

CHRISTIAN TESTIMONY.

(2 TIM. i. 8 ; 1 COR. ii. 1.)

EDITED BY

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GOD HIMSELF THE OBJECT OF THE SOUL.

ROM. v. 1-11.

THE truth in this chapter goes further than that in the eighth. It is, as men say, more objective ; that is, not the work within the soul by which we enter into the enjoyment of redemption, as the eighth chapter so blessedly describes ; but God Himself is before us throughout as the object of our souls. In the eighth chapter, for instance, we have the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, making me free from the law of sin and death—looking at the effect upon our hearts. *Here* we have peace with God so that the blessing is looked at in reference to Him. It is in virtue of what He is that there has been redemption wrought. It is not presented here as making me free by the Spirit of Christ in my soul, but the total putting away of sin in God's sight. We have, truly, the privileged place of the christian in these first verses of the fifth chapter, but they speak of God who has been the source of the blessing all through, rather than of its effects on our hearts.

Now I can understand that souls would turn more to the eighth chapter, and am not finding fault with it. It is indeed the process which must go on in the soul that it may really know the privileged place of a christian ; but it is a higher thing to have God before us as the object of our souls. This is what will be our eternal blessedness. It will not be our joy that will be occupying us there, we shall have no need to think of self, for every thing will be perfect. We shall have nothing to desire, and our object will be God Himself. There is not this in the eighth chapter, it is what meets *our* need.

This is all right and blessed in itself, but after all not the highest thing.

There is the Spirit of Christ within, the spirit of adoption, and God for us; and, as has been often said, it begins with "no condemnation," and ends with "no separation." Most blessed truth ! Still it occupies the heart with what it has got, more than with what God is. Now we like to be occupied with self, it is natural to us all. If a person is suffering, he will talk to you by the hour of his pains, not that he likes the pains, but he talks to you about them because it is about himself, and the same with pleasure, because he has been enjoying it. We see this occupation with one's self in souls just delivered. It is their joy and their deliverance that occupies their minds, and I am not finding fault with this.

If I were turning now to the process that must go on in your soul before you can have God as the object of your heart, I should turn to the 7th and 8th chapters to bring this process out. We must all pass through this process, and the deeper the better. There is no settled peace with God till the sinner has been thus exercised, and has learned not only what he has done, but as in the 7th what he is. In the 5th chapter as far as the eleventh verse it is sins—the other half takes up what man is, that is, not what he has done, but what he is in himself. In the beginning of the epistle the Apostle speaks of sins, first in the Gentiles and then in the Jews, and in the 3rd chapter we get redemption by blood from these sins; but there is more than this to be learned. I must come to the end of flesh before God, not in conflict, for that remains, (Gal. vi.) but before I can get peace with God. I must be delivered from this state of a man in the flesh, responsible to God, and when I have come to the end of it as to all hope in it, and to all expectation of getting any good out of it, I get delivered by another, by being *in Christ*.

I find there is no condemnation. I am not any longer in

the flesh before God, but in Christ. It is getting rid of flesh, not by passing over sin and making light of it, but by dying to that condition with Christ, and rising out of it into another in Him. Now this judgment of what *sin* is in the soul, is what is called experience. I do not speak of conviction of having committed sins as experience, that is the first work, when divine light enters the conscience; but the vii. of Romans is the experience through the work of the Spirit within, not of what a man has done, but of what he is. And he gets delivered by reckoning himself dead, because Christ has died, so that he can say, being in Christ, "There is no condemnation."

In convincing a man of sins, God takes up a man's conscience as a matter of fact. He lets His light into the soul and shews what has been going on there, like the vision of God to the Prophet, when He commanded him to dig into the walls of the temple, and to go in, and there he saw all the idols and abominations of the house of Israel portrayed upon the wall round about. When God convinces a soul of what it has been, it is because He is there and casts His light upon everything that soul has done. How vivid then does the memory become! What a number of things long forgotten rise up before the mind. Now that is all guilt, and this conviction of guilt is where God begins with a soul. Just as He did with the woman of Samaria, telling her all things that ever she did, so that she could say to others she had found the Messiah, for He had told her all things that ever she did. This is the first witness that He is the Christ, because He can enter the heart and shew us, as a wonderful recollector, all that we have done.

Now is there any honesty in trying to keep up a good character and all the time to have a guilty conscience. One may have a good character before men, and may even be outwardly a worshipper of God, but if God should come in and

His voice be heard there would be no difference between that soul and Adam, who fled to hide himself amongst the trees of the garden. Suppose the world was to have every thing told about every one, how would the world get on? I do not say that any good would come of such disclosures, but this is what the world is in God's sight, and this is what the presence of Christ in it brought out. The truth came by Him,—*grace* too. But He was the truth, and revealed everything. He *is* the truth still, but I am speaking of His manifestation on earth. It is not merely a commandment, but I know a person who is the thing, the truth itself. The law is only a rule, it is not the truth itself, but commandments about what men ought to be, and that is necessarily condemnation. But now take the Beatitudes—He says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Well, He was poor in spirit, and so with all of them. He was what He taught, so that in Christ I have *the* thing, as well as hear about it. Everything is brought completely out—what God is and what man is, and besides being the Truth, *grace* came by Him. He reveals the sin as in the woman of Samaria, but talks to her of the gift of God, as if she were as pure as an angel.

All the sin is brought out by this Blessed One, but I see God above it in goodness. Oh! what a comfort this is to the heart. I learn it by the Holy One who walked up and down in this world. I know Him. He tells me what He is. I have not to ask, where is He? like Job (xxiii). As He said to the blind man in John ix. "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" and he replied, "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?" He saith, "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee."

This we see all through the Word in those souls the Lord was dealing with; bringing out before the soul what God is and then saying, "I that speak to thee am He."—I am He that has found out all that is in your heart, not as a Judge

but as a Saviour. But blessed as this is to have God dealing about sin in this manner, this is not all. There must be a work to put the sin away, and to clear the conscience, and so in the last verse of the fourth chapter we have Him delivered for our offences (speaking here of believers). It is what God has wrought in Christ so that "having been justified by faith, we have peace with God." Thus the conscience is cleared, and in God's sight too. We want both. It is not enough that there should be this perfect putting away of sin in God's sight, you must have it in your conscience too, or you cannot walk with God.

(To be continued.)

"DEAD TO THE LAW."

GAL. II. 19, 20.

WHAT a deliverance for us that we are not under the law but under grace! Peace or liberty there is none for a soul under law. So far from it, the testimony is that, "as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." A child of God under the curse—what a contradiction it would be! Impossible, altogether impossible for us to have had the relationship and the affections of children if God had left us beneath the power and authority of the law! It is of the highest importance that we should be clear about this. Judaizing teachers are as little wanting now as when this Epistle was written; and our foolish hearts alas, are as ready to turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, as the Israelites were to go back in heart to the flesh pots and the hard bondage of Egypt.

Yet the Word of God gives no uncertain sound. It leaves no doubt upon the mind of a simple child of God, whatever difficulties reason or theology may find. That the law keeps

a soul in bondage and that God has called us to liberty, the simple believer *knows* as taught of God. He hears God say, "Ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ," and he rejoices for the consolation. He hears God say, "cast out the bondwoman and her son." He does not reason but obeys.

This does no dishonour to the law. "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." Woe to him who despises it. "We know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully." But it is not a lawful use of it to put the christian under it, for the Scripture says, "Ye are *not* under the law," and to make it the rule of his life is to dishonour both the law of God, and the standing of the child of God. It degrades the son to the place of servant and robs the law of its absolute authority, for how shall it curse whom God hath not cursed? Yet "as many as are *of the works of the law* are under the curse." Whether born again or unregenerate, they are "under the curse;" whether they seek to attain righteousness or to secure holiness of walk, "as many as are *OF the works of the law* are under the curse."

Thank God! He has delivered us. He has magnified the law, maintained its authority and yet done "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh." "I, through the law," says the Apostle, "am dead to the law." Its righteous and paramount authority is manifested in and by my entire deliverance from it. Its holiness and majesty, its righteous claims and divine authority were too great to allow me longer to live. I died beneath the righteous judgment of God—a judgment executed not in my own person but in Christ—and by the law, I am dead to the law. Its utmost penalty having fallen upon me in the death of Christ, I am free. I live no longer in the sphere of its authority. If I have another life, and thank God, I have, I have nevertheless lost the life which was forfeited to the judgment of God

by sin; I am dead. It was in that life that I was subject to the law,* and that life I lost by the just action of the law upon me. I am therefore dead to it, and dead to it by its own unimpaired authority and by its righteous action. The law has not lost its authority, but I have lost my life beneath and by that very authority—the life of sin and rebellion I used to live when I was in the flesh.

"The law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth." But the christian is dead (Col. ii. 20; iii. 3). We are "become dead to the law by the body of Christ." (Rom. vii. 4.) Its dominion then has ceased, not by the law dying or losing its authority, but by the death of those who violated it. This death has come upon us not in our own persons—it would have been perdition—but in the death of Christ. It is there and thus that we have "died to that wherein we were holden." (Rom. vii. 6, R.V.)

The practical importance of this entire deliverance from the law by our death to it can scarcely be overrated.

(1.) It is a deliverance according to righteousness. A righteous law has condemned the sinner. Its sentence has not been revoked, nor passed over, but *executed*. The believer has died beneath it. What more can be required in righteousness. If a *new* life is given in grace, it is grace that reigns through righteousness. But the empire of law has ceased with the life over which it reigned.

(2.) It is a deliverance according to holiness and that in a very practical way. For not only has the sentence of death been executed in Christ's death but it has been wrought in the conscience of the believer. Rom. vii. 7-24 is very explicit as to this. Sin is in the soul whether it be under the law or

*Gentiles were never put under the law by God in a direct way. This, however, does not affect the question before us. We have all been under the law practically. Nor is there any other measure of what God requires of man if he is to stand well with Him in the flesh. The law applies to man in the flesh (never to "a man in Christ,") whether he be a Jew, formally under it by God's command, or whether he be a Gentile not altogether lawless.

be lawless. When the law is brought to bear upon the conscience sin is discovered. Every movement of it becomes transgression. The law does not give power against sin; it does not even help the renewed man to keep from transgression. Nay, without law there would be no transgression though sin is ever there. Moreover, when that which the man loves is forbidden, the energy of his nature is stirred to fulfil its own desires. "Sin taking occasion by the commandment wrought in me all manner of concupiscence." This is terrible for the renewed man. In the struggle which ensues he is always worsted, always beaten. He has not the Holy Ghost and therefore there is no power. Sin on the contrary is there in full force. It takes occasion by the commandment, deceives the man and slays him. The commandment which would have been to life ("Do this and thou shalt live"), had there been power to do it, turns to death. It condemns the sinner; it brings home to him the exceeding sinfulness of sin; it shews his helplessness to go out from under the power of sin. The hatred of sin may be there: it is there in the renewed man and the delight in the law of God, for God has wrought it. *But until DEATH sets the soul free* (and there is no other way of escape) *it is in hopeless bondage.* Until then the bitter cry is wrung from the despairing soul, "O wretched man that I am!" Until then the Spirit of God cannot take up His abode there nor give the ransomed spirit its new place in a risen Christ. But when death has done its work and is wrought in the conscience, then "*who shall deliver me?*" finds its triumphant answer,—"*the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*" (Rom, viii. 2.)

(3). This deliverance is essential to christian position and privilege. Impossible, while the law is in authority over us, to "be married to another, even to Him that is raised from the dead." When *death* has dissolved the ties which bound

us to the law. (*we*,—not the law—having become dead by the body of Christ) then we are free to be “married to another,” to be wholly given up to Christ risen. A christian under law would be spiritual adultery.

Our relations with Christ are all by the Holy Ghost. It is He who unites to Christ; it is by Him that Christ dwells in us. But “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” No more “O wretched man that I am!” No more “spirit of bondage again to fear!” Thank God! the spirit in us is “the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father!” “Wherefore thou art no more a servant (under law) but a son.” Pure and precious grace! To be servants in the outer court would be the highest privilege the law could give to the obedient. And to the disobedient, what? *Death*. To be sons in the house (the Father’s house) for ever is our portion, by grace, which reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.

(4). This deliverance is needful “that we should bring forth fruit unto God.” But we must consider this in a subsequent paper, if the Lord will.

THE CHRISTIAN RACE AND THE WAY TO RUN IT.—PART II.

(HEB. XII. 1-3.)

Continued from the Bible Herald vol. 2 page 189.

HITHERTO we have considered the life on earth of the perfect Man, who alone can be our perfect pattern and example for the christian race, as He alone could be our Saviour. Paul might say, “Be ye followers of me,” but

he had to add, "even as I also am of Christ."* But Christ could say to His apostle, "Follow thou Me," without such a modifying addition.

But however profitable for our souls such meditations may be, they would be without practical power for our walk unless the lessons they teach us are learnt at the feet of the glorified Man in heaven. Thus it is we behold Jesus in the epistle to the Hebrews. "The truth as it is in Jesus," can only be taught by Christ, *i.e.*, the *exalted Jesus* whom "God has made both Lord and Christ." (Compare Acts ii. 22, 36; Ephes. iv. 20, 21.) Sweet as it is, to meditate upon the blessed Son of man on earth, yet, to render this *divinely blessed* for us, we must learn at the feet of the God-Man in heaven what the *Son of man on earth* was, as the example and pattern for our christian race. The way to run the *christian race* must be learnt of *Christ*, the *glorified Jesus*, from His Word and through His Spirit, who glorifies Him and receives of His and shows it unto us. Mary's service at the feet of Jesus on earth, precious though it was, coming from a heart filled with Him, had not, nor could it have the same character and tone as Paul's service at the feet of a glorified Christ.

How was it that those Hebrews to whom the Apostle wrote, who had in former days endured a great fight of afflictions, having been made a gazing-stock, both by reproaches and afflictions, and become the companions of them that were so used, had taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they had for themselves in heaven, a better and an enduring substance;—how was it that having so joyfully set out on their christian race, they were growing weary and in danger of turning aside? Why had their ears become dull of hearing, their hands hanging down, and their knees feeble? It was because their eyes had got off Christ glorified. Thus

* The words of the Apostle in 1 Cor. iv. 16, and Phil. iii. 17 find, of course, their explanation through his words in 1 Cor. xi. 1.

it was they had not, like Moses, "endured, as *seeing Him* who is *invisible*."

The eye of faith looks at "things that are not seen," but the natural eye only at things that are seen." If we, being daily surrounded by, and occupied with visible things, permit the natural eye to prevail over the *eye of faith*, the former, like a heavy eye-lid, begins to obscure the latter, and the eye of faith grows dim. Alas! which of us has not made that humbling and sad experience, christian reader?

But the eye of faith does not only look at *things* that are invisible to the natural eye; it looks, like that of Moses, at the *Invisible One*, "as seeing Him who is invisible," only, in a far higher sense than Moses could, *i.e.*, with the eye of christian faith. That eye *sees* "Jesus, crowned with glory and honour." It beholds Him as distinctly and surely as we see each other with the natural eye, and far more so. To "see Jesus crowned with glory and honour" is not a matter of poetical or religious imagination, but the reality of sober faith.

It was just here, that the Hebrews had so sadly failed. Their eyes had got off Jesus, glorified in heaven. Hence their low and weak condition, being babes when they ought to have been teachers, and having need of milk instead of strong meat.

And what is the remedy which the Spirit of God, in this beautiful portion of Holy Writ, employs for their restoration? He directs their eyes to Jesus glorified in heaven, holding Him up, like a precious diamond, to the eye of faith. So at once in the first chapter, thence shedding its divine lustre over the whole Epistle, as we see the same in another way, in the gospel of St. John. In the first chapter of our epistle we behold Jesus *seated* on the right hand of the Majesty on high, in His due place of *rest* after His glorious work of an eternal redemption finished in the agonies of His cross. In the second chapter we see Jesus in His place of honour, "crowned with

glory and honour," after the shame and reproaches He bore, when the reproaches of them that reproached God fell upon Him. What *rest* after such a *work*! What *glory and honour* after such *shame and reproaches*!

"O Jesus, Lord! 'tis joy to know,
Thy path is o'er of shame and woe,
For us so meekly trod:
All finished is Thy work of toil,
Thou reapest now the fruit and spoil,
Exalted by our God.

Thy holy head, once bound with thorns,
The crown of glory now adorns;—
Thy seat, the Father's throne.
O Lord! e'en now we sing Thy praise,
Ours, the eternal song to raise—
Worthy the Lord alone.

We triumph in Thy triumphs Lord,
Thy joys our deepest joys afford:
They taste of love divine.
While sorrowing, suffering, toiling here,
How does the thought our spirits cheer,
The throne of glory's Thine."

In Chap. iii. the eye of faith is directed not merely to glance, as it were, at His glory, but to *rest* upon Him, to *consider* the great Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.—As "*Apostle*," i.e., as "sent" by the Father into the world, He is as "*The faithful Witness*" contrasted, in His own superiority, with one of God's most faithful witnesses, even Moses, then with Joshua, then Aaron: then in His superiority as "High Priest, made higher than the heavens," as to His wonderful and striking type, Melchisedec; after which we have the glorious summing up in divine conciseness in the two opening verses of ch. viii. The first eight chapters devoted to His all-glorious and all-beauteous *Person*; then the ninth and tenth chapters to His wondrous *work*. This is *divine order*. For Jesus Christ has done what He has done, because He is what He is. "When *He had by Himself*."—This comes first, then—"purged our sins," then, "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

At the end of chap. ix. we find the eye of faith looking for His coming again; ever *upward—heaven-ward—glory-ward—Christ-ward*, the only direction for the eye of faith. We now return to our chapter (xii.) where we again meet with the same divine injunction as to the only right direction for the *eye* in order that our feet might be able to run the race, that is *set before us*.” When the eye rests on a worthy object, (as we said once before) the *heart* begins to *feed* upon that object. And if the heart be *happy*, the *feet* will be willing and alert, but if the heart be *heavy*, the feet will be *heavy* too.

(*To be continued.*)

“WATCH AND REMEMBER.”

ACTS XX. 17-38.

At the time when, at Miletus, the apostle Paul delivered his farewell address to the elders of the church in Ephesus, he was evidently given to see the dangers to which the whole church of God would soon be exposed. And by the Spirit he earnestly and faithfully exhorted his hearers to take heed unto themselves, as also unto all the flock, forewarning them that, after his departure, not only would the church be harassed by the attacks of “grievous wolves” from without, and distressed by the uprising of the heresiarchs within, but further, that those grievous wolves would assuredly succeed in effecting an entrance,—would “enter in among them,” and make sad havoc of the flock; and likewise that the heresiarchs would, by “speaking perverse things,” certainly succeed in drawing away disciples after them.

Force and cruelty might characterise the grievous wolves, and deeper subtlety the heretical teachers, yet both would be

energised by none other than the adversary, and both become his instruments to accomplish his foul purpose, either by intimidation or seduction, to divide and scatter the sheep.

What then was to be the action of saints of God in view of these dangers? Were they to attempt to measure their own strength with that of their adversaries, and to oppose force by force? Surely this would have been to expose themselves and the flock to still greater perils! He who foresaw these dangers did not fail, mercifully, to furnish those whom He had made overseers of the flock with particular instructions, which, if faithfully carried out, would, doubtless, have ensured the complete deliverance of the church of God from all the violence and craft of the enemy.

Against that church Satan had already employed both violence and subtlety, but hitherto his utmost efforts had proved abortive. At the moment that the Apostle uttered the words "Therefore watch, and remember," those grievous wolves were still without, and those heresiarchs had not wrought mischief within the church. It is important that we should notice this historical fact, that as yet every attack upon the church had resulted in the discomfiture of the enemy! Was this because his rage was less furious than it afterwards became? By no means. Was it not simply because the church had not yet left her "first love," and in her midst were found saints who ceased not both to "watch" and "remember?" In view of a possible attack by enemies from without or within, the importance of vigilant watching cannot be over estimated. He who commanded the porter to watch; who said, "watch and pray.....watch ye therefore.....And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch," was perfectly aware both of our weakness and of the implacable hatred of the enemy.

The historical Books of the Old Testament furnish us with several remarkable instances of saints watching unto prayer.

During the reign of Jehoshaphat very alarming news

spread far and wide in the little kingdom of Judah, to the effect that three nations were confederate against it. At such a time worldly wisdom might have prompted such proclamations as "Arm yourselves!" "Prepare for the worst!" "Fight valiantly for all that you hold dear," but Jehoshaphat watched unto prayer, and simply proclaimed a fast in Judah. And while their enemies were concentrating their forces, "Judah gathered themselves together to ask help of the Lord." "And all Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children," while Jehoshaphat prayed and said, "O our God.....we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon Thee." His prayer was heard, and by the Spirit of the Lord Jahaziel foretold the complete overthrow of the enemy, and said, "O Judah, and Jerusalem, fear not nor be dismayed: to-morrow go out against them, for the Lord will be with you." This command was promptly obeyed, and as the army went forth, the king exhorted all the people, "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper." Though they were marching towards the enemy, their eyes were still upon the Lord, and those that went before began to praise the beauty of holiness and to sing, "Praise the Lord; for His mercy endureth for ever."

By the power of Jehovah was the enemy overthrown, so that when Judah came upon their dead bodies, it was only to take away the spoil. And a few days after was seen a victorious army, laden with the spoil, returning with joy to the house of the Lord, to own God's great deliverance. (2 Chron. xx.)

I had not referred at such length to this scene if we were not so apt to forget that "power belongeth unto God," and that faith in Him and obedience to His Word will always be rewarded by the complete deliverance of those who fail not to "watch and remember." Though those that so watch may be

counted by units, they shall prevail, even when the enemy marshalls his thousands against them.

Hezekiah had opened the doors of, and had repaired the temple; he had also revived the worship of Jehovah, when the boastful and blaspheming Senacherib appeared on the scene, resolved to destroy Jerusalem. The Assyrian king was followed by an army of 185,000 warriors, but in Judah were found two faithful men, watching unto prayer (2 Chron. xxxii. 20). Their prayers were heard, and while as yet the haughty Gentile monarch continued to boast and to blaspheme, the Lord pronounced this word concerning him. "He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by the same way shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the Lord. For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake." That very night the angel of the Lord destroyed that mighty army. (2 Kings xix. 32-35.)

A. J.

(To be continued.)

SHORT PAPERS ON THE REVELATION.

CHAP. VI. 9-11.

Continued from the Bible Herald, Vol. 2, p 206.

THE opening of the fifth seal reveals far deeper things than the external working of God's ministers of power. The inner life, not the circumstances of men, is brought before us, and the word of God is the test.

"And when the Lord opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held."

These slain ones were accepted worshippers, like Abel, and

they, as he, had resisted unto blood. They had owned the authority of the word of God as above all other authority, and their testimony cost them their lives. To them "One only was lawgiver and judge, even He who is able to save and to destroy," and they were slain for obeying Him. Such has been, is, and will be the opposition of man to God in His own earth. The deadly poison of disobedience was instilled in Eden, and ever since Satan has laboured incessantly to spread the virus. A simple, obedient recognition of the claims of the word of God inevitably entails persecution. (2 Tim. iii. 12.)

It would be a painful task to bring forward proofs of this in our time. May the reader be himself a proof. Still, sober men admit, that while the wide dissemination of the Holy Scriptures is pre-eminently distinctive of the present day, even christian effort is not directed by Scripture. Indeed, very frequently is it seen that the more earnest the worker, the bolder he appears in claiming exemption from the commandments of the Lord. The good of man is so intensely the chief object, that any means are adopted, and any associations and combinations formed, so long as that end is thought to be secured. The very spirit of obedience is withered by the zeal that confounds activity with service. Oh! that the zeal of the most zealous might glow even more ardently, but be guided and directed in everything by the word of God. Who so swift in service as the Seraphim? One of them *flew* to lay the live coal on the mouth of the prophet. But who so reverent and subject? (Isa. vi). Yea, let us rather contemplate Him who opens the seal. Who so zealous in seeking the good of man? but man was not His object. The glory of God was the end of all He did and suffered, hence obedience found its perfect expression in Him. Let the christian reader consider, truly, his present position and his ways. How much have other christians, with whom he is in fellowship, made it lawful and

free for him to do which the word of God forbids? and how much have they made it unlawful for him to do which the word of God enjoins? May the question prove a searching one. To us there can be but ONE LORD, and we are soon to meet Him.

That there will be a true owning of the authority of God's word revived in souls, after the church is gone and the darkness of universal apostacy settles down on Christendom, is revealed in other scriptures, (Jer. xxxi. 33; Isa. lxvi. 2, 5; Deut. xxx. 1, 2; Psalm cxix) but in none more clearly than in this prophecy.

The present work of God among the Gentiles is near its close. When the oracles of God were committed to the Jews they made them of none effect by human tradition, and "darkness in part came upon Israel." The church then became "the pillar and stay of the truth." But the church has followed in the way of the Jews, and, as a dispensation, this period will close in darkness. Then the work of God will begin again in life-giving power among His ancient people, and it will be "in Jacob" that a people will be found "turning from transgression." (Compare Isa. lix. 20 and Rom. xi. 25, 29: also Isa. lx. 2 and Rom. xi. 22, 23, and both with Jer. xxxiii. 19, 26.) Of this more must be said should we enter on the seventh chapter.

There will be a remnant raised up who, like the three captives before the mighty Chaldean king, will not yield to man the allegiance due to the Lord. God may suffer them to be killed, but at all cost He must be obeyed. To the proud king this was daring presumption, and his power seemed to eclipse the very power of Omnipotence; but they quailed not for a moment. (Dan. iii. 17, 18.)

So here, man triumphs; the obedient are slain, and the "little season" that must intervene before the establishment of the kingdom in power, will be characterized by unremitting

violence against the servants of the Lord. It will, in mercy, be but a "little season."

Nothing doubtless is farther from the thoughts of men than the revival of persecution, and it seems almost impossible that there can be a return to the savage intolerance, and vindictive cruelty of former days. It is this, doubtless, which makes the *historical* interpretation of this prophecy so popular; and most who read the past and not the future in it, agree in putting the "Era of Dioclesian" called the "Era of martyrs" under the fifth seal. It was indeed a fearful time. "Christians everywhere, without distinction of sex, age, or condition were dragged to execution, and tortured with the most exquisite torments, that rage, cruelty and hatred could invent."

But we must read the future, not the past in this chapter; though not denying that He who knew the end from the beginning, may have foreshadowed, for the help of His saints all through, His providential government. There is, unquestionably, a judicial character in the ways of God with men even in this period, "the day of salvation."

But the cry of the souls under the altar is clearly not that of christian martyrs. Like Stephen, yea rather like their Lord, prayer for, not against their murderers has characterized their cry. But where the testimony is no longer, as now, to the full grace of God, but rather (like that of John the Baptist), the solemn warning of the coming of the Lord in separative and eternal judgment on His enemies, the call for judgment that the rebellious nations may be subdued, will be in harmony with the Spirit of Christ in those who still carry on His testimony. (Compare Isa. xxvi. 9; Psalms lviii, lxxxiii. and many others.)

The name of the Lord they use is important too, to notice, "O master," (Despotes), as the character of the wicked in that day will be marked by resistance to authority. The secret

developement of this spirit is making rapid strides even now. The diseases of the last days are already among the people.

"And there was given them to each one a white robe," is the reading of the Revised Version, "probably if not certainly right." This would doubtless be the immediately expressed approval, by "the Judge of all," of their ways (xix. 8), however maligned by their enemies on earth. When suffering from the cruel but false aspersions of men, what joy to turn to One who can give the white robe which no malice of man can ever stain.

But they must wait before they get the full answer to their cry. They are but a part of the noble army of martyrs, whose blood will yet flow before the looked-for judgment falls upon the oppressors. It is in every way a striking passage! The state of souls after death, and before the resurrection, would at all times be a matter of interest. The Lord in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus first drew aside the veil. Then in the words to the dying thief more light is given. Still more in the moment of Stephen's departure, until, in simplest language, the Holy Spirit records,—*"Absent from the body, present with the Lord."* Here, beyond the christian period, we have this wonderful revelation of the *souls* of slain ones, their desires and their lessons. *What an undying reality the soul of a man is!*

MATTHEW VI. 8.

Thou knowest, Lord, my ev'ry want,
 And, ere my prayer is pleaded,
 Art ready my request to grant,
 As wisdom sees 'tis needed.
 Thy love to me
 Is Fatherly :
 Be not my wish the measure,
 But, Father, Thy good pleasure.

Thou sawest from eternity
 How much would best befit me ;
 Didst fix what here my days should be,
 What joys and griefs should meet me.
 Why shrink, my heart ?
 Would'st thou have part
 In faith's rich blessing's tender'd
 Without faith's service render'd ?

GOD HIMSELF THE OBJECT OF THE SOUL.

ROM. v. 1-11.

(Continued).

TILL a soul has peace with God about its sins, it cannot walk with God. Of course, if you are careless about the thing altogether, you are not walking with God. But if you are troubled about sin, you must get your conscience clear, for you cannot walk with God in your sins. Not that the soul who has this peace will be free from conflict with sin, and from exercise of heart, but as regards relationship with God it can say, He has delivered His Son for my offences. It is the revelation of what God has done, and done too, long before I became anxious about the matter, so that I have peace with God. Christ has done the thing which put the sins away, and thus has given me peace with God about them and peace in my conscience too.

Now, dear reader, if you have not got this answer in your conscience, you are not where Christ's work would put you. You may be learning what you are in yourself,—all very needful in its place, but till you have peace with God, you have not that which Christ has made by the blood of His cross (Col. i. 20). The thing is perfect in itself; there is the peace whether you have it or not. Your conscience entering into it is another thing. This is what Peter means when he says, "who by Him do believe in God." When I enter into what God has done in delivering Christ for my offences, then I believe in God. I have peace with Him; but see how entirely it is out of ourselves. I have God before me as an object, by believing in what He has done in delivering Christ. I have peace about my sins; but that is not all. It is added,

"By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." It is not only that I am delivered from my place of guilt and condemnation, but what place have I now? Here we come to resurrection. I have access by a living Christ into the place which He has taken before God. The Judge has brought me there. He has raised Christ for my justification; so that it is not only that I am delivered from my old place in Adam, but I have got into a new place in Christ. I am standing in the favour of God. The sins are gone but the love remains, and in this grace and favour of God I stand.

But there is more than this. You may say, "But what can you want more?" Well, for my present position in the world I do not want more than to stand in this favour of God in Christ risen; but then I am not always going to remain on earth. I have another prospect. I am going to God and I rejoice in hope of being in His glory. This is my prospect for the future. THE GLORY OF GOD. You say, how can we expect that? Well, if I look at myself, a poor worm, I could not say so, but I do not look at myself; I look at Christ. He is gone "to prepare a place for us" as the necessary result and consequence of the love that gave us peace. His *heart* is in it. He must have us with Himself. "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me, be *with me where I am*." Then as I look at Christ, I can say I shall have it for He is in the glory of God, and I shall be with him. Thus God is before us as our object. It is peace with God. It is in God's favour we stand and it is the glory of God we wait for.

It is not my happiness but His glory, and He is far more glorious in redemption than He was in creation, for He had not to give His Son to create a world, but He had to, to redeem one: and Christ said, "I have glorified Thee on the earth..... glorify Thou me with the glory that I had with Thee before the world was." And He has gone into that glory as a man,

and as "the First-born among many brethren" whom God is bringing to glory; entering there as our Fore-runner. That is what our hope is.

Then also we glory in tribulations, in all the exercises of the way, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, so that we can say, come what may, how can He but love us who gave His Son to die for us?

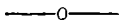
And mark, how objectively He speaks here of the love of God. It is not as in the eighth chapter, the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God, crying "Abba" in our hearts; but this love of God is shewn in the way it acted towards us while we were sinners and without strength, (and to be *without strength* is a harder matter by far than to be convinced that one is a sinner). Well, the love came out in Christ's dying for us. "Much more then having been reconciled by His death," says the Apostle, "We shall be saved by His life." If His love was such when He was the weakest, (for He was crucified, we read, through weakness) how much more can we count upon that love in everything, now that He liveth for us by the power of God.

Thus I look back and see God delivering His own beloved Son for my sins, and I say, that is what He has done for me. I look to the present place into which He has brought me, and that is what He is to me, and I rejoice in hope of His glory, as that which I shall have. Sins gone—grace present, and glory future.

Then I can glory in tribulations, because it is instruction in the path; and the key to all the exercises I pass through is His love to me, for whom, ungodly and without strength, He gave His Son, that is, the very best gift there was in heaven to give. The Apostle throughout reasons from what God is. Then in learning God, I can joy in Himself, the highest thing of all. He becomes the delight of my heart, "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have

now received the reconciliation." The difference between the Holy Ghost's reasoning and the saint's is seen in this, that the Holy Ghost reasons from what *God is*, to what we shall experience from Him; while the saint is apt to reason from what *he is* to what he may expect from God.

And now, dear reader, let me ask you, Is God Himself thus the object before you? Have you got this peace with Him? There it is, but have you entered into it? The Lord says, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." Have you got what He gives? No, you say. Well then, you are not yet in the place into which God puts His people. May you not be satisfied in anything short of this, being able to say, I am reconciled to God, so that you may joy in Himself.



WITHIN AND WITHOUT. OR, THE ORDER OF GOD'S ASSEMBLY.

The importance of the prayerful study of all Scripture (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17) makes it most desirable to set before the readers of "Christian Testimony" occasionally such papers as the following, which presents the truth in the words of Scripture and gives the meaning and force of those words where necessary, (Neh. viii. 8), so that the youngest christian, if simple, as in the presence of God and waiting on Him to receive the truth, will find much profit. (Ps. cxix. 162.) Edrs.]

In the following remarks the word of God is referred to as the only authority on the subject. It is also regarded as so divinely adapted for the varying circumstances of the church in all ages that nothing need be added to it, or taken from it. The paper consists of two divisions which must be carefully distinguished. The first is an attempt to set forth from scripture the original order of the church of God as regards reception and discipline: the second, the resources to be found in Scripture when the church is in ruins. Each of these divisions also consists of two parts:—The one consists entirely of God's word on the subject and is everywhere printed in italics, the other is merely what the writer understands to be the true meaning of the passage, and is submitted to the spiritual judgment of the reader,

To avoid unnecessary misapprehension, a brief definition is given of the sense in which certain terms are used which may be open to misconstruction.

1. *The Church.* This word is used in scripture in a two-fold sense, which is determined by the context.

A. All saints (or sanctified ones) in any one city or place (1 Cor. i. 2). (Further definition deferred at present.)

B. All believers throughout the world (Eph. v. 25).

2. *The Lord's table.* This word (only found in 1 Cor. x. 21) is used scripturally, as an equivalent to the Jewish altar, (1 Cor. x. 18) and is the place where the saints are gathered on scriptural grounds and according to the rules of God's word, to eat the Lord's Supper.

3. *The Lord's Supper.* This word (only found in 1 Cor. xi. 20), means the bread and the cup, eaten and drunk in memory of the Lord.

DIVISION 1.—THE ORIGINAL ORDER OF THE CHURCH.

We will now give a full list of all passages bearing on the subject of reception and discipline, giving, wherever necessary, brief remarks on what appears to be their true meaning.

PART 1. THOSE WITHIN

the church of God on earth, including also those subject to every variety of discipline, short of exclusion.

THOSE WITHIN IN VIRTUE OF THEIR CHRISTIAN PROFESSION.

A.* "*All that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place*" (1 Cor. i. 2) including all "saints" at this time.

Note. The meaning of "calling upon" (*ἐπικαλέομαι*) is found by the use of this word elsewhere as follows:—

a. Acts ii. 21. "*Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*"

β. Acts ix. 14. "*To bind all that call upon Thy name,*"

* The text quoted is that of the Revised Version.

- γ. xv. 17. *"And all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called."*
- δ. xxii. 16. *"Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on His name."*
- ε. Rom. x. 12. *"The same Lord.....is rich unto all that call upon Him."*
- ζ. 13. *"Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."*
- η. 14. *"How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed."*

From these and other Scriptures it appears that the expression implies (η) belief, (ζ) salvation, (δ) that it is connected with baptism, (β) that it was a common title of Christians.

This Scripture, supported by the whole practice of the Acts, suffices to shew that all who gave satisfactory proof (see Acts ix. 26, 27) of being saved were WITHIN God's assembly on earth. Being regarded as members of Christ's body by the baptism of the Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 13) they were owned as brethren (Rom. xv. 7).

Being WITHIN they had their place, not only in the ἐκκλησία in the town or place, but in the church of God generally, wherever assembled throughout the world; passing freely from place to place if well known, as Paul; or, if not, by means of letters of commendation (2 Cor. iii. 1).

Being WITHIN they were subject to the following varieties of discipline, short of exclusion; further discipline is treated of elsewhere.

B. THOSE WITHIN, THOUGH SUBJECT TO DISCIPLINE.

1. *"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned, and turn away (ἐκκλίνω to avoid or shun) from them"* (Rom. xvi. 17).

2. "*Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye which are spiritual see (Matt. xviii. 15, 16) restore such an one in a spirit of meekness*" (Gal. vi. 1).

3. "*Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw (στέλλομαι. shrink from, avoid, shun), from every brother that walketh disorderly*" (2 Thess. iii. 6).

4. "*And if any man obeyeth not our word by this epistle, note that man, that ye have no company with him (συναναμίγνυσθαι. to associate or have familiar intercourse with, only used elsewhere 1 Cor. v. 11) to the end that he may be ashamed. And count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother*" (2 Thess. iii. 14, 15).

5. "*Them that sin, reprove in the sight of all, that the rest also may be put in fear*" (1 Tim. v. 20).

6. "*Reprove, rebuke, exhort*" (2 Tim. iv. 2).

One other class remains to complete the list of those WITHIN viz., those restored after exclusion.

7. "*So that contrariwise ye should rather forgive him*" (2 Cor. ii. 7). The church here exercises its power in "remitting," as previously in "retaining," in the case of the same man, according to John xx. 23.

PART 2. THOSE WITHOUT.

A. ON THE FUNDAMENTAL GROUND OF HAVING NO REAL TITLE TO BE WITHIN, AS "CALLING ON THE NAME OF THE LORD."

a. All unbelievers. The reason being that they are not included in 1 Cor. i. 2, or in any other passage speaking of God's assembly, and are regarded as spectators in 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. These are different from the succeeding classes in never having been within, but as constituting essentially "Those without whom God judgeth" of 1 Cor. v. 13. The succeeding classes are *placed outside* by discipline or otherwise, having been within.

β. *"If he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the Publican"* (Matt. xviii. 17).

NOTE. This is not an absolutely certain case, as the course prescribed to the very end is entirely individual. The trespass is against a brother, and the final word is "unto thee." But practically this amounts to treating him as not belonging to the company of 1 Cor. i. 2, and if he persisted in defying every effort of grace there would be no evidence that grace had ever reached his heart. At the same time there is no direct scripture for putting him away, the only solid ground for so doing in the end would be, that he had no real title at all to be within; verse 18 seems to point to binding his sin upon him.

γ. *"Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God"* (2 John 9).

NOTE. *"The teaching of the Christ"* (the article is here) does not refer to what Christ taught, but to the teaching of Scripture about His person, then being denied in one way (v. 7), now in another. Those who thus in any way assailed Christ's person had not really the christian's God; that is, were not entitled to remain among those "who called upon the name of the Lord" on account of having departed fundamentally from true christianity. The fact that he was excluded from christian fellowship is forcibly shewn in ver. 10 by the consequences of offering it to him even privately.

δ. *"He that giveth him greeting partaketh (κοινωνεί) in his evil deeds"* (2 John 11).

NOTE. Two words are used in scripture for partaking, μέτοχος or μετέχω, and κοινωνός or κοινωνέω. They are used as follows;—

"They beckoned unto their partners (μέτοχοι) in the other boat."
*"James and John, sons of Zebedee, which were partners (κοινωνοί) with Simon"* (Luke v. 7, 10). [The first sig-

nifying temporary association in that voyage, the second permanent partnership].

"Since then the children are sharers (*κοινωνέω*) in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook (*μετέχω*) of the same" (Heb. ii. 14).

The first means necessarily and permanently, the latter voluntarily and for a particular purpose.

"Were made partakers (*μέτοχοι*) of the Holy Ghost" (Heb. vi. 4).

"If any fellowship (*κοινωνία*) of the Spirit" (Phil. ii. 1).

The first means outwardly and for a time, the latter inwardly and permanently.

From these and other scriptures we see that *κοινωνέω* means a partner in the closest and fullest sense, being the strongest word that can be used; and this is the word used here.

Hence one who knowingly (the passage supposes this) greets or receives one who does not bring the doctrine of Christ (such an one as described in ver. 9) is, *de facto*, in partnership with him; so that the two are partners in the evil, though one may not actually hold it at all. Being thus linked, the position of one is necessarily that of both; in short, one is in one sense as bad as the other.

We next see from 1 Cor. x. 17 that we not only have the closest fellowship at the Lord's table (v. 16), but with one another as fellow-members of His body. The *one* loaf as truly sets forth the one Body of Christ composed of all believers, as the *broken* loaf sets forth His body given for us. Hence there is no such thing as breaking bread individually. The act must be held, when done knowingly, as at least as close a sign of fellowship as reception into a private house or greeting. If this be admitted, it is evident that known fellowship at the Lord's table with one of class γ brings the person into class δ .

This fourth class is WITHOUT, not on the ground of leaving christianity personally, but of having entered into most in-

timate partnership with one who has, and hence equally excluded from christian fellowship. The two being to this extent alike in evil, if either class is retained within, the assembly itself becomes defiled, and the table ceases to be regulated by divine principles, and hence, strictly speaking, to be the Lord's. Further, the fact of the word "partner" being used makes the guilt co-extensive with the links formed, and all known fellowship with such evil doctrine as here described, or with a known "partner" in it, necessarily forms a link.

B. BECAUSE THEY HAVE GONE OUT.

a. *"A man that is heretical, after a first and second admonition refuse"* (παραιτέομαι, have done with, avoid), (Tit. iii. 10).

Sects or divisions within lead to heresies without (1 Cor. xi. 18, 19), and this man had probably gone out. Whether he has or no, there is no ground for excluding him, as those we have spoken of, nor for putting him away. He is to be left alone after two admonitions, to take his own course.

β. *"They went out from us, but they were not of us"* (1 John ii. 19).

These are antichrists, and differ from the preceding class in the fact that had they not gone out, they would probably have been excluded on the ground of A γ.

C. ON MORAL GROUNDS.

a. *"Now I write unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat"* (1 Cor. v. 11).

So far this does not in itself amount to exclusion, "keep company with" being the same word as 2 Thess. iii. 14, where the man is WITHIN: and "no, not to eat" probably refers to

private meals. It no doubt implies exclusion, as the passage proceeds:—

"*Put away* (ἐξάιρω 'to cast out of the midst,' used only here) *the wicked man from among yourselves*" (1 Cor. v. 13).

It will be noted that if the leaven be not purged out, the mass itself gets leavened with the moral corruption allowed within (v. 6); and hence, though in a different way from A. δ., those who persisted in fellowship with evil-doers of this class were themselves defiled. If they would be clear, they must purge out (ἐκκαθαρίζω) the old leaven. If the assembly refused to do this, a resource is still left for the faithful; which we will consider in our second division.

We make no allusion here, as being beside our subject, to a fourth class that are WITHOUT; being removed from the assembly on earth by the direct discipline of God (1 Cor. xi; Acts v.) Those outside therefore are either (A) because they have never received, or have departed from true christian doctrine; (B) because they have gone out, or (C) because they have been put away on moral grounds.

(To be continued.)

"THAT I MIGHT LIVE UNTO GOD."

GAL. ii. 19-20.

SUCH is the liberty wherewith Christ makes free! Such the blessed purpose of God in our deliverance from the law! God cannot give, nor can the new man desire, liberty for the flesh to fulfil its lusts. But He can give, He has given the liberty to live wholly unto God in a sphere and in relationships quite incompatible with a standing under law; and in this the new man delights.

The law was a most important part of the *ways* of God, but it forms no part of what scripture speaks of as His *purpose*.

There is not a word as to the law in such a chapter as the 1st of Ephesians where the Spirit of God develops His eternal purpose in Christ Jesus. It was His purpose to reveal Himself as God—the God of our Lord Jesus Christ—and bring men nigh in holiness and love, as worshippers. It was His purpose to reveal His name of Father and bring men nigh as children. He chose in Christ before the foundation of the world, those who were thus to be holy and without blame before God in love. He predestinated these, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the adoption of children. Such, in His unfathomable love, was the purpose of God. Man has no part in forming it nor in bringing it about. He *receives* of the Lord's fulness grace for grace.

But God has, in His ways, to deal with man in his responsibility as a creature and in whatever place God is pleased to give to man. The law was a part of these ways. "The law entered that sin might abound." "It was added because of transgressions." Its purpose was not to bring man into blessing; for God said "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Its purpose was to turn sin, which existed in all its hideousness before God into transgressions, to bring it home to the conscience, that "Sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." See Gal. iii. 19; Rom. v. 13, 14; vii. 13.

"What things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God." Not only has man broken the law from the very day God gave it, but the name of God has been blasphemed through those who "received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it." Worse still, grace itself has been refused and God in Christ rejected; rejected even by those who in responsibility and outward position were the people of God. It is all over

with man in his natural condition and place. God's *ways* have manifested the utter and hopeless RUIN of man. But God's *purpose* remains, a purpose apart from law, nay, a purpose which could not be accomplished till the law had done its work of stopping every mouth and bringing all the world in guilty before God.

God would have a people with a life holy and according to God, which should have Himself for its object. Nothing less would accomplish His purpose, nothing less meet His heart. It must be a life of perfect liberty, liberty in a known position of nearness to God, liberty in an enjoyed relationship—"children by Jesus Christ unto Himself," a life in a sphere *beyond the judgment of sin*.

It is said of Christ, "In that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that liveth, He liveth unto God" (Rom. vi. 10). In His death, He not only died for our sins but He died *unto sin*. By death He passed out of the condition in which He had to do with sin (Himself sinless) and in which He was made sin. Free for ever, "He liveth unto God." He is no longer in a scene where for His love He had hatred, no longer straitened till His baptism should be accomplished. No, thank God! In the peace of the heaven He has entered "by His own blood," in the glory wherewith God straightway glorified Him, and in the rest of that love wherewith His Father loves Him because He laid down His life,"—*there "He liveth unto God."* That risen life, in a sphere where "all things are of God" is freely and peacefully for God.

But this is not the portion of Christ alone. The saints live of His risen life. We are "alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." God has delivered us from sin and from the law which is "the strength of sin" that this life might move and have its being in a sphere of holy liberty. "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

In considering this amazing privilege of living unto God, we may look at it first *inwardly*. This—the state of the soul—is of all importance because "the Lord looketh on the heart;" and because the walk and testimony before men will be but the outward expression of the inward condition.

Two things will ever characterize this life inwardly:—(1) enjoyment of God and (2) the Spirit of adoption.

1. In the first part of Romans v. the Spirit of God leads the soul on to the highest point of blessing it can have here below before its God:—"We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Justification before God and consequent peace with Him,—what blessings for God to give! How much for man to receive even from a hand so bountiful! But though man might have been satisfied with such a portion, God could not be. He had set His heart—blessed be His name!—on lost and guilty man. He would bring him

"Nearer still, through Jesus' blood."

He "commends His own love towards us in that, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Here God is revealed, His nature told out, His heart made known. And with what result for us? We are "reconciled to God by the death of His Son;" we are saved in all the power of the risen life of Christ, that blessed Son.

This mighty salvation gives us to "joy in God." He is not too *righteous* for us to delight in Him,—His righteousness has justified us (Rom. iii. 26.) He is not too *holy*: we give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness. The *light* which He is has "shined in our hearts,..... the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." His *love*, (and He is love) is "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost." God fully revealed brings the sinner nigh—gives the believer liberty in His presence, boldness in the holiest. "We joy in

God." Not only is fear cast out by perfect love, but God becomes the joy of our hearts.

"Thy gifts, O God, can never suffice
Unless Thyself be given.
Thy presence makes my paradise
And where Thou art is heaven."

"Whom have I in heaven but Thee!" "Thus will I bless Thee while I live; I will lift my hands in thy name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips. When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches" (Psalm lxiii. 4-6). What a heaven upon earth is the heart that can "joy in God!" The wilderness of Judah may be a dry and thirsty land; not so the heart which has so learned God as to delight in Him. It "shall never thirst." Living unto God, the soul enjoys HIM. "Holy and without blame," as seen in Christ, and soon to be so in every sense, it is "before Him in love." Precious purpose of God, and precious blood of Christ which has made it good! Blessed risen life of Christ, and blessed grace of God that in it we "live unto God." O for hearts touched more deeply by such grace! O for ways formed by it!

(To be continued.)

SHORT PAPERS ON THE REVELATION.

CHAP. vi. 12-17.

The answer to the cry of the slain ones under the fifth seal is, as we have seen—"that they should rest yet for a little time, until their fellow servants also, and their brethren, which should be killed even as they were, should be fulfilled." There are to be other witnesses before the day of Christ's manifested wrath. The opening of the sixth seal then, is *not* the coming of that day, though the terrors of the scene lead

men to think it is. Judgment will surely come, but the anger of the Lord yet lingers. The final storm of wrath shall surely burst, but not until the iniquity of the enemies of God and man is full.

That the Lord whom they invoke, is not indifferent to their cry, and that He will make a way for a full and righteous answer to it, is at once revealed.—“And I saw when He opened the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake: and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood; and the stars of the heaven fell unto the earth, as a fig tree casteth her unripe figs when she is shaken of a great wind. And the heaven was removed as a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.”

This vividly grand description of universal overthrow is in the language of the spirit of prophecy, and the same style is found in the Old Testament (Compare Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8; Jer. iv. 23, 24; Isa. xiii. 10; xxxiv. 4). It reveals in symbol, the overturning of the supreme and subordinate authorities established on the earth. The famine and misery, and the consequent despair, during the third and fourth seals, and the open, avowed hatred of any testimony from God seen in the fifth seal, would be fitting precursors of an outburst of popular, anarchical revolt. The long predicted fruit of *man's* rule in the earth is seen to be rapidly ripening. The iron and the clay do not cleave to each other, and the “break up” must come to make room for a kingdom which shall never be destroyed (Dan. ii. 43, 44).

Intense suffering about a century ago, roused the fevered and restless masses on the continent, and, fanned by atheism, the terrible revolutionary spirit long at work among them, burst forth with resistless energy, and produced those stupendous convulsions which changed the political face of all Europe. The future, as given to us in this chapter, will exceed the

past, as not only does every evil intensify, but the modern appliances for war and slaughter are fearful to contemplate.* The christian's hope is the *place prepared on high*, far away from these closing scenes of earth's travail (John xiv. 2). To know the end of all *man's* schemes to effect that which Christ alone can accomplish—the blessing of all the nations of the earth—is important, but to expect the Lord from heaven day by day, is incomparably more so. The kingdoms of this poor world, and Israel the chief, must *go down* under the billows of God's wrath in government, before they come forth with the glad confession that “salvation is of the Lord.” The children of God know it, and *go up* to meet the Lord in the air.

To those who have studied the prophetic account of the fall of Egypt, of Babylon, of Edom and of Jerusalem, there will be little difficulty in gathering the meaning of the symbols used in the description of events under this seal. The downfall of ancient monarchies, which appeared before men as glorious as the heavenly bodies in their place of rule, and as stable as the mountains, was thus described of old.

Symbolic language is the most expressive, and indeed nearly all writers, when describing scenes of unusual interest, naturally adopt metaphor; and in this case, however appalling the imagery, the christian knows the description is not an exaggerated one, for it is inspired.

The fact of this universal terror (which is an important fact at this point of the prophecy, for as the judgments proceed men get hardened and lose their former fears. See chapters xvii. 14; xix. 19) is told in earnest but simple language.—“And the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the chief captains (chiliarchs), and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman and freeman, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of

*“There is hanging over Europe some great object, by reason of which all nations are armed in this manner, and most people, who have not some curious idea of security, apart from politics, see that there is hanging over the world some dreadful war, which is bound to come sooner or later.” Lord Wolsley, Dec. 1883.

the mountains: and they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?"

This discovers, plainly enough, the hollowness of the peace of the thoughtless multitudes of Christendom, for the expressions of fear could come from those only who have some knowledge of christian truth. The terrors of a guilty conscience are awakened as they see the mighty hand of God on everything in which they trusted, for sudden destruction cometh as travail upon a woman with child. What more solemn than the mind taught the truths of scripture, and the heart and conscience indifferent to the love of God and the work of the Lamb. The voice of the blood of the martyrs, so recently slain, crying from the ground, and ruin, darkness and distress on all sides. How fearful their apprehensions! How expressive their words of terror! "THE WRATH OF THE LAMB!" The wrath of Him who was last seen by the world "crucified in weakness," who did not resist them, who was led to the slaughter. They dread the retribution of the wrongs of Jesus. Yet they express no repentance, they manifest no sorrow, they seek for no mercy. It is a solemn scene, for although "the fire of that great day" was not yet kindled, the part that conscience will play in the torments of the lost, when it does come, is anticipated in them. Poor "*christian world!*" you know too much to escape! "Better for you not to have known the way of righteousness, than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment given to you."

We may note that "a *great earthquake*" is three times mentioned in the course of this prophecy. First here: again during the sounding of the sixth trumpet; and lastly, under the seventh vial, the greatest of all—"such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great." Thus, repeatedly, will be the wreck and ruin of

everything in which men of the world boast and trust. Oh! to have a sure portion beyond it all, a kingdom which cannot be shaken (Heb. xii. 28); and to know the full import of that gracious promise of the Lord—"I will keep thee *from* the hour of trial, that hour which is to come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Even when souls are deeply moved by the sense of grace in their salvation, the thoughts of many of God's children are too vague as to the "wrath to come" *from* which Jesus delivers them (1 Thess. i. 10). Its waves are here seen rising like the waters of the flood, but Enoch was translated *before* the flood, a true and striking type of our hope. Noah (like the sealed remnant in this book) was carried safely *through* it. "We wait" (not for the flood of wrath, not for a wave of it, but) "for God's Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us *from* the wrath to come,"—not the final and eternal judgment only, the saints live and reign with Christ a thousand years before that judgment (Rev. xx); but the wrath on the living, the wrath coming (oh so soon!) upon the whole inhabited earth to try them that dwell upon the earth (Compare Isa. xxiv. 17 and Rev. iii. 10, R.V.).

Still, may we not add, that it is not because of the judgments which are coming that we should be "like unto men that wait for their Lord." There is indeed a blessing to "him that readeth, and to them that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein," however many may miss that blessing by not doing so.

It is the only book that, traversing the entire period from the church's departure from its first love to the final setting aside of the whole power of evil, sets before the children of God the perfect moral development of His ways in respect of every form sin will assume to the end. Man refuses the testimony of the past. He has learned nothing by the terrible reign of death as the result of "*one offence*" (Rom. v. 17). To

us then the story of sin is told throughout. The Lord leads us on from one chapter of judgment to another till we possess His mind about everything. But then, at the close, He reveals Himself as *One outside*, and far away from this dark place on which the lamp of prophecy sheds its rays.

“I AM THE ROOT AND THE OFFSPRING OF DAVID,
THE BRIGHT AND THE MORNING STAR.”

It is the bright and heavenly excellency that ever shines forth in Him, unseen by a sleeping world and slumbering saints, that makes the church, led of the Spirit, long for His coming.

Have any, wearied by the seeming delay and yielding to the universal tendency to indifference to this vital truth, given up waiting? Oh! let us heed the midnight cry. Let us go forth again to meet Him. May the closing words of the seer find a deep response in the hearts of all who read this prophecy. “EVEN SO, COME LORD JESSUS.”

FRAGMENT.

“God is going to take us to heaven to be happy with Christ there, but He makes us happy out of heaven first. It is a difficult thing, but He does it, and He would have His people living up there where God is, and where we are going, as being freed from this present evil world.”



THE CHRISTIAN RACE AND THE WAY TO RUN IT.

(Continued.)

There are two chief impediments to running a race; a burden and a snare. As to the former, every one knows that spiritual burdens weigh far heavier than material ones and are not so soon to be got rid of. Efforts of our own to shake them off are of little or no avail. On the contrary, the word used by the Spirit in our passage excludes any idea of such an effort. The Apostle says, "Let us lay aside every weight."—"Lay aside." What an easy expression! Just "lay it aside!"—"An easy advice, but not so soon carried out!" some might exclaim. The question is, whether the burden of which we complain is really felt to be one, or a secretly cherished one. Many a one complains of the cares and troubles of business, and yet all he says and does shows that his whole heart is in the counting house. It requires no effort to throw away dung or dross if you find it to be such, or a burden, if you really felt it to be a burden and impediment in your christian race.

But there is something more required. Perhaps you may really have felt the burden and tried to shake it off, but have not succeeded. You found, like Christian in Bunyan's "Pilgrim," that the more you tried, the more closely the burden stuck to your back. Christian pilgrim! have you done what "Christian" did, when at last he was freed from his burden, not by the efforts of his shoulders to shake it off, but by his eyes looking in the right direction. He, as to the burden of his sins, looked to *Jesus crucified*, and his burden was gone. Have you, as to the burden of cares and troubles, "looked off" unto *Jesus glorified*? One glance of a bitten Israelite at the lifted-

up brazen serpent was sufficient to heal his otherwise mortal wound; and the quiet looking up of faith, to the risen ascended and glorified Jesus at the right hand of the throne of God, suffices to dispel all clouds and fears from the troubled mind, and remove the burden from the sinking heart.

The Greek word in the original, as most of our readers will be aware, means "looking off unto." Why the "off" should have been left out in the Revised Version, I cannot understand, for the Greek word distinctly expresses it. For certainly as long as there is no "looking off" from circumstances, there cannot be the "looking (up) unto Jesus." You cannot have one of your eyes fixed on the earth, and the other on the sky at the same time. You must either look with both your eyes upwards to heaven, or downwards to the earth. Where the treasure is there the heart is, and thither the eye looks.

What a state of things there was in Israel and on earth, when our Blessed Lord "lifted up His eyes to heaven" and said, "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son, also may glorify Thee." All was over with Israel. As to that *nation*—He had spent His strength for nought, and laboured in vain. He had come into the world which was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He had come unto His own, and His own had not received Him. They hated Him without a cause. One of His own apostles had sold Him for thirty pieces of silver, and was on his way at the head of the band of His deadly enemies, to betray his Master with a kiss; another was about to deny Him thrice; all, even the disciple of His bosom, were going to leave Him, as He had told them before. The agonies of Gethsemane were before Him, where Satan was about to bring all the pressure of the terrible power he wielded, to bear upon the holy Sufferer, as at the beginning of His career Satan had tempted Him with the charming panorama of the glory and beauty of all the kingdoms of this world. And above all—the cross with its circumstances was

before Him—the being forsaken of His God—the drinking of that terrible cup of *divine wrath*—all those fiery billows and waves to roll over Him—the waters of death around and beneath Him—in short, the burden of the cross to endure—the mountain-loads of our sins and iniquities, the *curse* of the law for the transgressions of His people.....But who is to estimate the weight and burden of that cross, but He alone who bore and felt and endured it all “for the joy that was set before Him.”

Jesus was looking onward to that joy when, after the traitor had received the sop, and left the upper-chamber, “and it was night,” He said, “Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; and God shall glorify Him in Himself, and straightway shall He glorify Him.” Jesus was “looking off” and “unto” His God, and onward to that joy, when “lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, ‘Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify Thee.’”

Christian fellow pilgrim and fellow heir of glory, glory with Christ in His and our Father’s house; member, too, of His body—the Church; of His Bride, called to reign with Him over the earth when He shall appear and we appear with Him in glory—beloved fellow christian, what is the direction of our eyes and hearts? We have Him, the beginner and perfecter of faith, for our Pattern, and we have that glorious bright cloud of witnesses in the preceding chapter for ensamples, saints whose eyes and hearts were *heaven-ward*, and who were thus made sojourners, pilgrims, and strangers on earth. They had not received the promises, but only looked onward towards them through a vista—an avenue, so to speak—of some thousand years, yet they greeted them afar off, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth, and this notwithstanding their small compass of knowledge of the truth, and their inferior position,

relationship and blessings, compared to ours. Abraham looked for a city which has foundations, whose Builder is God. Moses looked at Him, who is invisible. What is the direction of *our eyes and hearts*? May the Lord in His grace, by the Spirit of glory turn the hearts and faces of His dear saints more *heaven-ward, glory-ward, Christ-ward*.

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at things which are seen, but at things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen, are eternal.”

“And though there intervene
Rough roads and stormy skies,
Faith will not suffer ought to screen
Thy glory from mine eyes.

There shall all clouds depart,
The wilderness shall cease,
And sweetly shall each gladdened heart
Enjoy eternal peace.”

(To be continued)

WITHIN AND WITHOUT.

OR,

THE ORDER OF GOD'S ASSEMBLY.

(Continued.)

DIVISION 2.—THE RESOURCE IN THE RUIN OF THE CHURCH.

By the statement that the church is in ruins, two things at least are meant: 1st.—That nowhere can all the believers in one place be found gathered together, so that the church locally no longer exists. 2nd.—That the various bodies of christians that do exist are no longer governed by the divine rules laid down in Part 1, either admitting more into their

company than those rightly **WITHIN**, or failing to exclude some of the classes that should rightly be **WITHOUT**, besides failing in many other matters besides discipline.

In all this it must be remembered that there is no failure on God's side; that all His people and His only are **WITHIN** His assembly, looked at generally, though this assembly may nowhere find expression, and that none are **WITHIN** who should be **WITHOUT**. The failure has consisted in not acting on earth in unison with God's Word and mind in heaven, so as to have ratified down here what is done above. If we would understand the present state of things, we must be clear about two facts:—

First. There has been a total ruin of the church as far as man is concerned;

Second. There has been *no* ruin of the church as far as God is concerned.

Now it is plain to every christian conscience, that God could not wish His children to remain in that which was contrary to His mind as revealed in His Word, however accredited; and we therefore find sufficient guidance and light from Scripture to point out the line of action in such a state of things.

This action is two-fold:—First, separation from evil; and secondly, the Scriptural association of those separated.

PART 1. THE DIVINE WARRANT FOR SEPARATION FROM EVIL.

A. SEPARATION FROM UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.

“Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness.” (2 Tim. ii. 19.)

This, it will be observed, is individual; it is addressed to the very ones spoken of in 1 Cor. i, 2, as **WITHIN**; and is a de-

parting or withdrawing from (*ἀφίστημι*) every form of known and proved unrighteousness. (See 1 Peter iii. 11.)

Inasmuch however as this divine principle is not peculiar to the days of the church's ruin, but existed just as much from the first, the separation from evil must be limited and governed by the lines elsewhere laid down in God's Word, and, as far as church order goes, already alluded to in Part 1.

B. SEPARATION FROM ECCLESIASTICAL EVIL.

"Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, meet for the master's use, prepared unto every good work." (2 Tim. ii. 20, 21.)

The house of God is spoken of in 1 Tim. iii. 15, and elsewhere, and the word "house" used here, *evidently* points to ecclesiastical association, and may well figure that which was called the House of God in the first epistle, but is only spoken of here under the image of "a great house."

In order to become a vessel unto honour, individual purging (*ἐκκαθαίρω*) is required by God from the unclean elements in the house, not however from the house itself. Both these separations are individual, the first being on moral grounds, the second more on ecclesiastical, and would embrace the various corruptions that have crept into "the house," false doctrine, wrong discipline, unscriptural modes of worship, &c., &c. The separation is of course from the men who hold or allow such things.

C. SEPARATION FROM FALSE PROFESSION.

"For men shall be lovers of self.....holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof; from these also turn away." (2 Tim. iii. 2, 5.)

This turning away (*ἀποτρέπομαι*) is evidently from the men

of mere religious profession which has so crept in and corrupted the church of God.

D. SEPARATION FROM UNBELIEVERS.

"Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers.....for ye are the temple of the living God.....Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate saith the Lord." (2 Cor. vi. 14, 17.)

This is separation in the things of God from open unbelievers.

These four Scriptures therefore give a warrant for (A) *"Departing from"* every form of known and proved unrighteousness in oneself or others.

(B.) *"Purging oneself from"* Those who corrupt, ecclesiastically, the house of God.

(C.) *"Turning away from"* professors whose evil practices shew their godlessness.

(D.) *"Coming out from"* open unbelievers.

PART 2. THE SCRIPTURAL ASSOCIATION OF THOSE SEPARATED.

A. INDIVIDUAL.

"Follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure (ἐκκαθαίρω) heart." (2 Tim. ii. 22.)

It may be well to link now the three places we have had this word ἐκκαθαίρω (to cleanse out) used. In 1 Cor. v. we were told to "cleanse out" the evil. That not being done and the house becoming leavened and corrupt, a man is to "cleanse out" himself, and finally is to associate—not with those who "call on the name of the Lord" only, as at first in 1 Cor. i. 2,—but with those "that call on the Lord out of a cleansed out heart."

This, in itself, however gives no ecclesiastical ground of gathering. There can be but one ground of rightly gathering ecclesiastically, and that is the original order of the church of God in Scripture, which we have already looked at. It

may however be asked what warrant have a few (not being all the believers in a place) who have separated individually according to 2 Tim. ii. to break bread and exercise discipline as an assembly. The answer to this is in Matt. xviii., and John xx., which we proceed to quote.

B. CORPORATE.

α. AS TO GATHERING.

"Where two or three (not necessarily all the saints in the place) are gathered together in my name (here is the essential principle of God's assembly), there am I in the midst of them." Matt. xviii. 20.

Here then is the warrant for gathering.

β. AS TO DISCIPLINE.

"Jesus came and stood in the midst and said... Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." John xx. 23.

Here is the company of Matt. xviii. 20, empowered to act in the Name to which they are gathered, for reception or exclusion.

If we now go a step further and ask what are the rules for reception and exclusion by this little company who have separated from evil, it must be answered, Scripture contains no rules save those originally laid down for the church at large.

The great difficulty of their position manifestly arises from the smallness of the company and the immense breadth of the ground they stand on, and from the difficulty, therefore, of avoiding forming unwritten codes of select rules for the purged company. It is needless to say, Scripture warrants no such course. If these purged ones wish to act on Divine principles, these are emphatically, solely, and entirely, those rules for WITHIN and WITHOUT, originally laid down for the guidance of the whole church of God.

These having been already considered, no more need be said

about them. One or two examples only may make the practice clearer.

Those gathered in Christ's name are bound to recognize as **WITHIN** all the eight classes given in Part 1, Division 1, and as **WITHOUT** the three great classes given in Part 2 of the same division. They have not to receive the former, but to treat them as **WITHIN** in virtue of their position in the church of God. "**WITHIN** and **WITHOUT**" do not apply to the little purged company, but only to the church at large. At first if a man was not **WITHIN** the local assembly, he was not **WITHIN** the church at all. Now the contrary is true, and must be recognized by all who would stand on the ground of the church of God and avoid forming a new and exclusive sect.

At the same time all the classes in Part 2 (those **WITHOUT**) are refused, not "put away." Fresh converts are received, **NOT INTO THE PURGED COMPANY**, but into the church of God; they may or may not take their place with the former, but they are **WITHIN** until Scripturally **WITHOUT**. Any who come under the discipline that excludes are put **OUT**, not only out of the purged company, but outside the whole assembly of God, though such discipline may not be generally recognized on account of the ruin of the church. The "two or three" have therefore no warrant to exercise any discipline not applicable to the church at large, if all were in order.

Finally the relation of a purged company who wish to act on the principles of God's word towards similar companies, and towards those they have left may be briefly considered. 1st. As regards other companies. We must here remember the word "church" may mean either the believers in a place, or the actual assembling of such on Divine ground (see note *) Hence in the former sense, God's assembly in a town includes every believer in it not excluded by discipline, while in the latter sense, the assembly may only find its true expression in a little meeting of per-

haps only two or three, to which, however, every believer in the town, *de jure*, belongs ; he has not to be admitted to, still less, excluded from it. The association of those who call on the name of the Lord out of a purged heart is not voluntary, but follows on their recognizing the original principles of the church and obeying Heb. x, 25 If gathered together scripturally, such companies, however small, are the expression of the assembly in the place, or of the assemblies in a country, provided they include as *within* their circle every believer in the place or country not excluded by the word of God, and exclude all whose place from God's word is "without." No special unity however exists between such christians or christian assemblies that does not exist between all christians. Such assemblies are all one in the unity of the One Body, but include in their unity every believer as already stated, though the majority of such believers may never take their places amongst "the two or three" at all. The oneness of the church of God does not depend on the expression of practical *fellowship*, else discipline inside, where such has to be withheld, were impossible, but on the fact that every believer is within till excluded scripturally. If any therefore seek to keep the unity of the Spirit, they must walk in its principles ; the first of which is, that it includes equally every member of Christ. Care must therefore be taken not to raise these companies of purged ones virtually into the church of God, and also to avoid all appearance of a special communion. A fixed special communion of purged ones with a permissive communion of "outsiders" at once makes a new sect, and it is quite possible to make a sect on the principles of the one Body whenever these are altered from the lines of Scripture. The only privilege that one of a company of purged ones would have in going to break bread with another, provided both were rightly gathered, would be, that both owning Scriptural rules his belonging to the one company would be a sufficient warrant that he was

rightly WITHIN God's assembly at large: We repeat, we must always beware of applying the terms of WITHIN and WITHOUT to any company of purged ones, such a use being distinctly sectarian.

2nd. Respecting those from whom the purged company had separated, it is evident no link remains with the latter as a company. Should any from it however, rightly WITHIN God's assembly and not excluded by Divine rules, seek to break bread or associate with the *purged* ones, their place WITHIN must be recognized, though their evil position may be faithfully and lovingly shewn.

* The word *ἐκκλησία* (church) is used as follows in scripture.

1. The saints who form one, out of many gatherings in a city.— (Rom. xvi, 5.)
2. The saints collectively in any one city (Acts viii, 1.) though forming many gatherings.
3. The saints in any one place (Rom. xvi. 1.) who form but one gathering.
4. In one doubtful passage (Acts ix, 31.) the saints in a whole district or country.
5. The whole body of believers everywhere on earth at any time.— (1 Tim. iii, 5, 15.)
6. The whole spiritual body of Christ. (Col. i, 24.) (Eph. v, 27.)

The "Church of God" may refer to 2, or to 5.

The word *ἐκκλησίαι* (churches) is used as follows:—

A. The groups of No. 2 or 3 in a country or district as "The Churches of the Gentiles" (Rom. xvi, 4.) of Galatia (1 Cor. xvi, 1.) of Macedonia (2 Cor. viii, 1.) of Judea. (Gal. i, 22.)

Groups of No. 1 are never called "churches" but the church in the place. (Acts xi, 22.) Those in groups 2 and 3 are also called "the churches of God, (1 Cor. xi, 16.) and the "churches of Christ." (Rom. xvi, 16.)

THE LINK OF SCRIPTURE

BETWEEN CHRIST AND THE SOUL.

THE time is peculiar, and much of the quickening power of the Spirit is abroad. And it is not fine, clear preaching that is used, but rather a simple, earnest expression of the heart in prayer, or in speaking and also singing. I believe the *intellectual* lust of the day is meeting with some rebuke from the hand of the Lord, and yet, we are not to give up any truth we have learned from

Him through His Word that standeth fast for ever. The disciples were left with the Lord during the days of His personal attractions on earth, for they were then very ignorant of Scripture. But when He rose from the dead and joined them again, "He opened their understanding that they might understand the scriptures." He explained to them what the great bearing of Scripture was. He gave them, as it were, a lecture upon it. (Luke xxiv.)

This was the forming of another link between Him and them. *Personal attraction* was one already, and Scripture now becomes another. And this additional link not only capacitated them to use the Word for the guidance of others, but enabled them to read their own title in a way they had not yet done. When Peter, for instance, said, "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life," he understood the Lord up to a certain measure, and he felt that he could have no life but in Him; but now that the Lord had expounded His death and resurrection as the ground of remission of sins, Peter could read his title, as a sinner, to life in a clearness and certainty he never could have done before.

Many souls now freshly awakened, will need the confirmation of knowledge of the Word. Exercises of soul may set in, under the trials of life and the accusing of Satan in the conscience, and the various wear and tear of christian warfare, that will demand "the sword of the Spirit." The danger may be feared, on the other hand, that when the link of Scripture between Christ and the soul becomes strengthened that of *personal attraction* should become less. But our communion with the Word is to feed, and not to supersede our communion with Himself.

THE COMING OF THE LORD,

IN VIEW OF THE PRESENT PRACTICAL CONDITION OF CHRISTIANS.

AN important question has been raised from time to time, as to the position of all believers at the Lord's coming, seeing that the practical confession of Him and obedience to His word are, in these days, so different from what was found in Christians at first.

It may be well to take up this question, and examine it according to the light which Scripture affords us.

God has quickened us together with Christ. He has in His good pleasure chosen us, that we should be the companions of His beloved Son throughout eternity. (Eph. i. ii.) He has set us, each one in the body of Christ as it hath pleased Him. (1 Cor. xii. 18.) He has given us to the Lamb as His bride. (2 Cor. xi. 2; Eph. v. 25, 32; Rev. xix. 7.) All this is pure grace, altogether outside ourselves, and in no way connected with or dependent on our faithfulness. Christ has glorified the Father, finished that which was given Him to do and He merits therefore the full reward, and God will not let *Him* lose because we are unfaithful. When He comes for His saints, as we read in 1 Thess. iv. 15, 17, divine life (He is our Life) in each soul will at once fully respond to His call, and to His love.

That call may find some saints buried in worldliness, occupied with things here, and, so far as the *springing up* of the heart's affections to Christ goes, far from happy. But the love that went out to them when they were dead in sins will not prove untrue to itself, though they should have gone back to

sleep among the dead, and perhaps look so like them that no human eye could discern the difference. They have life, even life eternal, and Christ who is their life will awaken life in them in a moment. But true as this is—can it satisfy our hearts? Can we live on thus, satisfied with not being *left behind*, while our hearts are unresponsive to the love which is ceaselessly going out towards us? Ultimate safety, blessed as it is, does not content the soul that knows Christ; and should we be content now to go on with that which conscience testifies against, with *one thing* which we know to be contrary to the mind of the Lord, simply on the ground that when He comes there will be no believer left behind, that there will be no difference in this respect, but that all will be caught up together to meet Him in the air? If the word of God reveals that every one whose soul has heard the voice of the Son of God, shall hear it in *body* too, this revelation is surely intended to quicken the affections of His people during His absence (John xiv. 2, 3; Rev. xxii. 17). It is important to remember that the coming of the Lord and the “catching up” of the saints is a part of the purpose of God, not of man’s responsibility, and it is not merely the church, but all saints from Abel to the rapture who will then meet the Lord. We have our own portion, i.e., those who since Pentecost have been quickened together with Christ, but all the hosts of the redeemed will share in the triumph of the Lord in *that moment*. “*They are Christ’s*” and that is enough.

As regards the Lord’s acknowledgment of the more faithful service of some, it is a large question. Perhaps it will be enough to say now, that whilst the Father, in divine love, has given all the redeemed to Christ (and it is thus they are *Christ’s*, 1 Cor. xv. 23), and has chosen the Bride and will give her to His Son, the portion specially His own as the Lamb—and this in the fulness of grace, apart from all question of responsibility, yet that same love and grace have put

us as *servants* down here, the present representatives of Christ, His epistle (2 Cor. iii), as those who in everything are subject to Him, to act as He would have us act, to shew forth His virtues, what He is, to be here for Him and for Him alone. This is responsibility, and responsibility necessarily involves judgment. Each must give an account of himself (2 Cor. v. 10; 1 Cor. iii. 13; iv. 5; Rom. xiv. 10). There is reward for service in the kingdom, perhaps future service according to present faithfulness (Luke xix. 16-19). There are the crowns, the crown of life (James i. 12; Rev. ii. 10), the crown of righteousness (2 Tim. iv. 8), the crown of glory (1 Pet. v. 4).

For the saints as seen by God according to their perfectness in Christ (Col. ii. 10), and in their various relationships according to divine sovereignty, there can be no question of responsibility, all must be of pure grace; but as seen *down here*, the church as composed of individuals is responsible, both corporately and individually, and in both, will be judged—corporately as Christendom on the earth (Rev. xvii. xviii); the true believers individually before the judgment seat of Christ.*

But leaving the question of reward, let us rather look at the subject, as one of present privilege, and as that which concerns Christ's glory, rather than our own joy. How far are we sharing God's thoughts about the world's treatment of His Son? The world, in His sight, is guilty of rejecting, yea of murdering His Son; for though His determinate counsel and fore-knowledge were accomplished in the cross, yet man is none the less guilty. Therefore (and it is a striking proof of the world's condemnation), He is taking *out* of the world a

* This must not be understood as saying or implying that any saint will come into judgment as to his person or as to his acceptance before God. He will "be manifested" then according to 2 Cor. v. 10, walk and service—"the things done in the body" will be tried in the light of that solemn tribunal, but the person of the believer will never stand in judgment. See John v. 24, in which passage "condemnation" is the same word as "judgment" in v. 27. [Editors.]

people to associate them with a heavenly Christ. He is not putting the world to rights, while never giving up His supreme control over everything, for not a sparrow can fall to the ground without Him. Neither is He improving it. He is saving souls by the gospel of His grace, but He is not training nor elevating man's moral nature by this gospel. He is not using it for an external reformation, nor in any sense making the world, as such, better. Scripture leaves no room for such a thought. The world and He have two perfectly contrary objects. The world would exalt *fallen human nature*. For that end it patronizes christianity, pays the Lord outward homage, uses the name of "Jesus," and thinks by all this to bring God in debtor. Finding that to patronize religion is far more for the world's benefit than to persecute, it has its societies and its benevolent organizations, instead of tortures; its public demonstrations of religion, instead of its amphitheatres of former times. It has taken (in many parts) a christian form; but *as* the world, its object is still the same:—to remove the effects of the curse; to do away with the obnoxious truth that man is a sinner, so that he may be happy and undisturbed by conscience, though still at a distance from God.

As another has said: "If a Chinese, who had heard a missionary speak of Christ and christianity, came to London to see what it was, would he find the mass of men, the world, governed by other motives than those which governed the mass at Nankin, or Peking, or Canton?" Not the least. They will use the name of God and of Christ, they will acknowledge providential blessings, but they will live and reign without Him.

Now God has quite another object, viz.,—to exalt the One whom the world has cast out, to make manifest that all apart from Him is corruption, ruin and wretchedness; and to form for this One, who is *all to Him*, the "new man," the "new

creation," that which shall owe its very existence to Christ, the church which shall be in ages to come, the proof that all blessing is linked with Christ.

Whilst doing this, and consequently suspending the world's judgment, He calls upon those whom He has thus quickened, to come out manifestly from every association with that which is contrary to Christ—*His test of all*. He has named the name of the Lord upon them, and would have them wholeheartedly with Himself in making their first and last desire the glory of His Son; taking Christ's part, shunning everything the world can own (1 John ii. 15), even its religion, as an invasion of His rights, and being so occupied with Him in the heavens, that their walk in the world should be unmistakably and altogether *heavenly*.

(*To be continued.*)

ON STAYING AWAY, OR NOT, FROM THE LORD'S TABLE.

THE answer to your question depends in many points on the state of the soul. The first question would be:—Have you ever found peace of conscience before God, so that that should be true of you which ought to be true of you, according to Scripture "The worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins?" When we have not this, every fault mixes itself up with the question of the light in which God views us, and the question is not restoration, but of having or of recovering a sure sense of standing before God, which is a very different thing. God is not really known in love, though we may believe generally that He is so, since He has visited us in mercy.

If I am not out of Egypt, that is, if I have not a clear

knowledge of God as a *redeeming* God, but am looking to God to defend me against His judgment by blood, my thought of Him is yet wholly imperfect; my failures give *fears*, not self-judgment properly, to my spirit, the great point then is to know and believe that He has redeemed me in love, having taken me *in the resurrection* of Christ out of the whole state and condition I was in before; to know that *He* justifies me, and not only that I am justified before Him. Both these are true, the former only is perfect liberty. When this is fully known, His love is never doubted; but we are brought to feel that it is *grieved*. The love is therefore still known to be there; and hence, when the heart really looks to Him, it is soon restored, though the Lord may keep it so long in suspense as to communion, as may be necessary to probe the heart as much as is needed.

If you have the full assurance that God is love to you at all times, the witness of His Spirit in communion will soon be restored to you. But there is another question. When I have not positive sin on my conscience, I cannot properly excommunicate myself. Hence the separating myself (as to profession outwardly, of course I mean) from the unity of the body of Christ, of which the Lord's Table is the sign, is a very serious thing, and we are not justified in doing it, except on very positive grounds. If I felt that there had been serious neglect of God and *He* was positively dealing with me about my sin, I should rather stay away. But it is a very serious thing, when one knows that it is the unity of Christ's body; then one ought to take up the matter seriously indeed with oneself. With many the abstaining from communion is much too light a matter. On the other hand if it be, as is the case in some souls, only a distrust of God's love, of which the enemy is taking advantage, abstaining from it would only increase the uncertainty of soul. The word of scripture is not, —“Let a man examine himself whether he should eat,” but

"Let a man examine himself and so let him eat." This is the general rule, not to eat lightly, but in judging evil to eat.

If the peace I first spoke of is not possessed, we cannot judge rightly, because restoring love is not known.

The first great question for you is, Do you know really the love of God in not merely an attached heart but an assured conscience? If so, I should say, "go," but do it seriously, so as not to trifle with any evil; unless indeed, some definite dealing of God with you about evil be in hand, when you would do well to refrain till that be settled. I know not whether speaking thus generally (and I could only do this of course) will be of any avail. Look to the Lord. The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His way." Trust His love; only judge yourself. If I can be of any further use, I shall be happy.

Very truly yours in Christ,

J. N. D.

Slight verbal alterations have been made in this letter for the sake of those who are not accustomed to the writer's style, but nothing is changed which affects the sense. [Editors.]

A NEEDED ENQUIRY.

WHAT various departments of enquiry and knowledge there are in the perfect and beautiful oracles of God! 2 Tim. iii. 16-17 suggests this. There is the doctrinal, the historical, the practical, the devotional. Each of us, it may be, has a tendency to nourish his soul with one or other of these somewhat out of due proportion, and the character of our mind will form itself accordingly, and the character of our communion also. Some of us will be known rather as orthodox, some as spiritual, some as practical, some as intelligent. Might we not pause for a moment and look at ourselves, not only as individuals, but collectively, and ask, have we been unduly feeding

the soul with one or other of these meats from off the table of the Lord to the damage of its full health? And can this be discovered from the character of mind which prevails among us, and from the character of the communion which our own souls have with the Lord and with one another? I believe this would be a profitable enquiry.

And is it so? Is the mind and the communion that have been produced among us (let me so express it), of so marked a character, that we can discover from them the food we have been living on, and the air we have been breathing? There is a variety of character among us; truly we need not question that.—It must needs be so, I might say.

But still, is there not something prominent, something pervading? I believe there is, and I am disposed to express it in this way—that we have been more intent on cultivating knowledge rather than devotion. The result, as to our communion one with another, has been marked accordingly. We find, on social occasions very generally, points of enquiry presented, and nice distinctions (correct also, I allow,) taken up and discussed, but the exercises of the soul in conflict, or the experiences of the soul about the virtues of “the kingdom of God not in word but in power,” are less our material. We are wanting in “fervency of Spirit,” and have talked, and talked accurately about truth, but not *broken the heart* over it sufficiently.

There is a yet further enquiry, and an important one, suggested by 1 John v.—If I love a family of children for the parent's sake, I shall love *all* the children. If on the contrary, I love some of them and despise or take no account of the rest, it is evident that my love for those I do love is owing to some congeniality or other personal cause, not from love to the parents. How is it with us as to the whole family of God, the household of faith?

THE TWO-FOLD "WAY" OF GOD.

PSALM lxxvii.

I need only say a few words on a portion that, happily, is familiar to our souls, and therefore it is not for the purpose of entering into what is familiarly known that I would call attention to this Psalm, but because of a truth of deep practical importance in connection with the two-fold "way" of God.

His way is in the Sanctuary and His way is in the sea. Now there is a great difference between these two things. In the Sanctuary, where all is light, all is clear. The way for us there is through Christ, through His blood—"the new and living way through the veil, that is to say, his flesh." We thus enter in where all is light, and where (precious truth!) all is love. There can be no mistake there. There can be nothing there in the least degree that is a harass to the spirit, nothing to distract the mind or trouble the heart. On the contrary, it is when the poor troubled one enters into the Sanctuary and views things in the light of God, that he sees the end of all that is not of God, of everything that is so entangled by sin on the earth. God has given us the Spirit and the Word for guidance here, and in the Sanctuary we have the Father and the Son. Peaceful, blessed guard from all evil! It is thus we can judge all things the end of which we could not otherwise know.

We learn the same truth in another Psalm (lxxiii.) "When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me. Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end"—that is of "the ungodly, who prosper in the world."

Thus, however difficult, or trying, or painful the matter, it is our privilege to bring it, and to bring it at once, into the presence of God. When there, we get into the place of perfect light and of perfect love, for God is light and God is love, and then, whatever the difficulty, all is set right. Nothing there can occupy the place which belongs to Christ, and nothing can fail that concerns His glory.

But it is not only that God's way is in the Sanctuary, and that when we are there all is bright and happy, it is also true that His way is in the sea, that is, He walks where we cannot trace His footsteps. God moves in a mysterious way at times, as we all know. There are ways of God which are purposely to try us, yet not at all as if God had pleasure in our perplexities. And if perplexed, it is not as if there were not the Sanctuary to draw near to, where we can rise above all perplexity. But still there is a great deal in the ways of God that must be left entirely in His own hands. And yet what we find even in connection with His footsteps being in the sea, is Divine guidance for those who are in the spirit of dependence, as sheep that must be led.

"Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known. Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron,"—and that was through the sea.

Afterwards it was through the wilderness, but it was through the sea first. The beginnings of the ways of God with His people were these, because from first to last God must be the confidence of the saint. It may be the first lesson of his soul, but it never ceases to be the lesson.

It is happy to know that while the Sanctuary is open to us, yet there is something still nearer—God Himself—as the Apostle Peter tells us in the third chapter of the first epistle, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to *God*. This is a precious truth.

We *are* brought to God. We have boldness to enter into the Holiest, the Sanctuary, but we are brought to God Himself, a more blessed thing than to be brought into the Sanctuary. And I am bold to say that heaven itself would be but a small matter if it were not that we were brought to God. It is better than any blessing, or any deliverance from trial to be brought to One who is Himself the Source of all blessing and joy. That we are brought to Him *now* is the most precious truth of God.

But still there are the ways of God in the sea, and there we often find ourselves at a loss. If we are occupied with the sea itself and will try to see God's footsteps there, then they are not known. But confidence in God Himself is always the strength of faith.

May the Lord grant to us increasing simplicity and quietness in the midst of all we pass through, for His Name's sake.

THE CHRISTIAN RACE AND THE WAY TO RUN IT.

Continued from page 41.

In verses 22-24 of Heb. x. we find, like a "seedplot" for the following three chapters, the three all powerful motives for the believer's heart: *faith*, *hope*, and *love*,* as they are developed and commented upon in Chap. xi. (*faith*), xii. (*hope*), and xiii. (*love*).

There is nothing so attracts and encourages even the natural heart of man as the certain expectation of a great joy awaiting him. *Hope* is the cheering element of the Christian pilgrim during his rugged path through a barren land to-

* Most of our readers will be aware that the correct readings in v. 26 of Chap. x. is "*hope*" not "*faith*."

wards his final rest and glory with Jesus. Even for the "children of this generation," a world without hope would be but a grave. Though they may have constantly to make the sad experience, that the life path of the children of this world, from the cradle to the coffin is strewn with disappointments, —dead, slain hopes,—yet men never grow tired of plans and hopes.

"And what," to use the words of a well-known Christian writer,—“what more powerful in its influence than hope? It is the hope of harvest, that cheers the husbandman in his toil. The exile is sustained in his wanderings by the hope of once more beholding his beloved country. It is in the hope of revisiting his native shores, that the mariner ploughs the deep, and braves the storm. The merchant is stimulated by the hope of gain—the student by the prospect of celebrity—the warrior by the hope of conquest, and it may be, of spoil. Take away from these the hope of securing the objects they severally pursue, and all motive to exertion or endurance is withdrawn. Rob that mother of the hope of seeing her children happy and esteemed, or at least the *hope* of their being so, whether she should live to see it or not, and what do you leave to support her amid her daily and nightly anxiety and toil? Ah, it is thus that even in this world, *hope* goes beyond the limits of the individual's life, and leads men to live and to act for a future in the well-being of their offspring, when their own career on earth shall have come to a close; and hope, even in respect of things of this life, sweetens the bitterest cup, and sustains under the heaviest load of present calamity and grief.”

But earthly hopes are doomed to disappointment, in one way or another. The real objects of such hopes, when attained, are found, as to their value or satisfaction, far beneath what they were expected to be. In this world, *rest* and *desire* destroy each other. One has formed a plan to obtain some

attractive object of his desire. To obtain and *rest* in the enjoyment of it, is his *hope*. Every muscle and nerve, all the activities of his mind are strained and set in motion to obtain it. And when he has reached it and wants to rest in the object of his desire and hope—behold, it is “vanity and vexation of spirit.” As the fabulous “apples of Sodom,” growing on the shores of the Dead Sea—once the site of Sodom and Gomorrah,—crumble into dust and ashes under the grasp of the thirsty traveller, so the desired object withers away into disappointment. It is not what the hopeful attainer had expected it to be. *Desire* and *rest* have destroyed each other. And can it be otherwise in a world which is ruled by the powers of darkness, and where Satan, sin and death reign?

Not so in Christ. There *rest* and *desire* *provoke* one another as it has been truly observed. The more the heart rests in the enjoyment of what our Beloved One, who is ours and whose we are, is in Himself and to us, the more do we desire to know Him, whom to know is not only Eternal life, but real strength and joy and rest. Happy desires ! Still happier rest of heart in the enjoyment of that which alone can and does satisfy ; and thrice happy object of them all, Blessed Saviour, whose knowledge and enjoyment alone satisfies, and more than satisfies those Divinely created desires, whilst increasing them. Everlasting praise be to Thy precious Name !

“What in thy love possess I not?
 My Star by night, my Sun by day!
 My spring of life, when parched with draught,
 My wine to cheer, my bread to stay!
 My strength, my shield, my safe abode,
 My robe before the throne of God.”

And if the hope for a great earthly joy awaiting us, has such a cheering influence upon the natural heart of men, what, Christian reader, must have been the attractive power and the cheering influence of the corresponding hope of that

Heavenly joy, that was "*set*" before that Heavenly Stranger on earth, who always set His God before His face, when He was in this world which is alienated from God, a "Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," yet rejoicing in His God, who had set that *joy* before Him? And what was the character of that joy, which was "set before Him"? Was it not the joy of sitting at the right hand of God, His Father, in virtue of the accomplished work of an Eternal Redemption?

We all know, how sweet is *rest* after *labour*. And if the result of that labour was the accomplishment of a perilous and heavy task, on which the welfare and happiness of a family depended, we can readily imagine from our own little experience, what must be the pleasure and comfort of the head of such a family when on his successful return he "*sits down*" to enjoy his *rest* after such a work! There is a wonderful power in that simple expression "*sat down*," as used by the Spirit of God throughout the Epistle to the Hebrews in connection with the finished work of Christ. The Spirit of Him, who when passing through this "Valley of tears," set His God constantly before His face, speaks of that joy, which His God had "set before Him," when saying: "at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." Who can conceive the joy of the obedient Son of the Father, who when approaching the Cross, and praying for those He was about to redeem, could say in Divine anticipation, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do"—who, I say, can conceive His supreme joy, when He *sat down* in Heaven at the right of the Majesty on high, in His due place of rest, glory and honour? He had been manifested to destroy the works of the Devil, taken part of flesh and blood, that by death he might destroy him that had the power of death, to deliver them who through fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage. He had bruised the serpent's head and fitted many sons for Glory, by satisfying all the claims of God's Majesty, against which man

had rebelled. He had fully met and satisfied them all, when at the end of His patient race He bore the burden of all burdens, *the Cross*, where "mercy and truth met together and righteousness and peace kissed each other."—He had glorified His Father and God from the beginning to the end of His Race on earth, during His life, but more still at the end, in His death, when lifted up from this earth, nailed to the accursed tree. He had triumphed in Himself on that Cross over all the powers and principalities of Satan, whom He had met in his very stronghold, even death. But above all, He had glorified His Father by His obedience unto death, even the death of the Cross.—He had laid down His life, that He might take it again. It was therefore the Father loved Him, and gave Him the welcome of a divine Father, at His right hand. And well might such a Father say to such a Son: "Sit on My right hand until I make thine enemies thy foot-stool!" For had not that Son's first word when about to leave His glorious home on His errand of grace and truth been: "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God?" Had it not been the same, when, in His unremitting service on earth, He had given the water of life to a weary soul, and spake to His disciples, on their return with provisions for the body: "I have meat to eat that ye know not of? My meat is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work?" And when, at the end of His earthly career of perfect obedience, the thrice repeated appeal went up from Gethsemane to His Father, that if possible, that cup might pass from Him, had not the ever repeated ending been: "Nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done?" What then, must have been the greeting, and the reception on the part of that Father of such a Son, on His return from the "far country," whither He had gone, in *obedience* to His Father's will, to rescue lost "prodigal sons,"—"children of wrath and of disobedience," after He had "spent all His substance," i.e., sold all His treasures to "bring many sons to

glory," and secure them a mansion in the Father's home above?—Surely, the joy and the welcome, which then took place in Heaven, witnessed by myriads of angels, when the obedient Son of the Father's love ascended to the highest Heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, "the last Adam," and thus far in the very form and likeness of a fallen race, that had rebelled against that Majesty—that joy, that welcome, that reception could only be understood by the divine hearts, that felt it.

May the joyful hope of Him, who for that joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross, and despised the shame, cheer us day by day, and enable us to run with patience the race that is set before us, till we shall hear Him say: "Well done, good and faithful servant...Enter thou into the joy of Thy Lord."

(To be continued.)

ATONEMENT AND THE WAY TO GOD.

LEVITICUS xvi.

God, from the very beginning of man's history, made known that sin involved death and separation from Himself. Moreover, after the fall of man, He shewed clearly that the alone ground or means of acceptance was by sacrifice and death. This is seen both in His dealings with Adam, and His acceptance of Abel's offering. ..

It was not until a later day, when God took up Israel and redeemed them to be His particular nation and people, that the question of atonement and the way to God was clearly brought out.

Consequent upon redemption, Jehovah made His dwelling

with His people, and appointed the Tabernacle for this blessed purpose. This was set up by Moses ; and Aaron and his sons were duly established as priests to serve in it.

It was after two of Aaron's sons had sinned before the sanctuary (Lev. x.) that Jehovah gave His instructions respecting atonement, and approach to Himself.

The day of atonement was, of all others, the most important to Israel, as well as to Aaron and his house, as the time when the question of their sins for the year was settled. The way and the time of access to God were then decided.

Jehovah's presence being *within* the veil of the tabernacle, the place of His throne, it was a question of what became the majesty of Him who appeared in the cloud upon the Mercy-seat.

Who, save Jehovah Himself, could decide what would meet His holy claims, and the sins of the people, as well as allow Aaron to draw near without incurring death ?

How instructive, whether for an earthly people in the past and future, or for the children of God of to-day ; and, we may add, no less for man generally. The chapter clearly shews that neither Aaron nor Israel had any voice or will in the provision for that day.

All being of God and made known by Him, it only remained to give heed to, and carefully carry out His will, to secure the needful and happy results, as to God and the people.

"Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place, with a young bullock for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering." This, then, is clearly and emphatically made known—that Aaron must approach by means of sacrifice. The bullock for the sin-offering as well as the ram for the burnt offering equally told of life to be given up to death. No less plain was it with the goat, to be taken and killed as a sin offering for Israel.

Further on it is written, "And Aaron shall bring the goat

.....and offer him for a sin offering" (v. 9). And again "Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering...and shall kill the bullock" (v. 11). Aaron and his sons needed the bullock, and Israel needed the goat to be slain. Thus was it taught that, whether it be atonement for sins, or the question of approach to God by those in themselves guilty, it can only be by death. The slain bullock and goat declare plainly that "the wages of sin is death." The holiness of the throne, and the guilt of the guilty can alone be met thus.

Aaron, dressed in his appointed holy garments for the occasion, and his flesh washed in water, may have a suited place and purpose to shadow forth what Jesus was in His own Person and ways; but death *alone* could meet the deep requirements of such a moment. It is all-important to note this.

Again, if the life is in the blood, both the blood of the bullock and goat must be brought into Jehovah's presence, and applied as He enjoined. Aaron entering the divine presence with the blood, is instructed to take with him "a censer full of burning coals from off the altar before the Lord and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small" (v. 12), and to burn it for a cloud of incense, so as to cover the Mercy-seat, "that he die not." Then commenced the wondrous application of the blood of the already slain victim. With his finger he sprinkled it *upon* the mercy seat eastward; *before* the mercy seat he had also to sprinkle it seven times. The same had to be done with the blood of the goat for Israel, as with that of the bullock for himself and his house.

Thus, it is manifestly seen that blood, and blood only, makes atonement, and gives access to the Divine presence.

That Aaron should come not at all times was also clearly stated. Once in the year, at the divinely ordered time, and *only* then, could he come with the blood of the slain victim. The Majesty of the throne claimed that which would be con-

sistent with its nature, as to light, holiness, and righteousness, and the blood was the alone appointed provision for it. Being sprinkled both *upon* and *before* it may well declare that nothing less would answer to the Throne, or allow Aaron (and all those that day represented in or by him), to be before it or stand with unshaken confidence in the sacred enclosure of the Divine presence.

Here the work was completed as to the all important feature, typically, of that day, both for the claims of the Throne and the need of the guilty people. Much more took place as to the blood being sprinkled seven times upon the *Altar*, as well as the solemn act of carrying forth the carcase of the bullock and the goat, to be wholly burnt without the camp. But the grand and important feature surely of that solemn and unique day was, the blood taken and sprinkled, before, and upon the throne.

By this the question of atonement for sin and sins according to what became Jehovah, as well as of the only way of approach, and standing in His presence was settled by blood alone. Aaron, after this, retires, passing outside the veil, that veil which screened the Divine presence and excluded even his entrance, until the following year, when the same work had to be repeated.

How perfect and simple are the ways of God even in type and shadow, leaving nothing to man's will or choice. Obedience to His revealed mind was the only thing, both as to His claims, and man's need and blessing. True it was but the type or shadow of better and heavenly things, yet surely an unmistakable voice, that atonement, and access to God, must be by blood. To allow or invent aught else would of necessity and justly, involve judgment.

What a warning for to-day, when man's will and corrupt mind would seek to blot out the truth as to his true condition, and need, daring to go in his own way to God without blood ;

and thus ignore the Majesty of the throne with the unalterable claims of holiness as to sin. This, too, in the full light of the cross of Christ, where the question of sin according to the claims of holiness was fully gone into and settled by Him of Whom it is written, "Having made peace by the blood of His cross."

What a golden key is the Lord Jesus Christ, in His glorious Person and Work, to unlock all the precious types, which at most could but partially set Him forth! Where, apart from Him could be found the antitype to the day of atonement, so as to meet what the throne claims, with what God is, whose throne it is, and the deep need and distance of a sinful heart?

(To be continued.)

"THAT I MIGHT LIVE UNTO GOD."

GAL. ii. 19, 20. PART ii.

Thus this life unto God has its sphere and exercise in the knowledge of Himself which our God gives. It delights in Him with the joy which this knowledge imparts. Immense as is this blessing it is not all, for we live unto God,—

(2) in the power of the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father. Choicest God-like purpose to have us before Him as children and to form a life and create affections in us by the Holy Ghost which answer to the heart of our Father! Precious grace, that he would possess us as the "many sons" whom He is bringing to glory, now and in the eternal day of His own ineffable rest! Life unto God in such a relationship,—what heart but His could even have conceived the thought of it! Yet it is ours, and ours for present enjoyment.

The law told man what he ought to be and what God's claims upon him are. It required of man, in God's name, that he should yield entire obedience; it cursed the disobedient. But it could not tell what God is, nor bring lost and guilty man to Him. Still less, if possible, could it reveal the Father's name. This none but the Son of His love could do, after the law had done its sad, but just and needed work.

"I have declared unto them thy name," said the Lord Jesus, Himself the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father. He said it whilst dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. Who but He *knew* that bosom of love which passeth knowledge? Who but He could unfold its blessed secrets? He dwelt there in the repose of eternal love. Before the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy, the delight of the Father was the Son who lay in His bosom. That calm was undisturbed when He made the worlds. Nor was it broken when He came into the world. Though the humbled, emptied One here, He was owned of the Father as He began the public and active service of His life, and as, in a sense, He closed it, in sweetly memorable words,—*"This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."* From the moment when His *life-service* was owned and the Son of man was wrapped in the cloud of the excellent glory, down to the cross was but a second stoop of love and devotion: *"As the Father gave me commandment even so I do."* *"Therefore doth the Father love me because I lay down my life that I might take it again"* (John xiv. 31; x. 17).

How fitted He to declare the Father's name whilst still in this world! (John iii. 13). Yet was the full adequate declaration of it only possible when Christ was risen. *"I have declared unto them thy name and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them."* He made good this word the third day after its utter-

ance when He bade Mary to go to His "brethren" and say "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father." Redemption had wrought a mighty change. It had opened up for man an entirely new position. The Father's name is fully declared, and, through the finished and accepted work of Christ, the believer enters into the fruit of it; the love wherewith Christ is loved is in him, and Christ is in him. He lives unto God, a *child* before his *Father*.

How far, dear fellow-believer, how far have we apprehended the truth that our deliverance from the law and from sin is that we may enjoy God and taste the Father's love? Is the grace that has made us children of the ever-blessed Father deeply wrought into our hearts? Do we bless our God every day that He is truly our Father, and our Father according to the excellence of the relationship His own Son had down here in humiliation, and has on high as the exalted One? Does this close and tender relationship form our hearts and our ways by its own unspeakable grace? Do the joys of the way and its sorrows come to us from a Father's hand? Are the mercies of our path and its trials fragrant to our hearts with the love that the Father bears Jesus, His Son, our Lord? Is the service we render the service of children whose hearts are fresh with the Father's love? And is the meanest work of daily life the service of an obedient and devoted child? As our God looks down into our hearts, does He see the answer to, and the reflection of, His own blessed love?

Beloved, the spirit of adoption is in us to produce the holy affections suited to the relationship in which we are with our God. His witness with our spirit (according to Rom. viii.) is not a witness to our pardon nor even to the favour in which we stand with God. Above and beyond these priceless blessings His witness is that we are CHILDREN OF GOD. Witness beyond all price for a soul heretofore a child of wrath! Witness sweet and refreshing as the dew of Hermon, yet

mighty in the exceeding greatness of His power who dwells in us, the seal of divine and perfect love and the earnest of assured glory yet to come! We have received the Spirit "that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." This same Spirit is "the *power* that worketh in us" that we may enjoy here below, spite of the circumstances around and the weakness within, the love of the Father which is in us and Christ Himself who is in us. How happy we, beloved! How blessed our place! How deep our joys! How real the *power* our God has given that we may taste them! Soon our Lord will lead us up to that Father, whose name He has declared. In joy unspeakable for Him and for us He will present us before the presence of His glory. Then unhindered and unceasingly we shall "live unto God" in His own eternal home, purged worshippers before our God, adopted children with our Father. "Even so, Come, Lord Jesus!"

"WATCH AND REMEMBER."

ACTS xx. 17-35.

Continued.

And is not this touching address, this solemn leave-taking by the Apostle a word of deep instruction for us in this day? Paul submits his daily course to our view that we may see what serving the Lord really involves. If God honoured him with great gifts, he exercises them in all humility of mind; and if his ministry was abundantly blessed, his service cost him many tears. He is ever before us as one who realized all the difficulties and the dangers of the task, but never allowed his own conscious weakness to hinder his going on with it. "By the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." They were to remember how God had

wrought in him, and watch lest another energy should be found at work in them (Compare Phil. ii. 13). Following human leaders, however gifted, diverted their eyes from the Giver to the gift, and would prove destructive of the spirit of dependence, and therefore of divine succour and support.

Faith in God, faith in the presence of Christ, faith in the word of God's grace, the Apostle presents as the safeguard of the church in the midst of, and opposed by the powers of evil. It is thus he contemplates the saints at Ephesus. A flock, (what more helpless), with wolves around, and dangers within, but a flock purchased by the blood of God's own Son, and therefore His who bought it.

Israel had been the Lord's flock (Ezek. xxxiv.) and was thus the chosen vessel of His power in the midst of the idolatrous nations. Though in themselves as weak and as ready for destruction as a bush in the desert, burning but not consumed, they went forth at first in the full confidence of redemption-power (witness the song of Moses and the children of Israel (Exod. xv). The Lord could say of them,—“I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown” (Jer. ii. 2), This was their “first love” and these their “first works.” Therefore we find Israel's case is put as an example to us and as a warning too, in 1 Cor. x. They were led like a flock. “Thou leddest Thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron” (Ps. lxxvii). Thus separated by God Himself, Moses was the apostle to them as the Lord is to us (Heb. iii). Then it was “Moses law,” now it is “the word spoken by the Lord” (Heb. ii. 2, 3; xii. 25), that is, we are separated to *subjection*, in the constant confession of the *authority, majesty, power, glory, and dominion* of Him whom the world rejected, but who is made Lord and Christ. “God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts ii. 36).

This then is the position, and this the condition of the church as *here*—subjection in the place of absolute dependence, and utter weakness in that place. As seen in *union with Christ*, the security and blessing of every member depend on the faithful love of the Head, the nourisher and cherisher of His body, and this can never fail. These two aspects of the church are of all importance to understand. In the former, faithfulness is looked for in the church, and alas! it is not found. In the latter faithfulness in Christ is seen, and this, as we have said, can never fail.

To return to the example of Israel, whose story is told for our admonition.—Whatever their first love, and joy, and works, how soon had it to be written of them, "Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked.....then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation." Their weakness, their dependence, their condition as a flock in the midst of wolves were all forgotten, and the prophets raised the warning cry of destruction to arouse them from their false and fatal confidence.

But though "destruction upon destruction" had been thus cried (Jer. iv. 20), not until the Glory had departed from the temple could Nebuchadnezzar enter in to destroy the city and scatter the people; and the thought is solemn, so long as the church was found cleaving alone to "the Rock of salvation," His promised presence was its defence against every attempted inroad of the enemy. Oh! that the church had remained faithful to her "first love" and still "held fast the Head from whom all the body, being supplied and knit together through the joints and bands, increaseth with the increase of God." In the Revelation the Lord lays bare her failure and her dangers, and calls her to repent, to return to her "first love" and her "first works" or her ruin as a testimony to Him will be complete. Has it not proved so?

Who that has read the history of the church, can doubt that

the Lord's warnings and the predictions of the Apostle, have long since been fulfilled? Indeed her present condition leaves no doubt that the flock has not been and will not be spared by the enemy, and to "shepherd the sheep" by gathering them together to Him who gave His life for them (John x. 11) and who died in order to gather them together in one, is the most honourable service in which a servant of Christ can be engaged. They are unspeakably precious to the Good Shepherd. He calls them His own. "My sheep,"—"My Father gave them me,"—"I lay down my life for the sheep." How unlike the shepherds who "feed themselves and not the flock." Such, it is grief to say it, either claim the sheep for themselves and draw away disciples after them, or they lord it over the heritage, so that the sheep which should be gathered are discouraged and driven away.

The thought should comfort every troubled soul, distressed with the havoc the enemy has made, that He who foresaw all, provided for the eternal security of the millions of *living stones*, gathered during nearly two thousand years, in those memorable words,—"*Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it* (Matt. xvi. 18).

Perfect then should be the rest of every believer in Jesus. He is not only a "living stone," as quickened together with Christ, but he is *built* upon the Rock: the builder too is Christ Himself. Faith sees all in resurrection. "And this is the will of Him that sent me, that of ALL which He hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."

"View the vast building, see it rise;
The work how great! the plan how wise!
O wondrous fabric! power unknown
That rears it on the Living Stone."

But as here in ruin, in division, in difficulty, in danger, yet each of us responsible, not only as an individual, but as a part of this building, as a member of the body of Christ, how can

we be witnesses of the unfailing faithfulness of God amid all the failures of man? The blessed Lord looked through the whole church period as He stood in the midst of His disciples in Matt. xviii. and spake of those who at *any time*, from Pentecost to the end should be *gathered in His name*. Such should be, however weak, under the care of His Father (v. 19), happy in His own presence (v. 20 and John xx. 20), and guided of the Holy Ghost (v. 18 and John xx. 22, 23).

Paul, too, was given to see the wreck of his work as a wise master-builder, but he knew full well that every *living stone* of the building had to do with the infinite resources of the *Living God*. He commends us "to God." And he also knew that there was no limit to His grace, and the word of His grace is enough for every willing heart to see and act upon. He commends us "to the word of His grace." It is just this which we need, and which none but God can supply (Psalm xlv. i. 3).

NIGHT AND WINTER.

In John xiii. 2 it is said that the devil "*put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son to betray*" the Lord; and in verse 27 we are told that Satan "*entered into him.*" These are two very distinct actions of the enemy, who in his subtle dealings with us, first *suggests* evil, and then if the suggestion is tampered with and not judged, he himself gets entrance and actuates, *i.e.*, *energises* to the carrying out of the evil he at first suggested.

This is a solemn word to us, for the person—the vigilance,—the *subtlety* and the *power* of Satan are great realities at this moment.

Then in verse 30, we are told that when Judas went out to accomplish the terrible deed, "it was *night*." How well the moment and the darkness suited the transaction, and its moral consequences! Do you think that "and *it was night*" has no other signification than to indicate the time by the clock as it were? I do not. There is serious moral meaning in the words. Do you believe that this world is shut up in impenetrable darkness, judicially shut up because of its rejection of the Son of God—the Lord Jesus Christ? What then is the "*dark place*" in which the prophetic word shines as a light according to 2 Pet. i. 19? What is "*the night*" that "is far spent," the day being at hand (Rom. xiii. 15)? And what is the meaning of "this is your hour and the power of darkness?"

But it is maintained that mankind has made progress; that the light and intelligence of the present age has done much to chase away and is chasing away the darkness of bygone ages? But *what is this boasted light* and how does it manifest itself? It is the blindness of the human will "searching after truth" which, like Pilate, it cares not to find in Him who is IT; and its grand display is in judging and frittering away the word of the living God which reveals Him. The darkness is profound: darkness that is felt by all to whom the spiritual eyesight has been given to discern it. Have you this discernment?

In another place (John x. 22) it is said in connection with the rejection of the Lord "and it was *winter*." Could it be anything but night and winter in the absence of Him who is the sun and centre of all blessing.

Read John viii. 12, and xii. 35-50.

G. O.

ATONEMENT AND THE WAY TO GOD.

PART II. HEB. ix. and x.

IF Leviticus xvi. declares the order and work of the day of Atonement as carried out by Aaron, together with its results, chapter ix. of the Epistle to the Hebrews blessedly gives the commentary of the Holy Ghost on it, in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ with its precious results, worthy of Him who was indeed a contrast to Aaron as well as his antitype. It is unspeakably blessed to find ourselves engaged with Him who, by His precious death, in virtue of His own atoning blood, not only settled fully and finally the question of sin, but by it laid a righteous basis that God's glory may never suffer by having a people (though guilty in themselves), as redeemed worshippers before Him in light, holiness and peace.

It is clear from what the Spirit states in Hebrews ix. that the real way to God was not known or enjoyed by Israel.

Though Aaron, the High Priest, entered the Divine presence once a year with blood for himself and the people, yet, the Holy Ghost says, "The way into the holiest was not yet made manifest." Yea it could not be so long as the first Tabernacle, with its appointed service, went on.

All waited for Aaron's Antitype, for Him who needed no sacrifice for Himself, but was, as the Apostle Peter states, "the Lamb without blemish, and without spot," and who, in accordance with what we have in Hebrews ix., "through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God." This precious Christ came, and made atonement, so that we have only to listen and give heed to what God says of *Him*, and of

all the glorious change, consequent upon His wondrous death and blood-shedding.

How direct and pointed is this change from type to Antitype in the reasoning of the Holy Ghost—"But *Christ* being come an High Priest!" Were these words weighed and heeded there would be no place for so much of the present teaching and judaizing practice which keeps souls in bondage and dread, rather than in liberty and peace. Moreover the thought of repeated sacrifices and resprinkling of the blood, as in Aaron's day, would and could have no place.

When Christ came He not only died, but for ever made atonement by His precious blood, shed once for all—*never, never*, as Aaron's sacrifice, to be repeated.—Such a thought would be to reduce, in its value, the perfect sacrifice of Christ, to the level of that of goats and calves.

The Holy Ghost guards this by saying that:—"By his own blood he entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption."

Thus the antitype to what took place when Aaron entered the earthly sanctuary on the day of Atonement, is most clearly and blessedly given.

Now this magnifies God and shews what was before Him as to His own beloved Son, and the means of Atonement as solely by His precious blood. Well may we say, that what the Throne in holiness demanded, love fully supplied, and at a cost known only to Himself. Who shall or can measure the results after this? Surely none, save God Himself, can tell them out. Aaron enters the Divine Sanctuary below, with the blood of others, for himself and the people, Christ enters the heavenly sanctuary, even heaven itself, by His own blood which was shed exclusively for others.

Aaron needed a cloud of incense to envelope him as he carried the blood to the Throne.

Jesus needed no such incense—The preciousness of His

glorious Person, with the perfection of all that He had been on earth was well known, estimated and enjoyed by God as He entered by His own blood. .

Aaron received atonement for a year, Christ obtained eternal redemption. Blessed be His holy Name! what less would be worthy of such a work as His? Aaron too must retire from the Divine presence, outside an unrent veil, never to return save with the blood yearly; Jesus, the High Priest, the true Aaron, abides in Heaven itself, and ever represents His people there. Thus atonement is made; its eternal effects are before God, and its present and everlasting results are secured for the believer, according to the value God Himself puts upon it. The veil that was rent from the top to the bottom when atonement was made, is but a figure of a greater truth; not only that all distance is gone, and access to God is secured, but He Who did it by His own death, has entered heaven and there abides as High Priest for His people. What therefore of those who believe in such a Person and work?

Are they to share no better results than those flowing from what Aaron did on the day of atonement?

Is it still a yearly redemption, and a conscience in bondage under dread, not knowing whether God at the end will not after all be their Judge? Or is distance displaced by nearness, with a conscience set free for ever, so as to be before God by the new and living way, in the enjoyment of His presence? Does not the same scripture shed its own pure and certain light upon these things? If the way to God of old was not manifest, neither could the people of God know or enjoy a perfect conscience, that is freedom from the smallest dread of the judgment of God.

What is the language of the Spirit of God in His reasonings about the blood of Christ, in contrast to that of bulls and goats? He adds:—"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself with-

out spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Not only is the fact thus plainly and emphatically stated, but the question is more fully gone into in Chapter x. in its application to the believer.

Those who approached God in the outward sense, under the law, were never perfect as to conscience. Like the priests who were constantly offering, and never sat down, so as to say their work was done. But now Christ having come and having perfectly completed His work, has "for ever sat down," and the believer, as to *conscience* is *for ever* perfect. What less could be expected, though alas so little understood and enjoyed, whether as to the state of conscience or the liberty of drawing near to God? To Aaron, Moses said—"Come not at all times into the Holy Place." To believers it is now written—"Having therefore brethren boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus."

Wondrous privilege for the people of God of to day, to go freely to God with a conscience at rest as to sin. Precious indeed the blood that secured it, and eternal praise be to Him, whose blood was shed to this blessed end. Truly is it, "a new and living way" opened for believers, and as purged worshippers there is nothing to do but accept the God-given invitation:—"Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." The precious blood of Christ giving the abiding title, is the same which both purges effectually the believer's conscience and vindicates the Majesty of Him who now invites to draw near. What remains therefore, save the happy and continual worship of those so favoured?

"Within the holiest of all,
Cleansed by His precious blood,
Before the throne we prostrate fall,
And worship Thee, O God!"—

Where is the reader as to these solemn and precious realities? Is he a happy, purged worshipper in the heavenly sanctuary, or is he still in a worldly sanctuary, with a conscience in dread and at a distance from God? G. G.

THE CHRISTIAN RACE AND THE WAY TO RUN IT.

(Continued.)

Looking around has often a very distracting effect. But there is a wonderful power in *looking up*. It has been truly said: "If you want to be miserable, *look within*, if you want to be distracted, *look around*, but if you want to be happy, *look up*."

The captain of a vessel, whose son had to go for the first time *to the top of the mast*, was standing on deck, watching with the intense interest of a father, his perilous ascent. When the boy had arrived at a considerable height, he began to look down towards his father. The captain well knowing, that the looking down would be sure to cause giddiness and a fatal fall, put his hands to his mouth and shouted with all his might:

"LOOK UP!"

The boy, who began already to feel the giddy effect of his looking downwards, caught his father's warning cry just in time to save his life. With renewed effort he continued his journey, steadily looking up to the top of the mast and reached it in safety.

Many, especially of our younger fellow-Christians, so easily influenced by the giddy rotations of daily circumstances in the world, in family life, and in the Church, would we remind of that warning, and yet so encouraging word:

"LOOK UP!"

A greater and better captain, even the "Captain of our

Salvation," addresses to us, beloved christian fellow-mariner, not from below, but *from above* the same exhorting, yet cheering call to "*look up*," through the inspired pen of the faithful pilot of His appointment, who could say: "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do." For *this one thing* Paul did: "Forgetting those *things* which are *behind*, and reaching forth unto those things, which are *before*," he pressed toward the mark "for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." He *looked up to the Head*, and *therefore* was able to warn the christian-mariners of his time and of future generations of the "*breakers a-head*," though his eye of *faith* was not fixed on *them*, but on the *Head above*. Like Peter, who threw himself into the water and made for the shore,—an *earthly shore*, "where death is hovering," but where he beheld his risen Master standing, as the blessed goal of attraction; so Paul, in a higher sense, made for the *resurrection-shore*, where He beheld His risen, ascended and glorified Master, like in Stephen's case, as it were standing, ready to receive him. No bread and roast fish were in store on *that shore*, but Christ Jesus Himself, "the Resurrection and the Life." All the agencies of the new Man, all the energies of Christ's resurrection life in Paul were, through the power of the Spirit of Glory, "reaching forth" and "pressing" towards that bright resurrection-shore and the all glorious and all beauteous goal that made it so bright. Just as a swimmer, surrounded by the element of death, but the power and energy of life in his body, with his arms and hands making for the shore, at the same time pressing down the water, and pushing it back with his feet, thus maintains the mastery over the element of death around him, whilst advancing towards the shore of safety, so was Paul "reaching forth unto those things that are before," and so did he "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

How the straight "looking off unto Jesus" keeps us

superior to the disheartening and sickening effects of the surrounding circumstances in the world, and still more in these "perilous times" and "last days" of the Church on earth!

Many years ago, when the writer of this found himself on the (Baltic) sea, and was in dread of the sea malady, this being his first voyage, he was advised, not to look at the water, but to keep his *eyes steadily fixed on the top of the mast*. He followed the advice given him, and was spared the dreaded attack. After having found the Lord, when reading the words of our chapter: "Looking off unto Jesus," he remembered the lesson, then learnt, and it has often been a helpful warning to him, when in danger of looking at the water, *i.e. circumstances*, instead of "*looking off unto Jesus*." How many anxieties, perplexities and troubles would he have been spared if he had but remembered the lesson more continually. We therefore can but repeat what we said at the commencement of these meditations—"Let us keep *Christ between us and the circumstances*, and we shall walk, like His Apostle of yore, *over the waters*, but if we let them *slip in between Christ and us*, we shall *sink into them*. It is the old tale of Peter over and over again.

But if the eye is fixed on Christ's glory, and the heart on His altogether lovely Person, all the burdens that would impede the race, *glide off*, and we don't know how. We just "*lay them aside*," because they are *felt to be burdens* and nothing but burdens. How the new *Christward* nature rejoices and breathes more easily when they are thus gone!

But there is a still more dangerous impediment to the christian race, than a mere burden. I mean: *snares*. But this all important subject we must reserve for our next, the closing meditation on the christian race.

THE COMING OF THE LORD.

IN VIEW OF THE PRESENT PRACTICAL CONDITION OF CHRISTIANS.

(Continued.)

Faith looks on to Christ's earthly glory, occupies the thoughts with God's purposes about this earth when His King shall be set up according to His word (Psalm ii. 6-12). Therefore God has given us *prophecy*, because it is the testimony of Jesus. It is the same Jesus, our Lord, who then will be seen to be exalted. "The Lord shall be King over all the earth, in that day shall there be one Lord and His name one." What concerns Him in that day of His manifested glory concerns us, for we shall reign with Him, but now our walk is to testify to an unseen, to a *heavenly* Christ, and our mind to be on *heavenly* things.

The professing church has lost sight of all this. Christians (*real ones*,) have forgotten their heavenly portion, their present heavenly association with Christ, therefore, naturally have sought an earthly one; and consistently, have brought Christ down to reign spiritually, through the gospel, over the world which rejected Him personally. They have tried to reconcile these things in order that they themselves might be comfortable in the world. Their affections being really touched by the work of Christ for the sinner, they have worked hard to spread the knowledge of salvation by it, but, occupied with their *own* interest in this salvation, they have lost sight of what concerned Christ, and have been more anxious to win the world over, even to an outward shew of allegiance, than to take Christ's part against the world, and in their conduct to corroborate, so to speak, the Holy Spirit's testimony, and "convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John xvi. 8).

Satisfied with what they thought "essential to salvation," they have not enquired wherefore God had left them down here, and busy in their own well-meant ways of doing good, have not had their spiritual discernment exercised to discover what God was doing in saving them. They have not seen that the cross is death to this world (Gal. vi. 14) and that minding *earthly* things (not worldly merely, but *earthly*),—living in spirit in them, is enmity to the cross (Phil. iii. 18–19).

It is not for us to measure degrees of neglect in the things of God, but there is no doubt that culpability exists in proportion to the light brought in. Each one possessing divine life (the divine nature), is responsible, and ought to be in the condition to discern at once when God is acting. It is this discernment which has always characterized faith—discernment of God's ways. Thus the godly remnant in Israel owned John the Baptist and justified God, while the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves in not owning him. So now in these last days, when the professing church has become so thoroughly mingled with the world that the world accredits it, speaks well of it, gives it wealth, and name and worldly standing, faith discerns that God's calling is *above*, and the heart is intelligent in its own things in the heavens, and is thus taken off the world and the things in it.

To such an extent has the world succeeded in extinguishing the light which the church was set up to give, that real christians, to distinguish themselves as a *body* from mere professors, have called themselves the "invisible church." What a confession! The light of the world invisible! The witness of Christ invisible! The epistle of Christ, that should have been plain enough for all to read, invisible! But in one sense it is true to our *shame*. There are christians, but no visible church answering to God's purpose concerning it. Groups of christians there are, who meet together of their own accord

(often with a large admixture of the world), and agree to form certain associations, but no *one assembly* meeting in the name of Him who died to gather them in one, and for whom they are waiting—gathering in faith of His promised presence and thus around Himself; their worship also partaking of the same *character* here as it will in the glory, because, though personally down here, they are in spirit one with Christ in heaven. This could not be, for christians (real ones) had lost consciousness of the heavenly standing of the church and almost of heavenly things. We were content to go on without true, manifest association with Christ, but He could not be content.

God, who is rich in *mercy*, could not leave us in this state. God, who must have His Son honoured in spite of man's failure, had compassion on us. He would have companions (so to speak) with Jesus in His rejection, and also in all that to which He is looking forward. Therefore, though He did not set the church up again, though He left it as a professing body in the ruin, and did not put that which was like "a great house" to rights, He called the attention of His saints to their heavenly position, brought the light of His word to bear upon all with which they were linked, and as a consequence, those who received the truth found they could no longer go on with the ecclesiastical systems of the day, for they stood in human appointment. The Holy Ghost was not recognized as down here on earth, in the absence of Christ, as the uniting power in christians, uniting them not only to the Head but to each other, or, in the Habitation of God, ordering all according to God. Man had acted and settled all. He had planned and done his best, but so far did not recognize the Holy Ghost as manifesting Himself in the Divine ordering of the church. Indeed, man left no room for Him. Not that *when* things were thus organized he did not ask God's blessing in true desire of heart, and own the Spirit as to *life* in the individual christian,

and even as to indwelling, but he did not (if a human comparison may be allowed) own Him as the directing soul of the body, the church. That is, the Spirit might not act as *He pleased* in the members. No wonder, then, that *the church* of God was invisible, seeing that there were parties taking different views of order, and carrying out their various and often opposing plans, setting up different tests and regulating admission by human standards.

How could it be otherwise when He who came down to take Christ's place, was practically set aside. The *One Will* not obeyed, the *One Guide* not listened to, even that other Comforter whom the Lord said should abide with us for ever.

But to return. Those who receive the truth, who reject man's expediency for God's order, find themselves alone with God, and at the same time one with each other, *one* because the Body is one, though having many members. They find that while they cannot set up a new thing, they can seek to obey God as He reveals His will, set free from all that man arranges and appoints. As those brought individually into the knowledge of accomplished redemption, made the righteousness of God in Christ, and therefore in full peace, it behoves them that their walk should manifest Christ, and therefore that walk must be in the Spirit, and not apart from the Body of Christ. They are in no sense *the church*, but they can, by the guidance and guardianship of the Spirit according to the word of God, act upon the principles and receive the blessing of the church, one part of that blessing being—*association with Christ in His rejection* while they wait for His glory. In other words, a people prepared not only as to their standing in Christ, but also *separated in heart and walk* to meet the Lord Jesus at His coming, to *watch* and *wait* for Him.

God has redeemed us that we may be thus wholly for Christ. In the fulness of His grace He has done all for us, and unceasingly cares for us. The suited return surely should

be that we should take care of all that concerns the glory of His Son in our walk and testimony. How have we kept our charge? Shall it remain a question—how much of our responsibility we can escape without being *disowned* by Him?

"THAT I MIGHT LIVE UNTO GOD."

GAL. ii. 19, 20. PART iii.

If this living unto God is characterized *inwardly* by (1) the enjoyment of God and (2) the spirit of adoption, it is marked *outwardly* by (3) obedience and (4) fruitfulness.

(3). The obedience which the law required was the condition of attaining to life: "The man which doeth these things shall live by them." The obedience of the Child of God is the fruit of life by the power of the Holy Ghost which is given him. It is not the obedience of a servant in the outer courts, but of one "brought nigh" to God, of a child in the happy consciousness of His relationship with his Father. This nearness to God is according to the new place of the risen Christ, his relationship is that of Christ:—"My Father and your Father, my God and your God." It is so with the obedience. We are called to obey as Christ obeyed. Alas, how short we come! Yet "he that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." 1 John ii. 6. We are sanctified unto the obedience of Jesus Christ (1 Peter i. 2).

But oh, what obedience was His! As the Eternal God it was His to command. Yet did He learn obedience by the things which He suffered. Let no one imagine that this means that He *learned to obey*. Nay, verily; but He learned what obedience is, and that in its whole extent when obedience was suffering, shame, and death.

We learn from His own words the character of His obedience:—“Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened. 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: yea thy law is within my heart.” Ps. xl. 6-8. Faithful Servant of the Father’s Counsel, whilst Son of His love, we would bow our heads as we contemplate Thy perfections; Blessed Master and Model for us, we would learn of Thee, meek and lowly in heart as Thou wast down here!

“Lo, I come to do Thy will” characterized, we may say, all His path from the moment when He said it, coming into the world, “until the day in which he was taken up, after he, through the Holy Spirit, had given commandments to the apostles.” What a pattern for us! “Mine ears hast thou opened,” (Heb. *digged*). That is, He had in obedience to the will He came to do, taken the place of a servant and received of God the body prepared for Him. Compare with this Psalm Heb. x. 5, and Philip. ii. 7.

Further light is thrown upon the character of His obedience by Is. l. and most precious it is. Himself Jehovah with his unshortened hand of might (v. 2-3), He bows to receive from the Lord Jehovah the tongue of the learned; not, however, for high things and mighty among men, but for the manifestation of lowly grace in speaking a word in season to him that is weary. Compare Matt. xi. 28-30, where He is, as here, the rejected One bowing to the will of another, and receiving all, even rejection and heart-breaking grief, from Him.

Nor is it only the one stoop, stupendous as it was, of taking a servant’s place:—“He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ears to hear as the learned.” *It was the obedience of perfect love, which hung daily upon the will, and lived by the word, of God His Father.* Satan could not move Him from this entire obedience by his baits or his wiles. He presented to Him the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the

pride of life; but all in vain. He whispered a doubt of His Father's love in leaving Him for forty days without food, and sought to beguile the perfect Servant from the path of obedience. He would induce Him, if he could, to use the power He had as Son of God to take Himself out of the difficulties and trials of the path of obedience on which He had entered as servant of His Father's will and counsels:—"If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." Ah Satan, all thy wisdom is folly in the presence of the mighty conqueror. The wiles of the devil were all in vain for One whose meat it was to do the will of Him who had sent Him. The Man Jesus Christ was here to do His will, to live upon His word. Morning by morning His ear was awakened—daily, absolute dependence! "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Equally perfect was the obedience unto death. Satan, vanquished by the Lord as He entered upon His public service, returns in view of the cross to alarm the Lord, and to draw Him, if he could, from the path of full obedience, obedience "unto death, even the death of the cross." Up to this point this path was in the clear shining of His Father's smile. Rejection by man could not touch this. Hunger and poverty could not hide the smile that lighted a path through a world estranged from God. The homeless stranger might pass His night on the mount of Olives while the creatures of His hand slept upon their beds; all was light and favour above. "I alway do the things which please Him." "This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes." He needed no voice to tell Him that He was there, and then, and ever the delight of His Father.

But now the dark shadows of the cross are on the path of the Lord, and Satan is there, as if with the last forlorn hope that the fear of death—death in all its dread reality as the

judgment of God—might turn the One, who loved supremely the presence and smile of His Father, from a path which *must* lead into the darkness of the forsaking of God. Who shall tell the anguish of that holy soul? The "strong crying and tears" and "the great drops of blood, falling down to the ground," tell the tale as far as our poor hearts can take it in. How the heart bows dumb before "this great sight!"

"When we see Thee in the garden,
In Thine agony of blood,
At Thy grace we are confounded
Holy spotless Lamb of God!"

An angel strengthens the obedient man, made in astounding grace, "a little lower than the angels."

Listen!—"O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, **THY WILL BE DONE.**" Satan is finally vanquished even in his strong-hold, his goods are spoiled. The obedient One goes down to the cross. "But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise let us go hence."

"Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him." The first man dishonoured God and lost everything by disobedience. The second man has honoured God supremely, and brought to His name a deeper glory, and a higher, than was possible in an earthly paradise; and He has won for man more than Adam lost. "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

Beloved, we live unto God in the excellence of the life which Christ is. We are called to an obedience here below stamped with the character of His obedience.

(*To be continued.*)

“DEPARTING” SCENES IN SCRIPTURE.

(PHILIP i. 23.)

THEIR LESSONS.

I have heard of the departure of dear——. I desire to rejoice in one and another finishing the course and gaining the presence of the Lord in Paradise, though the common meeting of Him in the air is the proper hope. If however 1 Cor. xv. gives us the victory of the *body* in the day of resurrection, 2 Cor. v. gives us the victory of the *spirit* in the day or hour of its disembodiment, so to speak. If the shout on the one occasion be this—“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” The triumph on the other is this—“Absent from the body, present with the Lord.”

May our affections and our thoughts be more at home in the midst of the scenes of faith and hope, and in the enjoyment of unimpaired, and what is more, undistracted powers to think of the Lord, and of the rest which He has purchased and given.

Like Jacob, or like Moses, or like David, we may well covet to be so free in spirit as to think of the glory that is before us, and of the necessities and sorrows of those that are around us. The departing scenes of these elect ones are very edifying. And so indeed was Noah's, as he was preparing to depart out of one world into another. It was the same two things that occupied him. He was preaching righteousness, and building his ark. In other words, he had his mind on the voyage or journey he was about to take, and on the condition of the generation that surrounded him; and all this he waited on calmly, and that is so blessed.

When the heart and conscience are so delivered, the heart from its distractions or attractions, and the conscience from its guilt and fear, that the soul can give itself to the glory that is before it, and to the condition of fellow sinners that are around it, how welcome is all the will of God, whether to depart and be with Christ, or to stay if more needful for others.

We see the same thing in the camp of Israel as they stood on the banks of Jordan. There, like Noah, they were about to pass from one world to another, to leave the wilderness for the land; and the securing of a poor woman in the devoted city, and the making of their own passage across the river, were the two activities that interested them. They had nought to ask about themselves. Grace had made sure promises in which they had to trust. They need not fear enemies, or the strength of the river. He who was with them, was greater than all that were against them. But they would fain pass the waters in such order as was worthy the presence of the Lord of the whole earth, and they would delight in giving pledges, even at the eleventh hour, to a poor self-ruined sinner who was still in the city of destruction (Josh. ii. 4). This is the true *sublime*, this is moral dignity that befits the saints of God.

FRAGMENTS.

THE BREASTPLATE.

“THE glittering jewellery on the breast of Aaron teaches us of the believer’s place on the heart of Christ—*his own, his very own*. The intercession of Christ must prevail; but this intercession also connects itself with the cry of the soul put up to Him. The Holy Spirit awakens that cry in the soul which is answered and echoed by the High Priest above. The

Spirit of the Lord calls on me thus to pray, and avail myself of Him. Suppose I ask for joy—Jesus asks, pleads that it is my portion, even joy unspeakable (1 Pet. i. 8). He has gone in before God, and pleads our cause mightily.

THE HIDING PLACE.

The Lord is always a Sanctuary, a hiding place to His people; in every place, in every company, they may hide in the secret of His presence from the strife of tongues about them. Better never enter into company, even with christians, if we cannot take our hiding place with us.

“Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man; thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues” (Ps. xxxi. 20).

SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. 1. Please explain Rom. xi. 12. How are both the diminishing and fulness of the Jews, the riches of the Gentiles?

F. H. M. S.

A. It is explained by considering that in God's providence (dealing in dispensation), Israel has been, is, and will be the appointed channel of blessing to the earth. “In thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed.” If such be God's plan, and if in His wisdom, even in their rejection blessing comes to the Gentiles through Christ, “the Seed.” (Gal. iii. 16), how much more, when the fulness of God's peculiar people be come, will blessing flow out from them to the utmost limits of the Millennial earth, not only as now, spiritually through Christ, but as the acknowledged centre temporarily of the whole earth.

[The "diminishing" of Israel gave occasion for the accomplishment of God's eternal purpose in the church—his purpose *for heaven*. "That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and of the same body." See also Eph. iii. 10. "Their fulness" will be the accomplishment of His purpose *for the earth* when its sabbath is come. "There shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people, to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious" Is. xi. 10. See also Deut. xxxii. 43.]

Q. 2. What is the meaning of the expression "baptized for the dead" 1 Cor. xv. 29? F. H. M. S.

A. The best explanation of this confessedly difficult passage appears to be that which takes it to mean,—filling up the ranks of those who have fallen as the soldiers of Christ Jesus. Many other interpretations are given to this passage, more or less ingenious, but none of them seem on the whole to give the full force of the words. We shall be glad however to hear any thoughts our correspondents may have on this verse.

Q. 3. Kindly explain 1 Cor. x. 2. F. H. M. S.

A. Moses was the leader, and they were all associated with him in death, through which he led them, in figure, *i.e.*, through the waters of the Red Sea. Moses was, as we know, a type of the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. iii. 1–6) with whom we are associated in death (Rom. vi.) and with whom (as risen from the dead) we have to walk in "newness of life" through the wilderness to Canaan. Mark however, that none passed through the Red Sea who had not passed already under the blood of the Passover lamb. (Note the "they" in Heb. xi. 29, and "them" in ver. 28.) When death is typified by blood, it is atoning in character and is between man and God. When it is typified, as here, by water, it is generally death in its separating character between the christian and his former enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil. Atonement is by *blood*, cleansing and separation by *water*.

[In 1 Cor. x. Israel's case is put "for ensamples" ("types") ver. 11. They were a people separated to Moses by God Himself and in His appointed way; not only "through the sea" but "*under the cloud*." Moses "as servant" was the Apostle of their confession. Christ, "as Son" is ours (Heb. iii). The gospel of the grace of God gathers out to the blessing, but also to the *confession* of the name of Jesus. Baptism separates to this confession. Thus, in Israel's case, they were no longer in subjection to Pharaoh, but they were to Moses. They were therefore in the place of absolute *dependence*, and were ministered to by the Lord—"spiritual meat and spiritual drink"—and "*all*" that were baptized to Moses were thus ministered to (see each verse 1-2-3) There is the *love* side; "*all*" were ministered to. There is the *confession* side; "*all*" had to be subject. It is in this important connection that the Lord's Table is seen in 1 Cor. x. It marks the church's place, in the midst of the sacrifices of the Jews and those of idolators, that is in the world as seen in ver. 32. where the love of God is not known and subjection to Christ refused.]

Q. 4. When will the second three and a half years begin, referred to in Rev. xii. 14? C. H. S.

A. The second three and a half years, begin after the career of *deceit* pursued by Satan is ended, and the great tribulation of bitter persecution, such as has never been yet, is commenced (ver. 13). These days will however be shortened, hence they are not enumerated as twelve hundred and sixty days but as "time, times and dividing of time," or as "forty and two months."

Q. 5. Please give me a definition of the word "type." C. H. S.

A. A type may be a person, place, event or other circumstance, which, over and above its obvious and present meaning, has a deeper reference to some future person, place, event or circumstance.

CHRIST'S THOUGHTS ABOUT A CHRISTIAN.

JOHN xvii.

The Gospels give us the *acts* and *words* of our Lord Jesus Christ, with rare exceptions they do not tell us of His THOUGHTS, for these we turn to the Psalms. For instance, we see Him all through His life, carrying out in perfect grace His mission of love in obedience to His Father's will. But, if we would learn what were the secret thoughts of His heart, what the expression of His soul toward God, we turn and read with reverence Psalm xvi., that hidden main spring of a perfect life. Again, we gaze on Him at Calvary. We hear the taunts and jeers of heartless men, "the mockeries of hell, reverberate in human lips;" but of what passes within that holy bosom we should hear no trace could we not in Psalm xxii. read the very thoughts of His suffering soul. One always feels in reading such psalms as these, that we are being admitted to hear what would be beyond our place to know, were it not God Himself that reveals it to us. It is then with such feelings as these that we draw near to a passage in the New Testament that stands alone. I refer to John xvii. when the Lord Jesus, on the only occasion as far as we know, pours out His soul fully to God in the hearing of His disciples. If at other times He would commune with His Father, He rises a great while before day, He goes into a solitary place, He sends His disciples on in advance or retires from them a stone's cast. Here alone are they entitled to listen to Christ's thoughts about themselves poured out into His Father's ears. There can be no doubt from the first verse of chap. xviii. that our Lord spoke these words on the night of His betrayal.

There can also be no doubt that in the language used, He places Himself at a different period altogether.

Verse 4, "I have finished the work," and verse 11, "And now I am no more in the world," shew us that this period was *after the cross*; while verse 1, "glorify Thy Son," verse 11, "I come to Thee," verse 13, "now I come to Thee," shew us as clearly it was before the glory, probably before the resurrection. Another consideration helps us to fix the time. The Lord does not speak in this chapter of giving His life *for* us. If the period of which He speaks anticipatively here be after the cross, the giving of His life *for* us had of course been accomplished. But He does speak of giving His life *to* us, not as an accomplished fact, but "that He *should* give eternal life to as many as thou hast given Him." This life was given in all its fulness in Christ's resurrection (chap. xx. 22), hence, looked at here as future, the period would seem to be before that event. If our considerations be correct, we have then here, our Lord speaking anticipatively to God in that mysterious period when His voice was hushed on earth, and in which, if the prayer had actually been uttered, the disciples could not have heard or recorded its love inspired utterances for us.

What then do we hear as we draw nigh and listen to our Saviour communing with His Father? We find that out of the 26 verses composing this prayer we are the direct subject of 23. We learn Christ's most secret thoughts about ourselves. We see and feel His heart overflowing in love to and for us. In that mysterious hour in which He places Himself, the first thought of His heart, when restored to the sunlight of His Father's love, after being "made sin for us" at Calvary, is all "to usward." He cannot say too much about us, He cannot request too much for us, and is it not wonderful to think how we are beloved by Christ, and to see how this prayer, as it were, lets out all the secret?

One thing strikes us at the outset We are the elect, the

chosen of God, and given by the Father to His Son. The Father Himself loves us, and as a proof of His love to Christ, as a sign of the worth He sets upon us, He has thought us a worthy and acceptable gift to Christ, and Christ has received us not only with all the joy that a loved Father's gift inspires, but with a love to us "that passes knowledge," that has expressed itself in the depth of woe to which He descended in the "selling all that He had" in order to fit us to dwell for ever with Himself. What a history! What a worth to put on a company of sinful men!

Such are Christ's thoughts of our origin! Such His account as to how we came into His possession, and none who realize what this account means can ever have the least fear that Christ will lose one solitary member of a gift so costly from God Himself. All this fills us with amazement. We are accustomed to think of "sinners saved by grace," of "being saved from hell," but we are not used to considering ourselves as a part of God's gift to Christ. And yet this is the only view He takes of our origin. Should we not think more of it, beloved friends?

And now what has the Lord to say to God about us? Whether we think of the disciples of old, or of ourselves now, one thing is certain, there cannot be much of good to say. Especially at that moment, when one of His own chosen apostles had turned traitor, must the heart of Jesus have been grieved. We find He speaks of two things; what we *are*, and what He desires for us. As to what we are our Lord makes three great statements, not one of which we could make for ourselves, and each of which we are, alas! in some way or other denying every week that we live.

He says:—We have kept God's word,—That He is glorified in us, and that, We are not of the world any more than Himself, verses 6, 10, 16.

Take these three sentences, beloved reader, into the pres-

ence of the One who uttered them, and tell Him whether they are practically true in your life. Oh, how we hang our heads! The love and the confidence of Christ in speaking of us like this is too much for our poor hearts. We cannot understand it, for we *know* what traitors we are. All we can do is to fall on our faces before Him and say, "Oh Lord, in Thine own goodness and power, make, oh make these words more practically true of me. Let me not lose the power of them by thinking, that if Thou didst say them they must be true in Thy sight, but oh! let them be true in my life. Keep me in Thy truth, holding fast Thy precious word! Make me in some way, O Lord, a glory and not a shame to Thee! And oh keep me by Thy divine power separate from this world!"

Nothing overwhelms the heart like love. Far, far more cutting is it to hear our Saviour pouring out His soul in speaking well of us to God in all loving confidence, than to receive the bitterest reproaches.

It is enough to call attention to these utterances, the Spirit of God can alone make their **POWER** felt in our souls.

And now briefly as to the requests, they are seven in number.

'That we may be kept in the Father's name.'

'That we may be kept from all evil.'

'That we might be filled with Christ's joy.'

'That we might be filled with Christ's love.'

'That we might be filled with Christ's glory.'

'That we might be separated to God.'

'That we all might be one.'

The consideration of each one of these requests might fill a volume. Better far, however, than to enlarge upon them here is it for our souls to take them up one by one and ponder them now before the Lord.

Let us just review the holy ground we have been passing over.

Our Lord's thoughts of a christian are:—

1. That he is part of His Father's gift to Himself, and a partaker of His own life.

2. That he is one who has kept God's word, who is a glory to Him, and who is in every way 'not of the world.'

3. That he is one whom His Father, in answer to His request, will keep in the truth and from all evil, will sanctify and preserve in unity, and will fill with Christ's joy and love now, and hereafter with His glory for ever.

Are these, beloved reader, your thoughts about yourself? Truly 'His thoughts are not as our thoughts.' The consideration of them however is of extreme blessing to our souls, and there are few portions of the word where meditation bows the soul beneath the weight of Divine love, and leads it to earnest resolves for Christ's glory, like this wondrous seventeenth of John.

THE CHRISTIAN RACE AND THE WAY TO RUN IT.

(Concluded.)

The effect of sin is this: It *enchains*, *entangles*, and *entraps*. It is like the weed, that creeps stealthily up to the top of the plant and suffocates it. It may have a pretty, green, lively colour, but its embrace is *deadening*. An ivy covered tree or house may be a pretty sight, but the ivy kills the tree and spoils the walls of the house.

But it is especially in its *entangling* or *entrapping* effect, that sin is presented in our passage, in its tendency of ensnaring the *feet* of those who run the christian race. And let me add here at once, that the usual interpretation of the words, "the sin which doth so easily beset us," as meaning what is called

"*the besetting sin*," or that particular kind of sin, to which one or another is especially liable by his natural individual inclination, does not appear to me to give the mind of the Spirit, as expressed by those words in connection with the whole drift of our passage. For, however true it may be, as we know from our own humbling experience, that there is a particular kind of sin, to which every individual christian, on account of some prominent disposition of his natural character, is especially liable, and against which he therefore needs especial watchfulness and prayerfulness,—still, the whole general tenor of our passage does not appear to me to admit of such a restricted application of the term: "*the sin which doth so easily beset (or entangle) us.*"—It is an expression referring to the obstruction of the *feet* of one running a race. It appears to have rather an *objective* or *outward*, than a *subjective* or *inward* meaning.

There is sin in us, that is within our flesh, and in our natural heart, and there is sin without—in the world around us, that is, "*the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.*" Now the sin within, corresponds with, and answers to the sin *without*. "*As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man. Hell and destruction are never full: so the eyes of man are never satisfied.*" (Prov. xxvii. 19, 20.) So the things in the world *without*, are turned by the world (*i.e.* the natural heart and flesh) *within*, into snares for the feet of the christian pilgrim, if he does not constantly watch against them.

But *how* are we to guard against those snares? By walking *circumspectly*, *i.e.* looking around us? It is true we are enjoined to walk *circumspectly*, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil, (only the word in the original does not mean: *looking around us*, but "*carefully*," "*exactly*"). A cat, walking on a wall, spiked with glass, walks *carefully*, every footstep guarded. But it does

not look *around*, but at its *feet*. As to us—we guard our feet by looking up to our Head, “looking off unto Jesus.”—How does the bird avoid the snares? By being on the *wing*, *i.e.* above them. “Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird” (Heb.: “in the eyes of everything *that hath a wing.*”)—When a bird is caught in a net, it is because it has *run* into it, *i.e.* been on its *feet*, instead of being on the *wing*. A bird hardly ever *flies* into a net, but it *runs* into it.

In vain the endeavour of avoiding the snares laid for our feet by being *on our feet*, *i.e.* by efforts of our own. This is nothing but combating *sin* by the *flesh*, trying to quench the fire by pouring oil upon it.—We must be *on the wing*, *i.e.* above the snares. Thus we shall avoid them.

There is a species of bird which furnishes us with a well known and frequently used illustration in this respect. I mean the *Frigate-bird*.—This bird, has very clumsy feet, not much fit for running. Her strength consists in her *wings*. They are of an immense size, in proportion to the body. Consequently, in order to mount up into the air, she is obliged to make her ascent from some elevated spot, to get the necessary quantity of air beneath her wings. But when once in her proper element, she rises above the highest mountains and clouds. And when a storm is approaching, and the sea-birds seek a shelter in the holes of the rocks, or of the sand, the Frigate-bird is seen high above the dark clouds with their destructive charge. And when beneath her the raging battle of the elements begins, and lightning and thunder break forth upon the earth, and the sea, lashed into fury by the merciless gale, covers the coast with the wrecks of man's hopes and fortunes, the Frigate-bird, high above the tumult and confusion below, is fixed in mid-air, calmly resting on her wide-spread mighty pair of wings. She is said even to sleep on the wing.

What a lovely illustration this bird affords us of a christian,

who knows the power of Christ's resurrection, and, as risen with Him, seeks those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God; and setting his affection on things above, not on things on the earth, is kept by the "Power from on high," even "the Spirit of Glory," far above the tumults and contentions of the world, taking, as it were a birdseye view, of the *things* on earth; but not of His fellow-men, much less of his fellow-christians. Such a looking down, with the eye of spiritual self-attainment and pride, upon so called inferior classes of our fellow-christians, betrays the "haughty eyes" of pharisaic pride, which is one of the "*six things*" which "the Lord doth hate," and soon leads on to the *seventh* thing, thus completing the number, and is "an abomination unto Him," that is, the *sowing of discord among brethren*. The Frigate-bird is certainly not intended as a pattern for us in this respect. Such a spirit is the opposite to that of the faithful Jewish remnant, when they will emerge from the fiery furnace, after their cry "from the depths" of sorrows and exercises, (from the fish's belly, as it were), has gone up to the Lord and been heard of Him (Ps. cxxx). What will be their language then? A very different one to that of their rulers of old—"Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child."

[Here we have "Lamech," *i.e.* "poor" ("*Blessed are the poor*")—"made low," "smitten." (Gen. v. 28, 29.)]

And what is the Lord's answer? (Ps. cxxxi.) "Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth and for ever."—[After "Lamech" comes "Noah" (*i.e.* *Rest, comfort*). Gen. v. 32. Such is the order in God's school.]

May we thus by the Spirit of Him, who for the joy, that was set before Him, "endured the cross," be kept more at the

foot of that cross. There it is we learn to keep under judgment the *earthward* tendencies of the old nature, and the *deathward* tendencies of the flesh, which, like that herd of swine on the inclined plane, tend towards death. And may we, as risen with Christ, by His Spirit in our hearts and minds, be kept there above, where our Head,—the “Chiefest among ten thousand, who is altogether lovely”—is sitting at the right hand of God, in all His excellencies and perfections, both human and divine. And being thus kept near Christ by His Spirit, by whom we are united to Him, and who glorifies Him and receives of His and shews it unto us, the Spirit and mind of Christ will be more manifested on earth by us, where He, as the meek and humble Jesus, once said: “Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For *my* yoke is *easy*, and *my* burden is *light*.”

May He, who for the joy, that was set before Him endured the Cross, *despising the shame* (which makes men despised), and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God, grant us daily *patience*, to bear up under the trials of surrounding circumstances, and *faith*, to rise *above* them, and thus, whilst looking off unto Jesus, to run in patience the race that is set before us.—“Here is the *patience* and the *faith* of the saints,” is an all important principle of divine truth, not only for the Jewish saints in the “day of Jacob’s trouble,” at the time of Antichrist, but for all who desire to be true to Christ in these “last days” when that “mystery of iniquity” is fast approaching its final development: the *first Adam in full bloom*, i.e. Antichrist.—“The Lord is at hand.”

“A little while and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” “He, who is the beginner and perfecter of faith,” and, who, having run the whole race, is set down at the right hand of the throne of God, says:

“To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me, in

my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever." Amen.

J. A. v. P.

"THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT," WHAT IS IT? AND AM I KEEPING IT?

We do not propose to write this paper for the purpose of controversy, but for the edification of simple christians who desire to know the truth and walk in it.

Now to understand what is the meaning of "The Unity of the Spirit," as mentioned in Eph. iv., some little acquaintance with the mind of God as revealed in His word is needed, and also subjection thereto. It is one of those phrases, often met with in scripture, that cannot easily be defined in a simple sentence, comprehending, as it does, a volume of truth in itself.

If the reader will turn to the second chapter of Ephesians, and read carefully from the 14th verse and on through the third chapter, he will see that the Apostle, by the Holy Spirit, there unfolds a glorious truth connected with the Lord Jesus Christ, which had never been revealed before—God had kept it hidden in Himself from all Eternity, and had never made it known till he revealed it, by the Spirit, to Paul and the other New Testament apostles and prophets. It is called a mystery, not because it is deep and unknowable, but because it had been a secret, an unrevealed truth. As we have intimated, he begins to speak of this mystery in the 14th verse of the 2nd chapter, He says: "He [*i.e.* Christ] is our peace who hath

made both one." The apostle does not mean here, that Christ is "our peace" as between our souls and God, although, blessed be His peerless Name! He has "made peace through the blood of the cross" (Col. i. 20); but the meaning here is, that, a crucified, risen and glorified Christ is the point of reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles, who had been hitherto at enmity with each other. In ancient times God had called out the Jew and separated him from the Gentile, and had hedged him around with a "law of commandments contained in ordinances." He had put a wall of partition between the Jews and the Gentiles, that was by no means to be broken down or ignored by His people. Therefore a Jew did right in maintaining his peculiar distinction from the Gentiles around.

Not only had the Jew a distinct and peculiar calling which separated him from the Gentiles, he had also a "hope" which the Gentiles had not. The Gentiles were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having *no hope* and without God in the world."—The Jews, on the contrary, had a *hope*, and that hope was their coming Messiah, and deliverance, blessings, and glories, which they would enjoy in connexion with His coming and reign.—But this hope—which had been held out to them all through their history, and especially during the last part of that history, when they had become "scattered and peeled" among all nations—had been really brought nigh to them. Their Messiah had been raised up among them, (Acts iii. 26) and they had rejected Him, despised Him and put Him to death. The grand thing is, that, when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, and He had been taken down from the tree and laid in the sepulchre, God did not leave Him there, but raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in heavenly glory. Now, it is just at this very point that God makes known this new thing, which He was going to bring

about as a consequence of the rejection, death and resurrection of the Christ, or Messiah—that is, that He would gather out a people from Jews and Gentiles, and would send down the Holy Ghost who should baptise them into *one body*, and unite them to the risen glorified Head in heaven—This is what the apostle begins to unfold to us in this second chapter of Ephesians—He says: Christ “hath broken down the middle wall of partition that was between us [*i.e.* between Jew and Gentile] . . . for to make in *Himself* of twain ONE NEW MAN, so making peace, and that He might reconcile both unto God in ONE BODY by the cross.”

This is what is called in scripture, the Church,—the “Ecclesia,” or Assembly of God—the body of Christ—and in the last verse of this chapter we are told that it is “builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.” Not that it *has been* built, as though it were completed, but it is now in process of building, and “*groweth* unto a holy temple in the Lord.”

In the third chapter he tells us that this has hitherto been a mystery, or unrevealed thing, but that God is now making it known to His apostles and prophets by the Spirit, and that this mystery consists in God making both Jews and Gentiles “joint-heirs, a *joint-body* and joint-partakers of the promise in the Christ;” and in the fourth chapter he tells us that Christ, as Head of His Church, has given gifts to it—“for the work of the ministry for the edifying (or building up) of the *body of Christ*, till we all come, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a *perfect man* [not to perfect *men*] unto the *measure of the stature of the FULNESS OF CHRIST*.”

In the last verse of the first chapter, the Holy Spirit makes an incidental reference to this “body”—which puts it into a position of honour, dignity and blessing, surpassing all human conception. After telling us what God has done by

His mighty power in Christ, in raising Him from the dead and making Him the Supreme Head over the whole redeemed and glorified creation, he says: that He is thus "Head over all things to the Church, which is *His body*, the FULNESS, (the complement, the completion, the filling up) of Him that filleth all in all!" Can we conceive of a position more glorious, of a dignity higher, of a blessing more superb, for that Church whose members are recruited from the vilest sinners of the earth? Yet so it is; and furthermore, so complete, so absolute, is the Oneness, the Unity of Christ and the Church in God's wonderful counsels and purposes, that He takes up the figure of a human body and says: that as a human body, though it has many members, is *one body*, SO ALSO IS CHRIST! (1 Cor. xii. 12.) Superlative grace! Matchless condescension!

Although this Unity is perfect in the mind, and according to the counsels of God, yet we learn, from Eph. iv. and other scriptures, that this "one new man," this mystical Christ, will not be "perfect" or complete until the last member of the "body" is brought in, and the whole body is manifested with Christ, as His Church, in the glory. And it is by means of this very Church, this union of Jew and Gentile into "*one body*," that the "manifold wisdom of God" is to be displayed to all created intelligences, and in it glory will redound to Him, "by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end."

(To be continued.)

"However God acts, in grace, *first* on individual souls, yet He never sees them out of the connexion of the body of Christ, and the building of it up together in the faith, by the varied spiritual helps and gifts of the members. Though the epistle to the Romans is engaged with the dealing of God with the individual, yet so large a portion of his character and service is to be formed as a member of the body of Christ, that the apostle could not leave out the saints' place in it." (Rom. xii. 4, 8.)

SHORT PAPERS ON THE REVELATION.

(CHAPTER vii. 1-3.)

The seventh seal is not opened immediately after the sixth. It is the last, and when it is broken we enter upon the distinct and definite judgments that issue in the final conflict between the powers of evil and the Heir of all things—"the Lamb" of the first advent, "the Lion" of the second. The seventh chapter is thus in a striking place in the Divine story, and we shall do well to enquire humbly, but earnestly into the instruction God designs in thus introducing it. Nothing can be plainer than this, that the gracious object of the Lord in announcing to us the final developement of His ways in government, is not merely to interest us but to reach the conscience. This will be found true in Old Testament prophecies. The people in every case had fallen from their original place of blessing before the Prophets addressed them, and the word of Prophecy was given as a lamp for their feet in the "dark place" into which they had departed. Ruin followed on their refusal of it (2 Chron. xxxvi. 16).

So judgment on professing christians must follow on their refusal to heed what the Spirit saith to them in this prophecy; but the hearts of the faithful are encouraged to walk with God by the special promises herein made known. When the true christians are called to meet their Lord, the mass, already deeply corrupted, will become a prey to the final efforts of the enemy, and judgments, as in the seals, will fall upon them. But a new witness for God will be brought in, in connection with *the earth and in earthly order*, and of this we read in the seventh chapter. Viewing then the events of the sixth chapter as taking place very soon after the coming of the Lord for His saints, and observing that the eighth chapter speaks only of a "third part," a sphere over which the Dragon (see

the twelfth chapter) has direct governmental influence, we shall see the wisdom, as well as the goodness of the Lord, in introducing the seventh chapter between the removal of the long established governments, now called "christian," by revolutionary violence, and the beginning of rule under the direct influence of Satan.

Is it forgotten that the abounding mercy of God to the Gentiles, in their advancement to a place of highest privilege as to His dispensed blessings on the earth, is dependent on their "*continuing* in God's goodness"?

Can any reader of the Old Testament doubt that, in the prophecies, the blessing of the Gentiles is most frequently seen to be dependent on the restoration of Israel and their establishment in the land given to Abraham and his seed? But the present dealings of God with the Gentiles is at the *expense* of Israel, is the result of their fall. Their unbelief, shown in their rejection of their Messiah and in their hatred of the Gospel, has thus, in the wisdom of God, become "the riches of the world" and "their loss the riches of the Gentiles." (Rom. xi. 12) who have been lifted into their place for the time (v. 17). But will this state of things continue?

Will Israel always be in their present degradation and the Gentiles in their present ascendancy?

Rom. xi. leaves no doubt as to the answer. The Gentiles have neglected the warnings of that chapter. They have committed the three sins: they have boasted against the Jew; they have not continued in God's goodness, and they stand no longer by faith (v. v. 18, 20, 22). They will be *cut off* and the long disowned seed of Abraham will be restored to their place of pre-eminence (v. v. 17-26).* When the last soul for

* The point of view from which Israel and the christianized Gentiles are regarded in Rom. xi. is of the deepest interest at the present moment. The wide-diffusion of anti-christian doctrine in the professing church, and the rapid growth of a liberalism that refuses every form of the acknowledgment of God in the governments of professed Christian countries, may well lead to the conclusion that the Nations of Christendom are ripening for judgment, for God is not mocked. The path of the

heaven is converted, then v. v. 25-26 will be fulfilled—the church will be taken out of the scene, and judgments will set in, as in Rev. vi. resulting in the wreck and ruin of the present governmental systems in the Roman earth. Out of this ruin the beast of chap. xiii. i. will rise, having upon his heads the names of blasphemy, to whom the Dragon will give his power, and his throne, and great authority. The full power of Satan will then be rampant. It has long been working, and God alone holds it in check day by day, till the last stone of the heavenly building, the church, is brought in (2 Thess. ii. 6-7). Between these two points in this world's history—the wreck of the present systems and the introduction of the openly blasphemous system of government—we are given to see a work of grace begin in the tribes of Israel, resulting in a most remarkable outflow of blessing through the earth, making good the word—"For if the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead"? That the blessing of Divine mercy to the world has resulted in the salvation of millions for heaven, from the east and the west, and from the north and the south, has sustained the evangelists in their labours, and is the joy of every child of God; but when Israel shall be restored, "when the Lord shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root; Israel shall blossom and bud, and *fill the face of the world* with fruit." (Is. xxvii. 6. compare also Is. ii. 2-3; lx. 14-23, lxi. 9-11; Hosea ii. 14-23; Zeph. iii. 20; Zech. xiv. 16, and many other prophecies) This change in the order of Divine government is a special subject of prophecy.

In looking more directly to this seventh chapter of the Revelation our attention is first directed to the range of judgment. The storms of God's wrath are ready to be let loose

true Christian is outside all this. His portion is not here, not of this world. His love for souls should express itself therefore the more earnestly in seeking their salvation. Not only may death close the door of hope on individuals, but the coming of the Lord may speedily terminate the day of long-suffering goodness to these Nations, for surely the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

over the whole earth, and symbolical language is again used to convey in a word (as an image) the greatest, because the Divine view of the scene. Four angels are seen standing on "the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that no wind should blow on the earth," (that is, on all that is apparently ordered, and stable among men); "and on the sea" (all that is ready for tumult and commotion); "and on any tree" (any of the great, or mighty, or noble). All are alike in danger. Let but the winds be loosed and their "hurt" must follow.

There is however another Angel seen ascending from the east, or the point where, when the day begins, the light and the glory of the sun will be seen. Surely the following verses can leave no doubt on the reader's mind as to the meaning of this allusion. The sealing of the 144,000 of Israel, the godly remnant who will fear the name of the Lord (Mal. iv. 2), will take place during the darkest hour of the world's history, and the One who seals them, seals them for the day of His glory, when as the Sun of Righteousness He will arise with healing in His wings. The seal of the *living* God not only secures them from death, but for *the day*, the whole millennial period. The Angel in this chapter has authority over the others, and has also the seal of the living God in his hand. In the next chapter He stands at the golden altar with a golden censer, and has power to give efficacy to the prayers of the suffering remnant. In the tenth chapter He comes clothed with a cloud, even as the glory of the Lord appeared of old (Ex. xvi. 10; xix. 9; Lev. xvi. 2, &c.), and claims both earth and sea, according to Ps. viii. As we study these visions it becomes more evident that we have presented to us in this glorious Person "the Angel who redeemed Jacob from all evil" (Gen. xlviii. 16.) "the Angel of the covenant" (Mal. iii. 1). "The Angel of His presence" (Is. lxiii. 9.) Jehovah of the Old Testament, Jesus of the New.

We are entering upon a new phase of events. We leave the sphere where men once had light as to *heaven* and the *Lamb*, but have abandoned and lost it. The judgments of the first four seals clearly press the truth that the Lamb is there—the sixth awakens terror because of Him, the fruit of conscious enmity—the fifth, the determination to allow no testimony to Him on the earth by those who dwell on it. The state of a lapsed christendom and the final ways of God with it are thus revealed. Then the scene changes, and our attention is called to angels and angelic care, for the tribes of Israel now come on the scene, and the Jewish economy of old was angelic in its administration. All is thus in perfect order. The Lamb in the midst of the throne in connection with the Gentiles. “The Angel of His presence” and angelic care (or judgment) in connection with Israel.

Truly “there is much food in the tillage of the poor,” and this will be found true as to this book. Human learning has its advantages, but soul profit must depend on soul state. The prophets of old “searched diligently” into their own prophecies. There was, we may be sure, much food in their tillage.

SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. 1. Please explain Mark x. 38, 39: to what does “drink of the cup” refer? M. E. B.

A. These verses, speaking of “the cup” and “the baptism,” mean, that James and John should be partakers of Christ’s sufferings according to 1 Pet. iv. 13. This baptism is referred to in Luke xii. 50. The cup does not mean the cup of Divine wrath, in drinking which Christ was our substitute, not our example, and is the cup which we (believers) can never drink.

Q. 2. Will you explain—"When they fall upon the sword they shall not be wounded" (Joel ii. 8) also verse 14? M. E. B.

A. The enemies that will come up against Zion in the last days are here compared to locusts. Like them they will swarm in such numbers that no "sword," or resistance, affects them in the least. They appear invulnerable. The "he" in verse 14 is the leader of this great northern army.

Q. 3. Kindly explain (a) John x. 34 (b) also John ii. 4. M. E. B.

A. (a) Judges were called, in a sense, "gods," because they interpreted the righteous will of God to the people (Psalm lxxxii. 6). There was no division then, as now, between civil law and religious. The best judges were those who knew most of God's will as revealed to Moses. The argument is, if such a title be applied in the Old Testament to those who merely interpreted the Divine will, why object to the One, who not only spake the words, but did the will of the Father in this world—being sent by Him—calling Himself the Son of God.

(b) The manner of saying it, and the phraseology of the East, in which "woman" implies no disrespect, take away from this sentence its apparent harshness. The decision of its tone was rendered necessary by the need of distinguishing between those things that belonged to Him, the Son, and His Father, and to Him, Jesus, and His mother. All connected with His work and mission here flowed from the spring of His Heavenly Father's will (else it were sin, which would be impossible), and was not the result of His mother's wishes, however much they were respected in their place.

Q. 4. (a) Does "be courteous" (or humble minded R.V.) 1 Pet. iii. 8 apply only to believers, or to all alike? (b) To what does "the unclean thing" (2 Cor. vi. 17) refer? M. E. B.

A. (a) To believers, the epistles do not contain precepts for the unconverted: the only word to such is "Repent and believe the gospel." (b) It is a quotation from Is. lii. 11, and

refers here to all that is of the world and not of God.

Q. 5. Explain (a) Eccles. xi. 2, (b) Matt xxiii. 9, and (c) 2 John 9. What does "Whosoever goes forward" (R.V.) mean.

A. (a) Give liberally or perfectly ("to *seven*"). The whole passage to v. 6, is of the same tenor. (b) No one that is not so literally, *i.e.* as a title. (c) To "go forward" is to leave that which "was from the beginning" (1 John i. 1), and to progress by adding to God's word. The words "hath not God" shew that the person has left or added to foundation truth, and practically left true Christianity and God's word by which alone He is known.

Q. 6. Was not Baptism, *i.e.* "putting on Christ" an open profession of having believed in the hated Nazarene, that He was God's Christ;—something akin to a man "taking the shilling" now? H.

A. It not only was, but is *now* in heathen countries. In India and China a man may say what he likes, but the real line is decidedly drawn at Christian Baptism. If this be refused for fear of losing caste &c. the man cannot be recognized as having professed Christ.

Q. 7. When does "The day of the Lord" really begin? Some say, it may be said to be going on now; others say, it begins when Christ comes for His saints; others say, the last three and a half years of the great tribulation; but when does it begin, according to Malachi iv.; 1 Thess. v.; Joel ii.; Rev. vi.? Do they agree with Matt. xxiv., 2 Thes. ii.? W. C.

A. Does not "The day of the Lord" begin with the rising of "the Sun of righteousness" in judgment on this guilty world, and will it not continue throughout the millennium?

Does not 1 Thess. v. 2 agree with this? 2 Thess. ii. 2 should be "the day of the Lord is present." Matt. xxiv. agrees also with the above. [We may return to this subject on an early occasion, if the Lord will. EDES.]

"THE DAY 'OF' THE LORD."

The question in the last issue—"When does the day of the Lord really begin"?—calls attention to a subject of the deepest interest, and of the most momentous importance. The portions of the Word of God which directly or indirectly refer to "the day of the Lord" are so numerous, and the details of the events in the Divine method are so varied, that it is beyond the scope, as indeed it exceeds the ability of the writer, to attempt a full developement of them. May that which is attempted be under the guidance of the Spirit for the glory of Him whose coming draweth nigh.

The subject may be profitably considered under four heads.

I. That which, according to revelation, must precede the day of the Lord.

II. That which introduces it, and therefore partakes of its character.

III. The day itself.

IV. That which succeeds it.

I. That which must precede the day of the Lord.

A momentary consideration of the following Scriptures must suffice as introductory—Gen. iii. 15, xii. 3, Num. xxiv. 16-23, Ps. cxxxii. 11, with Acts xiii. 23-34.

Immediately on the success of the tempter in the garden of Eden, and before any judgment was pronounced on fallen man, God spake of One—"the Seed of the woman"—who, after suffering at the hands of Satan, should bring on him a terrible and complete destruction. This first gleam of hope as to a day of victory after a night of sorrowful defeat, was followed in due course, by a remarkably distinct promise made

to Abraham, that "all the families of the earth" should one day be brought into blessing. But before this period of universal happiness *on earth*, it was predicted later on, that a day of vengeance on the enemies of the Lord should intervene, vengeance so wide-spread and so overwhelming, that, in view of it, the prophet exclaimed—"Alas! who shall live when God doeth this?" Clearer light was afforded after Israel's failure under the law, and in the priesthood, when the Lord instituted royalty among His people in the person of David, and promised him that his seed should sit upon his throne for ever. The eye of hope was thus set on One who should be "the Seed of the woman," the Seed of Abraham, and the Seed of David.

The Person, the titles, the sufferings and the glories of this sovereign Lord, are rehearsed again and again in Old Testament Scriptures, but not until after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus was the understanding of men opened to fully understand these revelations.

Still it is remarkable, and no less beautiful, to witness the operation of the Spirit in the pious few whose names are recorded in Luke i. ii. at the time of the birth of Jesus Christ. The last Prophet had spoken of them (Mal. iii. 16, 17). They were a poor and afflicted people, scorned by the proud, who, apparently, were the happy and the successful people of the time. They spake often one to another, and it is not difficult to discover the theme of their discourse. Zacharias and Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph, Simeon, Anna and others looked for *redemption* in Jerusalem, for Herod the Idumæan King was leavening the mass with time-serving worldliness, the Pharisees with hypocrisy, the Sadducees with infidelity. Then it was that the God of Israel sent His angels with glad tidings of great joy. There had been communion before between these simple saints. How was it heightened when the Lord was born! Simeon speaks at once of salvation and of glory,

Anna of redemption, the shepherds, as taught by the angels, of the Saviour, Christ the Lord.

Their hopes were of necessity according to the promises of the Old Testament. They looked for "deliverance from their enemies and from the hand of all that hated them, that they might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of their life" (Luke i. 67-79; compare Mal. iii. 18 to iv. 3). They waited for "the day of the Lord," when "all the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off."

But we need not remind the Christian reader that a far deeper work lay before the Lord Jesus Christ, which must precede that day. He was indeed "a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers," and thus Zacharias, the priest, spake of Him; but He was far more. When God sent His Son into the world, it was to deal with *sin* as well as with Satan. It was to bring in eternal life where man had brought in death. It was to bring in deliverance,—according to eternal purpose, for all who should believe in Him, whether Jew or Gentile—from the whole region and system in which unsaved men exist, into the new creation where all things are new and all of God. All this of necessity postponed "the day of the Lord," or the time when the righteous government of God *in the earth* will be manifested in the reign of Christ with His saints. Another day, associated with the revelation of other glories of Christ, has intervened, whose moments are still running on, (for with the Lord a thousand years are as one day). As displaying the abundant mercy of God to the world, this day is called "*the day of salvation*" (2 Cor. vi. 2); because, let men fail as they may, mercy is still offered through Christ to all. To the saints of God it is the day of trial, and is compared in Heb. iii. to "the day of temptation in the wilderness," during which they have to "exhort one another while it is

called *To-day*." While, viewed as the time when man assumes the place of judgment, forgetful of the Judge of all, it is called "*man's day*" (1 Cor. iv. 3. marg.).

The glories of Christ which this day reveals are entirely hidden from the world. Faith alone can have present communion with Him in the heavenlies, while the display of His glory for the earthlies is deferred.

He is giving eternal life (John xvii. 2), and caring for all who receive it, as Advocate (1 John ii. 1), and as Intercessor (Heb. vii.). He is guarding each saved soul as a Shepherd his flock, and providing pasture (John x). He is fitting each member of His body, by the Holy Spirit, for the place given of God (Eph. iv. 7-13.) and revealing the Father's name even to the babes in the family of God (John xvii. 26).

Such, and far more than this, are the glories of Christ made known to the *believer* only, that he may be a true and faithful witness for Him in the world during the night of His rejection. The Thessalonians are a beautiful sample. They thus reflected Christ, as they served God and *waited for His Son from heaven* (1 Thess. i. 10) and this in the midst of the thoughtless, careless unbelievers around them. To turn them aside from this true and proper, as well as bright and courage-inspiring hope, Satan tried to perplex and distress their souls by saying that "the day of the Lord is now present" (2 Thess. ii. 2. R.V.). No, said Paul, "let no man beguile you in anywise, it will not be (present) except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed.....the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of His coming." This ought to decide that the day of the Lord is *not* "going on now."

Indeed the *next* step in the ways of God is that, for the sake of which Paul could beseech the Thessalonians, i.e. "the *coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *our gathering together*

unto him." Individual grace wrought at first in our salvation ; works still in us, keeping us in our course through the world, and will be completed when the Saviour, whom we await from heaven, shall call us up to meet Him in the air. Precious grace ! like precious faith that trusts it ! God began it, and "will complete it until (for) the *day of Jesus Christ*" (Phil. i. 6) ; an important text, and suitably followed by the prayer—"that ye may be sincere and without offence till the *day of Christ*" (v. v. 9-11). Christians are "sons of light, sons of the day," while the unsaved are of the night and darkness. Though not in "the day of the Lord" we are therefore of it, for that day will prove that the Lord will not endure evil in the world, and the Christian should prove that he *cannot bear it in himself*. He is already a vessel in which the life of Jesus is to be daily displayed ; and "it is God that worketh in us, both to will and to do of his good pleasure." All else is our will, and grace in us judges it *now*, and refuses it *now*. We are thus morally of the day, and look onward to, and live down here in view of "the day of Jesus Christ," when the Lord having come and perfected His love by taking us to Himself in His Father's house, will leave nothing of our own ways while on earth, in the obscurity of our own partial judgment or that of others, but will bring everything done in our bodies into the perfect light of His own judgment seat. (2 Cor. v. 10 ; Rom. xiv. 10.)

Let not the heart of the believer shrink from this clearly revealed truth. If now, through grace, he desires no concealment, if now "perfect love casteth out fear," and he freely confesses his sins, how much more *then*, when according to His promise we shall be with, and like Christ. (1 John iii. 2, Phil. iii. 20, 21.)

As to the time of the manifestation of the saints before the judgment seat of Christ, all that is clearly made known is—that it will be after the Lord has come and called them, raised

or changed, to meet Him in the air. But being exclusively for saints and in connection with reward for service, it will doubtless precede the manifestation of them to the world, or "the day of the Lord."

The consideration of the many Scriptures which afford light on this subject must be reserved for another paper, if the Lord will.

"THAT I MIGHT LIVE UNTO GOD."

GAL. ii. 19, 20. PART IV.

"And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." (John xii. 50.) Such was the language of the perfectly obedient One, who in Spirit had said long before: "Thy law is within my heart." His was obedience which while extending to every detail of daily walk, had its seat deep in the soul. The Spirit of God would work such obedience in us. It is in the very terms of the new Covenant: "I will put my laws into their hearts and in their minds will I write them." What a marvel of grace! We are dead to the law, and thus free from its curse and delivered from its bondage. But we live unto God with His word and will wrought into the inner man, that our obedience may be "from the heart," the obedience of children who delight in their Father's good pleasure.

Even when our obedience is tested by direct and positive commandments, these have no legal character. They always imply an assured place before God or a known relationship with Him. Love is the substance of the old commandment and of the new. (See 1 John ii. 7, 8.) Its measure and its motive-power are: "as I have loved you." Ointment more

precious for God than the costliest that was poured upon Aaron's head and ran down upon his beard ! Gentler dew than ever refreshed Hermon,—than ever descended upon the mountains of Zion ! " Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity,"—to manifest one to another the love which had its fulness and wrought in its perfection in the heart of Christ ! Truly His commandments are not grievous.

(4) Even fruitfulness itself is a part of this blessed obedience—the obedience of Christ. " Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit ; so shall ye be my disciples.....I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit." (John xv. 8-16.)

This fruitfulness is an essential manifestation of the new life for, and unto, God. " That ye should bring forth fruit unto God " is given in Rom. vii. as the purpose and object of our deliverance from the law, and of our new relation " to him who is raised from the dead."

Here again we are in company with Christ. As He was supremely the godly Man, whose " delight was in the law of the Lord,"—blessed obedient One !—so was He " like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season." And this is our calling—our unspeakable privilege. " He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit."

The law could never produce fruitfulness for God. It could not give life before God and there can be no *fruit* without life. The law was addressed to man in his natural life and responsibility to God, and required of him corresponding works. Life was proposed to man, offered to him on certain conditions. In this sense the commandment was " (ordained) to life." But man, guilty and without strength, finds it, and *must* find it, to be " unto death." So far from giving life it could only bring death into the conscience by applying the

righteous and inexorable claims of God upon a creature who is gone away from God and is already under sentence of death. But life, without which is no fruit, it could not give.

The believer lives unto God through the death of Him who died for him. His life is the eternal life which is in the knowledge of the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent; it is life "more abundantly" by the breath of the risen Jesus.

Is it not natural that such a life should bring forth fruit unto God? Is it not the purpose of Him who says: "This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise?" (Is. xliii. 21.) This is said of the Israel of God's purpose, and will be made good in a day soon to break in gladness for the ransomed of the Lord. But it is true of the people which God owns to-day—"a people near to the Lord:"

"Nearer still, through Jesu's blood."

Numbers xxiii. and xxiv. tell us God's thoughts of His people,—of Israel seen "from the top of the rocks," seen "in the vision of the Almighty." His people are a chosen, separated people for Himself; ch. xxiii. 9. They are a justified people: v. 21. They are a people fresh with the beauty and fruitfulness of His own grace: ch. xxiv. 5-9. How refreshing and strengthening to hear our God say:—"How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters!" What a change from the cruel bondage of Satan's power in this present evil world—from making bricks without straw in the fiery kilns of Egypt! What a change from the wrath of God abiding on us! Ay, and what a change from the vain striving, the bondage and the curse of a law which could only wring from the despairing heart, "O wretched man that I am!"

Now there are not only streams of refreshing, but there is water to spare for needy ones around: "He shall pour the water out of his buckets." Or in the language of the full revelation of God in Christ:—"Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters." The Holy Ghost in His blessed ministry of Christ, is not only a fresh spring of joy and satisfaction within the soul, but also rivers of living water flowing forth in a dry and thirsty land.

The barrenness and selfishness of our old man, whether under law or lawless, is replaced by the fruitfulness of gardens by the river's side. Trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, fresh and fragrant for Him, and a blessing from His hand,—a precious witness of His grace to all around. The promise is made good in THE SEED, "I will bless thee.....and thou shalt be a blessing."

If we turn to the days of Israel's decline, when Baal and the calves and all abominable idolatries had brought her to ruin, we read the same story of grace from the hand and heart of God. "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as LebanonThey shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine; the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon." (Hos. xiv. 4-7.) Precious fruit of restoring grace! And that grace through the blood of the new covenant! Abundant fruit too, suited to the grace which produces it!

"Corn and wine and oil," God's well-known emblems of His fruitful blessing are here in God-like plenty. Well may Ephraim exclaim:—"What have I to do any more with idols?" Tender and full of mercy the answer of Jehovah, "I have heard him, and observed him!" (Compare Jer. xxxi. 18-21). Restored and confiding Ephraim replies, "I am like a green

fir tree ;" to hear in return from his God's own lips of faithful love, "From me is thy fruit found."

May we remember it, beloved ! May we be kept near to Him, from whom alone our fruit is found ! May we *live* upon His word ! May it dwell richly in us in all wisdom ! May our hearts be kept in lowly dependence, continuing "instant in prayer !" May we be kept in holy separation from all evil, yet in a separation wholly *unto* Christ, supreme and perfect goodness.

It is to be feared this positive side of Christianity is but feebly apprehended by us. Did we but enjoy our God better, we should be more truly "imitators of God as dear children." We should "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." The bowels of Christ would be more free in our souls,—streams of living water flow more abundantly from our inner man.

The Lord grant it to us, for this is true fruit-bearing for God ! "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." "If any man serve me, him will my Father honour."

"THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT,"

WHAT IS IT ? AND AM I KEEPING IT ?

(*Concluded.*)

It is said in 1 Cor. xii.,—"By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body ; whether we be Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." As a matter of fact therefore, the Church, the body of Christ, did not

exist (except in the purpose of God), until the work of Christ having been accomplished on earth, He took His seat as the glorified Man in heaven, and the Holy Ghost was sent down in consequence, to form it, and to dwell in it.

The Unity, then, which is unfolded to us in the second and third Eph. is the creation of the Holy Spirit. It is the *Spirit's* Unity—the Unity which is *of* the Spirit, in contrast to a confraternity, which is man's Unity.

It is not a "Spiritual Unity," or oneness of spirit and heart amongst christians, as some would limit it to mean. It is far more. It is that glorious Unity, that One body which the Spirit Himself came down from heaven to make, and which He makes by uniting every believer individually to Christ, and by baptizing all believers into one body, called "the body of Christ," yea—"Christ!" (See 1 Cor. xii. 12 to end.)

Now, our calling,—“the vocation wherewith we are called”—consists in our belonging to this Unity; in our being members of this “one body,” this “one new man,” and the apostle makes this fact the basis of his exhortation to us to walk worthy of it, with all lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, and forbearance of one another in love, giving diligence to maintain this Spirit's Unity in the bond of peace, for there *is* one body, and one Spirit, who dwells in that body, and who is the abiding characteristic of its unity.

We are not told to *make* a unity, for man's unities have always been made in man's disobedience and sin; but we are told to “give diligence to maintain” that Unity which the Spirit has already made.

Thus then, we think we have answered our first question:—“The Unity of the Spirit, what is it?”

Now for the second:—“Am I keeping it?” The answer which is, alas! so sadly common is:—“We cannot keep it, because the Church of God is in such sad confusion that it is

impossible to maintain Unity now." As if our sin and failure were an excuse for our continuing in disobedience! and as if God mocks us by telling us to do a thing which is impossible! "Ah, but," say some, "when that was written the Church was not broken up, and in such confusion as now." We reply:—Did not the Holy Spirit foresee the confusion, and has He not made provision for it in the Word which He has written for our guidance? Undoubtedly. The word He wrote to the Ephesians when all was in order, has not lost one whit of its authority, notwithstanding all the disorder that man has brought in. But alas! how many there are who not only take advantage of the confusion and divisions to excuse a continuance in disobedience, but who are *indifferent* to the confusion, who even add to it. Does not this mark the days in which we live as precisely similar in character and spirit to those of Judah's history, just before the time when the Lord carried them to Babylon for their sins? Look at the vision in the ninth of Ezekiel. A man clothed in linen, with a writer's ink-horn at his girdle, and a man with a sword following him. What is the word of Jehovah to the former? "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that *sigh, and that cry, for the abominations* that be done in the midst thereof." (v. 4.). And when he returned and reported the matter, we do not find that he had discovered a single soul, who was so in sympathy with the mind of God as to heave a sigh because He was dishonoured. How many christians are there to-day who groan in spirit, and whose hearts are sorrowful because Christ is dishonoured in the Church? Thank God if there are a few, but how far greater is the number of those who rather pride themselves on the very thing which has brought dishonour to the Lord in His own house, and disgrace upon the Christian name in the world!

Reader! are you giving *diligence* to maintain the Unity of

the Spirit? Is there anything in your christian course; is there anything in your Church relationship that contradicts it, or that practically hinders you from maintaining it? Then give it up at once and prove the blessedness of cleaving only to Christ, and to what you find in God's word as to your union with Him, and with every member of His body.

In answer, then, to the second question, we must say—If in church fellowship, CHRIST alone, the living Head of all His living members, is not the Centre; if the Holy Spirit, who by *His presence* imparted unity at the beginning, is not the confessed Power to preserve that unity in all its divine reality; and if the oneness of the *whole* Church of God is not the ground of gathering, there can be no sincere “endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

H. C. C.

ON THE DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF THE RESURRECTION IN THE FOUR GOSPELS.

It must be borne in mind that each Gospel is the deposit of all that refers to the special aim of the Holy Spirit in revealing the glories of Christ. His glories are diverse, and the revelation of them is the *harmony* of the Gospels.

In Matthew, where Christ is presented specially as Jehovah—Messiah, King of Israel, and as such rejected, the Resurrection is a pledge of the *power* which will be manifested when He returns.

“There shall come out of Zion a Deliverer.” And again, “His people shall be willing in the day of his power.” It is thus He speaks to His disciples—“All *power* (authority) is

given unto me in heaven and in earth." (xxviii. 18.) But this will bring judgment on His enemies, on the world. Therefore we have the earthquake, the angel in power and glory, his countenance like lightning, all in terror, the keepers shaking and becoming as dead men, the Angel sitting on the stone, and the Lord alway with the feeble remnant "even unto the *end* of the age."

Mark is the Gospel of service. Christ is seen in it as the Servant-Prophet. The Resurrection is therefore the pledge of rest from toil. All difficulties are over, the Resurrection has *done all*. For here the one thought was service, and in such a world true service is difficult and involves labour. The women are there *very early* in the morning, and they say among themselves—"Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, for it was *very great*?" They came expecting to have it to do, but it was already done. It was rolled away, and the "young man" was sitting down in the empty sepulchre, "clothed in a long white garment," at *rest*, in *purity*, not girded. The mission here is also in the simplest terms for the salvation of souls, for the bringing of the weary and heavy laden sinners at once and for ever into *rest*. "Go ye unto all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, but he that believeth not, shall be condemned."

Luke is the gospel in which the Lord is specially presented as *Man*, not officially as Messiah, the King; that is, as in Ps. viii. rather than as in Ps. ii. It is the Gospel in which His perfections as Man are made known, and side by side with this, man's character and conduct are specially unfolded, whilst his wants are met in richest grace. A peculiar feature in the resurrection scenes in this Gospel, is the grace in which the difficulties of the *mind* are solved. The women were much *perplexed* at finding the empty tomb, and the two men in garments of *light* meet their reasonings by recalling the

words of Jesus. What an answer to the darkening counsel of their own understandings. Peter goes to the tomb, and *wonders* in himself at that which was come to pass. The two disciples who were going to Emmaus, *reason* together, and Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. He brings the light of the Word to bear on all their doubts, He answers all their questions, resolves all their difficulties. Thus the Resurrection is a pledge that every thought of the mind, every reasoning, every misgiving shall be fully met. We shall fully understand, we shall know even as we are known. Now, every doubt, every difficulty, every question, can be answered to *faith* only.

We are to walk by faith not by sight, and to this end the Lord in resurrection opens the *understanding* to understand the Scriptures, for faith stands not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God, and in the Word.

In John, the Lord is presented in the full and divine glory of His person, yet in all the attractiveness of grace. This apostle leaned on his Master's bosom, and he seeks to lead up the soul into the same deep intimacy, the same rich communion (1 John i. 1-4). Here therefore the Resurrection meets the *heart's* need. There is nothing of judgment, nothing to cause fear, no thinking of the stone, no reasonings; but love, fervent love for the *person* of Jesus. Where was the body of the One loved? Who could have taken it, and how was it being used? Yet to the mind of the seeker there was evidence enough of care and watchfulness. Angels had watched that body, one at the head, and one at the feet where it had lain. But she was not satisfied, and could not be, without Himself.

She still wept, till the beloved object of care and thought stood by her side, *living*, to satisfy her heart, and answer all its cravings by the manifestation of Himself. Here, then, the Resurrection is the pledge to us that the *heart* in all its

desire shall be fully satisfied. The Lord will come Himself and we shall meet Him and be for ever with Him.

"And when the storms of life shall cease,
And Thou to meet us com'st at length,
Lord Jesus, then this heart shall be
For ever satisfied with Thee."

"I HAVE WALKED IN A TENT AND, IN A TABERNAOLE."

(2 SAM. vii.)

In the facts that are detailed in Scripture, great principles of truth are brought out for us. God has chosen many ways of presenting to us the same truth; sometimes by stating it directly, sometimes by exhibiting it acted out in some history that is given.

In the history of the tabernacle, He showed that it is His good pleasure to manifest Himself in circumstances suited to those in which His people are. He chose a tabernacle or tent for Himself while His people were in tents as journeying pilgrims.

When David built a house for himself, he thought that he would build another for the Lord; but the Lord would not allow that, He would have His dwelling place in the tent still, and thus preserve the witness that they could not take themselves out of their state, but that He must do it for them.

As long as His people are in their pilgrim state, so long will He identify His name with them in that state. As long as the flock of God is a "little flock," and here and there

through the world, so long will He choose, as a place for His presence among them, a gathering of even two or three in His name. He would not accept of a more fixed and settled abode in the zealous labour of any of His servants, as a substitute for two or three gathered together in His name, as long as He sees that this is indeed the position of His own people. When He takes the saints out of that place of weakness, then He will display Himself in power, and He will manifest Himself with them in the place of power in which He has them with Himself. (Rev. xix. 11-14; Col. iii. 4.)

He will not manifest Himself in His glory without us, and He will not leave us in our weakness without Him. He chooses weakness now as the place to make perfect His strength.

"And from the beginning God has been exercising His elect in this same lesson, humbling them while blessing them; taking up the weak, and the foolish, and the poor, to illustrate His holy principles, and by whom to carry on His gracious operations."

The Lord teach us this lesson, so often refused, so easily forgotten.

"NOT IN WORD, BUT IN POWER."

"Let us remember this, that the place we are set in is that of an epistle of Christ. We are set for this, that the life of Jesus should be made manifest in our body. Christ has settled the question as to us, with God: He appears in His presence for us, and we are in the presence of the world for Him. "In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." If I know that He is in me, I am to manifest the life of Christ in everything. If He has loved me with unutterable love which passes knowledge, I

feel bound in heart to Him: my *business* is to glorify Him in everything I do. "I am bought with a price"—that is settled, the price has been paid: if bought I am *His*.

But, beloved friends, I press upon you that earnestness of heart which *cleaves to Him*, especially in these last days. Oh! if christians were more thoroughly *christians*, the world would understand what it was all about. There is a great deal of profession and talk; and the activity of the Spirit of God—thank God—there is too; but do you think if a heathen came here to learn what true Christianity meant, he would find it out?

SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

To the writer of the article "Within and without: or the order of God's assembly."

Q. 1. Why (in p. 48 on Corporate discipline) is the 21 v of John xx omitted? Do not these words constitute those to whom they were spoken, *Apostles after the resurrection*?

Does not v. 22 give the necessary qualification for their mission?

Where in v. 23 do you find anything about "reception" or "exclusion"? but rather to the *same persons His authority to forgive, &c.* J. P.

A. Does not Luke xxiv. 33 shew, that those gathered in John xx. were by no means all Apostles, but disciples generally? Those who were Apostles among them were not constituted so by v. 21, which certainly applied to all the company, including probably women, but were Apostles long before.

A. T. S.

[The question is—Does this lovely scene represent the church in its practical expression, gathered as *disciples* with the Lord's presence in the midst, and the power of the Holy

Spirit given; (not yet the Spirit *come* as in Acts ii.)? Viewing the place it has in the closing scenes of John's gospel, most would admit that it does.

As to "reception" and "exclusion"—the remission or retaining of sins has nothing whatever to do with the question of justification by and before God; but it has to do with *maintaining holiness* in the gathered assembly on earth. "Do not ye judge them that are within"? (1 Cor. v. 12.) necessarily involves judging, in the first place, whether a person is (scripturally) within or not. With this agree Rom. xv. 7, and Acts ix. 26. The unsaved and the ungodly (whatever their profession) are not to be received; a "wicked person," if within, is to be excluded, and if humbled and penitent to be forgiven and comforted (1 Cor. v., 2 Cor. ii.). In the case of discipline, the end proposed is the salvation of the spirit of the subject of it, in the day of the Lord Jesus, for all in the church should be a savour of Christ to God, seeing that He is in the midst and is the *Saviour*. Eds.]

Q. 2. (a) May I ask if Adam is a saved soul? So many Christians affirm that he is. If so will you kindly explain Gen. iii. 22—"lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever"—That implies eternal life, does it not? and we do not read that he afterwards offered a sacrifice for his sin. L. S.

A. "Live for ever" (v. 22) refers to existence in the earth. To become an heir of the "eternal inheritance" one has not to eat anything, but to believe God, and this not only now but from the earliest time. (See Heb. xi.) Now it would appear that after his fall Adam believed God, for, after the word in v. 15, he changed his wife's name from "Isha" ii. 23 to "Eve," or, "Chavah," in token of his faith in what God had said. At the same time the omission of his name from Heb. xi. prevents one speaking with absolute certainty on the subject.

Q. 3. As we get Christ Himself, the "Head of the

church," in Prov. viii. and part of ix., is it a stretch of the imagination on my part to conclude that the "strange woman" in chap. vii. is identical with "Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth?" Verses 19 and 20 seem particularly suggestive of the absence of Christ. In corrupted Christianity it is the professors who say—"My Lord delayeth his coming." L. S.

A. We should think the analogy is decidedly strong, and equally so with regard to the "wise woman" of Proverbs, and the church.

Q. 4. Please explain Matt. xviii. 20. R. W.

A. It is connected with v. 19, and assures the smallest number gathered in Christ's name of His presence with them. They have not to ask for this; all they have to see to is, that they are truly gathered in His name.

If more is wanted please write again.

Q. 5. Kindly explain (a) Eph. iv. 4. (b) 1 Cor. i. 12.

A. (a) This is the statement of a fact, which exists whether we recognize it or not. Our duty is not to "set up" or "start" anything, but just to own what God has set up, *and nothing else*. (See also the article "The unity of the Spirit" p. p. 110 and 130).

(b) There were parties in the church calling themselves after leaders, to the extent of using even the name of Christ in a sectarian way; just as the name "Brethren" may be used now. We are all brethren.

"THE DAY OF THE LORD."

II.

In dependence on the Spirit to guide us into the truth just touched upon at the close of the former article, may we now examine those Scriptures which reveal the character and results (so far as they affect the saints of God) of the "judgment seat" (Rom. xiv. 10; 2 Cor. v. 10.) before which *all* must stand. This, though in a sense, an interruption of the main subject, is too important to be passed over.

The purpose of the death of Christ cannot be limited to redemption. It is written—"For to *this end* Christ died, and lived again, that He might be *Lord* of both the dead and the living." But Christ is rejected by the unbelieving men of the world. Not until His enemies are made His footstool, and He rules in their midst, will they admit His title, and then unwillingly and in judgment. The time of the manifestation to them of this glory of Jesus is designated—"The day of judgment"—"The last day"—"The great day"—"The day of wrath"—"The day of vengeance." (Matt. x. 15; xi. 22-24; xii. 36; Mark vi. 11; 2 Pet ii. 9; iii. 7; John xii. 48; Jude 6; Rom. ii. 5; Is. lxi. 2; lxiii. 4), and in general "The day of the Lord" or "That day."

The full and unrestricted claim of Jesus Christ over all who believe in Him, is owned by them from the *moment* they are *saved* (Rom. x. 9, R. V.), but the time of realizing what this involves in the case of the saints of God, is called—"The day of Christ" (Phil. i. 10; ii. 16)—"The day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. i. 6)—The day of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. i. 8; 2 Cor. i. 14) and by Paul—"That day." This is the more striking as, when the expression "The day of the Lord" is used, it is in connection with unbelievers (1 Thess. v. 2; 2 Pet. iii. 10). May we now, while it is still "the night,"

though "far spent," constrained by the love of Christ, walk as "children of light," as "children of the day."

The Lord Jesus Christ cannot be indifferent to the ways and walk of those He loves. His present abounding grace clearly shows this. To keep us separate from the defilements of the world, He washes our feet (for that is the figure), with "the water of the word." Because of our infirmities He intercedes for us as our great High Priest. And should we even carelessly fall into sin, dishonouring to Him as it is, He forsakes not our cause, but is our "Advocate with the Father." It will be proved on our side, so to say, at the day of Jesus Christ.

Perhaps the secret of souls shrinking from this future manifestation is, that they are not at ease in the presence of God now. They do not know in simplicity, what it is to really believe in Him that *justifieth the ungodly*, and that this simple, but divinely given faith, is counted for righteousness (Rom. iv). They do not know, or hesitate to believe, that they are always and at all times in the full value and efficacy of the work of Christ; that they are every moment in the love and care of God, ever sheltered by the blood of Jesus. It was God Himself who drew our souls to Christ, and Christ by His blood has put away sin perfectly, according to God, so that He sees no sin on us. The holy sensitiveness to evil of the true christian is never to awaken torment, yet fear hath torment. It should, indeed, lead to more diligent watchfulness, to closer study of the Word, to more fervent prayer, to confession of faults, to humility, but not to doubts and fears as to "the day of judgment." "Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have *boldness* in the *day of judgment*; because as He is, even so are we in this world." Like Paul we "have obtained mercy," and we are "saved from wrath through Him." Delivered from the wrath to come, we *wait for Him* from heaven, for we "shall not come unto judgment." We

are saved and saved eternally, and God has multiplied Scriptures (some of which have been just quoted), in order that nothing may shake our steadfast peace with Him.

But we are also "sanctified to obedience," we are "children of obedience," we are to follow Him whose obedience was perfect, and as we seek to walk as He walked, we shall see the value of referring all our ways and works, not to the false balance of man's judgment, or the false light of man's day, but to the perfect standard of Divine judgment, the perfect light of the day of Christ.

Happy it is for the soul that trusts in the Lord, to know that the first cardinal principles of eternal life *abide* to the end—"faith, hope, love." Neither the world nor the mere professor possesses them; but, however degenerate the age, the feeblest saint is not without these mighty principles which wrought so effectually in the first converts (1 Thess. i. 3). Whether manifested in work, in labour and in patience, or put on as an armour of defence against the flesh, the world and Satan, the energies of these mighty principles *abide*. "And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three, but the greatest of these is love." "But let us, *since we are of the day*, be sober, putting on the breast plate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation." The light of these mighty principles will never flicker or fail, their strength will never yield to any attack of the foe, and their results in the day of Christ who can conceive? They maintain the conscience "in the sight of our God and Father," and practically deliver us from the influence of men. We have thus an "armour of light" for God is light, and "he that doeth truth cometh to the light that his works may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." So that Paul said, immediately after the passage we are considering, "but we are made manifest to God," i.e. now. That is, Paul was so wholly in the presence of God as to the things he did, as well as to

himself, that there was no reserve, nothing kept back, no deceit, hypocrisy, pretension or secret self-seeking. The moral power of the truth of the judgment-seat of Christ, when even the counsels of the heart will be made manifest, and many secret deeds of love and devoted service will be disclosed, is therefore most healthful and blessed for the soul.—Then, and not till then will "*each one have his praise from God.*" (1 Cor. iv. 4, 5, see also Luke xii. 1-3; Rom. xiv. 12, with Matt. vii. 4, 6, 18.)

The expression—"that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad" should not be passed over. It has been shown that the manifestation of the saints will be after they are glorified. "Whom he justified, them he also glorified:" their righteousness is never called in question, their glory therefore, is certain. In this we must see the essential difference between the manifestation of believers and of unbelievers, before the judgment seat of Christ. Reward or loss *in glory*, according to service, will be the result in the case of the former, the blessed adjudication of One who has loved them and strengthened them by His grace to serve Him. In the latter, the solemn and eternal judgment of the Judge, whose will has been rebelled against and whose mercy has been despised. To the one, as we have seen, it is "the day of Jesus Christ;" for "the things done in the body," on which He adjudicates, are "the fruits of righteousness which are *by Jesus Christ* unto the glory and praise of God." To the other it is "the day of judgment" and "of wrath." To both it is, in a sense, "the day of the Lord" for "He is Lord of both the dead and the living."

The *time* of the manifestation of the saints is not referred to in the passage. It would appear, from a consideration of the Scriptures that unfold it, to be between the moment of their being caught up to meet the Lord in the air and their

appearing with Him in glory, and this would be simultaneously with those dealings in judgment on the earth immediately preceding the full display of "the day of the Lord." (2 Thess. i. 7-10; Rev. xix. 8-14.) It is certain that Paul had "that day" ever in mind. He lived and laboured in view of it. (1 Cor. iv. 5; iii. 13; 2 Tim. i. 12-18; iv. 8; Phil. ii. 16.) Peter speaks of its dawn in the heart, and presses souls to diligence to be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless, seeing we look for it and what succeeds it. (2 Pet. i. 19; iii. 10-14.) In Hebrews we are bidden to exhort one another in view of it (x. 25). James tells us to remember how near the Judge is (v. 9). John looks to it in regard to the results in the saints ministered to (1 John ii. 28; 2 John 8). And Jude ascribes all glory, majesty, dominion and power to Him who, in the darkest times, can keep us from falling, and set us before the presence of His glory faultless, with exceeding joy.

Some important principles flow from the truth we have been considering.

1. Each one *must* be made manifest. It is one of the Divinely stated necessities, so that man can conceal nothing. (2 Cor. v. 10).

2. It is to his *own* Master the servant stands or falls (Rom. xiv. 4.)

3. On "the judgment-seat of God" (Rom. xiv. 10 R.V.) Christ will have His rightful place over every one (Phil. ii. 11).

4. The saint when there, will be like Christ (1 John iii. 2), and in every way capable of giving "an account of himself." There will be then no weakness of judgment, no imperfection of knowledge, no influence of habit, of temperament, of natural affection, or of tradition, no fear of man, no shame of our former "old man," the evil nature, no self-love, no cross results or confusing motives. In the unclouded light of Christ Himself we shall see light.

Again. 1. God is working in us for that day (Phil i. 6, 10, 11, 13).

2. Christ also confirms us unto the end, that we may be blameless in that day (1 Cor. i. 8; compare Phil. iv. 13; 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10).

3. Ministry and discipline by the Spirit in the church, are in view of that day (Heb. x. 25; 1 Cor. v. 4, 5).

4. Suffering, service and spiritual diligence get their acknowledgment and reward of the Lord in that day. (1 Pet. i. 7; 2 Tim. i. 12-18; iv. 8; 1 Cor. iv. 3; iii. 13; Rev. xxii. 12.)

5. Its light shines now on every thing, to the conscience exercised in the Word and things of God (Rom. xiii. 11 &c.; 1 Thess. v. 2, 4, 8).

It is necessary perhaps to point out before closing, the difference between the *body* of the believer and that of the unbeliever in the sight of God, since "the things done in the body, are to be made manifest.

At the fall the soul was corrupted, and God at once humiliated the body (Gen. iii. 19). While on earth, the body of the believer, equally with that of the unbeliever, is one of humiliation (Phil. iii. 21). Not so the soul. In the one the soul is saved, and he waits for the redemption of his body (1 Pet. i. 9; Rom. viii. 23). In the other the soul is lost, and he has no hope as to the body either (John iii. 36). Of the body of the true Christian it is said:—

1. It is counted by God as clean in His presence, "washed with pure water" (Heb. x. 22).

2. It is nevertheless our vessel, to be possessed in sanctification and honour (1 Thess. iv. 4).

3. It is the Lord's—for the Lord and the Lord for it. (1 Cor. vi. 13-20.)

4. It is indwelt by the Holy Spirit (vi. 19).

5. It is a member of Christ (vi. 15).

6. God is to be glorified in it (vi. 20 ; 2 Cor. iv. 10, 11).

7. Its members are to be instruments of righteousness to God (Rom. vi. 13).

8. We may have to put it off, and in the meanwhile groan in it, but *the hope* is that it will be changed (2 Pet. i. 14 ; Rom. viii. 26 ; 1 Cor. xv. 51).

Well indeed, may Paul say—"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies, a living sacrifice, holy acceptable to God which is your reasonable service." Oh to realize how great the privilege, how brief the opportunity !

(*To be continued.*)

"I AM CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST."

(GAL. ii. 19, 20.)

It is thus that the just sentence of the law has been executed upon the sinner who believes in Jesus. It is thus that the righteous judgment of God has fallen upon him. The sentence *has been* executed, there is none remaining. The judgment *has* fallen, there is none to come. What a deliverance ! As manifestly righteous as it is complete and eternal !

Faith cries with divine assurance : "I am crucified with Christ ;" God has judged me already, my nature and all its out-goings. He has pardoned my sins on the sure and righteous ground of the blood-shedding of Christ. He has dealt too, not in pardon but in destruction, with the bad tree which bare all these evil fruits. He has *crucified* my old man with Christ "that the *body of sin* might be destroyed." My old man, fallen, rebellious, guilty and polluted, exists no more before God. I am dead,—"*crucified with Christ.*"

What peace has the soul which apprehends this entire deliverance ! Not only is the voice of the accuser stilled as

to sins, countless as the sea-sand though they may have been; not only is the conscience at peace as to ten thousand transgressions; but it knows that to the *root* of sin the axe has been laid,—that for God, and by His judgment, "our old man is crucified...for he that is dead is freed from sin." (Rom. vi. 6, 7.)

Here and here alone is solid ground for abiding peace. The more we know what our God is,—the more we have apprehended the majesty of His throne, the holiness of His Being, the less possible is settled peace without the knowledge that the life in which we dishonoured God has met its end in the cross of Christ. But the deeper this knowledge of God, the more perfect the peace when faith lays hold of the thrice-blessed *fact* that sin, in its principle and root, has already been judged by God, who in the cross of His Son, has put an end to the life which was SIN before His eyes. "*I am crucified with Christ.*"

A pious poet, in a well known hymn, has prayed,—

"Nail my affections to the cross."

It is to be feared that many, who should be walking in the liberty wherewith Christ makes free, are just where this writer seems to have been; i.e. vainly striving to accomplish in practical experience that which God has already done in the death of Christ. God *has* crucified our old man with Christ. He has done more:—He has told us of it that we might enjoy present liberty and "that henceforth we should not serve sin."

We are never told to crucify or mortify our flesh,—our old man. The Word of God bears distinct and repeated witness that our old man has been crucified. Rom. vi. 6 bears this testimony in terms too clear to admit of a doubt. The passage we are considering is not less explicit. In Gal. vi. 24, the Spirit of God attributes to the believer (i.e. to the one who has submitted himself to God's righteousness and said Amen to His righteous judgment,) the crucifying of the flesh. But

He does not present it as the duty of a christian or as a thing which he has still to do ; He does not speak of it as a matter of experience or of growth, but as a thing done and finished. For faith, as for God, it *is* done:—"They that are Christ's *have* crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

It is true that it is said in Col. iii. 5 "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth." But the reader will remark, (1) that the Spirit of God says emphatically in the same passage, "For ye *are* dead," and (2) that it is not the old man which we are to mortify—that *is* crucified—but it is the fruits and works of the flesh to which death is to be applied. In other words God has completely and finally judged and put to death our old man and we are to reckon ourselves "to be dead indeed unto sin." We are further to apply the sentence of death to every deed or work of the flesh. May our God effectually work both in our souls !

How admirable, how divinely beautiful is the way in which the Spirit of God presents the doctrine and the practical truth which flows from it in Rom. vi. 10, 11 ! Speaking of Christ He says, "In that he died, he died unto sin once." It is not here the truth, most blessedly developed elsewhere, that Christ died *for* our sins. This truth is of sovereign importance both for the glory of God and for our blessing. But here it is said, "He died *unto* sin." In His life—all spotless and a sweet savour to God—He had had to do with sin in its countless and bitter fruits (Matt. viii. 16-17; Luke v. 20-24); and on the cross He was made sin. But in dying He passed out of the condition and sphere in which He was made sin; He died *unto* it. He poured out His soul unto death. In the devotion of perfect obedience, He laid down His life. He never took His life again in the condition and sphere in which He laid it down. He has done with the whole state into which He entered in obedience to His Father and in grace for man ; "in that he died, he died unto sin once."

The next verse applies the same language to us; the only difference being that in our case it is "through Jesus Christ our Lord." "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin." God would never tell us to *reckon* a thing which is not true. Thank God, it is true! We are "dead indeed unto sin." It is He who has wrought it. The law has no claim upon a dead man; sin has no authority over him. In the death which God has executed upon the believer in the death of Christ, the believer has passed out of the condition and sphere in which he lived. Was that condition one of guilt? He is *dead*; no guilt can attach itself to a dead man. He may have been guilty in life but He is *dead**. Was he responsible before God to keep His holy law? A *dead* man cannot be responsible. When he comes out in a new life *this* life has its responsibilities and the power of an indwelling Holy Ghost to answer to them. But the law is for men living their natural life before God, alas! a fallen and rebellious life. This life for the believer exists no more; he is dead. God bids him to *reckon* himself to be dead indeed unto sin. It is so, but there is great danger that he should fail to reckon it. Hence the solemn injunction.

O bless God! we are dead indeed unto sin; He says so. The judgment of sin can never come upon us again. Death has closed for us the whole old scene as it has for Christ. May He give us every day and in every thing to *hold* ourselves as dead indeed unto sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

"I am crucified with Christ" tells of as absolute a close, for faith, of the old life—the life we lived when we were in the flesh—as the Red Sea was of Israel's life in Egypt. With

* Had the death taken place in his own person it would have been the second death and scripture tells us that this is the lake of fire. The death has taken place in the death of Christ, which death perfectly met every claim of God upon the sinner who believes in Jesus. A *new* life in a risen Christ is his portion, but the old life is gone, and with it, all its guilt and defilement.

them as with us, the blood formed the righteous basis of God's dealings in grace. Impossible to pass the Red Sea without the shelter of the blood of the Lamb! Those who braved death, typified by the Red Sea, without the shelter of the blood "sunk as lead in the mighty waters." For those who had found this safety in the blood "as of a lamb without blemish and without spot," DEATH WAS DELIVERANCE. It closed for ever the life heretofore lived, with its distance from God, its guilt, its pollution, its flesh pots and its bondage. And thus it is with every soul whom God has taught to say, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

"Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

(2 TIM. iii. 15.)

"In the history of Redemption, a blessing or a curse has followed throughout the range of intelligent* existence upon the reception or rejection of the various expressions of the Divine Mind." "It is the expressed mind and will of God alone (by which also all things were created and are sustained, Heb. xi. 3; i. 3) which determines the character of that among which it stands." "This judicial character of the Word of God now rests in *Scripture*—for of God's mind, *beyond what is written* we know nought."

"With no other weapon than '*It is written*' did Jesus our Lord defeat the adversary: With no other shield than '*It is written*' did He stay his fiery darts. His clue to unravel every difficulty suggested was, '*It is written.*' His escape from every dilemma of the enemy was '*It is written.*' In the

* The first exemplification of this seems to have been in Satan—"he abode not in the truth" (see John viii. 43-47).

midst of all lying and falsehood, all that He would use was '*It is written.*' He staked all upon the faithfulness and truth of God to what *was written*; and Satan stood confessed and conquered. O wondrous estimate! O marvellous display of the power, value, and authority of Scripture! Surely we may say—"Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name."

THE RESURRECTION.

(1 COR. xv.)

The blending of the Gospel in its most simple terms with the truth of the resurrection of the dead, and still more emphatically "*from among the dead,*" is perfect in this chapter, and as strikingly beautiful as it is perfect. Nothing, perhaps, shows the great difference in modern preaching from that of the Apostles more, than the way in which the gospel is now shorn of its strength by the feeble presentation of this fundamental truth in it. It is almost entirely reserved for the consolation of the bereaved, under the mournful circumstances of the loss of those they love, and alas! held out as a hope to *all*, whether believers or not, as a spark of man's own kindling, struck for the moment in the dark hour of nature's sorrow. Witness the "burial services" of christendom.

When the Apostles "preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead," it told for good or evil on those who heard it. The study of "The Acts of the Apostles" will abundantly confirm this. The philosophers scoffed at it; the most intellectual Jews were roused to fury by it; the Roman governor cried out, in open court, that Paul was mad, when he spake of the resurrection of the dead as verified in the person of Jesus, so recently crucified outside Jerusalem. In every way Satan sought to get rid of it, even as, at the very moment of the resurrection of the Lord, a lie was invented to keep the Jews in blindness as to it. Even in the Church there were

some, as at Corinth, who denied it, and in other places false teachers spiritualized it. (1 Cor. xv. 12; 2 Tim. ii. 18.)

And how does it fare to day? The orthodox hold it, but put it at the greatest distance; while all that gives distinctness to it, all its precious value as to the position of a Christian before God, all its sustaining efficacy under trial, and in keeping alive the constant hope of a triumphant issue from the whole earthly scene, is merged in generalities. The intermediate state, and the happiness of the spirits of those who depart to be with Christ, are, in God's mercy, still held and preached, though it is sad to hear rumours of the revivals of old errors as to these; but the resurrection of the saints who sleep in Jesus, the coming of Christ to deliver the bodies of all that are His from the power of the grave, while those who are *not* Christ's remain to be called up at the *close* of all God's dispensations, is, to a large extent, "a lost gospel." With no invidious thought let us quote the closing words of the creed, "which except a man believe faithfully" (it is declared), "he cannot be saved."—"At whose coming" (*i.e.* the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ) "all men shall rise again with their bodies, and shall give account for their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire."

For one who simply holds and believes the divinely stated "order" of the resurrection as given in this chapter, there are thousands who hold and believe the creed just quoted, so much more ready are men to hearken unto men, than unto God. Why is it said "every man in his own order," if all rise together? "Christ the first fruits"—which as we know was accomplished eighteen centuries ago—"afterward they that are Christ's at His coming"—"Then cometh the end"—the reign of Christ, and the risen saints with Him, filling up the period between the first resurrection and "the end." And what will take place at "the end"? The destruction of death.

—"The last enemy that shall be destroyed, is death,"—the result of which to the lost is delineated with stern fidelity in Rev. xx. 11-15.

A glance at the marvellous way in which the Spirit of God deals in this scripture with this doctrine may lead some to a closer examination of it. Even natural men have been compelled to own its logical perfection. After the simple statement of the Gospel, the complete and irrefragable testimony of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (in v v. 5-8)—following so beautifully on the proved unpreparedness of those who truly loved the Lord at the time of the cross, to expect, much less to believe, the fact of His resurrection—opens the subject. Then the testimony of Paul, who had been notoriously the most violent in his zeal against even the name of Jesus, completes the record of the eye-witnesses. Then the clear way in which it is shown that the faith of christians as to pardon, and their hope as to those fallen asleep, can alone rest on the resurrection of the Lord, intensifies the power of the reasoning. The mockery of baptism, and the folly of such a path as Paul's and others, are added, and all are bound together with inimitable clearness and force to support the argument, and to show the hopeless blank without this truth.

But the full blaze shines out in v v 20 to 28. Where our natural ancestor, Adam, utterly failed, and entailed death on himself and his race, Christ, who is now "our life," triumphed gloriously. He, the first fruits, *we* the harvest. At His coming, all that are His leave for ever the last consequence of sin possible to them. Then, rapidly, in this wonderful programme of God's counsels, follows the full kingdom display, till the manifestation of perfect rule in the hands of the second Man, the last Adam, closes in the destruction of the last enemy, and in the eternity of God Himself—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—God, all in all. Oh what a place, "the Man of sorrows" has, and will have, as the one and only

centre and object of all God's counsels ! And oh ! what volumes of truth are concentrated in a few brief sentences when He is the theme !

It is this that binds the whole of Scripture together—
Creation, Redemption, Glory, Eternity,
The Kingdom, The heavenly calling, The Church.

Sātan who overthrew man, and thus the whole dominion of man, subjecting creation to vanity, is already defeated, and will be subjected by Man, and the inheritance purposed by God for man and all that can gladden the heart of man, shall come, by every title, into the hands of Him who here was crucified and laid in a sepulchre. Oh to know Him ! to love Him, and to be loved by Him ! This alone can buoy up the heart as it daily comes in painful contact with the vast ruin around. It is thus, and thus alone, we can despise the wisdom of this world, and of the princes of this world, that come to nought, and live in the bright region of faith and hope, occupied with the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. The next article, contributed by another, will help in elucidating this most important portion of Scripture : One word only remains as to the present *moral* power of the resurrection in the lives of Christians.

For what are the masses of Christians waiting ? In how many hearts is the coming of the Lord longed for ? It is said of the heathen they had *no hope*, and this in contrast with the Jews who had the promises (Eph. ii. 12.) The *hope* of any of Israel who believed the promises was "hope toward God," and necessitated faith in resurrection. The great lines of teaching of the Old Testament whether in history, in prophecy, in type or in song, ran only on the truth of resurrection. Without it all would be a blank, the exercises and experiences of godly souls a miserable delusion. Can its importance be less now, that "life and incorruptibility" are brought to light by the gospel ? Can it be less now, that Jesus Himself is

"the Resurrection," and that to really believe in the resurrection of those who sleep in Jesus, is to look for the Lord Himself from heaven to change us, the living, at the *same moment* that He calls them up from among the dead. This was the moral power of the hope in the first converts, and it at once distinguished them from the heathen around who had no hope, and even from the Jews who, according to prophecy, waited for the kingdom, and necessarily looked for the events foretold, to precede it.

None can tell the loss to Christians through the decline of this, their distinctive hope. In many there is practically none. Death is their expected terminus, and to prepare for this, to overcome, even with trembling, in this last conflict, their one great desire.

But beyond the loss of the moral power of *hope*, there is, it is to be feared, in some, most imperfect apprehensions of their standing before God, involving the loss of the moral power of *faith*. They fail to see that the position of Jesus now, as risen from the dead and made Lord and Christ, is theirs; that they are "in the Lord," "in Christ," and that "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made them free from the law of sin and death." Practical holiness can alone be maintained in walk by the constant recognition of this great and glorious fact, that the believer possesses "life more abundantly," life in resurrection, life with which the Holy Spirit is associated, which the risen Christ communicated to His disciples when He stood in their midst, "the Living One, who was dead, but is alive for evermore," on the first day of the week. (John xx. 22.)

Not only is peace made by the blood of Christ, not only is sin put away for ever and death overcome, but the believer is delivered from the *law* of sin and death by the higher law of the Spirit of life in Jesus Christ. He is thus vitally one with the risen Christ. Oh what has God wrought! What

divine workmanship! Would that none would spoil it. Would that all ministry tended to the growth in us of that which is divine. Would that we plainly confessed that "we have *put off* the old man with his doings; and have *put on* the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him."

All truth is the fruit of God's infinite grace in Christ, and we need it all. To part with any involves loss and damage to the soul.

"With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all."

NOTES ON SOME PASSAGES IN 1 CORINTHIANS XV.

Verse 2. "Unless ye have believed in vain." This does not mean unless your *faith is unreal*, but unless what you have believed is an unreality. (See verses 14 and 17.)

Verse 19. The meaning here is, If the object of our hope in Christ is only something in this life, and not in resurrection, we are of all men most miserable; being called to forego all that the flesh most values here, and having nothing beyond. (See verses 14 and 17.)

Verse 22. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.....Christ the first fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming."—The rapture of the sleeping and living saints when "the Lord Himself shall descend" into the air as revealed in 1 Thess. iv. 16–17, is not mentioned here, because that will not include those Jewish saints who will be slain between the rapture and the coming of the Lord in His kingdom. (Rev. vi. 9–11; xi. 11, 12; xv. 2 with xx. 4–6.)

Verse 24. Here also we have a skipping over, but of a much longer interval than that between the rapture and the

appearing: viz. the whole interval, including the millenium, between the Lord's own resurrection and the end, when He will deliver up the Kingdom to God even the Father.

Verse 33. "*Evil communications corrupt good manners.*" I call particular attention to this because in the revised version "*company*" is substituted for "*communications*" and the practical force of the passage is entirely lost. From the context it seems evident that the Apostle had in view the false doctrines, especially the denial of the resurrection, that were passing current with some at Corinth. The lesson the Apostle enforces is a most important one, viz. that if we hold bad doctrine our morals will be corrupted.*

Verse 34. "Some have not the knowledge of God." This does not mean that some were unconverted, but that they had not the knowledge of Him as the living God that raiseth the dead. Resurrection is a question of the power of God. To deny it was in effect to deny His power. Moreover it was to deny the fact that Christ had been raised. Thus it completely overturns the Gospel, dishonours Christ and robs God of His glory. Abraham put such Sadducism to shame. (See Gen. xxii. 5 and Heb. xi. 19.)

Verse 36, 37. Experience might have taught them the resurrection-power of God. What the husbandman sowed was not what he reaped; he sowed a bare grain, and it died, but God gave it a new existence, a (resurrection) body as it hath pleased Him.

Verses 39-41. Is not intended to teach that saints will have each a different degree of glory when we get to heaven; (although that will be true), but that within our own natural observation, God has different qualities and spheres of created existence,—flesh of beasts,—flesh of fishes, and flesh of birds;

* Intercourse with the world, in its philosophical speculations, its objects and its practices, at all times tends to the damage of the soul. It opens the door to unsound doctrines and principles, and, as a consequence, corrupts true Christian morals. The Word of God gives principles of universal application, though applied, as in this passage, to the point before the mind of the Spirit. [Evs.]

celestial bodies, as the sun, the moon and stars, and also terrestrial bodies, all in their proper measures and spheres shewing forth His glory, and that "so also is the resurrection," *another sphere, one among the rest*, though infinitely more glorious and *common to all believers*. It is the resurrection state as a fact that the Corinthians denied, and that the Apostle by the Holy Ghost is here contending for, and not the differences of the saints in glory. Verses 39 to 41 inclusive are a parenthesis.

Verse 58. This verse indicates the baneful influence of the denial of resurrection, it does away with its effect as a motive for diligence and steadfastness "in the work of the Lord." "Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die." All is in vain if there be no resurrection, and we are *yet in our sins*.

But thanks be to the God of all grace, the Lord Jesus Christ is risen, and we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Presbutes.

SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. 1. "The law is good if a man use it lawfully"—What is a lawful use of the law? D. D.

A. Do not verses 9 and 10 in 1 Tim. i. answer your question, and point out that the law is addressed not to the new man, but to the old?

Q. 2. Please explain (1) Eccl. iv. 8; (2) Matt. xvi. 19. W. A.

A. (1) Is not this a graphic picture of a solitary miser, who has not the excuse of having others to support, but labours to amass riches for himself?

(2) "Loosing on earth" means (in regard to the order of

the church on earth) on being satisfied of a man's true repentance, so that he might be publicly restored to his Christian position, so restoring him. This, as in 2 Cor. ii. 7 was ratified in heaven.

[Peter's special authority in the kingdom, committed to him by the Lord, and exercised by him as we see in the early chapters in the Acts, was confined to him alone.]

Q. 3. What is meant by God winking at the times of ignorance. Acts xvii. 30 ? B. G.

A. It would be better rendered "overlooked" or "passed by." We always prove that God is gracious and forbearing to all ignorance, but severe when light is offered and rejected.

Q. 4. How does Rom. x. 14 apply to those who have never heard the gospel ? B. G.

A. That it does *not* refer to such is evident, from the text being made the foundation of an elaborate argument to prove the necessity of preachers being sent everywhere to make the good news known.

Q. 5. (1) Rom. xi. 22. What cutting off is meant here ? (2) Kindly explain Rom. xi. 29. B. G.

A. (1) The word "also" refers us to v. 17, which makes the meaning apparent. God ceased dealing dispensationally with the Jews in blessing, when He took up the Gentiles by Paul's ministry. This place of God's favour the latter have held ever since, but they will lose it when professing Christendom becomes finally apostate, and the Jews will again be taken up in grace.

(2) That although Israel had rebelled and sinned over and over again, every word God had promised to Abraham should yet be made good to his seed, and He would shew them that, though they were "unstable as water," they had to do with the unchangeable One.

MAN ;

INNOCENT, FALLEN, REDEEMED.

Created in the image of his Maker, with high intelligence; with heart to love, and will delighting to obey the God who gave him being; untainted by the deadly touch of sin he walks the garden, praise filling his soul, and perfect joy and thankfulness his heart. Eve, by his side, mingled with his her praises, and together they rejoice to own their Maker and their God. All nature joins in sweetest unison and all is peace, for God has now pronounced creation "very good," and "rests from all His work which He has made." Then He who in His love created all and gave to man dominion over it, as Ruler *over* all, imposed but one command, and asked but this one proof of love and gratitude:—that he should not partake of the forbidden fruit.

Sweetly could man enjoy the untold happiness of frequent visits from his gracious God, and all the scene was gladdest harmony, until the evil hour wherein he bent his ear to listen to the vile reasonings of that arch-fiend, who, of his own high place in light bereft, (because "iniquity was found in him," for "he abode not in the truth"), would now fain drag into the depths of his own misery, the happy souls who there in sweetest innocence could walk with God. Ah! bitter hour! Yet thanks be unto God—who bringeth forth from the womb of night, the brightness of the morn—this first dread victory of evil He has o'erruled to the eternal glory of His blessed name, and has bound up therewith the richest, fullest blessing of His creature man.

But now how changed the scene where God had deigned to walk! Again He cometh down, in the cool of even-tide, as was His wont, but sin hath entered, and conscience stricken man, from that once welcome Countenance must hide himself, and at the question "Adam where art thou?" comes the unwilling word "I was afraid." And now the death-doom falls upon his ear, for sin must ever separate the soul from God; yet in his righteous judgment God remembers mercy, and, for the sin-crushed soul, He speaks, most graciously, a word of comfort, telling of One who yet should come, and bruise the serpent's head beneath His feet. But from that much loved paradise, endeared by many an hour of purest joy, forth they must go, to wander o'er the earth, now cursed for man's sake; Adam, with sweating brow to eat his daily bread, and Eve, in sorrow to bring forth her children; children who now inherit, every one, the bitter birthright of a nature hating God. Ah! fearful blight! Death reigning all around tells how the curse has fallen on God's fair, beauteous earth; and man, once fit for blessed intercourse with God, revels in wickedness, the willing slave of him who first deceived; and as succeeding ages roll along, deeper and deeper in the mire he sinks, delighting in the sin which works eternal ruin to his soul.

Yet all the while, God in His mercy infinite, bears patiently with those who thus have sinned with a high hand against His love; and never suffers their base infamy to turn away His heart, which lingers over them in measureless long-suffering. And as He never can receive back to His bosom those thus stained with sin, (for God is Light), in infinite compassion, in love, the height and depth of which we ne'er can know, He gave His Son, the peerless, precious One, who from the unknown ages of eternity was His delight, that He, the Holy One, leaving those heights of glory, and, for the suffering of death, sin's awful penalty, taking upon Himself the form of

man, might bear the immeasurable judgment due to sin, that God might have a righteous way, though ever just, to justify the sinner who believes in Him.

This was His matchless scheme of wondrous grace; and when the time appointed had arrived, Jesus, who e'er delighted to fulfil His Father's will, deigned to be born a lowly babe, cradled in Bethlehem's manger; and in His spotless life, so fragrant to the Father's heart, (for now, for the first time since Adam's fall, He could delight in One who walked the earth,—a Man,) He showed to those who were despising Him, nothing but love. But man, who loveth darkness now rather than light, hated the presence of that blessed One, though for man's very sake He had come down, a willing victim for his sins to die.

Yet turned He not aside, but with determined will to vindicate the glory of a holy God, and to redeem from an eternal hell the lost and ruined souls He came to save, onward He went to that dark hour, when with wicked hands they crucified and slew the Prince of Life.

Oh wondrous Cross! displaying in its own dark character the heart of man, yet showing forth in the same hour God's perfect hatred of the sin that had dishonoured Him, and love, as perfect, to the sinner's soul. Here, sinner, thou by faith may'st see the judgment due to sin, in justice meted out to One who in His mercy took thy place, and God, forsaking Jesus His beloved, that to His bosom He might welcome thee.Believe, and live!

Who now shall lay aught to the charge of God's elect? 'Tis God who justifies, and sets in His own presence blood-washed souls, clothed in the perfect beauty of His precious Christ; seated in Him in heavenly places now, though waiting here till He shall come again to take us home. Oh magnify His name! In rapturous harmony proclaim the glories of the Lamb once slain, Angels of light! But for *our*

lips the loudest, sweetest, highest note is still reserved. Sing, sing, YE RANSOMED HOSTS! *To him who loveth us, and by His blood redeemed us unto God, eternal praise !* D. M.

"I LIVE ; YET NOT I."

(GAL. ii. 19, 20.)

Death has done its work and yet the believer lives. It is so, thank God, because the sentence of death has taken effect, not in his own person, but in the cross of Christ. Sin in the flesh is condemned. The sinner has died in the death of his blessed Deliverer ; the believer lives a life out of death and beyond its reach. The mighty waters in which the enemy sank like lead, roll between him and the land "where death and darkness reign." He lives anew, but now with death and judgment behind, with eternal life in present possession, and with the home and abiding rest of this life full in view, the home of which one has said :—

"In it all is light and glory,
 "O'er it shines a nightless day,
 "Every trace of sin's sad story,
 "All the curse is done away."

When Bunyan's pilgrim had reached the cross and his heavy load had rolled into the sepulchre, "then was Christian glad and lightsome and said with a merry heart, 'He hath given me rest by His sorrow and life by His death.'" Yea, thank God, LIFE through the DEATH of Him that died.

"Nevertheless I live." To have died with Christ is a great deliverance when death for us would have been everlasting woe,—the second death or the lake of fire (Rev. xxi. 8). But we rejoice in a real personal life beyond this death with Christ,

a life which is Christ in us by the power of the Holy Ghost. "For the grave cannot praise thee; death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down to the pit cannot hope for thy truth, The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth." Is. xxxviii. 18, 19.

This is indeed victory and assured blessing. A life, eternal as much in its present character as in its duration, is ours, and ours that we may praise our God and be to his praise.

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." As another has forcibly said, "The knowledge of the Almighty gave assurance to the pilgrim of faith; that of Jehovah, the certainty of the fulfilment of the promises of God to Israel; that of the Father, who sent the Son Jesus Christ, the Anointed Man and the Saviour, was life eternal. True knowledge here was not outward protection or future hope, but the communication, in life, of communion with the thing known to the soul."

"Eternal life" is thus seen to mean far more than a life which will last for ever. "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." This gives the true character of eternal life. It is the knowledge of God, even the Father, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. Christ has fully declared the Father's name, "that" as he says, "the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." Christ the perfect revelation of God, Christ the Declarer of the Father's name, Christ in us,—this is life eternal.

Hence the disciple whom Jesus loved could say, "For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us; 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. (1 John i. 2, 3.) This life is ours and we

possess it in Christ. (1 John v. 11.) But it is in us, because Christ is in us by the Holy Ghost. How blessedly we are linked with our God made known to us in Christ! And how evidently eternal life, as used in these scriptures, has a deeper and wider meaning than that this life lasts for ever. It must and does endure for ever. But it has a moral character as well as endless duration. This character is unfolded to us in these blessed scriptures. It is a life which flows from God, no longer hidden behind a veil, but revealed and revealed in His own blessed Son. (John i. 18.) This "Son which is in the bosom of the Father" has declared His ineffable name of Father to us, thus making us children. He has, by the good spirit of God, taken up His abode in our souls, and thus the love wherewith the Father loves the Son is in us, and *Christ* is in us. If this is eternal life, what a tale of grace we tell when we exclaim in words which the Holy Ghost teaches, "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true: and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life!" (1 John v. 20).

Beloved Christian reader, how far have your heart and mine laid hold, in practical power, of this truth of **ETERNAL LIFE**? It is ours; otherwise we should not be christians. But how far is it the holy, operative reality to our souls which God would have it to be? Do we taste every day in this busy world, in this scene of turmoil, amid the waves and billows of this troublesome world,—do we taste the fellowship which is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ? Have our souls daily to do with God our Father in secret, in this unspeakable fellowship? Are our thoughts and feelings as to Christ formed by fellowship with the Father? And the Holy Ghost which is in us, the witness that we are the children of God,—does He bring daily home to us the revelation of the Father which Christ has made to our souls?

O Lord, give to us whom Thou hast so loved, a deeper taste of this holy communion! Mould our hearts inwardly by it and may our ways tell of it outwardly! Be it thus with us until Thou comest to take us to Thee on high that we may enjoy it unhinderedly when mortality is swallowed up of life!

ON BAPTISM.*

The difficulty is felt in considering the subject of Baptism, of keeping entirely clear from the influence of traditional thoughts. We may however be free from much of the confusion prevalent on this subject, by leaving aside the controverted question as to the proper subjects of Baptism. The doctrine i.e. the revealed mind of God as to His end and purpose in Baptism is of primary importance. We refer of course to *Christian* Baptism. The Israelites, we are told, were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. Thus they were separated from Egypt's King and Kingdom to subjection to Moses as the servant of God (1 Cor. x.; Heb. iii.). So also, many years after, John baptized in Enon, and separated thus the repentant from the unrepentant mass of the Nation to wait for their Messiah. But Christian Baptism as given us by the Lord, is unto Himself and to His death, and came into operation *after* His resurrection. Indeed as an ordinance it testifies in the most powerful manner to faith in resurrection: "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Rom. vi. 5). With this agrees the somewhat difficult text, 1 Cor. xv. 29—"Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then

* In answer to the following—"I wish to ask you if you would kindly explain the doctrine of Baptism to me." W. W. G.

are they baptized for them?" (R.V.) The chapter is devoted to the subject of the resurrection of Christ and of those that are His, and in this part the apostle shows that the hope set forth in Baptism was in no way dimmed, and could not be, by the fact that death had taken away some from the ranks of Christians. Others still came into their company by being baptized also, for Baptism testified to *resurrection*, and faith in God triumphed over the natural discouragement of seeing death diminishing the numbers of the baptized. It bore witness to a hope in Christ beyond this life, and, as an initiatory rite, it spoke loudly to the believing subject of it, that this scene is not his resting place. The last trumpet might at any moment sound, and all that are Christ's rise "in the twinkling of an eye" to heavenly glory. When Christianity sank down to the earth, Baptism lost this, its first and most blessed significance.

The ordinance itself is not power, and Christianity is not a dispensation of ordinances. Judaism was such an economy, and the constant tendency of the mind and feelings of men is to Judaize, to slip into mere obedience to ordinances as the way to please God. But wherever baptism is spoken of in the Epistles, the truth of the resurrection of Christ and the *power* of it are connected with it. Let these be lost sight of, and the mind is loose to play upon its own theories, and the door is open for all sorts of confusion. But let the all important truth of Christ's resurrection from the grave, (that solemn, marvellous terminus of a life of perfect obedience to the whole will of God, by which He has gained for every believer participation with Him in life, in standing and acceptance before God), let this in Baptism be seen and held in faith, and it is evident that there needs be but little confusion, for there can be but "*one baptism.*" The grave of Christ, figured in the water, can but receive the true recipient of Baptism once, beyond it he is to continually reckon himself

"alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord," and this by faith.

A fact, and the outward expression of the fact, are two things, and need to be at times clearly distinguished. It is thus as to faith in Christ and its results, and Baptism. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." This then is the fact as to every responsible person on earth. Each one has, or has not, everlasting life. But Baptism *expresses* an important fact, in a remarkably vivid manner, viz. that death must precede (and in the case of believers, has preceded) life. "We are buried with Christ by baptism into death."

Just pause here, to think of the "*we*" i.e. of the variety of the (truly) baptized. Jews once zealous of the law, heathens formerly led away unto dumb idols, magicians practised in evil arts (Acts xix. 19), sinners too of the grossest character (1 Cor. vi. 11.). All these Paul associates together with himself in this "*we*," and shows that all that applied morally to each and every one baptized, was separated from, even as a dead and buried man is separated from all that applied to him when alive. The Christian formerly a Jew, is "dead to the law by the body of Christ," even as those from the heathen are dead to sin in its various forms. Then he adds further—"that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. vi. 14). Now "*newness of life*" is not a figure. Baptism is a figure (1 Pet. iii. 21). "*Newness of life*" is a Divine reality, it is the gift of God. But this makes this Scripture (Rom. vi.) a most important and comprehensive statement of the doctrine of Baptism, of the end and purpose of God in Baptism. The walk of the baptized should be, as to every step, in *newness of life*, because, among other reasons, in his baptism the fact is expressed that by

faith (and therefore by grace), he is separated from every path and course of the "old man" by the cross of Christ (v. 6.), and his path and course now are associated with a *risen* Christ—"like as Christ was raised up from the dead &c. so he should walk" &c. The living subject of Baptism views everything of his "old man," with its deceitful lusts, left behind in the grave of Christ. He has been buried with Christ into death, and while on earth has to learn, day by day, what a walk in "newness of life" involves; as in Rom. xii. &c.—"to prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

But, we must repeat, no *power* is given by an ordinance. Hence Paul's work was far higher than baptizing. "Christ," he says, "sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel (1 Cor. i. 17), and souls were begotten through the gospel (iv. 15). This was *power* by the Holy Ghost, and baptism, as an *expression* of their burial with Christ, cut them off from everything that would hinder this power carrying them forward in "newness of life," associated with a risen, living Saviour, and with all that are truly His. The study of Rom. vi., as it bears on the daily walk of the baptized, will prove, by God's blessing, most profitable.*

In Gal. iii. 26 to 29 we have the truth of baptism applied to the religious and other *distinctions* of men as before the cross, but chiefly that of Jews and Gentiles. The Judaic party in the church (see Acts xv. 1; and Gal. ii.) were energetic, as they are to this day, and the Galatians were getting under their influence, which for a time carried away even

* "In baptism a man acknowledges that *all he is* is subject to the judgment of God. It is not merely that he has now new motives, but God has given him a divine conviction of the *utter ruin* of all he is. And he knows Another that the world does not know, as his life. He *has* One who is risen from the dead. Thus it is not with him a mere struggle against sin. Christ not only blots out the past, but He is given of God to live upon for the present. His *grace* is sufficient. In Christ dead and risen is power against sin."

Peter and Barnabas (ii. 11 to 14). But Paul by the Holy Ghost wrote the Epistle to deliver these troubled churches, (an Epistle so blessed of God, through Luther, in delivering from Romish superstition and error), and in the course of it shews that by baptism we have "put on Christ," so that with the baptized there is no longer the distinctions of Jew and Gentile (iii. v. 28). "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Thus all the efforts of the Judaic party to bring up these distinctions of the flesh again, and to revive the carnal ordinances which were imposed on the Jews "until the time of reformation," were met by the truth expressed in Baptism; for Gentiles equally with Jews, left behind all distinctions of the flesh in the grave of Christ, and they "put on Christ," avowed they were Christ's, and "if Christ's then Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." Gentiles could never get to Abraham and to the promises by circumcision and Jewish ordinances, they could be but proselytes at best. God had made no provision for Gentile flesh becoming Jewish flesh, but if "Christ's" they were Abraham's seed *in resurrection*, and Baptism expressed this fact also in a lively manner.

In Col. ii. Baptism expresses the fact of a Christian being buried with Christ (v. 12) as applied to separation from all that is most valued in the world, the highest attainments of men in the flesh, whether in reason or religion, i.e. from "philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." What is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (see v v. 16, 18). In contrast with cultivated flesh on earth, which is so highly esteemed in the world, we have Christ raised from the dead and glorified in heaven, and the baptized are to have faith in this "*operation of God*" (v. 12), for what is expressed in Baptism is, that they have died with Christ from the rudiments of the world (v. 20), and are risen with Him (iii. 1), and their life is hidden with Christ in God (v. 3),

therefore in *heaven*; and they are not to seek, what men in the flesh seek—things on *the earth*—but to have their mind set on *things above* (v. 2).

This necessarily leads the soul further than the Romans and the Galatians, as it sets the truly baptized looking up like Stephen (Acts vii. 55.) into heaven, to behold there the glory of God and Jesus in that glory; and then the heart longs to be with Him, yet seeks to manifest His grace while here, even to enemies.

In 1 Pet. iii. 21, the *judgment* of God upon *unbelievers* is the prominent thought, and as Noah in the ark was brought though the judgment safely and established in a new scene beyond it, so baptism (here distinctly called “a figure”) expresses the fact, that in Christ, believers have passed through all God’s righteous judgment on them as men in the flesh, and by His resurrection are as truly separated from unbelievers as Noah, (they thus condemn the unbelieving world), and in it have their new standing before God, where the “good conscience,” fully alive to His holy requirements, is at rest as to all judgment. We cannot pass to our *new* position but through the *judgment of the old*.

One other passage claims our attention, very intimately connected with this last—the words of Ananias to Saul of Tarsus. “And now, why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” In appealing to those of his own nation, Paul afterwards used these words—“If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as *Lord*, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” In this connection how striking are the words of Ananias, urging immediate baptism on Saul, with calling on the name of the Lord. It was under the burden of our sins that Jesus suffered and died. In his resurrection he left all that burden behind, and was made *Lord* of all. The washing away of sins, and the

title of Jesus Christ to Lordship are here united in expression in this Divinely instituted ordinance, hence the importance of Paul's argument in 1 Cor. i. 13.

May "the moral necessity of the truth connected with the reality of baptism," be more clearly understood. "There is no room allowed of God for the 'old' and 'new man' in the same person."

"CHARITY EDIFIETH."

It is surely most evident that the Lord Jesus, in teaching, invariably appealed *primarily* to the *hearts* of His listeners, and but *secondarily* to their intelligence.

If He had borne witness of Himself, as one seeking his own glory, the Scribes and Pharisees would have readily given heed to teaching calculated to increase the knowledge they had already acquired: but He sought His glory who sent Him, and fearlessly exposed their most secret thoughts and ways, while He faithfully reprov'd their vain efforts to conceal the workings of evil in their deceitful hearts, and this they resented.

He said, "Come unto Me...learn of Me;" but they came not unto Him, and though they were amongst His most frequent hearers, they failed to *learn of Him*. When they murmured, saying, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them," they were pointedly answered, *not* by a narration of the personal glories of the Great Shepherd, but by a parable illustrating the love of the Good Shepherd for one poor lost sheep: by that parable also which so beautifully expresses the Father's love for the returning, repentant prodigal, and the joy with which He received him, as a lost one found, and *not* by a glowing description of the untold glories of that same Father's house.

These professors of the law, boasted of their knowledge of the letter, but because the love of God had no place in their unbelieving hearts (John v. 42), they were not benefited by a knowledge, which, in their case, simply increased their responsibilities. We might add more, by that very law they themselves were condemned who wantonly cursed "unlearned and ignorant men," simply because they lacked knowledge. (Compare Lev. xix. 15, 18; John vii. 49.) They said, "We see," but being spiritually "blind," they discerned not that those believing Galileans, whose hearts had been opened to receive the words of eternal life, were already happily possessed of "wisdom" and "understanding" which those who cursed them did not possess (Job xxviii. 28). The Father "revealed unto babes" things that were hid from the "wise and prudent;" so that, notwithstanding their learning, the word preached did not profit faithless men, who were most careful to cleanse their *hands* from imaginary defilement, while quite content that their *hearts* should remain "full of ravening and wickedness." Such were those who would not enter into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled, yet did not shrink from committing the awful crime of constraining Pilate to crucify Jesus, the Son of God.

How many to-day are crying, "Instruct the mind," who seem to forget that it is not the intellect, but the *heart* of a man, which is the mainspring of all his actions.

Whether his knowledge be very limited or very extensive, it nevertheless remains true, that "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh." "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." "Where the treasure is there will the heart be also."

"A man's heart deviseth his way." A believer may have more or less intelligence in the Word, but his feet will most

certainly follow the promptings of his heart. Provided that his *heart* (like Paul's) is set upon "winning Christ," not only will his *feet* be found "following after" Him, but his *intelligence* will also be brought into active exercise by his heart's earnest desire to "know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings." How essential then that all should obey the solemn exhortation:—"Keep thy heart with all diligence (margin, "above all keeping"); for out of it are the issues of life;" for what is more sorrowful than to witness the dreary unreality of an intelligence in full exercise, unaccompanied with any manifestation of real yearnings of heart towards the person of the Christ of God.

Why did Paul determine not to know anything among the Corinthians save "Jesus Christ, and him crucified?" Not because he in any measure underrated the value of knowledge, but that their faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Though a man had the gift of prophecy, and understood all mysteries, and all knowledge, if he had not charity, he was nothing.

Again, why did the same apostle, on behalf of the saints at Ephesus, pray, that they might be strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man, that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith; that they, "being rooted and grounded in love, might be able to *comprehend* with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to *know the love of Christ*, which passeth knowledge." If Christ does not dwell in the *heart* by faith, how can a saint of God be rooted and grounded in love? And if he is not thus rooted and grounded in love, who can enable him to comprehend &c. His intelligence has no root and must wither away.

Love is of God, and it appeals more powerfully to the heart of a man than knowledge does to his intelligence. And could Divine love itself, be more fully expressed than in the words

of our Lord Jesus, addressed to His disciples on the night of His betrayal? "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love." But He had yet many things to say unto them, which they could not bear at the moment when He thus spake unto them; and His crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection, were all accomplished before He opened their understandings that they might understand the Scriptures (Luke xxiv. 45). It was most essential that the disciples should be "rooted and grounded" in His perfect love, before it was given to them to understand what the same love had accomplished for them, and (through mercy we can add) also for us.

The most gifted only "know in part," but the most simple-hearted believer has already received of that "*perfect love which casteth out fear.*" And there may be found knowledge without obedience, but love will seek to display itself in obedience, and will delight in self-sacrifice.

Would that we all cherished more of that "brotherly kindness and love," which brought Paul into such deep exercise of heart, because of the sorrowful delusion of the Galatians. He could not rest satisfied with simply showing from whence they had fallen,—he *travailed in birth again* until Christ was formed in them.

Do any ask, "But how shall I reach an erring brother? I have often reasoned with him, and argued, but hitherto all my efforts have proved fruitless." It is worthy of remark that Paul, in his solemn charge to Timothy, (written when "perilous times" were in prospect) says, "Preach the word rebuke, exhort" &c., but adds not one word about reasoning and arguing. Men of the world may reason and argue, but he must be energised by the Spirit of God who would effectually "preach the word" &c. Reasons and arguments appeal to man's intelligence. Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, each one pursued his own peculiar mode of reasoning in his endeavour

to benefit Job, yet all alike failed to help their sorrowing friend in his adversity (Job xvi. 2). Worse than this, in their several abortive attempts, by reasoning, to convince Job of wrong doing, his would-be instructors themselves, erred more grievously than he whom they sought to put right (Job xlii. 7). It remained for Elihu to rebuke both him that had justified himself rather than God (Job xxxii. 2), and those who could not answer, and yet had condemned him (v. 3). Elihu appealed directly to Job's *heart* and *conscience*, nor ceased to speak until Job was brought face to face with God; so that he who had, before his friends, justified himself, was brought to the abhorrence of self, and to repent in dust and ashes (Job xlii. 5, 6).

Faith worketh by love; and love, as we have before said, appeals more powerfully to the heart, than reasons and arguments appeal to the intelligence. Unless the two disciples (Luke xxiv.) had been "slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken," they had surely not left, upon the day of the resurrection, the city where the Lord commanded the blessing; notwithstanding this, as they journeyed in sadness, "Jesus Himself" drew near, and went with them. And while as yet their eyes were holden that they should not know Him, the love and sympathy expressed by the Unknown Stranger at once touched their hearts. And though rebuked by Him, and their consciences reached by the Word of God (v. 25), their hearts burned within them while He talked with them by the way, and while He opened to them the Scriptures; and all this before He was known of them in breaking of bread. If unbelief prompted their journey to Emmaus, *love*, bringing their spiritual understanding into exercise, constrained them to return without delay to Jerusalem, where they, with others, beheld Jesus "in the midst," and were filled with joy in His presence.

The Lord's thrice repeated "Lovest thou me," wrought

more effectually in the heart of Peter than the most elaborate discourse man ever listened to could have done. And if the erring brother's inmost affections for the person of the Lord Jesus are, by grace, brought into full exercise, his feet will assuredly follow where his heart leads, and in true restoration will heartily desire to "know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."

"Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth." A man may think that he knoweth something, while knowing nothing as he ought to know, "But if any man love God, the same is known of him." A. J.

SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. 1. I have not been accustomed to think, I may say, *believe*, that the changes which befall us in life are of God's appointing. If they really are so, a short paper might be very helpful.

A. We fail to see how you can doubt it. One great change in life you *know* was of His appointing, and that is your conversion, and if the great change why not the lesser, when there is no greater or lesser with God? If you mean—"are not many of my ups and downs the result of my folly rather than God's will"?—we fully agree with you. It is absurd to say, whenever we are in trouble—"It is the Lord's will." It is not the Lord's will, but our own folly very often, that brings us into difficulties. At the same time God *overrules* all.

Fancy Eve, out of Paradise, and Adam, earning his daily bread by the sweat of his brow, saying—"Well, you know, it is the Lord's will." The beauty of Eden was God's will for them. If a child is put under punishment by his father, he does not say—"Well, it is my father's will and I must bear it."

If we love money so much that God has to take some of it away, we often talk of "suffering the Lord's will" instead of judging ourselves. At the same time he orders all. The truth is, if our hearts are right, and we are truly desirous of doing His will in spite of countless mistakes, the changes in our lives will be the result of this, and will be for His glory. On the other hand, if we are bent on doing our own wills, God often lets us eat the fruit of our own ways. We go astray and get miserable. This we must not say is God's will, but our own, though, as we have said before, God graciously brings good to our souls even out of our failures. But to deny in a general way God's care, and ordering of our daily life, is to cease to have to do with a living and loving Father, and to lose one half of vital Christianity.

Q. 2. Oftentimes when gathered to remember Christ, and to show forth His death till He come, and my soul is entering into the love and grace of God for such an unspeakable gift as Jesus, some brother has asked God in prayer, to bless us and keep us, and to give us to feel His presence. What I want to ask is, are there Scriptural grounds for such petitions? I do not wish to limit the Spirit's work, but are such requests the outflow of a heart when realizing Christ's presence, and brought into a deep sense of His love and grace? D. M.

A. That prayer at such a time is most "in the Spirit" which expresses the feelings and desires, not of the individual who speaks, but of the assembly for whom he speaks; seeking, while not going beyond their condition of soul, to lead on to higher aspirations and to deeper notes of praise. To ask the Lord to be present would be clearly a mistake, for He has promised to be there and will not fail. To ask that we may realize His presence is most necessary, though some may already do so. We must beware of the selfishness which would even make our own feelings and state of soul the standard. We do not say that such a character of prayer is

of the highest order, but then it is often real, which is much better than assuming anything.

Q. 3. What is the meaning of "Ye which have followed me, *in the regeneration*?" Matt. xix. 28. GERSHOM.

A. This expression occurs in two places only: here, where the Son of Man will reign in the millennium. and in Titus iii. 5 where it refers to the new birth, as in John iii., by the Word and Spirit. It is called "washing" because this new birth is a moral and inward cleansing of the entire man by the imparting of a new life. This is the force of "washed" or "bathed" in John xiii. 10. "He that is washed." Among Christians "regeneration" is a common word for the new birth, though the word for this in Greek is quite different.

[Individual souls are now the subjects, by grace, of "*the washing of regeneration*," and are thus "saved," while the whole world lies in wickedness and under judgment (1 Titus iii. 5; 1 John v. 19; John xii. 31). In "*the regeneration*" (Matt. xix. 28), "the habitable world to come of which we speak," will be put in subjection to Jesus, as Lord of all (Heb. ii. 5-8.), and Acts iii. 21 will be fulfilled. The connection of the two passages, Matt. xix. and Titus iii., is thus evident].

Q. 4. What is the difference between being made partaker of the Holy Ghost, and partaker of the Divine nature? GERSHOM.

A. The latter refers to the new birth. The former (Heb. vi. 4) referred to those who came within the sphere of His working, but, as the word used shews, merely in an outward and temporary manner. Many came under the influence of the new power who were not saved, or born again. Another word altogether is used in 2 Pet. i. 4.

.. We regret we have not space this month for all the Questions sent and the Answers to them.

"THE DAY OF THE LORD."

III.

In pursuing our enquiry into this subject, it is necessary to present two important truths before examining the passages which directly refer to the day of the Lord. They can only be briefly stated now, but a careful study of the Word will abundantly confirm them. First—In past dispensations men have departed from God, failure has abounded, and the dispensation has been set aside. The faithful in all dispensations have been sustained of God, and have mourned over the corruptions around them, but the mass has become more and more ungodly until there is no remedy, and the dispensation has been cut off. Second—In the present economy, "the mystery of iniquity" has been working from the days of the apostles, and will work until it results in the predicted "falling away," or apostacy, and the manifestation of the "man of sin."

Believers will be saved all through, but the *present* dealings of God with the world, for the display of the riches of His grace, will be changed. Judgment, though "His *strange work*," will terminate this day of grace.

The "last days" of this dispensation, instead of being marked by increasing purity, are characterized by deeper departure from true godliness, and Satan's power, instead of waning before a widely diffused Christianity, will increase by corrupting it, until his sway will be in all the concentrated energies of the predicted "beast," and "false prophet." (2 Tim. iii.; 2 Thess. ii.; Rev. xiii. &c.) Then the Lord Jesus must and will personally take the world under his righteous rule. (Heb. ii. 5, 8; Rev. xi. 15.) This brings us to the second division of our subject.

We do not meet with the expression "the day of the Lord"

(yohm Y'hovah) earlier than Isaiah. No doubt the period itself is presented in type from Genesis onwards, and it is the subject of many of the Psalms. Let us reverently and believingly examine the following passages, which are all in the Old Testament where this formal expression occurs. (It is found in connection with the words "wrath," "anger," "vengeance," in a few other passages). Is. ii. 12 to ch. iv.—xiii. 6, 9; Jer. xlvi. 10; Ezek. xiii. 5; xxx. 3; Joel i. 15; ii. 1, 11, 31; iii. 14; Am. v. 18; Ob. 15; Zeph. i. 7-14; Zech. xiv. 1; Mal. iv. 5.

"The day of the Lord," unlike the present "day of salvation," is the time characterized by His *judging in righteousness*, and therefore will begin with just vengeance on the wicked *living*, even as it will close with the judgment of the wicked *dead*. (Compare 2 Pet. iii. 10 with Rev. xx. 11-15.)

One thought must predominate as this solemn subject of revealed truth assumes its due importance in the soul. The history of man has been too often, the story of *power abused*. The comment of "The Preacher" on this, must be acknowledged as painfully true. "I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun; and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of the oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter" (Ec. iv. 1).

Can any one read the story of man's lawless cruelty to man, and not long for a time of justice and judgment, or believe the story of Calvary, and not feel that the time must come?

Yes, verily, "the Lord will take His great power and reign," "the Kingdom of the world shall become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ." "He shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor" (Ps. lxxii). He is not *yet* dealing in judgment with the evil in the world, because the church is still in it, for the church

is the richest manifestation of grace: but, on the other hand, He will not *display* His saints in glory without removing the evil from the world. (Matt. xiii. 41-43.) The coming of the Lord for *them*, will separate them by an act of pure grace from the sad confusion and admixture of the world in which many of them are found, by calling them up to Himself. Then "the day of the Lord" will come as "a thief in the night" on the ungodly, *i.e.* when they are utterly unprepared. The former is the hope of the believer; the latter will prove the terror of the unbeliever.

If we turn now to the Scriptures quoted, this truth as to "the day of the Lord" will be confirmed. In Is. ii. it is evidently the time when the Lord will deal in "the glory of his majesty," with the pride and idolatry of men. He "will arise and shake terribly the earth" and prostrate all before Him. But Jerusalem and Judah will especially be the sphere of these humiliating judgments, when even the dress and vanities of women, as ministering to pride, will not be passed over (ch. iii.). A godly remnant will be saved, in mercy, through these judgments, and the presence of the Lord will again, as in their deliverance from Egypt, be their shelter and defence upon every dwelling place and upon all their assemblies (ch. iv.).

In Is. xiii., the *Gentiles* are seen as coming under the hand of the Lord, and in the past, sudden and striking destruction of Babylon, "the head of gold," we read the doom of the whole image (Dan. ii.), especially of the power that will inherit her guilt and her position—the fourth beast of Dan. vii.; the first of Rev. xiii.—The result will be Israel's deliverance and exaltation (Is. xiv.).

In Jer. xlvi. another power, the first of the oppressors of Israel, and, at the time of the prophecy, seeking to "rise up like a flood and cover the earth," is brought low by the sword of Jehovah. No doubt the primary application was to the

days of Nebuchadnezzar, but with Dan. xi. 42-43 before us, we cannot question that Egypt will be found among Israel's enemies in the day of the Lord, and "shall not escape." But mercy rejoiceth over judgment. "The Lord will smite Egypt, but they shall return to the Lord, and he shall be entreated of them, and shall heal them. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land" (Is. xix). Wonderful future of a people now engaging so much of the attention of men! Still more wonderful the grace of God that will be displayed in such a race!

In Ezek. xiii. the spirit guards against false prophets. To "stand in the battle in the day of the Lord," nothing less than the sure word of the Lord will avail. An important principle at all times, and none the less so in our day (1 John iv).

In Ezek. xxx.—The downfall of Egypt is again referred to, but in connection with universal judgment. "The day is near, even the day of the Lord is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the *time of the heathen*" v. 3. The spirit of aggrandisement and lust of dominion, so characteristic of the Gentile powers, will meet with their full and final rebuke in that day (see chap. xxxi).

In Joel—the subject of every chapter is "the day of the Lord," but in special connection with *Judah* and *Zion*. In ch. i. a terrible dearth that had followed the ravages of armies of locusts, affords occasion to call on all the inhabitants of the land of Israel to mourn, and to fast, and to cry unto the Lord. Even the beasts of the fields groan and cry unto God in their distress.

Then in ch. ii. the day is described as ushered in by "the Lord's army," "a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it"..... "His camp is very great; for he is strong that execu-

teth his word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it." Earnest exhortation to repentance, in view of this judgment, follows, and on the true repentance of the people the Lord speaks only of the richest mercy and the most abundant blessings. Israel, rejoicing in the assured presence of Jehovah, should never be ashamed. Signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth would *precede* that day, whoever should call on the name of the Lord would be saved, and *afterwards* Jehovah would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh. (What a flood of light is here).

In ch. iii. the gathering of all the heathen to the valley of Jehoshaphat ("*the judgment of Jehovah*") is described. It is the time of the harvest of the earth, and of the vintage of the vine of the earth. (v. 13; Rev. xiv. 14-20.) The Lord will gather his wheat (the saved remnant) into his garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire (Ps. i. 4). He will tread the wine-press alone: the execution of His vengeance will be terrible (Is. lxiii. 3, 4). "Multitudes, in the valley of decision" (*threshing*) "for He will thoroughly purge his floor."

Such will be the day of the Lord. Dark and terrible when the Lord resumes the direct and manifest government of the earth; glorious and blessed when He shall be known as dwelling in Zion, His holy mountain (v. v. 16-18).

In Amos v. we have an especially evil time described, and because of it, some professing to *desire* the day of the Lord. But "to what end" would it be for them? Calamitous as were the days they lived in, the day of the Lord would bring them no deliverance. "It would be as if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him, or went into the house and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him."

In Obadiah the solemn truth is seen that the nearest in nature can be the bitterest in hatred, and Edom brings down on his own head the sorrows he sought to inflict on his

younger brother. "In the day of the Lord, as thou hast done it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head."

In Zephaniah, the terrors of the day of the Lord are widespread, and the results, first, in separating the meek of the earth, that they may be hid in the day of the Lord's anger, and finally, in the full restoration of Israel (the object of the Lord's unspeakable love, iii. 17), with the blessing of the nations and their worship, are told in the most touching and forcible language.

Zech. xiv. gives us the closing scene of the last days. From ch. xi., which describes the rejection of Jesus, to this chapter where He comes again to the mount of Olives, whence He ascended to heaven, the prophetic history is of the most, intense interest.

Here, the final gathering of the nations against Jerusalem, its last siege, its impending destruction, the sudden appearing of the Lord, the cleaving of the mount of Olives in the midst, the manifestation of all the glorified saints, and the blessing of the day when Jehovah, even Jesus, shall be king over all the earth,—are set before us. What an amazing revelation it is! May we be suited vessels to receive it with reverence and godly fear.

Malachi closes the prophetic record. He bears solemn witness against the offensive indifference and overbearing pride of the professing people, distinguishing a remnant who really fear the Lord (iii. 16). To these the most precious promises of blessing are made, while in the day that was coming, the proud and all that do wickedly, should be as stubble in the fire. Nevertheless the Lord promises that a special testimony shall be raised up before the close. He will not strike until He has warned. "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."

May this lifting of the veil of the future bring present blessing to every reader.

"CHRIST LIVETH IN ME."

GAL. ii. 19, 20.

This is indeed "life eternal." This is the life which the knowledge of "the only true God," revealed in the Son of His love, has given us. Well may the last words of Christ ere He crossed the brook Kidron, the night in which He was betrayed, linger in our hearts: "And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." The full fruition of this declaration of the Father's name awaited the gift of the Holy Ghost. Nor could the declaration itself be completed until the risen Christ should breathe out upon His own the Holy Ghost. Blessed as was the declaration of the Father's name by Christ still down here, there was a reserve. It could not be otherwise. Christ had a baptism to be baptized with and He was straitened till it were accomplished. The disciples too were dull of hearing; their understandings had not been opened as they were by the risen Jesus.

"Go to my brethren," said He, the day He rose, "and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God." Here was a full declaration of the Father's name, a declaration which put the saints in His own place before His Father. He had a place all His own as the Eternal Son of the Father. But He was Son of God as born into this world; "that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke i. 35. Is He thus a Son in all the conscious nearness, in all the sweet fellowship

of that relationship? He sets us in the same blessed place, in the same holy relationship. On His side, Christ gives it freely and unreservedly: and the Holy Ghost comes down as the promise of the Father, and as shed forth by Christ, that on our side it may be made good. The Spirit of God can now say: "Which thing is true in him and in you." 1 John ii. 8.

The relationship exists and the love is not wanting. It was supreme and perfect love that counselled for us, and gave to us such a place; but the love is now *according to the relationship already existing*. God did love us although we were sinners. Now the Father Himself loveth us as His own children. He loves with the sort of love He bears to the Son of His love. This love is *in us*. Our bodies which are the temples of the Holy Ghost are the vessels of this unspeakable love. It is *IN us* and *Christ is in us*.

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John x. 10.) We have life through His death; we have life, and life more abundantly in the power of His resurrection. In His death He gave Himself *for us*; risen, He gave Himself *to us*. Looking at the truth from another point of view we may say that God gave His Son for us. Unspeakable gift! When that Son in grace for us and in obedience to the counsels of Eternal love had gone down into death, the working of the mighty power of God raised Him from the dead. But the might of that power wrought towards us too, who were dead in trespasses and sins: it raised us up with Christ. Thus has God given us eternal life.

Now Christ is this life in us. He lives in us in the power of the Holy Ghost and by His presence in our body. It is thus that He lives in us, so that it can be said, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness;" (Rom. viii. 10.) and that at the same time He may be *our life*.

How can we bless our God worthily? The eternal life which was with the Father has been manifested unto us. How perfect the manifestation among men of "eternal life" when Christ walked down here! But what was it for God to look down upon! How the Father found His delight in it! If our hearts, as won for Christ, are moved to adoring wonder in tracing His path of faithful love, of holy devotion, of perfect grace, of unsullied light, what was that life for the One whose will He was doing—for the Father in whose bosom He dwelt!

"Faithful amidst unfaithfulness.

"Mid darkness only light,

"Thou did'st Thy Father's name confess

"And in His will delight."

That same eternal life is now in us. Its manifestation is feeble, but the life is perfect. There is no feebleness in Him who now lives in us. The *life* is the same whether seen in its perfection in Christ or dwelling in the saint. In Christ, as the Father owned His Son in whom He was well pleased, and as the Spirit sealed Him, eternal life was perfectly manifested. In the believer, loved of the Father and sealed by the Holy Ghost, the eternal life *subsists*,—however feeble its expression. The "Eternal life" is the same: there could not be two.

What blessing for us is this! As the Father looks down upon those in whom He has put His love—the same love He bears Christ—He sees the same eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. He saw its lovely manifestations at the well of Sychar, near the pool of Siloam, at the gate of Nain, at the cave at Bethany, in the temple at Jerusalem. Who shall tell what the sight was to the Father of our Lord Jesus in His sanctuary on high! The sweet savour of that perfect life never failed in that holy place whilst Jesus tabernacled amongst men. What fellowship of untold love, of perfect delight between the hallowed courts on high,

and the hallowed place where Jesus walked in lovely grace! God's good pleasure was indeed with men. With what delight does the Father now see that eternal life in His dear children! With what satisfaction does He enjoy its sweet savour, as it now reaches the sanctuary from hearts which He has formed for Himself!

"And is this the manner of man, O Lord God?" Who but God could have thought toward us such thoughts of peace? Who but He could have loved us in our distance and alienation? Who but the Son of His love could have made good that love to us by a work which met every claim of God and revealed His whole heart? "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!" Well may our hearts bow before this sovereign grace, before the God of all grace! When we were defiled before His pure eyes and guilty before His righteous majesty, He gave His own Son to die for us; He brought us nigh by the blood of Christ. What a heart is His! A heart which would not be satisfied with a less blessing for us than *Christ in us*—Christ the revelation of the Father—the eternal life that was with the Father! What a Father to know! And what a way of giving us to know Him! Truly "this is LIFE ETERNAL, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

And what answer, dearly beloved, have our hearts to all this? Should not our answer be:—a heart wholly given up to Christ and ways which tell that He is dwelling there by faith? May our God work effectually in our souls to call forth this answer in an ever growing measure by His good Spirit which dwelleth in us!

GOD'S ABOUNDING GRACE AND SOVEREIGNTY IN BLESSING.

I.

In Numbers xxi. and xxii. the wondrous contrast is recorded between the people of God as toward *Him*, and God as toward *them*.

In the first case (xxi.) Israel speaks against God and against Moses. In chapter xxii. God comes unto Balaam, and speaks for Israel, forbidding him to curse Israel for they were blessed. How purely and divinely sovereign grace shines, displaying that God *must* and *does* act from and of Himself. The way and means are completely outside those who are the subjects of divine grace and mercy, as the present case illustrates, not only as to the beginning of their history with God, but on *to* and *at* the very end. May grace, as it is seen in these striking instances, speak to the heart and conscience, and magnify God more fully in the soul, whilst we learn too, the precious basis upon which it rests, so that the ministry of grace, and the sovereign action of pure unmingled blessing may flow, and be maintained in righteousness, holiness and love.

That Israel's deliverance was purely a sovereign act of grace on God's part, is seen in Exod. iii. Jehovah, having seen Israel's afflictions in Egypt, and heard their cry, tells Moses that He had undertaken to deliver them, and would use him to that end.

When speaking also in chapter xi. of the approaching judgment upon Egypt's first born, Moses wishes Israel to understand that their escape from judgment was because the Lord put a *difference* between the Egyptians and Israel.

The basis upon which this difference could be made, consistent with what God is in holiness and truth, must no less be of God's appointment and provision. The blood of the Paschal Lamb upon the lintel and side posts of all Israel's dwellings, spoke clearly of the alone ground of difference. Nothing on Israel's part in *person* or *act* could furnish the ground for a holy and righteous God to pass over them. The blood of the Lamb *alone* explained it, manifesting that the same grace which took them up, provided the means, whereby, (to use later New Testament language,) "God might be just, and the justifier." Will it be seen otherwise at the end of Israel's journey than at the beginning? Can the conduct of Israel in their pilgrimage, furnish a ground for Jehovah to say so emphatically to Balaam—"Thou shalt not curse the people for they are blessed." Let the record, with its varied circumstances, speak for itself. Not to go outside chapter xxi.—Israel when nearing the border of Canaan, their promised inheritance, was encountered by the Canaanites. They cry in their distress to Him, whom they had known so long, whose mercies, despite of all their unfaithfulness, had never failed them.

Israel vowed a vow to utterly destroy the Canaanites if the Lord would deliver them into their hand. The Lord answers, and victory is ensured in a way to inspire their fullest confidence in the presence, power, and all-sufficiency of Him, who *had* been and was for them.

It only needs another stage of their journey to be taken, with a further given test of circumstances, to bring out what was still in their hearts, shewing that the flesh ever remains flesh to the end of the journey, and only serves when allowed to act, to rebel against, and dishonour God. Neither trying nor easy circumstances matter to the flesh, for it fails to own and confide in God. Not this *only*, but it is said—"Israel spake against God and against Moses."

What can God say to *such*, or what can He do with such a nature? Will He bear further with it, and seek to improve it, or provide a means whereby, not only the *fruit* in open rebellion may be met, but the *root* of such a nature may be judged and set aside for ever? Judgment and righteous indignation must take their course, only, in infinite grace and wisdom, to make way for the means to be introduced whereby salvation and life may be secured to the lost and guilty. The fiery serpents, sent in righteous judgment, led to the significant provision of Jehovah, in the serpent of brass, as the remedy for their *hopeless* condition.

Sovereign grace and infinite wisdom here shine, exposing Israel's true state of absolute ruin, and God's provision to meet it. Surely even in such a typical moment it could be said—"Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

In the Antitype to the lifted-up brazen serpent can be seen how the sin of man and the love of God have met.

The full judgment of sin, according to the claims of holiness, was met by Him who was no less the full and perfect expression of the heart of God. If the Son of Man *must* be lifted up, that the sinner might not perish, that same Son, the only begotten of the Father, was no less God's free gift to a lost, guilty world.

It was at the close of Israel's wilderness history of rebellion and unfaithfulness that this type came out; so was it at the end of the sad history of this world that the Son of God came. "Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Again, if the serpent's bite in judgment brought death, the lifted-up serpent brought life and healing. A look on the part of the needy was the only means to secure it.

Is not the type therefore a voice and lesson, as to the entire ruin and end of man, and no less the way and means of life and blessing on God's part to man? Jesus said of the

world "Now is the judgment of this world," and "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto me." No less is it the privilege of the believer to own, as to the same rebellious, God-hating nature manifested by Israel, that the precious cross of Christ has brought it once and for ever to an end. The old man is crucified with Christ, and eternal life is *in Him* who is now alive for evermore, in whom the believer lives. Divine love, its work, and present fruit, shine in that lifted-up Christ, and ere long its eternal fruit will be enjoyed in His blessed presence on high.

God having been glorified in and by Christ on the cross, no wonder that God can bless worthily of *Himself*, despite of all that the believer is, whether when taken up in Egypt, or at the end of the journey.

"THE KINGDOM OF GOD FOR WHICH YE SUFFER."

I.

Christians of this day can have but a very faint conception of the spiritual darkness that reigned throughout the church before the reformation. Every truth of the Gospel was lost.

The Bible was practically a sealed book to the people. To possess it was to be suspected of heresy: as Melancthon said—"It seems since the preaching of Luther as if a new day had arisen after the long darkness of a dark night."

But if the knowledge of justification by faith, then brought again to men, and the enjoyment of peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ are such unspeakable blessings, it cannot be supposed that they are all that God in His infinite goodness would have the believer to enjoy. "The unsearch-

able riches of Christ" know no limit. Doubtless one portion of truth is more needful at one time and another at another, but the Spirit of God has come to guide us into *all* truth, for nothing less than all truth will glorify Christ. And nothing less is necessary to us for the growth and building up of our souls. The Christian is to be "thoroughly furnished," not partially. The truth of the Church as "the body of Christ" and as "the habitation of God," the truth of its privileges as partaking of all the fulness of Christ in heaven, and of its responsibilities as to displaying on earth the power and the operations of the Holy Spirit, was not reached by the reformers, and the many and diverse organizations, called churches, are practical proofs of the ignorance that prevails as to church truth to this day.

But beside this, there is a large and important field of truth in Scripture, too little searched by those who, through grace, do possess some clear light as to salvation and the church; that is, the truth of "the kingdom," the truth of the absolute authority of Christ in view of the day when we must appear, or be manifested before His judgment seat.

Surrounded by much that passes current as "work for the Lord," though with little or no expression of severance from the world to walk with God in His appointed way, many Christians (true ones) seem but very imperfectly to realize what is involved in the *confession* of Christ. God hath made Him *both Lord and Christ*. That is, there are not only the highest blessings, the richest consolations, and the fullest security for all who believe in Him, as the Christ, but there is the claim of His *Lordship*; and this can only be met on our part by the fervent desire to be filled with the knowledge of *His will* in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, and to do it. It is the peculiar phase of the professing church, that it can go on with the world, which has not returned to God, and at the same time call Jesus "Lord." This is serious, but it is

the legitimate effect of the subtlety and daring of Satan: He knows that Christ alone is "the Light of life," so he at once fashioned himself as "an angel of light," that he might attract as many Christians as possible to follow him and not Christ; and we have now the strange phenomena continually before our eyes—the world saying "Lord" "Lord" and not doing His will, and true Christians, instead of suffering for obedience at the hands of the disobedient world, taking part in ordering it and bettering its external appearance, and thus in high favour with it.

It is only as we consciously possess and enjoy the true thing that we can detect the counterfeit. Therefore is it that the true christian is instructed that he is "a child of *light*" (1 Thess. v. 5); is "*light* in the Lord" (Eph. v. 8); "has been called out of darkness into *God's marvellous light*" (1 Pet ii. 9); to "walk in the *light* as God is in the light" (1 John i. 7); and is armed with "the armour of *light*" (Rom. xiii 12); while waiting for "the inheritance of the saints in *light*" (Col. i. 12). Thus is he divinely fitted at every moment of his sojourn in an enemy's country, to avoid Satan's wiles, and to be a manifest follower of Him who is "the Light of life." Presenting Christ to sinners, in the proclamation of the Gospel as "the Light of the world," puts the world under responsibility, but let believers see to it, for they too are very responsible as having "the Light of life." Whoever or whatever dulls the conscience as to this is working against, not for the Lord. Much of the laxity of the present day is the result of ignorance. Certain truths are kept *continually* before the soul, and others are as continually kept in abeyance.

The Bible is no longer entombéd as before Luther's day, but portions of it are grievously slighted.

As to *present* results of the service of some who are not governed in their work by the Word of God, there is indeed much, very much to bless and praise God for. He is sovereign

in His actings and supreme in His grace. He blesses the preaching of *Christ*. The leaders of faction preached Christ in the apostle's day, and he rejoiced that Christ was preached. (Phil. i. 16. 17). Luther was an Augustinian monk when, on those few planks in the Market-place of Wittemberg, he began to proclaim to the people the living truths of the Gospel, and God gave His blessing. Since then evangelists have preached in hood or cowl, in lawn sleeves, in surplices, in gowns &c. and God has wrought eternal deliverance for souls in monasteries, in cathedrals, in churches, in chapels &c. Does he then sanction all these things for His saints? Clearly not in His Word.

But let us remember God is God: the sovereign Lord, who giveth no account of His matters. The christian is a *servant*, under commandment, and must give an account of himself at a moment when every object, purpose or motive which now comes between him and his Lord will be left behind, and every work will be made manifest. "The fire," the Apostle says, "shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon" (that is upon "the foundation, Jesus Christ") "he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved: yet so as through fire," (1 Cor. iii. 13. 15). It is indeed true that this has a special application to those who labour in word and doctrine, but in principle it applies to all, warning us not to be led away by present results. The thoughts of "*that day*" was much in the mind of Paul. It was not man's judgment of his service, or even his own, that sufficed for this whole-hearted servant.

"But with me," he said, "it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing against myself: yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Wherefore judge nothing before the time, *until the Lord come*, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darknes, and

will make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then shall every man have praise of God." He looked forward to, and longed for the judgment of his Lord, not only on his outward service, but on the secret motives of his heart, and he sought to keep all in the clear light of that day. He lived and laboured in view of it. While the Apostles, each and together, present the gospel, and establish the way of grace for salvation by faith, and count each believer as a child of God and meet for glory, they alike press the great principle—that to his own Master the servant stands or falls, and that at the judgment seat of Christ each saved one must, (and will be able to) give his account. It has been truly said—"The church and its truth, its union with its Head, its hope and joy confessed, is lovely in all moral loveliness, but it is not *all* the Lord left." And again "The Holy Spirit acts as the Spirit of union of the children of God; but *conscience cannot be in society*, and reject its own individual responsibility. It is *individual*, otherwise God could not be the master of the conscience." It is then to assert, as earnestly as grace enables, the paramount claim of conscience in each individual saint of God, and to give to the Lord Jesus His true place of absolute authority *now*, as well as hereafter, that this paper, and any that may be permitted to follow are written, (Rom. xiv. 7-12; 2 Cor. v. 9, 10).

THE SPIRIT AND THE WORD.

"The Spirit of God and the Word of God must go together. The Word will not do alone; for I may attempt to judge of the Word by my own private judgment, and so get wrong. The Spirit of God works by the Word, or I may mistake my own fancy for the Spirit: they go together. Then the moment the Word reaches my heart, it is absolute authority, and the

Word judges me. When they are both received into the heart, when thus in complete possession of me, Satan cannot touch me, because they will allow nothing of the flesh, (of self will &c.) to work. Is their evil? They will enable me to judge it in myself, and in everything around me. Such an one is guaranteed against all error. He has the *Spirit and the Word*. It need only be added that all truth must be held in communion with the person of Christ, or it will not guard against error. Be sure of this, if it is not the living power of a living Christ, known and enjoyed in the soul, it cannot withstand error."

SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. 1. Will you please explain the latter clause of Psalm xvi. 2? GERSHOM.

A. We must link it with v. 3—"But unto the saints," &c. Christ, a perfect man, here speaks of human goodness as not attaining in itself to Divinity, but as linking itself with godliness in others, wherever found.

Q. 2. Is any part of prophecy being fulfilled during the present dispensation? GERSHOM.

A. Such passages as Deut. xxviii. 64 &c.; Hosea iii. 4.; Dan. ii; Luke xxi. 24; are being fulfilled, but the mass of prophecies respecting the Jews in the O.T. prophets, and God's judgments in "The Revelation," do not begin to run their course until the church is complete and removed from this scene. She is *not* the subject of prophecy.

Q. 3. What are the "apples of gold in pictures of silver?"

A. Our apple is probably not meant. Apricots or Citrons are the most likely fruits. They were of a golden colour, and were served no doubt in some silver basket or stand, to which allusion is probably made. So is "a word fitly spoken" (Prov. xxv. 11).

Q. 4. What is the earnest of the Spirit. 2 Cor. v. 5?
GERSHOM.

A. The Spirit who is the earnest of the future inheritance. It is He who gives us to realize even now, somewhat of our future portion, as in the following beautiful lines written nearly six hundred years ago:—

To praise Him in the dance! O blessed day!
 The pilgrim journey done.
 No more press forward in the weary way,
 For all is reached and won.
 His hand at last, the hand once pierced for me,
 For ever holdeth mine.
 O Lord, no songs, no harps of heaven will be
 Sweet as one word of thine.
 Lord, altogether lovely! then at last
 High shall the guerdon be:
 Thy kiss outweighs the weary ages past
 Of heart that breaks for Thee.

* * * * *

Yet *now*, I know Thee as the hidden bread,
 The blessed One who died.
 Who sitteth at my table, by my bed,
 Who walketh at my side.
 I know Thee as the fountain of deep bliss.
 Whereof one drop shall make
 The joys of all the world as bitterness,
 My Lord, for Thy sweet sake.
 Lord, Thou hast loved me, and henceforth to me
 Earth's noon-day is but gloom.
 My soul sails forth on th' eternal sea,
 And leaves the shore of doom.
 I pass within the glory *even now*,
 Where;thought and words are not.
 For joy;that passeth words, O Lord, art Thou,
 And bliss that passeth thought.
 I enter there—for Thou hast borne away
 The burden of my sin.
 With conscience clear as heaven's unclouded day
 Thy courts I enter in!
 Heaven now for me! For ever Christ and heaven!
 The endless NOW begun.
 No promise—but a gift eternal given
 Because the work is done.

THREE REQUISITES FOR THESE LAST DAYS.

CHAPTER 1. A "HORN FILLED WITH OIL."

"And the Lord said to Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill thine horn with oil and go; I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite" (1 Sam. xvi. 1).

It is well in our days to remember those words of the Lord to His faithful, yet gracious prophet. What a fatal resemblance the religion of these latter days bears to that of Saul, preferring sacrifices to obedience, and the fat of rams to the hearkening to God's word!

Would God there was amongst us more of the *mourning* of Samuel, and of the spirit of humiliation and intercession of a Daniel and a Nehemiah! But in those men of faith, their mourning was followed by a decided witness and activity in the energy of faith, which proved the reality and genuineness of their previous mourning.

We, therefore, do well to remember the word of the Lord to Samuel: "How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? *Fill thine horn with oil and go*, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite."

We are not prophets, it is true. We are more than prophets, for "he that is least in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he," that is, greater than even Christ's forerunner, who was "more than a prophet," and "no prophet"—not even Moses—"greater than he."

But not only *are* we more than those prophets (whose faithfulness ought to humble us to the very dust), but we also *have* infinitely more. Samuel might be told to "fill his horn with oil," to anoint Jesse's son King over Israel. But we,

beloved child of God, have an "unction from the Holy One, and know all things."—God has anointed us, also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

Samuel was told to fill his horn with oil, and go and anoint one of Jesse's sons. We are enjoined to be "filled with the Spirit" (which is more than being "sealed" by the Spirit), and "go" and glorify—not David, but David's Son and David's Lord. We are to forget things which are behind (*i.e.* the religion of both the Saul's), and make much, nay, everything of Christ. The religion of the Old Testament Saul at Gibeah was the same, as to its nature and effects, as that of the Saul of the New Testament in Jerusalem. The former persecuted David, and the latter David's Son and Lord, only that, through God's marvellous grace and power, this Saul was turned into a Paul, the greatest servant of Christ. He had done it in ignorance, not so the former.

What then means to us "*a horn filled with oil?*"—Simply : our being "filled with the Spirit." And how does the Spirit act? The Lord said to His disciples, when speaking of the Holy Ghost, whom they were to receive of Him : "He shall *glorify me* ; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you."

And no sooner had that promise in marvellous grace and blessing been fulfilled at Pentecost, and the Holy Ghost come down upon the disciples in the shape of fiery cloven tongues (*i.e.* for both, Jews and Gentiles), when He at once began, through the mouth of Peter, to glorify the Name of Him, whose Person God has glorified in Heaven, and whose Name, (which expresses His Person,) God wills to be glorified on earth. The very first Name in the Gospel is that most adorable Name of "*Jesus.*" And how does the Spirit, through the apostle, conclude? "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus whom ye have crucified both *Lord and Christ.*"

And what was Paul's first testimony at Damascus? "And straightway he preached *Christ* (i.e. the risen, ascended, exalted and glorified *Jesus*), *that he is the Son of God.*" (Acts ix. 20.)

Such was the testimony of the Holy Ghost then, and such it is now. "He shall glorify me." The Spirit of glory which rests upon us, points upwards to the glorified One, who sent Him down from heaven. And as Jesus, when on earth, glorified His Father in heaven, so does now the Holy Ghost on earth, glorify Jesus, the heavenly Christ.*

And our heavenly Christ ("Anointed") in His character as Head of the church His body, has given us the Holy Oil, "the Anointing from the Holy One," not only in our own priestly and royal character, but as those, whose first and paramount business it is, to "*glorify Christ.*" And if that blessed heavenly Guest, that dwells in us, is not grieved, our eyes will follow the direction of His uplifted finger, that points to a glorified Christ, and we shall be ready with joyful lips to proclaim the virtues or excellencies of Him, who has called us from darkness into His marvellous light. The Spirit's comforting and teaching us is not the first thing, but His glorifying Christ. It is not first we, but Christ, "Who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."

Beloved, is our horn filled with oil? Are we "filled with the Spirit?" Stephen, a man subject to like passions as we are, when "full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." Let us ask ourselves again: Does that wondrous *Divine Person* dwell within us as an ungrieved

* In John i. 41, He appears as the earthly Christ [Anointed], i.e. Messiah; in Acts ii. [in a transitional way], as the heavenly Christ, yet ready to return to this earth as Israel's earthly Messiah, if Israel would receive Him (Acts iii. 9-21), in Ephes. i. 20-23, and Col. iii. 1, we behold Him definitely seated at the right hand of God in glory, in His heavenly character as the Christ [Anointed] Head of the Church, His Body. —

Guest? If so, our horn will be filled with the Holy Oil of consecration to "crown Him Lord of all,"

"Till there with yonder sacred throng,
We at His feet shall fall ;
There join the everlasting song,
And crown Him Lord of all."

Him, God's chosen One, precious to Him, and precious to us, through grace. What a privilege, what joy in this dark and disconsolate time of a *Christless* religion, to glorify Christ and exalt His blessed, Great Name, and praise His excellencies, both Divine and human, His perfections both as Son of Man and Son of God.

But Samuel, when coming to Saul's house with his horn filled with oil, had not been told *which* of Jesse's sons was the Lord's chosen one. He had to learn an important, salutary lesson. For when Jesse began to make his sons pass before Samuel, Samuel looked at the tall, stately form and the handsome face of Eliab, remembering Saul's stately and handsome appearance, who "was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward," and he said (within himself, I suppose): "Surely, the Lord's anointed is before him." He forgot that God had given the people a king according to their own heart and mind, had given them a king in His anger, and was about soon to remove him in His wrath. But the Lord said to Samuel: "Look not on his [Eliab's] countenance, or on the height of his stature, because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

For Samuel, it was not enough to bring his horn with oil in it, he had to learn that all important lesson to enable him to discern, *which* of Jesse's sons was the Lord's chosen one. So for us, beloved, it is not sufficient to have the "anointing from the Holy One," blessed security as this may

be, even for the youngest babe in Christ, against the subversive and seductive spirits of anti-christian doctrines in these perilous times,—but in order, under the sure guidance of that blessed Spirit, to discern and glorify God's Elect and Chosen One, *God's Christ*, we have like Samuel to learn that lesson, so hard to nature, not to look at *outward appearances*—I do not add: “but at the *heart*,” for that is God's province, who alone searcheth the reins and the hearts—but to test everything by the *written word of God*. Never the Spirit without the word, nor the word without the Spirit. It is not merely: Have you got *Christ*? But *what Christ* have you got? Is the Christ you have received, *God's Christ*? Is it the Christ of *Scripture* or not? As it will be at a not very distant time, when the cry will be raised: “*Here is Christ*, and *there is Christ*,” just before the appearance of Antichrist himself, so in our days, in doctrines and books of all kinds, *Christ* is proclaimed and taught. But *what Christ*, dear reader? Is it the *Christ of God*? If so, it will be the Christ of God's Word—the *written Christ*. The *ascended Christ*,—the *written Christ*, and “Christ in us the hope of glory, always agree. The Spirit of God is a Spirit of fellowship indeed, but the true “fellowship of the Spirit” cannot exist in any place or among any number of “*Christians*,” who do either themselves not hold or teach the true Christ of God and of His written Word, or for “love's” and “peace” sake maintain fellowship with those who hold or teach a doctrine, that encroaches upon the perfect Person and work of Christ. As it has been truly said: “Put Christ No. 1,” and the “nice christians No. 2,” and you'll be right enough; but if you put the “nice” christians No. 1, and Christ No. 2, you will be all wrong,” Alas! how many are doing so in these testing days, not intentionally, I grant, but practically. Have they sat down and counted the cost? If so, they must have an uneasy presentiment, to say the least, as to where such a practice

will land them. Alas! we have known many, who had been looked up to as being very "spiritual," who, when the decisive moment came, have manifested a sad lack of what Samuel had to learn!

There are two kinds of "ceasing" in the first two chapters of the prophet Isaiah. The first (chap. i. 16, 17,) is, "Cease to do evil; learn to do well."—Through grace some of us have learnt this in some way, as to the "going forth without the camp" of a Judaised Christendom, which is much worse than pure Judaism.—But there is another "ceasing" at the end of the second chapter of that prophet, which appears far harder to nature than the former. It is this: "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?" It is just here, where not a few are turning aside in these sifting days. It is not so difficult for honest Christians, to "cease" from a false religion, and from evil men, who "lie in wait to deceive" (Ephes. iv. 14). But it is hard, very hard, to cease from "*good men*" such as Barnabas, when they get wrong in divine matters, especially if they not only possess great gifts, but an imposing and attractive personal appearance to boot. Throughout all ages there have been such periods of trial, when it was manifest, what christians had learnt of Christ, and what they had learnt of men. As Calvin has truly said, "If we receive divine truths from men, we shall soon receive errors from men,"—as if they were divine truths, we add. Only what we have learnt in God's presence, at the feet of Christ, will stand the test.

This leads us naturally to one, whose habitual place was at the feet of Christ. and whose service was a sweet savour to God. I need not say, I am speaking of Mary and her *alabaster box full of spikenard*,—the second requisite for days like these. The same blessed Spirit within us, who glorifies Christ, "*receives of His*," and thus fills or stores the new mind, like Mary's alabaster box, with "precious spikenard," that is

with thoughts about the Person and work of Christ, of His excellencies and perfections in love, grace, goodness, patience, wisdom, power, etc., in order that that alabaster box, when opened in due time, may send forth the sweet smell of its contents, and the house be redolent with the savour of it.

This second requisite for these last days: an "*alabaster box filled with spikenard*," (Mark xiv.) will, under God's help, form the subject of our next meditations.

May God in His rich grace grant us a "*horn filled with oil*," to go forth and make much, yea, everything of His chosen, Elect and Precious One, to extol His blessed Name and proclaim the virtues (*i.e.* excellencies) of Him, that called us from darkness into His marvellous light,

"That we might be *filled with the knowledye of His will*, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding," and "that we may approve things that are excellent [or, "differ"]; that we may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being *filled with the fruits of righteousness*, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God."

GOD'S ABOUNDING GRACE AND SOVEREIGNTY IN BLESSING.

II.

Does not the type in Num. xxi. (the subject of the former article) give a precious clue to the determined action of Jehovah to bless Israel in chap. xxii.?

Balak was against Israel, and would have given anything to have them cursed.

Neither pains nor money were wanting on his part. Balaam, the willing tool who loved the wages of unrighteousness, sought an opportunity to curse them, but the interfering hand of God forbade it. His definite word to him at *first*,

should have kept him from all his future attempts, knowing that the purpose of God *must stand*. The God who knew Israel's failures, and hatred in speaking against Himself, would not be turned from them; moreover He had just before taught them, that life and healing were solely of His own providing.

Balaam and Balak must alike go to their *place*, when God takes up the cause of His people; praise and glory be to Him!*

So the believer of to-day is privileged to appropriate the language of the apostle in Rom. viii.—“If God be for us who can be against us?” Does this chapter, any more than that already considered in Numbers, furnish any motive *in* the believer wherefore God should be for Him? On the contrary He has shewn in it, that the flesh, or nature of the believer is so bad, that sin in the flesh had to be condemned and judged in the sacrifice of Christ (v. 3). Moreover, it is added, that “they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” (v. 8.) The motive therefore is outside man, but thank God, His love, in its own purity and sovereignty, furnishes the motive and object,—His beloved Son being the holy means and blessed expression of it. “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all,” more than answers all the reasonings of unbelief, as well as silences every effort of the enemy, who to-day, as in the past, would seek to turn away God from His people, and bring upon them what they in themselves deserve.

* [Balaam's four prophecies give us the ground on which Israel is to enter on their blessings, and a precious view also of those blessings.

1. Their calling. God sees them as a separate people. They are not of the nations (xxiii. 9).

2. Their justification and security (v. v. 21, 23).

3. Their acceptance; what they are in the sight of the Lord, even when in the wilderness (xxiv. 5, 6).

4. The coming of the Lord, His glory and dominion in connexion with them (v. v. 17-24).]

Christ has died, and God in love gave Him to that end. Having, through grace, believed it, what remains save for faith to own and enjoy God's free gift, and infinite blessing in and with His Son. Faith's abiding language is—"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Not only is God *for* the believer in a way that makes him inseparable from His love in Christ Jesus, but he is the object of His sovereign choice and purpose in Him in whom purpose and responsibility meet. Jesus, who died for the believer, is the golden key to unlock the secret, as to *how* and *why* God can save according to the riches of His grace, and have those who are most unworthy, before Himself to the praise and glory of it. He who alone knows and estimates the *work*, and the glory of the *person* of Him who could say—"I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do"—can be the judge of the extent of blessing for those who are the favoured objects of it. God therefore, as *the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ*, has blessed those chosen in Him with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ. Who then can turn God from His purpose of blessing, or curse those so richly and fully blessed through and in His beloved Son? G. G.

DETACHED PORTIONS.

I.

"We trust in the Living God who is the Saviour (Preserver) of all men, specially of those who believe." It is therefore our privilege as believers, and according to the will of God,

that we should count upon His *special care* for us. This harmonizes with the precept—"Take no thought," or as in the Revised Version—"Be not anxious about the things of to-morrow." (Matt. vi. 25, 31, 34,) If the most anxious were examined as to the ground of their disquietude, it would be found in the majority of cases, that the provision of this day was not the ground of it. They carry forward their imagination to a distant future, and fill it up with the spectre of melancholy and despair. What a world of unhappiness would be saved if the duties, the services, the needs for the day were sufficient. It is thus the Lord taught His disciples to pray—"Give us *this day* our daily bread" and we have in this, the greatest encouragement to ask in faith for our daily bread, that is "bread which is convenient to our substance for the daily support of life" (St. Chrysostom); and according to the faith of our prayers so will it be done unto us. As to the morrow, how delightful it is to know that, by committing its issues in quietness and faith to Him, when it comes the provisions of it will come along with it. May our hearts then be fixed, trusting in the Lord, and we shall not be afraid of evil tidings (Ps. cxii. 7).

"Does each day upon its wing,
 Its allotted burden bring?
 Load it not besides with sorrow
 Which belongeth to the morrow.
Strength is promised, strength is given,
 When the heart by God is riven;
 But foredate the day of woe,
 And alone thou bear'st the blow.
One thing only claims thy care;
 Seek thou first by faith and prayer
 That all glorious world above,
 Scene of righteousness and love;
 And whate'er thou need'st below,
He thou trustest will bestow.

“THE FAITH OF THE SON OF GOD.”

(GAL. ii. 19, 20.)

It is of the utmost importance to remember that the eternal life, which Christ is in us, is in the power and sphere of resurrection. “The exceeding greatness of his (God’s) power to usward who believe” which, quickening us, has given us this life “more abundantly,” is “according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.” And we have already seen, looking at the truth from another point of view, that it was not till Christ was risen that He breathed the breath of life eternal upon His saints.

It is a risen One who lives in us, a life in a new sphere and in new and holy and eternal relations. The old sphere where sin reigned unto death is left behind. The sphere of the law’s divine authority lies on the other side of the cross and grave of Christ. Where the risen Christ lives, grace reigns, —not on the ruins of a broken law but consequent upon its being magnified above all human thought,—not with sin still before the eye of God, but “through righteousness (manifested in its eternal judgment in the death of Christ,) unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

“At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you” (John xiv. 20). That day is come with its unutterable blessing for the children of God. We are *in* Christ; it is our new and eternal place before God. He has put us there; there He sees us. But Christ is *in us* too; Christ the risen One; Christ alive for evermore; Christ “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead;” Christ

is *in us, our Life*. Not only is He the eternal life which was with the Father; not only is He the One who can say, "I am in the Father," but He is truly *in us* by the Holy Ghost. It is thus that in the highest and fullest sense "old things are passed away; behold all things are become new. And all things are of God."

Doubtless we shall live this blessed life above. Its sphere, its home is there. Christ who is our life is already there. It is His Father's house,—ours too *because* He has entered it. But we live this life now, though it is indeed a life away from home, a life in the midst of circumstances altogether opposed to it. Faith will not be needed when the rest of God is come and we have entered it. But for this life to be manifested in our mortal flesh—this indeed calls for a simple and earnest faith. It is our calling, it is our unspeakable privilege that the eternal life which we have in the knowledge of God revealed in His blessed Son, should be daily manifested in our mortal body; that "what we now live in the flesh" should be "by the faith of the Son of God."

In passing let it be remarked that the apostle does not call our connexion with the present scene "life;" it is rather "daily dying." But whatever we may call our present state in unredeemed bodies (Rom. viii. 23), it is given to us to live it "by the faith of the Son of God."

It is only by faith that this life is brought into activity in the scene through which we pass; it is only by faith that it ever becomes a practical reality in our souls. Faith makes what is unseen to be an enjoyed and operative reality (Heb. xi. 1); it makes what is yet to come, when we live this eternal life in its own clime—in its own home, to be a *present* thing. It brings in God so that we walk in His fear and we taste, and live in, His perfect love. We *receive* this life by faith, we *enjoy* it by faith and we *manifest* it by faith. Law never enters into account here; it could not give life, it could

not maintain it, it could do nothing towards its manifestation. Christ in us by the power of the Holy Ghost, known to faith and enjoyed by faith, is life and liberty, satisfaction and power.

But what is the faith of the Son of God? It is that which lays hold of His fulness and brings it into the soul. It is that which apprehends the beauty and grace of His path down here and feeds upon Him as the heavenly Manna. It is that which bows adoringly as it contemplates His obedience unto death and is so nourished upon Him there and thus, as to bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus; it is so strengthened as to love the fellowship of His sufferings. It is that which beholds Him as He is glorified on high and is changed into the same image from glory to glory. It is that which brings CHRIST into every detail of doing and suffering, of service and communion in our pilgrimage; that judges of everything by Christ (Phil. i.), that loves and brings into the soul the mind which was in Christ Jesus (Phil. ii.). It is that by which those who abide in Him walk as He also walked. It is the faith which is *from* the Son of God, its blessed Giver which returns *to* the Son of God its single, absorbing, exclusive object, and which owes its all character and its all power to the Son of God.

The eternal Son of God, *as such*, was never under the law. And when His stupendous stoop of purest grace brought Him under it, as born of a woman, born under the law, He not only magnified it His life long but He bore its curse in His death; He was "made a curse for us." By resurrection He was declared Son of God with power. The veil had been rent as He expired, and His cry in that solemn hour, "It is finished" is now answered by a rolled-away stone and an empty grave. His undisputed victory gives Him those He is not ashamed to call "brethren" as the sharers of His victory and companions of His glory. Impossible to bring the risen

Son of God or those given to Him by His Father under the law. "*Faith is come*"—Gal. iii. 25. By it we enter into the blessed fruits of His death; we are in Him as the risen One and He is in us. The power of His resurrection is our triumphant deliverance, our eternal blessing. We enter into it by faith—the *faith of the Son of God*.

O for this faith in a deeper and wider measure! But faith is ever formed by, is nourished by, and reposes alone upon, the word of God. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." If we have to deplore the feebleness of our faith, beloved, let it not be in idle lamentation; but let it be, through the grace of our God, in the diligence and vigour which feeds on, which *lives* upon the word of God.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord"—Col. iii. 16.

"THE DAY OF THE LORD."

IV.

We have examined briefly all those portions in the Old Testament in which the Spirit of God uses the expression, "The day of the Lord," and it is surely evident that, however varied the circumstances which gave occasion to these prophecies, the period so called will be characteristically very different from the present. Even those passages which speak of it in connection with past interventions of the Lord in sore judgments on certain self-exalting powers—only confirm the truth, that, by "the day of the Lord" is meant, not any secret course of government as now, which we speak of as "providence," (however at times judicial in effect), but the open, public manifestation of the righteous rule of the Lord, so that "He alone shall be exalted in that day."

This truth will be found a great help to the student of Scripture as to all prophecy, for the proper object of prophecy is not instruction as to the fate of empires and kingdoms, but as to the exaltation of the Name of the Lord in all the earth; that name which however despised now, is above every name. "The Lord *has* set his glory above the heavens, and his name *shall* be excellent in all the earth" (Ps. viii).

A word of warning however, in reference to the study of prophecy seems to be needed. If truly humble and self-distrustful we need not be afraid of the vastness of the subject, or discouraged by the failures of others in their pursuit of it, but let us on no account trust the natural mind (1 Cor. ii. 14; iii. 18). The perceptive powers of the natural mind, however showy, are really poor, feeble and limited. Some few wise and good principles have been deduced by them from the study of the past, and thus far men have profited by them, but the enigmas of veritable history are too numerous and difficult for the mind of man to interpret. Evil has triumphed where good was expected, and the wisest have been compelled to say, as they "beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun, because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it: yea farther, though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it." (Ec. viii. 17.)

It is a fatal mistake then to trust to the natural mind in reading prophecy, or to attempt to reduce it to a mere unfolding of providence. Analogies in certain cases there may be, but prophecy is distinct in its object, and *faith in Christ Jesus* is essential to the understanding of it. Let the subject be the whole earth, or the heavens in rule over the earth; let it be Israel or the Gentiles; let it be any governmental power, as the King of the north, or the King of the south, the beast of the west or the false prophet of the east; let it be any city, as Jerusalem, Nineveh or Babylon, the one ques-

tion the student of prophecy needs to keep before the mind, is this:—In what way will these, or any of them, be made to subserve the *glory of Christ*? This is a wonderfully simple principle, but it can be carried with safety through everything. "All things were created by him, and *for him*," and He is the "appointed *heir* of all things."

Indeed this is true now as to the continuance of the present peculiar economy, so expressive of God's grace to men. It is only and wholly for the glory of Christ. The human histories of the last nineteen hundred years would weary even a devourer of books to wade through. The Spirit of God sums the whole up in a few words. (See 2 Pet. iii. 8–13.) With the Lord time is no factor, the display of His long-suffering, of His rich mercy and grace in Christ to man is important, but the day of the Lord will come. Faith is not left in ignorance of the cause of delay. The bride is preparing for the Lamb, the heavenly kings and priests are being called out and consecrated for the bright results of "the first resurrection." (Rev. xx. 6.) What does the mere historian know of this? What did the wise men of Zoan know of the use God was making of Egypt, or of its proud king, yet even the babe in Christ can read all in the light of God's purposes. (Hosea xi. 1; Matt. ii. 15; Rom. ix. 17.)

It is thus that faith gives to its possessor an understanding to which the natural mind can never attain (1 Cor. iii. 18), for faith puts the soul in communion with God. Enoch had this vantage ground, and it necessarily put him morally outside the whole course of the wise men of his day, their energies and their objects. He knew that he was leaving them, and that the fruit of all their labours, would soon be swallowed up by the flood; (see the name he gave to his son), and he also knew the Lord was coming and that he himself would be one among the myriads of His saints in that day (Jude 14). This was his wisdom, not the

fruit of his own mind, but the teaching of God. What saint to-day has *practically* got beyond it? How many indeed have really attained to it?

And so of Abraham. "Jesus said to the Jews—"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad." Millions doubtless lived at the same time. They possessed in a greater or less degree, the powers of the natural mind and the affections of the unregenerate heart. They founded cities, had their kings, knew how to make war, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded: but what did they know of "the day" which Abraham saw, and of the gladness which filled his heart in view of it?

So it is now. Where the world sees nothing, the christian, taught of God in the power of faith, sees Christ, and the vast sphere of blessing into which grace has brought him (Eph. i. 6-12), all to be displayed in "that day." Not Abraham only, but the simplest child of God who reads his Bible in faith, gets his heart full (Eph. iii. 17-19), and of him the testimony will be true, "he rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad."

In the Old Testament prophecies, the three great spheres prepared for the display of the glory of Christ in His day are—Creation, the Jews or Israel and the Gentiles.

In the New Testament we have the fourth sphere for the display of the glory of Christ. The truth of the church of God goes far beyond prophecy, but it is not wholly apart from it, as Rev. xxi. 10-xxii. 5 clearly shews. John, who is pre-eminently the prophet of the New Testament, and writes to the churches, furnishes us with details of evil of which the earlier prophets knew nothing. The decay and corruption of the professing church goes on till John is called to see a mass of apostate wickedness (Rev. xviii.), exceeding all that has ever gone before. Her names of infamy are many (ver. 5), but "strong is the

Lord God who judgeth her." The circle of judgments, preceding and introducing "the day of the Lord," would be incomplete without this New Testament prophecy, without this solemn story of the doom of that which now calls itself Christian but is Christless, and which will become the most idolatrous system in the earth. We are not writing on "the Revelation," but cannot forbear noting some important disclosures in this remarkable part of a wonderful book. It is a *fact* that the Spirit of God has used it again and again to rouse the conscience to separation from what savours, *in any degree*, of this coming corruption. May He do so again. The church of God and this master-piece of Satan's wiles are in marvellous contrast in the New Testament. Let us set them (briefly) over against each other.

The former is heavenly, and *will*, when Christ reigns, have heavenly rule.

The latter adorns herself with every worldly embellishment and grandeur now (xvii. 4; xviii. 7.) and seeks political power, wide-spread sway (xvii. 1 and 15.) and boundless wealth (xviii. 12 to 14.) as much, and even more than the world.

The former is for Christ, as a chaste virgin to one husband.

The latter panders to the passions of the kings of the earth in order to increase her influence (xvii. 2; xviii. 9).

The former is God's testimony for the earth, His candlestick; a beacon and a blessing for men.

The latter intoxicates the inhabitants of the earth by the success of her attractions with the kings, and commerce is increased by her, so that there is the twofold bait of wealth and power (xvii. 2; xviii. 15).

The former is "the habitation of God through the Spirit."

The latter "becomes the habitation of devils and the hold of every foul spirit" (xviii. 2).

The former receives the saints of God, even the weak in the faith, as Christ received them, in tender grace.

The latter *persecutes*, even until she “is drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus” (xviii. 6).

Need we pursue the contrast further?

But oh beloved christian reader, how does all this affect you? Are you with those who, while professing to be the church or a part of it, own the importance of wealth, and human influence and power? Are you where some earthly idol is found, some golden image? You may not believe in it, you may not approve of it—but are you there? Are you mixed up with those who do? Oh! “come out of her my people!”

SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. 1. “To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me” (1 Sam. xxviii. 19). Did Samuel simply mean that they should die? If so, how could Saul’s sons (unconverted) be with Samuel? C. H. S.

A. Does it not mean generally, *i.e.* in the place of departed spirits, to which both Lazarus and Dives went, though to different parts?

Q. 2. What is the meaning of the parenthesis 2 Sam. i. 18? It seems to have no connexion with the context. C. H. S.

A. Does it not refer to 1 Sam. xxxi. 3, where it is seen that Saul was first wounded by the Philistine archers? Hence the wisdom of teaching the men of Judah the use of the bow and making them more skilful with it.

Q. 3. Does the word, “so” in 2 Sam. xxiii. 5 apply to the qualities of a ruler in *v. v.* 3, 4, or is it an independent expression, meaning, “as it should be?” C. H. S.

A. Surely it refers to verses 3 and 4.

Q. 4. Does 1 Cor. i. 7, refer to our Lord’s coming *for* His saints, or *with* them? M. C. B.

A. We do not know whether the difference was, as yet, made known to the Corinthians, or whether they had only the general thought of Acts i., until they read 1 Cor. xv. [The word *apokalupsis* is translated in other passages of the N. T. by *revelation*, *manifestation*, or *appearing*; once by *to lighten* i.e. bring to light. See 1 Pet. i. 13; Rom. viii. 19; 1 Pet. i. 7; Luke ii. 32.]

Q. 5. Please explain "predestination" and "calling."

A. *Predestination*—The electing grace of God, marking out beforehand His chosen ones, not merely for salvation but to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. viii. 29). This is a precious truth for the children of God, but forms no part of the gospel to sinners.

Calling—A very common expression, "Called saints," or literally, "Saints by calling." It is connected with predestination (Rom. viii. 30) and the sovereignty of God; the occasion being when we believed in Christ, and thus truly heard the voice of God. Besides this general "calling," God "calls" some specially for particular lines of service. In every case it is purely a question of God's sovereignty and good pleasure.

Q. 6. What bearing has the following scriptures on the habitual use of intoxicating liquors? "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. v. 1). Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving (1 Tim. iv. 4). "Let no man therefore judge you in meat or drink" (Col. ii. 10). Does not Gal. v. 13, "Only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh," apply too? D. G.

A. These scriptures shew the liberty of the Christian, but at the same time we must remember Rom. xiv. 21, which we in our selfishness so often forget.

**“WHO LOVED ME,
AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME.”**

GAL. ii. 19, 20.

What words are these from the lips and pen of the chief of sinners, snatched from the wrath to come in the hour when his mad and wicked rage was touching its highest point. What words for us to repeat with hearts throbbing their unspoken praise!

And did the Son of God love Saul of Tarsus? Was His eye upon him in compassion, in tenderest sovereign love, as the clothes of Stephen's murderers lay at his feet! Fathomless love! Love possible only in the bosom of the Son of God!

The importance of the place which Stephen's martyrdom occupies, its character as a sort of filling-up of the guilt of those who, with wicked hands, had crucified and slain the Lord of glory, and especially its relation to the subject before us render desirable a few remarks upon it. The cross was the highest expression of the hatred of man against Him who had come down from God in the pure grace which seeks and saves the lost. But to the Lord's prayer, "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do," his murderers owed a "lengthening of their tranquility." Alas that they should have used it to do despite to the Spirit of grace and to send a message by Stephen, "We will not have this man to reign over us!" Yet, just as Jesus of Nazareth was a man approved of God by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by Him, so Stephen, the witness of a glorified Jesus, was not left without divine testimony. Those who had deliberately refused the miracles and wonders and signs which God did by the

Lord Jesus, sinned against the Holy Ghost who shone in Stephen's face. Those who boasted that their great law-giver's face shone with the reflected glory of Jehovah, refused the *same* light when it testified that Jesus is Jehovah. The wickedness of man had reached its deepest depth. And Saul presided at that bloody scene! He consented to the death of a man in whose face the light of heaven beamed; a man, moreover, whose only crime was his relations with Jesus the Son of God.

It is permitted to us now to turn from earth with its gnashing of teeth upon the follower of Christ, and its stoning of that shining face—to turn to heaven and learn its choicest thoughts. At the right hand of the majesty there, Jesus stands to receive the spirit of His beloved and honoured witness. The circle which is filled with joy when one sinner repenteth was moved with fresh delight as the *standing* Jesus received that thrice happy spirit. Man had done his worst, and that "worst" was to put to sleep the object of his hatred. Hatred is never satisfied. It gnaws the heart in which it dwells. The unhappy murderers leave the scene of their wild and cruel rage with gnawings of hell in their bosoms. But love in its home above kept high feast at that self-same moment. Ere the devout men had raised for its burial the disfigured body, but lately bright with the light of Jehovah-Jesus' face, the released spirit was received into the arms of eternal love. It gazes, satisfied, on the face of Jesus. The joy of Jesus like the flow of David's loving tears exceedeth! He has more joy in receiving Stephen to the paradise of God than Stephen has in finding himself "present with the Lord." But LOVE IS SATISFIED;—love in its full fountain in that eternal heart, and love in its blessed stream in that ransomed spirit.

From that height the eye of the Son of God is upon the chief of the persecutors as the mortal scene closes and as each

takes up his clothes. Eyes as a flame of fire indeed, and yet full of unspeakable love! He looks down upon the blasphemer, the persecutor, the injurious man, not to take speedy vengeance, not to cry, “Depart thou cursed into everlasting fire.” No, blessed Son of God! Thoughts of peace and not of evil are Thine towards Saul of Tarsus Thine enemy!

“Who loved me.” Not a step of all that path of rebellion and hatred against God in His highest and fullest manifestation of Himself but was known to the Son of God. Precious were the saints to the heart of Jesus; He calls them “*me*” for indeed they were bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh! Of old it was said, “he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.” Doubly true was this of those whom Saul persecuted. Indeed it was not for their own sake that he hated the disciples of Jesus. It was solely because of the Name they bare. Hear his own testimony before Agrippa of the “many things” he did “contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth”:—“I punished them oft in every synagogue; and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even to strange cities.” (Acts xxvi. 11.)

Truly he *was* the chief of sinners. His malice against God manifested in flesh, his turning the highest attainments, the most lofty position and the most perfect righteousness in the flesh to frustrate the best work of God, and that in which His heart was most engaged—in this he was truly the chief of sinners.

With what abhorrence do the pure eyes of the Son of God behold sin! And *such* sin, how it grieved Him at His heart!

The heart of Paul felt his own former guilt as he wrote his burning words of warning to saints in danger of going back to a system, the sworn enemy of Christ and of His cross. How he judged afresh the wicked course which Christ Himself cut short in His heavenly majesty, in His mighty grace as

Saul neared the scene of further havoc among the saints. But deeper than his guilt was his Saviour's love. Higher than his rage at its highest against Christ was the love that knew it all, that saw it all beforehand, that felt it all and yet poured itself out in choicest blessing on his guilty head. How his heart thrilled again as he thought that *he* personally—the guilty persecutor—was before the eye of the Son of God when He yielded Himself to accomplish the ineffable purposes of God: *then* "He loved me and gave himself for me."

And is there not a clear sweet-sounding echo in our hearts, beloved? Is there not more than an echo? Does not the fresh ministry of Christ to our hearts now call forth with renewed love this hallowed cry, "Who loved me, and gave himself for me?" A cry sweetly personal! Had *I* been the only sinner to be redeemed to God by blood, Jesus my Saviour would have come, would have lived and died for me,—would have poured out His soul unto death on my behalf! *I* was before His eye—each child of grace can say—*I* was dear to His heart as He said, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." It was for *me*, guilty, hell-deserving *me*, that He cried (drops of blood on His brow, and tears in His eyes) "If this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, thy will be done." It was for *me* that at last, in the thick darkness of the place of a skull He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Jesus, Son of God, what does this poor heart owe to Thee! What, for the favour of God now! And what, for all the joys of Thy Father's house by and by!

And this, knowing *all* beforehand,—all the rebellion, all the guilt, all the heartless sin against perfect love in which we once lived. This, too, knowing all the waywardness and coldness of our hearts since we have tasted His grace! "Who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Beloved brethren, with a heart moved as this priceless love and its precious fruits pass before the mind, let me press upon

you the practical bearing of all this. "What I now live in flesh," says the apostle, "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Shall we not seek in a deeper measure this present, abiding sense of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge? Shall we not seek that our hearts may be led captive by it; that our ear, our hand, our foot, sanctified by the sprinkled blood and anointing oil, may be given up entirely to Him who died for us and rose again?

Jesus, Son of God! take these feeble hearts, fill them with Thy PERFECT LOVE, work in them mightily by Thy good Spirit that, as Thou livest in us, so what we now live in the flesh may be by the faith of the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us. Amen.

UNION, DIVISION, UNITY.

(ROMANS xvi.)

We are here introduced into the family circle, and shown God's delight in His people. The earthly Kings of Israel and Judah had Chronicles written for them. God writes Chronicles of His heavenly saints.

There is a mother (verse 13), there are brethren (verse 14), and sisters (verses 1-6) brought forward here.....It is not the body; it is the family. Not unity but union. There are different members in a family; each preserves his individuality, still it is one family. In the body there are members, but members working in the one great unity. The assembly, the body, is a unity (Eph. iv. 4).

The sisters are especially mentioned. They may be servants of the church, like Phebe, succourers of many; helpers in Christ Jesus, like Priscilla, willing to lay down their necks for a Paul, for whom the whole assembly give thanks; they may bestow much labour on the servants, may labour much

in the Lord, like the beloved Persis ; and may be sufferers, and prisoners for the Lord's sake, like Junia.

Nothing is too little to be put down. Epænetus is the first fruits of Achaia unto Christ. Amplias is beloved in the Lord. Apelles is approved in Christ. What a bond ! The little words, "in the Lord," "in Christ," are mentioned ten times in the first sixteen verses. They are the secret of all blessing and union amongst the saints. They are in Christ, and Christ is in them. The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, the second Adam, has been given to them (John xx. 22). They are one family. The world has no part in this holy circle ; they are outside it all, for these are "in Christ."

But if they are in Christ and thus separated, men causing divisions and contentions may still come in. Yea, such may belong to the saints themselves, and even arise from the helpers (Acts xx. 28-30). They are to be avoided. Every saint, even the weakest, is responsible. No gift or office is to hinder the saints in this.....Alas, for the church when it is full of such people ! Still in the midst of divisions, the saints are thrown on the God of peace. He will bruise Satan, the author of divisions, under their feet shortly (verses 17 to 20). A short appendix is added, in which "the mystery" is alluded to. (Verses 25-27 ; see also Eph. iii. ; Col. i. and ii. ; and Eph. v. 30-32 to learn what "the mystery," is, and unity, together with the blessed relationship between Christ and the church).

EXTRACTED.

PRAYER.

What rest it affords to the mind that would stay itself on the Lord, and the heart that would put its trust in Him, to be assured that whatever we ask in prayer *believing* we shall receive. "What things soever ye pray and ask for, believe

that you have received them, and ye shall have them" (Mark xi. 24). How simple the condition! yet what a rebuke to unbelief. It is quite true, that the qualifying clause necessarily restricts the prayer to certain things, but would it be well for us to have it otherwise? If *our wills* should prompt the petition, what distress we might bring on ourselves and others! Could we, for instance, pray *believingly* for riches? What a temptation to consume them on our lusts! (Jas. iv. 3.) What resting place for the dove was so secure, so well provided during the continuance of the waters of death, as the Ark. When a change of present circumstances was tried, it was soon found better to return. God's future of rest in the earth would come, and then the dove might wing its flight according to its nature, but not yet. Shut in to God and His provision was far, far better than roaming midst the scenes of death, to settle on corruption. "Thy will be done," must ever be the desire of faith. Not that the Lord does not encourage us to fully pour out our souls before Him. According to Phil. iv. 6 we may pray freely, making known our requests with thanksgiving, but in this case we must realize our own imperfect knowledge of what is best. Perfectness of knowledge and wisdom are only in the mind of God, and as to *our* requests, we must "leave it to Himself to choose and to command." We may not get the things for which we pray, but we are promised, that which no mere things could ever afford, "the *peace of God* which passeth all understanding." (Phil. iv. 6, 7, compare 2 Cor. xii. 8, 10.)

But there are those things for which we have a full warrant to pray *believingly*, and may be assured that asking, we shall obtain. Thus, for *wisdom* there is a special promise, and Oh, how great is the lack of it! As we look around and witness the too evident mistakes in the church, in families, in individual paths, how painful the conviction that saints do not realize their want of wisdom, and pray *believingly* for it.

But getting wisdom, we should know what are really "*good things*" for us, as children of God, that we may shine as lights in the world, and asking *believingly* for them, we shall have them (Matt. vii. 11). Why do christians bear so feeble a testimony? Why is there so little out-shining of the true light from them? Daniel knew the secret in his day of the failure of all Israel—"Yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God" was his confession. (Dan. ix.) Should it not be ours?

Again, it is one of the tokens of the love of God in a man that he ministers to the *wants* of his poorer brethren (1 John iii. 17). How perfect is the love of God to His poor children. He knoweth all their need, and supplieth according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus (Matt. vi. 8; Phil. iv. 19). What confidence in prayer this should give to the poor. "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." Yet let us ever remember among all our needs, there is one thing that, in many of us, is greatly lacking—"Ye have need of *patience*." Do we not feel it? Yet do we ask *believingly* for it? There would be a great change in things, both in the family and in the church, if we did.

Then we are assured that the Lord Jesus, as our great High Priest, "ever liveth to make intercession for us," and we know some at least of His desires on our behalf—That in the hour of temptation our faith may not fail.—That we may be kept from all evil, and be truly sanctified.—That we may possess His peace, be filled with His joy.—That we may know unhindered communion, the love wherewith the Father loves the Son may be in us, and Christ in us. Do we pray for these things? Surely we ought and that *believingly*.

Then how many are the exhortations to special petitions, as—for more labourers in the vineyard, for the spread of the Word of God &c. Have we enlarged our coast, so to speak,

and got beyond ourselves? Oh! how many things we might ask for in confidence, in true faith in God, if we were more in communion with God.

One very precious fact is disclosed in Rom. viii. 26. A groan that cannot be uttered is eloquent to God, and the Holy Spirit is interceding *in* us, even when we may be totally unable to express in words, what we are conscious we really desire. Beautiful is the assurance then given in v. 28. May this encourage us all. "Men ought always to pray and not to faint."

THREE REQUISITES FOR THESE LAST DAYS.

CHAPTER II. AN ALABASTER BOX FILLED WITH SPIKENARD.

(Read Luke vii. 37-50 and Mark xiv. 1-9.)

In the two portions of the Gospel referred to above, we have the description, by the pen of Divine inspiration, of scenes very different to that referred to in the first part of our meditations. For, however precious in its simplicity, and full of most profitable instruction for our souls that scene in the house of Jesse may appear, and perfect in its place, as every portion of the Divine Record, yet from its merely typical or foreshadowing nature it cannot be compared to the two wondrous scenes, lovely beyond description, in the houses of the two Simons, which form the subject of this second part of our meditations. In Jesse's house we see the anointing oil from the prophet's horn poured upon the head of Jesse's offspring, even the modest and humble ruddy shepherd boy David, as he had been fetched from his flock, which he so faithfully tended. Instead of Saul, the king after the people's heart, but rejected

by God, we behold the young shepherd being anointed as king by the prophet, in the presence of his father and brethren, who thought him, who was the man after God's own heart, beneath the prophet's notice.

But in the houses of the two leprous Simons* we behold Jesse's root and offspring, David's son and Lord, anointed, not by the hand of a great prophet, but by two of the Lord's humble handmaids, when God's well-beloved Son, who was in an infinitely higher sense than David, "*the man after God's own heart*," was about to be rejected by the builders and to be disallowed of men, who, like David's brethren, saw no beauty nor comeliness in Him, while even His own disciples in the house of Bethany begrudged the homage done to Him, as being a "*waste*."

But let us enter more closely upon the meditation of these two scenes, each unique in its loveliness and beauty, and set in relief in its brightness, (especially at Bethany), by the very darkness and hideousness of the surrounding evil.

The "Alabaster box" as the expression of the heart's best affections and the mind's sublimest thoughts being devoted to Christ, yea, of the whole being spent upon, and lost in His all-beauteous and all-glorious Person, occurs twice in the Gospels on the two remarkable occasions already alluded to.

In the case of the woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee, (not to be confounded with Mary in the house of Simon the leper at Bethany), we behold a "child of wisdom," who had been a child of sin and folly, prostrate at the feet of Jesus, the "Friend of publicans and sinners," pouring out all her heart's affections upon His Person, overwhelmed, as she was, in the presence of *grace personified*, seen in the graceless abode of a selfrighteous pharisee. She had been *lost away* from Him, and now she was *lost in Him*, Who was "fairer

* Only that one of them was a *cleansed* leper; most likely he was the same as the one at the end of Mark i.

than the children of men, and grace poured into His lips." The Father had drawn that soul to His Son, and the Son said: "I will in no wise cast out." She poured out herself upon Him. Much had been forgiven her, and she loved much. Her tears, wherewith she washed His feet, showed her deep *repentance*; the kisses wherewith she covered them, spoke of the *love* of that broken-hearted sinner to Him, Who came to heal the broken-hearted. Her hair, "the woman's glory," formerly used as a net in Satan's service, to catch and entrap other souls for his dreadful slavery, was now employed as an humble towel to wipe His feet, thus showing her *devotion* to His Person.

But above all, her *Alabaster box*, emptied upon His feet, expressed the deep and true *homage* of her whole being, bowing before the Saviour-God. This was more than the anointing oil, poured from the prophet's horn upon David's head. It was the bowing down, though not yet in conscious worship, like Mary's, but the instinctive bowing down of a sinner's soul, where God had begun His work of grace, before Him, Who was the image of the invisible God, yea, the revealer of the Father; Who was drawing that soul to His Son, to receive from His fulness grace upon grace, and in Whose Person she perceived all the grace that a poor outcast sinner, like she was, stood in need of, convinced that *He* would *not* cast her out; for had not the self-righteous pharisees, who had no balm for a broken-hearted sinner, called Him "the friend of publicans and sinners?" The very reason why they rejected Him, had been for her the reason to go to Him, in Whom grace and truth came *personified* into this sin-deluded world. And as her conscience could unburden itself before Him in her tears, heedless of the chilling presence of Simon and his friends, and as her heart could pour out its holy love in ceaseless kisses upon His feet, unchecked by the selfish hearts around her, and all unconscious of their very presence, she

emptied her alabaster box with its precious contents upon His feet, after having wiped them with her hair, overwhelmed by the presence of a Divine Saviour. But precious and acceptable though her homage was to God and His Son, the Holy Ghost, in perfectly divine appropriateness, does not say, as in the case of Mary (John xii.), that the house was filled with the odour of it. The reason for this omission appears to me not only this, that the contents of the alabaster box in Luke vii. were not of that higher order of ointment, called "*spikenard*," as in Mary's case (of which I shall speak farther on), but because the case in Luke vii. bears the character of grace towards a penitent sinner, and not the higher character of worship, like that in Mark xiv., Matt. xxvi., and John xii. This appears to me the reason why there is no mention made of a "sweet savour filling the house" in Luke vii., though this omission detracts nothing from the exceeding beauty of the scene, nor from the character of that "child of wisdom," who "justified wisdom," and therefore is justified by that gracious One, Who was and is "*wisdom*" Himself. The sole difference lies, as mentioned already, in the different character of each scene. In Luke vii. it is: *Jesus and the penitent and justified sinner*, but in Matt. xxvi., Mark xiv., and John xii., *Jesus and the accepted worshipper*.*

We find throughout the Gospels, that whenever on special occasions men showed their disregard of the Son of God, God took care to honour Him in an especial way. So in Simon the pharisee's house. Amongst Simon's guests there

* The reason why the fact of the "odour of the ointment filling the house" is not recorded in Matt. xxvi. and Mark xiv., appears to me this, that in John xii. the homage rendered to the Son of God (expressed by the anointing His feet) is paramount, as being rendered to the highest of His glories, whereas in Matt. xxvi. and Mark xiv. it is done to the Messiah—King, as expressed in the anointing His Head. Of course, as a matter of historical fact, Mary anointed both His feet and His Head, only that the Spirit of God records or omits one of the two in each of those three Gospels, according to the prominent character of Christ presented by each.

was One, seated in some low place, in an humble garb, and of simple appearance. The host and his servants had not thought it worth their while to offer him water to wash from his feet the dust of the road, which He had contracted in His errand of love and unremitting service—an act of the commonest courtesy shown in the East even to the humblest visitor or guest. But God honoured His Son in the very place where man despised Him. He procured water for the feet of Jesus, far more precious, and purer than that of Simon's reservoir,—water flowing from a better fountain, even the heart of a penitent sinner, touched by Divine grace. That was the proper water for the feet of the Saviour, who had come into the world to save sinners. Simon had not anointed Jesus' *head* with oil. She anointed His *feet* with the precious contents of her alabaster box. The self-righteous pharisee had no kiss for the Saviour, in Whose Person upon the cross, righteousness and peace were to kiss each other. The broken-hearted sinner, overwhelmed by the presence of a Divine Saviour, from Whose fulness she was receiving—drinking in, as it were—grace upon grace, covered His *feet* with kisses. Much had been forgiven her, therefore she loved much. The blinded pharisee did not know who the guest at his table was. He did not know that it was the same whom another Simon (or Simeon, which is the same,) had held as a babe in his arms, exclaiming: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

Poor blindfolded pharisee! He had a grown-up Saviour as guest at his board, Who filled the whole land with the fame of His mighty words and deeds, at whose bidding the blind did see, and the lame walk, the lepers were cleansed, the deaf heard, and the dead were raised, and—he knew him not. A

guest was at Simon's table, who, two thousand years before that day, with two of His elect Angels had been the honoured guest of a better host, of whom Simon and his friends vainly boasted as their father—even the Messiah, to Whom Moses and the prophets had pointed as the One who was to usher in the millennial blessings of Israel, and to Whom the Jews were looking—not yet in penitent faith, as the "Deliverer from their sins" (Matt. i. 21), but as the One, who was to deliver them from the effect of them, under which they smarted, *i.e.* the yoke of the Romans. To Simon—oh, blinding and hardening effect of pharisaic religiousness!—there was no beauty nor comeliness in that despised guest of his at the bottom of the table. But the Father, Who loveth and honoureth His Son Jesus, and draweth souls to Him, sent a pardoned sinner to Simon's house to perform the duties of the neglectful host, and bestow upon the neglected Guest the honour and distinction due to Him, in doing the very things which Simon had omitted to do, whereupon *wisdom*, having being justified by her child, in turn justifies her child, turning away from the prodigal daughter's "elder brother," who was no Barnabas, *i.e.* "Son of consolation," but a "Bar-Nabal," *i.e.* a Son of folly.—Jesus sends that blessed "child of wisdom" away with the full assurance of pardon, salvation, and peace, whilst as to Simon and his companions, He, in His gentle and quiet dignity, assumes His place as Judge, giving them a foretaste of that awful moment when the once despised guest will be seated on His Great, White Throne, and the final judgment be pronounced upon all unbelieving mankind, and upon all Simons and their equals of every age.

But, however blessed and wondrous this scene between *Jesus and the sinner* in Simon's house, we now proceed to a still more blessed and wondrous scene in the house of another a better Simon.

DETACHED PORTIONS.

II.

How many Christians are in constant anxiety and unsettledness as to their whole path on earth, because they do not simply and truly believe that they have a Father in heaven who cares for them, and for every little detail in their daily walk. Oh if they only believed in the love of God, the real LOVE of God to them—a love which *spared* not His beloved Son when the sacrifice was needful for their good; if they only believed that they, in all the special circumstances of their lot on earth, were the objects of His love in heaven, what a load of anxiety and care it would remove, and what brightness it would give to their faces and to their path too.

I would refer any tried one about the earthly path to the sixth chapter of Matthew, where the Lord Jesus, in the most tender and most loving way, and by the most assuring declarations, seeks to put thorough confidence in God into the hearts of His disciples as to the morrow, and all that would bring care, whilst they were doing His will moment by moment. "Go, work *to day* in my vineyard"—to-morrow is not ours. "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness and *all* these things shall be added unto you;" that is, all that we "have need of" (see v. 42)—"Take therefore no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself."

While we are doing the *present* will of God, we are assured by the Lord that our interests and needs are the concern and care of our Father in heaven. He feeds the fowls of the air, who "neither sow nor reap, nor gather into barns." He *thinks* of them and cares for their necessities; not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father.

EXTRACTED.

SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. Is it possible when once a child of God to become a castaway ?

A. E.

A. If by 'a castaway' you mean finally lost, No, because all God's children are eternally saved; if by a castaway you mean laid aside as useless for God's service, Yes. Always hold firmly the foundation truth of eternal life that can never be lost for all God's children, and that because they are BORN His children ; they are *adopted* His sons.

Q. It says in Rev. iii. 20—"Behold I stand at the door and knock, &c." Does it mean that if any man open the door and go out to Christ, who is already outside the door, Christ will go into that man in the outside place and sup with him and he with Christ ?

A. The result of supping with Christ would be, that in heart and spirit, and in position also, one would be separate from Laodicean self-sufficiency. The passage does not bear however the interpretation you place on it, though it amounts practically to this.

Q. Will you please explain the meaning of Hebrews xii. 6. I should like to know the difference between *chasteneth* and *scourgeth every son whom He receiveth*.

M. A.

A. The passage is in the form of a quotation, and in accordance with Hebrew poetry repeats the same idea in different order. In the R.V. it is printed as poetry.