," but shall live to Him, as we live *by* Him, for ever.

THE LAST ADAM A LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT.

THIS notice of the Redeemer has presented Jesus, the Son of God, to us as Repurchaser, Avenger, and Quickener. Such, as we have seen, were the three characters and duties that belonged to the Kinsman or Redeemer under the law, and which meet all our necessities. But our meditations now must lead us to the *quickening spirit*, or to Jesus, the Kinsman, building up His brother's house.

At the beginning Adam was the channel of life from God to that family whom God had set up as His image here, over the works of His hands. But sin entered, and death by sin. Then came forth the promise of the woman's seed, who was not only to have His own heel bruised, and to bruise the serpent's head, but also to become the channel of *life* to man, now dead in trespasses and sins. And accordingly, by faith, Adam calls his wife "the mother of all *living*," thus owning that the dead sinner must now find life in a newly constituted fountain. Adam, as God's creature, becomes unfruitful to God, and the woman's seed is revealed to faith as the channel (or source) of life.

From that moment faith apprehends this mystery, and looks for life, not to the flesh in Adam, but to the woman's seed. According to this is the mystery of the barren wife, of which we see so much in the Scriptures. Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, the wives of three leading Patriarchs, all belong to this class; and their barrenness, healed by the mighty power of God, sets forth the mystery of life received, not of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God—of God, not acting through Adam or flesh, as at the beginning—but in His own way of sovereign grace and power, as through the woman's seed. This is very simple. Hannah, in after time, rehearses the same mystery. So Elisabeth in the times of the New Testament. But at length the true seed of the woman is manifested, begotten indeed as the woman's seed, in the simple, sovereign energy of God, so that all His types now appear to have been but faint resemblances. For it is not a barren wife receiveth strength to conceive seed, but a virgin—the new thing in the earth—"a woman encompassing a man"—a woman alone getting seed, according to the very first promise.

This is the new source, the new channel of all life. Jesus, the Son of God. God manifest in the flesh. The word made flesh. The Lord from heaven made the Second Man, and as such "a quickening spirit," out of whom all life is now drawn—the flesh being dead in sin—cut off from the living God.

The first man had been "a living soul." The Second is a "quicken- ing Spirit." The first had a life subject to death, or subject to be cut off from all communion with God. The second carries a life which has triumphed over death and all its power. The first was of the earth, the second is the Lord from heaven. The first was but *natural*, the second is *spiritual*.

And thus all that live by Him (Jesus) are spiritual. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." He is not a living soul, but a quickening Spirit; and His *nature* gives *character* to that life which He communicates, as Adam's earthly nature would have given character to all that derived life out of it, had it not corrupted itself; and as now dead in sin, it gives character to all flesh, which is still taken out of it, and accordingly corrupt and dead as to God.

Thus the Son of God is the "quicken- ing Spirit," not the Holy Ghost, but Jesus the Son. The Holy Ghost afterwards dwells in the new creature,

but that new creature is "in Christ," having derived its life out of Him who is the quickening Spirit. And that which is born of the Spirit being spirit, a distinct principle of life in us, it has its due actings, its own proper faculties and affections. Thus St. Paul speaks of serving in the Spirit (Rom. i. 9); *living* and *walking* in the Spirit (Gal. v. 25); *understanding* in the Spirit (Col. i. 9); *having strength* or *faculty* to *comprehend* in the Spirit (Eph. iii. 17); having a *conscience* in the Spirit (Rom. ix. 1); *living* in the Spirit of God (Col. i.); having *bowels* in the Spirit (Phil. i. 8). These are a few instances wherein the Spirit is owned as a principle of a *distinct life*, the spring of its own peculiar faculties and affections; as it will, by and bye, be also the life of its own peculiar and united body (1 Cor. xv. 44). The *sleep* is evidently only of *the body*. (See 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.) For then the spirit, that which has already been detached from the corruptible body, and gone to Jesus (Acts vii. 59), will take up and seat itself in the glorious body.

This is a blessed truth, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." As one has said, "The person of every believer bears the image of the two Adams." The image of the first Adam is wholly sinful, as Adam was. The image of the Second Adam, distinctly considered, is wholly righteous, as Christ is. This new life, drawn from the Second Adam, Christ, "the quicken- ing Spirit," is *spirit*, the *new creation*, the *new man*, the *inner man*, the *divine nature* in us, *life of the risen Jesus*, which the Holy Ghost can own as *His temple*, to form, and fill, and nourish, and so strengthen with His own might, as to give it to stand in the battle with that which is still in us of the old Adam.

THE INDWELLING OF THE SPIRIT.

Thus do we see our own creation in Christ Jesus—and this meditation leads us to another on the Holy Ghost, which I would now for a little pursue. As soon as we become spiritual—or one spirit with Jesus—as joined to Him, we become such as the Holy Ghost can own. And in this age He does so own us. For it is the *Lord* in us whom He thus owns, and Him He can own, of course, everywhere. He could never own or adopt the flesh—and the law never took us out of the flesh—but the word of grace unites us as one

spirit to the Lord. Nay, the Holy Ghost did not acknowledge flesh in unfallen Adam, for Adam was not a temple of the Holy Ghost. But He can own even a poor sinner who, by faith,* is one with the Son. An *individual* body He owns, just because He finds *the Lord* there (1 Cor. vi. 17-19). Our collective bodies or the church He owns, because, in like manner, He finds the Lord there (Eph. ii. 20, 21). He makes both of these His temples—dwelling in them—because the Lord is there in this age.

And thus the believer is not only "spiritual," as being by faith "one with the Lord," but he becomes a "temple of the Holy Ghost." The Holy Ghost enters and dwells in Him. Then the Spirit bears witness with the believer's spirit (Rom. viii. 16). His own spirit tells him he is a child, because, by faith, he is one with the Son of God's love. And the Holy Spirit joins in this testimony, because He has entered us as owning the Son in us, and thus in us cries or breathes out, "Abba, Father."

But even this "indwelling of the Holy Ghost" is matter of revelation, as well as our oneness with the Son, or our being "Spirit." Therefore it is neither to be *prayed for* nor *experienced*, but *believed*. Sweet and refreshing, and purifying fruit of this indwelling will surely be known and enjoyed; and that more or less as we walk in holy diligent cultivation of the spiritual mind, and in our communion with God. And that will be our experience. But at first we are not to put the soul to any effort to experience the indwelling of the Spirit, but to believe the revelation that He does indwell. And the happy way to reach experience is simply to have faith in the revelation. And it is, moreover, on this very ground that our *responsibleness* arises. We are all debtors, under this age, to walk in the Spirit, just because we have the Spirit. Believers in old time were not thus "spiritual." A prophet, or the like, may have been called "spiritual" while the Spirit was in him to prophecy, but that was far different from being "spiritual," in the sense of being indwelt by the Spirit for constant though varied need of the soul.

From all this we gather that the Spirit is imparted by the word of the Gospel—that "word" is the seed of new or spiritual life in us, and is received by faith: and then the Holy

*Union with Christ is rather by the Holy Ghost. But faith is, of course, essential. —ED.

Ghost comes and dwells in us thus spiritual, or one with the Lord. And this shews us there is *connection*, but not *identity*, between the "word of grace" and the Holy Ghost. The word of grace gives liberty to the sinner, purifies the conscience, makes us one with the Son, and thus prepares us for the entrance and indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

All the elect have been born of the Spirit, have derived their life unto God from the woman's seed, the head of the new creation. But not till Jesus, the Son of man, was glorified, did the Holy Ghost dwell in the elect as now He does. He was given occasionally, at all times to God's servants, for official service and testimony (Ex. xxxi. ; Num. xi. 27 ; Deut. xxxiv. ; 1 Sam. x. ; 1 Chron. xxviii. ; Neh. ix.). That was, however, different. For then, according to the order and notice of Scripture, the Holy Ghost was still *in heaven*, as in Isaiah xlvi. 16, but now dwelling in, and given to, the saints. He is owned by the same Scriptures of God as on *earth* (Acts ii. 28 ; Eph. iv. ; John xiv. 16).

RESURRECTION GOD'S SECRET FROM THE BEGINNING.

OUR meditations thus conduct us through great things of our God, which, however, we must not dismiss till we look at *resurrection*, which, with its results, is to be the great presentation of the blessed and wondrous purpose of our God.

God's secret I judge to have been resurrection from the beginning. That which He graciously calls "my covenant" was established on that principle. It shows itself in God's dealing with *Adam*. It was intimated by the very first promise of the woman's seed, for that was something above nature, above flesh and blood. It was, as the prophet calls it, "a new thing in the earth." And though the Son of God became the woman's seed by *incarnation*, yet, in the mighty results of that, and in the character of the Bruiser of the serpent's head, indeed in all that we now enjoy, either of His person or His work, it is in resurrection we know Him. As the apostle says, "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know we Him no more." And accordingly we are now, even in this first promise about the woman's seed bruising the serpent, to have respect to Christ in resurrection, for there, and there only, the full fruit and issue of that bruising is to be enjoyed. And afterwards resurrection is connected with

God's secret or covenant in His dealing with Noah. "The end of all flesh is come before me. Make thee an ark of gopher wood." Here again resurrection was God's relief or *resource* when He took cognizance of the utter corruption of all flesh in His sight. For the ark was the chariot of God's salvation conducting Noah out of the old into the new creation. It was plainly the symbol of death and resurrection. "Every thing in the earth shall die," says the Lord to Noah, "but with thee will I establish my covenant ;" thus revealing the secret that His covenant, His purpose touching this creation, was to establish it in some condition after death had ruined it, or on the ground of resurrection.

So in His dealings with *Abraham*. Abraham was to have a son and an inheritance on the same principle. He and Sarah were without children, and without so much ground as to set his foot upon. But he was to have a seed as numerous as the stars, and an inheritance that was to stretch northward and southward, eastward and westward. And this was all called "God's covenant" with him, again plainly telling us that God's purpose, or secret, or covenant, rested on resurrection, rested on the setting aside the flesh in its strength and resources, in doing something beyond and above nature, which is the same as resurrection, or the quickening of the dead and strengthless body of Sarah. And accordingly Isaac is born out of the dead bodies of Abraham and Sarah. With Isaac is God's covenant. Ishmael may be blest—as he is—but with Isaac, and Isaac alone, is the covenant plainly again telling us that God has taken *resurrection* as the principle of His action, the ground of His counsels. Man may receive blessing in *nature*, it is true, and in the divine overflowings of goodness such Ishmael promises are enjoyed every day, but *the covenant* is with Isaac. The real abiding and sure blessing is all, not in nature, or mere flesh, but in resurrection.

And the *inheritance* comes in the way of resurrection as well as the *seed or heir*. It lay under the bondage of corruption for a time. It was in the hand of the Amorite while he was filling up the measure of his sin. But then it is rescued from such a pit of corruption. It passes through its baptism or circumcision. It, and all its fruits, go through a process of sanctification. Like a leprous house, it is cleansed by the dead and living birds, and thus as in resurrection, it is fit for the people who were in covenant with God ; a risen inheri-

tance becomes a risen people, and Canaan was thus a sample of the whole creation, which is now as dead in corruption, but to be raised in glory (Rom. viii.)

The dispensation of the law then takes its course. But it was not God's covenant. It was *man's* covenant, because it took flesh and blood for its principle. It was flesh and blood, or the strength of the natural man, which is addressed or operated on, and thus it was *man's* covenant, and not God's. But it ended in the full conviction that man could get blessing from it.

God is then manifest in the flesh. The Son of God becomes incarnate. In His own person He stands untainted. He renders to God a beautiful offering of perfect human fruit. Flesh and blood in His person was the loveliest piece of creation God ever looked on. It was indeed a meat-offering, an unleavened sheaf out of the earth. But it must be set aside ere the head of the serpent can be bruised by this promised and precious seed of the woman. Not, however, set aside like flesh and blood in all beside as *worthless*, but set aside by a *meritorious death*, that by death this woman's seed might destroy Him that had the power of death, the old serpent who had brought death. And such is the end of flesh and blood in the Son of God. And therefore, in it, we are not to know Him any more. We are to know even Christ Himself now as dead and risen (2 Cor. v.), the Lord of a new creation, up to which He has won His way by fully meeting all the penalty which the old creation has incurred ; and in which new creation we (by faith in His atonement and victory for sinners accomplished by His death) stand with Him, a dead and risen people, the true circumcision, who rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

And I cannot close without alluding to a blessed instance of the Lord retiring to thoughts of resurrection as His relief, when He looked on the end of flesh. I mean in His visit to Jerusalem. (See Mark xi.) He came down to Jerusalem. He looked on man then as of old He had looked on him in the days of Noah. But all was evil. And He said of it, represented in the barren fig tree, "No fruit grow on thee henceforth for ever." And having pronounced this doom on flesh, even in Jerusalem, the most favoured nursery of it, He went out to Bethany. And what was Bethany but the witness to resurrection ? There Lazarus was, who had actually been raised ; and

there Mary was, who had the faith of the resurrection. So that Bethany was the same relief to the thoughts of Jesus now, as the Ark of gopher wood had been to His thoughts in the days of Noah.

And touching all this, faith is our duty. For faith takes us into God's counsels about the covenant. Faith says, as God says, "the end of all flesh is come before me," and resurrection, the Ark of gopher wood, becomes the believer's object or resource, as it is God's. It is the thing we look for, as it is the thing that the blessed God has purposed and promised. And thus faith takes us into God and His secret. Precious faith, we may well call it, that thus takes us up in spirit to that light in which the mind of God dwells, and in confidence to that work which God has accomplished.

And precious hope, which carries us beyond the present Ishmael blessings of nature, and gives us desire for the inheritance in resurrection according to God. Creation is but the avenue or ante-room. Without faith in resurrection "the power of God" is not known (Matt. xxii. 29), "knowledge of God" is not attained (1 Cor. xv. 34), for creation did not show God *fully*—but redemption, leading to resurrection, does.

But ere we leave this mystery of resurrection, I would look at the mind of the Spirit in 2 Cor. v., as connected with it.

There is, I believe, in the opening of that chapter, an allusion to the tabernacle and the temple, which were successively the dwelling-places of the Ark. The tabernacle conducted it through the wilderness, and it was a temporary thing, made of clothes and boards, all liable to be soiled and torn, and broken in their passage. The temple in due time received it in the land, and then it entered its abiding place, which nothing could move or injure. And this temple was just as costly to the eye as the tabernacle had been unattractive. The tabernacle had appeared but as a dirty badger-skin house, for all the glory was then concealed, but the temple now appeared full of magnificence to every beholder. "See what manner of stones and what buildings are here."

But withal, they both contained *the very same ark*. It was conveyed from one to another, as being the chief thing round which all else, be it unsightly or glorious, gathered. And so with us, as the Apostle here intimates. We have the earnest of

the Spirit, we have life of God in us, life from Jesus, the quickening Spirit, and the Holy Ghost Himself dwelling in us—and this is the great thing after all. This is as the ark to which all, whether tabernacle or temple, was but secondary. This is the present glorious tenant of our "vile body," the earthly house of this tabernacle; by and bye to be the glorious inmate of the "glorious body, the house of God not made with hands." *The same ark, the same Christ, the same Spirit.* And by this God shows that He already owns us as decidedly or simply as ever He will. "He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God." God has put His hand to us already; God has got His own interest or kingdom in us even now, just as God hath appropriated the tabernacle to Himself, unsightly as it was, as surely as He afterwards did the beautiful temple.

And this is the simple joy of faith, that God has *already laid* His hand on us, and put His glory in us, so that it is His interest and His care to *preserve* us, according to which the Spirit given is "*the earnest*," as He is here called.

And in passing through these verses, the apostle, I judge, glances at Adam as created. "Since that, being clothed, we shall not be found naked." Adam was naked. His nakedness, it is true, expressing his unconsciousness or innocence, but expressing his exposure or liability also; for, being *only* a creature, he was open to the assaults of the enemy. But when the saints reaches the house of God, then it will not be nakedness or exposure, but clothing and security. Then it will not be a mere creature, but a creature thus enclosed, as it were, in God's own workmanship, he himself wrought by God for a house built by God. And being thus clothed, there will be no nakedness, no liabilities any more. It will not be Adam again. And from this our apostle seems to draw a great inference. In ver. 16 he says, "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh." He had surveyed resurrection. He had looked in spirit at the temple in contrast with the tabernacle. The eternal house in contrast with the earthly house. He had owned God as the builder of that temple, and as the Giver of the Spirit to dwell in it for ever. He had longed for the clothing of glory as something far beyond even the nakedness of innocence. And under the light and sense of all this, he now loses sight of flesh or old creation. He

cannot return to it. He has seen "a glory that excelleth." He has seen resurrection or new creation in Christ, the Son of God, outshining all the old thing as begun in earth and in flesh. He cannot look again at flesh; yea, Christ Himself in the flesh has been outshone by Christ in resurrection. Christ in flesh had been lovely, it is true, the loveliest piece of the old creation that had ever been presented. It had a glory—as the law had a glory—but like the glory of the law, that glory of Christ in the flesh was now outshone, and the Apostle had turned from it to the "more excellent" glory. Paul, as it were, could give up Christ *in the flesh*, when he got this view of resurrection.

And having taken before us this place, having shewn himself in this attitude of soul, he shortly tells us the main character of this object that was now filling his vision, the feature of this new creation in the Son of God, which was now spread around him. That it was a grand system of reconciliation, devised and perfected by God Himself; by which, even now, the rebellious might enjoy in spirit a full return to God through Jesus, and walk before Him, not in the distance, and darkness, and death of their own condition in sin, but in the light and liberty, the assurance and joy of his own righteousness.

This was the present aspect of the new creation, by and bye to be perfected in that state of resurrection to which he had been before looking, and the light of which had, as we saw, led him to these present thoughts. And such will be our eternity, shining in the righteousness of God with glorious bodies; living, moving, and having our being, not in Adam or flesh, but in Christ, and in glory. And at last there will be "the new heavens and the new earth," the former things will have passed away: even the kingdom will be given up, and "God will be all in all."

He that sat upon the throne, said "*Behold I make all things new.*"

THE WOMAN'S SEED.

God knows that you are sinners; He knows that it is the subtle iniquity of Satan, which would make man his prey. But there is to that an answer, of which Satan knew not, any more than poor, guilty, fallen man: the revelation of the Seed of the woman. (Genesis iii. 15.) The question is really between the serpent and the second Man—

not the first. It is neither a promise to Adam and Eve from God, nor a hope of improvement in their children; but God pronounces judgment on the enemy, and in the midst of it the revelation is made of the Saviour, child of the woman who had ensnared the man to be ruined of the devil. The woman's Seed shall bruise the serpent's head, but He is bruised Himself first. What grace, yet righteousness! What humiliation, yet victory! If Adam exalted himself as a robbery to be as God, He who was God emptied Himself to be a man, and became obedient unto death, as the other was disobedient unto it. To lost Adam, the first man, there was, and could be, no promise. All the promises of God are yea and amen in the second Man; but they become the portion of every believer. Faith finds and enjoys the promise, not sin and unbelief. To Eve and Adam God only speaks of the actual consequences of sin. (Ver. 16-19.) It is in judging the serpent (ver. 15) that He reveals the coming Seed of the woman, and the way of His victory. Thenceforward the only hope of lost man is in this revealed Saviour; and before he is driven out he hears of what Jesus was to suffer in destroying the power of the devil; yet not a single sign of repentance appears in Adam after his sin. He had shown terror of God, cowardly selfishness as to his wife, as much dishonesty in his own case as dishonour done to God. But God occupies Himself only with His counsels of grace in the woman's Seed, whose person and work and glory are developed in all the scriptures.

But victory over Satan in the cross of Christ is no longer in any sense a promise; it is accomplished. Had man let into his heart that God did not love him? that He kept back what was good for him, through jealousy or envy of his happiness? It was Satan's lie; for the suffering second Man, the woman's Seed, is Son of God, the true God, and eternal life, who became man to die for sinners and destroy the works of the devil. Yet is the unbelieving heart so perverse as to refuse its confidence to the God who thus gave His Son. Jesus, instead of fleeing from God's judgment, went to meet it when the hour came, and took on Him the burden of our sins, instead of listening to the voice of man or Satan. "The cup which my Father giveth me, shall I not drink it?" By His death He annulled him that had the power of death, and gives

the believer perfect confidence in God, all fear of death being gone. His love puts us in peace and relationship with God, unscared by difficulties, now that we are forgiven our sins, clothed with Himself instead of nakedness or fig-leaves, with nothing but grace to stand in and God's glory to look forward to, since He bore the judgment for us.

Is your confidence then in the God who gave His Son to save the poorest of sinners? This confidence inspires and strengthens obedience. Nothing to the believer is more precious than God's love in Christ, which makes us prefer His will to all Satan can offer.

May God touch your heart, and give you to magnify Him by receiving all that His love has done in Christ!

A DAYSMAN BETWEEN ME AND GOD.

WHEN I come to that point, to say (not the world is wicked, but) *I am wicked*, I have the "Daysman" between me and God. (Job ix.) He is the One who has come to me in all the wickedness of my heart, and has come to me because I am so. Now I have, not only God working in me, sending Satan to plough up the fallow ground, and to show to my conscience what was there long before, but God doing a work for me. He brings in a righteousness (His own) for the sinner. He works a work for us. The first thing I find then is that this my state has not kept Him away from me, but it has brought Him to me. That is grace, not righteousness. Hiding my sin from me would not be mercy. Not letting me see things as God sees them is not mercy. It is in meeting me just as I am, and acting above the sin, that he has shown mercy. Christ never alarms people who come to Him in their need. To the hypocrite He speaks terror, but to the poor in spirit it is "Fear not: I am all that you need." You say, "I am such a sinner." Christ says, "That is just the reason I am come." You reply, "I have an awful will." "That is the reason I am come," says Christ: "I will break your will." "Neither do I condemn you," said He to the woman accused by the Pharisees.

I defy you to find a case where Christ brought fear upon a convicted conscience. He takes the fear away instead of causing it. He comes in the poorest and the lowest way to meet with those in need, and that

they might not be afraid of Him. Grace reigns—it has come in God's own blessed sovereignty.

How different are men's thoughts of righteousness now from God's! We can let all go on quietly without trying to set things right, knowing we have something better. We are made the righteousness of God in Christ.

We have a daysman not only laying His hand on man but on *God*. He is the mediator to reconcile. If a day is assigned in a court of law, the daysman is the one who appears on my behalf to undertake my cause. Not only has Christ come to me in my sins, but He has come to answer for me, taking up the whole cause. He has done it—settled the whole thing as to my sins, and is gone back to appear in the presence of God for me. He has appeared for God amongst us, but now He is gone to appear for us in the presence of God. I have given up all attempt to answer for myself: *He* has taken it up. Has God accepted his answer for me? Here faith comes in to accredit God when he says He has accepted Him. The work that the daysman has done is accepted. We know not only that there is a daysman, but that the daysman has sat down, the work being finished, no more remaining to be done (as to the sacrifice). The Holy Ghost is the witness of that: "their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

Righteousness is there. Where? Before God. I am not talking of the fruits of righteousness, but of righteousness itself there. God's mind is that He has accepted Christ. God has given Him, and that is love. He has accepted His work, and that is righteousness. Now there is no fear. Grace reigns through righteousness. I stand in the presence of God by virtue of the perfect righteousness that has been presented to God. Where is love to be seen? Very feebly indeed amongst Christians, but love is not feeble in God. I find in Him perfect love. He has broken my heart because it was a hard heart.

Here was all the country set in movement to get Job's heart right!—Sabeans, Chaldeans, &c. *God* has been working in all this. *I* have the key to it all now through the gospel. Self-will, pride, all must be broken; but God is perfect love. He has taken away the sin by the cross, and He has provided righteousness. Then what have I to fear? Though He will exercise our souls that we may know good and evil, it is all love. I can glory in tribulation,

knowing that it worketh patience, experience, hope.

Now, beloved friends, are you resting on the daysman? or are you saying, "If I can make my hands a little cleaner, my conscience a little quieter, I shall be all right?" If you were to stand in the presence of God, that would be all spoiled. (Job ix. 31). What righteousness is that which is spoiled in the presence of God?

It is the blood which has made atonement, and Christ at the right hand of God is our righteousness.

WONDERFUL GRACE.

I now find God Himself the source of all blessing, and not only this as a present thing, but seeing what God is, I can say, "goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of Jehovah for ever." We shall never want goodness and not find it. "*Goodness shall follow me.*" Assuredly the goodness of God is better than man's, even if we could get this.

There is also a place to dwell in: that is my hope. For us it is the Father's house. There are not only blessings conferred, but a place to dwell in with the Father for ever. As He brought Christ through, of course He will bring me through too, and I am there now by faith. I am at home with my Father. He would have us feel that all the correctings and chastenings by the way are founded upon the fact that He is for us. When peace is really settled through the work of Christ, I have all these exercises; and what is known only to faith at the beginning becomes afterwards experience, though always faith too; but, every step having had this experience, we can say that we know it. Whatever it be we meet with by the way, we know it is all for good, and we shall dwell for ever with Him. Wonderful grace!

THE PATH OF LIFE.

"*Thou wilt shew me the path of life.*" How dependent for everything! He does not say, I will rise up, but "*Thou wilt shew me.*" He passes through death in dependence on His Father (there was the blessed perfectness of a man with God); and, at the close of His career, "knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God and went to God, He riseth from supper" (John

xiii). He could go back unsullied to the throne of God, and take man back with Him into the glory, out of which He came. There is manhood now in the presence of God.

"*Thou wilt shew me the path of life.*" It is most blessed to hear Christ say this. It is the path of death in Ps. xvi. 10; how did He find that of life? Adam found the path of death in his fall and his self-will, but back from it never. The tree of life was never to be touched in the garden of Eden; he had taken the other path. Thus we see there are two trees all through the world—that of responsibility, and the gift of God which is life. All man does ends in death (but it is too late to speak of that); he is dead in trespasses and sins; but now Christ came, bringing life into a world that drove Him away, where Satan the prince of it was, and everything was bearing the stamp of its prince.

In this place of death then He makes out a path for us. He is shewn by His Father and God the "path of life." He was the life, but then the path of life had to be tracked through this place of death, where no one thing testifies of God—one wide waste, where there is no way. Christ has tracked the path Himself: it is for the Christian I am speaking now. The gospel shews He gives it to those who believe. He had to make out the path of life through a world of sin and wretchedness, in obedience, up to God. It must be through death for us, because we are sinners. Now He says to us, If any man serve Me, let him follow Me. We must take up the cross. The cross to Him was atonement—that was the path. As He came for us, it must be by the cross. He has gone through it perfectly and absolutely. What is the consequence? The end is, "In Thy presence is fulness of joy." He would rather die than disobey.

Notice well that death is gone to us—the end is gained; but we have to tread this very same path that He trod up to His presence, where there is "fulness of joy." Christ is the blessed object for our affections. Alas! how little affection we bear Him. In the wide waste of sin, "a dry and thirsty land where no water is," He could say, "Thy favour is better than life." Why all this? It was for His own glory and His Father's doubtless, but it was for these "excellent of the earth." "In My Father's house are many mansions . . . I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."

We have to follow Him. It is not the quantity we do, but the measure of presenting Christ that is the value of our service, in a world where there is nothing of God. "All that is in the world . . . is not of the Father." In that world the Son of the Father has marked out this path of life up to the Father.

Christ is the object of our study when we have righteousness in Him. When brought into blessing, we can study Him who brought us there. It is this searches the thoughts, affections, motives in the path; then we go through the death in taking up His cross; then in the end we are to be like Him. The Lord give us to know the blessedness of being identified with Him, following in the path He has tracked out for us.

AN ALPHABET OF BLESSING.

(Continued from page 72.)

FAITH finds it easy indeed to see such an one as the Son Steward of prayer and dominion and royal honours when He comes to sit on a throne, just as He was a Steward when He traversed, in weakness and humiliation, the path of life. Can glory and a kingdom elevate Him? But He who entered with sorrow in its season will enter with joy in its season. The Man of Sorrows will take the cup of salvation. To Him that was despised and rejected, insulted and scorned, every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. The Person is the same throughout. Give man belief in one Christ, and faith receives it, that, having been the Steward of the Father's will and grace in days of humiliation, He may still be Steward of the Father's Kingdom in days of exaltation and strength. The Son of God delights to be the Servant or Steward of the will of God, and brethren in grace or in glory, in humiliation or in power.

GIDEON experiences at first the sense of his own littleness, whatever may be the relationship between the Lord and the people. The Lord's answer shows him the one simple means "*Surely I will be with thee.*" When God acts powerfully on the heart, the first effect shows itself always in connection with Himself. Gideon's thoughts are occupied with the Lord's. It is by worship that he expresses his feelings when he receives an answer from the Lord to all his thoughts. He builds an altar to the God of peace.

HEZEKIAH is a type of the true Emmanuel, of Him before whom the

Assyrian, the desolator of Israel, will fall. This is a very important history, as foreshadowing the events of the last days. We find here again the principle with which Israel's deliverance and that of all men is connected—a principle pointed out in Elisha and accomplished in Jesus. Hezekiah is raised as from the dead.

If we apprehend things and present them to men *such as they are in the sight of God*, the Holy Ghost accompanies the testimony, and the conscience is reached. When God gives us this simplicity which makes us occupy ourselves with things in the manner in which God sees them, we ought to speak to any one according to the state he is in before God. If I see that he is lost, I tell him so, simply, and the simplest addresses are the best and most blessed.

JOSHUA, type of the energy and the mind of the Spirit in one who enjoys communion with the Lord, is certain of success, and in this assurance of faith he acts without hesitation. In effect all the strength of the enemy falls to the ground, without the use of any means that could account for it. Another principle is that there must be no fellowship whatever with that which constitutes the power of the enemy of God, with the world and that which is its strength. "Keep yourselves from the accursed thing." God may use these things by consecrating them to Himself if He wish, but if man, if the Christian meddle with them, the Lord must judge him. Cities walled up to heaven, the greatest obstacles are as nothing. Complete separation from the world, because power is of God, that is the condition of strength.

KING of Tyre, Hiram (representing the Gentile's glory of the world) supplied all that Solomon needed to accomplish his designs. But it is not only within the borders of the land that the power and glory of Solomon are known, his fame spreads among the heathen, even to distant lands, and the Queen of Sheba comes to bring him her tribute of admiration and the precious things of the Gentiles, who thus contribute to the splendour and glory of the place chosen by God, whose light had come (in type), and upon which the glory of the Lord had risen. It is a glory, the report of which attracts the nations; one which, when seen, surpasses all that could be said of it, and which one must be near to appreciate. It is a glory that excels all that the world had seen—a wisdom never equalled.

"LABAN and Bethuel answered and

said, 'The thing proceedeth from the Lord.'" If, instead of spending our time in reasoning, we were more simple and obedient, and presented things as the Holy Ghost tells them to us, the result would be better. But we often substitute our human wisdom for the commands of God. Often the things which are most simply said produce the greatest effect. Peter said to the Jews, "You killed the Prince of Life." This is what *you* did, and what *I have to tell you* on the part of God" (Acts iii.)

MOSES' faith is seen in his giving up, when grown to age, all the advantages of the position in which God had set him by His providence. Providence may, and often does, give that which forms, in many respects, the servants of God for their work, but could not be their power in their work. It gives that, the giving up of which is a testimony of the reality of faith and of the power of God which operates in the soul. It is given that it may be given up. This is part of the preparation.

No possible experiences can ever have the effect which the presence of God produces on a soul. Such experiences are useful to humble us, they are a means of stripping us of ourselves. Nevertheless, it is only the presence of God as light which can cause us to condemn ourselves and gives us power to purify ourselves from our well known, though hidden, idols. Abraham had nothing to do either with Jacob's idols or Jacob's experiences.

ONE secret of the Christian's life as soon as he knows God's will is to do his work, to occupy himself with it and let no delay interfere with it, even to satisfy the wants of his body. This is the effect of the sign of the Holy Spirit's work. Eliezer wishes to deliver his errand. And what was it that was in question? The interests and the honour of Abraham his master. He had entrusted to him the interests of Isaac his son; and God has committed to us, down here, the glory of Jesus His Son; and the glory occupies us by the Holy Ghost who is given to us, that is, where there is a single eye in spiritual discernment, according to the position in which God has placed us. If we are there, there is no hesitation; being in our place we act with liberty and joy.

PEOPLE sometimes come before God because they have forgotten Him in the place where they ought to have stood and borne testimony for Him. And thus He asks Elijah "What doest thou here, Elijah?"

Terrible question—like those addressed to Adam, to Cain, and now to the world with respect to Jesus. God has still seven thousand souls who had not bowed the knee to Baal, although Elijah had not been able to discover them. Oh, when will the heart of man, even in thought, rise to the height of God's grace and patience? If Elijah had leant more upon God, he would have known some of these seven thousand. He would, at any rate, have known Him who knew them, and who raised up his testimony to strengthen and comfort them.

"QUIETNESS and confidence."—Do not make yourself uneasy; the One who holds the reins of the need-be is God. He does not take pleasure in afflicting. The great secret is to have entire confidence in the love of God, in the certainty that He is the Doer of it—not looking at circumstances or at second causes, but seeing the hand of the Lord in it—that it is the trial of our faith, and that it is only on the way. When the day comes in which God has His own way, these very trials will be found to praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

RUTH furnishes a kind of intermediate link between the fall of Israel under God's immediate government, and the future fulfilment of His purposes. Prophecy, which unfolds these purposes and gives moral proof of this fall, begins with Samuel. We have this from the lips of Jesus, who is Himself the object of prophecy. Samuel, consecrated to God in a new and extraordinary manner, comes in, with the special testimony of the Lord.

SHADRACH, Meshech, and Abednego are cast into the burning fiery furnace. But it is in the sufferings of His people that God in the end appears as God. He allows their faithfulness to be tried in the place where evil arises, that they may be with Him in the enjoyment of happiness in the place where His character and His power are fully manifested, whether on this earth or in a yet more excellent manner in heaven. Faith and obedience are as absolute as the will of the king. Outwardly the king's will is accomplished. But this is only to manifest more brightly the power and faithfulness of God, who comes even into the midst of the fire to prove the interest he takes in the fidelity of His servants. The effect to them of the fire is, that their bonds are consumed, and that they have His presence whose form is like the Son of God.

THE Church is called to answer the desires of the Lord Jesus, to be this to Him, either in the Holy Ghost now, or in the kingdom by and bye; to enter now, in spirit, into His thoughts and affections, His joys and His sorrows, and hereafter to shine in His glory and to sit on His throne. The Church, now endowed with the indwelling Spirit, and destined to sit, glorious herself, in the inheritance of His dominions, is the answer to these deepest desires of the Lord Jesus in the days of His flesh. He sought and claimed a kingdom when He was here; He desired the sympathies of His saints when He was here. But His people were not prepared to own His royalty; His saints were not able to give Him this fellowship. A kingdom, however, He is receiving in heaven, and He will return and administer it here. This fellowship He is beginning to find was through the Spirit indwelling in His elect, and it will be in its fuller measure made good to Him in the day of their perfection. The kingdom will be His glory and joy; but this fellowship in which the Church will stand with Him will be still more to Him. It was His desire here, and it will be His richest enjoyment by and bye. Eve was more to Adam than all his possessions besides.

UZZAH'S death was the result of David's conduct, and he is angry with the Lord when this result takes place. This was truly the flesh. God made David sensible of that which was becoming to the service of the God of Israel (see 1 Chron. xv.), and He restored his soul by showing him that He was the true source of blessing, and that the leaving the ark aside was leaving blessing aside too.

VICTORY leads to negligence. The work is thought easy. After the manipulation of God's power there is a kind of confidence, which in reality is only self-confidence, for it neglects God. What proves this is that God is not sought. Ai was but a small city, two or three thousand men could easily take it. They went up and viewed the country, but God was forgotten. They did not seek His counsel, they went forward and they were defeated. When he who has the Spirit was taken by surprise, not having acted in the Spirit. He must fall on his knee before the Lord. "Israel hath sinned."

WHEN Satan's power in superstition, in whatever way it may be outwardly manifested, is despised, it is destroyed, supposing always that God is with him who pours contempt

on it and that he is in paths of obedience. Gideon overthrows Baal, and what can this god do said even he to whom the altar belonged. The power of God acted on their minds, for faith was there. Satan will incite men to open hostility against those who throw down his altars, but if we are standing on God's side the only effect of this will be to give us victory, deliverance, and peace.

Xt. gives us depth. If Xt. be not there, all is shallow.

YES, "we have an altar whereof they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle." We have a sphere in which the divine life communicated to us can exercise its own faculties and find its own resources. The church has its own joys, its own interests, its own treasures, its own sphere of life, its own field for the affections, its own world, in short, in which there is fruit found to God.

ZEBULON, Asher, and Naphtali came up also with Gideon against Midian. The power of the Spirit which sways the minds of men is with the faith that acknowledges God, that acknowledges Him in His relationship to His people and faithfully puts away the evil which is incompatible with that relationship. Thirty-two thousand men follow Gideon. But the Lord will not have so many. He alone must be glorified in their deliverance. Ten thousand men are still too many. The Lord's hand alone must be seen. Those only may remain who do not stop to quench their thirst at their ease, but who refresh themselves hastily as opportunity offers, more occupied with the combat than with their own comforts by the way. This was what was needed for Israel, *that the Lord should have His place in their hearts and faith.*

THE PLACE OF LIBERTY.

THE judgment of death is with God, the power of death is with the devil! Christ comes and places Himself in blessed grace in our place to bear the whole weight of Satan's power—puts Himself under the consequences of our sin: "was made sin for us." Thus grace brought Him where sin brought us, that He might deliver us from the whole force of evil. Christ, having not only delivered us but glorified God perfectly by the cross, having made good His title at all cost, goes into that glory by virtue of redemption, with the full joy of the firstborn among many

brethren, enters as man into the presence of His Father.

This gives the character of what we are made partakers of. If He enters there, it is in a certain sense our entering; it is for us, as "our forerunner," in virtue of His entering. We have entered in Him as our Head; we sit "in heavenly places in Christ." "Thou hast not shut me up in the hand of the enemy, but thou hast set my feet in a large room."

There is liberty. The state of the heart delivered corresponds with the deliverance into a large place: "Set my feet in a large room." We are in the presence of God without the possibility of wrath. The cup of wrath has been drunk—it is not now to drink.

God's eye was upon me when I was in my sins. He has "known my soul in adversity," and I am brought into the presence of God—into the sunshine of His glory, without a cloud, by virtue of redemption. It is after I was a sinner, I am brought there through the efficacy of the work of Christ. I am there necessarily to be the proof of the value of His blood. God looks upon me as the fruit of His Son's work: I am set according to the value of God's Son in His sight. This is how I know His love, in the perfect favour of God—not only in divine favour without a cloud, but assured that there never can be a cloud.

And there is another thing—"Sin shall not have dominion over you." Not that it will not be there; but that we are set free from sin and death. The same power that raised Christ into the presence of God has delivered me. I may slip through unbelief, but I am delivered, and am then one spirit with the Lord.

Satan has no power against Christ up on high; all his power was exhausted at the cross, and it is all gone. God "hath delivered us from the power of darkness," and set our feet "in a large room." That we may enjoy this large room, the Holy Ghost is given. "Stand fast in the liberty." Satan has no right or title against Christ. In Him I am delivered. I am entirely out of the enemy's reach (I do not mean if going on in the flesh); in Christ is my title and portion. I have received the Holy Ghost. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." "If led by the Spirit, we are not under the law." By the Holy Ghost, I "know the things that are freely given of God," and have the power of enjoying them

(1 Cor. ii.), an "earnest in our hearts" (2 Cor. i.).

I add another thing that puts the crown to all: "we joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." I know it is for ever. The Spirit has sealed me "until the day of redemption." Well, now I can trust and joy in God. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" No creature can separate us from the love of God. There we find ourselves; and the apostle is not afraid to say, "We joy in God." This is a "large room." All the holiness of God is our delight. He that first descended is ascended into the proper glory; and we are brought into it all. If I cannot see the end of it, I can see it is boundless blessedness. And Christ is all and in all. The Lord give us to dwell there! Surely it is "a large place."

JESUS TRUSTING.

"IN thee do I put my trust." This is quoted in Hebrews ii. to prove His humanity. There are two things make perfection in a man, dependence and obedience. They were in Christ, the contrast to what was in Adam when he sinned. Christ was ever the dependent and the obedient one. Independence is sin: there is the principle of sin in it. All thought of freedom from the will of another, where one's own will is at work, is a terrible thing. With Christ there was no will but His Father's. This was not any check but motive. It is most blessed for us to see Christ taking this place of dependence. It is natural to us to say, I must do something. But no! you should not eat or drink unless He tells you. Whatever you do, do all in the name of the Lord: yet it is all liberty.

So in family life, no person who has his father in his affections at all times would do anything without a desire to please him. Love makes it perfectly indifferent to the child what is to be done. It is done to please the father. Would not a child like even in eating and drinking to please his father? It is not the thing that is of consequence, but the relationship and affection to him. Satan tempted Christ to make the stones bread, when He was hungry, and he could have done so. He might have had twelve legions of angels, but He has taken the place of dependence and waits.

His heart could be moved with compassion; not only could He shew His power in working miracles.

And it is in seeing the place of this dependent obedient One down here that the heart gets food. What traits are seen in Him! Asleep on the pillow, He can rise to still His disciples' fear. When sitting wearied on the well, He could converse with the poor woman who came there in need. He was able in love to go through all.

THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION.

ONE who stands in the divine righteousness does not speak of crying out of the "depths." There is an immense change. We have the Spirit of adoption. If I am going through all the difficulties and trials of the world, it is as a child I am going through them. My feelings and my affections flow from the certainty of relationship. "I have declared Thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them." What was Christ's place on earth? Was He uncertain as to His Father's love? Never; but, on the cross, bearing our sin under the hidings of God's face. There was in Him perfect obedience, but as a Son. If we are led by the Spirit, we have liberty, "not bondage again to fear." Have you liberty? If I have the consciousness of Christ having been in the depths for me, I am out of them, and am no more to be in them; consequently I am sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. The cross behind me, having come by that to God, I look by the Holy Ghost at the cross and see my sins put away there.

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2 COR. IV. 3-6.

[No. 12.]

WISE BEHAVIOUR.

1 SAMUEL xviii.

A TIME of success is often dangerous. David had just returned with the head of Goliath in his hand, amidst the applause of the people. But at this season, it is four times recorded that he "behaved himself wisely." We find the secret of this wise behaviour in verse 14. "David behaved himself wisely in all his ways, and the Lord was with him." The presence of the Lord was the secret power that produced the outward results. A due sense of the Lord's presence with us will ever work in us a holy watchfulness and a dependent spirit. His presence demands holiness, and a good conscience alone enables us to "give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness."

After the wondrous victory wrought by God through David, he still occupies a lowly place. There is no puffing up. "I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed" (ver. 23). Neither the disdain of the Philistine nor the flattering song of the women who ascribed unto David "ten thousands" distracted the soul of the man who had the Lord with him. Those who humble themselves under the mighty hand of God can well afford to await His "due time" for their exaltation (1 Pet. v).

David's holy bearing, however, kindled the anger of Saul, and led him to seek his life. It also produced respect and fear, for "when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely he was afraid of him."

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How constantly is this principle found true. The man who is walking closely with God has a moral power about him that will soon make itself felt. It is wonderful how the space is cleared around such an one. If it stir up enmity (as will surely often be the case, for we serve a rejected Saviour), it will also produce a degree of fear in the adversary. In this case Saul was not ignorant of the cause of his fear. We read (verse 28), "Saul saw and knew that the Lord was with David" and the result is again given in the next verse: He was "yet the more afraid of David, and became his enemy continually."

May we be found in this place of dependence and meekness, continuing in prayer and watching in the same with thanksgiving. It is the path of true blessing for ourselves and those around us.

After a fourth mention of David's wise behaviour, the chapter ends, "so that his name was much set by." There has been one perfect Example here below, Who indeed "behaved Himself wisely in a perfect way." His Name is precious and much set by. We are to follow in His steps, Who could say, "I have set the Lord *always* before me" (Psa. xvi.) Thus, as in the presence of the Lord, we shall be enabled to behave ourselves wisely, and to walk in wisdom toward them that are without. The meekness of wisdom will be shewn out of a good conversation (James iii. 13). True, some "Saul" may "eye us from that day forward," but our judgment is with the Lord, and we "serve the Lord Christ."

MEDITATIONS ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

(Translated from the Italian.)

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SPECIAL WORK OF THE GOSPEL CONTINUED AND COMPLETED.

At Iconium many believed, but the Jews renewed their efforts against the Gospel. As God worked by the Word, however, the Apostles abode there a long time. But the city being divided, and their adversaries desirous of doing them injury, they set out for Lystra and Derbe, where they preach the Gospel, as also in the regions round about. At Lystra, the power of God was manifested by the hand of Paul in healing a cripple who had never walked. Here we find that the faith of the cripple had to go with his restoration; in other cases this does not appear, the cure being effected by the power of God alone, by him who was His instrument.

The people, astonished by the miracle, call Barnabas, Jupiter, and Paul, Mercury, because he was the chief speaker. Barnabas (as Mercury was servant to Jupiter), is mentioned first in the narrative. The priest of Jupiter desires to do sacrifice with the people. The Apostles, Barnabas and Paul, vexed in heart in seeing the purpose of the people, and far from desiring any honour for themselves, rend their clothes, and, running in among the crowd to stop them, announce the one true God (not here salvation), who, till then, "had suffered all nations to walk in

their own ways. Nevertheless He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

Such was the beautiful description of what God was, even among the Gentiles, and of what He gave to be known by them; I do not say that they did know Him, for they preferred the imaginations of their own hearts, and the gods who favoured their evil lusts. Nothing could be more horrible than what man shewed himself to be, when God, on account of his perversity, left him to himself. What they did every-day in their idolatry is unfit to be written. The account of it may be found in the first chapter of Romans. The Apostles seek to persuade the Gentiles of Lystra to give up their idols, and to believe in the one, true, and bountiful God, whom they had come expressly to declare to them, to lead them to His knowledge, and to faith in Him. Scarcely, however, do they succeed in preventing the people from sacrificing to them.

But the Jews, not satisfied with having driven the Apostles from Antioch and Iconium, and moved by an animosity, grievous to the heart, against the gospel, come to Lystra also, and persuade the people, who, ignorant and fickle, now seek to stone those whom, shortly before, they had been ready to adore. Paul, the more culpable in their eyes, because the more active in the work, is stoned, and, apparently dead, dragged out of the city. Such is man—such the religious, when they have not the truth; Paul himself had been such—but such also is the power of the Gospel, when active in an unbelieving world.

But it was not in the thoughts of God that His servant should then perish. "As the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city; and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe." Much blessed in this city, he goes on his way, and returns to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, from whence he had been expelled. Outrage and violence neither impede the work, nor enfeeble the courage of the servants. When the Lord so wills it, they return in peace to the very places from whence they have been driven. It is beautiful to see the calm superiority of faith over the violence of man, and how God conducts the hearts of His servants. They submit to, or, if possible, avoid violence; but, if the work requires it, God opens the door,

and the labourers are there with it again.

Now another part of their work is here presented. They continue to preach the Gospel, but it was now necessary to establish assemblies, and put them in regular order (ver. 23). They give the disciples to understand that Christ was not come to bring peace on the earth, which would meet with the opposition and enmity of the world, but that through much tribulation they must enter the kingdom of God. It was a warning for all times, to make men understand that persecution was not a strange thing. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Not, however, all Christians. If a Christian conforms to the world, he will avoid persecution; but he will lose the joy of the Holy Ghost and communion with God; he will be saved as by fire, and an entrance into the eternal kingdom shall not be abundantly ministered to him. If we walk with God, we shall not be barren in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

I speak thus, because for many the time of open persecution has passed away; but, if we are faithful, we shall most surely experience persecution, both from the world, and from our own families. The world cannot tolerate faithfulness. If the Christian walk with the world, instead of winning the world to Christ, he himself gets at a distance from Him, and will lose, I do not say life, but his spiritual privileges, his joy, and the approval of Christ; and his testimony is against Christianity. By his ways he declares that the friendship of the world is not enmity against God. The Christian when with the world is in no respects at ease; and when in the company of spiritual Christians his conscience reproves him because he is walking badly, and that which is a joy to them, he cannot enter into. May all who are disposed, or in danger of being let to mingle with the ways of the world, give heed to this exhortation!

The Apostles choose elders for the Assemblies in every city. It is not, *ordained by common vote*, nor *ordained*; this is not the true rendering of the word, but *chosen*. The same word is employed in 2 Cor. viii. 19, where the assemblies chose brethren to accompany Paul with the money collected for the poor of Jerusalem. The same word occurs again in Acts x. 41, where it is used in respect of God, and *chosen* is necessarily the sense. The Apostles then, chose elders for the Assemblies. The epistle to Titus is

another proof that the authority of the Apostles was the source of that of the elders. I do not dwell here, however, on this question, though it is an important one, since the ordinary translation leads to putting the truth in a false light.

We have not in these days apostolical authority; and election made by the assembly, is a thing unknown to the Word. The authority descended from Christ to the Apostle, and from the Apostle to the elder. The word *Bishop*, in its present acceptation, is also unknown in the Word. All the elders are called bishops, as in Acts xx. 28; no other bishops are to be found in Scripture; and at the beginning, Paul and Barnabas chose them for every assembly among the Gentiles, and afterwards Paul sent Titus to establish them in every town in the island of Crete.

It is important here to observe that the apostle not only preached the Gospel for the salvation of souls, which was his principal work, but that he united the converts in assemblies, to which he was afterwards able to write; and that the church or assembly which he founded in every city was properly ordered, and represented the universal assembly, of which those who in each place composed it, were members (1 Cor. xii.); with the promise that Jesus would be in the midst of them. But the wickedness of Christians, or of Christians so-called, and forgetfulness of Christ's return (Matt. xxiv. 48-50), has corrupted Christianity, according to the prophecies of the New Testament (see 2 Tim. iii. 1-5; Jude 4; 1 John ii. 18, 19; Matt. xiii. 28-30). All is disorder, confusion, and corruption.

But we are here learning the primitive order, before the assembly became corrupted. John tells us that the last time has already come; and Paul, that "the mystery of iniquity doth already work" (2 Thess. ii. 7); Peter, that the hour has arrived to judge the house of God; Jude, that those who should be judged at the end, had already crept in unawares.

The testimony is as clear as day, if we have ears to hear what is written in the Word; that in the time of the apostles the corruption of the assembly of God had already commenced, and that when the apostolic energy of Paul should be absent, evil from within and from without would inundate the Church like a deluge.

Chapter xiii. of Matthew, 29, 30, teaches us that the evil effected by

the enemy in the kingdom of God, should not be taken away till the judgment. It all exists still, while the patience of God gathers in His own.

Then, when they had prayed with fasting, and had commended them that believed to the Lord, the apostles go down by Pisidia, to the sea-shore, preach in Perga, and pass on to Antioch. Here we see the true force of what had been done in chap. xiii. 3. They had been recommended to the grace of God, for the work they had now fulfilled. This is repeated in chap. xv. 40, so that Paul would have been twice ordained, if this had been ordination, and he would moreover have been an apostle ordained by the laity. This, however, he stoutly denies (Gal. i. 1); "an apostle," he says, "not of men, neither by man." The Judaizers sought to have it so, but he refuted it with all his power. These insisted that his mission was from the church at Jerusalem, and opposed him precisely because it was not. He was not willing to be an apostle at all, if not from God, and from Jesus Christ.

It is to Antioch they go, not to Jerusalem; they return to their starting point, and from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God. The work of the Holy Ghost connects itself with Antioch, in its earthly relationship; the power is all from above. There the apostles recount the great things which God had done for them, and how He had opened the door among the Gentiles. "And there they abode a long time with the disciples." In the preceding narrative, we find this history of the preaching of the Gospel among the Gentiles, by formal apostolic mission, the difficulties, the position of the Gentiles and of the Jews, the circumstances under which it was propagated in the world, and that independently of Judaism, and of Jerusalem, a work in which Peter took no part. God worked mightily by him among the Jews; but except that he was employed to introduce the first Gentile, he had nothing to do with them. He was the apostle of the circumcision, and with the other apostles formally gave up the work among the Gentiles to Paul and to Barnabas. (Gal. ii.)

FAITH IS MY THINKING GOD'S THOUGHTS.

FAITH is my thinking God's thoughts instead of my own. God says, "Their sins and their iniquities will

I remember no more;" I think so too. God says "children of God through faith in Christ Jesus;" I think so too. God says, we stand in favour; I think so too. I do not know how God could prove His favour more than by sending His Son. He says, an "heir of glory," "joint-heir with Christ." I have everything Christ has, as a child with my Father. Now comes conflict; but I have the experience of a free man with God. One dead, quickened, and raised up together with Christ is the experience of a Christian, into all which he enters by virtue of divine righteousness in Christ. In the "fulness of time" He came. They were servants before He came; but now we are sons, and the Spirit of God is in us the Spirit of adoption. This is my place. I do not always act rightly in it: the Holy Ghost reproves and humbles me; but that is my place.

THE HEIR OF ALL THINGS.

Hebrews i. ii.

THERE is a great secret in Heb. i., ii. "The Son" being appointed "Heir of all things," takes His appointed inheritance as a Redeemer.

The inheritance had become lost to man by sin. Adam forfeited it; and it was itself corrupted, and under the burthen of sin. If it be again inherited, it must be taken with this burthen upon it, as others have long since expressed it. The Son, appointed Heir, is therefore to take it as a Redeemer, or as One that relieves it of its burthen.

This secret or mystery is suggested in Ps. viii., cited in Heb. ii. There, the Lord Jesus, the Son of man (who is "the Son," the "appointed Heir," of chapter i.), is seen with all things put in subjection under Him; but He is seen also to have reached such lordship as One, who, by the grace of God, had tasted death for the inheritance* [for everything]. He is therefore a Redeemer-Inheritor, and not a simple Inheritor.

Therefore, we may say to His praise, He will enter the kingdom as a Redeemer-Inheritor, while the inheritance itself will appear there as a redeemed thing. And in this manner, He alone will be glorified

*The *πάντος* of ver. 9, the *πάντα* of ver. 8. But so far as the word *πάντος* is concerned it may refer equally well to every one of the many sons God is bringing to glory by Christ Jesus as the "Captain of their salvation." Hence in the New Translation "or every one" is added after "everything" in a foot note.

there, while all around Him or under Him will be in blessing and security. And let me add, this mystery of the redemption of the inheritance is set forth in Col. i. 20, where Christ is declared to be the Reconciler of all things in heaven and on earth, through the blood of His cross. And the cross itself bore witness to the same mystery, or His lordship of the world by reason of His death; for His royalty, with which His dominion and inheritance are linked, was there inscribed (and inscribed not to be erased), in all the languages of the nations. There it was made known, therefore, that the crucified One was the King, that the cross was His way and title to the crown. (See John xix. 19-22).

All this makes "the world to come," or this inheritance of Christ, a new creation, that is, creation under new conditions. In the old creation, all things were "of God," it is true; but they were of God who created them. But in the new, all things are of "God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. v.). All these will witness redemption; the blood of the Lamb of God, and not simply the power of the hand of God, will be traced there.

And this distinguishes the dominions of the Second Man from those of the first, or Christ from Adam. Adam received lordship of the creatures from the hand of God at once: Christ, the Son, the Man of Ps. viii., takes it, after having been made lower than the angels, that, as man, or in manhood, He might taste death for it.

But there is more in this mystery. The redemption of the inheritance by blood, as we have been speaking, is to be made good by power. Power will have to reduce or rescue the inheritance; or, in other words, to clothe the title of Christ with possession. This action is given to us in the Apocalypse; and it is an action, consequently, conducted by strength on the ground of purchase; that is, conducted by Him who is "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," and who had already been "the Lamb that was slain" (Rev. v.). This is to be noticed. And thus it is, by the action of that Book, that "all things" are actually "put in subjection" to Christ. As to "the Son," therefore, the "appointed Heir of all things," the Man of Ps. viii., the Lord of "the world to come," we see these things.

The decree which puts all things under Him is recorded in Ps. viii. That decree commented on in Heb. ii.

is declared to be not as yet made good to Him. The action by which this is accomplished (the manner in which all things are made subject to Christ), is given to us in the Book of the Apocalypse; and then, the results of that action are displayed to us in the pages of prophets and apostles; for there we see "the world to come," or "the kingdom," or "the inheritance of all things," is in the hand of "the Son."

Thus, "the Son" is the "Heir of all things;" and after this manner, and in this due time, the inheritance will be his, brought into actual possession.

But, in the riches of His grace, He will have heirs of this inheritance together with Himself—as we read of the saints, "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ." Or, as we read in our Epistle (chap. ii. 10), as the Captain of salvation He leads the sons to the glory; and as these Heirs had redemption by blood, as the inheritance itself has, this Captain of salvation is also a "Sanctifier," as our chapter goes on to teach us (ver. 11). For if He takes us up, He must take us up with all our burthens likewise. He must charge Himself with us, from the place of our ruins to the place of His glories. And this is just what He has done, as we still further read in ver. 16. "For verily he took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham." He laid not hold of angels, as the meaning is, but He laid hold of the seed of Abraham. That is, the Son, who is the Christ, made the interests of elect sinners (here called "the seed of Abraham") His care, charging Himself with their blessing, and having respect to them in all His ways and doings, till He takes them into the glory, or into the inheritance of all things with Himself. In all the successive parts of His history, from the first to the last, He never lets them go. They are always seen with Him.

This, I judge, is the force of those words, "He took on Him the seed of Abraham." And this is necessary to that great mystery, *the Sanctifier making the sanctified joint-heirs with Himself of the appointed inheritance*—and this we find to be so, as we read Heb. i., ii. throughout. For we there find, that we never lose sight of *ourselves* while we are tracing *Him* from the beginning to the end of His blessed, mysterious journey. And surely this is a great and precious truth. I would notice this, as these two chapters give it to us.

1st. His incarnation.

This, of course, was the beginning of His path. But this we here learn took place, *because of us*. Because we, the children, were partakers of flesh and blood, He likewise Himself took part of the same (ii. 14).

2nd. His life of suffering temptation.

This, as I may say, followed immediately upon His incarnation. But all His life He went through, *because of us*. It was, that He might succour us in our temptations (ii. 18).

3rd. His victorious death.

This closed, as we know, His life of suffering temptation. But this death was likewise *for us*. It was, that He might deliver us who, through fear of death, were all our life-time subject to bondage (ii. 14, 15).

4th. His ascension.

This gloriously succeeded His death and resurrection. But in this He appears also *for us*. For He took His seat on high as the Purger of our sins (i. 3; ii. 9).

5th. His present priesthood in heaven.

His ascension led Him to this service and dignity. But it is all exercised *for us*. He makes intercession in the tabernacle for us according to our need (ii. 17).

6th. His future coming and kingdom.

This will be in due season, after the present service on high is over. But on this great occasion, and in this age of the glory, He will still appear *for us*. As the Captain of salvation, He will lead us to this glory, that we may sit with Himself in the sovereignty of all things in the world to come (ii. 10).

And thus we see ourselves with Him, throughout all this wondrous journey, from the womb of the virgin to the throne of the kingdom. We see ourselves interested in every character which He bears, and in every action or suffering that He fulfils. He is the Incarnate One, the Tempted One, the Dead One, the Risen and Ascended One, the Priest in the heavens, and the Captain of salvation entering the world to come, where the glory is, but in each and all He is either with us or for us. We are never allowed to lose sight of ourselves or of our interests for a single moment, while tracking His path from the beginning to the end of it. He is "Heir of all things," but we are joint-heirs with Him, having been made meet to be so by Himself in the earlier parts of His ways.

We have a fuller, brighter view of all this mystery now, in the light

of the day of Heb. ii., than they could have had who walked in the light of the 8th Psalm only. But this of grace and of God also. The light shines brighter and brighter, as we pass on, through the oracles of God. And the day is still to come, when, with an emphasis beyond even this, it shall be said, "O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth."

CHRIST HIMSELF,

Not Truth, the satisfying Portion of the Heart, and the true incentive for giving up.

It will be found, in the long run, that knowing all about the truth and being well versed in it (being quite orthodox in our views, as people say), does not satisfy or fill the heart, so that joy and worship flow out. Blessed as truth is, the knowledge of it (perfect as that knowledge may be), apart from the Lord's person, will not satisfy the heart or call forth gladness.

In 1 Samuel xviii. we have a striking illustration of this. David has stood before Saul with the head of Israel's enemy, Goliath, in his hand. He has answered the king's question respecting his birth, and Jonathan, the king's son, has stood by, a quiet but not uninterested observer of the whole scene. He has seen David the conqueror; seen also the proof of his conquest in the bleeding head of his and Israel's bitterest foe. He who had defied the armies of the living God is now dead. What is the result that comes home with so much force to the mind of Jonathan? Why, that there is no enemy left. And Jonathan loved David as his own soul. His heart was knit with David. The effect is, they made a covenant together; there was a private moment when alone Jonathan told David his thoughts of him. But more than this. He, the king's son, "stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle." What is this for? Jonathan is a king's son, and clad in royal robes becoming his station, while David is but a shepherd boy. What then does this mean? Why, Jonathan is saying, "I am to go down; you are to go up. I am nothing; you are everything now to me. Everything that I valued or that made anything of me I gladly give up, that you may be exalted."

Now what is the secret here? I

believe that Jonathan knew all *about* the death of Goliath before this. But it was being in the very presence of him who had won the victory, to look upon him who had done it, which wrought this wonderful change in him. Beloved brethren, can we not apply this to ourselves, and in view of the work of the Lord Jesus, say that it is not knowing *about* Him or His work that will call forth worship and joy, and make you take off everything that exalts you; but it is being in His *presence* that will produce this. Is not Paul taking off and putting on in Phil. iii.? It is for the same reason. He has seen Christ Jesus the Lord, the antitype of David—seen Him, too, in glory in the position of a conqueror. There had shone round about his path a light beyond the brightness of the sun. What was its effect? Paul was *eclipsed*. He had seen Him; and having seen Him, what does he say? He reckons up all the things that made much of himself as a man, and he says of them, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." Would he take them up again? No; he says, "I do count them but dung, that I may win Christ and be found in Him." What had produced this wonderful change in a man whose character was unimpeachable? He had been in the Lord's presence—he had seen *Him*—and he would fain dwell there for ever.

It was the same in John xx. They had heard all about the resurrection—Mary Magdalene had given them the Lord's own message about it. One of them—Peter, the failing Peter—had been the first to go into the sepulchre, and to see that He whom they all loved was not there. And now they are all together, with this truth fresh before them, what effect has it on them? Does it gladden their hearts? Does it satisfy them? No; and we are marvellously like them to-day. We know much truth, more than they knew, for the Holy Ghost has come to take of the things of Christ and reveal them unto us, and He is here. Yet how often are we found *not* joyful—*not* satisfied. Why is this? It is because we have not seen *Him*. But notice what comes next in John xx. He Himself came into their midst; He is there, and there are the marks in His hands and His side: He speaks unto them works of wondrous and solemn import, yet few. "Peace be unto you," He says; and as they gaze upon Him, as they hear His voice, their own love, their joy, their thanks-

giving, burst forth, and "Then were the disciples glad when *they saw the Lord*." It cannot be otherwise with us always if we are consciously in the presence of Him who is always there when we come, as Matt. xviii. 20 says. I believe Peter, too, was there at that time—Peter, to whom the Lord in wondrous grace was about to commit again, after his restoration, the care of His beloved sheep and lambs. There was a necessity to speak to Peter alone, and it came after; but joy must fill the soul in His presence, and it is a moment that excludes all else. Now, compare this with what we have seen in Jonathan. You come, for example, to the Lord's Table to look at Him who has conquered every foe that opposed you, so that you have not now an enemy left. You go forth, in the energy and power of that moment, to take off everything that exalts you, because you are determined to exalt Him.

(1) You will not be filled with joy yourself, though you may be a Christian, who goes regularly to the Lord's Table, unless you see Him—unless you get into His company there. (2) You will not go through this world, putting down yourself in order that He may be exalted, save as you are consciously in His presence and His company. But if you are there you can do *nothing else*; and remember, the greatest saint can do nothing more; and do we remember that verse in Matt. xviii., and think what a small meeting we may have as to number, and yet count on *His presence* there? Do we want aught but this?

Ah! in these days of religious excitement, and a desire after great things and large numbers, may the Lord keep distinctly before the hearts of us, His own saints—Himself—ONLY HIMSELF.

THE SON OF GOD

Our All-Sufficing Source of Blessing.

1 JOHN i.

THE fitting moment was come, beloved brethren, for the saints that the Apostle was thus addressing—and there is a moment when it comes to us, too, with peculiar appropriateness—to find the fulness of the blessing that grace has given us in the Son of God.

There are dealings of God previously, incomparable communications of His own grace and truth, and in due season; but if we are to be kept bright, and with joy full to

the end—if we are not to be drawn aside and swept away by some current of error—the time will come when we must know that which alone suffices for the God of glory, and which equally—I will not say suffices, for it is far more than this—which lifts us to Himself, above all the tendencies, the snares, the difficulties, the delusions, which are around.

For none are so much tried as those that are Christ's; none has Satan such a desire to make instruments of grief to Him, instruments of dishonour to His name. What have we not seen, what do we not know of danger to our own souls? We have not passed through that which God has led us through in His grace without some such sense. Would to God that it were one that showed that our souls are conscious of the perfections of His grace, and of His most faithful care.

For I speak now to those who are members of Christ's body, and who have passed through the attacks of His enemy in so many ways. I am persuaded He will make it felt by us what a fulness there is in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in this way, "*fellowship*." I am not speaking of the fellowship of saints now, but of the soul, brought out of all that is subordinate, and all that tends to drag down, and even to misuse the most precious things God has given.

We need a power to lift us *above* it. The saints of old passed through the same in principle. Something more with us. We have had to find the way to get out of confusion, which they had *not*. They were brought out of that which is false in heathenism, and the merest region of death in Judaism itself; but we have had to face the effort of Satan to corrupt and destroy in a thousand forms. We have been brought out of these confusions, brought to God Himself: God Himself, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and the great effort of Satan is to take advantage of all traces that remain, all weaknesses, all the things that assault, assail, and which have grown up in this scene of difficulty, as well as what each carries along with *himself*, what each has practically *learnt but little to judge*. For we have each with us that which increases the difficulty of all.

Now it is a most precious thing that God has provided, and that too in our Lord Jesus Christ, for here it is not merely the meeting of *need*, though need there was, and danger too, but *the positive delight of God Himself in His own Son, and the delight too of the Son in the Father*.

And where is it that we find this? *In Himself.*

I believe that "Eternal Life" as it is here presented, is not at all as we find it in the beginning of the epistle to the Romans. "Eternal Life" *there* comes in more in its triumph over death—"Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord;" but here it is not so much that. That was most thoroughly in its own season, and I do not believe souls will be able to appreciate the way in which the Holy Ghost presents it here, unless they have already been founded in what the Holy Ghost has given in the epistle to the Romans and elsewhere.

Here it is quite another way, not so much looking at us and our need as at *the Father and the Son*. Here the Holy Ghost regards Christ. Christ as He was seen; Christ as He was heard, too; Christ as He came in contact with the commonest things here below; but with all that a Christ that led into the deepest enjoyment of the Father in Himself, and the deepest enjoyment of the Son also in His Father; for I believe this is precisely what is meant by "*fellowship*." It is "the eternal life" which was in our Lord Jesus Christ; the ground of it, that is, eternal life made use of by the Holy Ghost.

In speaking of the "fathers," it is particularly to this point. "I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning" (chap. ii.) Which of us but has often considered where could be the especial force and beauty, where could be the blessedness referred to, for it is evident the Holy Ghost had a great practical purpose in it, "that your joy might be full." This, where there was everything to assail, everything to distract and grieve.

Now the saints ought to know what grief is. None knew it as Christ; but no grief He passed through—no feeling the state of the people of God—interrupted the joy He had in God Himself. It is well to be fully sensible to things around. We ought to have the ability to look in the face of everything to estimate and weigh it according to God. If so, we shall know what deep grief is, but know it according to God. Nothing so easy as to enfeeble one another, to be feeling the trial, the difficulty, the distraction, and merely to go about speaking of it, and thus adding to the difficulty of the saints. To Christ there was the perfect appreciation of it all, for there was this power of measuring, judging, feeling all things according to God.

There was a heart that unwaveringly turned to God, and which found its rest and delight in Him. What was that to the Father? and was it less because He was a man? Unspeakably more! For the first time there was one man that in everything met his heart.

Well now we have that very same eternal life. It is true we have it not in ourselves apart from Him, but we have it in Him not less really, nay, *more blessedly*. This is what he starts with. We are privileged to see it as perfect in Himself in the Gospel. Here it is filling the saint with the joy of knowing this very thing. Not apart from Him. God forbid; that would be to do the greatest dishonour to Him.

Now we have it a great deal more blessedly still,—this "*fellowship*," that which answers to His own thoughts and feelings in the midst of ruin. Are we then to be the spreaders of our own fears, our own anxiety, to damp comfort, to depress souls?

Then, beloved, may God be with us in comforting our hearts. There was a time when we could not have appreciated it. Some cannot enter into it. There is a ripeness, a maturity, where it suits; this I think I see in the connection of it with the "fathers," but we should profit by all God has given. In the wreck around, in all that rises up so to burden, so to fill us with anxiety and fear, it is what Christ had in all its perfection; it is what Christ is, for the very life that is in Him is the very life we have now; fellowship with the Father, and with the Son; and all made known that our joy may be full, and surely where the joy is full we do communicate, and we communicate according to that joy.

We strengthen instead of weakening. We turn the heart to Christ, instead of occupying it—with what hinders—with evil things and Satan here. It is not less felt, but there is power above it, and a power that nothing can touch. I think I see a peculiar fitness and sweetness in this to meet our souls in all that surrounds us now, comparing the state of the Church when the apostle was writing with what is the need we find to-day. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full" (1 John, i. 3, 4).

THE SECRET OF POWER.

Please read 2 Kings. ii. 9-12. 2 Cor. iii. 17-19. 2 Cor. iv. 10, 11.

I HAVE read this passage in the Old Testament because it tells the secret of *how we get power*.

There is a difference between what Christ has done *for* us, and what He has done *in* us. A person though only a babe is as perfect in the former respect as the greatest saint that ever existed. That is Christ's work.

But, then, another thing is, what that person is now. Hence, the apostle says to the Galatians, "For whom I travail in birth till Christ be formed in you." That was not the question as to what Christ has done for them. A person may say, I admit all you say, but what I want to know is, "*How do we get the power now?*" The secret is told. I have read it in the Old Testament. "If thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not it shall not be so." (2 Kings ii.)

And I may say, in passing, I commend the reading of the Old Testament to you. We suffer from a great defect if we confine ourselves too much to the reading of the New Testament, and neglect the Old; and no less so, if we confine ourselves to the reading of the Old, and neglect the New. In the former case we become dry and critical, and in the latter legal. We require both. The New Testament is the science of navigation, and the Old is the log-book where you get the account of the history. A man who does not study the Old Testament, does not know where he is historically—does not know what he has learned by the grace of God for himself. There are too ways, so to speak, in which we learn this. First, the Christian like a bird flies at once to the top, and sees everything accomplished; and then he, as it were, comes back, and creeps up every inch of the way. We are not only going to heaven, but we have to understand the nature of the road, and the way there.

Now the point here is, Elijah was to be taken away. That is the first thought. You must get hold of it simply in your heart—Christ is not here.

Elijah was going away, and this causes him to put the question to Elisha—"What shall I do for thee, before I be taken away from thee?" "Give me, said Elisha, a double portion of thy spirit"—a competent portion. Very well, but there is only one way in which ye can get it—"If you see me when I am taken from

thee, it shall be so unto thee; if not, it shall not be so." Now, beloved friends, whether you think it simple or not, that is the only way to get power. "If you see me when I am taken, it shall be unto you, and if not, it shall not be unto you."

Now, mark, Elisha loved Elijah, and, what is more, was extremely devoted to him; and yet, had he not looked at him when taken, he would have had no power. This is as clear as possible. If he had not observed this simple direction, he would have had no power.

Now, there is no question about Elisha's being a true-hearted man—but true-heartedness is not power. I meet many a person true-hearted, but not powerful. You say you are truthful. Quite true, I do not doubt you are, and in earnest, but you have no power. Power is quite another thing. It is simply, the reproduction of Christ in me. It is all right, where Christ is, *there* is power.

Christ comes into a poor, wretched, earthen vessel, as we read in the chapter we looked at just now, 2 Cor. 4, 7, 8, 9. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." Here are four things stated about us—half inside, and half outside. That is what *we* are. At the same time the excellency of the power is in us. But how do we get this power? You say I am a believer, a member of Christ—Yes, certainly. Accepted in the beloved—Yes; but what I say is, it is another thing to have power—The Apostle says, "I have strength for all things in Him who gives me power" (Phil. iv. 13). Power is a peculiar thing. Power is simply, that a poor, weak creature as I am myself, who am a child of God, a member of the body of Christ, that I should be walking here, meeting things here, and acting here, according to the power of Christ.

You find this in Elisha. He gets the secret of what I am dwelling on now. And I will show you in the New Testament, that when the Christian acts in power, that is the secret still. "If you see me taken, it shall be so."

"WITHOUT ME YE CAN DO NOTHING."

All of us could give instances of earnest, true-hearted Christians, who have no power. Why have they no power? They are not looking at Christ where He is. They are not looking at Christ where He is taken.

It would be an interesting study to examine the passages where we

read of the Lord being "taken up." In the first chapter of the Acts, we get it no fewer than four times.

In the 15th John we have a passage which contains the whole truth of which I have been speaking. It says, "Except the branch abide in the vine, it cannot bear fruit," and adds "no more can ye except ye abide in Me—for without me ye can do nothing." That brings out the principle of the secret of power. "Without Me ye can do nothing." It is not "without Me ye *are* nothing." It is not serving there, but really you can *do* nothing.

One says, I want to do something. Well, you cannot do it without Christ. You want to go and preach, or to go and visit the sick. You cannot without Christ. But you say, I am a Christian. I do not doubt you are a Christian. I am not raising that question at all. That is not the point. It is a question of power.

Many a person may be a strong man, but not able to make a watch. Why not? He wants ability to make the watch. He wants the necessary intelligence and *skill*. It is not because he is not a strong man. He does not know how to apply his strength—has not had the necessary education. You require to be taught.

TEACHING IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY FOR EVERYTHING.

The most talented man can never do one single thing aright the first time. I believe it never was known for a man to do the thing rightly at first. Take what you will—take the most skilful driver of horses, when he began to drive, depend upon it he took the reins the wrong way. A man must be taught to do everything first, or he is sure to do it awkwardly. He has not the knack.

And so it is when we come to divine work. You are going to visit that sick person—who is going I want to know? Is it some nice Christian—some kind lady or gentleman? That won't do. It should be Christ. And now just think of the gravity of Christ's doing it. If you are going for Him, you must be in unison with Him about it. The very fact of the importance of the work, and the danger of your misrepresenting Him who does it, shows your need—and that is the secret—"Without Me ye can do nothing." Neglect of this is the secret of all the failure. It is the cause in every

instance. It is the cause of all our failures in service. I will sit lowest here if you like, but I repeat it, *that* is the cause of all failure. It is not that the motive is bad. You say I am well inclined. Inclination is not power—This is the only secret of power "to see Christ *taken up*."

WRITTEN IN GLORY.

THE Apostle is contrasting the law with Christ in 2 Cor. chap. iii. He says the law comes from glory, and was written upon tables of stone, and now Christ is come from glory too, and must be written upon the fleshy tables of the heart. The law was written in glory, and of course Christ must be. The law was written in glory upon tables of stone, and Christ the greater thing which is the ministration of righteousness, not written in stone, but upon the fleshy tables of the heart in glory. I say it affectionately, dear friends, you cannot get the impression of Christ but in the sphere where Christ is, and that is the real cause of the little knowledge of what Christ is practically. You have not been conversant with Christ in the sphere where He is. Here the tables were written in glory, and if the ministry of condemnation which is annulled was in glory, how much more shall the ministration of righteousness excel in glory. It must be in glory that Christ must be written upon the fleshy tables of your heart.

I do not want to distress any one, but I want to account for it. You say, "why have I so little of Christ about me?" The simple answer to the question is this—"You are not receiving the impression of Christ in the only place where you can receive the impression." I must go where the person is to get an impression from the person. We cannot know Christ except where He is. It is as simple as possible, but the argument the Apostle uses is this:—The law, which is the demand for righteousness, was from glory, then how much more the ministration of righteousness from glory. You have Christ in the glory—you have a man in the glory of God now.

When "the glory" retired from Israel, as we see in Ezekiel—driven away from the earth, for men actually drove it away, in the brightest spot in the retiring "glory" was the figure of a man. Thus when God sent one—His Son—came as a child into the world, "the glory of God" returned. It never returned to earth till then (Luke ii). Then it re-

turned, as we are there told, "And, Lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is *Christ the Lord.*"

Now you get a man who meets all the mind of God, first in private life, then in public—I am only cursorily going over the history just to show you where you are—Here was a perfect man who has met the demands of the law in perfect righteousness. He has shown Himself perfect, both in private, and in public life. Nevertheless, rejected of men, John the Baptist put to death, He goes on to the Mount of transfiguration, and we see a man perfectly righteous in the glory.

From this point the Lord descends, and prepares for the judgment upon man, because of unrighteousness, and then under the weight of the judgment of God, He glorified him. When Jesus went out, He said, in John xiii., "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him."

He is raised from the dead, and now there is a *man in the glory*. He met all the righteous demands of God, not only in Himself personally, but on account of me; and therefore I have now a Saviour in the glory. I have got a Saviour, not a law now, but a Saviour in the glory. That is exactly the difference. This was what so astonished Saul of Tarsus. He had gloried in the law, but now he sees a Saviour in the glory.

I say, then, to every Christian, if "the glory" is not the easiest place for your soul, even when you fail, if the glory of God, the brightness of His own personal glory, is not the easiest place for your soul, you have not yet found, and you have not a Saviour in the glory. Where would a child feel happiest and safest? By the side of his father and his mother. And where should I feel happiest, and most secure. By the side of my Saviour and my Lord.

ACQUIRING CHRIST.

First, how we *acquire Christ*; and Secondly, How we *express Christ*.

I think, it is often the case with many of us, that we know a great

deal more of the Lord than we can shew. Else, why do we feel so distressed when we have not acted rightly? Why, we know more of the Lord than we express, but have not been able to act up to it. How is this? Why, there is something the matter—something wrong. You see in 2 Corinthians iii. the secret of acquiring Christ. I have a Saviour in the glory of God, and it is the easiest place for my soul if I belong to Him. I will shew you presently how a man finds it so, and how a man walks in the grace of God. "The Lord is that spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"—Liberty, wherever there is a good thing to do. I have liberty to go wherever there is good, I do not want to go where there is bad. Then, "But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." You have got an object, and you take in the object because you have a mirror. The Lord is there, and we behold Him with unveiled face. There is no veil upon His face, nor on ours—and you go in and look upon Him. You say that is very simple. Yes, it is all very simple if you practise it. Try it, and see what you will be. "If you see me, it shall be so unto you, and if not, it shall not be." It is the same principle. And it was then we first came to Christ—we looked at Him. So with the brazen serpent—they looked and were healed. So with the thief on the cross. He looked—He did nothing else—looked to the man that had done nothing amiss.

Beloved friends, I say it distinctly, there is a greater light in this place to-night than the light of the sun, and by that light I see Jesus more clearly on the throne of God, than I see any of you. Thank God for that light. The God of this world tries to blind the eyes of them that believe not "lest the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." It is the illumination—the expression of the divine satisfaction in the accomplished work of Christ.

The glory is the expression of the divine satisfaction in Christ. But the Apostle says it shines out from us.

Then we must have got it in us if it shines out. But how do I grow in this? "*Beholding with unveiled face,*" I catch the image, and I am formed into the same image. Beholding the Lord's glory, we are transformed—not changed—into the same image of glory. The glory now

claims me. At mount Sinai, man could not get near it. Now it claims me. What does it do? It draws me to the Saviour—"from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord," There you acquire Christ, and most blessed it is. I am sure I trust you know what it is to sit alone with the Lord gazing upon Him, taken up with the glory of His person—and there is no expressing Him without it. The more I know of Him, the more I am able to express Him.

It is like a man standing on the sea-shore, gazing on the sun. He sees it there, but he gets on higher land, and the sight increases. He goes on a mountain, and the object grows larger still. He ascends one yet higher, till at length he sees nothing but the sun.

And so it is as to Christ: the higher I go, the more immense I see the One I have to do with. And this is the secret. I am looking at Him—beholding Him. The first blessing I got came by looking at Him, and every blessing comes in that way. But how do I know I am looking at Him? Because I am not looking at anything else. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where CHRIST sitteth on the right hand of God."

People often think this so very simple. It is very simple, but I say, let me see you practically maintaining it, then it will throw you on dependence on Him, and that is what faith is.

What hinders souls is, that they get off this ground. You go in like Paul perhaps into the third heaven, and very happy you come out, but some one meets you and says something disagreeable to you, and you reply with something naughty, and you say, I wish I had not come out. I was so very happy, and now I am come out it is all wrong. What is the explanation? You were right in acquiring Christ, but failed in expressing Him. And why? You do not walk in faith. You were trusting to your enjoyment, instead of walking in faith. And how many have damaged the truth after enjoying, and talking of their enjoyment of it, by then going home, and failing in one of the most common details of life. This comes from trusting to your enjoyment, and not to the Lord—not walking in faith. The Apostle Paul comes out of the third heaven, but the Lord says, you must depend on me. You must not boast about these wonderful things you have seen there—you must go down, and be nothing. The

principle is the same all through. I do not dwell upon it further. He took the poor man up, and set him upon His own beast. You must be carried all the way by Christ. Do not say you must get along by your own power. If you think to go on your own legs, you will come down. The principle is, the power of Christ upon me. Thus the Apostle learns in that lesson the power of Christ resting upon him. You see in heaven, it was the enjoyment he had, but now he comes down into the world, it is the power of Christ resting on him. That tells you the secret. You say, I have been very happy in the Lord, but going out into the cold world, you button your coat around you, for you feel there is an enemy outside, and so you must get ready for him. It is the principle of the Ephesians. In the first chapter, the power used against Satan, for bringing me up to God, and turning it round, I must bring that same power to bear upon the enemy—chap. vi. "*Be strong in the Lord, and the power of His might.*"

HAVING CHRIST ESSENTIAL TO LIVING CHRIST.

For a person to live Christ, he must have Him. How can a person live Christ if he has not got Him? You cannot express more of Christ than is in you. That is the truth. You can never go beyond what you know. You may use all the adjectives in the dictionary, but you cannot get beyond it. Some people abound in the use of adjectives, but it is of no use, for they only qualify their nouns, and the noun is the idea.

And you never bring a person beyond where you are yourself. You may give them the desire to go further. You may awaken the desire, and if you are a minister, then they will leave you. That is the way people leave off going to churches. Their ministers awaken desires which they cannot meet, then they go somewhere else. And that is the right principle.

The point is, to be where the Lord is, and it is important to get hold of it simply. The Apostle's desire, as expressed in Philippians, was, "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ." But then he had acquired Him. I will explain this a little, and then pass on.

I will give you one passage to keep simply before you in the 14th Matt. It is Peter walking on the water, and

what he wants is power to do that. Christ's rejection is come in—He goes to the wilderness—the multitude follows Him there, and He goes on in his marvellous manner feeding people in spite of the power, and by the power of death, He feeds them on the earth. But there is another thing; He walks on the water. What is the answer to that? Why, he is above it. He allows things to go on as they are, but He is calm. He walks on it. Wars and rumours of wars now, but where is Christ? Above all. "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." Well, then, I say what will I do now? What says Peter when he sees the Lord? "If it be Thou, bid me come to thee on the water." And he came down from the ship. You have the waters now—the waves are here—the whole thing acted upon, and Christ above it all. If I say, I will leave the ship, where am I to go to? I will go on the waters with Jesus. What is the secret of this power? The inclination for it? The courage for it? No, the *faith*. "Bid me come to thee." Now the secret of the power comes out. Jesus said "Come," and Peter went down and walked on the water to go to Jesus. And here he found out what this power was. While walking on the crest of the wave to go to Jesus, where was his eye? How did he get the power? In the same way as Elisha. He saw the Lord above the waters, the figure of his resurrection, "far above all principality and power." He is the exalted Jesus. My eyes are upon the exalted man. Where is your eye? If my eye is upon Him, I am equal to anything, and everything. To walk upon the water? Yes.

What is the cause of the declension of the Church is visible means—that is the hindrance. Where there is the most visible means, there God is showing that there is no power. Nebuchadnezzar and Darius had visible means, but neither the one nor the other had the power. The poor children of the captivity had the power. The one king had the fire, the most powerful of material forces, and the other the lions, the strongest of beasts, but neither the one nor the other could get the mastery of these poor captives.

People talk so much of "means." There are plenty of means, but they have not power. The secret of Peter's power is that his eye is upon Jesus. But now he misses the

power. How is this? He sees the wind boisterous, and the power is gone. Is not that the case with you sometimes in your domestic circumstances? Do not you look at the things that trouble you? And do you get great help by doing so? Do you not get more confounded? But you turn your eye from circumstances to the Lord, do not you get a wonderful sense of support and strength to get above it?

Let me tell you, beloved friends, the mistake that souls make, and I have made it too. You think if you get into any difficulty or trouble, God will change the circumstances. No, God will make you superior to the circumstances. And which is the better? Would you be superior to them, or inferior? If the latter, God must come in. He says, "I am not going to take away that thorn from you, but I will bring you up to it. My grace is sufficient for thee?" That is the wonderful position I see Paul in. A prisoner, and yet able to say what all the emperors of the world would not say, "I have strength for all things in *Him who gives me power.*" Beloved friends, it is a most magnificent thing to be a true saint here! Peter turned to look at the things around him, and it was all over with him. Listen to people—listen to myself—listen to rumours—think about the things around you—and what do you get by it? Do you get out of it? I look at the Lord—the Lord who is above everything, and what is the result? I am above everything too. You have to come to this real comfort. I have known it for myself.

But suppose everything does go wrong, and the crash comes, Well, the Lord will come. What an immense comfort that is! You are walking on the water now. Now you have brought Christ in, you see perfectly.

WE HAVE TO DO WITH HIM- SELF TO BE AS HE WAS.

BUT mark, beloved friends, you have to do with *Himself*; and, when you have to do with Himself, He will impart power to you.

I cannot tell how He actually presents Himself, but the moment I look to Christ, I see Him in the very aspect I want to be in. To give you an example. When the Lord was in the ship in the storm, He was asleep. The disciples were in trouble on account of the storm, and they see the Lord asleep. If they had had sense, what would they have done? Have gone to sleep too.

But they did the worst thing they could, when they awoke Him, for He put them all to sleep in a great calm. I get the moral impression of Christ, and the moral ability from Christ, to carry out the very impression He makes.

Let me just give another practical example of it in Stephen, in the 7th of Acts. There you get more, the principle. In the 55th verse, "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven." It is of immense importance where your eye is. You will find if your eye is turned to things down here, you have no power for anything. But here, Stephen is a pattern man. He inaugurates a new order of things. Heaven is opened to him. "Being full of the Holy Ghost, he looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God and Jesus." And he comes down with the expression of Christ on him, But he acquires Him first, and then he expresses Him. Now he has got his look, he comes out in that sense as a soldier well-drilled, up to every evolution, every exercise—comes out now to battle. He has not now to learn his steps. He has learned them all. If he had not learned them, he would fail in the day of battle. But, now, what is the preparation required? The preparation is, I have to do with Jesus in the place where Jesus is.

I remember well a sister saying to me once, she had been in a storm at sea, and at the time she was thinking of Jesus asleep in the storm. I said, that is not the way to look at Jesus. If you had been looking at Him where He *is*, He would have made you like what He *was* in the storm. You must get your connection with Jesus where He *is*. How do I get skill to be as Jesus was here? Let me give you one single statement to keep definitely in your souls,—You must see Him where He *is*, to be like Him where He *was*. You must see Him where He *is*: Not be looking at Him where He *was*.

Many a person is greatly hindered by merely studying Jesus in the gospels, as if Christ was to be his pattern, as He is depicted there. Morally He was a pattern; but it is not in the gospels I am to be occupied with Him. I must be educated. I must get power. I am indeed to be like Jesus where He was, but I am in conscious connection with Him where He *is*, and He enables me to act as He would have acted in this scene. With many persons there is at the bottom a deal of what I call a morally thinking you can imitate

Him. You can never imitate Him. You can *be* Christ, but you cannot *imitate* Him. Imitation implies that you have the ability to be like Him. I *am* Christ. I have Christ. If you live Christ, you must have Him. "Without me ye can do nothing." Get the eye off Christ, and you will fail. Take a case. Go to visit a sick person. What are you looking at now? You say I have my eye upon the Lord. That is right; and very likely the Lord will come out, and make the thing perfect.

THE DAISY AND THE SUN.

You see a person nervous and anxious sometimes. He says, the only thing I feel I can do now, is to get my eye upon the Lord. It is not that I do anything. It is the sense of dependence upon Him.

Let me illustrate this. It is like a flower and the sun. Take a little daisy. It has not opened to-day. What is the reason? There is no sun. The daisy won't come out, for there is no sun. Take the finest, the most expanded flower you ever saw, and put a cover on it, and hide it from the sun, and you will wither it up. Its dependence is upon the sun.

Many a saint is like a plant you sometimes find in the garden-house with a long taper stalk working its way out at the door or window. There is no real development about him. It is not a question of root. There is a difference between root and flower, and between root and fruit. You have the root, but no fruit. You must have blossom before the fruit, and the reason you have not got blossom, is that you have not got *sun*. Look at any plant you like, and if it has not got sun, it is flowerless. Many a Christian is like the stalk travelling out of the garden-house to get light from the sun. No flower can do without the light of the sun, and no Christian can do without the light of Christ.

I often ask myself, have I had the glory of Christ shining upon me this morning? The Israelites did not want to go to the baker's shop for the manna. They gathered it in the morning, before the sun was up. Before the influences of the day, the soul gets the sense of what Christ is, for a provision for it. The soul sees in the light of the glory of that blessed presence all he wants, and no where else. Do you think that a sorrowful thing? It is the most joyful thing a soul can see? "Without me ye can do nothing."

I say—"Thank God!"

THE DYING OF JESUS.

"I BEAR about in my body the dying of the Lord Jesus." It is not up there. If I look up to the glory I get it. I say I have *Him* now. But you say it does not come out. What is the reason? The flesh is the difficulty, and the glory won't do to set aside the flesh. You must bring in Christ's death. You must mortify it "always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus." He gives us the cross to open the way to the glory. I must use the cross to be the expression of Christ on earth. I can tell you what prevents the expression of Christ. The very thing that gratifies you most, that is the thing that hinders.

Mark the latter part of the verse—"that the life also of Jesus," (not the Lord Jesus) "may be manifested in our body"—In our body. The life is there, but I want it to be seen outside. I say to a coachman on a dark night, Have you got your lamps? Yes, he says. Are the candles good? Oh, yes, the best that can be got. Well, what is the state of the glasses? Oh, I quite forgot to clean them. Then, I say, your lamps are not worth a farthing. The light is there, but no one will see it because the glasses are dirty. The light is there, but it has to come through the glasses, and cannot because of the dirt.

I use a word well known to some of you, though perhaps not to all—the reason why the light does not come out is, that your body is "opaque." I was speaking on this subject the other day in the country, and a countryman said, when we want a light, we take a large turnip, and scrape it till it is so thin that the light can shine through it. That is just what you want:—No "flesh" in your body, and then your body will let out the light. "Always bearing about in the body, the dying of Jesus."

You say how am I to know the dark thing hindering. Have you a great taste for music, or for drawing? Yes, you say, I have quite a passion for it. Then, I say, take care, that is black. That will hinder the light. You say, why there is no great harm in it. It is not a question of harm. It hinders the expression of Christ the light. You do not allow yourself to become an unhindered vehicle of grace. You say, I must do my work. Certainly, work never does harm. It is care and absorption through nature that does harm. Work is the very thing given to man, and he will never do

well without it, it is the care that does the mischief. Care is the doubtful issue of your work. It is not work that hinders. That is no excuse. There is nothing so useful for a man as labour. "He brought down their soul with labour." No man has his health if he is not a labouring man. A working man is a true man, whether it is for the Lord or not. Let no person talk to me, and excuse himself by saying, "I must do my business." The duties of life are the banks of the river within which you ought to flow on. After mingling in the bustle of a godless world, when I get home, there should be the "ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God, of great price." What a wonderful thing that is. *There* is something to teach me what God is. The duties of life are the very banks through which that river shall flow. If the river had not banks, where would it be? I am not answerable for people if they make, what I call canals,—make ways for themselves. You never saw a canal without a dry dock. That is not God's way. That is a canal that you make for yourself to ride on.

But as an actual force, what is to hinder me? The hindrance is whatever is self-gratification—that will bar the expression of that which is Christ.

I look at a man like Stephen. He is the expression of Christ. He is under the cross—under death. Flesh gets nothing. There is no self-gratification to hinder him, and then he comes out as a beautiful expression of the divine.

ALWAYS DELIVERED UNTO DEATH.

WE should live here "always delivered unto death." God is extremely gentle with us, beloved. He will never leave us to say He neglected or overlooked us. But, if He does not find you tractable—if He finds you are like a self-willed horse—you *will* have your own way, you *wont* go. Well, He says, I can't make any hand of him—I will turn him out to grass. He *wont* use you, but *leave* you just to feed—and some people say perhaps he has a fine time of it. I do not think so. He will be brought in again, some day, and the collar will be put on again, and it will gall all the harder for having been off so long. What the Lord does when He sees us willing to do anything is, He comes in and helps us.

You should live "always delivered

to death." Then all is easy. Suppose a person says, I will give up my ornaments, and such like. I have no doubt the Lord comes in and helps you in that way. But where there is a strong desire to retain the thing, He allows it to go on till circumstances bring the soul into the right place.

Just like Paul. Paul was full of Jerusalem. This was a real and true thing in one sense, and the Lord allows it to go on, and by and by, in Philippians, we find Paul in his right place. He says, I am like a balloon in a string. All I desire is "to depart, and be with Christ." Nothing can draw him here now—not even Jerusalem. The Lord brought in the pressure of circumstances, and he says, "we are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake." And the Lord does not remove the pressure. As a man sometimes says of a pony, I never keep the saddle off him. He is a tractable, useful animal, I have always work for him. That is exactly what the Lord says of us, when we can say with Paul, "We, who live, are always delivered unto death." I will never take the pressure off you. I will always keep the pressure on you, because you turn it to some account; now, what people are looking for, are fine easy times—and that is really to be out to grass. I do not know if any of you are looking for easy times here, instead of saying, I am in the world, and Christ is gone away, and because Christ is gone away, what are you doing now? I say my eye is upon Him where He is.

CLOTHES RENT,

AND THE BITTER WATERS SWEETENED.

WHAT was the first thing Elisha did when he got the power? Many people cannot answer this question. He took up his own clothes, and tore them into two pieces. Did he not take up Elijah's first? No, he first took up his own—the old thing. The other is the second thing we have to do—to express Christ; and if I express Christ, it is because He is in me. I am not to look now for self-gratification to work in me, but that this body might be so given up that there might not be any hindrance for the life of Jesus to come out in me, whether in the family, in private life, or in business in public. Wherever I am, there should the Lord be seen. In all my circumstances I am to bring the Lord in, and He will sweeten every bitter cup.

What was it Israel found after

they had got across the Red Sea? They came to Marah, and found the waters bitter. The Lord says I will give you a cure, bring the tree into the waters and they will be sweet. Have you got rid of all your selfishness yet? Instead of finding fault with the ways of God always, you might be always praising Him for the sweetness of the water, instead of complaining of the bitterness. What is the cause of the change? Simply that you have brought Christ in. "The tree" is there. That has got rid of the bitterness, and that is not resignation. Resignation is drinking the bitter waters with a heroic spirit. That is resignation. Drinking sweet water is not resignation. There is no heroism about it. It is with nothing but thankfulness we drink the sweet waters. The water is made sweet because the self-gratification is gone. The very same process that gets rid of the bitterness, is the very same process that gets rid of the selfishness, that hinders the grace of Christ from shining out from you. It is in you therefore the Apostle can go on in this same chapter and say, "If our outward man perish, the inward is renewed day by day." *Thus it is that the body becomes a lamp here.*

PROPITIATION AND SUBSTITUTION. *

MY intercourse with saints, and especially with those who preach, has led me to discover that a good deal of obscurity in their manner of putting the Gospel, and I may add a good deal of Arminian and Calvinistic controversy, arises from not distinguishing propitiation and substitution. I am not anxious about the words, but about the practical distinction, which is very simple and I think of moment. I say the words, because in propitiation, in a certain sense, Christ stood in our stead. Still there is a very real difference in Scripture.

This difference is clearly marked in the offerings of the great day of atonement. Aaron slew the bullock, and the goat which was called the Lord's lot, and sprinkled the blood on and before the mercy-seat and on the altar. The blood was presented to

* The attention of believers abroad who are perplexed about the *atonement*, is specially called to the consideration of the distinction herein given, in the hope that it may help to clear their minds a little, on this important subject. The whole matter is in a nutshell, and is settled at once if this scriptural distinction between *propitiation* and *substitution* be received in the grace and power of the Holy Ghost.—Ed.

God, whose holy presence had been dishonoured and offended by sin. So Christ has perfectly glorified God in the place of sin, by His perfect obedience and love to His Father in His being made sin who knew no sin. God's majesty, righteousness, love, truth, all that He is, was glorified in the work wrought by Christ, and of this the blood was witness in the holy place itself. Our sins gave occasion to it, but God Himself was glorified in it. Hence the testimony can go out to all the world that God is more than satisfied, glorified, and whoever comes by that blood is freely, fully, received of God and to God. But there was no confession of sins on the head of this goat; it was about sin by reason of Israel's sinfulness, but it was simply blood offered to God; sin had been dealt with in judgment according to God's glory, yea, to the full glorifying of God, for never was His majesty, love, and hatred of sin so seen. God could shine out in favour to the returning sinner according to what He was; yea, in the infiniteness of His love, beseech men to return.

But besides this there was personal guilt, positive personal sins for which Israel was responsible, and men are responsible, according to what is righteously required from each. On the great day of atonement, the high priest confessed the people's sins on the scape-goat, laying both his hands on its head; the personal sins were transferred to the goat by one who represented all the people, and they were gone for ever, never found again.

Now this is another thing. Christ is both high priest and victim, and has confessed all the sins of His people as His own, borne our sins in His own body on the tree. The two goats are but one Christ, but there is the double aspect of His sacrifice, (1) Godward, and (2) bearing our sins. The blood is the witness of the accomplishment of all, and He is entered in not without blood. He is the propitiation for our sins. But in this aspect the world comes in too. He is the propitiation for the whole world. All has been done that is needed. His blood is available for the vilest, whoever he may be. Hence the gospel to the world says, "Whosoever will let him come." In this aspect we may say Christ died for all, gave Himself a ransom for all (an ἀντίλυτρον περὶ πάντων,) an adequate and available sacrifice for sin, for whoever would come.

But when I come to bearing sins the language is uniformly different. He bore our sins, He bore the sins of many. "All" is carefully abstained from. I say carefully, because

in Romans v. 18, 19, the difference is carefully made. The first, "our sins," is the language of faith, left open indeed to any one who can use it, but used and to be used only by faith. The believing remnant of Israel may use it, including the blessing of the nations, for He died for that nation; Christians use it in faith, for all that have faith to use it. The second "many" restricts it from all, but generally has the force of *the many*; the all (οἱ πολλοί) as contrasted with a head or leaders, the mass in connection with them. Adam's οἱ πολλοί (all) were in result all, but all as in connection with him. Christ's οἱ πολλοί (all) those connected with Him. But it will never be found in Scripture that Christ bore the sins of all. Had He done so they never could be mentioned again, nor men judged according to their works. That Christ died for all is, as we have seen, often said. Hence I go with His death to the world as their ground and only ground of approach, with the love shown in it. When a man believes, I can say, "Now I have more to tell you, Christ has borne every one of your sins, they never can be mentioned again." If we look at the difference of Arminian and Calvinistic preaching, we shall see the bearing of this at once; the Arminians take up Christ's dying for all, and generally they connect the bearing of sins with it, and all is confusion as to the efficacy and effectualness of Christ's bearing "our sins," and they deny any special work for His people. They say if God loved all He cannot love some particularly; and an uncertain salvation is the result, and man often exalted. Thus the scapegoat is practically set aside.

The hyper-Calvinist holds Christ's bearing the sins of His people so that they are effectually saved, but he sees nothing else. He will say, if Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it, there can be no real love for anything else, and denies Christ's dying for all, and the distinctive character of *propitiation*, and the blood on the mercy-seat. He sees nothing but *substitution*.

The truth is, Christ is said to love "the Church," (never "the world,") that is a love of special relationship. God is never said to love "the Church," but "the world." That is divine goodness, what is in the nature of God (not His purpose), and His glory is the real end of all. But I do not dwell on this, I only point out the confusion of propitiation and substitution as necessarily

making confusion in the Gospel, enfeebling the address to the world, or weakening the security of the believer, and in every respect giving uncertainty to the announcement of the truth. I believe earnestness after souls, and preaching Christ with love to Him, will be blessed where there is little clearness, and is more important than great exactitude of statement. Still it is a comfort to the preacher to have it clear, even if not thinking about it at the moment; and when building up afterwards, the solidness of the foundation is of the greatest moment.

NOTICE.—We have received an extended paper on "SCRIPTURAL UNITY AND UNION" from J. N. D., which we have put into an extra sheet, and to which we would now call the attention of our readers. It consists of a full examination and review of Dr. A. Moody Stuart's Sermon before the Free Church General Assembly in May, called, "Jesus Christ, the Bond of the Holy Universe;" comparing his statements with the Holy Scriptures, and thereby demonstrating their unscripturalness, while the true Scriptural doctrine on Unity and Union is fully represented. It is a very important paper. (Twelve Copies sent post free for One Shilling).

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