

HELP AND FOOD

FOR THE

Household of Faith.

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ERRATA.

Page 127, third line, for "David" read "Daniel."

Page 278, sixteenth line, for "process" read "protest."

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MOTTO FOR 1889.

"The light of the knowledge of the glory of God,
in the face of Jesus Christ."

Help and Good

FOR

THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH.

THE LOST SHEEP.

(Luke xv. 1-7.)

NOT only are the *mines* of Scripture yet little worked, there is a wealth of precious things yet upon the surface which we have never made our own for all the centuries we have had the fields in our possession. What are we more familiar with than the parables of this chapter? They are the constant theme of the evangelist; they are among the most prized treasures of faith every where. They are sung in hall and in street, lisped by childhood and studied by youth, and often link for the dying the most precious memories of the past with the joys into which they are entering. And yet, even among so-called evangelical Christians, how often do we find contradictory conceptions of these very parables! If we ask, Who are the "ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance"? who are the two "sons" of the last parable? how is it that the father says to the elder son, "All that I have, is thine"? we shall find very different answers given by different persons of at least the average intelligence in spiritual things.

It is no purpose of mine to take up these differences, but rather to look at the parables themselves for what the Lord in His grace may grant us out of them for edification and blessing; only making the diversity of view the argument for closer examination of their meaning and design. One thing is sure: however often we may have come to these divine springs, we shall find still that there is fresh and living water. Blessed are they only that hunger and thirst: they shall ever be filled.

The occasion of the three parables was a common one, and they are so manifestly linked together in subject, all the more clearly because of their individual differences, that scarcely a question can be raised on that score. In each case, what has been lost is found; in each, the joy—the basis— and the crowning joy—is, blessed be God, in the one who finds what he has lost. The threefold story of the love that seeks and finds suggests (what a further view confirms abundantly) that here it is the heart of the whole Godhead that is told out to us. Father, Son, and Spirit are all occupied with man. Around him revolves an interest that makes all things its witnesses and servants for its blessed purposes.

The occasion is this, that there “were drawing near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him.” And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, “This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.”

Our common version says, “*Then* drew near,” but the words do not speak of what merely happened at a certain time, but of what was habitually taking place. We see that every where through the gospels, from the day at least in which He called Levi from the receipt of custom, and Levi made Him a feast in His own house, “publicans and sinners” flocked around the Lord. They had gone out largely to John's baptism before that, when through the gate of repentance they were invited to come to find remission of their sins. Now, when grace sought them more openly, it was to be expected that they would

beyond others welcome it. And they did. "Verily I say unto you," were Christ's words to the Pharisees, "that the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not, but the publicans and the harlots believed him; and ye, when you saw it, did not even repent yourselves afterward, that ye might believe him" (Matt. xxi. 31, 32).

The Pharisees resented the grace that welcomed such; for this grace makes its own demand, and, with the inflexibility of law itself, will abate nothing. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," is harshness indeed to "just persons who have no need of repentance;" and this is how the parable itself describes those to whom, as murmurers against His ways, He is replying. Surely it is evident that if in the last parable alone this murmuring is distinctly found in the person of the elder son, the first no less pictures the two parties to whom alike they were uttered.

People look around to find a class who have no need of repentance, and some who cannot find them on earth apply our Lord's words to the angels! A common hymn we sing speaks of the same class as—

"The ninety and nine that safely lay
In the shelter of the fold,"

but of this the parable says nothing. The mistake is in making a reality out of what is but the image in a mirror which the Lord puts before His audience that they may recognize themselves. And from this He necessarily pictures them according to their own estimate of themselves,—an estimate which He uses at the same time for the purpose of conviction on the one side, of encouragement on the other. *Had* he pictured them other than their own thought, the arrow would have missed its mark. How could they fail to apply aright these righteous men whom He exhibited to them in contrast with this wander-

ing sheep,—“lost,” or self-destroyed? How could they interpret wrongly this “elder son” serving his father in the field, indignantly pleading against the free reception of his unworthy brother his own ill-requited years of toil? Yet after all, in what seems to admit their fullest claim, they find themselves convicted and exposed, their argument refuted, and their heartlessness and distance from God laid bare.

Yet withal God Himself is at the same time so wondrously revealed, that when the scene closes with that direct appeal upon the father's part—“Then came his father out and entreated him,”—you listen involuntarily for the sudden sob which shall tell of another heart, no less a prodigal's, broken down into confession and return.

The scribes taught much in parables. The Lord will have them listen to parables in turn. We feel, in the style in which He addresses Himself to them here, that the reason is not that which He gives upon another occasion to His disciples: “Therefore speak I unto them in parables, because they seeing see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.” No doubt, here as elsewhere, the parable would, like the seed of which He was speaking in the former case, test the receptive character of the ground upon which it fell. Yet the pleading in them cannot be mistaken either. Did He not, as just now said, Himself picture the Father as entreating even the Pharisee? Could He do less, or hide from them in words hard to be interpreted, that very entreaty?

The gentlest, most persuasive, winning form of speech is undoubtedly the parable. There is the attractiveness of the story itself, as the lips here could tell it, taking possession of one before even its meaning might become plain, and then detaining the soul to listen to that meaning. There is the hold upon the memory which we all realize, by virtue of which it might, like incorruptible seed, lodge in the frozen ground until a more genial time should give it leave to expand and root itself. With how

many has it not been so since! and how great a harvest may we not be sure will yet be seen to have sprung from this sowing! Sow it in some hearts afresh even now, blest Sower, Son of Man, for Thy love's sake!

“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

“And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing.

“And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.

“I say unto you that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.”

They have assailed Him for His love, and the Lord first of all, therefore, answers for Himself. He will afterward, though in a more covert way, show how the Spirit, and then openly how the Father, is of one mind with Him. Are *they* not too? He asks. If it were only a sheep that was in question, there would be no doubt. Alas, that doubt could only come in where *men* were concerned! Would they indeed value a man lower than a sheep? But these were His: put them upon that low level, who should forbid His interest in them?

He does not compare Himself to the shepherd here. He might act as that, but He was much more than that—even the Owner of the sheep. We see that he makes the loftiest claim here. They are *His*,—even these poor publicans and sinners. He who made them and fashioned them is He who is in pursuit of them. Will they question His right?

It is a first principle for faith that God is the seeker; that there is heart in Him,—goodness in Him. We are not bid to batter at closed doors. We have not to

soften Him to pity, or turn Him toward us. We feel our hardness toward Him, and we think Him hard. We listen to our consciences that accuse us, and we think we hear His voice in them, who yet "upbraideth not." What a revelation of God is this, when Christ, down here among men, becomes His true and only representative!

Conscience is *not* the voice of God to us. It is the voice of self-conviction, of the moral nature within us, pronouncing upon ourselves, and which makes us rightly anticipate a judgment to come. But even here, while it is the eye to see, there is no less required the light to see. In the twilight darkness in which so many are shrouded, what is unreal is oftentimes confounded with the real. If a poor Romanist omits his worship of the virgin, conscience may smite him for it. If he gets his absolution from the priest, he feels relieved and happy. Of many, Scripture says, "Even their mind and *conscience* is defiled" (Tit. i. 15). It may have its fools' paradise or its fabled purgatory. As the light comes in, reality succeeds to the unreal, and in the day that comes there will be nothing hid.

But conscience can never take the place of revelation. God only can tell me what He is, or what Christ did for me, or how my soul can be at peace with Him. For all this, I must listen to the Word alone. It alone can bring in the true eternal light in which conscience and heart alike can find their rest and satisfaction forever.

God reveals Himself then as Seeker. It is He whose the sheep are who is come after them. In this character He is for the lost, the wanderer, though it be, as with these publicans, that worst wandering, heart and mind astray, and astray hopelessly, without power of self-recovery. A bottomless word, this "lost"! Not even the Pharisees would have uttered it of these publicans; for they believed in an inherent power in man by which, though by painful effort and perseverance, the crooked might be straightened yet. Were there not legal sacrifices

and prescribed restitutions, ablutions, and purifications?

Divine love saw *lost* ones,—saw in its full extent the misery which it alone was adequate to relieve, and that misery, so hopeless otherwise, brought it down on their behalf. The Creator becomes the Saviour. He “goeth after that which is lost until He find it.” With the divine power and wisdom in pursuit, there is no uncertainty here as to success. Help is laid upon One who is mighty, with whom to fail would be indeed irretrievable disaster, convulsing heaven and earth in universal ruin. But there is no fear: the cause of the helpless is become the cause of the Almighty, “to the praise of the glory of His grace.”

Pharisees, publicans, and sinners alike knew who were these lost ones thus made the objects of God's special interest. No one of them needed to inquire, as so many to-day are found inquiring, “Is this for me?” It was a definite gospel addressing itself without any possibility of question to those whose hearts claimed so great salvation, and whose consciences put them in this strangely privileged class. They had but to take the divine estimate of them to find themselves enrolled among the heirs of salvation. And here, marvelous to say, communion with God begins for the poor sinner who thus is at one with God as to his condition and his need.

Light has shone in upon the soul, and though it be but upon ruin, yet here also, as in the six days' work, God sees the light that it is good. It is the proof of a work begun which shall end only in the rest of God when at last *all* is good. The soul is in His presence whose presence yet shall be fullness of joy to it. We are *new-born*, as born naturally, with a cry.

“Until He find it.” He has made the responsibility of that His own. Blest news for the consciously helpless,—the work is His. The effect of this sweet assurance, where it takes hold, is that Christ is revealed in it. The lost *are* found: the everlasting arms are realized to

be about them. Not more surely are they disclosed to themselves than He is disclosed to them. 'This is rest begun. He has given it.

"He goeth after that which is lost until He find it." Then these lost are found. Infinite power and love are on the track and cannot fail. It is plain, then, that the Lord is speaking, not of all men as in a lost condition (for all men are *not* found), but for the ear and heart of these who were flocking now around Him. His words are no mere generalities, powerless to minister to the need of souls, but divine seed finding its own place, and rooting itself in the furrows of the plowed-up ground, where the work of the Spirit gives it entrance.

It is a blessed thing to be able to give a free and general offer of salvation,—to say, "Christ died for all: come to Him, and He will give you rest." Yet there are those who need even a closer individualization. There are those who lie wounded by the road-side, needing, not merely the call of the gospel, but the grasp of the strong, tender hands, and the binding up of the gaping wounds. There are those to whom, if they cannot appropriate Him, Christ would appropriate Himself,—those who dare not thrust out leprous hands to Him because of their pollution, and who can only be liberated and brought out of their isolation by that direct touch of His, in which a new, undreamed-of life for them begins.

"He goeth after that which is lost." How much do those quiet words involve!

"But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed;
Nor how dark was the night which the Lord passed through
Ere He found His sheep which was lost."

The cross was the only place in which He could overtake these wanderers. It is only as we realize what the cross is that we find the arms of this mighty love thrown round us. Here indeed He has come where we are. Here is the place in which, without rebuke, we can claim

Him,—*our* place, the place of our doom,—our substitute and sin-bearer He who takes it. The awful cloud which has shadowed His glory has destroyed forever the distance between us. The crucified One is ours; for the death and judgment He has borne are ours. These are our due,—our penalty; and we have them in the cross borne and borne away from us. He has found the lost; and immediately we are freed and upborne by the might of this redemption and by the living power of the Redeemer: “He layeth it upon His shoulders rejoicing.”

How blessed is this! What *can* be the force of such words, but to assure us of the complete triumph of divine love in the poor sinner’s salvation! There is to be no trusting him to himself again; no possible forfeiture of all the toil and pains of divine love in his behalf. The joy is His who brings back His own. The loss now would be indeed *His* loss. The failure clearly, as represented here, would be His. Failure, then, there cannot be. Put all the weakness, folly, waywardness of the now recovered one in the strongest way, and prove them by the most conclusive of arguments, what does all this do but furnish the most satisfactory reason *why the sheep should be where it is*, upon the shoulders of the shepherd, and not upon its own feet?

This, then, is salvation in the Lord’s thought of it in this parable. It is salvation “to the uttermost” (Heb. vii. 25),—complete, eternal (chap. v. 9) salvation. This alone suits the case; alone gives peace to the conscience, alone gives rest to the heart. And it is here assured to every one who, looking to the Saviour, finds himself in this company of lost ones, after whom is His special quest. And how beautifully, in this freest of gospels, is repentance thus insisted on as inseparable from saving faith! “And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and his neighbors, saying unto them, ‘Rejoice with with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.’ I say unto you that likewise joy shall be in heaven over

one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."

Here the moral is plainly reached, and the application is easy. Who is the sinner that repenteth? Beyond all possible doubt, the sheep which was lost. Who are the just persons that need no repentance? As plainly, those who have never been thus consciously and hopelessly astray. It is to the *consciousness* of those before Him the Lord appeals; and upon this depends the force of that appeal. These publicans and sinners who as such flocked to hear the message of grace, were those in whom was repentance; and so the gospel, with all its real freedom, *selects* (so to speak) its recipients. The ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance have, on this very account, no need of and no taste for *grace*. No less certainly than the needle follows the magnet do these convicted sinners follow and cleave to Christ.

There are many teachers,—there are many and conflicting teachings,—there were at that time, there have been ever; yet we are not left to this confusion and uncertainty. Nor are the simplest and most ignorant left to be the dupes of those subtler than themselves. No, there is a rule of God's moral government which forbids such a result. For, let a man but face his own convictions,—let him only admit the sin which his conscience, if not hardened, witnesses against him, and realize the helplessness which soon discovers itself to those in earnest to be delivered,—there is but one voice that can be authoritative for him any more. The jangle of contending voices is hushed; scribes, doctors of the law, names, and parties, and schools of thought become utterly insignificant. Faith hears only Him who says, with calmness and assurance, "Come unto ME, and I will give you rest."

It is the Lord; and He who invites to rest, Himself rests in the rest He gives. It is that for which He has labored. "Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel . . . the Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty:

He will save; He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love; He will joy over thee with singing." (Zeph. iii. 17.)

"THINGS THAT SHALL BE:"

AN EXPOSITION OF REVELATION IV.—XXII.

PART I.—(Continued.)

Thrones Around the Throne. (Chap. iv. 4.)

THIS rainbow-girdled throne is a throne of judgment: "Out of the throne proceeded lightnings and voices and thunders." Mercy may and does restrain judgment within fixed limits, or use it sovereignly to fulfill purposes of widest, deepest blessing. None the less is it plain that the "throne of grace," to which it is the part of faith *now* to "come boldly, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need," is not here before us. Even the bow of promise itself speaks of a "cloud over the earth," which might seem to threaten ruin as by another deluge. The promise to Philadelphia warned of an "hour of trial" which was to "come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth," while it assured the overcomers there that the Lord would keep them out of this. And now before the lightnings are seen to issue from the throne, before the peal of judgment startles the world from its security, we find "round about the throne four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment, and on their heads crowns of gold." The promise has been fulfilled, and the "kings and priests" of God are around the throne of God.

That these are "thrones," not seats merely as in the

common version, is not contested, so far as I know, by any one. That they are men, not angels,* who sit upon them, should be plain by many considerations. Their very title of "elders" speaks for it, and in Israel these were the representatives and rulers of the people. Their number, twenty-four, if to be illustrated by any thing in Scripture, can only be referred to the twenty-four courses into which David divided the priesthood. And this reference is confirmed by the priestly actions of these elders in the next chapter (v. 8). They are *crowned* priests,— "kings and priests,"—the "royal priesthood" of which Peter speaks (1 Pet. ii. 9). And when they act in that capacity, the angels stand in a separate company outside of them (v. 11).

They are therefore saints, not angels, as the general consent of interpreters acknowledges. There are "thrones" indeed among angelic powers, but no priests: for priesthood speaks of mediation and of sin which requires it, and no provision of this kind is needed by the holy or exists in behalf of the fallen angels. No doubt the angel-priest of the eighth chapter will be urged by some, but here it is in behalf of men he offers, and there is but One to whom it belongs to add to the prayers of the saints that which gives them efficacy. Christ, therefore, though presented in a mysterious manner, must be the Priest in this case. Nowhere else in Scripture is there the most distant thought of angelic priesthood.

But if the elders are saints, *how* are they represented to us in this picture? Not, plainly, as departed spirits, but as glorified beings, raised or changed, and evermore beyond the power of death. Not till Christ gets His human throne do His people get theirs (chap. iii. 21). All rewards

* E. H. Bickersteth, the author of "Yesterday, To-day, and Forever," and Dr. Craven, American editor of Lange's Commentary on Revelation, are among those who advocate the angelic interpretation in the present day. The arguments of the latter are based entirely on the confusion of the multitudes of the redeemed in chaps. vii. and xiv. with the heavenly saints of the present and the past dispensations.

proper wait till the day when we shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, and receive for the things done in the body (2 Cor. v. 10). Thus it is clear that the scene at which we are looking supposes resurrection come, and the voice of the Lord to have called us to Himself. Thus alone could the thrones around the throne be filled.

For the same reason we cannot conceive of any representation here of the position of Christians as now known to and enjoyed by faith. We are indeed "raised up together, and seated together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 6); but this is a question of acceptance, not of reigning. Christ reigns, it is true, but in no wise has He taken that place as our representative. *Seated upon the Father's throne, we are not seated in Him, nor ever shall be with Him there.* Thus such a thought is absolutely forbidden to us, as that of a positional application of the vision before us.

More plausible would be the thought of *anticipation*,—a pledge and assurance for our encouragement of what is to be only at the end enjoyed. Such anticipations, there are in the book before us. The multitude out of all nations, who are seen in the seventh chapter as already "come out of the great tribulation," present us, in fact, with such an anticipatory vision. The woman of the twelfth, clothed with the glory of the sun, is in some such features similarly anticipative. Thus the *principle* is one we cannot refuse, and which *might* apply in this case. We have only to ask, Is there any thing which in fact would prevent our so applying it?

Now, if we look at the white-robed multitude of the seventh chapter, which is the nearest in resemblance to the vision of the elders, if the latter be anticipative, we find one very marked difference between the two. The former is a complete whole, separated from the other visions which surround it, and not an integral part of the prophetic history. It forms no part of the events of the sixth seal, as it plainly forms none of the seventh, but,

with its kindred vision of the Jewish remnant sealed, is inserted parenthetically between them. It *interprets* the course of the history, rather than forms part of it; and here the moral purpose of the interpretation is quite evident.

But suppose we had found, on the contrary, this company associated with the course of the prophecy throughout; present and worshiping when the Lamb takes the book; interpreting some of the after-visions; mentioned as present when other events take place: should we not look at it as strange and incongruous indeed to be told that it had no existence as such during this very time? that it was only anticipatively brought before us,—an encouraging vision, not an actual fact?

Such is the relation of the elders to the prophecy before us until the nineteenth chapter closes with the appearing of the Lord. They sing the song of redemption when the Lamb takes the book; they interpret as to the white-robed multitude; they worship again when the seventh trumpet sounds; in their presence the new song is sung which the one hundred and forty-four thousand alone can learn; and when Babylon the Great is judged, they fall down once more before the throne, saying, "Amen, Halleluiah." It is not till after this that the Lord appears.

Thus the elders in heaven are no transient vision, but an abiding reality all through this long reach of prophecy. We must accept the fact of glorified saints enthroned around the throne of God from the commencement of the "things that shall be." With this, many other things are implied of necessity. The descent of the Lord into the air; the resurrection of the dead; the change of the living saints; the rejection of the rest of the (now merely) professing church; the close of the Christian dispensation. All this we have already found in Scripture to take place before the incoming "end of the [Jewish] age,"—the last week of Daniel's seventy. The internal evidence harmonizes completely with what is derived from the general

consent of prophecy, in proving to us to what point in the dispensations we have here arrived.

Daniel had long before this spoken of thrones around the throne. "I beheld," he says, "till thrones were placed (*R. V.*), and One that was Ancient of days did sit" (chap. vii. 9). But he can tell us nothing more as to the occupants of these thrones. The earthly, and not the heavenly side is given to him to unfold. John not only shows us the occupants, but his vision antedates that of Daniel, and raises the thrones themselves to a higher elevation. We must pass on to the twentieth chapter of this book to find the scene which the Old-Testament prophet depicts, and there the character of rule is limited every way both as to time and place. "They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." This is earthly rule, and not yet the new earth; but it is just as plainly said of Christ's "servants" in the New Jerusalem, "they shall reign forever and ever." Here the limitation is gone, and the heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ, are fully manifested.

The idea of a millennial reign, true and scriptural as it is, tends to get too large possession of the thoughts of those often styled "millennarians," a word which answers to the early "chiliasts,"—both derived from this "thousand years" of rule. And these, as shown in Papias, Justin, and Irenæus, conceived of it in a Jewish and earthly fashion, seriously conflicting with the Christian's heavenly hope. To this Old-Testament expectation many in the present day have swung round again, and we cannot too earnestly protest against it.

The truth is, that to those whose hope is the millennium, it is quite natural and necessary to go to the Old Testament for their views of it. But then they are in the line of Jewish promises, and an appropriation of these to a greater or less extent is to be looked for. This is the mode in which have been produced some of the most heterodox and evil systems of the day.

If we would "rightly divide the Word of God," it can be only by respecting the divisions which the Word itself has established for us. And if we ask ourselves, What has the New Testament to say of the millennium? for how much of our knowledge of it are we indebted to its pages? the answer will be impressive and should be enlightening.

In the New Testament we find, first of all, that it is a *millennium*,—that is to say, that it is *limited as a period*. It belongs not to eternity. It precedes the "new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness;" closes with the judgment of the great white throne, and passing away of present things.

It is *not*, therefore, as so often represented, Sabbath-rest, but only the last day of man's work-day week, the last of the probationary dispensations. Its true type is the sixth day of the creative week when man and woman are put at the head of earthly government, and not the seventh day, which God hallows because He can rest. The merest glance at Rev. xx.,—the merest reference to the Old-Testament prophet, ought to make this so plain that there should be no need to spend another word in its defense.

But what, then, must be the effect of substituting for what is everlasting that which is temporal and transient merely? Certainly, it cannot be a light one. With many, it has perverted the whole future before them, and introduced into it elements destructive to Christianity. To any, it must be hurtful, just in proportion to their occupation with it. For the truth it is that sanctifies. Error demoralizes and despiritualizes. How much, if it touch that in which the heart is called to rest, as it were, looking forward and entering into it as that in which God shall rest eternally? What indeed we hope for, we practically reach after, and are controlled and fashioned by it.

The New Testament speaks of the binding of Satan during these thousand years, and of the deliverance of creation from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. It speaks also—and

this is the positive feature which it adds to the Old-Testament picture,—of the reign of the saints with Christ over the earth. This is expressed in the Lord's promise to the apostles that they should "sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. xix. 28); in the authority given over ten or over five cities (Luke xix. 16-19); in the promise of the rod of iron (Rev. ii. 26, 27); and of sitting with the Son of Man upon His throne (iii. 21). In the twentieth chapter of this book, it is the one thing we find as to the millennium besides the fact of its being such, and the binding of Satan. These things are significant. The New-Testament blessings are "in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. i. 3), and thus the book of Revelation adds but the heavenly side to the earthly picture. It shows us beyond the judgment of the dead the new heavens and earth, and the tabernacle of God with men; and then the prophecy closes with the description of the New Jerusalem, the heavenly city.

The millennial rule, characterized by the rod of iron which dashes in pieces the opposition of the nations, is a special, exceptional kingdom for a great purpose, which being accomplished, it is given up. Christ sits now at the right hand of God until He makes His foes His footstool; and this subjecting of His enemies goes on until death, the last enemy, is subdued. This is preparatory to the judgment of the great white throne, and after this Christ delivers up the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all (1 Cor. xv. 24-28).

The special kingdom closes, but this does not and cannot touch the blessed truth that the throne in the heavenly city remains, past all changes, the "throne of God and of the Lamb;" nor this, that "His servants shall serve Him . . . and shall reign forever and ever." The thrones around the throne abide forever. The joint-heirship with Christ—wonder of divine grace as it is—on that very account can be no passing thing. The rod of iron passes away. All that speaks of sin as present passes necessarily,

The glory of the grace remains. In the ages to come He will show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus (Eph. ii. 7).

(To be continued.)

OBJECTION TO CONTROVERSY, A TENDENCY.

WE need to be upon our guard against an overwhelming tendency—namely, that unspiritual sensitiveness that would allow but the very smallest liberty for the discussion of any doctrines except those upon which we are agreed.

Unawares we shape our thoughts and utterances more and more to comply with this imperious tyranny until we arrive at, in a measure at least, a creed and communion with one another rather than the truth and communion with God.

Then it becomes a chief merit to comply, a demerit that puts one under a shadow of distrust to differ from the common sentiment that has thus gained its miserable sway. Thus Satan gains power to undermine character, and to cause us to bow down to and cling to our own poor thoughts in place of the sanctifying truth of God. Moderation, gentleness, and humility are dishonored and little esteemed, and high thoughts and high utterances carry the day, and are esteemed as a mark of spiritual discernment.

All this, as says Robinson's farewell to the Plymouth pilgrims, "is a misery much to be lamented." It is a hideous evil, which, if we are wise, we will tread under foot,—not nourish and cherish as we are so prone to do.

We rightly object to certain tendencies in controversy, yet often—rather, commonly—is not objection to controversy found on the side of sloth and superficiality, impatience and inability? And the end is, to be carried with the tide rather than won by the truth. I am not bound to

have ability to argue, but I am bound to have faith in God, with patience and love.

Exercise in this school develops depth and fortitude which otherwise we miss, and drift in the weakening current of complacency with those with whom we can agree.

Even truth held in this latter condition of soul must be shorn of much of its proper sanctifying power; and error is accredited by human influence, and holds firm lodgment against attack. "I hate argument," often means, as has been said, "I don't want to be reasoned with;" and so also, "I hate controversy" as often means, "I lack tone and character to bear it, and I take credit to myself for what is really an unspiritual condition."

Controversy is accompanied generally by utterances that stir ill-feeling. Even so. This let us deplore, and humble ourselves, and pray about; and yet not be too sensitive on this score, for sincerity and sharpness may be at times in place, but let us deplore the tendency to err, and be warned against it, and seek help from God not to speak unadvisedly with the lips,—and how great a victory is this! But shall we be so weak as to turn away from a conflict that may concern important points of truth because there is that that is painful to the feelings, and that the careless scoffer or the superficial Christian will easily profess to be scandalized by?

There is a spirit abroad that has led the Church in every age to sacrifice truth to sloth, self-complacency, and intolerance, so that we may boast of peace and unity when spiritual power is gone, and we have arrived at the end of inquiry into the fathomless depths of the treasury of God's Word.

Let us never be weary of having all we hold exposed to the light, and tested anew by Scripture. It will do us good, and not harm, we may be sure. The truth will be dearer each time it comes off conqueror. We need not fear for results, and we will not, if holding the truth in communion with God.

May we avoid a rough handling of the Word and of one another; but above all, may we be preserved from the deathlike complacency of human agreement. And yet, may we desire to be of one mind.

And even in a periodical for general circulation, if at times a difference in judgment appears, may there not be this valuable lesson, aside from the truth involved, namely, that all may learn that it is possible to differ and and yet forbear one another in humility and love?

Much of controversy would not be suitable, but to entirely exclude it, would it not be morbidity of the kind referred to in this article? not a true, spiritual judgment.

Let us see to it that our thoughts, conclusions, and utterances in this are in the line of true, and not false and injurious principles, for we all contribute to that common sentiment among us that tends to sway and govern our lives. And such power has a principle,—that I may be sincere and yet in error, because the principle that governs me is false, as a devout Romanist is sincere, but his principles (such as subjection to his church,) are often darkness itself; and then how great is that darkness!

Let us be careful and prayerful that we may judge rightly, and speak rightly, lest we should hinder when we seek to help.

I add below a suggestive extract from "D'Aubigne's Reformation,"

E. S. L.

From "D'Aubigne's History of the Great Reformation," p. 395:—"There are two tendencies which equally lead us into error. The one exaggerates diversity; the other exaggerates unity. The essential doctrines of salvation are the unit between these two courses. To require more than these doctrines is to infringe this diversity; to require less, is to infringe unity.

"The latter excess is that of rash and rebellious minds,

who look beyond Jesus Christ to form systems and doctrines of men.

“The former exists in various exclusive sects, and particularly in that of Rome.

“The Church should reject error, and unless this be done, Christianity cannot be maintained. But if this idea were carried to extremes, it would follow that the Church should take arms against the least deviation. . . . Faith would thus be fettered, and the feelings of Christians reduced to bondage.

“Such was not the condition of the Church in the times of real catholicity,—the catholicity of the primitive ages. It rejected the sects that attacked the fundamental truths of the gospel, but these truths once received, it left full liberty to faith. Rome soon departed from this wise course, and in proportion as the dominion and teaching of men arose in the Church, there sprang up by their side a unity of man.

“When a merely human system had been once invented, coercion increased from age to age. The Christian liberty, respected by the catholicism of the earlier ages, was at first limited, then enslaved, and finally stifled. Conviction which, according to the laws of human nature and of the Word of God, should be freely formed in the heart and understanding of man, was imposed from without, completely formed, and symmetrically arranged by the masters of mankind. Reflection, will, feeling,—all the faculties of the human being which, subjected to the Word and Spirit of God, should work and bear fruit freely, were deprived of their liberty, and constrained to expand in shapes that had been determined upon beforehand. . . . Doubtless there still existed many souls that had been taught direct of God, but the great majority of Christians from that time received the convictions of others only. A faith peculiar to the individual was rare; it was the Reformation alone that restored this treasure to the Church.

"And yet for some time there was a space within which the human mind was permitted to move. There were certain opinions that might be received or rejected at will. But as a hostile army day by day presses closer to a besieged city, compels the garrison to move only within the narrow boundary of its ramparts, and at last forces it to surrender, so the hierarchy from age to age, and almost from year to year, contracted the space that it had temporarily granted to the human mind, until at last this space, from continued encroachments, had ceased to exist. . . . The faithful were relieved of the fatigue of examining, of reflecting, of contending. All that they had to do was to repeat the formularies they had been taught.

"From that time, if there appeared in the bosom of Roman Catholicism any one who had inherited the catholicism of the apostolic ages, such a man, feeling his inability to expand in the bonds in which he was confined, was compelled to snap them asunder and display again to the astonished world the unfettered bearing of a Christian who acknowledges no law save that of God."

"THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE."

IT is our thought in this paper to consider briefly, in the light of the above text, the attacking of those who differ from us, both in a public and private way. For, after all, it is the "word of truth" that sanctifies.

The Lord's every act was perfect. Every thing was in due season. Each step He trod, there went up an odor of sweet incense unto the Father. Many, in their would-be zeal for God, undertook to rebuke Him; but He was not to be corrected. There was no dross to be consumed; He was (and is) the light of the sanctuary which required not the use of the golden snuffers. In and out among men on God's behalf, He sought their welfare, but not apart

from the glory of God. He testified that their works were evil, uttering the words given Him of God; and He could say of His ministry among them, "They hated Me *without a cause.*" He gave them *no cause* to hate Him.

In this, as in other things, it is ours to learn of Him. A much needed lesson, we may all readily admit. How often we reap our own sowing in regard to this! Giving those with whom we come in daily contact, and those to whom we may seek to declare the gospel in a public way, *ample cause* for hating us. It may be they refuse to hear the precious Word, and we grow weary in "well-doing."

Frequently resorting to carnal weapons to fight the flesh in others,—manifesting *the spirit* of the disciples who "knew not what *manner of spirit* they were of," and would call down fire from heaven to consume them. The blessed Lord passed on to "another village," shook the dust of their city from off His feet, "leaving us an example, that we should follow in His steps."

While we may marvel over our scanty fruit-bearing, so much apparent sowing needed to reap however small a harvest, how prolific are the results of our sowing to the flesh, springing up in congenial soil.

We may taunt and ridicule those Christ-rejecters, provoking them to envy and strife; but we ask, Is it the "wisdom that cometh from above," which is "first pure, then peaceable"? "He that winneth souls is wise." Is it wise to use scurrility? Is not such a course rather building towers and high walls? rearing obstacles which many years of "patient continuance in well-doing" can not efface? We are persuaded that we create a vast deal of the prejudice we complain so bitterly about. It is largely our doing. We would not write to blunt the keen edge of "the truth," or that the "whole counsel of God" should not be declared. May the "gospel of Christ" be "fully preached," the present grace and the coming judgment; but do not needlessly rouse the flesh. Let them, if they must, hate you "*without a cause.*"

The preaching of the gospel may, through the mercy of God, gather out precious souls in a locality; but where the close of the work is wound up by such needless provocation as we have described, what opposition those who abide there have to stem! And they also, true to their teaching, resort to the preacher's weapons of carnal warfare, and are perhaps made, in after years, to learn that they have been driving souls away where they cannot reach them. Alas, for our evil ways! We fail to have a "good report from them that are without"—think too lightly of what the world has to say of us. Is there not, alas! too much truth in their sayings?

May we learn not to be "buffeted for our faults," but for "well-doing," which is "acceptable with God." "Not rendering railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing, knowing that we are thereunto called that we should inherit a blessing."

We are told not to marvel that the world hates us. But may we seek so to live that they may hate us "*without a cause*," following in the gracious footsteps of our blessed Lord and Saviour, who "came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

"And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation." (Heb. xiii. 22.)

M. Clingen.

"THEY SHALL WALK WITH ME IN WHITE."

(Rev. iii. 4.)

WONDROUS theme for contemplation,
 "They shall walk with Me in white"!
 Wondrous hope and expectation,
 They are now the sons of light!
 Wondrous day in which we're living,
 God's free grace to magnify!
 Wondrous love! Our God is giving
 All! His Son to glorify.

Wondrous work, the work of saving
 Contrite ones on every hand!

Wondrous Word, the Spirit using
 God's good news for every land!
 Wondrous power, the Spirit quickening
 Sinners dead in nature's night!
 Wondrous grace from heaven descending,
 Gathering with Jehovah's might!

Wondrous care our God is taking
 Of His loved ones here and there!
 Wondrous hopes in them awakening,
 Soon to meet Him in the air!
 Wondrous patience and long-suffering,
 Saints are failing one and all!
 Wondrous mercy, never failing,
 From their wanderings doth recall!

Wondrous Captain of salvation—
 Jesus Christ, the glorified!
 Wondrous succor in temptation,
 All their needs He hath supplied!
 Wondrous death and resurrection,
 Heaven now is opened wide!
 Wondrous joy in tribulation,
 Suffering saints—His waiting bride!

Wondrous journey they are taking
 Through this desert waste and wide!
 Wondrous pilgrimage they're making
 To a home beyond the tide!
 Wondrous place the many mansions,
 With the blood-washed gathered in!
 Wondrous song of all the ransomed,
 "Thou hast washed us from our sins"!

Wondrous glory then unfolding,
 Mystery of ages past!
 Heaven and earth with joy beholding
 Him the first and Him the last!
 Wondrous joy! 'tis God's salvation,
 Satan vanquished, peace restored!
 Wondrous name of exultation,
 Jesus, Saviour! Jesus, Lord!

C. E. H.

"LET your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord." (Luke xii. 35, 36.)

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Q. 1.—In *Help and Food*, 1888, p. 270: “Suffer little children to come unto Me,” is no authority for their baptism, but must refer, as all “coming” does, to an act of faith in the child, which baptism expresses.

Ans.—You will find that the circumstances of the case contradict this common idea. “Suffer them to come” was said to the disciples who were hindering the children *being brought*. They had not “come” of themselves at all.

Q. 2.—How can you say, there is no resisting will in children, when all naturally are at enmity?

Ans. This is spoken of such as were there, young enough to be taken up in His arms; it does not at all imply the absence of an evil nature, but an undeveloped state simply. But it is plain also that in putting the child under the authority of the parent, the training of the will is a main point, and it is not considered as yet established: “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it!” The child and the adult are held to be on a different footing.

Q. 3.—Page 271: “As far as it goes, it is baptism unto death, not life.” Scripture never severs baptism from resurrection, never leaves the one in death. (Rom. vi.; Col. ii.; 1 Pet. iii.) Where would the “good conscience” be to leave the child in death?

Ans.—On the contrary, I believe it will be found that *baptism never goes farther than death*. It is *burial, contrasted* as such with resurrection. Only it is “to Christ,” and “to His death,” which thus, as it were, pleads for him who is baptized. But the baptism in itself goes no further.

Take the passage in Col. ii.; which seems most favorable to the other thought, and indeed, as it reads in every translation that I know, really necessitates it; but in this case, how are we raised up with Christ in baptism? In figure only? That cannot be, for it goes on to say, “through the faith of the operation of God, who raised Him from the dead.” But faith is not necessary to make a figure a figure: it would not do to say, “raised up with Him *in figure, through faith.*”

If not figurative, it must be real, however. Are we, then, really raised up with Christ in baptism? That would be to attach virtue to an ordinance in a way contrary to all scripture elsewhere, and to the whole spirit of Christianity. This very

chapter speaks of our not being "subject to ordinances;" and for my readers I need perhaps scarcely pursue that.

Read now, as the Greek gives undoubted right to do, "in whom," instead of "wherein," and the thought is clear: "*In whom ye are raised together*"—there is no "him"—"through the faith of the operation of God, who raised Him;" how evident that "through faith" is just what is needed here. It is by *faith* we pass into this condition,—not by baptism.

In the passage in Rom. vi., there is no difficulty. All that is said is (I read it according to J. N. D.'s translation), "If we are become identified with [Him] in the likeness of His death, so also we shall be of His resurrection." If the *meaning* of baptism has been fulfilled in us, our walk will show the consequence—we shall "walk in newness of life." Happily true it is, as our correspondent says, that Scripture does not leave the baptized one in death. So far, true; but only the grace of Christ, and that not in an ordinance, can carry him beyond it.

No good conscience can be where the child—or adult either—is left in death. But a good conscience does not come through baptism. Baptism is the "*demand*" of one,—"*request*" would perhaps be better. "*Answer*" is generally admitted to be wrong. In baptism, Christ is owned, that a good conscience may be the result. But this is actually given, not by baptism, but "*by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,*" as the passage itself (1 Pet. iii. 21) clearly says.

Q. 4.—Page 272: Circumcision is no where a type of baptism, but "a seal of the righteousness of the faith, being yet uncircumcised." Does not circumcision figure the private or individual faith toward God (the Romans' side), while baptism figures James' earthly or kingdom side? Col. ii. 11, 12 shows both, and a distinction between them, not that they are the same thing. And both are true of a believer now; on which ground 1 Cor. vii. 14 shows wife and children are holy—"In a place of privilege, etc.—the kingdom, I take it, without their being baptized,—grace outstripping law.

Ans.—"Circumcision is no where a type of baptism;" there are no types of it: it is simply analogous as the Jewish, as baptism the Christian, mark. Nothing more has been claimed for it than this. Moreover, *although* "the seal of the righteousness of the faith," which Abraham had, "being yet uncircumcised," it was by God's express command performed upon the child of eight days old. Should not this be weighed?

Circumcision does not *figure* faith, but *sealed* it (in Abraham).

It *figures*, according to Col. ii., the "putting off the body of the flesh;" and "we are the circumcision who . . . have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. iii. 3). Nor does baptism *figure* the earthly or kingdom side, by which I suppose is meant the introduction into the kingdom. It *actually* introduces into it. Baptism *figures* burial with Christ, according to Rom. vi. 4. The two are thus very nearly allied in meaning. A great difference is, that while circumcision simply speaks of the judgment of the flesh, the Christian rite, as burial, shows death (and Christ's death) as what sets it aside for us, and all hope for us in a resurrection from the dead.

"On what ground," I do not understand. The *wife* and children of 1 Cor. vii. 14 are not alike said to be holy: only the children are. The wife is sanctified only "in the husband," not in herself. As one flesh with her husband, she is covered by this: that is all. But the holiness of the children is different: it is a recognized thing, and thus *proves* the wife to be sanctified in the husband. The acknowledgment of the relationship is shown by the acknowledgment of the fruit of it, which surely implies that there was some *open* acknowledgment. Of course the *holiness* is not renewal of nature, but whatever is dedicated to God is, in the Scripture-sense, "holy." But this cannot show that there was no *way* of dedication (as by baptism). Rather, it argues for it.

Q. 5.—Page 236: "Two keys . . . admits into the body of the disciples." Thus also in Eph. iv. 5, "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," are found together." How is it true of unconscious infants?

Ans.—In the passage from which the first words are quoted, it is said, "Here there are two keys: 'baptizing' and 'teaching' are the joint-methods of discipling. In the one, we have the key of knowledge; in the *other*, that which, as the outward part, authoritatively admits into the body of disciples upon earth."

Our correspondent will see that only baptism is the authoritative admission—*one* key, not two; but that to be in the kingdom in its full thought, the key of knowledge also must introduce. Therefore the word "Bring them up in the nurture and discipline of the Lord."

As to the rest, "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," *are* joined together in the kingdom in God's thought of it, and thus again the previous exhortation.

PRIESTHOOD AND PROPITIATION.

SUPPLEMENTARY.

I AM thankful to have received objections to the preceding papers: thankful, not of course that there should *be* objections, but that being existent they should be made known, and fully examined. The difference of view itself the Lord would use for various blessing, that, exercised by His Word, we may be ruled by it,—not blindly follow one another, or any special teacher, however gifted. Persuaded as I am, that whatever may be our hindrances to receiving it, yet the truth once clearly known would have the allegiance of all, I am encouraged to take up what has been urged against me, not doubting that there will be blessing in it, on whichever side the truth may appear to be.

And first, it has been said that—

“if we want to understand about the making of atonement, we must turn to Lev. xvi. for information; for there only, in the ritual appointed for the day of atonement, shall we fully learn—as far as typical teaching can illustrate it—what is comprised in the thought of *making it*. . . . What was required to *make* atonement is the subject of God’s communication to the lawgiver on that occasion. The *noun* “atonement” is *not* once met with therein. The *verb* only is used, to call attention by typical teaching to the *making it*.”

Is this correct? No doubt the day of atonement is exceedingly important for the doctrine of atonement: one could not dispute that. But is it the fact that we may limit ourselves to the sixteenth of Leviticus in order to see what is involved in making it? And what is the force and value of the fact that the noun is not found in the chapter, but only the verb?

First, as to the word “atonement:” the noun is found but eight times in the Old Testament. Three times we have the expression, “sin-offering for atonement” (Ex. xxix. 36; xxx. 10; Num. xxix. 11). Once we have “the ram of atonement” (Num. v. 8). Once, “the atonement-

money" (Ex. xxx. 16). And in the remaining three occurrences (Lev. xxiii. 27, 28; xxv. 9) the application is to the "*day* of atonement" itself!

It is surely remarkable enough, if the omission of the noun in chap. xvi. has the significance said to attach to it, that three out of the eight occurrences should actually be found to apply to the day of atonement!

If I understand the argument aright, "atonement" as a noun (*kippurim*) being used, would direct our attention to what in itself atonement is, the use of the verb to that which makes it. What, then, about the "*day* of atonement"? Would not that direct our attention to what atonement is, as much as the sin-offering, or the ram, or the money of atonement?

On the other hand, in all the detail of the offerings in the first seven chapters of Leviticus we have equally no use of the *noun* "atonement," while the *verb* occurs no less than thirteen times! How, then, does the argument apply here?

And must we not in fact go to those earlier chapters in order to know the meaning of the day of atonement itself? What are sin-offering and burnt-offering here without the previous detailed explanation? Are these not the very means by which atonement is *made*?

Coming now to the making of atonement, it is further said—

"Now, to do that, four things were absolutely necessary. 1. An offering must be found which God could accept (Lev. xvi. 6); and that offering must die, because it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul (Lev. xvii. 11). 2. A substitute must be found to which the sins of the guilty should be transferred, and by it carried away into the land of forgetfulness. This was foreshadowed by the scape-goat (Lev. xvi. 10). 3. Blood of the sin-offering must be presented inside the veil, by sprinkling it on and before the mercy-seat,—an act done by the high-priest, and by him only, and when alone with God (Lev. xvi. 14–16; Heb. ix. 7). And 4. Divine judgment must be endured by the victim, typified by the consuming of the burnt-offering, and the appointed parts of the sin-offering on the brazen altar (Lev. xvi. 24, 25). These are essential elements of atonement, without which it could not be made."

Again, I am compelled to make serious objections to this. If we are to take the day of atonement as our pattern, why should the work at the altar before the Lord be omitted (*vv.* 18, 19)? Five essential elements may be thus reckoned instead of four; and with better reason.

A more serious objection still with regard to our present subject is, that for the priestly house, as is well known, *there was no scape goat*. For them, not a goat but a bullock was offered, and one bullock only. Was complete atonement made for them? None surely can doubt that. Yet one of the four elements deemed essential is not found in it!

And this touches nearly some common thoughts about propitiation and substitution. There is no doubt that for the priests these two are found together in the *one* bullock of the sin-offering. The blood of propitiation is in this case the blood of the substitute; or to which of the goats, the Lord's lot or the people's lot, does this bullock answer?

And this shows that what is essential in atonement may be implicitly contained in what explicitly does not teach it. Thus, Job's burnt-offering could be accepted for sin; and blood could ordinarily make atonement at the altar (*Lev.* xvii. 11), which on the day of atonement was carried within the vail. The priests' bullock *went beyond* the two goats in reality, as the bullock was in typical meaning beyond the goat; while what was *expanded* indeed in the latter was yet contained in the former.

As a fact, was there *no* atonement made in Israel except upon the day of atonement? Yet if the objection be rightly made, this must have been the case.

And again, is it not dangerous to take for truth our interpretation of a type, rather than the plain teaching of the New Testament? Would so important a matter as what constitutes atonement (or propitiation either) be left for the shadows of the law to unvail? But to go on with the objections:—

“So far, then, we can all see what were essential elements of atonement—the death of the victim; substitution both in sin-bearing and bearing divine judgment; and the dealing with the blood inside the veil by the high-priest. In the making atonement, then, substitution, as this chapter shows, was an essential element, as well as the high-priest’s work inside the sanctuary. Had either been omitted, atonement would not have been effected. Now, were these two services the same? Clearly not. Wherein did they differ? In the scape-goat, or in the service at the brazen altar (Lev. xvi. 24), we see typified One who was a substitute *for* others. In the picturing the blood on the mercy-seat, nothing of that was delineated, though it was the blood of the substitute which the high-priest presented to God.”

Why “substitution *both* in sin-bearing and bearing divine judgment”? How can you separate between these? Was not sin-bearing really wrath-bearing? Or, if you speak of the scape-goat, were not the sins borne away by the very fact of the victim’s death for them? Why make differences in the work itself of what were only different *aspects* of the work? It is just this modeling of the truth by the type instead of interpreting the type by the truth, which has made propitiation a different work from substitution, whereas the one is but the Godward side of that of which the other is the manward.

But the type itself refuses this by the fact that for the priestly family (which represents the Church) there was *no* scape-goat. Yet the truth conveyed in it is ours surely (Heb. x. 17).

The service at the brazen altar (*v.* 24) is, then, classed with the scape-goat as substitution, and not propitiation! Necessitated as it is by the argument, it is indeed remarkable that it should not be seen how completely the argument is broken down by it. For the burnt-offering, although for man indeed, and substitutionary as every sacrifice was, *went up directly to God*, the whole of it, as a sweet savor! It was thus expressly denominated the *olah*, “that which ascends,” as it is also said, “to make atonement for” the offerer, and to be “for his acceptance.” (*v.* 3; see *R. V.*) Yet this, which actually typifies all the preciousness of the work for God,—the glorifying of God

in it,—is simply substitution *in contrast* with propitiation! Does not this show how merely technical is the meaning given to “propitiation” in this reasoning?

It is settled otherwise that there is no propitiation but in the holiest; therefore, of course, the burnt-offering is not propitiation. Yet—if there is any meaning in words—*it propitiates!* But no: the burnt-offering is *but* substitution, the sin-offering glorifies God in “His holiness and righteousness” above the burnt-offering,—sweet savor though the latter is, in contrast to the former.

Let us look at things, not words merely, and the mists will surely disappear. The New Testament must interpret the Old, the antitype the type, and there is then no difficulty.

But again: in the blood on the mercy-seat “nothing of that”—substitution—“was delineated, *though* it was the blood of the substitute”! But if it was, how shall this thought be kept out? Notice that, according to this, the whole work below—sin-offering, burnt-offering, and all—was substitution. Yet in presenting it to God upon the mercy-seat, an element is somehow *found* in—for we must not say, “introduced into”—the work below, which all these types of it fail to present! It would indeed scarcely be too much to say that *one* work was done outside the holiest, and *another* work presented inside!

Or shall we say, the burnt-offering was substitution, the sin-offering was not? No, we may not that, for it has been acknowledged that the blood presented to God is the blood of a substitute. Does God, then, when it is presented to Him, not take notice of the substitution?

But to go on:—

“And a marked difference—which helps us greatly in the understanding the character of the service within the veil—was this, that the blood was carried in to God because of the *uncleannesses* of the people, as well as for their transgressions in all their sins; whereas over the scape-goat Aaron confessed their iniquities, and their transgressions in all their sins, but *not* their uncleannesses. Not only, therefore, was there a substitute required to bear in the sinner’s stead what he had

deserved, but the holiness and righteousness of God had also to be met by blood for the uncleanness as well as for the sins. Now, this last service is meant when we speak of making propitiation. An essential part of atonement it was, but not the whole of it, and markedly different from substitution. In this last the sinner's deserts and needs were portrayed. In the other, God's nature was first thought of and cared for."

Here, then, we are to find the meaning of propitiation. "The blood on the mercy-seat met the uncleanness of the people, *as well as*"—mark—"their transgressions in all their sins." Notice, then, this latter first. The blood did meet their "*sins*." Yes: "He is the propitiation for our *sins*."

But this last is the effect of *substitution*, is it not? The confession of the sins over the scape-goat is said to mark the substitutionary character. Why not here, then, in the holiest of all? The *addition of something else* cannot take away this, at least. Addition is not here subtraction—like adding the law to grace; for there is here at least no essential contradiction.

Propitiation is, then, (so far, at any rate,) by substitution. The blood on the mercy-seat, whatever else it is, is surely—admittedly—the sign of an *accomplished* substitutionary work. And it is not according to Scripture to say that "nothing of that was delineated" in it.

But the uncleanness of the people—the meeting that—is the peculiar feature of propitiation. Strange, then, that in the New Testament we find nothing of this! "He is the propitiation for our sins." Precisely that which we are told is *not* the distinctive feature of propitiation is the very thing and the *only* thing which the New Testament insists on! Will not our brethren now awake to the unscripturalness of all this? What is stated to be the peculiarity of propitiation is absolutely not found in the New-Testament use of it at all. And what *is* found is exactly that which it is attempted to distinguish from it!

Yet we are getting now upon the track in which we shall find, not indeed what propitiation is in the abstract

idea of it, but what this propitiation in the holiest of all implies. It is expressly said to be an atonement *for the holy place* (vv. 11, 17, 20, 23). *That* is its peculiarity; and that is the reason why "*uncleanness*" are spoken of as well as "sins." "He shall make an atonement for the holy place because of the *uncleanness* of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins; and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation (tent of meeting) that remaineth among them *in the midst of their uncleanness.*"

What is "uncleanness" in this connection? Is it not *tendency to defile* the holy dwelling-place of Jehovah among them? What would defile it? *Any thing else than sin?* Are not their sins just in another aspect their uncleannesses? What else?

You may say, perhaps, there were ceremonial uncleannesses, as in the fifteenth chapter, which were not sins. True; but you will hardly say that the great peculiarity of the work in the holiest was to provide for these. To say so would be to remove the whole matter from having any significance for us, such as is contended for, at least; and we need not wonder if the New Testament does not even notice it.

But the "purification of the heavenly things" the epistle to the Hebrews does notice (chap. ix. 23), and I have elsewhere referred to it. It need scarcely be taken up again.

Now, if the blood on the mercy-seat be for uncleanness and sins, even if these should be considered different, how is "God's nature" more in question by the first than by the last? If you conceive of difference, would not even the reverse of this be true? And is not God's nature vindicated and glorified by the burnt-offering or the peace-offering, or the sin-offering whose blood never came into the holiest of all? Did the fire of the burnt- or sin-offering not vindicate God's nature? How can it be that the blood itself—the very same blood—did not

vindicate God when outside the sanctuary, and *did* as soon as it was brought in?

No, it was the blood itself—the work implied in it—which glorified God, and made propitiation, and the bringing in once a year maintained (for Israel) God's holiness in dwelling among them; for us, throws open the glorious sanctuary in the heavens.

Now, as to propitiation in the New Testament, we need not go into so much detail. The objections made have been mostly met. The breadth of substitution and propitiation has been more than once examined. Substitution is not for the world as such, true; and propitiation is "*through faith*" only for it (Rom. iii. 25). There is no difference here; and none, therefore, can show a difference.

As to the Septuagint, it is not at all a question between verb and noun, which could not make any essential difference of meaning. Indeed, the noun is more variously rendered than the verb, and so more loosely. But it is true that the Septuagint uses *exilaskomai* and *exilasmos*, while the New Testament in both cases omits the *ex*. The force of *ex* here being merely intensive, and the words given in the lexicon with precisely the same meaning, I did not apprehend any difference which could affect the argument; nor do I. As for Gen. xxxii. 20, the passage seems to speak for itself. Translate it literally all through, allowing the correction, it will be: "I will cover his face with the present going before, and afterward I will *see his face*. Peradventure he will accept my face." It will surely be seen that there cannot be here the idea of hiding from his sight, and that "his face" may, as in other places it does, stand for "him."

A more serious question is, whether God can be said to be "propitiated" or "appeased." With Luke xviii. 13 before us, in which the Lord Himself puts into the lips of the publican what is literally "God be propitiated (*hilastheti*) toward me, a sinner," it seems strange that we

should be bidden to "remember that God is *never* said in Scripture to be propitiated or appeased." The verb only occurs once beside (Heb. ii. 17), so that it is not so strange that the expression should occur but once. Can it be supposed that the Lord puts a wrong thought into the mouth of one who is in designed favorable contrast with the Pharisee of the same story?

And what, then, *is* propitiation? and to whom is the propitiation offered? God is not said to be *reconciled* in Scripture, true: for He never was man's enemy; but was there not righteous and necessary wrath to be appeased?

As to propitiation being made outside the sanctuary, it needs to be shown that it cannot. And it is not contended that it could be completed without blood. But that God was really *thus far* propitiated when the wrath-cloud passed from the cross, has not been met, nor can be. Death surely had still to be endured, and that I have always said. But if propitiation had any meaning that we can recognize, it was *accomplishing*, not accomplished, before the Lord's actual death. If you say, No, the blood must be shed, your type-teaching will lead you farther than you wish; for you will have to say that the work was not completed till *after* death, and that there was no blood of atonement until the soldier's spear had brought it forth.

We want *things*, not words merely: all these truths are the deepest realities for the soul. What does propitiation mean? what is its power? tell me. If it is not appealal, what is it? for I want to know. If it is wrath removed,—if it is death borne by Another—precious and efficacious before God, then we shall surely soon agree about it.

Now for the question of the priesthood: "We learn that the priests were consecrated in connection with death, and as that having previously taken place—for the ram of consecration had to be killed for Aaronic priests to be consecrated to their office" (Lev. viii. 22, 23). True; but the previous anointing of the high-priest *alone*

without blood (v. 12), has that no meaning? The high-priest, when associated with the priests, was a sinful man like them, and even on the day of atonement offered for his own sins. Alone, and simply the type of Christ, he is anointed with the oil without blood.

"We learn, too, that in their sacrificial service they normally had nothing to do till the victim had been slain." One of two exceptions to this is found, strange to say, in the very place to which we have been directed to look to see how atonement was made! It is "the case of *the high-priest on the day of atonement*, who in the capacity of offerer, it would seem, killed the victims." No remark is made upon this, and I shall make none. But the trouble is all through that it is the type teaching (or supposed to be teaching) the truth, not the truth making plain the type.

What about the work at the altar? That must be confessed priestly. Does it typify what took place in heaven, or on earth? Will the former be contended for, because it was after the death of the victim? Surely not. But then the argument is gone, or rather it is *on the opposite side*; for the priest is then typically a *priest on earth*. Let us go on.

"Further, we learn that propitiation was made by the high-priest alone, and that in the holy of holies, *not at the altar*."

According to the type, which is the first view, *where* do we learn this? As we have seen, the word "propitiation" is not found, except we take the Septuagint, and then it is found where, according to this view, it should not be! How, then, is this propitiation exclusively in the holy place to be made out?

But the Lord, it is said, was "perfected through sufferings," and some would render this "consecrated." In the first place, it has the undoubted meaning of "perfected," and the apostle is speaking directly of the Captain of salvation, *not* the Priest: "to make the *Captain of their salvation* perfect through sufferings."

We have no need, then, to "limit these" to sufferings short of death; and His entrance upon His *Melchisedek* priesthood was actually after this, as I believe, and have said elsewhere. What has been said before as to Heb. viii. 4 is simply not noticed. Should it not be? There is, I believe, no thought of "getting over" it at all; and the argument should be met.

The paper which I am reviewing was printed before my last one on "Priesthood," and naturally fails to answer what is there said. But it is strange to read—

"Now bring in His death between the commencement of His priesthood and His present exercise of it, and He ceases to be Priest after the order of Melchisedek."

If it had been stated that the Lord had been *all through Melchisedek* Priest, this would perhaps be true. I say "perhaps," for I read, "having neither *beginning of days* nor end of life, abideth a Priest continually." Now, if this apply to His human life simply, it *had* "beginning of days;" if to His divine nature, *that* had no "end of life." Any way, it does not affect the position which I believe to be the scriptural one.

But now, how, if death could *interrupt* His priesthood, could it possibly *begin* in death,—the view contended for against me? The argument that would affect the one side must surely equally affect the other. How strange to begin in death a priesthood taking character from an uninterrupted life!

Lastly, it is quite true that, as ministering *in the sanctuary*, the Lord would not be a priest on earth, and that there are only two sanctuaries,—the earthly and the heavenly. The service in the heavenly sanctuary begins only after resurrection.*

*I have no need of the argument as to the cross not being on earth, although I had used it on a former occasion. Longer thought and deeper exercise in relation to this subject has led me to a different judgment on some points to that expressed in the letter I speak of. But I do not on that account accept the argument from Dent. xxi. as to one hanging on a tree. The question cannot be so settled. The cross was not merely a malefactor's death. But I have raised no question of this in the preceding papers, as I am assured a broader ground must be taken as to the Lord's priesthood.

So far from this view "bristling with difficulties," then, it is alone, as it seems to me, free from the difficulties which beset all others. Let brethren judge. The Word is open to all; the Spirit, blessed be God, given to us all.

JOSEPH.

A WELL-KNOWN type of Christ.

Take, for example, Jno. iv 6. Why is it mentioned, "Now Jacob's well was there"? Surely to arrest our attention in some special way, and Gen. xlix. 22 discovers the secret. Joseph, we read, is a fruitful bough *by a well*, whose branches run over the wall.

In this wearied Man, therefore, who in that noontide heat sat by the well of Sychar, we see the true Joseph; and even while we gaze upon Him we behold His branches running over the wall of Judaism, and reaching, with their goodly fruit, this poor woman of Samaria. And if not actually, yet morally (for this characterizes this gospel), the archers had sorely grieved Him, and shot at Him, and hated Him; but His bow abode in strength, etc., as is shown by the deliverance He wrought that day for this poor captive of Satan.

We cannot help recalling that name given by Pharaoh to father Jacob's best beloved son—"Zaphnath-Paaneah" (Gen. xli. 45). None can say positively whether it is a Hebrew or an Egyptian name, but strangely enough (and probably there was a divine overruling in the choice of the name, however little conscious Pharaoh might be), in the one tongue it signifies "The Revealer of Secrets," in the other it means "The Saviour of the World."

To the woman, He was indeed "the Revealer;" it was as though He had told her all things that she had done. To the Samaritans, He was "the Saviour of the world;" *from among* the Jews indeed, as He had said, but, like that "fruitful vine by a wall," of which Jacob spoke,

“whose branches run over the wall,” He had brought life and blessing and joy for them, for it was not possible that His love could be restrained by any Jewish limitations.

(Selected.)

E. F. B.

FOLLOWING FULLY.

I WOULD follow Jesus
Wholly in the way;
Doing all He pleases,—
Loving to obey;
At His feet be sitting,
Resting on His Word,
Daily lessons learning
Of my risen Lord.

Learning in the desert
Lessons of His grace,—
Catching, through the portals,
Glimpses of His face,
Shining from the glory
Of my home above,
Shedding sunshine o'er me,
Telling of His love.

Knowing Jesus only,
Setting man aside,
Taking Him who's worthy
As my only Guide;
Resting 'neath His shadow,
Where no earth-mists come,
On His arm be leaning
Till I reach my home.

Gently to the haven
Nearing day by day,
Walking with my Saviour
In the narrow way;
I would follow Jesus
Wholly in the way,
Doing what He pleases,
Loving to obey.

(Anon.)

“RESURRECTION-LIFE:” WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

THE subject of “life” is one which needs much care in its consideration, and this on various accounts. No one can define life, even natural life. The acutest minds have either declared the impossibility of it, or done what they could to demonstrate this by their own failure. Its admitted different applications increase the difficulty. And when to this is added the use of terms hardly accurate, and at least not well understood by those who use them, it will be perceived that the need of care is abundantly evident.

I propose now only a very brief inquiry into the meaning of terms which are not, indeed, found in Scripture at

all, but which are in frequent use among many students of Scripture, to express truth which I have no doubt it teaches, and truth which is important also, though it may be, and is, in fact, strange to many Christians. Naturally, our first endeavor will be to understand the statements of the Word itself, and then we shall have the truth which these terms are intended to express, and thus ability to see what, if they are rightly to be used, must be conveyed by them, and to guard against confusion and abuse.

The first scriptural statement is "that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (1 Jno. v. 11). It is the "divine nature" of the child of God, by virtue of which he is that: a real communication to the soul, "that which is born of the Spirit" being "spirit" (Jno. iii. 6) as that which is born of the flesh is flesh.

But this new birth is also spoken of as quickening from the dead (Eph. ii. 5), and a *quickenings together with Christ*. Thus our life is connected, in its beginning, with Christ being quickened from the dead. Our quickening is identified with His, plainly because our life is in Him, and that He is the "last Adam"—head of the new race of men.

The Lord's words unite with this: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he who liveth and believeth on Me shall *never die*" (Jno. xi. 25, 26). It is plain that the Lord lays stress here not upon His being the life only, but the resurrection also, and that the resurrection is a present power for the life. So He says, not life and in due time resurrection, but resurrection and so life. And to this agrees the distinction made between the present and the past. He who had believed and died should live again; the power of death should yet be broken for him. In the present time, Christ having come as resurrection, there was no death for the believer on Him to meet: "he that *liveth* and believeth on Me shall *never die*." The life he gives is thus *resurrection-life*, the power of death left broken behind it.

Again, in the twelfth chapter He says, “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” Here life for us springs out of the Lord’s death: we are the fruit in resurrection, quickened with Him.

The scriptural basis of the term “resurrection-life” is evident, then.

But here is the difficulty. If the life we receive is *divine* life—life that was in Him before ever He came upon earth, or took up *human* life at all,—how could this divine life be *resurrection*-life as well? It surely was not *divine* life that the Lord gave up on the cross, but His human life. It was this also He took up again in resurrection. *Eternal* life could know no interruption, nor the divine nature die. How, then, do we receive *resurrection*-life?

Confusion is in the minds of many upon this point; and it has led, I doubt not, to the mistake that some are making as to the Old-Testament saints not possessing eternal life. Does not eternal life begin for us with Christ’s quickening from the dead? Is it not resurrection-life? How, then, could the Old-Testament saints possess it? Then if it be *resurrection*-life, how can you distinguish it from the *human* life of “the Man Christ Jesus”? And then, still more plainly, is not a communication of life to those living before impossible?

We have only to make some plain distinctions, and the confusion will begin to clear. In the first place, *eternal* life in its very nature admits of no cessation or interruption; neither death nor resurrection can be strictly predicated of it. Nay, the life strictly eternal—that is, divine life—knows no *beginning* any more than end. It begins *for us*, of course; *we* are brought, one after another, into the participation of it. The life in itself never began, and that is the sense in which it is called “eternal life.”

It was, of course, His human life that the Lord laid down, and which He took again in a new condition. In

this He was alone; it is not this which He has communicated to us, although by and by we shall be in the image of the heavenly, our bodies change into the likeness of His glorious body (Phil. iii. 21). "We shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 Jno. iii. 2). This involves no communication to us of His human life, or reception of His heavenly humanity,—a thing which ritualism dreams of being effected by sacraments, and to which some who are by no means ritualists seem to be getting back. His own *resurrection*-life we have not received.

The life communicated to us is *eternal* life, and this from the "last Adam" who "is a quickening spirit" (1 Cor. xv. 45). But by it we are children of *God*. It is never said "of Christ," but of the *Father*, and thus distinctly it is intimated what is the nature of the life received. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

But *how*, then, is it *resurrection*-life?

Only in this way, that, as communicated to us now by One who has been in death, and come up for us out of it, the virtue of this is connected with the reception of life. If He was "raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25), we, with the life received, have "*justification* of life" (chap. v. 18). We are not only children of God; we have an acknowledged right to the *place* of children. We have the "adoption," the sons' position, and so can have the "*Spirit* of adoption." These are the immense and special privileges of believers of the present day.

It is not that the life is higher or other than that which those born of God have possessed from the beginning: What can be higher than divine life? "Except any one be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" and *if* born again, "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." It must be either denied that Old-Testament saints were born again, or acknowledged that they had the divine "spirit"-nature, which is "eternal life."

It has been asked, "How, then, could the Lord say, 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die,

it abideth alone,' if in fact there were already multitudes of those who had received this life?" To this it seems easy to answer that He could have said as well, "Except the Son of Man be lifted up, no man can be saved," while yet myriads had been saved before He said it. But only *through* His being lifted up, though it might be many generations before it. The stream of blessing flows backward as well as forward from the cross; and that is all such texts as this insist on.

And we are "quickened together with Christ," not because we are quickened with the life which He took back again from the dead, but because His death (which resurrection demonstrates as accepted for us) is that out of which alone comes to us this unspeakable blessing of a life by which we pass from under judgment into the place and relationship of children with the Father—sons of the living God.

"IN MY NAME."

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you" (Jno. xvi. 23).

WHAT liberty is given here, my brethren! "Whatever"! Were it alone, it would be boundless, and the Lord would thus have opened the door to all the desires of unbroken wills among His people. But He adds, "in My name." This is His limit—the barrier He sets up.

If we apply to God for any thing in the name of Christ—and He will accept no other,—it must needs be in keeping with what Christ is. It is as if Christ Himself were asking it of His Father. He does not want us to make Him the messenger, as if we had not the liberty to approach. We have the same blessed liberty which He has, for grace has made us sons, and we are loved of the Father with the same love wherewith He is loved.

He wants us to realize that holy liberty, and go ourselves with our request straight to the Father *in His name*,—that is, as if it were Himself presenting it—He who is always heard, because He always does what is pleasing to the Father. How could Christ present any request to His Father in any thing inconsistent with His own character and ways which were ever within the circle of the Father's will? To pray in His name, then, involves our presenting to God only that which Christ could and would present. It calls for a real setting aside of our own wills, and for moving only within the circle of God's will, where Christ always was and is. Setting up our own plans, then making use of Christ's name with God, as if He were pledged by it to obey us, is an awful mistake, which He will rebuke to our shame.

But oh, for more of that lowly, broken spirit which finds its home in the Father's will, its delight in Christ's interests here, and which, burdened with that, knows how to plead with God, and never give up! And though He tarry long, victory is as sure as His throne. "Scripture cannot be broken," and He has said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, *He will give it you.*"

But, alas! how much more earnest we are apt to be when our will is at work than when it has been surrendered! How much more earnestly men will work in a business of their own than in the employ and interests of others! It but reveals that in us (that is, in our flesh,) dwells no good thing. Yet, though we be only servants as regards our service here, and, as such, owe absolute obedience to our Lord and Master, and should perform our service as pleasing Him and not ourselves, are we not sons too? are we not going to be sharers of His glory, and partakers of every fruit of His obedience and of ours? Does He not call us "*friends*"? Does He not mingle with us? And while we call Him "Master and Lord," and rightly so, is He not even our constant Servant? Surely, surely! Let

us, then, take courage. Let us lay hold of His business, carry it in our hearts, make it our own, plead with God about it according to the measure He has given. If Christ be our object, let us ask of God—ask *much*—and we will receive much, and our joy will be full here, and our reward great there.

P. J. L.

"THE GOSPEL OF THE GLORY."

(2 Cor. iv. 4.)

THE words which are in our common version, "the glorious gospel of Christ," should be rather (as now in the revised) "the gospel of the glory of Christ." This is not only the literal translation, but also the one required by the context, whether we glance back at "the glory of the Lord" in chap. iii. 18, or forward to "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," in the verse but one following. In either case, it is the Lord Himself in glory, risen from the dead, and at the right hand of God, that is spoken of. It is His glory there as man, although much more than man, and even as man the "image of God," which is "gospel"—that is to say, "good news"—to fallen man.

To Paul himself, let us remember, the first revelation of the truth had been the revelation of Christ in glory. With a brightness which eclipsed the glory of the noon-day sun, it had shone down upon the persecutor, lighting up the depths of his soul, and bringing him face to face with One upon the throne of heaven whom he knew not,—face to face with *himself*, whom he never yet had really known. What a meeting! What a discovery! The Lord, *his* Lord, Lord of heaven and earth, unknown up to that moment; he in that moment stricken from the heights of Phariseeism into a deeper "ditch" than Job's, but now "touching the righteousness which is of the law, blameless," a Pharisee of the Pharisees, and now sinner among sinners—the very chief of sinners!

What effected this mighty change? Just what will do it equally for you, reader, or for any one in his position,—*one moment's sight of the GLORY OF THE LORD.* You may have heard abundantly before: so had Job,—“I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear;” how different when he could say, “but now mine eye seeth Thee”! Then alone it is, “Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” Aye, no flesh can glory in *His* presence, whether revealed in vision as to Paul, or simply by the entrance of the Word in the power of the Spirit bringing divine light into the inner man of the heart. If one might have whereof to glory, yet “*not before God.*” The true test of whether a soul has been before God is here.

And let it be noted well, the hinge of the controversy between God and man is now the God-man in the glory. Why there? It is where He belongs, you say. True; He had left that which He had with the Father before the world was, to be in the world the Minister of Christ to it. All power in His hand to turn back into paradise again the ruin man had caused on earth. The sick healed, the deaf hearing, the dumb tongue loosed to sing, the lame whole, the devil's captives with a word delivered, the dead with one mighty word raised up,—He is attested by all this the Son of Man with power on earth to forgive sins,—to reach down to the very bottom of man's condition, and set all upon a new footing of grace and blessing before God. He was in the world, by whom the world was made, by whom the world could be again restored: what was the issue? The death of agony; the cross of shame; and so out of the rich man's tomb, not to be holden of death, up to the place from which He had descended.

What, then, of the world? “O righteous Father, *the world hath not known Thee*” (Jno. xvii. 25). That is still its characteristic. He that has known Christ has known the Father. He who owns Christ passes by this out of

the world; the world is crucified to him, and he unto the world. "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father; he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also." Yea, "whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God" (1 Jno. ii. 23; iv. 15). Once more: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. x. 9). Surely there is "good news" in a glory which, when revealed to the soul, is the salvation of him to whom it is revealed!

But let us not mistake the matter: there is an essential difference between receiving a tradition, or accepting a belief in which one has been educated, and the inshining of the light of which the apostle speaks,—just as much difference as between beholding the sun shine, and accepting, like a blind man, the warrant of others as to it.

Have *you* ever beheld His glory, beloved reader? Have *you* "believed with the heart unto righteousness"? Is there heart-interest in the matter with you at all? Have you ever confessed Jesus Lord? Does your soul own Him as its Lord indeed? It is a question of life and death; for "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, *thou shalt be saved.*"

But what direct "good news" does "the glory of Christ" bring?

What would it be to you if, in the pinch of poverty and famine, you suddenly heard of the exaltation of one whom you had known, and well known—a companion, a friend, an intimate—to the throne of the land? Need I ask?

Just such a friend—aye, a friend of *sinners*—has been Jesus. None such ever trod this earth beside. When He says, "All power is given unto *Me* in heaven and in earth," is there no good news there? Ah, the more power His, the more help mine. I am rich if He is,—at least, if

He be the same Lord Jesus that was once the Man of sorrows for us here.

But that is not all. Suppose the friend I just now spoke of had taken for me the burden of my sins upon himself; suppose I had actually seen him sign the bond and assume the responsibility of them all. Multiply all that a thousandfold. Let it be *sin*, not *debt*. Let the cross be the place of the assumption of my responsibility,—the death he died, my actual penalty. This is the simple, literal fact for the believer. What, then, to him the resurrection, ascension, and glory of the Son of God in the heavens?

The glory of Christ—of a *Man*: "the Man Christ Jesus." Manhood in Him, not drawn merely out of the slough of degradation and damnation of sin, but taken up to God and glorified with the glory which He had before all worlds!

Not only, then, is condemnation gone, penalty endured, justice satisfied; there is infinitely more,—a positive and not a negative blessing only. For as *man* He is gone up; as man He is in glory. He has conquered and won for man; for man earned and deserved; for man acquired and possessed. "The glory which Thou hast given Me I have given them."

Moreover, it is "the glory of Christ, who is the *image of God*."

That completes the blessedness.

He is "the image of the invisible God." If "no man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (Jno. i. 18). We are not left to ask, with Philip, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." The Father is not one God and He another: He and the Father are One.

Nor are His attributes divided; as if justice were the Father's, love the Son's; as if the Father merely received what the Son offered; as if the cross of the Son were but a shield from the wrath of the Father. No; God loved

and gave,—“so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jno. iii. 16).

If God gave Him up to die, He raised Him also from the dead,—took the side of those for whom He suffered, whether He gave Him up for them in love, or took Him up for them from the dead in righteousness. Thus His righteousness is on our side as well as His love, and whether I look up to Him who is on the throne of glory, or remember Him in His unparalleled humiliation upon earth, it is *God* I see in the man,—God-man as He must be, for who but God could thus show forth God?

All this the “gospel of the glory of Christ” preaches to me—to all who believe in Him. How is it it has been so much forgotten? May no reader of this be blinded by the god of this world, so that the light of it should not shine in upon his soul.

WALKING WORTHY.

MY attention has been drawn to the use of “*walking worthy.*” In *Ephesians*, we see clearly its connection with the force and character of the epistle. This treats of the Christian and then of the Church’s privileges; and the saint is to “walk worthy of his vocation” here, especially in Church-place, and the worthiness to be of that.

In *Colossians*, where the glory of the person of Christ is brought out, as they were slipping away from the Head—I do not say His headship, but the glory of Him who is Head—they are to “walk worthy of the Lord.” It is in this part that God and Father, the Lord, and the Spirit are brought out.

In the *Thessalonians*, who, from being heathens, had been brought to know the one true God, the Father, “The assembly of the Thessalonians, which is in *God the*

Father," having not intermediate, and indeed demon powers, but being in direct immediate relationship with the one true God, they are called to "walk worthy of God who has called us to His own kingdom and glory;" so they were "turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God."

Philippians, in which we have the experimental condition of the Christian, and the gospel is spoken of as in conflict in the world (Paul being in *bonds* for it), they were to "walk worthy of the gospel." So Paul was "set for the *confirmation* and *defense* of the gospel,"—he speaks of the "*beginning* of the gospel,"—Timothy had served with him "*for* the gospel,"—the woman had "contended with him *in* the gospel,"—Paul was set "*for* the *defense* of the gospel,"—they had fellowship "*in* the *furtherance* of the gospel." So it will be seen that when they are called to walk worthy of it, conflict is also spoken of, for which a right walk was needed, but they were not to be terrified by their adversaries.

The true gospel was as a cause, as a person in conflict in the world; they who stood by it as one they contended along with, were to walk worthy of it. They were "striving together with the faith of the gospel," *contending along* with the faith of the gospel in the world—not "*for*" the faith, but "*with*" it, as an associate with it in its conflicts.

There is thus in the *three* "walkings worthy," I think, a practical difference, though essentially the same. In *Thesalonians*, it is the essential measure and its nature—"worthy of God," imitators of God as dear children, "who has called us to His own kingdom and glory." Then the manifestation of what this is in a divinely perfect expression of it in Christ—"worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." In Eph. iv., we have more our own present place in it by the Holy Ghost,—"*the vocation wherewith we are called*"—all our privileges and place being known to us through the Holy Ghost, sent down

when Christ was glorified,—the place we are in in connection with Him glorified now.

J. N. D.

HE LEADS US ON.

He leads us on
 By paths we did not know,—
 Upward He leads us, though our steps be slow;
 Though often we faint and falter on the way,—
 Though storms and darkness oft obscure the day,
 Yet when the clouds are gone,
 We know He leads us on.

He leads us on
 Through all the unquiet years,—
 Past all our dream-land hopes and doubts and fears
 He guides our steps. Through all the tangled maze
 Of sin, of sorrow, and o'er-clouded days,
 We know His will is done;
 And still He leads us on.

And He, at last,
 After the weary strife,—
 After the restless fever *men call life*,—
 After the dreariness, the aching pain,
 The wayward struggles which have proved in vain,—
 After our toils are past—
 Will give us rest at last.

(Anon.)

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Q. 6.—Do we have eternal life immediately “through His blood,” or “redemption” only?

Ans.—Life is the fundamental blessing for every one, and all spiritual life is eternal life. Justification is attached to this: it is “justification of life.” So with redemption. It is the possession of life that puts us among the people for whom atonement has been offered and accepted. The work done in us and the work done for us are thus inseparably connected.

Q. 7.—Did the Lord “take again” the life—“in the blood”—that was poured out on the cross?

Ans.—When He says, “I lay down My life that I may take it again,” it does not follow that it was life in the *same condition* as before, and indeed it was not. “The life of all flesh is in the blood” (Lev. xvii.) applies, of course, only to the natural life of man which he shares with the beast. But “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption” (1 Cor. xv. 50). Blood is the supply of the waste of the body, the means of change and repair—necessary only in this way. The Lord, in resurrection, speaks of Himself as having “flesh and bones” (Luke xxiv. 39), not “flesh and blood.” In a body no longer subject to waste and renewal, the presence of blood would seem to have no meaning.

Q. 8.—Did He bear His own blood into the holiest, or only enter Himself?

Ans.—He entered *by*, not *with* it (Heb. ix. 12). I suppose no one contends for the latter literally.

Q. 9.—Did He “give” (as “the Good Shepherd *giveth* His life for the sheep”) *eternal* life? or is eternal life through quickening?

Ans.—Eternal life could not be given up, or laid down, at all. It is not the life in the flesh, but the *divine nature*,—a thing totally distinct from what was laid down or taken again. I have dwelt on this in a separate place under the head of “Resurrection-life.”

Q. 10.—Is the “corn of wheat” (Jno. xii. 24) the “incorruptible seed”—“the Word” of 1 Pet. i. 23? and is it by this, through the Spirit, that “you hath He quickened”?

Ans.—The “Word” in 1 Pet. i. is stated (v. 25) to be that which is preached in the gospel. It is not Christ Himself, but the word of the gospel, and which God makes, by His Spirit, effectual to souls (1 Thess. i. 5). This is incorruptible seed in the soul that receives it. (Comp. 1 Jno. i. 9: “his seed remaineth in him.”)

Q. 11.—Is eternal life communicated otherwise than in being “born of the Word”? and is “in Him was life” true for us, except as the “Word made flesh,” and as “His own Son in the likeness of—flesh”?

Ans.—The first question has been already answered in the negative; but the capital letter to “Word” suggests that perhaps

Christ is meant here. It is never said that we are born of Christ, or of the Word in that sense, though He is indeed the "last Adam"—head of the new race of men. A paper on "New Creation," in the fourth volume of *Help and Food*, may help as to this.

The last question has been often discussed, and very seriously. Only *through* incarnation and atonement could life be ours, of course; but it was possessed by the saints of the Old Testament before the Lord had actually come. Otherwise they would not have been children of God at all. The paper on "Resurrection-life" may help also here; also "Life Abundantly," in vol. iii., printed as a separate tract.

Q. 12.—Does 1 Cor. v. teach that the *whole assembly* at Corinth was leavened? If so, with what sin was it leavened? Could those in fellowship there be leavened with a sin they had not committed, or with a doctrine they had not received? Would it be correct to say that the assembly was leavened and defiled with the sin of disobedience to the commands of the Lord, springing out of the original sin of the wicked person or false teacher?

Ans.—The assembly was certainly leavened: the apostle says so, in fact, when he bids them purge out the old leaven, that they might be a *new* lump. The lump, the whole mass, then, was leavened. It was not "new," since the "old" had corrupted it. "Ordinary leaven consisted of a lump of old dough in a high state of fermentation, which was inserted into a mass of dough prepared for baking." This is the key to the terms "old leaven" and "new lump."

Objection has been made from the words which the apostle concludes: "that ye may be a new lump *as ye are unleavened.*" But it is simple enough that he does not say, "as ye are *an unleavened lump,*" nor could he say it: for how would it be consistent to say, "purge out the old leaven that ye may be an unleavened lump, **AS YE ARE**"? Yet a "new lump" means a lump not characterized by what is old, and the *old* is the *leaven*. It is plain, then, that he never means to say they were an unleavened lump. Corporately, they were leavened; but in their individual status in the life which they had in Christ, they were as the loaves of the showbread which represented Israel before God—unleavened. He would have their corporate condition correspond to this.

No one beside, that we know, had committed the sin which the one among them had, but their going on with the offender was

guilty disregard for the glory of God, as if He could go on with that with which they went on. And this was worse, if possible, than the heady passion which leads into sin, cool passionless indifference to it. An individual and an assembly are here on similar ground, and it may help to compare them. In the individual case, it is true that "in many things we offend all;" and so self-deceived may we be, that even an apostle could say, "I know nothing by"—that is, "against"—"myself; yet am I not hereby justified, but He that judgeth me is the Lord." There was with him a conscience exercised, that he might be alway void of offense toward God and toward man; and yet there might be undetected evil: he could pray still, "Cleanse Thou me from secret faults."

Here, however, there was no *leaven*. Communication with God could be maintained, as is evident. Now, if the conscience were not exercised, even though there were no known sin, would it be the same in this respect? Surely not. Indifference to sin, is it not already sin? and can a conscience be void of offense without the exercise which the apostle believed necessary to maintain it? It was here that Israel sinned in the case of Achan. They did not know of what was in their midst, but they were held responsible nevertheless. Had they been with God, they would have known.

How much more, then, when there is known sin to be judged, and it is not judged? The assembly and the individual are on the same footing here, just because sin is the same abominable thing with God, and His attitude toward it, wherever it may be, the same. People inquire for the warrant for judging *assemblies*: do they need, or will they ask for, warrant for judging *SIN*? If a man has identified himself with evil, so that he cannot be separated from it, we must at all costs separate from the *sin*, therefore from him who persists in it. Just so with an assembly, or any number of assemblies: we must separate from *sin*. But they say, We will not separate from the evil, and you must not separate from us who shelter it!

Power to judge assemblies! let them speak rather of *responsibility* to "judge them that are within." Is sin less sin when an assembly shelters it? Of course, we must show patience, and separation is only the last resort; but the principles are not different with regard to the individual or the assembly. "The knowledge of the Holy is understanding."

"THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."

6. THE PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM: SEED-SOWING AND ITS RESULTS.

WE have now seen what the kingdom is, and learned the general principles by which to interpret that parabolic teaching in which the Lord was pleased to convey to us most of the instruction which we have concerning it. Of these there are first to be considered the seven parables of the thirteenth chapter, in which we have its prophetic history from its commencement in the seed sown by the Lord Himself, until the mystery-form is ended by His appearing in the heavens. It is plain that this alone will close it, as it is that this is what is contemplated in the parables themselves; but we shall have to look at it fully at another time in answering some objections which have been raised to what I believe the true interpretation of the last parable.

In the twelfth chapter, the Lord, in announcing His death and resurrection, has declared the rejection of Israel. No sign further should be given them but the sign of Jonah the prophet; for as Jonah had been three days and nights in the whale's belly, so the Son of Man would be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. And thereupon He shows what would be the result to that wicked generation which had rejected Him (chap. xii. 41-45). His new relationships would be with the doers of His Father's will, and with these alone (*vv.* 46-50). This manifestly would exclude the nation of Israel in their unbelief, while it would bring in any and every believing Gentile. Judaism, with its narrow restrictions, was therefore gone.

A significant action on the Lord's part introduces the parables of the thirteenth chapter. He leaves the house, to sit by the seaside. Let any one compare the picture of the woman that "sitteth upon many waters" in Rev. xvii. 1, and he will find the meaning of this. The angel interprets it for us in that chapter: "The waters where the whore sitteth are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues" (*v.* 15). So here the Lord is leaving the house, the place of recognized natural relationship, to take His place, as it were, in the highway of the commerce of the world, which the sea is. And there, to the multitude upon the shore, He begins His parable with "Behold, a sower went forth to sow."

But Israel had been His vineyard, long ago planted, fenced, and cared for, according to His own words at another time (chap. xxi. 33). From it He had looked for fruit, not as a fresh field to sow it for harvest. From Israel He had to "go forth" elsewhere, with that "word of the kingdom" already by them rejected, to get fruit for Himself with it in the field of the world at large. For "the field is the world," as He Himself interprets to us,—not a chosen nation, but the whole earth.

We are at once, then, brought face to face with what has been going on during the whole of the history of Christendom. The results, as the Lord gives them here, are before our eyes.

The seed is "the word of the kingdom" (*v.* 19), the declaration of the authority and power of One rejected and crucified as "King of the Jews." Raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, He sits upon the Father's throne, all authority in heaven and earth being given unto

Him, who is exalted to be at the same time "a Prince and a Saviour." This is the seed He sows, and the sowing is always His, though He may use others as His instruments. The form the kingdom takes, therefore, is not as it will be yet—set up by almighty power, to which every thing must needs give way. It is offered for man's acceptance. It may be rejected. Faith is still to prepare the way of the Lord, and it is seen in result that "all men have *not* faith." In the kingdom predicted by the Old-Testament prophets, and yet to be upon the earth, a "rod of iron" will break down all opposition. Here, on the contrary, it shows itself at once in its three fundamental forms—as devil, flesh, and world. Three parts of the seed fail thus of fruit. Not only is there distinct and open rejection, but also men may receive the word outwardly, and thus become subjects of the kingdom, and yet be quite unfruitful and merely self-deceived. Thus in some of its general features the world of profession all around us is portrayed.

The first class represented here comes before us in the way-side hearer. In him the power of Satan is seen, though in such a manner as to leave the man himself fully responsible. It is solemn to read even of such an one, that the word was "sown in his *heart*" (v. 19). That does not imply conversion. He does not even "understand." But why? Because, as with the way-side, the ground on which it is sown is too hard-trodden for the seed to penetrate; and it lies exposed to the birds of heaven, tempting, as it were, the tempter to "catch it away." Of such souls there are many: pre-occupied with what hardens and deadens them to other influences—be it business, be it pleasure,—lawful

or lawless: it is the effect here that is noted, little matter how produced.

Still the word is "sown in the heart." Marvelous power of the Word of God, which, wherever it speaks, carries with it something of its divine authority. The "inner man of the heart" is reached, and made aware of that which brings with it its own evidence and claims. "By manifestation of the truth," says the apostle, "commending ourselves to *every* man's conscience *in the sight of God.*" Not every man will own how he winces under the truth. But he *does* wince. "Light" is there, consciously to the soul that turns away from it even, but turns away because conscious it is light, and loving darkness rather, the fit cover of evil deeds.

These moments of conviction, who that has ever listened to the Word can be a stranger to them? Nor does it follow that the Word is understood in any proper sense. It is felt as light, detecting the thoughts and intents of the heart; and the one who feels, and turns away from it because he feels it, falls thus under the devil's power. The impression made is soon removed. The seed sown is caught away. The poor dupe of Satan learns perhaps even to laugh at the momentary conviction, and to congratulate himself upon the wisdom of his present indifference.

In the next class of hearers, the stony ground illustrates the opposition of the flesh. And for this end it is pictured, not at its worst, but at its best. This man "heareth the word, and immediately with joy receiveth it; yet has he not root in himself." Here is not the natural man's rejection of the Word, but his reception of it; though there

s no more real fruit than in the first case. The seed has rapid growth, the rocky bed forming a sort of natural hot-bed for it, so that it springs up quickly with abundant promise. But the very thing which favors this ready development forbids continuance. The seed cannot root itself in the rock, and the sun withers it up.

It is easy to see what is wanting here, and that the picture is of the stony heart of unbelief, unchanged, denying the Word admittance, where seeming most to receive it. Many such cases there are—where the gospel is apparently at once and with joy received, but where the *immediate* joy is just the sign of surface-work, and of unreality at bottom. With such, the plowshare of conviction has never made way for the seed to penetrate. The work is mental and emotional only, not in the conscience. There has been no *repentance*,—no bringing down into the dust, in the consciousness of a lost, helpless, undone condition, which nothing but the blood and grace of Christ can meet. There has been no coming out of self—self-righteousness and self-sufficiency—to Him.

Thus there is no root in the man himself, Christ is not his real and grand necessity. So "when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." This is the religion of the flesh, of sentiment, of unreality, and this is its end. It lacks the sign and seal of a work truly divine—permanence. It "dureth for *awhile*." "I know that what *God* doeth, it shall be forever" (Eccles. iii. 14).

It should admonish every workman who goes forth with the precious seed of the Word of God, that there is such a hasty springing up of the

Word he carries, which (*in souls unexercised before*) is not to be caught at and rejoiced in, but just the contrary. An easy passage into joy and peace, without any deep conviction,—any real taking the place of a lost sinner before God. It is not that experiences are to be preached, or trusted in by souls, for peace. Christ alone is our peace, most surely. But we should nevertheless be admonished, that if Christ came "to seek and to save the lost" (and that is the gospel—"good news"—if any is), men must know that they *are* lost in order to receive this gospel-message. This is the Scripture truth and necessity of repentance; and this is its place: "Repent ye, and receive the gospel."

We come now to the third class of these hearers, to him "that received seed among the thorns." The Lord interprets for us what is figured here as the opposition of the *world*; "the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful."

It is a more solemn warning, perhaps, than either of the others. For the Word here seems to have deeper hold, and it is not the violent assault of persecution that overthrows this faith, but the quiet influence of things in one form or another about us all. No one of us but proves more or less how occupation with needful and lawful things tends to become a "care" that saps the life of all that is of God within us. *Soul-care* is not despised, but just crowded out. We all feel the tendency; and who does not remember cases such as this, of those in whom the seed of the Word apparently was springing up, and where, by no sudden assault or pressure of temptation, but just in the ordinary wear and tear of life, perhaps along with the un-

suspected influence of prosperity so called, like seed among thorns, the promise of fruit was choked?

But in all three cases, let us carefully mark that, however fair the appearance, there was, at the best, no "fruit." It was, in all, "faith," which, "having not work," was dead, being alone. It wrought nothing really for God in the souls of those that had it. It brought about no judgment of sin, no brokenness of heart, no turning to God: where these are, there is fruit and real faith, and eternal life. Such shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of His hand in whom they have believed.

Of the fourth class alone is it said, "He heareth the word and *understandeth it*." This is the character of him who "received seed into the *good ground*." And this man also "beareth fruit." The understanding of the Word is thus the great point here. And what puts us into a condition for understanding the gospel is just the understanding of ourselves. Our guilt, our impotence, our full need apprehended by the soul, opens the way to apprehend the fullness and blessedness of the gospel-message. If I am a sinner, and powerless by any effort of my own to get out of this place, how sweet and simple is it that Jesus died for sinners, and that through Him God "justifieth the ungodly." If I *can* do nothing, how that word, "to him that worketh not, but believeth," shines out to my soul! I understand it. It suits me. It is worthy of God. There is no *good ground*, prepared to receive the seed of the gospel, save that which has been thus broken up by the conviction, not of sin only, but of helplessness. "When we were without strength" came the "due time" in which "Christ died for the ungodly."

The lessons of this parable are plain enough. It teaches that the kingdom is not established by power, but by the reception of the Word, which in an adverse world is not only not universal, but often unreal where nominally it exists. It shows that the kingdom is not territorial,—that in its nature it is a kingdom of the truth, whose subjects are disciples, and the introduction to which is *discipling*, and which grows by individual accretions. So much is plain; and it is the foundation of all that follows.

(*To be continued.*)

GOD'S WAY OF PRODUCING DEVOTEDNESS IN HIS PEOPLE.

RESURRECTION, called by the Lord “the power of God,” or, at least, one of the ways of that power (Matt. xxii. 29), has been made known, through different witnesses, and in divers manners, from the very beginning. And connected as it is with redemption, the great principle of God's way and the secret of His purposes, it must have been so.

It was intimated in the creation of the beautiful scene around us, for the world itself was called forth from the grave of the deep. The material was without form, and darkness was upon the face of it, but light was commanded to shine out of darkness, and beauty and order were caused to arise (See Heb. xi. 3).

It declared itself in the formation of Eve. Then again in the earliest promise about the bruised Seed of the woman. It was kept in memory in Seth given in the place of Abel whom Cain slew; and then again in the line of the fathers before the flood. But still more illustriously was it published in Noah. “Every thing in the earth shall die,” says the Lord to him, “but with thee will I es-

tablish My covenant;" thus disclosing the secret, that the earth was to be established according to the purpose of God, as in resurrection, stability, and beauty.

So, after these earlier fathers, Abraham was to have both a family and an inheritance on the same principle. He and his generations after him were taught resurrection in the mystery of the barren woman keeping house. The covenant-blessing was linked with the risen family. Ishmael may get possessions, and promises too, but the covenant was with Isaac.

And more marvelously still, not to pause longer over other witnesses of it, we see resurrection in the blessed history of "the Word made flesh." We might indeed have forejudged that it would have been otherwise. For in Christ, flesh was without taint. Here was "a holy thing." But even of such we have now to say, "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more." Christ known by us now, is Christ in resurrection. And this is enough to let us know assuredly that resurrection is the principle of all the divine action, and the secret of the covenant.*

But resurrection has also been, from the beginning, an article of the faith of God's people; and, being such, it was also the lesson they had to learn and to practice, the principle of their life; because the principle of a divine dispensation is ever the rule and character of the saints' conduct. The purchase and occupation of the burying-field at Machpelah tell us that the Genesis-fathers had learnt the lesson. Moses learnt and practiced it when he chose affliction with the people of God, having respect to the recompense of the reward. David was in the

* All orders of His creatures in all places of His dominions witness Him as the *living* God; but in the history of redeemed sinners He is witnessed as the living God in *victory*. This is His glory; and resurrection should be prized by us as the display of it. The sepulchre with the grave-clothes lying in order, and the napkin which had been about the head, are the trophies of such victory (Jno. xx. 6, 7). The history of redeemed sinners celebrates Him thus. To hesitate about resurrection is to betray ignorance of God, and of the power that is His (see Matt. xxii. 29; 1 Cor. xv. 34).

power of it when he made the covenant, or resurrection-promise, all his salvation and all his desire, though his house, his present house, was not to grow. (2 Sam. xxiii.) The whole nation of Israel were taught it again and again by their prophets, and by and by they will learn it, and then witness it to the whole world, the dry bones living again, the winter-beaten teil tree flourishing again; for "what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead." The Lord Jesus, "the author and finisher of faith," in His day, I need not say, practiced this lesson to all perfection. And each of us, His saints and people, is set down to it every day, that we "may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings."

By the life of faith the elders obtained a good report. And so the saints in every age. For "without faith it is impossible to please Him;" that faith which trusts Him as a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, which respects the unseen and the future. They of whom the world was not worthy practiced the life of faith, the life of dead and risen people. (Heb. xi.) Stephen before the council tells us the same. Abraham, Joseph, and Moses, in his account, were great witnesses of this same life; and he himself, at that moment, after the pattern of his master, Jesus, was exhibiting the strength and virtues of it through the power of the Holy Ghost, and apprehending, through the same Spirit, the brightest joys and glories of it. (Acts vii.)

Now, I believe that the leading purpose of the book of Job is to exhibit this. It is the story of an elect one, in early patriarchal days, a child of resurrection, set down to learn the lesson of resurrection. His celebrated confession tells us that resurrection was understood by him as a doctrine, while the whole story tells us that he had still to know the power of it in his soul. It was an article of his faith, but not the principle of his life.

And a sore lesson it was to him, hard indeed to learn and digest. He did not like (and which of us does like?) to take the sentence of death into himself, that he might not trust in himself, or in his circumstances in life, or his condition by nature, but in God who raises the dead. "I shall die in my nest," was his thought and his hope. But he was to see his nest rifled of all with which nature had filled it, and with which circumstances had adorned it.

Such is, I believe, the leading purpose of the Spirit of God in this book. This honored and cherished saint had to learn the power of the calling of all the elect, practically and personally, the life of faith, or the lesson of resurrection. And it may be a consolation for us, beloved, who know ourselves to be little among them, to read, in the records which we have of them, that all have not been equally apt and bright scholars in that school, and that all, in different measures, have failed in it, as well as made attainments in it.

How unworthily of it, for instance, did Abraham behave,—how little like a dead and risen man—a man of faith—when he denied his wife to the Egyptian! and yet how beautifully did he carry himself as such when he surrendered the choice of the land to his younger kinsman. And even our own apostle, the aptest scholar in the school, the constant witness of this calling to others, and the energetic disciple of the power of it in his own soul, in a moment when the fear of man brought with it a snare, makes this very doctrine *the covert of a guileful thought* (Acts xxiii. 6).

Encouragements and consolations visit the soul from all this. Happy is it to know that our present lesson, as those who are dead, and whose life is hid with Christ in God, has been the lesson of the elect from the beginning—that on many a bright and hallowed occasion they practiced that lesson to the glory of their Lord, that at times they found it hard, and at times failed in it. This tale of the soul is well understood by us. Only we,

living in New-Testament times, are set down to learn the same lesson in the still ampler page, and after the clearer method, in which it is now taught us in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is some difference, let me observe, nay, I would say, distance, between a *righteous* and *devoted* man. No saint is a devoted one who has not been practicing this lesson of which I have been speaking. The measure of his devotedness may be said to be according to his attainment in it,—according to the energy he is exercising as a man dead and risen with Christ. At the beginning of this history, Job was a righteous man. He was spoken well of again and again, in the very face of his accuser. But he was not a devoted man. The whisper of his heart, as I noticed before, was this: "I shall die in my nest." Accepted he was, as a sinner who knew his living and triumphant Redeemer, godly and upright beyond his fellows, but withal, as to the power that wrought in his soul, he was not a dead and risen man.

Such also, I might add, was Agur in the book of Proverbs. He was godly, and of a lowly, self-judging spirit. He makes a good confession of human blindness and pravity, of the unsearchable glories of God, the purity and preciousness of His Word, and of the security of all who trust in Him (*Prov. xxx. 1-9*). He was a man of God, and walked in a good spirit. But he was not a devoted man. He did not know how to abound and how to suffer need. He dreaded poverty lest he should steal, and riches lest he should deny God. He was not prepared for changes. Neither was Job. But Paul was. He had surrendered himself to Christ, as they had not. According to the power that wrought in his soul, Paul was a dead and risen man. He was ready to be "emptied from vessel to vessel." He was instructed both to be full and to be hungry. He could do all things through Christ strengthening him. See that devoted man, that dead and risen man, in the closing chapters of Acts xx.-xxviii. He

is in the midst of a weeping company of brethren at Miletus, and in the bosom of a lovely Christian household at Tyre. But were those the greenest spots on earth to a saint, where, if any where, the foot of the mystic ladder is felt to rest, and the fond heart lingers and says, Let us make tabernacles here, able to detain him? No. Even there the dear, devoted apostle carried a heart thoroughly surrendered to Christ. "What mean ye," says he, "to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." He would not be kept. And on from thence he goes, along the coast of Syria up to Jerusalem, and then for two long years, apart from brethren, in perils by sea and land, under insults and wrongs, a single heart and devoted affection bearing him through all.

A good conscience alone is not up to all this. Mere righteousness will not take such a journey. There must be that singleness of eye to Christ, that principle of devotedness, which reckons upon death and resurrection with Jesus. Job was righteous, but he was not prepared for such shifting scenery as this. He loved the green spot and the feathered nest. Changes come, and changes are too much for him. But God, in the love wherewith He loved him, as his heavenly Father, puts him to school to learn the lesson of a child of resurrection, to be a partaker of "*His holiness*," the holiness not merely of a right or pure-minded man, but *the holiness that suits the call of God*,—the holiness of a dead and risen man, one of the pilgrim family, one of God's strangers in the world (Heb. xii. 9, 10).

Job was chastened to be partaker of such a holiness as this. Not that trials and troubles like his are essential to the learning of this lesson. A very common method it is indeed with our heavenly Father in His wisdom. But Paul set himself daily to practice that lesson, without the instructions of griefs and losses in either body or estate.

(Phil. iii.) In the fervent laborings of the spirit within, he exercised himself in it every day. And so should we. We are to dread the Laodicean state, satisfaction with present condition or attainment. The Laodicean was not a Pharisee, or a self-righteous man of religion. He was a professor, it may be, of very correct notions and judgments, but in a spirit of self-complacency he did not cherish increasing freshness and vigor in the ways of the Lord.—(*The Patriarchs*, p. 295, by J. G. Bellett.)

"THINGS THAT SHALL BE:"

AN EXPOSITION OF REVELATION IV.—XXII.

PART I.—(*Continued.*)

The Living Ones (chap. iv. 5-11).

AS I have said, the character of the throne as a throne of judgment is not seen until the saints are seen upon their thrones around it. In fact, we may say, it does not assume this character until they are there. For the "lightnings and voices and thunders" which now proceed from it are plainly not the announcement of any special judgment, but of the throne as a judgment-throne. This entirely accords with the fact that the dispensation of grace is at an end, the Christian Church complete, and with the saints of past ages glorified.

On the other hand, when the kingdoms of the earth shall have become the kingdom of Christ, the throne will not be characterized as here it is. Righteousness will reign, but the fruit of it will be peace, and the effect, quietness and assurance forever (Isa. xxxii. 17).

Thus we have in the lightnings and thunders proceeding from the throne neither the attributes of the day of grace nor those of the kingdom of glory, but rather of that interval of time which we have been al-

ready considering, in which, God's judgments being upon the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness (Isa. xxvi. 9). The bow of promise encircling the throne tells of the storm when it shall have passed—the effect designed from the beginning.

And before the throne, the seven lamps of fire bear witness of its action as suited to the character of Him who sits upon it. They are the sevenfold energy of the Spirit of God, who ever works out the divine purpose in the creature, whether it be in creation as at the beginning—when He brooded over the waters, or in sanctification—when we are new born of the Spirit, or in resurrection—when the work of grace ends in glory. And these seven spirits rest upon the Branch of Jesse when the government of the earth is put into His hand; "the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon Him; the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah; and He shall be of quick understanding in the fear of Jehovah: and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked one" (Isa. xi. 2-4). Here is the same perfect character of government. In both we see "man's day" ended and the "day of the Lord" commencing its course. Nor shall its sun ever go down.

Before the throne, also, is "a sea of glass like unto crystal" Before the *typical* "heavenly places" among the shadows of the law, there stood in Solomon's day a "sea" of water, at which the priests washed their hands and feet before they went in to minister in the sanctuary. But the priests are now gone in; the defilements of earth are over, and there is no longer need of cleansing. The sea is therefore here a sea of glass.

Abiding purity has succeeded to constant purification. No wind can henceforth even ruffle it. The lightnings and thunder cannot disturb its rest,—to it are as if they were not. Thus the elders rest upon their thrones in peace.

Below, we shall find the meaning of the judgment-character assumed by the throne. The conflict between good and evil is nearing its crisis; the power of evil is rearing itself in gigantic forms; open blasphemous defiance of God is succeeding to secret impiety; men are loudly saying, "Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us," and it is time for God to put to His hand, and to meet His adversaries face to face.

As, therefore, the cherubim and the flaming sword united to bar fallen man from paradise,—as, when Israel had reached the limit of divine forbearance, Ezekiel saw the infolding fire and the cherubic forms of judgment,—so now once more, but without the wheels within wheels of providential use of earthly instruments (God not to speak by a Nebuchadnezzar, but in plain wrath from heaven), the cherubim are 'seen.

"And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes before and behind. And the first living creature was like a lion, and the second living creature like a calf, and the third living creature had the face as of a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, having each of them six wings, are full of eyes round about and within; and they have no rest day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

The living creatures are in the midst of the throne, yet round about it,—identified with it, yet distinct. To picture this, as some have tried to do, may be difficult, and yet the idea involved in it is not difficult at all. The government of God is carried on, as Scripture represents it to us, largely at least, through created instruments. The Old Testament shows us thus angelic ministries in sway

over the earth; the New Testament speaks of "thrones and dominions and principalities and powers" (Col. i. 16). They are thus creaturely, yet identified with the divine. Thus were the judges in Israel called "gods," and our Lord says, "He called them 'gods' unto whom the word of God came" (Jno. x. 35). Here we have the idea which the words as to the living creatures "in the midst of the throne and round about the throne" seem intended to convey.

The "living creatures" certainly show that they are "creatures;" although no stress can be laid upon this word as used by the *R.V.* here, in place of the objectionable one, "beasts," in the older translation. The Greek word is, "living ones," though generally used as the equivalent of our word, from the Latin, "animal," which literally means the same thing. But the forms are those of the heads of the animal creation,—the lion, of wild beasts; the calf or ox, of cattle; the eagle, of birds; and man, of all. Such symbols could not be—were forbidden to be—used of God Himself. Their six wings are intended, surely, to lead us back to Isaiah's vision of the seraphim, who cry, "Holy, holy, holy," also, just as these; and here "with twain they covered their face, and with twain they covered their feet," the suited reverence of creatures in the presence of God. They are not, then, direct symbols of God Himself.

That they are the angels as a class is more *like* the truth, as is plain from what we have already seen; yet in the fifth chapter they are broadly distinguished from the angels, who are seen in a separate company round the throne; while, if the elders represent the redeemed, they are in our present one distinguished from these also. That they are a distinct *class* among the angels has in itself no *scriptural* probability, though it is the favorite traditional view. That they are symbols can scarcely be doubted; hardly of a race of beings of whom elsewhere we have no trace. Lastly, that they symbolize the

Church, as distinct from other bodies of redeemed, is negated by all the Old-Testament passages.

The view which alone harmonizes all that is conflicting in these is, that they are symbols of that government of God over the earth which may be exercised by angels, will be over the millennial earth by the redeemed associated with Christ Himself. The transition we shall find, in fact, in these very chapters of Revelation; while cherubim were, as we know, upon the tabernacle-vail, which the apostle declares to be the "flesh," or human nature, of Christ (Ex. xxvi. 31; Heb. x. 20).

Hence also—as having reference to the government of the earth—the living creatures are four in number, 4 being significant of earthly completeness, as in the "four corners of the earth." Their six wings speak of restless activity,—perhaps of restraint upon evil, for 6 speaks of this limit imposed by God. The eyes within and around show regard to God—for "within" is toward Him that sits upon the throne—and perfect, not partial, knowledge of things on every side. For the simple complete obedience of the creature would keep it free from displaying the short-sightedness of the creature.

Now, if we look at the appearance of the living creatures themselves, we shall find that each one furnishes us with some view of the divine government which supplements and balances the rest, and that the order also is significant, as in Scripture every thing is. What the Lord teaches us as to every jot and tittle of the law is true no less of the whole inspired Word.

How significant that the first form is that of a lion, the symbol of royal and resistless power! This is the first necessity for government, in which feebleness is only another name for failure. Christ's own name in the chapter following is, "Lion of the tribe of Judah," and when He acts in that character, no one will be able for a moment to resist Him. It will be the most absolute sovereignty that the world has ever seen.

But then, by itself, assuredly, this symbol would mislead. When John looks for the Lion of the tribe of Judah, he sees a "Lamb as it had been slain;" and when even wrath is ready to be poured out upon men, it is spoken of as the "wrath of the Lamb." Indeed, that is what makes it so terrible. It is the wrath of love itself. It is the judgment of One with whom judgment is a "strange work." It is judgment which is so unsparing because love energizes the arm and guides the blow. It is judgment for which there is no remedy,—which can alone fulfill the counsels of perfect wisdom and goodness; judgment which prayer cannot be offered to avert, but for which prayer is made and accepted by God.

Slow indeed it has been in coming! So the ages of misrule and evil, of oppression and wrong, would say. So murmur the down-trodden; so scoffs the infidel. The prophet cries, "How long?" The wicked, pursuing his successful wickedness, says, "God hath forgotten: He hideth His face; He will never see it." All are expecting from the government of God the rapid and decisive action which they think alone suited to Him in whose hands all power is.

Hence, the slow ox* follows the lion here; with strength equal to his, but used how differently! The ox is the symbol of patient labor, and which has man's good for its end. So the apostle uses it (1 Cor. ix. 9, 10). It is the mystery of apparent slowness that is here explained. "God is not slack, as some count slackness," but in all His government works out unfailingly counsels of wisdom in which man's blessing will surely at last be found. Not in the lion is the highest type of sovereignty. The lion's is brute force at the bidding of impulse merely. The ox works under the control of *mind*.

*"Moschos," translated in our version "calf," is so used in the Septuagint (Ex. xxi. 33; xxii. 1, 9, 10, 30; Lev. iv. 10; ix. 4, etc.), which uses it in Ezek. i. 10, the parallel passage to this in Revelation. The idea is of a young, fresh animal, not galled yet with a yoke, nor jaded with over-labor, the fitted type, therefore, of divine working.

But there is more than this, which the next cherub speaks of: for now a human face greets us—"the third living creature had the *face of a man*." And what strikes us first in this? Not mind merely, though there is mind, and in it lies the power he has—power which both the ox and lion own. But that only completes the thought which we have had already presented. Surely beyond this, and rather than this, what strikes us in a human face in the midst of such surroundings, is its *familiarity*. Here we have what we can understand in a way we cannot the lion or the ox; and as a symbol of divine government, it forces upon us irresistibly the conviction that in it God seeks to be known by us. Not only is He working out blessing in the end. He is meeting us also now, and giving us to know Himself. He is cultivating intimacy with us. And this every soul of His own can better understand in His personal dealings with himself, than in His ways at large—His public government of the world.

Here in our little world we can find, at least, if we will, how "tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience, and experience hope." Here the darkness and the sorrow, the night and the storm, yield (at least afterward) their "peaceable fruits." Here, if we "go down to the sea in ships, and have" our "business in the deep waters," we but the more "see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep." And how sweetly assuring is this knowledge of a living God, for whose care we are not too little, and from whom no circumstance of our lives, no need of our souls, is hid. Would that we all knew this better, which the most exercised among us knows best! We shall find in it, what this "face of a man" may well prepare us for, that it is not necessarily in great and out-of-the-way occurrences that God most manifests Himself. He has here as elsewhere a way of taking up and magnifying what is little by putting Himself into connection with it; and thus (as in all His works) the microscope will convey as much to us, it may be more, than the

telescope. For He is every where: "One God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all."

Yet because He is God, there will be that every where which will remind us in whose presence we stand. No where can we escape from the mystery which attends His presence. Nor would we if we realize this as its meaning. A God always comprehensible by us would be only such an one as ourselves: but magnify man into God you cannot. Still there will be the "light inaccessible, which no man can approach unto." Yet this is *light*, not darkness, and it makes nothing really dark, as men profess; rather in this light we see light,—the knowledge of God illuminates all other things.

And this is what is intimated, I believe, by the last of these living ones: "The fourth living creature was like a flying eagle"—an eagle on the wing. For the "way of an eagle in the air" is one of the four things of which the wise man speaks as "too wonderful" for him (Prov. xxx. 18, 19). And this is to be joined with what the eagle in itself conveys to us as a "bird of heaven,"—a type of what is heavenly; especially with its bold, soaring flight, for which the ancients assigned it to the apostle John as his emblem.

Thus, then, these cherubic figures speak to us, and in their praise they celebrate the holiness, power, and unchangeableness of the covenant-God. The Old-Testament names, as all the way through this part, come up again. It is this God who is our Father, but not as Father do we find Him here. He is our God, if Father: and as such the elders worship Him. For "whenever the living creatures give* glory and honor and thanks to Him that sitteth on the throne, to Him that liveth forever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall* down before Him that sitteth on the throne, and worship* Him that liveth forever and ever, and cast* their crowns before the throne, saying,

*These are all strictly futures, but the force seems better expressed in English by "whenever" with the present.

Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou hast created all things, and because of Thy will they were, and were created."

How blessed is this worship! The constraint is that of the heart alone: the spirit of praise dictates the praise. They are intelligent, and give the reason of it; not here redemption, but creation. By and by they celebrate redemption also, but one theme does not displace another: all that God is and has done is worthy of Him, and they express their adoration as dependent on the will of Him who, for His glory, had created them. This perpetual worship of heaven is the witness of the perpetual freshness of abiding blessing traced by the happy heart to God as its source. May we learn better on earth this song of praise!

(To be continued.)

"OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION, WHICH IS BUT FOR A MOMENT."

(2 Cor. iv. 17.)

OH, these glorious moments!—
With the Father's love
Beaming down upon us
From out the heaven above.

Oh, these glorious moments!—
Jesus, Lord, with Thee
Yoked, for the deeper lessons
Of holy liberty.

Oh, these glorious moments!—
With the Holy Ghost
Taking the things of Jesus,
Teaching us how to boast.

Oh, these glorious moments!—
Sinners being gathered in,
Angels in heaven rejoicing
In the triumphs over sin.

Oh, these glorious moments!—
Waiting, our Lord, for Thee;
Catching the shining of Thy face,
Joy of eternity.

J. F. G.

A TOUCHING INCIDENT IN BUNYAN'S LIFE.

[While confined in Bedford jail (12 years) visited by his wife and blind child.]

AFTER a few tender inquiries in reference to the blind child, Bunyan briefly recounted the incidents of his arrest, then ended as follows:—

“On the morning after, we sent to Justice Compton of Elstow, but he refused to release me, though I had broken no law whatsoever; still I am content that, if my lying here will serve the cause of God, I will lie here till my flesh drops from my bones. Let it be as God will.

“True, beloved, but we will do our utmost; the house is so dull without thee. Thy little Mary sits pining for thy voice, and the other two are often crying for father. It goes to my heart to see them craving for thee. And some that I thought better off will not pay what they owe thee. William Swinton, the sexton of St. Cuthbert, owes thee a matter of five pounds, ye know; now he says not a penny will he pay thee. Yet I am proud of thee. Yield not, John, for we will beg from door to door before thou shalt yield for our sakes, to do what ye feel to be wrong in the sight of God. I pray much that we may see thee again by our fireside, and I look through the stone lattice often, longing to see thy brave face through the pane; but I pray more that thou mightest stand fast, like David against the giant, that thou shalt one day too conquer. Think not of us, but be firm.”

“Ay, that I will,” said Bunyan, who had nestled the blind girl in his arms; “but what will my Mary do if her father has to die for the truth?”

“Do, father? why, love thee all the more, and pray for them that shall kill thee, and come as quickly as I may to be with thee. Oh, father! I shall look upon thy dear face in heaven. How I strive to picture thee! but I should like to see thee as thou really art. When I feel thy warm breath upon my cheek, and rest in thy arms, I feel I fear naught and want naught. But oh, father! my

mother taught me that thou art Christ's servant, and I am proud that thou art called to suffer, while the great ones deny the Lord."

"My little maiden, then, loves my Lord?" asked Bunyan, bending with tearful eyes over the clear, white face radiant with love the eyes could not speak.

"Ay, father! I have loved Him a little for a long time, but I have loved Him, I cannot tell how much, since these dark days began. When mother and I sat trembling, and wondering how thou wert faring when from home in the time of trouble, how I prayed for thee, and I felt thy God was my God, and I would serve Him too."

"But 'tis not enough, darling, to say that ye love Christ. What about thy sins?"

"Oh, father, I have confessed them all, and repented of them, and I do accept Jesus as my Saviour. I feel more certain every day that He has forgiven my sins. Is it not sweet to feel this—we are tied together by a bond that nothing can ever break?"

"Ay, it is, dear one; and in thy love and the love of thy mother, I feel brave and strong. Ye help me not a little to stand without blenching in the time of trial."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Q. 13.—Does Matt. xiii. 19, as to the way-side hearer, indicate that all who have heard the word are in the kingdom? Does the message from the King make all to whom it comes subjects, even though rebellious, so that the rejecter of Christianity, the infidel, is in the kingdom of heaven? If not, are there these three spheres of responsibility: that of the kingdom, that of the rejecter of the truth in Christianity, and that of the heathen? Does it not rob the King of His majesty if one may reject His message and yet have no kingdom-responsibility—that is, not be in the kingdom? Such an one would be unbaptized, it is true, but because rebellious.

Ans.—The word is the "word of the kingdom" (v. 19), and therefore, I apprehend, the word must be in some sense received,

in order to being in the kingdom. The unbaptized opposer of Christianity is an enemy simply, not a subject. He is responsible fully for his opposition, and in this way the authority of the King is fully maintained. It is on account of this case of the way-side hearer, as I take it, that the first parable does not begin as the rest do—with “the kingdom of heaven is like,” and we only learn, in result, that it is of the mysteries of the kingdom He is speaking.

I should not say there are three spheres of responsibility. In the kingdom, the *responsibility* is the same for all. The knowledge of grace alone enables one for its fulfillment.

Q. 14.—If asked for scripture for connecting baptism with the kingdom as the formal entrance, is it not that when the kingdom was announced as at hand baptism began? If it is not connected with the Church, can it be with the house of God? When the Church, the house of God, is taken from the earth, the kingdom will continue, and baptism also: does not this show that it is entirely with the kingdom baptism is connected, and not with the house of God, which is the Church (1 Tim. iii. 15)?

Ans.—The baptism into the Church is by the Spirit, not water (1 Cor. xii. 13), and in God’s thought, as we have seen elsewhere, the body and house are co-extensive. It is true that the house of God is become as a “great house,” but this is through man’s failure. Neither “living stones” nor “members of Christ” can be made by baptism, nor has man ever received authority to introduce into the number of these.

It is true that man builds (1 Cor. iii.), and that thus it is that the professing church has become enlarged so much beyond the true Church; but building is by the Word, through which the Spirit of God acts, and the living stones are produced and put in place. Baptism neither produces them nor puts them in place. As to the first, there can be no right question; as to the second, whatever may be asked can be speedily answered; for we have seen that baptism is burial—deals with men not as members of Christ, nor even children of God, but as sinners under death, to whom is announced indeed the forgiveness of sins, and whom as a “figure” it “saves” (1 Pet. iii. 21). This is abundant proof, for those who will consider it, that it has nothing to do with the Church as such, which does not begin until men *are* saved, and by a further act of divine grace—the baptism of the Spirit. Water-baptism does not, then, bring into the Church, whether (as men say) visible or invisible: that there is an invisible one is again due only to man’s sin.

As to baptism going on after the Church is removed, I suppose it will, but it is hardly certain enough to me to be pressed as an argument. That it accompanied the first announcement of the kingdom is plain in the case of the Baptist, but this was not Christian baptism, nor could it be into the kingdom, which did

not begin till Pentecost, or at least till Christ was glorified and enthroned.

Briefly, the arguments for the connection of baptism with the kingdom I would give as follows:—

1. That the kingdom is the sphere of discipleship, discipling is into it,—“Every scribe *discipled* unto the kingdom of heaven” is the expression in Matt. xiii. 52; “made a disciple to,” says the R. V.

2. That introduction to it, or discipling, is twofold: there are “keys.” And one of these is plainly the “key of knowledge” (Luke xi. 52; Matt. xxiii. 13).

3. That the two keys, or methods of discipling, are given, in Matt. xxviii., by Him who, with all authority in heaven and earth, sends out His servants to “disciple all nations, baptizing them and teaching them.”

4. That baptism is therefore “to the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts viii. 16; ii. 36-38; x. 48), as owning His authority in the kingdom. “Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (xxii. 16).

5. That it belongs, therefore, to the commission of the twelve, who are connected with the kingdom (Matt. xix. 28), and not to Paul’s, the minister of the Church (Col. i. 24, 25; Eph. iii. 2-7); who, although he did baptize, was “not sent to baptize” (1 Cor. i. 17).

Other arguments might be given, but these are the plainest, and (I believe) decisive.

Q. 15.—Pages 26, 27, of this volume, we read, “This very chapter” (Col. ii.) “speaks of our not being subject to ordinances.” Are we to suppose that baptism is among the ordinances which we are exhorted by Paul not to be subject to? That is the apparent teaching.

Ans.—I do not put baptism among these “ordinances;” but if we attached to it the virtue of which I have been speaking there, it would be one of the most stringent kind. The ordinances of the law itself never made spiritual blessing so dependent upon a material *opus operatum*—a “work done”—as this would imply. Sacramentalists, in fact, out-judaize Judaism.

Q. 16.—Page 28, we have, “Baptism actually introduces into the body.” Also it is said to be the authoritative key of admission. If so, evidently salvation must come through baptism, which does away with personal faith for souls’ receiving Christ. Or do you make salvation come only to infants through it, as “the child and the adult are held to be on different footings?”

Ans.—Our correspondent has made a very strange mistake. The passage first quoted says, “into the body of *disciples upon earth*.” This has been confounded with the body of *Christ*,—the Church! a very different thing surely. Baptism does not in any sense admit into the Church, nor does it “save,” except as a

figure. It is admission into the Lord's school on earth—that is, to the body of *disciples*,—*scholars*.

Q. 17.—How does the Word of God divide between soul and spirit (Heb. iv. 12)? and in what consists the necessity for its doing so? If “between joints and marrow” is figurative, are “soul and spirit” likewise so? and is “discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart” making them manifest to ourselves?

Ans.—If the spirit be synonymous with mind and conscience—the mental and moral judgment—and the soul with the affections and emotions, then there is plain need for “dividing”—or distinguishing—between them. How often do we need to distinguish between conscience and sentiment, intelligence and feeling? And the *Word* dividing between these implies, of course, that it is *forming* the mind and enlightening the conscience. Thus the division would *practically* be between what is natural and what is spiritual.

“Between joints and marrow” is clearly figurative, and the “marrow” of a thing is used in Greek for the “inmost part.” The difference between what is external and what is internal seems here the point. I do not think that this figurative expression involves the one before it being figurative; nor do I see how soul and spirit could be used in this way, in connection with one another.

“A discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” is what first of all the Word *is*, but of course it is for us that it detects and pronounces on them.

Q. 18.—Scripture clearly teaches that people may evangelize without being evangelists, just as they may teach, and teach well, without being teachers. Whatever we have, we are not only permitted but responsible to use—in what way exactly we must learn from God, and as subject to the Lord only in it, though if the assembly's room is used, they of course must be consulted. What edifies and has the divine blessing in it is what love seeks, and wisdom will not in general be lacking where real love to souls is the motive power.

An “open meeting”—such as 1 Cor. xiv. speaks of—is not suitable for the gospel. It is an assembly-meeting only, as the chapter in question shows, and in character quite different from those for the gospel, where all the world is invited in. These are the definite responsibility of those who feel they have a message to give, and undertake to give it. In this, two or three may unite together, but we do not invite people to come and see if the Lord will give somebody a word for them, but to hear what we are pledged to give them. The *assembly* does not preach: individuals do.

As to the question about the hymns in assembly-meetings, I do not think that the raising of tunes would come under the prohibition of 1 Cor. xiv. 34. The general rule, as indicated by the

question, "Is it seemly?" must decide (chap. xi. 13). "Let all things be done decently and in order."

Q. 19.—Would unleavened bread at the Lord's table *misrepresent* His body given for us? Can there be any modification from the teaching of the Word itself of the statement that "He bore our sins *in His own body*"?

Ans.—At the first institution of the Lord's supper unleavened bread must have been used, as no other could be in the house at the time of the passover. The use of it still would therefore be quite suitable, and in its meaning preferable to what is ordinarily used. There is no direction as to it in the Word, and we have no right to *enforce* any thing, therefore; but if all were agreed, the unleavened bread might suitably remind us of Him who knew no sin, and of how we too should keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

The second question I may not rightly understand; but the bearing of our sins by the Lord in His body on the tree simply means that the sufferings of the cross were due to our sins being borne by Him there. "*In His body*" means that He *suffered* in His body, a living Man, yet on to death, in which this suffering for us terminated. The sins being *borne* means that their due was borne—their *weight*. It is a form of what grammarians call *metonymy*, in which one word is put for another closely related to it, as, for example, in this case, the cause for the effect.

Q. 20.—What is the scriptural meaning of the term "repentance"?

Ans.—The word *metanoia* means "an after-thought;" and, as used in Scripture, speaks of a changed way of thinking, implying a judgment of the past. It is the self-judgment of a renewed soul accepting the *divine* judgment of his sins and of himself. It is not, as some have put it, a change of mind *about* God, though *Godward*—having reference to Him,—"*Now mine eye seeth thee; therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*"

Q. 21.—Can an assembly as such, if in arrears for rent, etc., scripturally minister to a brother in need?

Ans.—Certainly not, unless it were a need so urgent as to justify the diversion of funds to this purpose, and then with the purpose of replacing them as soon as possible. But this is not, I suppose, the case referred to, and, unless in cases of very exceptional circumstances, such a state in an assembly implies a spiritual condition as low as the funds. If "owe no man any thing" is the rule for the individual, how much more should it be for an assembly, where poverty to this extent can be hardly ever pleaded, and where the honor of the Lord is much more compromised! Many words cannot be needed surely about such a matter.

“THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.”

7. TARES AMONG THE WHEAT.

(Matthew xiii.)

THUS it is plain that the kingdom in its present form is *not* to be a universal one. From that which the prophets of the Old Testament picture, it is widely distinguished. Left to man's reception of it, and not set up by the right hand of power, it is received by some, rejected by many; and even where outwardly received, in many cases no real fruit Godward is the result. There are thus “children of the kingdom” who in the end, like those among Israel, are cast out of it; and that where there is no fault with the seed or with the sowing of it, but the fault is entirely in the nature of the soil in which the seed is sown.

But that is not the whole picture by any means. We are now to see not merely the ill-success of the good seed, but the result of the introduction of seed of another character, and sown by another hand,—the positive sowing of the enemy himself, and not simply his opposition to that sown by another. “The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way” (*vv.* 24, 25). Thus, in the very midst of that which the first parable has shown us springing up—good wheat, although there may be many barren and blighted ears—the enemy sows, *not wheat at all*, but *tares*. In this case, it is not the Word of Christ that is sown, clearly, but Satan's corruption of it. The springing up of the good seed could not produce

tares, nor the father of lies preach truth. Hence, the test of a man's speaking by a good or evil spirit could be, "Every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus Christ come in the flesh* is not of God; and this is that spirit of anti-christ," etc. (1 Jno. iv. 2, 3.) The enemy of Christ ("His enemy," v. 25), even "as an angel of light," will not *hold up* Christ, for he knows too well what Christ is for souls. On the other hand, when Christ *was* preached, even of envy and strife, the apostle could rejoice for the same reason. (Phil i.) But here, not the "corn of wheat," (Jno. xii. 24) which would bring forth wheat if it sprang up at all, but "tares" are sown; and "tares" and nothing else spring up. The word "sown," in imitation yet in real opposition to the truth, produces under a Christian name and dress a host of real enemies to the truth and to Christ, "children of the wicked one" (v. 38), not mere children of nature, however fallen, but the devil's own,—begotten by *his* word, as God's children by *His*.

And here, alas, we read of no hindrances, no opposition of hard-trodden ground, or underlying rock,—no catching away by the birds of the air,—no choking by thorns. All circumstances favor this seed and its growth. It needs no nursing; will thrive amid "cares of this world," and grow up in companionship with the "deceitfulness of riches." It is at home every where, and the soil every-where congenial, for its "wisdom" is not "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of

* This is more literal as a translation than "that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh," of the common version.

God:" it "descendeth not from above, but is *earthly, sensual, devilish*" (Jas. iii. 15).

So it prospers. And even the children of God,—nay, "the *servants*" (v. 27), are slow to discern the true nature of what is being sown, and growing up amongst them. Sad and solemn it is to see how lightly we think of error; for it is but another way of saying how lightly we value truth. Yet by the word of truth are we begotten, and by the truth are we sanctified (Jas. i. 18; Jno. xvii. 17). It is this by which we alone know either ourselves or God. It is of the perversion of this that the apostle said, "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. i. 8); words that he emphatically repeats, that we may be assured that it was no hastiness of ill-tempered zeal that moved him, but the true inspiration of the Spirit of Christ.

The seed springs up, then, and there are now tares among the wheat. How soon that began in the professing church! Judaism, legalism, ceremonialism, and even the denial of the resurrection itself, the key-stone of Christian doctrine, you may find again and again among the churches of the apostolic days; and in the sure Word of God what solemn warnings as to the future,—a future long since present. "Even now are there many antichrists," wrote the last of the apostles, "whereby we know it is the last time."

But for the sowing of these tares, those are responsible to whom the field has been intrusted. "*While men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat.*" There was the failure. In the case given in the first parable, they had not

power to prevent the ill-success of the Word of truth in men's hearts, or the hollowness of an external profession of the truth, which yet had no proper root in the man who made it. All who "gladly received the Word upon the day of Pentecost" were baptized "the same day." There was no waiting to see if, when tribulation came, they would endure, and yet that was the real test for the stony-ground hearer. Such would "immediately with joy" receive the Word, and so baptism, and be added to the disciples. It was not failure on the part of the baptizers, if such there were, for the heart they could not read. There each man stood on his own responsibility to God.

But it was a different thing when that which was *not* the Word, but Satan's corruption of it, began to be sown, and that in the very midst of disciples. And, once again I say, how soon that took place! and how soon it became needful to write even to the little babes about Antichrist; and to exhort men "earnestly to contend for the faith *once* delivered to the saints;" and that, because of "certain men, *crept in unawares*,—ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 3, 4). Thus were the tares already manifested. "The children of the wicked one" were there. Christ was denied in His own kingdom. The question of His actual sovereignty was raised, and He must come in sovereignty and in judgment to decide that question. The servants are not competent to decide it. "The servants said unto him, 'Wilt thou, then, that we go and gather them up?'"—these tares. "But he said,

‘Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.’”

A solemn lesson, from which we may, if we will, learn much; while it does *not* teach what so many seem disposed to learn from it. For plainly, communion at the Lord’s table is not at all the question here, and it is nothing less than willful blindness to persist in this application of it in the face of the manifold scriptures which contradict it. What meaning could “Put out from among yourselves that wicked person,” addressed to the church at Corinth, have for those who here learn from the lips of the Lord Himself, as they say, that tares and wheat are to grow up together in the church, and that it is vain and wrong to attempt any such separation? And what mean even their own feeble efforts to put out some notorious offenders, if this be so? If this be to gather up tares, why attempt it in the case of even the worst, when the principle they maintain is not to do it at all?

On the other hand, this passage does teach us that it is one thing to know and own the evil that has come in, and quite another to have power or authority to set things right again. Men slept, and the tares were sown. No after-vigilance or earnestness could repair the mischief. The gathering up must be left for angels’ hands in the day of harvest. “Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the time of harvest I will say unto the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.”

Jude’s remedy for the state of things is just the same. Of the ungodly men of whom he speaks as having crept in among the disciples, he says, “And

Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, *prophesied of these*, saying, 'Behold, the LORD COMETH with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.'" Thus alone in the wheat-field of Christendom is the separation of the evil from the good effected. It is quite another thing to purge *ourselves*, according to the apostle's word to Timothy (2 Tim. ii.), from the vessels to dishonor in the house; and this we are bound to do. The purging of the house itself the Lord alone will and can do.

Meanwhile, tares and wheat *do* grow together. The dishonor done to Christ in Christendom no means of ours can ever efface or rectify. No, not even the most zealous preaching of the gospel, however blessed the result of that, will ever turn the tares of Unitarianism, Universalism, annihilationism, popery, and what not, into good wheat for God's granary. Nor can we escape their being numbered with us as Christians in the common profession of the day. If we meet them at the Lord's table, as if it were no matter, or we could not help it, we should proclaim ourselves "one bread, one body" with them (1 Cor. x. 17); for "we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we are *all partakers of that one bread.*" But while refusing to link ourselves with them to the dishonor of our Lord and Master, we cannot put ourselves outside the common profession of Christianity to avoid companionship with them *there*. Nor if we had power, have we skill to separate infallibly the Lord's people, many of them mixed

up with most of the various forms of error. "The Lord knoweth them that are His" is alone our comfort. He will make no mistake. And "Behold, the Lord cometh," is the only available remedy which faith looks for, for the state of things at large.

The separation, which men's hands are thus declared incompetent for, remains for angels' hands in the day of the harvest of Christendom. They are the reapers then. The field is to be cleared of wheat and tares alike; and at one moment it is bidden both to gather the tares in bundles to be burnt, and to gather the wheat into the barn. Thus solemnly the day of Christian profession ends. But let us look a little more closely at the order and manner of it, which is of the greatest importance in order to understand it rightly.

"Gather together *first* the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them." There is no actual burning yet, and there is no removal from the field. It is a separation of the tares *in* the field, so as to leave the wheat distinct and ready for the ingathering. In what manner, we must refrain from conjecturing; whether it will be gradually or suddenly effected, we do not know. The separation will be, however, made, and the true people of the Lord will stand in their own distinct company at last when that day is come. There will follow then, *not* the removal of the tares, but of the wheat. The tares are left in bundles on the field; *the wheat are gathered into the barn.*

We know what that is very well; and how many joyful hopes are crowded into that brief sentence. The scene is pictured for us in 1 Thess. iv. The descent of the Lord into the air; the shout; the

voice of the archangel, and the trump of God; the resurrection of the dead in Christ, the myriads fallen asleep in Him through the ages of the past; the change of the living saints throughout the earth; the rise of that glorious company; the meeting and the welcome; the henceforth "ever with the Lord,"—all these are the various parts and features of that which these words figure to us: "Gather the wheat into My barn." Suddenly, we know, this will be. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," this change will be effected; every living saint will be gathered out of the length and breadth of Christendom,* and it will be left but a tare-field simply, with its tares gathered and bound in bundles, ready for the burning.

And where are the barren and blighted ears of false profession? Where is he of the stony ground? where the man in whom the good seed of the Word was choked with the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and brought no fruit to perfection? We have seen that the "tares" are not simply such, but the fruit of Satan's perversion of the Word. They are not those of whom the apostle speaks as "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof;" but rather they are those, whether teachers or taught, to whom apply the words of another apostle, concerning "false teachers, who shall privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them," and whose "pernicious ways" *many* shall follow,

* There is a notion current among many who believe in the Lord's coming, that only those who are in a certain state of preparation among the saints then living will be caught up then, and the rest will be left on earth to be purified by the tribulation that follows. I cannot do more than allude to this just now: but it is completely contradicted in the words of the parable before us.

"by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." (2 Pet. ii.) These are the tares of the devil's sowing, and it is important to distinguish them from the mere formalist and unfruitful professor of the truth. It is on account of these, as both Peter and Jude tell us, that the swift and terrible judgment which ends the whole comes. "Enoch," the seventh from Adam, prophesied of *these*, saying, 'Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints to execute judgment upon all.'"

And yet the formalist, the man of mere profession, will not escape. In the judgment of the *dead* before the great white throne they will receive according to their deeds as surely as any, but that is long after the scene before us in this parable. Here is a simple question of good wheat for the granary or of tares for the burning. Nothing else is in the field at all. There is no middle class, no unfruitful orthodox profession; all seem to have taken sides, before the solemn close of the time of harvest, either manifestly *for* Christ, or as manifestly against Him. Is this indeed so? and have we warrant for such an interpretation of the language of the parable?

The answer to this is a very solemn one; and we shall find it in the second epistle to the Thessalonians. In the first epistle, the apostle had spoken of "the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him." He had assured them that even the sleeping saints would be brought with Christ when He should come again (1 Thess. iv. 14); and that in order to accompany Him so on His return to earth, they would be raised from the dead, and together with all the living ones of that

day, be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Thus, when He "appeared" to judge the world, they would appear with Him in glory (Col. iii. 4). He could therefore in His second epistle beseech the Thessalonian Christians, by their knowledge of this coming, and this "gathering," not to be shaken in mind, or troubled, as supposing or being persuaded that the day of the Lord had already come.* That day (as all the prophets witness) is the day of the Lord's taking the earth from under man's hand and into His own, the time in which His judgments are upon the earth, and the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness. That day, he assures them, shall not come unless there come a *falling away* (an apostasy) first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped.

Now, my object is not any special application or interpretation of this. So much is manifest, that this "man of sin," whoever he may be, is one who heads up an, or rather "the," apostasy of the latter days. The evil, the mystery of iniquity, was already at work even in the apostles' days (v. 7). There was, however, for the present, a restraint upon it. When that should be removed, the wicked one would be revealed, who was to be destroyed alone, mark, by the Lord's coming (v. 8).

Thus we are evidently in view of the same period as that contemplated in the parable before us, as well as of the judgment which Jude warns

* Chap. ii. 2: The word rendered "is at hand" in the common version, is the one rendered "present," in opposition to "to come," in Rom. viii. 38 and 1 Cor. iii. 22; and so Alford renders it here. It is the only proper rendering. The generality of editors also read "the day of the Lord" instead of "the day of Christ."

of. The passage in the Thessalonians exhibits, however, the "man of sin" as the distinct head and leader of the latter-day apostasy, and, moreover, declares to us how far this apostasy shall extend. The coming of the "wicked one" is declared to be with a terrible power of delusion which will carry away captive the masses of the unconverted among professing Christians until none of that middle or neutral class remain. "Whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them *strong delusion, that they may believe a lie*, that THEY ALL might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (*vv. 9-12*).

Thus terribly shall close the history of Christendom. The true saints once taken out of it, the door of grace will be closed forever upon those who have rejected grace. They will be given over to become, as they speedily will become, from being *unbelievers* of the truth, believers of a lie. The wheat being gathered out of the field, tares alone will be found in it.

The actual burning of the tares is not found in the parable itself, but in the interpretation of it which the Lord afterward gives to His disciples. "As, therefore, the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be at the end of this age. The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine

forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (*vv.* 40-43).

This is when the Lord comes as *Son of Man* to take that throne which He has promised to share with His people. Then, when the time of "patience" is over, and the rod of iron shall break in pieces all resistance to the King of kings. Then "judgment"—long separated from it—"shall return unto righteousness," and the earth shall be freed from the yoke of oppression and the bondage of corruption. It is the time of which the thirty-seventh psalm speaks, when evil-doers shall be cut of: but those who wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth" (*v.* 9); when "yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be,—yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be; but the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (*vv.* 10, 11).

Some time before will the gathering for heaven have taken place, and the saints have met their Lord, as we have seen. Now, in this day of the judgment which prepares the way for the blessing of the earth, they are seen in their heavenly place. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun." Blessed words! which speak of their association with their Lord in other ways than simply as sharers of His rule with the "rod of iron." For "unto you that fear My name," says the Word by Malachi to Israel, "shall the *Sun of Righteousness* arise with healing in His wings." Who bears that name, we know; and how it speaks of earth's night-time passed away. But "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." So, *as* the Sun, shall the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of their

Father. With Christ, like Him, they shine; themselves subject in one sphere, if rulers in another; but subject with all the heart's deep devotion, where service is fullest liberty, serving as sons Him whom they call, at the same time, God and Father.

"THINGS THAT SHALL BE:"

AN EXPOSITION OF REVELATION IV.—XXII.

PART I.—(Continued.)

The Lion of the Tribe of Judah. (Chap. v.)

AND now, in the right hand of Him that sits upon the throne there is seen a book, or scroll, completely filled* with writing, which is, however, as to decipherment, completely hid from sight. It is the book of the future, already and completely foreknown and settled in the divine counsels: no room for any thing to be afterward supplied. Thank God, no tittle of history that the future holds will put omniscience to shame, or show the book of God's counsels to have escaped out of the hand of enthroned omnipotence.

Yet if it remain there, who can penetrate it? The seven seals show it to be absolutely hidden from saint or angel. Let it be proclaimed with a voice mighty enough to reach all the inhabitants of heaven, earth, and the underworld, there is no where any answer to the challenge, "Who is worthy to open the book?"

God's counsels imply blessing. It may be indeed

* "According to ancient usage, a parchment-roll was first written on the *inside*, and if the inside was *filled* with writing, then the *outside* was used, or back part of the roll; and if that also was covered with writing, and the whole available space was occupied, the book was called *opistho-graphos* ('written on the back-side,' *Lucian Vit. Auct.* 9, *Plin. Epist.* iii. 5.)" (Wordsworth, quoted in Schaff's Lange.)

through much tribulation—the light checkered with shadows—evening and morning together making up the day. Even so, we name it "day" from the light, not from the darkness. The conflict of good with evil must end in triumph, not in defeat. And who is worthy to proclaim that triumph? Only He who can insure it and carry it out; for this only it is, as we shall see, that opens the book. It is no longer, at the time to which this change brings us, a question of making prophetic announcements, but of manifesting God's purposes by decisive acts of power. True, *we* are enabled, as having the prophecy, in measure to anticipate what is to come. But that, with all its value for us, is not what we see in this picture. It is not the inditing of a book, nor the uttering of a prophecy, that we have before us, but the opening it by fulfillment.* Here, then, One alone can be found "worthy" to open it. And though we know well who it is, yet we must note the character in which He is introduced to us.

The prophet weeps because no one is "found worthy to open the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, 'Weep not : behold, *the Lion of the tribe of Judah*, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book and the seven seals thereof.'"

This is in complete and striking accord with what we have already seen as to the change of dispensation which the vision shows to be taking place. The time of gathering from heaven being fulfilled, the body of Christ completed, and the saints of the New-Testament period caught up with those of former times to meet the Lord in the air, the fulfillment of Old-Testament prophecy, long suspended, begins again, and in the forefront of the world's history Israel find their place as of old. The "Lion of the tribe of Judah" here announces One who is taking up once more their cause, to crown it with speedy and entire victory. Power is soon to manifest itself in that sudden

* We may note here, although it is not necessary to this interpretation, that "and to read" in ver. 4 is omitted by the editors.

outburst of irresistible righteous anger of which the second psalm warns the kings of the earth: "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings! be instructed, ye that are judges of the earth! Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with reverence. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath shall suddenly kindle."

In this title, "Lion of the tribe of Judah," the whole significance of Jacob's ancient prophecy flashes out. "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be upon the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he hath stooped, he hath couched as a lion, and as an old lion,—who shall rouse him up?"

From this we must not disjoin what follows: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and to him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. xlix. 8-10).

Thus it is Christ that Jacob has in spirit before him, when he sees Judah assuming the lion-character. And when in David it actually rose up for a short time in the predicted manner, the brief glory of his kingdom only foretold and heralded the better glory of Christ's enduring one. And in this way the Lion of the tribe of Judah is not only the "Branch of David," springing out of the cut-down tree, but, as here, the *Root* also of David, from which David himself derives all real significance.

It is plain, then, that now the appeal of the eighty-ninth psalm is to be answered. David's throne is to be lifted up from the dust, and Judah's long-delayed hope is to expand into fruition. Strange is it to think how critics and commentators can, in the Lion of *Judah* opening the book of God's counsels, see only the general truth of Christ upon the throne of providential government, when it is plain, according to the undoubted reference, that the thought of Judah's Lion is inseparably connected with

that of *Judah* taking the prey, and then couching with a front of power which none will dare to excite: "*Judah*, thou art a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up; he hath couched as a lion—who shall rouse him up?"

It is not only ignorance of Scripture, but also of the perfection of Scripture, which operates in these beclouding views of the great prophecy before us, in which every expression, every nicety of utterance, is to be marked and estimated at its worth, because it *has* worth. If not one jot or one tittle could pass from the law, as the Lord Himself declared, till all were fulfilled, how impossible, then, for prophecy to have an irrelevant jot or tittle which can be safely disregarded! Go on, with this character that Christ has now assumed present in the mind, and is it strange or doubtful what can be meant by the sealing out of the twelve tribes, in the seventh chapter, with the separate gathering of the Gentile multitude afterward, "come out of (not merely great, but specifically) *the* great tribulation? All is clear and consistent in detail when we have correctly the general thought.

It is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, then, who prevails to open the book. The hindrance to the blessing of Israel and the earth is now removed. Christ has overcome. But how then overcome? What could be the impediment to the execution of divine purposes of goodness toward men, and how alone could evil be met, subdued,—nay, made to minister to higher blessing? This is what is now to be declared.

"And I saw standing in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb, as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth."

The Lamb is not here represented as upon the throne, but in the midst of a circle formed by the throne, the living creatures, and the elders. Lamb as He is (and the

word used emphasizes the connected thought of feebleness in some way), the attribute of perfect power is seen in the seven horns as that of omniscience is seen in the seven eyes, with the still more decisive interpretation given them. Still the feebleness is again marked, and to the extreme, in the note appended that it was "as though it had been slain." Weakness, then, we are to mark in the One depicted here as well as power, and the evident tokens of past suffering even to death, although alive out of death.

Evidently this is how He has prevailed. He has conquered death through dying, conquered it in its own domain by going into it, giving Himself a sacrifice, a vicarious offering, for the *lamb* was well known as that. Sin has been thus met by atonement; evil triumphed over by good, the might of pure love acting according to holiness, where power otherwise there was none, or it was against the Sufferer. This was the victory that opened the book.

But we must not read this as if it was meant to assure us that the Christian view of the Lamb has replaced or set aside or come as in a mystery to explain the Jewish conception of the Lion. This is the thought of many, but it is entirely wrong and hopelessly confusing. The Lion and the Lamb are but one blessed Person; and, moreover, One who remains, through whatever changes of position, wholly unchanging Himself,—“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever” (Heb. xiii. 8). This is true, and necessarily true, and it is our joy and consolation for all time; but it does not turn condemnation into salvation, or make the judgment of wrath a piping instead of mourning.

The Lion of the tribe of Judah is not a mere Jewish notion, but a true and scriptural conception. It is Jewish indeed—not Christian; and for that very reason cannot be the equivalent of the “Lamb as it had been slain.” And yet it is in His victory over death that He acquites

the power which as the Lion of Judah He displays. This is how the two views, in themselves so manifestly different, find their relation to one another.

Yet it is the Lamb that takes the book, and the Lion of the tribe of Judah who does so. As the first, He is the Interpreter of the counsels of redeeming love, as they embrace the whole circle of its objects. As the second, He takes up Israel specifically to deliver them from surrounding enemies and establish them in peace under the shield of His omnipotence. His title here has plainly to do with power displayed against the foes of His people. And this is what plainly gives the necessary stand-point from which we can see aright the meaning of the chapters which follow for the larger part of the remainder of the book.

Yet it is no wonder that up in heaven, among the redeemed, it is as the Lamb slain that the myriad voices celebrate Him, and the Lion of Judah seems to be forgotten. This is not really so; nor does it show that the one title is not to be distinguished from the other. When He acts according to the latter, we shall find how intense are the sympathies of this heavenly throng. To no act of His can there be indifference. But the praise and homage of heaven are to the Lamb slain. Redemption is what declares Him to the heart, and that a redemption by purchase, though redemption by power be its necessary complement. The Lamb slain gives the one side; the Lion of the tribe of Judah speaks of the other.

When the Lamb takes the book, the redemption-song is heard in heaven. "And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sing a new song, saying, 'Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with Thy blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and

nation, and madest them unto our God a kingdom and priests, and they shall reign over the earth."

In this "new song," the living creatures and the elders are united. The angels we find in the verses succeeding these, worshiping in a circle outside and in other terms. This surely is another sign of what is taking place, and where the vision brings us. The symbols of administrative government, which the living creatures present to us, are now connected with redeemed men; and no longer with angels. "Unto angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, 'What is man, that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory and honor; Thou didst set him over the works of Thy hands'" (Heb. ii. 5-8).

This is, of course, spoken of the Lord Jesus, but in Him *man*, according to the will of God, comes to the place of authority in the world to come, in which, in the book of Daniel, we find the angels. It is when the Son of Man takes His own throne that the saints reign with Him. Thus, in this song of redemption we have now "they shall reign over the earth." It is plain, then, that the vision here brings us to the eve of the millennial day.

Not only are the heavenly saints seen as about to enter on their reign over the earth; they are already in their character as priests, "having golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints." It is not said that they are offering them: they are, in fact, at that moment in another attitude; and this seems pointed out as to them, as if to be another of the marks of the period which is now beginning. Observe, they are never looked at as themselves interceding. They are charged with the prayers of others, but add nothing to them. There are no supererogatory merits that they have acquired, to give efficacy to what they present; and the prayers themselves are the incense, not incense is added to them. Romantism

finds here no atom of justification, such as some have alleged; but the statement of the text is plain, and we must abide by it. The risen saints are priests and kings to God. In the former capacity, they have the incense-prayers in their hand; in the latter, they are presently to reign over the earth, so that the cherubic living creatures and the elders are now seen together.

Thus the period of the vision is made as plain as possible, and the song of the redeemed is thus a "new" song, not because redemption itself was yet a new thing, but because it was now, as far as heaven itself was concerned, accomplished. Resurrection, the redemption of the body, was now accomplished, and the Lamb about to commence what He alone could undertake—the redemption by power of the earth also. At this point, the song of praise celebrates the completion of all as to the singers save the reign over the earth involved in what He is now taking in hand to do. Thus the song is new.

But is it their own redemption they are celebrating? The text as it used to be read made no doubt of this; but it is abandoned by the general consent of the editors, who accept substantially what the *R.V.* gives, except that, as to the last clause, there is still dispute whether it should be "they reign" or "they *shall* reign." I prefer the latter, as most according to the fact, authorities being divided. The result as to the whole is that the elders do not say, "Thou hast redeemed *us*, and *we* shall reign," but "Thou hast redeemed a people, and they shall reign." Instead of being specific, it is general, as to who the people are, although the last clause limits it to the heavenly family of the redeemed. The millennial saints do not *reign* over the earth. They inherit it in peace and blessing, but it is they who suffer with Christ who shall reign with Him (2 Tim. ii. 12).

The change puts emphasis upon the redemption, rather than upon the persons who are partakers of it; and this commends itself to spiritual apprehension. The Lamb

and His wondrous work fill the souls of His own with rapture as they fall before His feet: "THOU wast slain, and hast redeemed to God." But there seems to me no ground for what some allege from this change of text, that the heavenly saints here are celebrating the redemption of others and *not* their own! Why should this be? The language does not necessitate it; for if we say, "Thou hast redeemed a people," even though we are speaking of ourselves, it is quite in order to say, keeping up the third person all through, "and *they* shall reign." I agree with those who hold the view with which I cannot agree, that there is a company of martyrs after this who are, as such, to be joined to this heavenly company, and who are seen in this way as added to them in chap. xx. 4-6. But to think that in the vision before us the saints are praising Christ solely for the redemption of another class than themselves, is, I venture to say, extreme and incongruous. Surely we should not think, in praising Christ for redemption, of wholly omitting the thought that we ourselves are among the subjects of it! Every consideration here, moreover, would forbid the supposition.

Outside the circle of the redeemed, the angels have now their place and their praise. It has been often and justly remarked that they do not "sing." Their peaceful lives, not subject to vicissitude, nor touched by sin, furnish no various tones for melody. The harps which we have above are tuned down here, where the Davids, signalized by their afflictions, are the sweet singers of Israel. Wondrous and eternal fruit of earth's sorrow, though by divine grace only, the redeemed among men will be the choir of heaven! Blessed be God!

"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying as with a great voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb that has been slain,

to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.'"

Redemption has thus added to the angels' praise. It is not to the Creator only. And in this new praise, a new element of blessing, a new apprehension of God, has entered into their hearts. They are nearer, though in this outside circle, than they ever were before. In truth, though in some sense outside, our earthly idea of distance fails to convey the thought. Larger and smaller measures of apprehension there may be and will be, but true distance of the creature from the Creator is in heaven the one impossibility, where of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ *every* family is named. "Whither shall I go from Thy presence?" is never whispered; and the whisper of it, even in heaven, would make it hell.

And now, in a wider sweep again,—

"Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, even all that are in them, heard I saying, 'Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.' And the four living creatures said, 'Amen,' and the elders fell down and worshiped."

This is the voice of the lower creation in echo to the praise of heaven. It is such a response as many of the psalms call for in view of the coming of the Lord; and is another mark of the time of the vision. The earth under the desolation of the fall has for the time lost its place, as it might seem, and wandered as a planet from its orbit into the starless silence around. Christ, as her central Sun, has come back to her after the long polar darkness, and her voices wake up as the spring returns. Blessed it is to realize (so simple and natural as it is) the response to this response on the part of the human elders, as this sound is heard. The governmental powers of earth—the living creatures—utter their glad "Amen" to it. Earth is to repay the long labor and service of rule at last. And

the elders, with their own memories of sin and darkness (now forever but memories, though undying), hear it in a thrill of sympathetic joy that (as all the joy of heaven) melts into adoration: "The elders fell down and worshiped."

(*To be continued.*)

LEAVES.

THE leaf of a tree is its clothing and adornment. It is the fundamental type, as botanists tell us, of its whole structure. In a leaf, you may discern, if you look closely, a picture of the tree itself,—may see the comparative height of its stem, recognize its internal structure, measure the angle and study the pattern of its branches.

Spiritually, the leaf lies rather under reproach among us. From the fig-leaves, man's first of many inventions to cover his nakedness, to the tree which our Lord cursed for its having leaves but no fruit, they have become linked in our minds very much with the thought of emptiness and pretension—of something to be shunned rather than commended. The lesson to be enforced by them has thus come to be negative rather than positive—rather of warning than of encouragement. This is natural, perhaps, and to a certain extent right also. It is the lesson which the examples already referred to would surely impress upon us. Yet it is only a half truth and not the whole. It is *an* application, not *the* application, of this beautiful natural type, which has much more to convey to us even of warning, and from another side too, while it can speak encouragement also, and animate as well as search out the conscience.

Leaves are not unhealthy excrescences upon a tree, nor are they merely a beautiful covering. They have their use and their necessity. You may for a certain end contrast them with the fruit, and rightly, yet they are clearly

in no wise *adverse* to the fruit, but the contrary. They imply it, and are necessary to it. Strip the leaves from a tree, and you have not benefited the fruit; if done early and thoroughly, you have destroyed it; and the tree, if not suffered to retain its leaves, must die also. The leaves are both a glory and a necessity to it. For their use is, to expose the yet immature sap, the life-blood of the plant, as it comes up from the root, upon their broad and delicate surface to sun and air, that it may become (as only in this way it can become) fit material for its building up. Destroy, therefore, the leaf, all growth and development must stop until it be restored again. Suffer no leaf to be, the plant must die. It is thus many deep-rooted weeds can be extirpated from the surface by the continual cropping of their leaves alone.

Leaves imply fruit, though not always, as in that fig-tree which the Lord denounced. In it, the foliage fully developed—although the fig-season was not yet—was a profession that it was ahead of others of its kind, and that fruit was already there. Just so with the nation of Israel into the midst of which Christ had come—zealous for the law, and proclaiming itself Jehovah's servant, while in fact bringing forth no fruit for Him. This fruitless but leafy tree stands thus as the perfect type of empty profession.

And the leaf in its innermost meaning speaks of profession, which of course need not and should not be empty, and for which, where true, we have a better name. We call it, with the epistle to the Hebrews especially, "*confession*,"—a beautiful and noble word, and the value of which the leaf emphasizes for us in a remarkable way.

Look at it, as it waves its banner in mid-air, courting the observer's eye, as it witnesses to the tree upon which it grows. Not less, certainly, by its leaf than by its fruit (though there be a difference in the knowledge conveyed), is the tree known. And while the fruit is often hidden, and you must seek for it, with the leaf it is otherwise.

Every branch flutters with its signals. The whole tree, from top to bottom, often shows little but the leaf. Easy enough it is thus to realize its significance.

But this place of the leaf connects itself with its office. That it may fill this aright, the sun must play on it, the breeze must fan it; the life—for “the life is in the blood,” which for the plant the sap is—coming into publicity through the leaf, gains from it transforming, ripening influences. For this purpose is the breadth of the leaf, with its net-work of vessels spread over it,—the lungs of the plant, as it has been called,—for without this breathing of the fresh air continually, plant and animal alike will die.

It is surely quite possible to interpret this spiritually; and important the lesson must be too. May the Spirit of God grave it upon our hearts!

It is in the *open confession of Christ* that the life within us (that eternal life which consists in knowing the Father, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent) comes, so to speak, to the fresh air,—pronounces itself openly, and glorifies Him. You say, perhaps, that it is in the fruit rather: it is in the manifestation of Christian character, and of the graces which belong to it. Certainly I have no thought of denying the necessity of these, or that without them all profession of Christ must dishonor Him. But while this is true, what I was just saying is also true. The leaf is not the fruit, but we have seen how necessary to the fruit it is. So is the open confession of Christ to the production of properly Christian character and conduct. The “leaf” of confession is not the “root” of faith, nor the circulating “sap” of life either; but as the tree clothes itself with its foliage, so is there to be (corresponding to the internal) also an *external* putting on of Christ; and as the sap in the leaf meets the vivifying influence of sun and air, so will the open confession of Christ bring our lives under influences that correspond to this.

Let us listen to Scripture, and see if it does not say so plainly enough. “The righteousness which is of faith

. . . what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach; that, if thou shalt *confess with thy mouth* the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the *mouth confession is made unto salvation*" (Rom. x. 8-10).

Here, root and leaf, faith and confession, are plainly distinguished, but the necessity of the latter is enforced as strongly as nature enforces her typical lesson. Who indeed would dare say so much, if the word of inspiration had not here so plainly stated it for us? There it is: let no one take away from so solemn a statement.

Does it stand alone? No, assuredly it does not. Hear from the lips of our Lord another testimony: "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father which is in heaven. And whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. x. 32, 33). He repeats this in Luke xii. 8, 9. The apostle in 2 Tim. ii. 12 cites the latter part of this: "If we deny Him, He also will deny us." "Whosoever, therefore," says the Lord again, "shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He cometh in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels" (Mark viii. 38).

It is in heart-felt and open confession of Christ that we range ourselves with His followers, and separate ourselves from the world which has rejected Him; and the more fully and in every way this is done,—the more completely we identify ourselves with Him, the more will He identify Himself with us. If we suffer for His name, the Spirit of glory and of God will rest upon us.

In a professedly Christian land it may be thought there will be little of this; but that depends entirely upon how far His words are identified with Himself in our confession. Sad it is to say, and yet true, that but few pro-

portionately of His people are out and out in their acknowledgment of their Lord. Absolute uprightness still costs much; and the fear of man, the desire of approbation, the dread of singularity, of a loss of influence, and what not, operate upon us in ways we would not like to admit to ourselves. The loss must be great, however, in real fruitfulness. And here we are prone to make the great mistake of imagining that we ourselves are the sufficient judges of what is fruit. “Let my beloved come into his garden,” says the spouse of the Song of songs, “and taste his pleasant fruits.” Christ is the Judge of what pleases Him, and “to *obey* is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”

How beautiful is this open, whole-hearted putting on of Christ, when He is manifestly Lord of the whole man, and the life within us greets the air and sunshine! “His delight is in the law of the Lord; and”—sure test and sign of it—“in His law doth He meditate day and night. And He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, which bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither,”—over his profession no blight shall come. The true confession of Christ builds up the soul in Him, confirming faith and developing fruit, as the function of the leaf it is to build up the tree, and make even the root itself strike deeper into the ground.

“THE GRACE WHEREIN WE STAND.”

(Romans v. 2.)

ROMANS v. 1, 2 sums up in two verses the results of redemption which we now enjoy. 1. Peace with God; 2. We stand in grace; 3. Hope of glory.

It is a halting-place, to sum up results. Since Christ's death and resurrection have just been mentioned, it is fitting that the entire result for us of redemption should just at this point be briefly stated.

It is natural, therefore, that in what follows we should have further unfoldings of what this grace has brought us into. This we get in chaps. vi., vii., and viii.

Hence, to be in Christ, as well as justification from sins by the blood, is "the grace in which we stand."

We stand, therefore, justified from what we have *done* (Rom. iv.), and justified also from what we *are* as of Adam. (Rom. vi.) The latter is by death with Christ. "I am crucified with Christ." This is the way Paul became dead—dead to the law and to sin. He does not say his old nature was crucified, but "I am crucified with Christ." That is, he, as existing in the flesh, had come to an end by the cross. He was now in Christ risen. Hence, "our old man is crucified with Him," in Rom vi., does not say that the old nature was crucified. That would be a defective statement. But we, as existing in the old nature (in the flesh), have by the cross come to an end. We belong now to Him that was to come (Rom. v.), of whom Adam was the figure. We were of Adam, and had an evil nature, and were in an evil condition: we are now of Christ, and have a new nature, and are in a new condition in Him.

We were in Adam by life: we are in Christ by life. Thus, the latter part of Rom. v. is introductory to vi. and vii. It is one topic. Redemption and life are the subject, not the indwelling of the Spirit. "Alive unto God in Christ Jesus" is plain.

I am in Christ, then, by redemption—by life. But the reception of the Spirit does not redeem me. The sealing of the Spirit owns me as already redeemed as to the soul, and becomes the pledge of redemption as to the body.

But if I must receive the Spirit to be "in Christ," then redemption stopped short of putting me "in Christ," and there is no such thing as life in Christ, for the indwelling of the Spirit does not give me life.

E. S. L.

"THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."

8. SECULAR POWER AND "THE VOICE OF THE CHURCH."

THUS we have compassed the whole history of the kingdom of the absent One, up to its solemn close in judgment at His coming. The two parables now before us take us back from this, to look at the same scenes in other aspects.

And the two parables, however dissimilar in other respects, have this in common (wherein they differ from the former two), that they speak, not of individuals, but of the mass, as such. They give us the outward form as well as the inward spiritual reality of what Christendom as a whole becomes—of what it *has* become, we may very simply say, for the facts are plain enough to all, whether men question or not the application of the parables to those facts.

"Another parable put He forth unto them, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof'" (Matt. xiii. 31, 32).

Of this parable the Lord gives us no direct interpretation. It is stated, however, to be another similitude of the same kingdom spoken of by the former ones. And as Scripture must ever be its own interpreter, and we are certainly intended to understand the Lord's words here, we may be

confident the key to the understanding of it is not far off. Let any one read the following passage from the book of Daniel, and say if it does not furnish that key at once (the words are the words of the king of Babylon):—

"Thus were the visions of mine head upon my bed: I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. The tree grew and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth. The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and *the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof*, and all flesh was fed of it" (Dan. iv. 10-12).

This is interpreted of the king himself (v. 22): "It is *thou*, O king, that art grown and become strong." The figure, therefore,—which we have elsewhere, and always with the same meaning, (as Ezek. xvii. 5; xxxi. 3-6)—is that of worldly power and greatness. But the strange thing in Matt. xiii. is, that "the least of all seeds" should grow into such a tree. For the seed, here as elsewhere, is "the Word of the kingdom" (v. 19). And we have seen already how men treated that Word. The kingdom of the Crucified could have but little attraction for the children of the men who crucified Him. Human hearts are sadly too much alike for that. How could, then, a great worldly power come of the sowing of the gospel in the world?

Granted that it *has* become this, is this a sign for good, or the reverse? How could "My kingdom is *not* of this world" shape with this? And what proper mastery of this world could there be, —what overcoming of its evil with divine good,

where three parts of the professed disciples were, according to the first parable, unfruitful hearers merely, and (according to the second,) Satan's tares had been sown broad-cast among the wheat?

But if we want plain words as to all this, we may find them in abundance; and if, on the one hand, we know by what is round us that professing Christianity has become a power in the world, we may know on the other, both by practical experience and the sure Word of God, that it has become such by making its terms of accommodation with the world. It has bought off the old, inherent enmity of the world at the cost of its Lord's dishonor, by the sacrifice of its own divine, unworldly principles. He who runs may read the "perilous times" of the latter days written upon the forefront of the present days (2 Tim. iii. 1-5).

Yes, the little seed has become indeed a tree, but the "birds of the air" are in its branches. Satan himself* has got lodgment and shelter in the very midst of the "tree" of Christendom. The "Christian world" is the "world" still; and the "whole world lieth in the wicked one"† (1 Jno. v. 19). The opposition to Christ and His truth is from within now, instead of from without; none the less on that account, but all the more deadly.

Rome is the loudest assertor of this claim of power in the world, and what has Rome not done to maintain her claim? Her photograph is in Rev. xvii., xviii. Successor to the "tree"-like power of old Babel, she is called "Babylon the Great." And she is judged as having, while professing to be the spouse of Christ, made guilty alliance with the

*Comp. vers. 4, 9. †Not "in wickedness." Compare ver. 18; it is the same word.

nations of the world; "for all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies" (chap. xviii. 2). And alas! with the power of Israel's enemy, she has inherited also the old antipathy to the people of God: "I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration" (chap. xvii. 6).

This is the full ripe result. The beginning of it is already seen at Corinth even in the apostle's day: "Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you. . . . We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honorable, but we are despised" (1 Cor. iv. 8, 10).

Thus early was the little seed developing; thus quickly did the Christianity of even apostolic days diverge from that of the apostles. Paul lived to say of the scene of his earliest and most successful labors, "*All* that are in Asia have departed from me." Thus wide-spread was the divergence. Men that quote to us the Christianity of a hundred or two hundred years from that had need to pause and ask themselves what type of it they are following,—whether that of degenerate Asia, or "honorable," worldly Corinth, or what else.

That is the external view, then, which this parable presents, of the state of the kingdom during the King's absence. It had struck its roots down deep

into the earth and flourished. Such a power in the world is Christendom this day. Beneath its ample cloak of respectable profession it has gathered in the hypocrite, the formalist, the unfruitful, —in short, the *world*; and the deadliest foes of Christ and of His cross are those nurtured in its own bosom.

But we go on to the other parable for a deeper and more internal view:—

"Another parable spake He unto them: 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened' (Matt. xiii. 33).

Now what is "leaven"? It is a figure not unfrequently used in Scripture, and it will not be hard to gather up the instances to which it is applied and explained in the New Testament. We surely cannot go wrong in allowing it thus to interpret itself to us, instead of following our own conjectures.

The following, then, are *all* the New-Testament passages:—

Matt. xvi. 6: "Then Jesus said unto them, 'Take heed, and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.'" In the twelfth verse this is explained: "Then understood they how that He bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the *doctrine* of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."

The passages in Mark and Luke are similar (Mark viii. 15 and Luke xii. 1).

In 1 Cor. v. the apostle is reproving them for their toleration of the "wicked person" there. "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out, therefore, the old leaven

that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of *malice* and *wickedness*, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

There the "leaven" is *moral* evil, as in the gospels it was *doctrinal* evil. In Gal. v. 9 (the only remaining passage), it is again doctrinal. "Christ is become of no effect unto you whosoever of you are justified by the law. . . . Ye *did* run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not from Him that calleth you. *A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.*"

If we take Scripture, then, as its own interpreter, it must be admitted that "leaven" is always a figure of evil, moral or doctrinal, never of good. But it is possible to define its meaning and that of the parable still more clearly.

It is Lev. ii. that furnishes us in this case with the key. Among the offerings which this book opens with (all of which, I need scarce say, speak of Christ), the meat- (or "food-") offering is the only one in which no life is taken, no blood shed. It is an offering of "fine flour,"—Christ, not in the grace, therefore, of His atoning death, but in His personal perfectness and preciousness as the bread of life, offered to God, no doubt, and first of all satisfying Him, but as that, man's food also, as He declares, "He that eateth Me shall even live by Me."

Now it is with this meat-offering that leaven is positively forbidden to be mixed (v. 11): "No meat-offering which ye shall bring unto the Lord

shall be made with leaven." True to its constant use in Scripture, as a figure of evil, that which was a type of the Lord Himself was jealously guarded from all mixture with it. Now in the parable, the "three measures of meal" are just this "fine flour" of the offering. The words are identical in meaning. The flour is man's food, plainly, as the offering is, and thus interpreted spiritually can alone apply to Christ. But here, the woman is doing precisely the thing forbidden in the law of the offering,—she is mixing the leaven with the fine flour. She is corrupting the pure "bread of life" with evil and with error.

And who is this "woman" herself? There is meaning, surely, in the figure. And he who only remembers Eph. v. will want no proof that that figure is often that of the Church, the spouse of Christ, and subject to Himself. It may be also, as we have already seen, the figure of the professing body, as the "woman," Babylon the Great, is. In this sense, the whole parable itself is simple. It is the too fitting climax of what has preceded it: it is she who has drugged the *cup* in Rev. xvii., for the deception of the nations, adulterating here the *bread* also. The "leaven of the Pharisees" (legality and superstition), the "leaven of the Sadducees" (infidelity and rationalism), the "leaven of Herod" (courtierlike pandering to the world), things not of past merely, but of current history, have been mixed with and corrupted the truth of God. All must own this, whatever his own point of view. The Romanists will say Protestants have done so; the Protestants will in turn accuse Rome; the myriads of jarring sects will tax each other; the heathen will say to one and all, "We know not

which of you to believe: each contradicts and disagrees with the other. Go and settle your own differences first, and then come, if you will, to us."

The leaven is *leavening the whole lump*. The evil is nowise diminishing, but growing worse. No doubt God is working. And no doubt, as long as the Lord has a people in the midst of Christendom, things will not be permitted to reach the extreme point. But the tendency is downward; and once let that restraint be removed, the apostasy (which we have seen Scripture predicts) will then have come.

But men do not like to think of this. And I am prepared for the question (one which people have often put, where these things have been so stated) how can the *kingdom of heaven* be like "leaven" if leaven be always evil? Must not the figure here have a different meaning from that which you have given it? Must it not be a figure rather of the secret yet powerful influence of the gospel, permeating and transforming the world?

To which I answer,—

1. This is contrary to the tenor of Scripture, which assures us that, instead of Christianity working real spiritual transformation of the world at large, the "mystery of iniquity" was already "working" in the apostle's days in it, and that it would work on (though for a certain season under restraint) until the general apostasy and the revelation of the man of sin. (2 Thess. ii.)

2. It is contrary to the tenor of these parables themselves, which have already shown us (in the very first of them) how little universal would be the reception of the truth: three out of four casts of the seed failing to bring forth fruit.

3. The language from which this is argued—"the kingdom of heaven is like unto it"—does not simply mean that it is itself like "leaven," as they put it, but like "leaven leavening three measures of meal." The *whole parable* is the likeness of the kingdom in a certain state, not the "leaven" merely is its likeness.

Let any one compare the language of the second parable with this, and he cannot fail to see the truth of this.

Ver. 24.

"The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a *man*, which sowed good seed," etc.

Ver. 33.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto *leaven*, which a woman took," etc.

Is it not plain that the kingdom is no more simply compared to the "leaven" in ver. 33 than to the "man" in ver. 24? In each case the whole parable is the likeness.

The kingdom, therefore, need not be bad because the leaven is, nor the leaven good because the kingdom is. And into a picture of the kingdom in its present form evil may—and, alas! must—enter, or why judgment to set it right?

There is indeed but too plain consistency in the view of the kingdom which these parables present; and a uniform progression of evil and not of good. First, the ill-success of the good seed in the first parable; then, the introduction and growth of *bad* seed in the second. Then the whole form and fashion of the kingdom changes into the form and fashion of one of the kingdoms of the world. This is the Babylonish captivity of the Church. And lastly, the very food of the children of God is tampered with, and corrupted, until complete

apostasy from the faith ensues. Christ is wholly lost, and Antichrist is come.

Here, thank God, the darkness has its bound; and in the last three parables of the chapter, we are to see another side of things, and trace that work of God which never ceases amid all the darkness; His—

Whose "every act pure blessing is;
His path, unsullied light."

(To be continued.)

CHILDREN OF GOD IN THIS WORLD.

AS children of men we are known in this world; the world can point to us and say, "His father was so-and-so; and, according to our high or low connection in that way, honor or despise us.

As children of God we are not known, for the simple reason that our Father is unknown. Let any man in any circle, high or low, of this world's society be introduced *as a child of God*, and see what a blank astonishment will follow such an introduction. They know not God, therefore can they not appreciate such a relationship with Him. The man who is in that relationship, therefore, is, as such, a real stranger and foreigner in this world. His being born of God constitutes him that, and according to the degree in which he himself values this wonderful relationship, so will he realize his strangership among the very people where he, as a man, is so well known; so too will it practically separate him from their company, their object, their mode of life, their pleasures and pursuits.

But there is more. The way he has become a child of God is through faith in Jesus Christ, who, "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness," was "lifted up" on the cross, "that whosoever believeth in Him should

not perish, but have everlasting life." This blessed Jesus, therefore, becomes now the object and delight of his heart. How else could it be? It is by His suffering upon that cross that his sins are forgiven,—by His stripes that he is healed. It is by His blood that he has "boldness to enter into the holiest,"—the very presence of that holy God before whom the seraphim angels have to veil themselves. It is by His death that he is set free from the guilt and the dominion of sin,—that he escapes the visitation of the angel of death at midnight, passes out of the land of bondage, and passes into the land flowing with milk and honey.

Jesus is now, therefore, the object of his heart. "We love Him because He first loved us." As the man who, out of love, "leaves his father and mother, and cleaves unto his wife," so Christ left His Father and home in glory, and out of love to us suffered as none ever suffered. But, in return, the wife clings to her husband, and follows him all through. So with us who love Him. If He is in heaven, our hearts follow Him there, and are at home only there. If He is still rejected and despised by this world, we want naught else from the world than what they give Him. We cannot endure to be received and honored where He is refused and despised. Nay, more—we cannot even feel at home with His professed friends who give Him but a back seat, and grieve Him by their ways.

One will readily see that this is not pretending to be holier and better than this or that, but a natural outcome of a love that is true. No true wife could be at home where the husband she loves is not given the place which belongs to him. So no lover of Christ can ever be at home in this world while "Christ" is a despised name in it. Nor can he be more comfortable among those who profess His name while they have among them that which wounds the Lord. Therefore when the world has crucified Christ and cast Him out, God said to His

children, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 Jno. ii. 15).

He also foresaw what His professing people would do, and how things would turn out in the end, so He said again to His people, "In the last days, perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; *having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such TURN AWAY*" (2 Tim. iii. 1-5).

Oh, beloved brethren! children of the God of love!—oh, for such a measure of that devotedness of heart to our Lord as to make it morally impossible for us to abide with whatever dishonors Him, but will compel us to follow Him any where and at whatever cost! Thus, and only thus, shall we know the reality of our relationship with Him, even as He has said, "Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. vi. 17, 18).

P. J. L.

AN EXTRACT.

I BELIEVE there is great blessing attending family-prayer, and I feel greatly distressed, because I know that very many Christian families neglect it. Romanism, at one time, could do nothing in England, because it could offer nothing but the shadow of what Christian men had already in substance. "Do you hear that bell tinkling in the morning? What is that for?" "To go to church to pray." "Indeed!" said the puritan, "I have no need to go there to pray. I have had my children together, and we have read a portion of Scripture,

and prayed, and sang the praises of God, and we have a church in our house." "Ah! there goes that bell again in the evening. What is that for?" "Why, it is the vesper-bell." The good man answered that he had no need to trudge a mile or two for that, for his holy vespers had been said and sung around his own table, of which the big Bible was the chief ornament. They told him that there could be no service without a priest, but he replied that every godly man should be a priest in his own house. Thus have the saints defied the overtures of priest-craft, and kept the faith from generation to generation.

OH, HAPPY HOUSE!

OH, happy house! where Thou art loved the best,
 O Lord, so full of love and grace;
 Where never comes such welcome, honored Guest;
 Where none can ever fill Thy place;
 Where every heart goes forth to meet Thee,
 Where every ear attends Thy Word,
 Where every lip with blessing greets Thee,
 Where all are waiting on their Lord.

Oh, happy house! where man and wife in heart,
 In faith, and hope are one;
 That neither life nor death can part
 The holy union here begun;*
 Where both are sharing one salvation,
 And live before Thee, Lord, always,
 In gladness or in tribulation,
 In happy or in evil days.

Oh, happy house! where little ones are given
 Early to Thee in faith and prayer—
 To Thee, their Lord, who from the heights of heaven
 Guards them with more than mother's care.
 Oh, happy house! where little voices
 Their glad thanksgivings love to raise,
 And childhood's lisping tongue rejoices
 To bring new songs of love and praise.

*This is only true of union in Christ: marriage is, of course, dissolved by death.

Oh, happy house! and happy servitude!
 Where all alike one Master own;
 Where daily duty, in Thy strength pursued,
 Is never hard nor toilsome known;
 Where each one serves Thee, meek and lowly,
 Whatever Thine appointment be,
 Till common tasks seem great and holy,
 When they are done as unto Thee.

Oh, happy house! where Thou art not forgot
 When joy is flowing full and free;
 Oh, happy house! where every wound is brought—
 Physician, Comforter—to Thee.
 Until at last, earth's day's work ended,
 All meet Thee in that home above,
 From whence Thou comest, where Thou hast ascended,
 Thy heaven of glory and of love.

Spitta.

(Translated from the German.)

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

CHAP. I.—(Continued.)

WHAT occupied the Old-Testament prophets was, the Spirit's testimony to the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow (2i. 11). For them, history was filled up with the events of this earnest expectation. Therefore, were they living now, what would fill their minds, the cross having been accomplished, would be, the looking for the coming glories—not for what man has attained to and boasts of in civilization. Let this have weight with us. In the degree of our sympathy with the hopes of the men of this world are we out of communion with the spirit of those holy men of old who were subject to God. Eighteen hundred years of more or less of civilization and great achievement, would not their spirits have been awed by it, and have acknowledged a certain obligation to show some interest in the march of so great events? Well, the Scripture gives the answer. There were great empires and human expectations in their day, but their minds were set upon

the mystery of the cross—the humiliation and atoning death of a glorious Sufferer, and then the glory. So David also disposes of this whole age in a few words: “Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase;” but what was all that? His whole book is occupied with other things—the purposes of God for His people, and the glory of Christ’s kingdom, when man’s development will have met God’s power, and have been forever abased.

We pass on now to the thirteenth verse, to have our minds too set upon the same coming glories: “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end (or perfectly), for the grace that is to be brought into you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” This is the opening exhortation of the epistle. It is followed by so many exhortations that it would be a labor to count them, however happy and profitable a labor it would be,—such as, “Be ye holy,” “Love one another,” “Laying aside all malice,” “Desire the sincere milk of the Word,” “I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul,” “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man,” “Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands,” “Rejoice,” “Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God,” “Be sober, be vigilant,” and many more; so that we may say that Peter, among the writers of the New Testament, is an “exhorter.” He says, “I exhort” (chap. v. 1); “I beseech” (chap. ii. 11); “I have written briefly, exhorting and testifying” (chap. v. 12); and in the second epistle, “Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance;” “Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance;” and “This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you, in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance, that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandments of the Lord and

Saviour through your apostles." In behalf of all Scripture, then,—Old Testament and New Testament,—this apostle declares himself an exhorter. With all earnestness he pleads; filled himself with the love of Christ.

Reference to the Revised Version will show that ver. 13 is the beginning of a new paragraph, or division. Vers. 1 and 2 form the introductions, and from there to ver. 13 is a second paragraph; from ver. 13 is a third. "Wherefore," refers to the salvation just unfolded in the previous verses, and the example of the prophets, and of the angels. Note, now, the characters of this opening exhortation of this part of the New Testament, presented to us by the Spirit of God. In it we are exhorted to do what we have just been told the prophets did. They set their minds on the coming glory; so we are to hope for the revelation of Christ.

The revelation of Christ will be when He is revealed from heaven,—when He will appear in glory with His heavenly saints, for the blessing and establishment of His earthly saints in the millennium,—that is, for the blessing of Israel restored to their own land, and of the Gentiles, who to the ends of the earth will share the blessings of that day, of which Jerusalem will be the centre, as regards the earth.

The glory of Christ and His heavenly saints will then shine upon the earth and upon the earthly saints. "When Christ our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4). Israel—*i.e.*, a remnant—will be waiting for Him in their own land when He appears; but we shall not then be here, for, having been caught up to meet Him before the tribulation of Israel, we shall be seen with Him in glory at its close. Christ in (or among) you the hope of glory" (Col. i.),—that is, Christ, being the life of these Gentile Colossians, that was the assurance of glory when He came. Col. i. 5 shows it will be heavenly glory by the words "the hope that is laid up for you in heaven," and chap. iii. 4, already

quoted, that the glory will be at His second coming, when He will appear to all the world, and every eye shall see Him.

This is the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Let us lay fast hold of it, for many reject the hope of the Lord's coming, and many who accept it have given up the hope of heaven.

The Holy Scriptures present us both. Let, therefore, the loins be girded, the thoughts gathered in from worldly purposes, and fixed upon our proper hope.

In Egypt (Ex. xii. 11), when in type they are redeemed by blood, they were to eat of the passover-lamb with the loins girded, staff in hand, and shoes on their feet. So we, having been redeemed, the first thing is, again to have the girded loins, as in Luke xii.—“Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.” The Christian must reject unbelieving and worldly thoughts by occupation with his heavenly hope, as the fish that were clean (Lev. xi. 9) were those that had fins to propel themselves onward, and scales to shut out the element that surrounded them. All that had not these were to be an abomination to Israel. Such is the hatefulness of sin in God's sight. The hope of glory with Christ of necessity shuts out from the heart those things that all the world seek for with the whole heart. But this demands decision of purpose—“diligence to the full assurance of hope to the end, that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (Heb. vi. 11).

Let the heart be true and firm, and let us habituate ourselves to a steady contemplation of the unspeakable joy that awaits us, and refuse all those things that so easily make inroads upon our souls when the mind has lost its steadfastness.

In Rom. v. 2-5, we find how this Christian hope is confirmed in the heart by a godly walk, and daily victory in trials: "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us."

"Maketh not ashamed,"—that is, the Christian is not confused by the sorrows of the way, like the speculator whose dreams have been disappointed; but in these very difficulties and distresses, the tender love of God, by His Spirit, so strengthens the heart, that future and unseen glories are made more and more real to us now. . . This is the joy that, as Peter says, is full of glory.

There is a very beautiful summing, or brief expression, of this Christian experience in Rom. ii. 7: "To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory;"—that is, a beautiful way and shining path—"patient continuance in well-doing." This is the way God marks out the path to glory, and the glory at the end shines down upon us, and richly sustains on the way to it.

But impatience, unrest, the hands hanging down, the knees feeble, murmurs against God in the secret of the heart, and against man, and yielding to the lusts of the flesh,—not glory, but shame is at the end of that path.

The glory is hidden from us then, and we have taken things into our own hands, deluded by Satan.

Let us make haste to confess our sin, and cast out the intruder, and return to the Lord, and He will pardon; and glory and virtue will again sustain us, the mountain of trouble will be removed, and "every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth."

E. S. L.

"SINGING WITH GRACE
IN YOUR HEARTS TO THE LORD."

(Col. iii. 16.)

"SO God alone attunes the heart
His holy name to praise,
For nature, though refined by art,
True worship ne'er can raise;
The voice is tuned, alas! in vain:
Of praise it still is void,
Unless a man be 'born again,'
And truly 'taught of God.'"

GRACE AND GLORY.

"THE Lord will give grace and glory." All blessing, both for time and eternity, is folded up in these two words. Both come from Him, and both are the fruit, or expression, of His love. Grace was exhibited in David, and glory in Solomon. It was grace that raised David from his low estate to the highest honors, and it was the same grace that restored him when he wandered, that comforted him when in sorrow, that sustained him when in conflict, and that kept him safe until he reached his journey's end. But when grace had done its work in David, glory shines forth in Solomon. Glory was stamped on every thing under his reign; yet grace shone in all the glory. The two things are inseparable. All the glories of the rose are folded up in the bud, but it is chiefly in this world that grace has to do with us. This marks the great difference between grace and glory. Grace has to do with us in our weakness, failure, sorrow, and willingly brings the needed strength, restoration, comfort, and holy joy. It is the sweet and needed companion of the days of our humiliation. Oh! what a friend, what a companion, what a portion grace is for a soul in this world! and what an unspeakable blessing to know the grace of God in truth! The Lord will give

grace and *glory*. Forget not this, O my soul! reckon on both—on *grace* now, on *glory* hereafter. They can never fail.—(*Med. on Psalms.*)

“God of all grace, each day’s march He’ll bestow
The suited grace for all they meet below;
The God of glory, when their journey’s done,
Will crown with glory what His grace begun.”

A. M.

GOD PROPITIATED.

THERE are two scriptures in the Old Testament that seem to show plainly that God is propitiated by the sacrifice of Christ.

In 1 Chron. xxi. 16–27, when David had made his offering at Ornan’s threshing-floor, “the Lord commanded the angel (whose sword was stretched out over Jerusalem), and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof.”

And in Gen. viii. 20: “Noah builded an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings on the altar; and the Lord smelled a sweet savor; and the Lord said in His heart, ‘I will not again curse the ground.’”

All Scripture agrees with this, but these two scenes are impressively pointed.

E. S. L.

THE PARTING.

“Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.”

“Lo, I am with you always.”

IT came—the parting, and our weary
Hearts fell torn and bleeding at the feet
Of One who knew such pang:
His name—“The Man of Sorrows,”
No stranger He to grief, for once
Alone, despised, forsaken e’en of God,

His heart—divine, yet human—bore
 The load of all creation's misery!
 Man's hatred too—He bore it all,
 And yet loved on.

And now we needed not to call, for
 He had watched each moment
 Of our fleeting joy with tenderest
 Sympathy; His ear had caught the
 "Farewell" which the lips refused
 To utter; and His heart o'erflowed
 With love—with yearning, pitying love,—
 His arms He clasped around us,
 And our heads cradled upon His
 Breast; while to each weary child
 Spake He of *rest*. And from those
 Lips dropped on each wounded heart
 The fragrant myrrh, soothing,—
 Restoring.* Sweet was that hour of
 Peace! Deep in the ocean calm, when
 The waves are stilled, when the wild
 Winds sink to rest, and the last
 Thunder-roll dies murmuring away, and
 Faint grows the note of the storm-
 Bird's cry as she seeks her lonely nest.
 But stealing—slowly stealing along
 The eastern sky, are streaks of glory,—
 Harbingers of morn, telling of
 Coming radiance—of a cloudless day.
 So stealing—sweetly stealing upon
 The wondrous soul, came visions
 Of His glory, of joys before unknown;
 And on each listening ear fell there
 A sound of words most sweet—
 Speaking of *love* which could
Not change—of hope which fadeth
 Not,—of meetings in a land where
 Partings come not, and only joy
 Is known.

* * * * *

So *He* spake peace; and from
 Each heart burst forth a song
 Of praise! We could not grieve;
 Each aching void was filled;
 For *He* was ours, and was not
 His *enough?*

(Selected.)

* CURRENT EVENTS. *

GLIMPSSES OF DIVINE WORK IN THE MISSION-FIELD.

2. FRANCE IN AMERICA.

FROM France *in* France, which we have briefly glanced at, it is natural to turn to her children in foreign lands, and among these, above all, to Canada, her ancient colony, and where a large province still perpetuates her language and her religion. Is there any thing hopeful to say of this, perhaps one of the most obedient parts of the pope's dominions? For there the shock of revolution which is yet felt in the mother-country hardly reached, and the very disaster, as it might seem, which subjected a Romanist population to a Protestant power shielded the papacy under a toleration it would never have practiced, and a faithfulness to compact it has never shown.

Rome, Cardinal Gibbons assures us, believes in toleration; and there is no doubt she does so under Protestant governments, and wherever it means *toleration for herself*. Such was the case in the vaunted constitution of Maryland as a British colony. But Rome has openly and solemnly anathematized "those who assert the liberty of conscience and religious worship;"* and declares "the absurd and erroneous doctrines or ravings in defense of liberty of conscience are a most pestilential error, a pest of all others to be dreaded in the State."† And a prelate of her own has assured us that "religious liberty is merely endured until the opposite can be carried into effect without peril to the Catholic world."‡

That popery knows how to use toleration wisely for her own interests, no one that has inquired doubts; and

*Papal Encyclical, Dec. 8, 1864. †The same, Aug. 15, 1864. ‡Bishop O'Connor of Pittsburgh.

Canada, now smarting under the reincorporation of the Jesuits, and compensation made to them, is witness of this to her cost. A struggle is commencing there, for which Rome has been long gathering her forces and putting them in position all over North America, with all the generalship of a profound strategist.

But we have not now to do with this, grave as is its importance. For us, the soldiers of the pope are *men*, and as such, of the number of those for whom Christ died, and our interest now is in what has been done or is doing among these French in Canada in the salvation of souls. In answering this, I shall draw mainly from a book now in its tenth edition, and therefore not by any means new, the history of the beginning of a movement which has been going on for over thirty years, but with which many are yet little acquainted, however well the name of the chief instrument used by God is known. I refer to "Father" Chiniquy, still familiarly so styled, and his "Fifty Years in the Church of Rome."

The book is a clear, bold, and terrible delineation of Romanism viewed from inside,—a picture which *ought* to rouse us, if any thing can, to a sense of the spiritual need of the millions intralled in its fearful bondage, and to earnest and constant effort for their deliverance. They are found on every side of us, needing no journey to a foreign land to seek, and no study of a foreign tongue in order to address ourselves to them. Yet how little is done! or attempted to be done! The easy claim for them that they are Christians, because they profess allegiance to Christ, dulls the many into indifference, which on their side is at least not reciprocated. For them, we are outside the pale of salvation. They at least realize a difference which it is our shame, with the open Bibles of which we boast in our hands, that we can make so little of. History, too, is lost upon us, because we are simple enough to believe that with changed times Rome too is changed. And she is changed indeed, and is changing:

only from bad to worse; the long descent ever steeper, till the pit swallows her up! "Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth"!

Mr. Chiniquy's book is like the opening of a sepulchre, indeed is the exposure of a *living* corruption, which is worse than that of death can be. Decency revolts at some of the details, and Rome, he tells us, counts upon her loathsomeness as too great to be exhibited in its full reality. But the light is not defiled by what it exposes, and there needs to be told what God permitted our author doubtless to go through his twenty-five years of priesthood, that he might thoroughly know and reveal.

These fifty years in the church of Rome illustrate indeed the strength of the system which could retain so long one lacking in neither courage nor acuteness. In his father's house the Bible even was read, and his first chapter recounts the effort of the priest, at that time useless, to remove it from it. "To the Bible, read on my mother's knees," he declares, "Thou knowest, O God, I owe by Thy infinite mercy the knowledge of the truth to-day: that Bible had sent to my young heart and intelligence rays of light which all the sophisms and dark errors of Rome could never completely extinguish."

One of the first horrors that popery had for him came, when yet a mere child, in the shape of the confessional,—a torture and a pollution both in one. Henceforth it was to be a spectre dogging his heels continually. The nameless and filthy questionings as to unknown and scarce conceivable impurities, forced to be answered fully under penalty of mortal sin, and which he finally had to force on others; the sins following too commonly, and growing out of this defilement; the malignant, devilish wickedness of a system which foreknows and provides for the iniquity which it unrelentingly presses upon its victims: all this in the most startling ways the book reveals. It can only remind one vividly of that atrocity of the canon law: "If the pope should become neglect-

ful of his own salvation, and of that of other men, and so lost to all good that he draws down with himself innumerable people by heaps into hell, and plunges them with himself into eternal torments, yet no mortal man may presume to reprehend him, forasmuch as he is judge of all, and is judged of no one."*

This is Rome, which deliberately sends its celibate priests into this slough of immorality, exposing them to every temptation, calculating upon their fall, insuring them what secrecy and immunity it can, until "the reign of the priest" becomes, to use the language of a Roman Catholic, "the reign of corruption and of the most bare-faced immorality under the mask of the most refined hypocrisy: it is the degradation of our wives, the prostitution of our daughters" (p. 34).

Mr. Chiniquy assures us that there are multitudes of women who will rather die in what they are taught is mortal sin than answer the impure questions which are proposed in the confessional. "Not hundreds, but thousands of times, I have heard from the lips of dying girls, as well as married women, the awful words, 'I am forever lost! All my past confessions and communions have been so many sacrileges. I have never dared to answer correctly the questions of my confessors. Shame has sealed my lips and damned my soul.'"

As to the priests, it was the testimony of the bishop of Chicago to our author, "The conduct of the priests of this diocese is such that, should I follow the regulations of the canon, I would be forced to interdict all my priests with the exception of you and two or three others. They are all either notorious drunkards or given to public or secret concubinage. . . . I do not think that ten of them believe in God" (p. 559). A very similar statement he represents as having been made as to his own diocese, by the bishop of Quebec (p. 192).

And no wonder! Read the account of their education

* Decretal, pars i, distinct. xi, can. vi. (The Papacy, by Dr. Wylie, p. 131.)

and preparation for the priesthood, and it is easily explained. "It is the avowed desire of Rome to have public education in the hands of the Jesuits. She says every where that they are the best, the model teachers. Why so? Because they more boldly and successfully than any other of her teachers aim at the destruction of the intelligence and conscience of her pupils." The teaching of Loyola is well known: "That we may in all things attain the truth, that we may not err in any thing, we ought ever to hold as a fixed principle that *what I see white I believe to be black* if the superior authorities of the church define it to be so."

Liguori, a Romish saint, and an eminent teacher, adds in "The Nun Sanctified:" "Blessed Egidius used to say that it is more meritorious to obey man for the love of God than God Himself. It may be added that there is more certainty of doing the will of God by obedience to your superior than by obedience to Jesus Christ, should He appear in person and give His commands. St. Philip de Neri used to say that the religious shall be most certain of not having to render an account of the actions performed through obedience; for these the superiors only who commanded them shall be held accountable."

"To study theology in the church of Rome," says Mr. Chiniquy, "signifies to learn to speak falsely, to deceive, to commit robbery, to perjure one's self. . . . I know that Roman Catholics will bravely and squarely deny what I now say. . . . Nevertheless they may rest assured it is true, and my proof will be irrefutable. . . . My witnesses are even infallible. They are none other than the Roman Catholic theologians themselves, approved by infallible proofs" (p. 119). He then quotes abundantly for his purpose, but the lack of space will not permit my following him.

All through his studies he shows how reason and conscience (both stout Protestants) had to be continually beaten into submission to superior authority. The final vow, "I will never interpret the Holy Scriptures except

according to the unanimous consent of the Holy Fathers," fell upon him like a thunderbolt. He had not, any more than the other students, "given a single hour yet to the serious study of the holy fathers." "I know many priests," says one, "and not a single one of them has ever studied the holy fathers; they have not even got them in their libraries. We will probably walk in their footsteps. It may be that not a single volume of the holy fathers will ever fall into our hands. In the name of common sense, how can we swear that we will follow the sentiments of men of whom we know absolutely nothing, and about whom it is more than probable we will never know any thing, except by mere vague hearsay?"

Chiniquy himself had deeper trouble in his knowledge than in his ignorance. He was aware, by what he had learned of church-history, that there were "public disputes of holy fathers among themselves on almost every subject of Christianity."

"During the months," he goes on, "which elapsed between that hard-fought though lost battle and the solemn hour of my priestly ordination, I did all I could do to subdue and annihilate my thoughts on the subject. My hope was that I had entirely succeeded. But, to my dismay, reason suddenly awoke, as from a long sleep, when I had perjured myself, as every priest has to do. A thrill of horror and shame ran through all my frame in spite of myself. In my inmost soul a cry was heard from my wounded conscience, 'You annihilate the Word of God.'"

What wonder if infidels and immoral men are thus abundantly manufactured? It is the legitimate result of such a process; and the immorality every where he bears witness to. Led by the representations of the superior of a monastery to escape from what he saw in others and feared for himself in the ranks of the secular clergy, he enrolled himself among the Oblates of Mary Immaculate at Longueuil, only to hear from one of the best among

them this answer to the question, "Where is the spiritual advantage of the regular clergy over the secular?"—

"The only advantage I see is that the regular clergy give themselves with more impunity to every kind of debauch and licentiousness than the secular. The monks, being concealed from the eyes of the public, inside the walls of the monastery, where nobody, or at least very few people have any access, are more easily conquered by the devil, and more firmly kept in his chains, than the secular priests. The sharp eyes of the public, and the daily intercourse the secular priests have with their relations and parishioners, form a powerful and salutary restraint upon the bad inclinations of our depraved nature. In the monastery there is no restraint, except the childish and ridiculous punishment of retreats, kissing of the floor or of the feet. . . . There is surely more hypocrisy and selfishness among the regular than the secular clergy. . . . Behind the thick and dark walls of the monastery or the nunnery, what has the fallen monk or nun to fear?"

Thus universal is the corruption of Rome. We cannot wonder that twice over the torch of the incendiary has reduced to ashes the electrotypes plates and many volumes of Mr. Chiniquy's book. Nor have they spared the writer, as we shall see. We have now the happier task of tracing the steps by which he himself, and with him many thousands more, have been brought by God into gospel light and liberty.

(To be continued.)

SIR ISAAC NEWTON once constructed a large globe, accurately exhibiting the continents, islands, mountains, rivers, lakes, and other features of the earth's surface. An agnostic philosopher, calling to see him, greatly admired the fine mechanism, and eagerly asked who made it. "Chance," was the stinging reply.

"THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN,"

9. THE DIVINE COUNSEL AND PURPOSE.

THE three parables which remain to be considered have found interpretations more various and conflicting than the preceding ones, and require, therefore, an examination proportionately the more careful. The former were all spoken (with the exception of the interpretation of the second one,) in the presence of the whole multitude, and they refer to a condition of things to which the world at large is this day witness. But "then," we read, these four parables having been delivered, "Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house, and His disciples came unto Him" (v. 36). To these alone He speaks the parables which follow, for they contain, not external history merely, but the divine mind surely fulfilling amid all this outward confusion and ruin, which the former parables have shown Him not ignorant of who foretold it from the beginning.*

It will not be necessary to advert to different views prevailing as to the meaning of the parables before us, but only to seek to show from Scripture itself, as fully as possible, the grounds for that which will here be considered as the true.

The first two parables we shall put together, as

*The very number of the parables tells of this. For as there are seven in all, the number from creation onward the type and symbol of completeness,—so this number seven is divided further into *four* and *three*. "Four" is the number of universality, of the world at large, from the four points of the compass, (as I take it)—east, west, north, and south. "Three" is the divine number—that of the Persons in the Godhead. Here, then, the first four parables give us the world-aspect of the kingdom of heaven; the last three, the divine mind accomplishing with regard to it.

they invite comparison by their evident resemblance to one another:—

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which, when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man seeking goodly pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it" (*vv.* 44-46).

The parables are alike in this, that they both present to us the action of a man who purchases what has value in his eyes at the cost of all he has. The question is, who is presented here? The common voice replies that it is man as the seeker of salvation or of Christ,—that we have here the story of individual effort after the "one thing needful," flinging aside all other things in order to obtain it. But is this consistent with the constant representations of Scripture, or with the facts themselves? Do we thus buy Christ at the cost of all we have? It is true we have in the prophet the exhortation to "buy" (*Is.* iv. 1), where the "wine and milk" are no doubt the figure of spiritual sustenance. But there (that there may be no mistake in such a matter), the "buying" is distinctly said to be "*without* money and *without* price." Man is never represented as seeking salvation with wealth in his hand to purchase it. The prodigal seeks, but not until perishing with hunger. He comes back beggared, driven by necessity, and only so. And all who have ever come back really to the Father know this to be the truthful representation of the matter.

On the other hand, the real Seeker, Finder,

Buyer, every where in Scripture, is the Lord Jesus Christ. The figure in both parables is most evidently His. The same Person is represented in each, and the same work too, though under different aspects.

In the first parable, it is treasure hid in a field that is the object of the Buyer. "The field," we are told in the interpretation of the parable of the tares, "is the world." It is an object in the *world*, then,—an earthly object,—that is sought for and obtained. So in this parable He is represented as buying "that field"—buying the world. He buys the field to get the treasure in it. Most certainly no man ever bought the world to get Christ, so that the believer is not the "man" represented in the parable.

Did Christ, then, buy the world by His sufferings? Turn to the last chapter of this gospel, and hear Him say, as risen from the dead, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and earth." Strictly, it is "authority," not "power." He has title over all, and that as the risen One. "Ask of Me," is the language of Jehovah to the Son begotten upon earth, "and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession" (Ps. ii.). Thus He takes the throne in the day of His appearing and His kingdom. It is because of that wondrous descent of One "in the form of God" down to the fathomless depths of "the death of the cross," that "*therefore* hath God highly exalted Him, and given Him a name above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to

the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii). It is that explains, what perplexes some, that Peter can speak of those who, "denying the Lord that *bought* them, bring upon themselves swift destruction" (2 Pet. ii. 1). These are not at all *redeemed* ones, but they *are* "bought," for all men and all the world belong to Him as the fruit of His sufferings,—of that cross, where He, for the sake of that which had beauty in His eyes, sold all that He had.

Thus I conceive it unquestionable, that it is Christ Himself who is the central figure in these two parables. We may now compare the two sides of His work presented in them. In that of the treasure, we have seen it is the field of the "world" that is bought for the sake of the treasure in it; while in that of the pearl, no field is bought at all, but simply the pearl itself. Are these two figures, then, the treasure and the pearl, different aspects of the same thing, or different things?—the same object from different points of view, or different objects?

If we look for a moment at what has been already pointed out as to "the kingdom of heaven" of which these parables are both similitudes, we shall see that there are two spheres which it embraces, answering to those words of the Lord we have just quoted, "All authority is given unto Me in *heaven* and in *earth*." Christ is now, as a matter of fact, gathering out from the earth those who are to "sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven"—not in earthly, but in heavenly blessing. But before "the *appearing* and kingdom," this purpose having been accomplished, and the heavenly saints caught up to meet the Lord,—He will gather to Himself, for blessing upon the earth, a remnant of Israel and an election of the

Gentiles. Take the two purposes of Christ's death as expressed in Jno. xi. 51, 52, you have it as the inspired comment upon Caiaphas' advice to the Jewish council,—“And this spake he, not of himself, but being high-priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die *for that nation*; and not for that nation only,” adds the inspired writer, “but that *also* He should gather together in one the children of God which are scattered abroad.” Now I ask, is it not significant that we find in the second of these parables the very type of UNITY,—the *one* pearl,—as that which the merchant man bought? Is it not, then, permissible and natural to turn to the other with the anticipation of finding in it “that nation” of Israel, for which also Jesus died, under the figure of the “treasure hid in the field”?

Thus would Israel on the one hand and the Church upon the other be the representatives of earthly and of heavenly blessing: the Gentile nations coming in to share with Israel the one as the departed saints of the past dispensations come in to share with the Church the other. The reason why these two alone should be spoken of, and not along with the Church the saints of former times, or along with Israel the Gentiles of the future, will, I think, be plain to those who consider the Scripture mode of putting these same things. Thus to Israel belong the “promises,” as Rom. ix. 4 declares. The Gentiles no more come into view there than they do in the parable of the treasure here. Yet many a scripture promises the blessing of the Gentiles on a future day. But they come in under the skirts of the now-despised Jew (Zech. viii. 23). Then again, as to the Church, it is the only company of people gathered openly and avowedly for heavenly

blessing. And moreover, it is the company that is being gathered *now*, and began to be with the sowing of the gospel-seed in the first parable of those before us.

Let us look now somewhat closer into the details of the parable of the treasure hid in a field.

Of old it had been said, "The Lord hath chosen Jacob unto Himself, and Israel for His peculiar *treasure*." (Ps. cxxxv. 4.) But at the time when He who had so chosen them came unto His own, there was but little appearance in the condition of the people of the place they had thus in Jehovah's heart. "Lo-Ammi,"—"not My people," had long been said of them. They were even then scattered among the Gentiles. The figure of the treasure hid in the field was the true similitude of their condition, watched over as "beloved for the fathers' sake," and yet trodden down by the foot of the oppressor, to none but Him who yet longed over them known as having preciousness for God.

But there was One who recognized the value of this treasure. One who had in His birth fulfilled to Israel Isaiah's prophecy of Emmanuel,—"God with us." One to whom, so born, Gentiles had brought their homage as "King of the Jews." He found this treasure, presenting Himself among them as One having divine power to meet their condition, and bring them forth out of their hiding-place, and make manifest the object of divine favor and delight. And those who knew best His thoughts were ever expecting the time when He would bring forth this treasure and display it openly. That question which they had proposed to Him after His resurrection shows what had

long been in their hearts, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

And they understood not when they saw the gleam of brightness which had shone out for them when He rode in the meekest of triumphs, amidst the acclamations of the multitude, into Jerusalem, fade and die out in the midday darkness which so shortly after fell on Calvary. They understood not yet how He was in all this but the "man" in His own parable, who, finding treasure in the field, *hideth it*, and for joy thereof goeth forth and selleth all that He hath, and buyeth that field.

And the treasure is hidden still. Calvary is come and gone,—Joseph's new tomb is emptied of its guest,—they have stood upon the mount called Olivet, and seen Him whom they have owned King of the Jews go up to take another throne than that of David. Then they are found charging the people with their denial of the Holy One and the Just, bidding them still repent and be converted, and even now, He who had left them would be sent back to them, and the times of refreshing come from the presence of the Lord. Scenes before the council follow; one at last in which a man, whose face shines with the glory of heaven, stands and charges the leaders of the nation with the accumulated guilt of ages,—“Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do alway resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye.” And they cast him out of the city and stone him. Those that were bidden have been called to the marriage, and they will not come.

The city is destroyed, and the people scattered. Israel are still a treasure hid. The parable gives no bringing forth. Simply the field is bought. It

is now but "Ask, and I will give Thee." All waits upon the will of Him to whom now every thing belongs.

But *He* waits, and has waited for eighteen centuries, as if the treasure were nothing to Him now and He had forgotten His purpose.

Then the second parable comes in as what is needed by way of explanation of the long delay. The "one pearl of great price" speaks of the preciousness to Him of another object upon which He has set His heart. "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it"—"went and sold all that He had and bought *it*." Not now the field of the world, for the Church is heavenly. Israel has still the earthly "promises." *We* are blessed with all spiritual blessings in *heavenly* places in Christ Jesus.

This Church is *one*—one pearl. Brought up out of the depth of the sea, and taken out of the rough shell in which it is first incased—taken out at the cost of the life of that to which it owes its being, the pearl is a fitting type of that which has been drawn out of the sea of Gentile waters, and out of the roughness of its natural condition, at the cost of the life of Him in whom it was seen and chosen before the foundation of the world. Of how "great price" to Him, that death of His may witness. The title which the Christian heart so commonly and naturally takes to be His alone, it is sweet to see that *His* heart can give His people. We, dear fellow-believers, are His precious pearl. Nor is there any "hiding again" here, or suspension of this purpose. This is the second meaning of the cross, "who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it."

“THINGS THAT SHALL BE:”

AN EXPOSITION OF REVELATION IV.—XXII.

PART I.—(Continued.)

The Opening of the Seals: The First Four Seals.

(Chap. vi. 1, 2.)

THE Lamb having taken the book, the opening of the seals at once follows. When they are all loosed,—and not before,—then the book is fully opened. The seals then give us the introduction to the book, rather than (as many have imagined,) the complete contents. Beyond the seals lie the trumpets, contrasted with the seals in their nature: the latter are divine secrets opened to faith; the trumpets, loud-voiced calls to the whole earth. These go on to the setting up of the kingdom in the seventh trumpet; and after that, we have only separate visions giving the details of special parts, until in the nineteenth chapter we reach again a connected series of events, stretching from the marriage of the Lamb through the millennium to the great white throne.

The opening of the seals, then, gives us events introductory, as regards both time and character, to what follows, and which have their importance largely in this very fact. The opening of them is the key to the book; for when they are opened, the book is. Yet they only set us upon the threshold of the great events which precede the setting up of the kingdom of Christ, the time of the trumpets; while on the other hand they contain the germ and prophecy of these, which spring out of them as it were necessarily.

In the Lord's great prophecy of Matt. xxiv., which similarly sets before us the time of the end, we have, before the period of special tribulation connected with the abomination of desolation in the holy place, an order of things which has often been compared with what we

find under the seals. Nor can we compare them without being struck with the resemblance. The Lord specifies here, as warning-signs of His coming, false Christs, wars, and rumors of wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes, and persecution of His people. In the first and second seals we have correspondingly war—that of conquest and civil war; in the third, famine; in the fourth, pestilence; in the fifth, the cry of the martyrs; and in the sixth, a great earthquake, though perhaps only as a symbol of national convulsion. Only the false Christs seem to be entirely omitted, and some have therefore imagined that the rider on the white horse in the first seal—coming, it must be admitted, in the right place to preserve the harmony with the gospel,—might fill the gap. But this we must look at later on. The correspondence is sufficiently striking to confirm strongly the thought that the seals refer to the same period as does the passage in the gospel, the time preceding and introducing the great tribulation of the end.

Looking again at the seals, we find they are divided, like most other septenary series, into four and three; the first four being marked from the rest by the horse and rider which is in each, and by the call of the living beings by which each is introduced. Their relation to each other is plainer (or more outward) than in the case of the last three, as may be observed also in such series generally. And how beautiful and reassuring is this rhythm of prophecy! The power of God every-where controlling with perfect ease the winds and waves in their wildest uproar, so as for faith to produce harmony where the natural ear finds only discord. Significant is it that in no other book of Scripture have we so much of these numberings and divisions and proportionate series as we have in the book of Revelation.

The call of the cherubim at the opening of the first four seals is also significant. It is to be noted that it is not addressed, as in our common version, to John, but to the

riders upon the horses, who then come forth. It is not "Come and see," but "Come," as the *R.V.*, with the editors in general, now gives it. The living beings utter their call also in the order in which they have been seen in the vision: for although in the first instance it is said, "*one* of the four living beings," not "*the first*," yet in the case of the other seals they are named in order—second, third, and fourth. And we shall find a correspondence in each case between the living being and the one who comes forth at his call.

We have seen that the cherubic figures speak of the government of God, in the hands of those who are commissioned of Him to exercise it. And thus the vail of the holiest, the type of the Lord in manhood—"the vail, that is to say, His flesh" (Heb. x. 20)—was embroidered with cherubim. To Him they have peculiar reference as the King of God's appointment; and the four gospels, as has been seen by many, give in their central features these cherubic characters in the Lord, and again in the order in which the book of Revelation exhibits them. The Lion of Judah we find in Matthew's gospel, where Christ looked at as Son of David. Mark gives us, on the other hand, the young bullock—the Servant's form. Luke meets us with the dear and familiar features of manhood,—the "face of a man;" while in John we have the bird of heaven—the vision of incarnate Godhead. These aspects of the Gospels I may assume to be familiar to my readers: here is not the place to consider them.

Now Christ has been seen in heaven in a double character:—the Lion of the tribe of Judah is the Lamb that was slain. It is the title under which He takes every thing, for it is that which shows Him as the One who has bought every thing by His surrender of Himself unto death. He is the "man" who, according to His own parable, having found in a field hidden treasure, went and sold all that he had, and bought that field. "The field," He says again Himself, "is the world."

But the Lord's death had also another side to it. It was man's emphatic rejection of God in His dearest gift to him,—just in his sweetest and most wonderful grace. While every gospel has a different tale to tell of what Christ is, every gospel has also, as an essential feature, the story of His rejection in that character. As Son of David, as the gracious Minister to man's need, as God's true Man, or as the only begotten Son from heaven, He is still the crucified One. Man has cast out with insult the divine Saviour,—has refused utterly God's help and His salvation. What must be the result? He must—if in spite of long-suffering mercy he persist in this,—remain unhelped and unsaved. He has cast out the Son of God; and why? Because he was His essential opposite: "the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." The world which rejects Christ as finding nothing in Him naturally is the world which owns Satan as its prince. He who rejects Christ is ready for Antichrist; and so He says to the Jews, "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive."

Thus man's sin foreshadows the judgment which must come upon him. This is no arbitrary thing. The law is the same physically and morally,—"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." In the true sense here, man is the maker of his own destiny.

And this will prepare us to understand the cherubim-call for judgment. If the living beings represent characters of God's government, and characters also which are found in Christ, we can find here a double reason why, Christ being rejected, the judgments come forth at the cherubim's call. A rejected Saviour calls forth a destroyer. The voice of the lion summons to his career the white-horsed conqueror.

This shows us, then, that it is not Christ who is thus represented. Many have supposed so, naturally comparing with it the vision of the nineteenth chapter, where

Christ comes forth upon a white horse to the judgment of the earth. But the comparison really proves the opposite. We have not, certainly, under the first seal, already reached the time of Christ's appearing. And the symbol of judgment is unsuited for the going forth of the blessed gospel of peace. The gospel-dispensation is over now, and the sheaves of its golden harvest are gathered into the barn. Not peace is it now, but war. Peace they would not have at His hands: its alternative they have no choice as to receiving. Christ received would have been an enemy only to man's enemies. Power would have been used on his behalf, and not against him: that rejected, the foes that would have been put down rise up, and hold him captive.

This, then, is the key to what we have under the first seal: a few words must suffice for the present as to the other details.

The horse is noted in Scripture for its strength, and as the instrument of war: other thoughts believed to be associated with it seem scarcely to be sustained. It indicates, therefore, aggressive power, and a *white* horse well known as the symbol of victory. In the *rider*, who of course governs the horse, there seems generally indicated an agent of divine providence, though it may be not merely unintentionally so, but even in spirit hostile. The rider here is not characterized save by his acts. His bow is his weapon of offense, which speaks not of hand-to-hand conflict, but of wounds inflicted at a distance. The crown *given him* seems certainly to imply, as another has said, that he obtains royal or imperial dignity as the fruit of his success, though by whom the crown is given does not appear. Altogether we have but a slight sketch of the one presented to us here, and one which might fit many of whom history speaks; but this is *divine* history, and the person before us must have an important connection with the purposes of God, to earn for him the leading place which he fills in the beginning of these visions of earthly doom.

We naturally ask, Can we find no intimations elsewhere of this conqueror? It appears to me we may; and I hope to give further on what I think Scripture teaches as to it, not as pretending to dogmatize as to what is obscure, but presenting simply the grounds of my own judgment for the consideration of others. If it be not the exact truth, it may yet lead in the direction of the truth.

Some preliminary points have, however, first to be settled; and for the present it will be better to content ourselves with noting the detail as to this first rider, and to pass on.

The second living creature is the patient ox. True figure of God's laborer, strength only used in lowly toil for man, it speaks to us of Him who on God's part labored to bring man back to Him, and plow again the channels back to the forsaken source, so that the perennial streams might fill them, and bring again to earth the old fertility. Yet here the ox calls forth one to whom it is "given to take peace from the earth, and that they should slay one another." Civil war is bidden forth by that which is the type of love's patient ministry. Yes, and how fitly! For just as if received, God having His place, all else would have its own; so, rejected, all must be out of joint and in disorder. Man in rebellion against God, the very beasts of the earth rebel in turn. Having cast off affection where most natural, all natural affection withers. Man has initiated a disorder which he cannot stop where he desires, but which will spread until all sweet and holy ties are sundered, and love is turned (as it may be turned) to deadliest opposition.

In the third seal the third living creature calls: the one with the face of a man. At his call, famine comes. We see a black horse, and he that sits on him has a pair of balances in his hand; and there is heard in the midst of the living beings a voice which cries, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius, and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine." A denarius,

which was the ordinary day's earnings of a laboring man, would usually buy eight quarts of wheat, one of which would scarcely suffice for daily bread. It is evident, therefore, that this implies great scarcity.

The congruity of this judgment with the call of the living being is not so easy to be understood as in the former cases. Were we permitted to spiritualize it, and think of what Amos proclaims, "Not a famine of bread, nor a thirst of water, but of hearing the words of the Lord, such a famine would, on the other hand, suit well; for "the face of a man" reminds us how God has met us in His love, and revealed Himself to us, inviting our confidence, speaking in our familiar mother-tongue, studying to be understood and appreciated by us; and assuredly this familiar intercourse with Him is what we want for heart-satisfaction. "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," was not an unintelligent request so far as man's need is itself concerned. The unintelligence was in what the Lord points out, "Have I been so long time with you, and hast thou not known *Me*, Philip? He that hath seen *Me* hath seen the Father."

Here, then, man's need is fully met. The hunger of his soul is satisfied. The bread from heaven is what the *Son of Man* alone gives, and it is meat that "endures to everlasting life." And this rejected,—the true manna loathed and turned from,—what remains but a wilderness indeed, a barren soil without a harvest?

But this gives only a hint of the real connection: for this seal following the other two, seems evidently to give a result of these. What more simple and natural than that after conquest and civil war,—above all, the latter,—the untilled soil should leave men destitute? Still more, that the oil and the wine, which do not need in the same way man's continual care, remain on the whole uninjured? An ordinary famine seems to be intended, therefore; yet the connection has been hinted as already said: for the natural is every where a type of the spiritual, and depends

on it, as the lesser upon the greater. Our common mercies are thus ours through Christ alone. Take away the one, the other goes. A natural famine is the due result of the rejection of the spiritual food. With the substance goes the shadow also.

That the third living creature calls for famine, then, may in this way be understood, and it shows how the greater the blessing lost, the deeper the curse retained. Christ rejected strikes every natural good.

And when we come to the fourth seal, and the flying eagle summons forth the pale horse with its rider Death, Hades following with him to engulf the souls of the slain, the same lesson is to be read, becoming only plainer. John's is the gospel to which this flying eagle corresponds,—the gospel of love and life and light, each fathomless, each a mystery, each divine. Blot this out—reject, refuse it, what remains? What but the awful eternal opposite, which the death here as from the wrath of God introduces to?

These initial judgments, then, are seen to speak of that which brings the judgment. The day of harvest is beginning, and man is being called to reap what he has sown. The darkness which begins to shut all in is the darkness not merely of absent, but rejected light.

This, in its full dread reality, no one that is Christ's can ever know. Yet before we leave it, it is well for us to realize how far for us also rejected light may be, *and must be*, darkness. We are in the kingdom of Christ, children of the light, delivered from the authority of darkness. Around us are poured the blessed beams of gladdening and enfranchising day. And yet this renders any real darkness in which we may be practically the more solemn. It too is not a mere negative, not a mere absence of light, but light shut out. And darkness itself is a kingdom, rebellious indeed, yet subject to the god of this world. To shut out the light—any light—is to shut in the darkness, and thus far to join the revolt against God and good.

And the necessary judgment follows,—for us, a Father's discipline, that we may learn, in our self-chosen way, what evil is, but learn it, that at last we may be what we must be, if we are to dwell with Him, “partakers of His holiness.” But will it not be loss,—aye, even eternal loss, to have had to learn it so?

Who would force the love that yearns over us to chasten, instead of comforting,—to minister sorrow, when it should and would bring gladness only? *THERE IS NO MERE NEGATIVE.* In that in which we are not for Christ, we are against Him. To shut Him out is a wrong and insult to Him. And these quick-eyed cherubim, careful for the “holy, holy, holy God” they celebrate, will they not, must they not, call forth the judgment answering to the sin?

(To be continued.)

THE WISH OF PAUL IN CHAINS.

ACTS XXVI.

IT is much, dear friends, to say with Paul to Agrippa, “I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.” (*v.* 29.)

There is what the apostle could say from the bottom of his heart to those who surrounded him, that they might be such as he was, without his bonds. He might have answered to Agrippa, who had said to him, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian” (*v.* 28), “Would to God that thou wert.” The answer would have been good, and according to charity; but it would not have presented us with a state such as that expressed by the words of the apostle, whose heart, full of joy, overflows with this charitable wish. A happy heart does so naturally.

The apostle was pressed to say what he knew,—that is, to express what was passing in a heart which enjoyed its position in God. His soul was so happy that he could

desire the same thing for others of which he had the consciousness for himself. Joy is always full of good-will; divine joy, of love. But more; this wish describes to us the state of the apostle's soul, notwithstanding his circumstances. Notwithstanding his confinement, which had already lasted more than two years, his heart was completely happy; it was a happiness of which he could render himself a reason; and all that he could desire was that those who heard him, even the king, were such as he was, except those bonds.

Such is the effect of the strange happiness that is produced in a soul wherein Christianity is fully received. It possesses a happiness which in principle leaves nothing to be desired, and which is always accompanied by that energy of love which is expressed by the wish that others were such as itself. We see, moreover, here that it is a happiness which outward circumstances cannot touch; it is a fountain of joy springing up within the soul. . . .

Paul had been taken and led to the castle because of the violence of the people. He had been dragged from tribunal to tribunal. He had languished two years in prison, obliged to appeal to Cæsar. And, to sum up his history, he was a man that might have been supposed to be worn, harassed as he was, pressed on all sides by all that can break the heart and daunt the courage. But there is nothing of this: he speaks before the tribunal of what he came to do at Jerusalem, and not of his sufferings. He was in the midst of all these things, as he says himself, exercising himself to keep always a conscience void of offense before God and man. All the difficult circumstances through which he passed were idle to him, and did not reach his heart; he was happy in his soul; he desired nothing but this happiness for himself and others, and the happiness which fills with perfect satisfaction is surely a remarkable happiness. True, he was bound with chains, but the iron of his chains reached not his heart: God's freed-man cannot be bound with chains. And he

desired nothing else, neither for others nor for himself, save this complete enfranchisement by the Lord. All he could wish was that all might be altogether such as he was, without his bonds.

J. N. D.

* CURRENT EVENTS. *

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GLIMPSES OF DIVINE WORK IN THE MISSION-FIELD.

2. FRANCE IN AMERICA.—(*Continued.*)

WE have been witness to some of Mr. Chiniquy's battles with his conscience as to the doctrines and practices of the church of Rome. They were many times repeated, and although superstition continually gained the victory, yet the memory of the conflict could not but have a certain effect. These conflicts had relation to some of the most distinctively Romish doctrines,—confession, transubstantiation, the vow of celibacy, the authority of the fathers, the mediation of the virgin Mary: the last of them indeed left a wound that seems never to have been healed until about eight years afterward he finally turned his back on the apostate church.

It was in the end of the year which witnessed this last struggle that he was called to leave Canada for a new field in the western states, which it was proposed to plant with colonies of French Canadians; on the one hand to prevent the risk to their religion which was involved by their being scattered among the Protestant population,—a considerable emigration having already begun; and on the other, to secure a fertile region for the dominion of the pope. Into this project Mr. Chiniquy threw himself with an energy that was natural to him, never dreaming that he was to be the chief cause of its failure, and that

God had appointed him thus to be the leader in a great exodus from the land of bondage, whose yoke was yet upon his own soul.

He selected St. Anne, Illinois, as the beginning of his enterprise, and ten days after selecting it, fifty families from Canada had planted their tents around his, on the site of the present town of that name. In about six months after, they had grown to over a hundred families, among whom were more than five hundred adults. Six months after this, again, they came not only from Canada, but from Belgium and France. "It soon became necessary to make a new centre, and expand the limits of my first colony, which I did by planting a cross at L'Erable, about fifteen miles south-west of St. Anne, and another at a place we called St. Mary, twelve miles south-east, in the county of Iroquois. These settlements were soon filled; for that very spring more than a thousand families came from Canada to join us;" during the six months following, more than five hundred more, and so the colony rapidly extended.

The exposure of the licentiousness of the priest of a parish not far off was, under the merciful hand of God, the means of introducing the Word of God among them. Many asked of Mr. Chiniquy where in the gospel Christ had established the law of celibacy. He replied, "I will do better: I will put the gospel in your hands, and you will look for yourselves in that holy book what is said on that matter." New Testaments were ordered from Montreal and from New York; and they soon began to do their work. The glorious "promises of liberty which Christ gave to those who read and followed His word made their hearts leap with joy. They fell upon their minds as music from heaven. They also soon found by themselves that every time the disciples of Christ had asked Him who would be the first ruler, or the pope, in His Church, He had always solemnly and positively said that in His Church nobody would ever become the first,

the ruler, or the pope. And they began seriously to suspect that the great powers of the pope and his bishops were nothing but a sacrilegious usurpation. I was not long without seeing that the reading of the Holy Scriptures by my dear countrymen was changing them into other men."

Meanwhile, exposure came upon exposure. The burning of the church of Bourbonnais by the priest just mentioned and another, was followed by the collapse of the bishop of Chicago, whom Chiniquy had loved and revered, and after his resignation and appointment to another bishopric, one of the first things done by the new bishop was to bring his predecessor before the criminal courts, to recover \$100,000 carried away by him out of the diocese.

The new bishop was much worse, and Chiniquy became the object of his bitter enmity. A suit against him undertaken by another, but with the bishop's sympathy, failed, but was the beginning of a long succession of such attacks, by which he was pursued long after he had abandoned the church of Rome forever.

The decree of the immaculate conception of the Virgin, Dec. 8th, 1854, came to increase the uneasiness already some time begun in his heart. A few days after he had read it to his congregation, he had to own to one of the most intelligent among them, in opposition to the assertion of the pope, that the doctrine was not in Scripture, but opposed to it; not in the fathers, and declared by many popes not to be an article of faith. And when the question naturally came, "If it be so with this dogma of the church, how can we know it is not so with the other dogmas of the church, as confession, purgatory, etc.?" he could only say, "My dear friend, do not allow the devil to shake your faith. We are living in bad days indeed. Let us pray God to enlighten us and save us. I would have given much that you had never put to me these questions!"

But the questions remained, burning into his soul.

In the end of August, 1855, he was in Chicago, at a "spiritual retreat" for the clergy of the diocese, in attending which he was witness to frightful scenes of license and disorder which we shall not enter upon. He had already left when he was called back by the bishop, and charged with distributing Bibles and Testaments among his people. He owned that he thought, as he was bound to preach the Word to them, so it was his duty to give it to them, and he urged Pope Pius VI.'s approval of Martini's translation. The bishop replied that the translation by Martini which the pope advised the Italian people to read formed a work of twenty-three big folio volumes, which of course nobody except very rich and idle people could read. "Not one in ten thousand Italians has the means of purchasing such a voluminous work, and not one in fifty thousand has the time and will to peruse such a mass of endless commentaries. The pope would never have given advice to read such a Bible as the one you distribute so imprudently." And he ended with the threat, "If our holy church has in an unfortunate day appointed you one of her priests in my diocese, it was to preach her doctrines, and not to distribute the Bible. If you forget that, I will make you remember it!"

Mr. Chiniquy had again to be in Chicago shortly after this, to try and defend his countrymen from the rapacity of the bishop, but he only succeeded in enraging him more than ever against himself. As a preliminary step toward an interdict, he was sued again in the criminal court of Kankakee by an agent of his, and when the verdict of this court was given in his favor, the case was appealed to Urbana; and in this court, the spring following, he was defended by Abraham Lincoln, then practicing law in Illinois, and with whom, to the end of his life, he enjoyed the closest friendship. Mr. Chiniquy clearly proves that it was by a Roman Catholic conspiracy that President Lincoln's life was ended; and it was in the defense at

Urbana that the enmity to which he fell a victim was first aroused against him.

Meanwhile the French Canadian congregation at Chicago had been dispersed by its chief shepherd, their priest interdicted and driven away, the parsonage sold, and the church removed five or six blocks, and rented to the Irish Catholics, the proceeds going into the bishop's pocket. By Chiniquy's advice, a deputation from the congregation waited upon him, to whom he answered, "French Canadians, you do not know your religion! Were you a little better acquainted with it, you would know that I have the right to sell your churches and church-properties, pocket the money, and go and eat and drink it where I please." After that answer, they were ignominiously turned out of his presence into the street. Mr. Chiniquy himself was sent for, and ordered to leave St. Anne for Kahokia, three hundred miles away, under penalty of interdict.

A sham excommunication followed, issued without the bishop's own signature, and administered by drunken priests; but the people of St. Anne vigorously supported their pastor, and the blow fell harmless. The trial at Urbana came on shortly afterward, and a new charge on the part of an old enemy threatened him with ruin which the mercy of God averted, exposing the malice and perjury of the accuser by the introduction of a new unhoped-for testimony; and Mr. Chiniquy's deliverance was achieved.

The struggle with the bishop of Chicago, however, was not ended, but grew continually to larger proportions. It was closed at last by an appeal to the pope and the French emperor, and the bishop was ordered to Rome and disappeared from the scene, while the bishop of Dubuque was named administrator of the Chicago diocese. With him Chiniquy had still to make his peace, for his rough handling of the former bishop had raised dangerous questions of Protestantism at St. Anne. He was asked, therefore, for a written act of submission, to show to the world that he was still a good Roman Catholic priest.

Protestant he was not, but there were doubts in his soul which had never been settled and would not be bidden away. He said to himself, "Is not this a providential opportunity to silence those mysterious voices which are troubling me almost every hour, that in the church of Rome we do not follow the Word of God, but the lying traditions of men?" He wrote down in his own name and that of his people, "*We promise to obey the authority of the church according to the Word and commandments of God as we find them expressed in the gospel of Christ.*"

It was with a trembling hand that he presented this to the bishop, but it was received with joy, and a written assurance promised him of a perfect restoration of peace. This reached him while in retirement for a short time in Indiana, and reconciliation with Rome seemed now complete. On the contrary, it was now that the breach was to become full, final, and irrevocable.

He was startled by another letter from the bishop of Dubuque, calling him thither, and on his way through Chicago learned that the Jesuits were astir, assailing him as a disguised Protestant. The administrator and the Jesuits themselves had telegraphed the submission to several bishops, who unanimously answered it must be rejected, and another and unconditional one given instead. Accordingly, when he reached Dubuque, the bishop demanded his testimonial letter from him, and having received it, threw it in the fire. He then referred to the terms of the submission which had been given him, and pressed for another. "Take away," he said, "these words: 'Word of God' and 'gospel of Christ' from your present document, and I will be satisfied." Chiniquy replied,—

"But, my lord, with my people I have put these words, because we want to obey only the bishops who follow the Word of God. We want to submit only to the church that respects and follows the gospel of Christ."

In reply, he was threatened with punishment as a rebel if he did not give the unconditional submission which was

required. But again Chiniquy answered, "What you ask is not an act of submission, it is an act of adoration. I do absolutely refuse to give it."

"If it be so, sir," he answered, "you can no longer be a Roman Catholic priest."

"I raised my hands to heaven," says Mr. Chiniquy, "and cried with a loud voice, 'May God Almighty be forever blessed!'" After all those weary years, deliverance had come at last.

How truly, he had yet to realize. The work had yet to be done in his soul which should make him aware of it. He had loved and honored the Word of God, and when he found that the church to which he clung was in fundamental opposition to the Word,—when he had to make his choice between the two,—he did not hesitate. But then this church, out of which he had believed was no salvation, now that it was gone, where was salvation? A moment of dreadful darkness followed: he knew not! He, alone, forsaken of man, the link broken with every thing that he had counted dear before, seemed to himself forsaken of God as well. Prostrate, desolate, undone, Satan pressed upon him the awful relief of suicide for his despair, but God's mercy stopped his hand, and the knife fell upon the floor.

From the Word of God, to which he turned now in his distress, the answer came at length. His eyes fell upon the words, "YE ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE: BE YE NOT THE SERVANTS OF MEN" (1 Cor. vii. 23). It was the new creative word, filling his soul with light and peace. "Jesus has bought me!" he said to himself; "I then belong to Him! He alone has a right over me! I do not belong to the bishops, to the popes; not even to the church, as I have been told till now. Jesus has bought me: then He has saved me! and if so, I am perfectly saved—forever saved! for Jesus cannot save me by half. Jesus is my God; the works of God are perfect. My salvation must, then, be a perfect salvation! But how

has He saved me? What price has He paid for my poor guilty soul? As quick as light the answer came: "He bought you with His blood shed on the cross! He saved you by dying on Calvary!"

He said to himself again, "If Jesus has perfectly saved me by shedding His blood on the cross, I am not saved, as I have taught and preached till now, by my penances, my prayers to Mary and the saints, my confessions and indulgences, nor even by the flames of purgatory." The fabric of Romanism, struck by the Word of God, fell into ruin and disappeared. "Jesus," he says, "alone remained in my mind as the Saviour of my soul."

Once more, however, the darkness returned upon him. His sins appeared like a mountain, and under them he seemed crushed utterly. He cried aloud to God, but it seemed as if He would have nothing to do with such a sinner, but was ready to cast him into the hell he had so richly deserved. This lasted for a few minutes of unspeakable agony, and then the light began again to penetrate the darkness, and Jesus began to be seen once more. To his intensely aroused sensibility it seemed as if he actually saw the Saviour, and heard Him offering Himself to him as a gift,—His precious sacrifice as a gift to pay his debt of sin, and eternal life too as a gift. He saw Him touch the mountain of his sins, and it rolled into the deep, and disappeared, while the blood of the Lamb fell in a shower upon him to purify his soul.

The result was real and permanent: fear had given place to courage and strength. His longing was now to go back to his people, and tell them what the Lord had done for him. Ere he reached them, they had received a telegram from the bishop, bidding them turn away their priest, for he had refused to give him an unconditional act of submission. But they unanimously said, "He has done right; we will stand by him to the end."

Of this he knew nothing when, arriving on the Lord's day morning at St. Anne, he stood in the midst of a con-

gregation of a thousand people, to speak to them of his new position and his new peace. When he told them he was no longer a Roman Catholic priest, "a universal cry of surprise and sadness filled the church." But he went on, giving them the full detail of his interview with the bishop, then of his darkness and desolation, then of the light and joy which succeeded this; and then he offered them the GIFT he had accepted, and besought them also to accept it. Finally he told them he was prepared to leave them, but not before they themselves told him to go; and closed with, "If you believe it better to have a priest of Rome, who will keep you tied as slaves to the feet of the bishops, and who will preach to you the ordinances of men, rather than have me preach to you nothing but the pure Word of God, as we find it in the gospel of Christ, tell it me by rising up, and I will go!"

But no one stirred of all the many there; weeping as they were, they sat in silence. Chiniquy was puzzled. After a few minutes, however, he rose up, and asked, "Why do you not at once tell me to go? You see that I can no longer remain your pastor after renouncing the tyranny of the bishops and the traditions of men, to follow the gospel of Christ as my only rule. Why do you not bravely tell me to go away?"

But still they sat; and something in their faces shining through their tears spoke to the heart of their astonished pastor. With a sudden inspiration of hope he told them,—

"The mighty God, who gave me His saving light yesterday, can grant you the same favor to-day. He can as well save a thousand souls as one." And he closed with, "Let all those who think it better to follow Jesus Christ than the pope, better to follow the Word of God than the traditions of men,—let all those who want me to remain here and preach to you nothing but the Word of God, as we find it in the gospel of Christ, tell me so by rising up. I am your man. Rise up!"

And without a single exception, that multitude arose!

"More than a thousand of my countrymen," says Mr. Chiniquy, "had forever broken their fetters. They had crossed the Red Sea, and exchanged the servitude of Egypt for the blessings of the promised land."

It was the beginning of a work which has gone on ever since. "In a few days, four hundred and five out of five hundred families in St. Anne, had not only accepted the gospel of Christ as their only authority in religion, but had publicly given up the name of Roman Catholics. A few months later, a Roman Catholic priest, legally questioned on the subject by the judge at Kankakee, had to swear that only fifteen families had remained Roman Catholics at St. Anne."

About the middle of the year 1860, "the census of the converts taken gave us about six thousand five hundred precious souls already wrenched from the iron grasp of popery."

In Montreal afterward, "in the short space of four years, we had the unspeakable joy of seeing seven thousand French Canadian Roman Catholics and emigrants from France publicly renounce the errors of popery, to follow the gospel of Christ."

In the prosecution of this work, Mr. Chiniquy has had to pass through much; in the thirty years that have followed, not less than thirty public attempts have been made upon his life. Thirty-two times he has been before the courts of Montreal and Illinois; and in one case alone, seventy-two false witnesses were brought to support the accusation.

Yet, as ever, all this has turned to the furtherance of the gospel; and to day, says Mr. Chiniquy, "the gospel of Christ is advancing with irresistible power among the French Canadians, from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans . . . Among the converts, we count now twenty-five priests, and more than fifty young zealous ministers born in the church of Rome."

“THINGS THAT SHALL BE:”

AN EXPOSITION OF REVELATION IV.—XXII.

PART I.—(Continued.)

The Last Three Seals (Rev. vi. 9–17; viii. 1).

THE first four seals have thus shown to us judgments poured out upon the earth,—judgments which are the necessary result of the rejection of Christ, now completed by the refusal of the gospel for so many centuries of divine long-suffering. The fifth opens to us a very different scene: here are beheld “under the altar, the souls of them that were beheaded for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.” Persecution has broken out against the people of God; for such there are still upon the earth, though the saints of the present time are with the Lord in glory. Heaven being filled, the Spirit of God has been at work to fill the earth with blessing; and here, as we know, God’s ancient people are the first subjects of His converting grace. The remnant of that time could be fitly represented by those disciples of the Lord to whom He addressed the great prophecy of His coming, Jewish as they were still in conceptions and in heart; and to these, after such warnings as had been fulfilled in the former seals, He says, “Then shall they deliver you up to tribulation, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all the nations (the Gentiles) for My name’s sake.” The two passages agree with one another and with nature.

Woe unto those who in a day of wrath upon the world for the rejection of Christ go into it to insist upon His claim! And that is what is meant by “the gospel of the kingdom” which the Lord tells us “shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all the nations, and then

shall the end come" (Matt. xxiv. 14). "Glad tidings" though it may be that the kingdom of righteousness at last is to be set up, and the King Himself is at hand,—to those who reject Him, it is the announcement of their doom. And we see under this fifth seal what will be the result. The Word of God will again have its martyrs, but whose cry will not be with Stephen, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!" but with the martyrs of the Old Testament, "The Lord look upon it, and require it!" "And they cried with a loud voice, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge, and avenge our blood on them that dwell upon the earth?'"

The cry is now in place, as is the pleading for grace in a day of grace. Judgment is indeed to come, and the time when God "maketh inquisition for blood" (Ps. ix. 12); but though at hand, there is yet a certain delay, for, alas! even yet, the measure of man's iniquity is not reached. "And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants and their brethren, who should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."

Two seasons of persecution seem to be marked here, though with no *necessary* interval between them; though the crash that follows under the sixth seal, with the terror thus (if but for awhile) produced, might well cause such a cessation of persecution for the time being. Whether this be so or not, the two periods are surely here distinguished. A much later passage (chap. xx. 4) similarly distinguishes them, while it enables us to recognize the latter of these periods as that of the beast under his last head: "And I saw thrones, and they sat on them"—those already enthroned in chap. iv. and v.,—"and the souls of those that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God,"—those seen under the fifth seal,—"and such as had not worshiped the beast, nor his image, and had not received his mark upon their fore-

heads or in their hands"—here are their "brethren that were to be slain as they were,"—"and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

The distinction between these two periods proves the introductory character of the seals, at least as far as we have gone. The time of the *great* tribulation is not come; just as, in Matt. xxiv. 9, the persecution prophesied of precedes it. Thus the martyrs here, while owned and approved, have yet to wait for the answer to their prayer. *Some* answer, it need not be doubted, the next seal gives; but plainly, it cannot be the full one: there are decisive reasons for refusing the thought entertained by many, that it is really the "great day of the Lamb's wrath" which is come. Men's guilty consciences make them judge it to be this; but that is only their interpretation, not the divine one.

A terrible break-up of the existing state of things it is: "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great convulsion; and the sun became as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood; and the stars of 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. And the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the chief captains, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman and freeman, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of 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 shall be able to stand?"

Well may it seem to be so; and just such physical signs are announced in Joel (ii. 31 and iii. 15) before "the great and terrible day of the Lord shall come." Just so also the Lord speaks of what shall take place *after* the tribulation: "Immediately after the tribulation of those

days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken; and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. xxiv. 29, 30).

The sixth seal precedes the tribulation, however, as we have seen; except this could occur between the fifth and sixth, and were passed silently over. This would be a very violent supposition in view of what we have already seen, and of what follows the sixth seal itself, as we may see presently. The rolling up the heavens as a scroll, moreover, goes beyond the language of Joel or of the Lord, carrying us on, indeed, to the passing away of the heaven and earth which precedes the coming in of that "*new* heavens and earth in which dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. iii. 13). But this is impossible to be thought of as occurring in this place. The only other practicable interpretation, therefore, must be the true one,—the language is figurative, and the signs are not physical, though designedly given in terms which remind us of what indeed is swiftly approaching, though not yet actually come.

And in this way the general significance is not difficult to apprehend. The heavens in this way represent the seat of authority. Nebuchadnezzar had to learn that the "heavens rule" (Dan. iv. 26). And they represent figuratively rule also on the part of man. In the Old-Testament prophets, we have similar pictures to that before us here (Isa. xiii. 10; xxxiv. 4), where the context shows that national convulsions are prophesied of. Here, it is evidently the collapse of governments, the shaking of all that seemed most settled and secure. All classes of men,—high and low, rich and poor, are involved in the effect of it, and their stricken consciences ascribe it as judgment to the wrath of God and the Lamb. In their alarm, they imagine He is just about to appear; but He does not, and

the panic passes away. A new state of things is introduced, of which the features unfold themselves.

When we might now expect the opening of the seventh seal, we find instead the parenthetical visions of the seventh chapter; and there is a similar interruption in exactly the same place in the trumpet-series: the vision of the little book and the two witnesses comes in between the sixth and seventh trumpets. This exact correspondence claims our attention. One result of it is, to make the septenary series an octave, and to give, therefore, to the last seal and the last trumpet alike the character of a seventh and yet of an eighth division. Let us inquire for a moment into the significance of these numbers in this connection.

The numbers are, in their scriptural meaning, in some sense opposite to one another. "Seven" speaks of completion, perfection, and so cessation. Seven notes give the whole compass in music. On the seventh day God ended all His work which He had made, and rested. The eighth day is the first of a new week,—a new beginning. The eighth note is similarly a new beginning. The essential idea attaching to the number in its symbolic use in Scripture is that of what is new, in contrast with the old which is passed away,—as the new covenant, the new creation. As outside the perfect seven, it adds no other thought.

Now if we will remember the character of these seals, that they keep the book closed, it follows of course that the seventh seal opened opens for the first time really *the book itself*. This in fact introduces us therefore to what is a new thing. We were up to this time in the porch or vestibule merely. Immediately the last door is opened we are in the building itself.

Does not this account for the fact that on its opening there is simply a brief pause—"silence in heaven for the space of half an hour,"—and then come the trumpets? This is exactly according to the seven-eight character of the closing seal. One period is over, and with this we

begin another. The last seal is open, and this discloses, not a bit more introduction, but *the book itself*.

The seventh trumpet will be found in these respects very like the seventh seal. It too is brief; and while closing the trumpet-series of judgment—in fact the three special woes,—opens into another condition of things, not woe at all, but the time long looked for, when “the kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever” (chap. xi. 15). Thus the seven-eight structure justifies itself in both series, of seals and trumpets.

But before the seventh seal comes a parenthetical vision, which is not a part of the seals really, but a disclosure of what is in the mind of the Lord, His purpose of grace fulfilling steadfastly amid all the strife and sorrow and sin which might seem to prevail every where. Let us now give it our careful attention.

(*To be continued.*)

THE POWER OF AN ASSEMBLY TO BIND AND TO LOOSE.

(Matt. xviii. 17, 18.)

I. THE MORAL LIMIT OF ITS POWER.

IN the prophetic announcement of the failure of the Church which has come to us from the Lord's own lips in the addresses to the seven churches, if the root of decline is found, as it surely is, in Ephesus,—“Thou hast left thy first love,”—the *formal principle* of it is no less plain in Smyrna, where those are who “say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.” The introduction of Jewish principles into the Church of God was that which prepared the way for clerisy, ritualism, and in due course, Romanism itself. I am not now going into the proof of this: it scarcely needs for those for whom I am at present writing. So rapid was the descent, in fact, that the Church of the New Testament never ap-

pears as such on the pages of merely human history; and ritualism appeals with confidence and success to the whole body of so-called "fathers" in its own behalf.

If, then, in the mercy of God, we have been in any measure delivered from the corruption and oppression of so many centuries,—if we have got back behind Nicene and pre-Nicene conceptions to the apostles and the apostolic Church itself, what should we expect but to find the same dangers before us which were before them, and developing only much more rapidly at the end than at the beginning, and amid the rapid developments of such a day as this?

It need not surprise us, therefore, (though it should awaken the most earnest self-inquiry,) to find in the address to *Philadelphia* the next reference to those who "say they are Jews and are not." If Philadelphia be in its very name an assurance that in the return of heart to Christ which is there marked there is a return of heart also to the fellowship of saints, the brotherhood of Christians, there is with this revival of true Church-feeling the revival of the old Jewish ritualistic assumptions: the New-Testament conception of the Church is again opposed by the traditional conception.

As a fact, nothing is more certain than that there has been such a revival of late years. If the Spirit of God has been drawing men to own the unity of his own producing, there has arisen in the very bosom of Protestantism what has been vaunted as the great Catholic revival, the impulse of return to unity of another type. The fact cannot be doubted: surely its significance cannot be for those who are hearing, or have an ear to hear, "what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

It will be said, and rightly, that the assurance is given to the Philadelphians, "I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie,—behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."

While that is true, the need of *overcoming*, even in Philadelphia, must be seriously weighed, as well as the danger of not holding fast what they have, that no man take their crown. Is not this very Jewish revival a danger they are called to overcome?—a danger specially pointed out, indeed, into which they may slip, and must be careful not to slip?

Notice, what has been often remarked upon, the way in which the Lord speaks of Himself to Philadelphia as “He that is holy, He that is true,” in opposition to the hollowness of ecclesiastical pretension. Those to whom He speaks have kept *His* word, not the church’s; and it is this, just this, that constitutes them Philadelphia. They “follow righteousness, love, faith, peace,” and thus find their company with those who “call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” Their fellowship is true because it is in the truth. They are united by the centre, not by the outside. They are held fast by the conscience no less than by the heart,—that conscience which is the divine throne in man, and may need enlightenment, but never repression.

These are needful remarks in commencing an inquiry as to the power of the assembly, and the limits of that sanction of its actions by the Lord, “Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.” Limit there must be, clearly,—some limit: otherwise, we shall be landed in Rome inevitably. And it is just in the uncertainty as to the limit that ecclesiastical pretension finds its opportunity, and the consciences of the saints are brought under its power. The whole of this address to Philadelphia is most helpful here.

For certainly the Lord has never delegated to the Church His rights over the conscience. If the Church is still “men,” it will always be in order to quote as to it, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts v. 29). There is always the possibility that the voice of man may not represent to us the voice of God, and that obedience

to the one may be impossible to unite with obedience to the other. Absolute authority there can be nowhere, except where there is infallibility as well,—that is, with God, and not man. Nor does this set aside authority; it only limits it.

“The powers that be are ordained of God.” Here, therefore, my own will must give way, and “he that resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God.” Yet the simple, direct, authority of God remains intact in its supremacy for my soul. There is no possible case in which duty to Him simply can be in collision with duty to Him in the power that represents Him. If I have His Word defining such and such a thing as evil, it can never be rightly a question for my conscience whether I ought to obey man in that. “The knowledge of the holy is” still “understanding;” and the dictates of that holiness are as simply to control me as if there were no delegated authority whatever existing. God nowhere, at no time, *resigns* the authority that He bestows on men; no shadow of intervening power is to darken the light of His presence in which we are called to walk continually.

So with the authority of a father precisely: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord,” is no license to transgress the commandments of the Lord in so doing. No one can suppose so whose judgment could be respected for a moment.

Now the principle remains the same, if we substitute the Church for the father or the magistrate. You may say the Church is indwelt by the Holy Ghost, or that where two or three are gathered to His name Jesus is in the midst. It is true; but He is not there to give sanction to what is not of Him,—to bind at the voice of His people what with His own voice He would condemn as evil. This would be to upset the first principles of truth and godliness,—to drag the divine honor in the dust,—to make God the Author of evil; and the direct result would be to justify in a certain class of cases those who say,

"Let us do evil that good may come;" "whose damnation," says the apostle, "is just" (Rom. iii. 8).

Indeed, it might seem wholly unnecessary to insist upon this. It is, one would say, self-evident. To question it is to blur all lines of moral distinction, and to confuse the whole spiritual sight. Is it no more to be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether" (Ps. xix. 9)? Nor is it here possible to make a distinction between unrighteousness *intended*, and a mistaken judgment merely: "the judgments of the Lord are *true*" as well as "righteous," and "righteous *altogether*," not merely in intention!

Few are the assemblies, we may hope, of even "two or three" gathered to Christ's name, where unrighteousness in what they did could be deliberately *intended*. Fewer still would be the cases in which a deliberate intention of this kind could be proved against any. To judge what is in the heart is beyond us, except as it may be necessarily involved in the life and ways. It is as to what is in the heart that the Lord says, "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matt. vii. 1). And the deceitfulness of the heart is no where perhaps more shown than in its power of disguising from ourselves the character of our actions. Certainly, if mistaken judgments are to escape the brand of unrighteousness on this plea, there will be few assembly-acts that can be pronounced unrighteous. If, for instance, only where one whom they *know* to be innocent they condemn as guilty can there be the guilt of condemning the innocent, we may practically dismiss the thought of such unrighteousness from the mind. It would be sin against love to *suspect* so great a crime. "From this all would shrink," says the one who furnishes the illustration. True; and if all other acts are to be considered righteous, where may we expect to find the unrighteous ones?

Practically, there may be abundance of unrighteousness short of this: a thing of which the Lord acquits His murderers: "Father, forgive them; for they know not

what they do!" "Had they known it," says the apostle (1 Cor. ii. 8), "they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." Yet, were He not the Lord of glory, He would have been rightly condemned.

No: to condemn the innocent is unrighteousness, whatever the veil over the eyes of those who do it. These "mistakes" come from a spiritual cause, and have consequences also which no sincerity on the part of those who make them can avert. The God of truth and righteousness cannot "bind in heaven" the blunders of men on earth, nor set His seal upon injustice. This is, in the nature of things, impossible. He cannot put evil for good, or darkness for light, or bitter for sweet, or compel my assent to this, when He has pronounced a solemn woe upon those who do so. (Is. v. 20.)

Nothing, however, blurs the moral perception like ecclesiasticism: an unmistakable proof of its evil nature; and of which Rome's tariff for sin is only the ripe manifestation. Any thought of God's binding me to treat as right what *I know* to be wrong is of the same order as the Romish indulgences. Of course, if I do not *know*, I dare not act as if I did. It would be itself unrighteousness to characterize as unrighteousness what I did not know to be such. If I may be mistaken, all right to wait until I am sure. But if I am really sure, I am responsible to God to act according to my knowledge, let the assembly or ever so many assemblies say what they will.

It will be answered that this is to make authority to depend upon infallibility, and that to reject it on this ground is lawlessness. Has, then, the church authority to define for me what is good or evil? Must I, with the father of Jesuitism, pronounce black what I *see* to be white, if the church so define it? From no other quarter can we obtain sanction for maxims so profane. There is a range within which there may still be found sufficient room to own authority; but to compel my obedience to evil in the name of God and good, the church had never

authority, and the claim of it would be itself an evil to be rejected with abhorrence.

These are as yet only first principles. The question remains, how they are to be carried out in a given case; but before considering this, we have to look at a number of other questions. Only this far have we reached at present, that "whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven" must be taken with the reserve that *evil* cannot be bound in heaven, and that whether the evil be intentional or not does not in the least affect this, though it affects immensely the *gravity* of the case for those concerned in it. Power to bind *evil* the church has not.

(To be continued.)

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

CHAP. I. 14.

"**A**S obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance."

In Eph. v. 6 we read, "Because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Thus we have the two classes spoken of in Scripture, according to their abiding and essential character. "Children of obedience," as it is in this verse in Peter (*R. V.*), and "children of disobedience" in Ephesians. The one class includes those who are "dearly beloved" (1 Pet. ii. 11); the other class, those upon whom cometh the "wrath of God." That is, all children of God—all believers, are called "children of obedience," for this is their character as born of the Word; for it is "in obeying the truth" (v. 22) they were "born again by the word of God" (v. 23).

This is of course linked with their practice too. As children of obedience by nature, so also their lives were to be in holiness, not according to the former lusts. They

were children of obedience by nature, they were therefore to show themselves to be such in their daily life.

That the nature and the practice are thus connected, like the tree and its fruit,—the tree good and the fruit good" (Matt. xii. 33), is indorsed in Paul's doctrine in Rom. vi. 15,—“What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? Far be the thought! Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” But nevertheless Paul equally with Peter declares the believer to be by nature (the new nature) a servant of righteousness and of God. “But God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.” Now the way we became free from sin, and servants of righteousness, was by death with Christ when we believed; “our old man crucified with Him (v. 6), that the body of sin might be destroyed (annulled), that henceforth we should not be in bondage to sin (as Israel to Pharaoh). For he that is dead is freed (justified) from sin.” Thus the sinner is made free, like a slave set free, when converted to God. The death and resurrection of Christ have made him a free man, ended the old, and brought him into a new and perfect standing before God in Christ. Free as to his standing by Christ's work; free as to the state of his soul when he has obeyed the form of doctrine as set forth in this chapter.

Therefore we conclude that Christians—all Christians are spoken of in these scriptures as “children of obedience” and “servants of God” and “servants of righteousness.” This they are to begin with; this they are essentially in their very nature, before practice can be spoken of, before exhortations can be given. The old nature is still in the Christian, since he is to have “no confidence in the flesh” (Phil. iii. 3). And this flesh

"lusts against the Spirit" (Gal. v. 17). And the new nature is there, the good tree, which constitutes him a "child of obedience," a servant of God and of righteousness, by the life (eternal) which he possesses as born of God.

Unless there can be fruit without the tree that bears it, let us not deny the two natures in the Christian. He fails—there is a nature that produced that: he loves God's people, and serves them—there is a nature that produced that. "The mind of the flesh is enmity against God" (Rom. viii. 7), but the believer, by the new nature, delights in the law of God" (Rom. vii. 22). "Sin in the flesh" (Rom. viii. 3) is the root of the Christian's failures; but he is free from its power, and by the Spirit can deny its lust, and rejoice in the Lord, and obey God. But let him not forget the flesh is in him, or trust it for a moment; unless it is right for the jailer to open the prison-door for a desperate criminal, and right for the citizens to declare him king. He may have policy enough to hide his hand, but he is a criminal nevertheless, and worthy of judgment, and not of a throne.

The Lord deliver His people from doctrines that lead to confidence in the flesh, rather than to confidence in His Word—the truth that sets free!

Therefore the apostle does not mean in Rom. vi. 16 that one who is a servant of God may become a servant of sin, and be on the way to perdition; but that a certain line of life shows that some are in reality on the way to death and judgment, whereas a different line of life—"obedience unto righteousness" shows that such are "servants of God."

Such passages are often read with gross carelessness, and made to suit doctrines destructive of Christian liberty and real holiness.

And it may be well here to ask the reader's attention to this point. In this passage we have been considering (Rom. vi. 16), and in many others (such as Jno. xv., Rom.

viii. 13., Heb. vi., 1 Jno. i. 6-8), what is presented is not two ways in which children of God may walk, but two different lines of life and conduct, manifesting two different classes of people. In the one case, whatever they profess, their life shows they do not know God; in the other, the life manifests reality. The end of the one course is judgment, the end of the other, reward and blessing. How alone good fruit can be produced (that is, by the new birth,) is not spoken of in such passages. Results—works only—are spoken of, to the end that the conscience may be reached, and the careless one aroused.

Only let the connecting verses be read, and the reader will often find the meaning to be just the opposite of what a careless reading had already gleaned.

But we are not to fashion ourselves according to the former lusts in our ignorance. And we do fashion ourselves in one way or the other, and our characters are being developed in evil or in good. The "former lusts" suggests, or calls to mind, the "old sins" from which we have been cleansed, as in the second epistle (i. 9), and the "old leaven" of 1 Cor. v., and also the origin of the term "leaven" itself,—that is, what is *left*, what belongs to the old.

For us old things are passed away, and all things are become new. We are linked indeed with the things that are eternal and glorious, since the same words are used, in Rev. xxi. 45, as to the eternal state. "The former things are passed away, . . . behold, I make all things new."

We were once in ignorance and darkness, but now we have been brought to God, and into His marvelous light, and because He is holy, we are to be holy in all our life and conduct.

This is a solemn appeal to the Christian, and calls for a deep-toned character of life. Our God is a consuming fire. Let us have grace whereby we may serve Him acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.

What the natural man hates—the holiness of God—the

obedient heart delights in, however conscious of daily failure.

Our God is "glorious in holiness." (Ex. xv.) May we ever remember who it is that has redeemed us, and so govern our lives.

E. S. L.

THE SCRIPTURAL SOLUTION OF THE EVANGELISTIC PROBLEM.*

WHEN God's tabernacle was to be built, all things were enjoined to be "according to the pattern" showed to the great leader and law-giver of Israel in the mount.

In every spiritual crisis and practical perplexity there is one unfailing, infallible guide,—the oracles of God. For our standards of doctrine, here is the form of sound words; for the moulding of character, here is the divine matrix (Rom. vi. 17, *Gr.*); here are rules to regulate our relations to the world and to the Christian brotherhood; the principles upon which the Church is founded, and by which its activity is to be inspired and governed; for all things, here is a divine pattern. We shall not turn in vain to the Word of God to seek a satisfactory solution to the evangelistic problem.

The teaching of our Lord throughout makes emphatic the duty and privilege of every saved soul to become a saver of others. This is found, not so much in any direct injunction, as in the general tone and tendency of all His words. The conception of the believer as a herald, a witness, a winner of souls, runs like a golden thread through His discourses, and even His parables and miracles. He does indeed say to a representative disciple, "Go thou and preach the kingdom of God" (Luke ix. 60); He does enjoin, "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes, highways and hedges, and compel them to come in;" but the command is one which is incarnated in His

*Being the second chapter of "*Evangelistic Work*," by A. T. Pierson, D.D.

whole life, and is suggested or implied in the very idea of discipleship: "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

Last words have a peculiar emphasis. It is a forceful fact that, at or toward the very close of each of the four Gospels, some sayings of our Lord are found recorded which touch at vital points of contact the great question we are now considering (Matt. xxviii. 18-20; Mark xvi. 15-20; Luke xxiv. 45-49; Jno. xx. 21, 22). Harmonizing these passages, we shall find the divine pattern for the work of the world's evangelization,—a perfect plan that is the only possible basis for the successful conduct of the work. It includes several particulars:—

1. Jerusalem is to be the starting-point for a world-wide campaign, including all nations and every creature.

2. The method of evangelization is threefold: preaching, teaching, and testifying,—in other words, the simple proclamation of the gospel, confirmed by the personal witness of the believer as to its power, and followed by instruction in all the commands of Christ, or the training of converts for Christian walk and work.

3. Attached to the command is a promise, also threefold: the perpetual presence of the Lord, the working of supernatural signs, and the enduement with the power of the Holy Spirit.

4. It is, however, to be especially noted that neither the commission nor the promise is limited to the apostles. (Cf. Matt. xxviii. 16, 17, with 1 Cor. xv. 6, etc.) Careful comparison of scripture with scripture puts this beyond any reasonable doubt. Christ need not have summoned the eleven apostles, whom He had already met in Jerusalem, to meet Him in Galilee; but it was there that the great body of His disciples were found, and where the bulk of His life had been spent. It is more than probable that it was on this Galilean mountain that "He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once;" and to them all He said, "Go, make disciples."

Here, then, is God's solution to man's problem. Evangelization is to be in a twofold sense *universal*,—both as to those *by whom* and as to those *to whom* the good tidings are to be borne. *ALL are to GO, and to go to ALL.* The ascending Lord left as a legacy to believers the duty and privilege of carrying the gospel to every living soul in the shortest and most effective way. To accomplish this, two grand conditions must exist: there must be evangelistic work by the whole Church, and there must be evangelistic power from the Holy Ghost.

Happily, the historic witness both illustrates and confirms the scriptural. Annibale Carracci deftly distinguished the poet, as painting with words, and the painter, as speaking with works. What Christ sketched in language is expressed anew in the "*Acts of the Apostles.*" Pentecost brought to all the assembled disciples the promised enduement; then, while the apostles were yet at Jerusalem, these disciples, scattered abroad, went every where preaching the Word. (Acts viii. 1-4; cf. Acts xi. 19, 20.) Mark!—" *Except the apostles!*" The exception is very significant, as showing that this "preaching" is confined to no class, but was done by the common body of believers.

Of course such "preaching the Word" implied no necessity for special training. To many modern minds, the word "preach" always suggests a "clergyman" and a "pulpit." A "sermon" is incased, not only in black velvet, but in superstitious solemnity. There is absolutely no authority for any such notions in the New Testament. There, no line is drawn between "clergy" and "laity," and no such terms or distinctions are known.

The word "preach," which occurs some one hundred and twelve times in our English New Testament, means "to proclaim;" it is the accepted equivalent for six different Greek verbs. Three of these are from a common root, which means "to bear a message, or bring tidings" (*Εὐαγγέλλω, καταγγέλλω, διαγγέλλω*); and

this statement covers about sixty cases. As to the other three Greek words, one is used over fifty times, and means "to publish or proclaim" (*Κηρύσσειν*); and another six times, and means "to say, to speak, or talk about" (*Λαλῆσαι*)." The other, which means "to dispute or reason" (*Διαλέγομαι*), is the *only one of the six which suggests a formal discourse or argument, and this is used only twice.*

One word used in connection with the preaching of these early disciples is especially suggestive (*Λαλέω*. Acts xi. 19, 20). It is close of kin to the English words "prattle," "babble,"—meaning, to use the voice without reference to the words spoken; it is one of those terms found in every tongue, which are the echoes of children's first attempts at articulate speech, and it conveys forcibly the notion of unstudied utterance. Those humble disciples talked of Jesus, telling what they knew. That was their "preaching."

There is nothing in the word "preach" which makes it the exclusive prerogative of any order or class to spread the good news. Even Stephen and Philip, who not only preached but baptized (Acts viii. 9, 38), were not ordained to preach, but to "serve tables" as deacons. All Jews had a right to speak in the synagogue (Acts xiii. 15), and believers spoke freely in public assemblies (1 Cor. xiv. 26-40). The proof is positive and ample that all the early disciples felt Christ's last command to be addressed to them, and sought, as they had ability and opportunity, to publish the glad news.

Upon this primitive evangelism God set His seal, confirming it with signs following, and adding to the Church daily. To such preaching we trace the most rapid and far-reaching results ever yet known in history. Within one generation,—with no modern facilities for travel and transportation, and for the translation and publication of the Word; without any of the now multiplied agencies for missionary work,—the gospel message flew from lip to

ear, till it actually touched the bounds of the Roman Empire. Within one century, the shock of such evangelism shook paganism to its centre; the fanes of false gods began to fall, and the priests of false faiths saw with dismay the idol-shrines forsaken of worshipers.

Subsequent history bears an equally emphatic witness, but it is by way of *contrast*. No sooner had evangelistic activity declined than evangelical faith was corrupted with heresy, and councils had to be called to fix the canons of orthodoxy; confirmatory signs ceased; and the evangelistic baptism was lost to the Church. Under Constantine, the Church wedded the State,—the chastity of the bride of Christ exchanged for the harlotry of this world. *Via crucis*—the way of the cross—became *via lucis*—the way of worldly light, honor, and glory. A huge hierarchy, parent of the papacy, rose on the ruins of the apostolic Church. The period of formation was succeeded by one of deformation, marked by putrefaction and petrification, or the loss of godly savor and of godly sensibility. And until the Reformation, dark clouds overhung the Church. Heresy and iniquity; a papal system, virtually pagan; ignorance and superstition as bad as idolatry; a nominal Church of Christ, whose lamps burned low, and whose altar-fires had almost gone out,—such was the awful sequence when habitual work for souls declined.

Too much stress we cannot lay upon this joint testimony of these two witnesses, Scripture and History, by which it is fully established that God has given us a plan for evangelizing the world, and that the plan is entirely feasible and practicable. Our Lord has left us His pattern for speedy and effective work for souls. So far and so long as that pattern was followed, the work was done with wonderful rapidity and success. So far and so long as that pattern is superceded or neglected, every other interest suffers. The promised presence of the Lord is conditioned upon obedience to the command, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every

creature." To neglect souls is treachery to our trust and treason to our Lord. No wonder evangelical soundness is lost, when the Church shuts her ears to the cry of perishing millions, and to the trumpet-call of her divine Captain.

To primitive methods of evangelism the Church of to-day must return. In whatever calling the disciple is found, let him "therein abide with God." Whatever be the sphere of common duties, let all believers find in it a sacred vocation; let us all take our stand upon the common platform of responsibility for the enlargement and extension of the kingdom of Christ by personal labor.

Let us not invest the term "minister" with a mistaken dignity. It never conveys in the New Testament the notion of superiority and domination, but of subordination and service. "Whosoever will be great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever of you will be the chiefest shall be servant of all" (Mark x. 43, 44). One word rendered "minister" means "an under-rower" (*ὑπορέτης*, Acts xxvi. 16),—the common sailor, seated with his oars in hand, acting under control of the "governor," or pilot (*ἑὸς ἄνακτος*, Jas. iii. 4).

Neander shows conclusively that Christianity makes all believers fellow-helpers to the truth, and that a guild of priests is foreign to its spirit (Neander, i. 179). Teaching was not confined to presbyters or bishops; all had originally the right of pouring out their hearts before the brethren, and of speaking for their edification in public assemblies (i. 186). Hilary, deacon at Rome, says that, in order to the enlargement of the Christian community, it was conceded to all to evangelize, baptize, and explore the Scriptures. Tertullian says that the laity have the right not only to teach, but to administer the sacraments; the Word and sacraments, being communicated to all, may be communicated by all as instruments of grace; while at the same time, in the interests of *order* and *expediency*, this priestly right of administering the sacra-

ments is not to be exercised except when circumstances require (i. 196).

The chasm between "clergy" and "laity" marks a rent in the body of Christ. The Church began as a pure democracy, but passed into an aristocracy, and finally a hierarchy. The creation of a clerical caste is a matter of historic development. We get a glimpse of it toward the close of the second century. Ignatius would have nothing done without bishop, presbytery, and deacon; and after all these centuries, this high-churchism still survives.

The common priesthood of believers is a fundamental truth of the New Testament. Expediency undoubtedly restricts the exercise of certain rights, but never the right and duty of bearing the good tidings to the unsaved. The partial purpose of these pages is, to show that only by a return to God's original plan can the work be done. After all our human resorts and devices, we are nothing bettered, but rather worse; is it not time to reach out the hand of faith and touch the hem of His garment?

A. T. P.

[Is it not time to "return to God's original plan" *unreservedly*, and not merely (important as that is,) in the matter of evangelizing? "Ye shall seek Me, and find Me," saith the Lord, when ye shall search for Me with *all* your heart" (Jer. xxix. 13). Alas! can this be so, when the writer openly advocates expediency in opposition to the truth of God? "*Expediency UNDOUBTEDLY restricts the exercise of certain rights*"! How shall we know? Where shall we find its shifting creed? or where the interpreter who can speak so positively for it? Upon the same plea exactly the mass of departures from the Word of God may be excused. Dr. Pierson is too much the American here. The Church was never a "pure democracy;" it *begun* as a *theocracy*, though it largely departed from it. And still "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."—ED.]

"THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."

10. THE "EVERLASTING GOSPEL."

I N the last chapter of this final three, we find, as I believe, not another aspect of the divine dealings with the mingled crop in the field of Christendom, but a *new* acting, whether in grace or judgment, after the merchant man has possessed himself of his pearl, or in other words, after the saints of the past and present time are caught up to Christ. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind; which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, and cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world (or age): the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just; and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (v. 47-51.)

The parable closes thus (in so far, just as the parable of the tares of the field,) with the judgment executed at the appearing of the Lord. The common application of it is to the going forth of the gospel during the present time, and the final separation of bad and good when the Lord comes. That is, the meaning is considered to be almost identical with the tare-parable. I believe there are some plain reasons against such an interpretation.

For, in the first place, the parallelism of the two parables in that case is certainly against it. There would be little in the picture of the net cast into the sea that was not simply repetition of what had already been given. And this, at first sight, would not seem natural or likely.

But beside this, it is to be considered that Scripture plainly gives us another going forth of the gospel of the kingdom, and as the result of it a discriminative judgment when the Son of Man comes, apart altogether from the present going forth of the gospel, and the judgment of the tares of Christendom. The company of sheep and goats in Matt. xxv. is an instance of this. For there will be no such separation as is there depicted between these sheep and goats, of the true and false among Christian professors, "when the Son of Man shall" have "come in His glory." The true among Christian professors, on the contrary, will come with Him to judgment on that day, as we have seen both Col. iii. 4 and Jude bear witness. The judgment of Christendom will not then be discriminative at all: the wheat having been already removed from the field, tares alone will remain in it. Thus in Matt. xxv. neither tares nor wheat can be at all in question.

But after the saints of the present time have been caught up to the Lord, and Christendom has become a tare-field simply, a new work of the Lord will begin in Israel and among the surrounding nations, to gather out a people for *earthly* blessing. It is when God's judgments are upon the earth the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. And this will be a time of "great tribulation," such as for Israel Matt. xxiv. depicts. Antichrist is there, and the "abomination of desolation" stands in the holy place; yet amid all the evil and sorrow of the time, the "everlasting gospel" goes forth (Rev. xiv. 6, 7) with its call, so opposite to the proclamation of this day of grace *now* being made. "Fear God, and give glory

to Him, *for the hour of His judgment is come.*"

Plainly, one could not say that yet. We say it is "the accepted time, the day of salvation," not of judgment. Only after the present day is closed could the everlasting gospel be preached after that fashion,—the old "gospel of the kingdom" indeed, but with the new addition to it of the hour of God's judgment being come.

It is this proclamation of the everlasting gospel that is the key to that company of sheep and goats standing before the throne of the Son of Man when He is come.

Now, if we look a little closely, it is just such a state of things as that amid which the everlasting gospel goes forth, that this parable brings before us. A "net cast into the sea" is the picture of the gospel going forth in the midst of unquiet and commotion, the lawless will of man at work every where, the wicked "like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." (Is. lvii. 20.)

Moreover, if we turn to the very earliest of Scripture types—to Genesis i.—we shall find confirmation of this view, which is exceedingly striking. In those creative days we find, day by day, the successive steps by which God brought out of ruin the beauty of a scene where at length He could rest, because all was "very good." There need be little wonder to find this but the picture and type of how He, step by step, after the misery and ruin of Adam's fall, is proceeding toward the final production of a scene in which once again, and never more to be disturbed, because of its goodness He can rest. These days in their respective meaning it is not the place here to point

out. The third day, however, speaks of the separation of Israel from among the Gentiles. The waters of the salt and barren sea are the representative of man left to the lusts and passions of his own heart (according to the figure in Isaiah just referred to), or in other words, the Gentiles.* Israel is the "earth," taken up and cultivated of God, to get, if it might be, fruit. The third day speaks of this separation of Israel from the Gentiles, as the first parable of the three we are now looking at speaks of her as God's earthly treasure.

This is a scene all on earth. The next creative day gives us however, the furnishing of the heavens, as we have already seen the second parable of the "pearl" does. And if the sun be a type of Christ (as it surely is), that which brings in and rules the day,—the moon is no less a type of the Church, the reflection, however feeble and unstable, of Christ to the world in the night of His absence. The present time, then, is here figured, —the time of the revelation, in testimony, both of Christ and of the Church.

And now, if we pass on to the sixth day, we have as plainly in figure the kingdom of Christ come. The rule of the man and woman over the earth,—not rule over the day or night, not the light of testimony, but rule over the earth *itself*,—is a picture of what we call millennial blessing.

Finally, in this series comes the Sabbath, God's own rest: He sanctifies the whole day, and blesses it; no other day succeeds.

Now between the fourth and the sixth days, the Church and the millennial dispensations, what intervenes? A period, short indeed in duration, but

* Compare also Rev. xvii. 15.

important enough to occupy thirteen out of the twenty-two chapters of the book of Revelation: the very time to which, as I believe, the parable of the net refers. And then, what is its type, if the fifth day represents it? Once again, the "sea," but the waters now supernaturally productive, teeming with life through the fiat of the Almighty. And so it will be in the day of Rev. vii. as the hundred and forty-four thousand of the tribes of Israel, and the innumerable multitude of Gentiles who have come out of "*the* great tribulation," bear abundant witness. These are the gathering out of the people for earthly blessing, as the fruit of the everlasting gospel.

These passages, then, mutually confirm each other as applying to a time characterized by Gentile lawlessness, Israel fully partaking of this character, and not yet owned of God, though He be working in her midst. Into this "sea" the net is cast, and, gathering of every kind, when it is full, is drawn to shore.

It is not till AFTER this that the sorting begins: "which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, and cast the bad away." This shows us that the sorting cannot apply to any thing which goes on during the time of the preaching of the gospel at all events, for the net is no longer in the waters when it takes place. And it is thus the same thing evidently as that which the interpretation speaks of: "So shall it be at the end of the age; the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from the just." This is the clearance of the earth for millennial blessing. When the saints are removed, at the coming of the Lord for His own which 1 Thess. iv. sets before

us, the wicked will not be severed from the just, but the just from the wicked. The righteous will be taken, and the wicked left. Here it is the reverse of this—the wicked taken and the righteous left. Thus, with the divine accuracy of the inspired Word, which invites scrutiny and rewards attention to its minutest details, it is said in the judgment of the tare-field of Christendom, "They shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity," but not, "they shall sever the wicked *from among the just*," for the just have been before removed. Here, on the contrary, the righteous are those not taken away to inherit heavenly blessing, but left behind to inherit earthly.*

With this glance at things which belong to that short but most momentous season—the season of the earth's travail before her final great deliverance, the sevenfold sketch of the kingdom of the *absent* King necessarily ends. The blessing of earth, as of Israel, necessitates His *presence*, and with that the close of the "kingdom and *patience*," the beginning of that "kingdom and *glory*" which will never end. Well will it be for us if we keep in mind the sure connection between the "patience" and the "glory."

"It is a faithful saying, "For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us; if we believe not, yet He abideth faithful, He cannot deny Himself." (2 Tim. ii. 11-13.)

* Parallel passages will be found in Matt. xxiv. 37-42, and Luke xvii. 21, 37. In the Old Testament, the Psalms especially are full of this covering of the wicked from among the just: e. g., Ps. i. 4, 5; xxxvii. 9-11; see also Mal. iv. 1-3.

“THINGS THAT SHALL BE:”

AN EXPOSITION OF REVELATION IV.—XXII.

PART I.—(Continued.)

The Parenthetic Visions:—The Sealed of Israel.

(Chap. vii. 1-8.)

AN objection may be taken to our interpretation of the convulsion under the sixth seal,—that it is not in harmony with that which we have given of the earlier ones. In these, the “earth,” for instance, was assumed to be literally that; in the latter, it is taken in a figurative sense; and it may be urged that this want of uniformity in interpretation allows us to make of these visions very much what we will,—in fact makes their alleged meaning altogether inconsistent and unreliable.

This is a mistake, though a very natural one, and it needs to be examined and shown to be such, or else a serious difficulty will remain in the way of further progress, if such indeed be possible. For the same inconsistency, if it be really that, will appear again and again as we proceed with our study of the book before us; we shall be using the same terms now in a literal and again in a figurative sense, as it may appear, arbitrarily, but in fact as compelled by necessity to do so, or according to the law of the highest reason.

Figures pervade our common speech, even the most literal and prosaic,—disguised for us often by the mere fact that they are used so commonly. We employ them, too, with a latitude of meaning which in no wise affects their intelligibility to us. They are used with a certain freedom in which there is nothing arbitrary, but the reverse. They are used rather in the interests of clearness and intelligibility, the main end sought, which governs indeed their use. It is simple enough to say that the

whole art of language is in clearness of expression, and that the right use of figures is therefore for this end.

Now, in visions, such as we have in Revelation, figures, it is true, have a much larger place: the meaning of the vision as a *whole* is symbolic—figurative. Yet this does not at all suppose that every feature in it is so, and in no case perhaps is this really true.

Take the fifth seal as a sufficient example,—where the altar is figurative, and so are the white robes, but the killing of their brethren is real and literal. This mingling of the literal and symbolic in one vision makes it plain that they may be and will be found mingled through the whole series of visions. And if it be asked, How, then, are we to discern the one from the other? the answer will be, that each case must be judged separately,—the sense that is simplest, most self-consistent, and agreeable to the context being surely the right one. God writes, as man does, to be understood, and *intelligibility* gives the law, therefore, to all the rest. It is reassuring indeed to remember this: plenty of deep things there are in the Word of God, and more perhaps than any where else are they to be found in the book of Revelation, but the mystery in them is never from mere verbal concealments or misty speech, but from defect in us,—spiritual dullness and incapacity. This most difficult of all Scripture-books God has stamped with the name of "REVELATION."

These thoughts are not an unnecessary introduction to the parenthetic visions between the sixth and the seventh seals, where just such questions have been asked as to the sealing of a hundred and forty-four thousand out of every tribe of the children of *Israel*. Is it in fact *Israel* literally, or a typical, spiritual *Israel* that we are to think of? The latter is the thought of expositors generally, though by no means all; and we are told (as by Lange, for instance,) that if we take *Israel* literally to be meant, then we must take all the other details,—the exact number sealed, etc.,—literally also: to do which would not involve any ab-

surdity, but which we have seen to be not in the least necessitated. We are free, as to all matters of the kind, to ask, What is the most suitable meaning? and to find in this suitability, the justification of one view or the other.

The *context* argues for the literal sense. The innumerable multitude seen afterward before the throne, "out of all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues," shows us plainly a *characteristically* Gentile gathering, and that they are in some sense in contrast with the Israelitish one seems clear. Taken together, they throw light upon one another, and display the divine mercy both to Jews and Gentiles in the latter days. While the separateness of these companies, and the priority given to Israel, agree with the character of a time when the Christian Church being removed to heaven, the old distinctions are again in force. We are again in the line of Old-Testament prophecy, and of Jewish "promises" (Rom. ix. 4); "the *Lion of the tribe of Judah*" has taken the book.

Even apart from the context, (decisive as this is), the enumeration of the tribes would seem to make the description literal enough, even although Dan be at present missing from among them, and supposing no reason could be assigned for this.* Judah too is in her place as the royal tribe: not the natural birthright, but divine favor, controls the order here. Every thing assures us that it is indeed Israel, and as a nation, that is now in the scene.

Let us turn back now to see how she is introduced to us.

"After this, I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that no wind should blow on the earth, or on the sea, or upon any tree. And I saw another angel ascend from the sunrising, having the seal of the living God; and he cried with a great voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, 'Hurt

*Dan and Zebulon are both omitted in the genealogical lists of 1 Chronicles.

not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, till we shall have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.' "

Here it is manifest that, terrible as have been the judgments already, far worse are at hand. The four winds—expressive of all the agencies of natural evil—are about to blow together upon the earth, under the control of spiritual powers (the angels) which guide them according to the supreme will of God. It is the "day of the Lord of Hosts upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low" (Isa. ii. 12). And as nothing *lifts itself* up as the tree does, so the "tree" is specially marked out here: the ax is laid at the root of it. The passage in Isaiah goes on quite similarly: "And upon all the cedars of Lebanon that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan" (v. 13).

But this becomes, as in the Baptist's lips, a general sentence upon man as man, from which none may escape but as in the Lord's grace counted worthy. Thus the sealing becomes quite evidently the counterpart of what we find in the ninth of Ezekiel, though there the range of judgment is more limited. "And He called to the man clothed in linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side; and the Lord said unto him, '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 cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.' And to the others He said in mine hearing, 'Go ye after him through the city, and smite; let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity; slay utterly old and young, both maids and little children and women, but come not near any man upon whom is the mark.' "

The sealing is as evidently preservative as the "mark" is. They are both upon the forehead,—open and manifest. If we look on to the fourteenth chapter here, we shall find upon the hundred and forty-four thousand there (a company as to the identity of which with the present one

it is not yet time to ask the question,) the name of the Lamb's Father written, and the seal marks thus undoubtedly to whom they belong.

Let us notice also that we are just approaching the time here in which the beast also will have his mark, if not always on the forehead, at least in the hands (chap. xiii. 16). The time of unreserved confession of one master or the other will then have come; and no divided service will be any longer possible. The beast "boycotts" (they have already invented both the *thing* and the expression for him,) those who do not receive his mark: those who do receive it are cast into the lake of fire (chap. xiii. 17; xiv. 9, 10).

The sealing is angelic,—a very different thing therefore from present sealing with the Holy Ghost, and from any power or gift of the Spirit. No angel could confer this, and the creaturehood of the angel here is manifest from his words, "Till *we* have sealed the servants of *our* God in their foreheads." The "we" shows that more than one execute the ministry, and they that do this speak of God as "our God." This is decisive, apart from all dispensational considerations. But in what the sealing consists it seems scarcely possible to say: the effect is, that the people of God are manifested as His, and preserved thus from the judgments which are ready to be sent upon it.

"The seal of the *living* God" seems along with this to imply their preservation as living men against all the power of their adversaries—His, and therefore theirs. True, that the power of the living God is shown more victoriously in resurrection than in preservation merely; true also that to the souls under the altar it has been foretold of others of their brethren to be slain as they were, and who are no less marked as His by the deaths they die for Him than any others can be: yet the "seal of the living God" may clearly manifest its power in securing preservation of natural life, and the connection

seems to imply this here; while thus alone do the two companies of this parenthetic vision,—the Jewish and the Gentile,—supplement each other, as is their evident design. This also to some will not be apparent, for the Gentile multitude are commonly taken to be risen saints in heaven. But the consideration of this must be reserved for the present.

Certainly the enumeration of the tribes speaks for their connection with God's purposes for Israel nationally upon the earth, where her future is. In heaven, as a nation, she has no place, but on earth ever preserves it (Isa. lxvi. 22). And here the connection of both these companies with a series of events on earth is evident. It may be said that the souls under the altar find similarly their place in connection with the seals, and yet are passed from earth: but these are introduced to show the prevalence of persecution, the unchanged enmity to God manifesting itself thus after the first periods of judgment have run their course; while they bring on, as it would seem by their prayers, the crash which follows under the sixth seal.

No *such* connection can be seen here, but the saints here are to be sheltered from the judgments coming on the earth—being themselves on it, an Israelitish company, inferring national revival, significant enough for earth, but not at all for heaven.

Leaving this for the present, we must give our attention to the number so definitely stated, and so earnestly repeated, of this sealed company. The enumeration, so held up before us, and emphasized by repetition, cannot be a point of little consequence. Of each tribe distinctly it is stated that there are twelve thousand sealed. What, then, is the meaning of this number? It is evidently made up of 12 and 10, the latter raised to its third power, the number of government and of responsibility. But we must look at these a little further.

Ten is the measure of responsibility, as in the ten

commandments of the law; raised to the third power, it seems to me to be responsibility met in grace with glory; while the number 12 speaks, as I have elsewhere sought to show, of *manifest* government. If I read the meaning right, the two together speak of special place conferred upon this company in connection with the Lamb's government of the earth; and this, it seems to me, is confirmed by other considerations.

That they are not the whole remnant of Israel preserved to be the stock of the millennial nation is evident from the one fact before mentioned, that the tribe of Dan has no place among them, and yet certainly has its place in the restored nation. In Ezekiel (xlviii. 1), Dan has his portion in the extreme north of the land. Thus the hundred and forty-four thousand here are clearly a special company, and not the whole of the saved people.

But the case of Dan has further instruction for us in this connection; and we shall find it, if we turn back to the blessing of the tribes by Jacob in the end of the book of Genesis. Jacob himself tells us here that he is speaking of what should befall them in the "*last days*;" and it is to these last days plainly that Revelation brings us: so that the propriety of the application cannot be doubted. Let us listen, then, to what the dying patriarch has to say of Dan.

"Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse-heels, so that his rider shall fall backward. I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord."

Abrupt, fragmentary, enigmatic, as the words are, with just this passage of Revelation before us, they startle us by the way in which they seem to meet the questionings which have been awakened by it. We are looking upon a sealed company, "a hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel." But Dan is not found among them! Can this tribe, we ask, have been suffered to drop out of God's chosen earthly family,

so as to have no part in the final blessing? The voice from of old answers the question decisively: "*Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel.*" No! the Lord's grace prevails over all failure: Dan does not lose his place. It cannot be that a tribe should perish out of the chosen people.

But more,—the company before us, if we have read its numerical stamp aright, is a company having a place of rule under the Lamb in the day of millennial blessing; and among these, assuredly, Dan is *not* found. How the old prophecy comes in here once more with its assurance, "*Dan shall judge his people*"! The staff of judicial authority is not wholly departed; but simply as what is necessary to tribal place he retains it, "as one of the tribes of Israel,"—nothing more.

The patriarch's first words as to Dan imply, then, a low place—if not the lowest place—for Dan, even as his portion in Ezekiel is on the extreme northern border of the land. He retains his place as part of the nation, that is all. And if we naturally ask, Why? the answer is given in what follows:—

"Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse-heels, so that his rider falleth backward."

Plainly these are characters which associate him in some way with the power of the enemy; for the "serpent," the "adder," speak of this. Jacob's words would show that in the apostasy of the mass of the nation under Antichrist, in the days to which we are here carried, Dan has a more than ordinary place. If the antichrist be, as every thing assures us, a Jew himself, what would be more in accordance with all this than the ancient thought that he will be of Dan?

And here how natural the groan, yet of faith, on the part of the remnant which breaks out in the next words of the prophecy, "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord"!

In Gad, therefore, the conflict finds its termination: "A troop shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at the last." Then in Asher and Naphtali the blessing follows, and Joseph and Benjamin show us in whom the blessing is. Upon all this, of course, it would be impossible to dilate now.

But all is confirmatory of the thought of this hundred and forty-four thousand being a special Israelitish company, destined of God to fill a place (but an earthly one,) in connection with the Lord's government of the world in millennial days. We have now to look at the Gentile company in the next vision.

(To be continued.)

TWO CONFESSIONS.

(Ps. xxxii. ; Matt. xxvii. 3-5.)

THE conviction of sin, and consequent confession of two men, these scriptures record. The former speaks of David, the latter, of Judas Iscariot. In this life they both confessed that which was pressing on their consciences; and the history of each has something to teach us, for whose instruction and profit they both have been recorded in the passages of Holy Writ (1 Cor. x. 11).

Turning first to the case of Judas Iscariot, insnared by the enemy through his love of money, he was led on till he committed the sin of betraying the Lord. Peculation, it would seem, though unknown doubtless to the other disciples at the time, was not an uncommon thing with him. "He was a thief," writes John (xii. 6). Nettled by the Lord's rebuke administered in the house of Simon (of Bethany) six days before the passover (Jno. xii. 7), he became the willing tool in the enemy's hand. That it was the rebuke then administered which incited him to turn traitor seems pretty plain from the juxtaposition, out of chronological order, of that scene at Bethany with his

interview with the chief priests and scribes, as recorded by Matthew (xxvi. 3-16) and by Mark (xiv. 1-11). And perhaps Matthew's statement, after reciting that incident at Bethany, "*Then* one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests;" etc. (xxvi. 14) may imply it. Without, however, building any thing on the adverb, *then*, in that passage, the events as related by Matthew suggest a motive for the treachery of Judas.

He went to the chief priests and scribes, not they to him. Sitting in conclave to determine how they could best apprehend the Lord without stirring up a popular movement in His favor, Judas appeared in their midst, and offered to effect that which they desired. Unexpected on their part was such treachery. But when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money (Mark xiv. 11). The price was agreed upon—thirty pieces, or shekels, of silver—between three and four pounds of our money. Unconscious, probably, were all the parties to this infamous transaction of that passage in Zech. xi. 12, prophetic of this event in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The terms arranged, within two days the compact was to be carried out, for the passover was nigh at hand. At the paschal feast with the Lord, Judas learnt that his purpose was known to the Master, though till then concealed from the rest. Whilst the others in their bewilderment were asking the Lord, "Is it I?" Judas had kept silence, it would appear, till doubtless very shame made him speak, saying, not "Lord," like the rest, but, "Rabbi, is it I?" (Matt. xxvi. 25.) To have remained silent would have betrayed himself to all. The Lord's immediate rejoinder, "Thou hast said," showed plainly that the plot was known to Him. Gehazi, in a past age, had learnt by Elisha's words that his duplicity and covetousness were known by the prophet. Judas must have understood that his plan, however carefully he had tried to conceal it, was not hidden from the Lord. Now, his

treachery exposed, would he recoil from it? In what light the others would henceforth view him must have been apparent by their concern at the Lord's announcement of a traitor in the midst. That did not stop Judas in his career. If any thing would have done it, surely the Lord's solemn words, uttered before Judas asked the question—"It had been good for that man if he had not been born"—would have had a deterring effect. But no. Satan had put it into Judas' heart to betray Him; and after the sop, Satan entered into him (Jno. xiii. 27).

Impelled by the desire for gain, he went out to fulfill his bargain, that the coveted prize he might grasp. All went on as well as he could have wished. The plan made for the Lord's apprehension was carried out without a check. No obstacle hindered its accomplishment; for Peter's stroke with the sword, though it hurt Malchus, did not further the release of his Master. Judas must that night have got his money; clutched it, doubtless, eagerly, and carefully counted it, we can well believe, to see that it was correct. The chief priests had got their prisoner in safe custody, and quietly. Judas thus enriched, how long did he keep his money? The time might easily be counted by hours. Nobody snatched it from him. Nobody coveted, that we know of, that ill-gotten gain. With none was he asked to divide it. It was all and exclusively his own. Yet he could not keep it. That for which he had bartered away his soul he now loathed, detested, and threw from him.

Conscience, hitherto dulled, awoke and spoke. No one, do we read, reproached him; no one accused him. He accused himself. His work as the enemy's tool was over; his service to the chief priests was a thing of the past; nobody now wanted him. And on the morning of the Lord's crucifixion-day, Judas was thoroughly wretched. He saw that the Sanhedrim had condemned the Lord: His death, then, was sure. The Roman governor would yield to the wish of the populace at such a time, and

the plans of the chief priests seemed in process of fulfillment. Now it was just at that moment, humanly speaking the most unlikely, that Judas repented himself. Humanly speaking, seeing that all was working in the way in which he had assisted, he would have persuaded himself that he had wrought a service to his countrymen, and that he had ingratiated himself with the leaders of the Jews. It was just at that time that his conscience spoke, and in tones to which he was compelled to give heed.

There is a time when conscience will exert its sway, and insist on being heard. That time for Judas had come. A solemn moment indeed it was for him—a warning now for any who need it. Conscience cannot be deadened forever. Judas proves that, and his history shows it. In his case, conscience roused up and spoke whilst he had on earth the possession of all his faculties. In some cases, it may only speak when opportunity for intercourse with others around has ended. But speak it will, assuredly, unless peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ is the individual's blessed portion. Conscience—the inward, silent monitor—will speak, and the individual at some time or other, as the Judge of all men may determine, must hearken. Surely it is for man's instruction that in the case of Judas it spoke while he was still in life, and able to confess.

Was it with him just a momentary waking up of conscience, ere the sleep of death was to silence it forever? No; memory is not impaired, though the body lies in the tomb in which it has been buried. Now this was taught us by One competent to teach—the Son of God. The secrets of the other world God can disclose. In both Testaments has He in measure done that, distinctly teaching us that unconsciousness and slumber are unknown in that region.

The soul does not sleep, though the body does. In this, both Old and New Testament agree. Witness the graphic, though poetical, description of the descent into

the under world of the king of Babylon (Isa. xiv. 9, 10) and of the king of Egypt (Ezek. xxxii. 21-31). Witness too the story of Dives and Lazarus (Luke xvi. 23-30). Figurative language, perhaps some may say, these passages present. Well, but of what? God does not deal in unrealities, however figurative may be the language in which the truth is expressed. The Spirit of God in the Old Testament, and the Lord in the New, impress upon us that the spirit of man slumbers not when it enters the abode of the departed. Nor is the past there forgotten. "No peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isa. lvii. 21) will be found awfully true. But the righteous who die do enter into peace, the same prophet tells us (lvii. 2); and the story of Dives and Lazarus illustrates and emphasizes both these statements.

Judas, now woke up to the enormity of his guilt, confesses it, and confesses it openly. "I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood" (Matt. xxvii. 4). Only in the gospel of Matthew have we any account of that wretched man's confession. But mark, he makes it to men, not to God. Had he injured the chief priests by what he had done, confession to them would have been in place. *The* One he had injured he did not seek out, and make confession to Him of his guilt: to God he did not turn, and acknowledge what he had done. Confession to men without confession to God was not— is not enough. Against God he had sinned; His Son he had betrayed: but to God and His Son the traitor was silent.

And now the money, the silver, once so precious in his eyes, has become worthless,—nay, positively hateful. He casts it from him, throws it down in the sanctuary, and would have nothing more to say to it. It could not be a salve to his conscience; it could not purchase forgiveness for his sin. All he had coveted he himself threw away, proclaiming to any one who might be tempted to act the traitor's part against God and His people, that the reward

of iniquity is just like dross and dung, when contrasted with the interests of the soul for eternity. "I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood" (Matt. xxvii. 4). Such a crime God does take notice of (2 Kings xxiv. 4). It is an offense in heaven's statute-book which is grievous in God's eyes, and when the guilty one wakes up to that, he needs no array of witnesses to convict him; he convicts himself. Many a hardened criminal, aware of his guilt, has boldly challenged his accuser to prove it. Between the conscience and God, however, when the former is aroused, it speaks, and the person is self-condemned, and, as here, may turn to be openly his own accuser.

Most welcome must Judas have been when he first visited the chief priests, and offered, unsolicited, as we have seen, to betray his Master. They were glad, and eagerly listened to his plan for the accomplishment of their cherished object (Luke xxii. 5, 6). Again he visits the chief priests and elders, making full confession of his guilt, but found a very different reception. "What is that to us? see thou to that" (Matt. xxvii. 4) was the answer they gave him. Heartless indeed was their conduct. What an opening of eyes to him! He had not a friend on earth; certainly he had no one to befriend him in heaven. "He departed, and went and hanged himself," is the brief record of his last act in this scene. "To go to his own place" is the significant and awful acknowledgment of his fate both in the present and in the future, of which the disciples were fully aware after the Lord's resurrection. (Acts i. 25.)

Now we have called attention to this history, not to dwell on it as mere history, but to cull instruction from it. We see in it a finally lost soul, wretched, self-condemned, compelled, as it were, to witness against itself. What caused this? Conscience spoke, and insisted upon being heard. Conscience condemns, but cannot save. Conscience too, if it works, makes its guilty pos-

essor to feel his unfitness to be in the divine presence. The accusers of the woman taken in adultery attest that (Jno. viii. 9). And Judas has left on record that a time comes when conscience speaks to the finally impenitent, and leaves them in all their nakedness without any excuse.

What would have been the prospect of any one of us, if divine grace had not wrought in us, and the atonement had never taken place? The prospect would have been black indeed—just that of Judas when he stood in the temple court. We should have been self-condemned, hopelessly condemned, without a friend to turn to in heaven or on earth. An awful position. Conscience accusing, no excuse admitted, no waiting for others to prove the guilt, nor taking the chance of a possible acquittal. The awful reality of eternity surely broke in upon him. At some time or other, that will, that must break in on the finally impenitent. Such must have been the *only* prospect before us had the Lord not died upon the cross.

Turning to the record of David, the resource that a guilty one needs, and its perfect sufficiency, is brought before us, and that in the language of David himself, who had proved it; for in both cases it is the guilty one who speaks and unbosoms himself, so there can be no misunderstanding about it. A bystander might of course exaggerate in the one case and minimize in the other: when those guilty speak each for himself, that is out of the question. We have heard the utterance of Judas, now let us attend to the words of David.

“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile” (Ps. xxxii. 1, 2). True this is. No one will dispute it. But who is the man that partakes of the blessedness? and how can he share in it? Two important questions. David first speaks, it will be observed, of *the one* who is forgiven. He speaks, as we afterward learn,

of that which he had found, and then enjoyed. His language, however, is in the third person at the opening of the psalm,—“The one,” etc.,—though he was the illustration of it; for he writes not of himself, his words implying that the grace he had found others might also enjoy. A hope thus is held out to the reader of the psalm, if he needs it, and that at the very threshold of this inspired composition. Forgiveness can be known, the sin committed may be covered, and the non-imputation of guilt may be assured to an offender. If David had found that, others might find it likewise; for if God can righteously act in grace toward one who has sinned, He can, as far as His nature is concerned, act in grace toward all.

Why such favor can be extended to any of Adam's race the New Testament must explain. That it does in Rom. iii. and iv., quoting in the latter from this very psalm. The blood of Christ before God enables Him righteously to justify the ungodly; and the one who believes on Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification (literally, “justifying”), that one is justified by faith (iv. 24—v. 1). Well then might the Psalmist write, “Blessed is he,” etc., for others besides that king of Israel might be assured of such favor on the authority of God's Word.

Now, passing from the Old Testament to the New, we mark a change in the language, the apostle enlarging the expressions in harmony with the dispensation under which he lived. Under the law, one and another might know the forgiveness of a transgression and the covering of some sin; so in the psalm all is in the singular. By the gospel, all believers should know the fullness of divine grace; so the apostle wrote in the plural, both of the persons blessed and of their iniquities forgiven. Dispensational teaching required the *singular* in the psalm: the freeness and fullness of grace proclaimed in the gospel called for the *plural* in the epistle. Yet it is personal

blessing, and must be individually known, so the apostle goes on, "Blessed is *the man* to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Far and wide can such blessing extend. "Blessed are *they*," etc., proclaims it. Individually it must be taken up and enjoyed, so the language reverts to the singular, "Blessed is the man," etc. What Judas never knew, David had proved, and in it all believers now have part.

But *how*? Here David's history affords light. "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long. For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer." No rest had he, no rest could he have, till he had confessed to God. Till then, wretchedness of spirit he knew; no rest could he find for his soul. He did confess, and that to God—the One against whom he had sinned—and found relief. The burden was gone. "I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and my iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."

Judas confessed to men, and found no compassion nor relief; David confessed to the Lord, and forgiveness was accorded him. "Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." David, then, went to God. To Him every sinner must go if he would be forgiven. Both Judas and David have left earth, and are in the place of the unclothed, waiting for the voice of the Son of Man to call forth their bodies from the tomb. Judas has left behind him the record of wretchedness of soul without relief, a conscience burdened with unforgiven sin. David has left on record his happiness, and his enjoyment of divine forgiveness, and has told how he got it. "I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." God ready to pardon is a character of Him given in the Old Testament (Neh. ix. 17). God ready to pardon is illustrated in the history of David. David's confession resulted in the divine and conscious forgiveness. "For

this," he writes, his heart full, "shall every one that i godly pray unto Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him." Divine judgment, like an overflowing flood which carries irresistibly all before it, will never reach that person. He is delivered from the wrath to come. Thus wrote David in the enjoyment of the divine forgiveness.

And now to whom does he turn but to God?—"Thou art my hiding-place." Had he not sinned against Him? Yes; but having confessed, he was forgiven. His hiding-place, his refuge, was in God, against whom he had sinned. Judas had no refuge. The sinner's refuge is in God, when truthful confession has been made to Him, the person thus showing that in him is no guile. "Thou art my hiding-place," says David. "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ," says Paul (Rom. v. 11). "Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance," confidently wrote the Psalmist. "If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life," wrote the apostle.

Conviction of sin, followed by truthful confession to God, insures everlasting blessing. Conviction of sin without confession to God must land the sinner in hopeless, irremediable despair.

C. E. S.

THE LOST PIECE OF SILVER.

(Luke xv. 8-10.)

THE second parable of this chapter, brief as it is, is undoubtedly the most difficult of the three, and that not merely because of its brevity. The thought of the woman, and that of the house, seem to introduce elements which if intelligible from a Christian are all the

less so from a Jewish stand-point. Yet we may not omit them as of no importance. Scripture is no where less than than perfect, and to impute what is our own ignorance to defect in it is irreverent folly. Let us see, then, what light may be gained by patient examination of the parable in dependence upon Him who alone can teach effectually.

It is certain that in all the three the joy of *recovery* is set before us,—the joy, blessed to hear of, in the *presence* of the angels—divine joy in the fullest sense. In the first parable, it is that of the Shepherd—of Christ Himself; in the last, it is the Father's joy who receives,—yet not only receives, for the son is yet "a long way off" when He sees and has compassion, and runs, and falls upon his neck, and kisses him. The second parable must give us, then, one would say, the joy of the Spirit, and thus the whole heart of God be manifested to us.

The central figure here—that of a woman—at first sight may present a difficulty here. A woman might well be a picture of the Church of God,—of the saints of God,—and such we have elsewhere in the Word. But then these thoughts are after all not so far asunder. The Spirit of God works through the Word; the Word is carried by saints; thus indirectly He may be represented in what directly their picture. And how else, indeed, one may ask, could He be more fitly? While most graciously thus redeemed sinners are not only themselves joyed over, but taken in to share the joy of heaven also over the salvation of others.

Thus the "woman" seems intelligible, and the figure of wisdom in the book of Proverbs may remind us that after all it is not altogether foreign to the Old-Testament Scriptures. Here, as we might expect in the gospels, the object of her search is more helpless, more absolutely dependent upon the love that goes out after it; and this does not in the least affect the suitability of the story here. Rather is it all in divine harmony.

So is it in keeping that we hear now of a lamp lighted

for the search,—the figure, of course, of the Word of God as lighted amid the darkness of the world. Yet the Spirit of God must light it up if it is to manifest where the lost soul is,—often in corners dark and secret enough, and sadly covered with dust and smut of sin, so that you would not recognize it at all as having the value that it has for God. A lost piece of silver speaks of this value; a lost *soul* may easily overbalance the whole world gained. The atonement-money in Israel was paid in silver; and atonement it is that exhibits the true value of a soul gained for God—*regained*, for He all through is the owner of it. “Behold, all souls are Mine,” He says. Ah, what diligent search would we not make if we thought of the stamp of the royal mint upon the lowest and most degraded among men, and saw the value of souls with God in the price paid for them—saw the sheen of silver glitter in the lamplight out of the dust of some neglected corner!

We must sweep the house! But the dust will fly, and this sweeping is not a pleasant occupation. To make a stir about sin is unpleasant enough, no doubt, but the broom turns, if it be a little roughly sometimes, the king's money out of its hiding-place.

The house must be swept. It is the place of natural ties and relationships—those links by which God would bring us together and make us objects of interest to one another. It is within this circle that we shall find most profit in sweeping—most readily come across the precious coins for God's treasury. Many are ready to do street-sweeping, and testify abroad for Christ, who have no heart for it in the familiar circles in which after all are the nearest and most recompensing fields of labor. The witness of the home, of the place of business, of the familiar and accustomed life, is the most fruitful—the God-ordained first place at least of labor, which if we occupy, we may be promoted, but not else. Ah, if we would sweep the house!—nothing so marks the work of

the Holy Ghost as this, in which the good work will be measured, however, not by the amount of dust that is raised, but by the pieces of silver that we find. For if "he that winneth souls is wise," he that is wise, too, shall win them. This close and homely work God blesses: the house is cleansed by it; but more, that which has been lost is found. Oh, be sure, this woman at her housework may read us a true gospel-lesson, and every woman at her housework may thus have the joy of the evangelist, and the labor of love that fails not; for love's labor is never lost.

What characterizes the day is so much official evangelism, with so little simple natural testimony according to the apostolic order—"I believed, and therefore have I spoken;" the necessary outflow of full hearts, of those that have been in Christ's company, and cannot forbear to say to those around what it costs no education, no special gift, to say,—“Come, see a Man which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?” A great and effectual preacher was that poor Samaritan woman! What had made her so? What she says herself,—the company of Christ. Christ had been speaking to her. It is this that looses the tongue and gives it eloquence indeed.

Is it not striking that when the Lord would give us here the share which His people can have in the joy of heaven, that He gives us, not a crier in the market-place, but this quiet and unseen toiler in the house. "It is only an illustration," some will say. Well, it is an illustration out of which the thoughtful and the humble will get help and courage, and thank Him for it. Let the crier cry too in the market-place, and thank God for that! But if it were a choice between the two (which it is not), better would it be to have the necessary testimony of faith—"I believed, and therefore have I spoken,"—in every private Christian than the more public testimony even. Could we have this aright, how would the Old-Testament scrip-

ture be fulfilled, "The Lord gave the Word: great was the company of those that published it"—as the words imply, the "*women* that published it" (Ps. lxxviii. 11). *This* woman-preaching would indeed be effectual work.

The joy is here as in the other parables: "And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbors together, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost.' Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

And the joy of the Holy Ghost, will He not make it felt in the hearts of His people? "Friends" He must have with whom to share it. It is diffusive, multiplying itself as it travels from heart to heart, as a fire increases with fresh fuel. Such shall be the joy of eternity,—the joy of one the joy of all,—the pervasive joy of love, than which there is nothing sweeter, nothing purer, nothing higher. It is indeed the joy of God Himself, for "God is love."

"HE BLESSED HIM THERE."

IT was with a young man a day of seeking, and he entered a little sanctuary, and heard a sermon from "Look unto Me, and be ye saved." He obeyed the Lord's command, and "*He blessed him there.*" Soon after, he made a profession of faith before many witnesses, declaring his consecration to the Lord, and "*He blessed him there.*" Anon he began to labor for the Lord in little rooms among a few people, and "*He blessed him there.*" His opportunities enlarged, and by faith he ventured upon daring things for the Lord's sake, and "*He blessed him there.*" A household grew about him, and, together with his loving wife, he tried to train his children in the fear of the Lord, and "*He blessed him there.*" Then came sharp and frequent trial, and he was in pain and anguish; but the Lord "*blessed him there.*" This is that man's ex-

perience all along, from the day of his conversion to this hour: up hill and down dale, his path has been a varied one; but for every part of his pilgrimage he can praise the Lord, for "*He blessed him there.*"—(*Spurgeon.*)

THE only thing in all this world that truly delights and refreshes the heart of God is the faith that can simply trust Him; and we may rest assured of this, that the faith that can trust Him is also the faith that can love Him and serve Him and praise Him.

CORRESPONDENCE.

BELOVED BROTHER,—Seeing that the question of baptism is being discussed in your pages, I venture a few thoughts on the subject, giving you briefly what I believe God has given me.

I was once a Baptist; and if immersion makes a Baptist, then I am a Baptist still; but I do not think baptism makes a Baptist, in the sense that the term is now used. Nobody called the early Christians Baptists because they had been baptized. The Holy Ghost never owns them as Baptists, but as "disciples," "believers," "Christians," "brethren," "saints," "beloved of God;" and no one questions this, so there is no room for controversy on this point; and I am not writing for controversy, but, as I said, simply to give out what I believe God has given me out of His Word.

As I have said, I was once a Baptist. And you understand that if there is any thing that a Baptist knows, it is this, that he knows all about baptism,—at least, he thinks he does. And so it was with me. But there came a time when I found that I did not know all about it, and that many of my Baptist opinions and views were changed and modified by a better understanding of Scripture; then I concluded to wait on God with an open ear (Ps. xl. 6), and I was in that attitude for eight years before I got clear as to my convictions.

And the point which troubled me most was the baptism of children. And while I read and heard different views upon the subject, I found nothing which satisfied my convictions until I saw the household character of Christianity.

Christianity has its individual character first, its household next, and its corporate or church character last; and when viewed in each of these characters in the light of Scripture, all is clear.

And I take Abraham for an illustration of these three characteristics. And mark this, beloved: Abraham is the one whom the Holy Ghost has given for this very illustration: Abraham, the father of the faithful—"the father of us all." (Rom. iv. 11-16.)

Now, there are two things worthy of our consideration, in Abraham first of all, as illustrating this point before us,—His call and his faith. His call was in sovereign grace, his faith was an active principle. And his call and his faith were first of all *individual*, and all the blessing flowing out was but a result—to his seed and to the world. See Gal. iii. 14,—“That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

The blessing of Abraham, then, is the blessing of Christianity—the blessing of sovereign grace through faith. Can there be any question as to this? I do not see how there can; and, to me, this settles the question as to Old-Testament saints,—sovereign grace through faith.

According to the chronology of our Bibles, Abraham was about seventy-two years old when God called him: and it would seem that Terah could not give up his son to obey the call of God; and Terah leaves Ur of the Chaldees and comes with Abraham to Haran, where he stops, for God had not called him; and in about three years he dies. And now Abraham is about seventy-five years old, and is no longer under the headship of his father Terah, but is responsible for himself and his own house. And this brings us, first of all, to the individual character of Abraham's faith and walk for twenty-five years, as noted by Stephen, Acts vii. 1-5,—“The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham.” “The God of glory”—the very One who appeared to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus. Hence Jesus could say, “Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it, and was glad.” The Son of God appeared to Abraham, and Abraham rejoiced in the sovereign grace that has come to us.

And this, beloved, is individual,—the first characteristic of Christianity. And this is the ground upon which Abraham stood for twenty-five years, “until his own body was now dead” (Rom. iv. 19), when God gave him Isaac; and then he is called to a household responsibility, which before he had not known; and then we get another characteristic of faith brought out, viz., death and resurrection. See Rom. iv. 17-19. The figure is,

death and resurrection. He received Isaac from his own and Sarah's dead body. This, then, is the true ground of faith, from Abel down to the present hour. And now, when Abraham is ninety and nine years (Gen. xvii. 10), God gives him His covenant of circumcision, for himself and his house (v. 13)—“He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised; and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.”

Now at this time Abraham's house consisted of males, three hundred and eighteen household servants, “born in his own house” (Gen. xiv. 14), himself, and Ishmael. These were all circumcised on the day that Abraham was ninety-nine years old (Gen. xvii. 23-27), and at this same time he gets the promise of Isaac; and then God said, “I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him” (Gen. xviii. 19).

And one year later, Isaac was born, and Abraham was one hundred years old, and he circumcised Isaac (Gen. xxi. 4, 5) at eight days old,—the symbol of resurrection,—eighth day, and a new creation, born out of death in resurrection-power; and this gives us the symbolic character of circumcision. And this symbolic character of circumcision is confirmed in Gen. xxxiv. 25. On the third day, when the Shechemites were helpless in their tents, they were slain. Compare also Josh. v. 1-10. On the tenth day, they came up out of the Jordan (death), with the twelve stones pitched in the bed of the Jordan—symbolizing the twelve tribes in death; and twelve stones, taken up out of the Jordan (death)—symbolizing twelve tribes in resurrection—pitched at Gilgal. Then they lay three days under the power of circumcision, and on the fourteenth day they keep the passover, and are ready to go forth in the power of the Spirit to conquer the land; and this is corporate relationship,—typically, resurrection-ground. This gives us the root of the subject. First, individual, second, household, and third, corporate relationship and responsibility. And we find that this passes down from Abraham to the present. I do not say circumcision is a type of baptism, but, as we have seen, it is a symbol, type, emblem, or figure of death; and intimately linked up with it is resurrection, as we have seen; and this was given as the household-covenant to Abraham and to his seed,—“a seal of the righteousness of THE FARRU which he had yet being uncircumcised.”

Mark, it is not said to be a seal of Abraham's righteousness, but of the right-straightness of HIS FARRU, and his faith stood on the ground of death and resurrection:—sovereign grace, through faith, had put Abraham on the ground of death and

resurrection, and this was the righteousness of faith; and circumcision was the seal, sign, or mark which was to distinguish himself and his household forever,—and this meant separation. By this mark they were separated from all others. And we find that baptism by water is also the symbol or emblem of death; and intimately connected with it is resurrection; so that (as you have said in January number of *Help and Food*, 1889, p. 27,) there is an analogy between baptism and circumcision, the eighth day also being symbolic of resurrection. And in contrast with this, we may remark that sprinkling, in Scripture, and pouring as well, symbolize the Word, and the application of the Word of God, and never death, hence never baptism, that I am aware of. “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.”—“Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.”—“That He might sanctify and cleanse it, by the washing of water by the Word.”—“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible—by the Word of God.”—and, “Of His own will begat He us by the Word of truth.” The washings and sprinklings of water in connection with the temple service were symbolic of the application of the Word, as I believe.

So that if we take water as the emblem or symbol of death and life—both, it might be stated in this way: burial with Christ in baptism into death; being raised up out of the water is life and resurrection, and the mark of separation from all that is of the old man, as in Rom. vi. and Col. ii.; for when a man is dead and buried, he is done with his old standing in this world,—and it seems to me that 1 Pet. iii. 21 has this double meaning.—“The like figure whereunto baptism also doth now save us . . . by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

The waters of the flood were death to all outside the ark; the ark, a type of Christ in resurrection, God’s salvation to all within; raised up out of and above the waters was life; buried beneath the waters was death. Baptism, the death and burial of the old man; raised up out of the water is life in resurrection,—(Rom. vi. 4) “Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”—(Col. ii. 12) “Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead.”

The household character of baptism, then, is linked up with the household character of Christianity; and this, as we have seen, is the household responsibility. When this is seen, all is clear. But our Baptist brethren will tell us that there is no evl-

dence from Scripture of the baptism of infants; and surely, if the household responsibility is not seen, I have no authority from Scripture for infant baptism. Others may think that they have, but I confess that I have not.

But our Baptist brethren will agree with us that there was the household responsibility in circumcision; and Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day, and was baptized by John the baptizer at the age of thirty in the Jordan—the figure of death, not because He was a believer, but “to fulfill all righteousness,—thus setting forth in figure the baptism of death on the cross to which He was hastening (see Mark x. 38, 39 and Luke xii. 50),—and this was not sprinkling, nor pouring, nor yet christening.

No one can doubt Abraham's responsibility to put his house upon the ground which he himself occupied,—not because *they* were believers, but because *he* was a believer. It was *Abraham's* responsibility, not theirs!—from eight days old and upward. And this principle is recognized when Jesus was circumcised, and when he said, “Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

Now, as to their fitness, there can be no question, much less of the little ones feeling their own fitness, nor of believing. Is it not, then, probable that Jewish Christians felt that question of household responsibility as to their children? And is it not recognized when Peter says, in Acts ii. 39, “For the promise is to you and to your children”? Also Acts xvi. 15—“And when she was baptized, and her household,”—also v. 33, “And was baptized, he and all his, straightway.”—also 1 Cor. i. 16, “And I baptized also the household of Stephanas.”

But it may be objected that there is no evidence from Scripture that Lydia, the jailer, or Stephanas had children. But it cannot be said that they had no household.

What, then, is the probability? Does not a household include children? and if not children, then servants; and if servants, why not children? And yet it is only said that Lydia and the jailer believed, but their households were baptized. Now Scripture does not speak of believers' baptism, but it does speak of the baptism of believers and their households; and to me, this settles it as a question of privilege and responsibility for all believers and their households; and I am constrained to say that there is no person in the world who can receive baptism (not sprinkling, nor pouring, nor even christening, but genuine baptism,) with greater pleasure and delight, and even fitness, than a babe of eight days old, or a child of thirteen, if in proper subjection, and the parents in happy faith about it. And this should

always be the case,—happy agreement and faith on the part of both parents; but the responsibility is upon the head of the house,—the husband first; in his absence, the wife and mother. “Who hath ears to hear, let him hear,” and “whoso readeth, let him understand.”

C. E. H.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Ans. 22.—With regard to further questions as to the use of unleavened bread at the institution of the Lord’s Supper, Scripture is clear that for the whole week beginning with the passover, leaven was, according to the law, to be put out of the house. Thus I can only say again, that I believe nothing else *could* have been used at the institution, unless some leavened bread was purposely introduced from elsewhere, and of which surely we should have some trace, if of the importance that this would argue. But if the Lord used unleavened bread, this would answer all questions of suitability.

But Scripture has not bidden us use unleavened bread at the Lord’s Supper, and all this is inference. It would be surely going beyond Scripture, therefore, to insist upon it, or to refuse it. “Bread” is all that is said; and this covers both kinds of bread. Why, then, should we raise the question?

Q. 23.—“How do you harmonize Matt. xi. 14 and Jno. i. 21?”

Ans.—John would have been Elias *to them* had they received him, though not in fact Elias. He came “in the spirit and power of Elias” (Luke i. 17), but was rejected.

Q. 24.—“When are those martyred during the ‘great tribulation’ raised from the dead?”

Ans.—All we know is, that they are found in the ranks of the “first resurrection” in Rev. xx. 4–6; and distinctly mentioned, so that there can be no mistake; but when exactly they are raised does not seem to be stated.

Q. 25.—“Are the saints of Rev. xx. 9 translated to heaven finally, or what becomes of them?”

Ans.—They are apparently some of those that are to fill the new earth of chap. xxi. 1. More than this one can hardly say.

THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

*A Lecture by W. C. Johnston at the Plainfield Meeting,
Monday, July 15th, 1889.*

(Jno. xiv. 16; xvi. 7-13; Acts i., ii.)

ONE might say that the thought has been before us in these meetings again and again about the presence of the Holy Ghost. It only expressed what was before me, I might say, on each occasion, before the word was uttered. How we need to get back in simplicity to that thought, that the Holy Spirit has come,—to get back to what it is to own His presence; to be so simple, so dependent, that unhinderedly He might act in power for the glorifying of Christ! In that case, there will be the ministry the saints need, there will be the ministry that sinners need. Then we read here, in Acts i. 5, "John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Again in the eighth verse, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Then the second chapter, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place, and suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Further, in Acts v. 30: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath

given to them that obey Him." Again, what we find in Acts vii. 55: "But he, being 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." Again, from Acts xiii. 2: "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, 'Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.' And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus." And just again, in Acts xv. 8, speaking about the work among the Gentiles: "And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." And lastly, ver. 28: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us."

The one thought already expressed is what one would desire to emphasize; but what a theme! and who is equal to so bring it out that hearts may be impressed by its reality, and that there might be that which would abide,—so abide, that whenever I open this book alone the first thought might be that the blessed One about whom it speaks is at God's right hand, and that there is another Person nigh, even dwelling within me,—God's blessed Spirit, who wrote the book, and whose joy it is to give its meaning and its power, unfolding God's thoughts about His well-beloved Son? I might just give a fact that may lend emphasis as to why this presses upon me. When God first led me to look at some of these expressions when quite a youth, I read them and re-read them, and meditated upon them, and said, "Is there not something about the Holy Spirit in the Word that is not usually taught?" And many a time the longing came, and with it the prayer and the searching, that it might be known. Books all bearing on the Spirit, orthodox or heterodox,

were looked through. Then, taking the Bible alone, I began to go through it as a whole with that one thought, that God might give the truth connected with this important fact about the presence of the Holy Ghost. What was the result? It changed the current of my thoughts; it changed my work, my position,—yea, every thing. Deliverance, in a measure, had been seen before; but till then, I did not see things in the light altogether to have the described effect all at once. Even then, separation truth, as we may speak of it, had not come before me. The truth about the Church, as it is now taught, I knew not. The truth about the Lord's coming I was so prejudiced against that I would not have gone to a meeting if I had known there was to be a lecture given on the subject. But this I did feel: I wanted to know what God could bring out about the person of the Holy Ghost; and God met me there; and while looking at Scripture, and the very passages I have read, the thought dawned on me, "There has been a change since Christ was on the earth:—there is a Person in heaven who was here: there is a Person come to earth since Christ has gone on high." And from that point the opening out of the wonderful thought of the mystery—the Church of God—came home in a marvelous way. And next, the thought, "Why, that's the bride, and He is the Bridegroom!" and His coming was accepted as a glad reality. The thousand objections about that subject were at once swept away. And why I feel so interested in this truth about the Spirit is simply this: that it was from that point of view any little progress God vouchsafed was given,—it was from seeing and learning a little about the person and presence of the Holy Ghost.

Then look at what struck me after that in the first and second of Acts. Take the verses as they come before us, and just read what we find there in Acts i. In the second verse, "He was taken up;" then again in the ninth verse, "He was taken up;" again in the eleventh verse, Who is

“taken up;” again in the twenty-second verse, “He was taken up.” The first of Acts is characterized by man being in a new place. That is the One who was here, and over whom heaven could open, and the Father could say, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” The Spirit rested upon Him, and that blessed, perfect One, having accomplished the will of His Father, is now raised from the dead, and declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the spirit of holiness. We find then, in the first of Acts, these words, four times (surely, not repeated in vain!): He was “taken up;” and so we get man in a new place at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Now, then, for Acts ii. 2, 17, 33, 39. Though not the expression there, you have at least the fact four times, that the Holy Spirit came down. What a magnificent change! What a new opening of the ways of God! A Man, in whom all His desires were met, taken up and seated at God's right hand; thence from Him, having received the promise of the Father, (Acts ii. four times emphasizes that fact,) the Holy Ghost came down. You know, if you take the earlier books and look at Jehovah, the Angel of Jehovah, and those touches so wonderful and suggestive, do they not lead the mind to the Son—to the One who in due time was God manifest in the flesh? Yet, until that Babe was born in Bethlehem, He is not here in the sense we have to think of Him now as having been here: So, in the Old Testament, from the first of Genesis right through, you find the working and the power of the Holy Ghost. Again and again, in the most distinct way, you find what is being done under His control; but not until that Man has been “taken up” and redemption fully accomplished do you find with distinctness that the Holy Ghost has come down. That is what we see in Acts ii., viz., the blessed presence on earth of the person of the Holy Ghost. As one (now with the Lord,) said, in a striking way, and it struck and struck as

I heard him say it, "Why," he said in substance, "at the beginning, through owning the presence of the Holy Ghost as at Pentecost, there were three thousand souls converted under one sermon; now, through overlooking or ignoring the presence of the Holy Ghost, you may have three thousand sermons for one soul." Do we not need, I repeat, though it be so well known, to have our minds stirred up by way of remembrance, to the fact that there has been a wondrous change since Jesus died and rose again? He has been taken up; thence, from Him the Holy Ghost has come down. You find that Acts i. begins with, "All that Jesus began both to do and to teach." No thought of ceasing: the One who was at work while among men continues at work still. Who is the One specially carrying on this work? This book, you know, is called "The Acts of the Apostles;" you also know it would be better named "The Acts of the Holy Ghost." Then let us connect what is done with the One who has gone on high, and also with the One who is actually here. Then, as with an army, you get to the right base; but, through losing the base, or through losing the sense of the presence of the One who is on the throne, as acting through the One who is now on earth, there is sure to be weakness and defeat. You will remember the terrible catastrophe in the Soudan. Hicks Pasha left what is known as the base of the army, and with his column plunged into the desert, only to be, you might say, annihilated. An army away from its base is soon rendered helpless, and hence such a catastrophe. Look at the thought, and think of the professing church to-day. Does it not supply the key to what has been so manifest? It has been like an army away from its base. The professing church has lost the sense of being linked with the Lord on the throne. Satan cannot hide the cross; he can use it to adorn people, or put it on the spire, or on the gable of a building, or on a tombstone. It is impossible to hide the cross; but mark what he does

do. "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." But "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Oh, depend upon it, it is a precious bit of truth when the devil has so set his whole strength in the way of keeping a cloud of dust between men and that One on the throne. And even with saints, he tries to blind the mind, that the light from that face should not so fill and thrill the heart as it ought. Has he not indeed succeeded to an alarming extent in keeping this truth from the saints? The fact itself he could not, but the power of it he has kept from thousands of saints of God, —the power that is known by the heart being in actual association with that One who was taken up. There has not been the knowing or realizing what it is to be associated with the Man who is at God's right hand. Next, is there any thing else he has so sadly succeeded in as this, that he has obscured and almost taken away the glorious fact of the Holy Ghost's presence on earth? Oh, if we want to hear what was from the beginning and walk in it, look well to these two momentous thoughts. Acts i. gives you a Man at the right hand of God in heaven: Acts ii. gives God the Spirit among men on earth. Heaven has a Man to sit on the throne of God: earth has God from heaven to be in the hearts of men below; and the two are linked together. And as you maintain the two facts, and your soul is brought into the power of these great foundation-truths, oh! every thing for what is personal, for what is corporate, for what is required for service or for worship, will it not be found in its place? Surely it will.

But now just see what follows in Acts v., and there you find evil at once beginning to manifest itself in the Church. Yes, it is *within*. You find in chap. iii. the devil

at work *without*, and they are suffering from what is around them; but now you find the devil at work within. But what is the check? What is that which this terrible sin is used to show up in the light? What is it that this, as it were raises a beacon of warning concerning? Does the sin of Ananias and Sapphira, in all its terrible character, not bring out in a most momentous way this great fact, that the Holy Ghost *was there*, and that He must not be ignored? We need to look at that again: the apostle speaks not of the saints, nor of the apostles; but he shows that this has been done unto the Spirit of God. There has been One present who has been ignored, and this is so signalized that you find judgment marking it upon the spot. We need, I say, as saints, to look further at how this is stamped in the beginning of Acts v. They are charged with having agreed to tempt the Spirit of the Lord. His presence was challenged, and solemnly proved by judgment.

Now look at what is put in that thirty-second verse. "We are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost." Take a court of law, and say there is a case under trial. Then you want witnesses. Will a document do? It may be admitted as evidence, but you do not think of a document as a witness; you think of a witness as a person. Then the word "witness" at once gives distinctness, as it presents personality. A witness, properly speaking, is a person. In the case supposed, a witness is such in the place and at the time where the matter in question is being judged. Now take that thought, and you have the Spirit's person and the Spirit's presence. Think of heaven; there is nothing in question there about the Lord Jesus Christ. The angels, the redeemed, God Himself, are agreed; or, as we have it, "The mind of heaven is one." There is nothing in question; then there is no witness, as there is none needed. As is well known, if judges come on circuit, and there are no prisoners to be tried, it is a maiden court: no

witnesses are called. Then you find nothing in question. So in heaven : Jesus has the highest place. He was taken up ; He was seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and they delight to own Him as worthy of that place, and you do not need witnesses there. Even the Holy Ghost is not thus thought of as a witness in heaven. But, mark you, the Spirit was there, and He saw and knew what took place when that blessed One rose from among yon little company when He was nigh to Bethany. You might think of the disciples as witnesses. Well, they had to say what they knew for themselves—each for himself, in his own way. One might begin where he was met in the boat ; another, where he was picked up at the receipt of custom ; another, like Philip, where he was taken up by the way, and from that point,—when he was first in company with the Lord,—right through, what he saw and heard and knew for himself. And where does it end ? In the cloud, when the cloud received Him out of their sight. Here see the source of their testimony : what each for himself witnessed,—what each for himself actually knew. It ranges from the point where they met Him to the point where they lost Him in the cloud. Now was that sufficient ? Was it all of which He was worthy ? Was it all the heart of God desired to be told out about Him ? No ! a thousand times No ! Above the cloud the Conqueror is still rising, until He takes the highest station at God's right hand, made Lord and Christ, God raising Him as a Prince and a Saviour. The Holy Ghost witnessed all, knew all, entered into all as God can ; and soon, down to Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, He comes, a new presence, if not a new power ; though His influence may have been traced from creation, you find Him now on earth, as a witness, testifying to what the Lord had received and become, on the throne. And mark my point, if there is no controversy in heaven about the blessed person of the Lord, there was a controversy at Jerusalem ; there is a controversy still with the

world who has rejected Him. There is where matters are in question; there is where the character and claims of the Lord Jesus are being canvassed; then, there you have the witness. He is now present in the place and at the time where and while Christ's claims are denied. The Spirit has come, and He abides as a witness.

But now what have we? These men who saw and knew all things connected with Christ's earthly career, until they lost Him in the cloud; now this heavenly witness, who saw and knew all that took place when He was seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high; and now they are together, and you have a complete, wonderful testimony as to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. How full and blessed is the testimony! The Holy Ghost also is a witness. As a witness He abides on earth, while Christ is on the Father's throne in heaven. Oh, to get that thought home to one's soul in power! In a feeble way once I put it, and one who had been in fellowship some seventeen years went around amongst the saints afterward, and said, "I never so saw and felt that fact that the Holy Ghost is here." And many a testimony of the same kind could be given; not merely getting past the fact of His being an influence, to the fact of His being a Person; but grasping as by His own power what His presence means. Oh, look at it as it comes out here. Any thing, every thing, now amongst the saints is looked at with reference to the presence of the One who has come, and who is ever in harmony with the One who has gone. There is no losing of the base where that One sits commanding all, and with whom are all our supplies. There is no losing of the active power now present to guide and control. You have both vividly kept in view if you think of the One taken up and the other as having come down; and now those who are His should be thus in harmony with Himself, to bear testimony in the world that has cast Him out. If it is the sending forth of others, you find the Spirit saith, "Separate Me Paul and Barna-

bas." If it is considering questions that are likely to cause trouble, or are showing that they are on the verge of division, it is that "it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." How one might go on and multiply instances and quotations, all bringing out that fact that they have got hold of the truth that He is come, and that they act and speak and labor as those who own that the Holy Spirit is here!

Now for ourselves, let me apply it by saying, I know not about Congress so distinctly, but take Parliament, as one may speak of that with a little more certainty, and in that assembly of hundreds of members, when is there to be a hearing? When you catch the eye of the Speaker. I suppose in Congress you have also to get the Speaker's eye, otherwise you are speaking to the wind; it is of no account. Is there not something for us there? In open meetings, in worship-meetings, how needful it is to catch the eye of the Speaker! I need to be dependent, and really exercised, to be sure before God that I have something by the Spirit of God. Oh how solemn and how wonderful, when it is real! It will not be the next moment that a brother has ceased that a hymn will be given out or a word spoken. If you wait to catch the eye of the Speaker, you will think twice before you speak. A little waiting will be no loss. I said to several, after our happy time (as I believe it was such) yesterday morning, that there was a thought I never dreamed of—never had in my mind, that I remember of, in a meeting: I was about to rise once and just say, "Could we not have five minutes' silence?" Yes, "Could we not have five minutes' silence?" Oh, it is a wonderful thing when we get to that fact that we are gathered unto Him who is at God's right hand, and that the Holy Ghost is here to lead and guide! How often do we speak without getting the eye of the Speaker! You know, the one who rises has to catch the eye of the Speaker, and so he has the floor. Every other must stand aside: the one who has thus got

his eye is to be heard. We want to know a little more of this in the power and joy of being dependent on the Lord, and knowing the control and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

How one might go on! but take just a thought as to service, or as to one's path, in owning the Spirit's presence. It occurs to me that I might put it in a way that you might remember it. San Francisco is famous for its cable-roads, and any body who has seen them will not forget them soon. Along those streets, over those hills, miles and miles, runs that wonderful system of cable-cars. I will tell you what I have thought. These roads have given me the back-bone of a very good sermon. I will tell you why. Look at the track. You will not go far unless you get on to the track—the rails. Well, to me, that suggests God's will. That is what the Spirit leads along. We want the track of the divine will. Then, if you are going, you have to take your seat in the car. God has given us His precious Word, and whatever you want you will find here: if you are asking for any thing, longing for any thing, and if you haven't got the Word of God for it, you cannot sit down, you cannot rest with the certainty that that thing can be accomplished; but if you get on the track of the divine will, and can just take your seat, you might say, in the car of the divine Word, then you can have that certainty. What then? There in the cable underground is the unseen power;—it is where you are, it is at the very end of the journey, it is all the way along, it is present every where. So is the blessed Spirit of God. As the cable works round its goal, so the Spirit moves in connection with the throne. Then you get on to the track; just take your seat in the car, and there you will find there is connection with the cable, and you will go along according to the power there displayed. In that case, you might think even, as in San Francisco, (although as associated with that place it is not an appropriate suggestion,) yet, if you will take it for what it suggests, you can go to "the Golden Gate." Well, to see

that there is what God has marked out as His will,—that is the track we want to discover each for himself. He has given us His precious Word. We want to stand, or, if you like, sit down, on that Word. We never do more than when we are resting, simply resting, on the Word of God. Then there is no effort, no worry, no hurry. We are connected with an unseen power, and that is connected with the throne. The Spirit is here; He is yonder, and all the way along; and how blessed when we find what it is practically, definitely, to own and act as yielded to the blessed Spirit of God!

W. C. J.

"THINGS THAT SHALL BE:"

AN EXPOSITION OF REVELATION IV.—XXII.

PART I.—(Continued.)

The Palm-Bearing Multitude. (Rev. vii. 7-17.)

THE hundred and forty-four thousand have been sealed before the winds of heaven have been let loose upon the earth. Before the next vision they have spent their violence, the great tribulation is passed, and an innumerable company of people are seen as come out of it. This expression, "the great tribulation," is one that rules in the interpretation of this scene as should be evident. When people simply read, "out of great tribulation," it was natural to think of all the redeemed of all generations as being included here, and the multitude and universality of the throng thus gathered would confirm the idea; but now it ought to be no longer possible. That it is "the *great* tribulation" is even emphasized in the original—"the tribulation, the great one,"—to forbid all generalizing in this way. We are reminded of one specific one, which as thus named

we are expected to know; and he who will take Scripture simply will surely find without difficulty the one intended. We have already gone over this ground, and there is scarcely need to remind our readers that the "great tribulation" of which our Lord spoke to His disciples, "such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be," which is shortened by divine grace, for otherwise "no flesh should be saved," and at the close of which "they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven," must needs be that out of which the multitude before us come.

That the tribulation is thus immediately followed by the coming of the Lord from heaven makes it easier to understand another thing, that their standing before the throne, as the prophet sees them, does not necessitate the thought of their being in heaven. There is no hint of their being raised from the dead, or having died at all. Simply they are "*before* the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple." Here again it is natural to the common habits of thought to suppose that the temple of God must be in heaven, and passages from this very book would doubtless be cited in support of this (chap. xi. 19; xv. 5): these will come naturally before us for consideration in their own place; but here it is sufficient to say that it is not said "in heaven," and that *on earth* there is yet to be a temple, as Ezekiel shows. Isaiah also declares that also of the Gentiles the Lord will "take for priests and Levites" (lxvi. 21).

With this view at least let us look at the scene before us, and see what we can gather more. That they have "white robes" shows simply their acceptance; the palms in their hands speak of rest in victory; their words ascribe their salvation to God and to the Lamb, but they "cry,"—it does not say "sing." The angels and the elders stand "around" the throne; they simply stand "*before*" it.

One of the elders now raises the question with John, "Who are these?" He, unable to say who they can be,

refers back the question to the speaker, and he answers it. But note the strangeness of such a question upon the ordinary view, and the greater strangeness of John's inability to answer. Plainly they were a company of saved ones giving praise for their salvation, and if it were the *whole* company, the very naturalness of the thought as accepted by so many would make us wonder at the question about it, still more at the apostle's speechlessness. But he had seen another company in heaven, who still kept their place before his eyes, and who had *sung* the new song, and at least with fuller praise. As to these, no question had been raised at all. It would seem, he might be trusted to make out who these were; and one of these elders was now accosting him! How could he miss the thought that here was a separate class of redeemed ones, and certainly upon a lower footing than those whose rapturous thanksgiving he had heard before?

Accordingly he hears that such is the fact. He is told they are those who come out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Not their sufferings have washed their robes white, but the Lamb's blood: and here again, though the expression is peculiar, they are on common ground with saints at all times.

And on this account they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple; (but in the new Jerusalem there is no temple: the "Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the Temple of it;") and "He that sitteth on the throne shall spread His tabernacle over them." So rightly now the *R. V.*, and not, "shall dwell among them." It is like Isaiah (iv. 6), who similarly describes the condition of Jerusalem in the time to which this refers: "And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day-time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain." How plain that it is as protection and defense, from the words that follow here in Revelation: "They shall hunger no more,

neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat"! How suited to men still in the world is this assurance!

But it goes on: "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall be their Shepherd, and shall guide them to fountains of waters of life, and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Blessed as all this description is, it seems to fall short of the full eternal blessing, and certainly short of what is heavenly. The impression given is of the earth's warfare not yet over, sin and evil not completely banished, but themselves indeed effectually sheltered. The thought of shepherd-care suits this as well as does the tabernacle stretched over them. The thanksgiving expressed also is that of those emerging out of a trial great as that out of which it is said they come, and for whom the joy of deliverance as yet allows little else to be thought of. There is not even a song—and Scripture can be trusted to its least tittle of expression—they "cry with a great voice," but do not "*sing*."

We may well believe, then, that these are the priestly class taken from among the nations of which Isaiah speaks (lxvi. 21). I am aware that it is a matter of dispute whether "I will take of *them* for priests and Levites" is to be referred to the Israelites whom the Gentiles bring back or to the Gentiles who bring them back; but, as Delitzsch well says, "God is here certainly not announcing so simple a thing as that the priests among the returned people should be still priests." He has just declared that the Gentiles "shall bring all your brethren out of all the nations for an offering unto the Lord . . . as the children of Israel bring their offering in a clean vessel unto the house of the Lord." The Gentiles are here, therefore, this "clean vessel;" and being thus cleansed, He further promises as to them, "And of them also will I take for priests and Levites, saith the Lord."

The passages in Isaiah and Revelation mutually con-

firm each other in this application, and we see who are those honored to serve in the temple of the Lord, as we see also what temple it is in which they serve. All is in perfect harmony, and the multitude of Gentiles stands here in plain analogy with Israel's hundred and forty-four thousand, and upon a similar footing to them. The two together complete the picture of blessing for both Israel and the Gentiles, through the storm which is about to burst upon the earth. Neither group is heavenly; neither is the full number to be saved and enjoy the summer sunshine of millennial days; but they are the sheaf of first-fruits of the harvest beyond, in each case dedicated, therefore, in a peculiar manner to the Lord.

Let us pause here to notice the thought so characteristic of the book of Revelation, book as it is of the throne and of governmental recompense,—of "robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb." The figures of Scripture are perfectly definite and absolutely appropriate, never needing apology. Of them, as of all else in it, the words of the Lord are true: "Scripture cannot be broken." On the other hand, they are various, and with meaning in their variations, so that if we are not careful, we may easily force them into contradiction with each other and with the truth.

What, for instance, is the "robe" in which the saint appears before God? It is easy to answer, and absolutely scriptural to quote, "He hath covered me with the robe of *righteousness*" (Isa. lxi. 10). And how beautifully does the "robe" speak of that, by which the shame of our nakedness, which came in through sin, is put away!

But what *is* our righteousness? Here again we have most familiar texts, "This is the name whereby He shall be called, 'The Lord our righteousness'" (Jer. xxiii. 6); "Christ, who is made of God unto us . . . righteousness." And the prodigal's "best robe" reminds us here how the beauty of Christ upon us must transcend far the lustre of angelic garments.

Nevertheless, if we think we have got the one idea of Scripture in this matter, we shall be sorely perplexed when we come to this text in Revelation. Could we wash *this* robe, and make it white in the blood of the Lamb? Assuredly not: it would be impossible to apply this expression, in any way that can be imagined, to this robe, which is Christ.

The Revelation has its own distinct phraseology here, in perfect harmony with the line of truth which it takes up. The robe is still the symbol of righteousness, but in view of the recompense that awaits us, "the fine linen" with which the bride is clothed, "is the righteousnesses—the righteous *deeds*—of the saints" (chap. xix. 8). It is practical righteousness that is in question,—not something wrought by another for us, but wrought by our own hands. It is a completely different thought from that in the Lord's parable, and in no wise contradictory because so different. Assuredly "we shall all be *manifested* before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive for the things done in the body, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. v. 10).

For the saint, indeed, this is not to come *personally* into judgment. That, the Lord has assured us, personally we cannot do (Jno. v. 24, *R. V.*). God can raise no question as to a soul whom He has received, whether He has received him. The matter of reward is entirely distinct from that of personal acceptance; but it has its place. And here comes in this solemn and precious reminder of how the robe needs washing in the blood of the Lamb in order to be white. How else could any thing of ours find approval and recompense? Thus as the apostle tells us in his prayer for Onesiphorus (2 Tim. i. 18), that reward itself is "mercy:" "the Lord grant unto him that he may find *mercy* of the Lord in that day!"

These saints out of the great tribulation know at least that not *by* tribulation, but by the work of Another, can that which is best and holiest in their lives be accepted of

God. "*They* have washed their robes." They have renounced the thought of any proper whiteness in their robes save that produced by the blood of the Lamb. On this ground they are as we, and we are as they.

Looking back at these visions now, and their connection with the seals, we see more fully than ever the introductory character the latter have, and how at the same time the seventh seal introduces to the open book itself. The sixth seal is not final judgment, prophetic of it as it may be. It is but as a zephyr compared with the storm-blast, for the winds have not yet been allowed to burst forth as they will. So too the brethren of the fifth-seal martyrs, which are to be slain as they were, have yet to give up their lives. But because the seventh seal, in opening the whole book, brings us face to face with this last and most awful period of the world's history ever to be known, therefore before it is opened, we are summoned apart for the succession of events, to see the gracious purposes which are hidden behind the coming judgments,—to see beyond it, in fact, to the clear blue sky beyond. And we see why these are not seals nor trumpets, but an interruption—a parenthetical instruction, which, coming in the place it does, pushes as it were the seventh seal on to be an eighth section, *itself filling the seventh place*. If numbers have at all significance, we may surely read them here. The seeming disorder becomes beauteous order: the seventh seal fills the eighth place, as introducing to the new condition of things, the earth's last crisis; *the seventh place is filled by that which gives rest to the heart* in God's work accomplished, a sabbatism which no restlessness of man can disturb! Let us too rest in thanksgiving, for these are the ways of God.

(*To be continued.*)

THE POWER OF AN ASSEMBLY TO BIND AND TO LOOSE.

(Matt. xviii. 17, 18.)—*Continued.*

2. THE DOCTRINAL LIMIT.

THE passage before us says nothing explicitly with regard to the power of the assembly as to *doctrine*.

It is simply personal trespass that is in question: "If thy brother trespass against thee." And it is striking that when we take up the first epistle to the Corinthians, in which undoubtedly we have the matter of discipline on the part of the assembly treated of, we have, with one exception that I shall presently notice, nothing but moral condition. The person to be dealt with there was an immoral person, plainly; and the apostle says, "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat . . . therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (chap. v. 11, 13).

The one thing here which is not simple immorality is *idolatry*; but it is at any rate plain, naked evil, about which there could be no question for a Christian. He was a "wicked person" who worshiped the gods of the heathen, and a wicked person was to be put away. But this involves no decision about doctrine, no pronouncing upon truths of Scripture, plainly. "Wickedness" was not a nice question, needing much knowledge of the Word to detect. It needed *godliness*. And this is the one thing that could be rightly expected of an assembly of Christians: not learning, not powers of research and skill in argument, not much attainment, where the most part might be babes; but hearts true to Christ, and a real desire to glorify Him. This would be their qualification for all that was required of them. Wickedness is opposed to godliness; and the godly might be trusted to know it and to cast it out.

But the church is never the teacher, never called to utter its voice upon points of doctrine; but Christ by His Word and Spirit alone are to be heard here. Nor is the church called to authenticate His teaching, but to receive it. Her attitude is not here that of authority, but of submission. The Jezebel-church it is that calls herself a prophetess, and where this claim is made the Lord rebukes His saints for "suffering" it.

The truth is to make itself felt as that in the conscience, not established by human authority, but itself authority. "If I say the *truth*, why do ye not believe Me?" the Lord demanded of the Jews. Wherever the church comes in authoritatively to define, the conscience is taken away from its true allegiance, the healthful exercise of the soul is lost, the fear of God is taught by the precept of men (Isa. xxix. 13), and the authority of God is taken away by that which professedly maintains it. Of all this, Rome is the natural outcome. Babylon is built up by such doctrine; and it is the mercy of God if "Babel" be plainly written upon it by the confusion and scattering which results.

On the other hand, it will be asked, If the church be not the judge of doctrines, how is discipline in these matters to be carried out? I answer, the Church is the Church of Christ, and not of Antichrist; the gathering practically is "unto His *name*." But this "name" expresses what He is Himself. If He be not "Jesus," "Christ," and "Lord" to us, there is no gathering-point, no centre of attraction, no actual gathering therefore. All is lost. There is really no church to exercise discipline. It is a deeper question than that of its *acts*: it is a question of its very *existence*.

But these fundamental truths are what every one gathered knows, what every one accepts, what does not require to be pronounced upon, but has been already by every soul that has received the gospel. He who, as an undone sinner, has trusted the blood of Jesus as his sal-

vation from eternal wrath, knows in himself what enables himself to refuse and necessitates his withdrawal from all that is not this. He may, alas! be seduced into another course; but it is *godliness* which alone he needs to keep him in the right path here. He has to make no new attainment to be qualified for his place in the assembly, and to give judgment of what he is called upon to refuse.

Thus, to pronounce upon "wickedness" is a very different thing indeed from defining as to truths. There is a creed to maintain, but it is that which every one who can rightly be received as a Christian has accepted to begin with. He must be faithful to it, and is not always necessarily faithful. But there are no new points to be defined. In the maintenance of a true gospel, he can be with all who are seeking to maintain it, without regard to differences which may still exist.

The church needs not, then, to define doctrine, so long as it is the Church. It needs to be separate from unfaithfulness to Christ,—that is, from "*wicked persons*." Those who attempt to do more do less, and in assuming authority are themselves in insubjection to it. It is evident that, to be the voice of the assembly, the discipline of the assembly must be intelligible to, and carry the conscience of, the least intelligent there. Otherwise some must act blindly, from confidence in others, and the seeing must lead the blind: in other words, the leaders must act, and the rest acquiesce; or the "assembly" practically stand for a part of it,—*perhaps* the most intelligent part: but who among the blind are to see this?

Foundation-truth is to be maintained, and upon this the church is founded. We need not to be told what it is, if we are on it, but we do need to be warned that we be faithful to it, and to put away from among ourselves any wicked person.

And as to all that is not foundation-truth, what do we need? Is it not to realize the power of the Word of God,

and of His Spirit, to lead us into all truth, and bring us to unity of mind and judgment? It is not a common creed and ecclesiastical decisions that can do this. The power of the Spirit can only really be known where we walk "in all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." A godly walk and a tender care for one another, and not legislation, are the way to unity. God has ordained no other. How plainly are we told so! and how abundantly experience confirms this, where by grace we have been enabled to heed this exhortation!

"Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." So it reads, and such is the divine order and connection between these two things: not "truth and grace," but "grace and truth."

Quite true that they come together and cannot be separated from one another for a moment. This is a blessed reality, for then where grace comes truth comes of necessity; but it is grace which introduces the truth, opens the way, disposes the soul for its reception. Thus if repentance is to be preached to men, it is in the *name of Jesus*—that name which is in itself a gospel, of Him whose presence in the world is God's pure grace.

Find me a company of those who are living godly in Christ Jesus, but among whom the truth can only make its way by the help of ecclesiastical decisions, and I will find you hot ice, cold fire, or any similar absurdity that you can name. This were to deny the Lord's own saying, that "if a man love Me, he will keep My word." To even the babes in Christ it is said, "But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you"—you need no mere human authority for that which you receive (1 Jno. ii. 27). Certainly, then, they need not the church, which was never called to teach, and which cannot teach: for who are the *taught*, if the church teaches? All this leads

directly into those Romanizing views of the church, which narrow it down to a certain number of those supposed competent ones, from whose disputes with one another the Lord's people are so often torn asunder from end to end. *God would put the power for discipline into the hands of those who by their very incompetency are saved from the jangle of these disputes.* For the decision of the church in any matter is to be the decision of the least as well as the most intelligent, the babe as well as the "father." How wise with infinite wisdom are the ways of God!

The church, then, must be built on the foundation, or it is not the Church. But being there, its duty is the simple one of caring for *godliness*, of putting away any one manifested as a "wicked person." The doctrinal limit in discipline is very plain.

"ESSENTIALS AND NON-ESSENTIALS."

"Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition." (Mark vii. 9.) *"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much."* (Luke xvi. 10.)

I N this day of formal and professed godliness, a painfully common example of making void the Word of God by our own arguments and traditions is the frequently heard distinction between "essentials and non-essentials."

"We differ only in non-essentials" seems usually a disturbed slumberer's way of saying, "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep!" Thus, I think, has our poverty of soul "come upon us as one that travelth," and our spiritual "want as an armed man"! (Prov. xxiv. 33, 34.)

To the question, What are "the essentials"? there is

but one response. "Essential to our salvation,"—that which ministers to our security.

What supreme selfishness—to deem nothing essential that does not endanger our safety! What insult to Him, to whom alone we are indebted for safety, to make such a classification of His holy things! How it proves that self has not yet been dethroned that Christ might be enthroned in the heart! Should not gratitude and love make most sacred whatever pertains to the glory of God?

Even our salvation is for His glory: "He saved them *for His name's sake*, that He might make His mighty power to be known." (Ps. cvi. 8.) "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions *for Mine own sake*, and will not remember thy sins." (Isa. xliii. 25.) "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ to Himself, . . . *to the praise of the glory of His grace*, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." (Eph. i. 5, 6.)

Who, then, are we, that we should sit in judgment of His affairs, and, out of a number of matters that pertain to His glory, call this one essential and that one non-essential? Were it not better that we should pray, "Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me; then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from great transgression." (Ps. xix. 13.)

But are not these distinctions set up to excuse ourselves from the responsibility of our many differences? Self-willed and stubborn, we will have our own way if possible in every thing which does not affect our salvation; and so it comes to pass that, instead of humbling ourselves for our sins, and preserving in our souls the sense of the glory of God and the solemnity of His Word, we betake ourselves to this unholy principle for comfort and guidance. Our dear Lord has bidden us *not to differ*. Should not the slightest wish of One who has so loved us and redeemed us be to us very essential?

Take, for instance, 1 Cor. i. 10: He not only bids us

be united, but lays *sevenfold* emphasis upon the injunction:

1. "I beseech you, brethren." We are *besought*, and that by one who carried in his bosom the heart of Christ toward His people, and who was suffering all things for the elect's sake. A fit instrument indeed for the Holy Spirit to use in thus beseeching us.

2. "By the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." What a name to beseech by! What recollections of love, patience, gentleness, agonizing sufferings it summons—and all for us! *The name of our Lord Jesus Christ!* If *that* does not make us heed what the voice has to say, what will? In Heaven's judgment, He alone is worthy, and that alone worthy which has Him for its object, and burns with the frankincense of His dear name.

3. "That ye all speak the same thing." Words are the expression of what is in our hearts. If *Christ* "dwells in our hearts by faith," it is *Christ* that we will speak, however great or small may be our knowledge of Him. The babe prattles in his weak way, and the strong youth speaks with clearness and vigor, but they speak the *same* language, and they understand each other well.

4. "And that there be no divisions among you" (*i. e.*, among "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord;" for such are the persons addressed in this epistle, as may be seen in ver. 2). Brother, whatever name you may as a Christian be under, this request appeals to you as also to me. It pleads for "no divisions," and that, mark, not in the ecclesiastical body in which you may be, but in relation to "*all who in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.*" We may find extreme difficulties in the actual state of things, to carry this out, but we are no less responsible to do it.

5. "But that ye be perfectly joined together." Not merely agreed, notice, but "*perfectly joined together.*" What can perfectly join a family together but absolute subjection to the one who at the head of it seeks only its good? So here: nothing can produce such a state among

us but absolute subjection to the Lord, and this is expressed in our subjection to His Word.

6. "In the same mind." Such subjection will form all our minds in one mold, so that, whatever be the diversity of tempers, of "constitution," or of gifts, they will be under "the same mind," and this will produce—

7. "The same judgment." In all things pertaining to God, and the family of God, it will find us united. Now I submit that for this blessed order of things, or for its opposite, we are, each and all, solemnly responsible; and that the idea of essentials and non-essentials is a mischievous excuse from that responsibility, making little or nothing of what disgraces our Lord, and thus hindering honest souls from seeking the way to cease from displeasing Him. O brethren, it is time to awake out of sleep, that we "*may with one mind and with one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" (Rom. xv. 6.) Thus the Lord prayed aloud for us, that we might hear what was in His heart: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on Me through their word, that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are One: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, even as Thou hast loved Me." (Jno. xvii. 20-23.)

Brethren, let us carry this prayer, this desire of our Lord, in our hearts.

E. C. W.

CHRIST has not only delivered me from the consequences of my sins, but also from the present power of sin, and from the claims and influences of that thing which Scripture calls "the world."

BE it remembered that one of Satan's special devices is, to lead people to accept salvation from Christ, while, at the same time, they refuse to be identified with Him in His rejection,—to avail themselves of the atoning work of the cross, while abiding comfortably in the world that is stained with the guilt of nailing Christ thereto.

“UNTO HIM THAT LOVETH US,

And hath washed us from our sins in His own blood, . . . to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever.”

LOVED me! there needs indeed a voice from heaven,
 Fraught with some message of supernal potence,
 To teach me, holy Father, that Thou lovest me;
 For nothing else would win me to believe it!

We love on earth—but then we love the thing
 That in itself is lovely, or can pay
 With kindred warmth the waste of our affection;
 Or that which, by some sweet assimilation,
 Can work us pleasure or requite our love.
 But *why*, Eternal Father, Lord of heaven,
 Maker of earth and of ten thousand worlds,
 Ten thousand times more spacious than the earth!
 Being without beginning, without end!
 Sufficient to Thyself—beyond the reach
 Of things create, to pleasure or to pain Thee!
 Before whose spotless purity the hosts
 Of most immaculate angels are not pure;—
 Omnipotent, who see'st in all that is,
 No more but the poor nothings Thou hast made,
 And couldst unmake, if so it were Thy pleasure!
 My spirit shrinks in wonder while I ask,
 Eternal Father, *Why shouldst Thou love me?*
 The thing Thou mad'st, but not what Thou hadst made it;
More hateful to Thee than the meanest worm,

Because the worm is innocent and true—
Less grateful to Thee than the flower to me,
 Because I rendered hatred for Thy love!

Thy child? Thou call'st me so—but I had wiped
 As a foul stain Thine impress from my brow,
 And should have blushed that men had seen it there!

Thy willing servant? No, not even that!
 For I betook me to another lord,

And Thou in anger didst refuse my service.

Thy slave? I should have been, but e'en the slave
 Who serves unwillingly the lord he chose not
 Has oftentimes been faithful, has been grateful.

What was I to Thee, then? Alas! *Thy foe!*
 Friend of Thy foes, and leagued to do Thee scorn.
 I knew Thy pleasure, but I did it not!
 I felt Thy excellence, but could not love it.

* * * * *

O God, and is it possible that one
 So hardened, so immovable, should be
 The object of Thy still enduring love?
 That yet 'Thou wouldst not leave me to my choice,
 But sent Thy Spirit to save me from myself?
 I've nothing to return Thee, but a heart
 Sometimes with Thee, and sometimes on the earth;
 Now soaring high above created things
 In utter scorn of all the world calls greatest,
 Pleasure or pain, and deems them all alike,
 So it may rest upon a Saviour's love!
 At other times—alas! why is it so?
 It does but float upon this changeful world,
 Like a light straw upon the ocean's bed;
 Now up, now down, disturbed by every ripple:
 And wilt Thou love me still, with such a poor return?
 It seems impossible—but Thou hast said it,
 And Thou hast proved it—oh, how much, how long!
 And shall I add to the black catalogue
 Of my ingratitude this closing sin,
 Blackest of all, to doubt what Thou hast said?

(Selected.)

AFTER FORTY YEARS.

AS we well know, the wilderness was the place of trial; and trial, whether for Israel or God's people in general, means the bringing out of weakness, sin, and failure on our part, and at the same time the manifestation of strength, holiness, and patience on God's part. It is affecting and precious to see, at the close of the journey, after years of unbelief and sin on the part of Israel, the futile effort of the enemy to bring a curse upon them. As we recall our own experience, with more of folly and failure in it, perhaps, than any thing else, what a comfort it is to hear the prophet (willing enough to curse,) compelled to say, "How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed?" "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel." In the light of that, we boldly lift up our head and say, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" Yes, with the history of murmurings, golden-calf apostasy, the great refusal at Kadesh, Korah's assumption, and the rebellion of Dathan and Abiram, to say nothing of the failure of the leader (Moses), the priest (Aaron), and the prophetess (Miriam),—with all this behind them, and with the defilement of Baal Peor just in front of them, when the enemy accuses and would bring a curse, grace answers as we have seen. How this sweeps away at once all question as to the believer's eternal security in Christ, magnifying the perfect grace of God, the value of the blood of Christ, and the work of the Spirit, while at the same time God's holiness is none the less seen in the many chastenings visited upon His erring people! "Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though Thou tookest vengeance of their inventions." (Ps. cxlx. 8.) It is at this latter truth—God's ways of holiness—that we would look a little, as suggested by a comparison of the numbers in the various tribes at the beginning and at the close of their wilderness journey, seen in Num. i. and xxvi. Here

not less than elsewhere numbers are significant, indicating prosperity (Gen. xlviii. 19) and strength (Luke xiv. 31).

Reuben (Num. i. 20; xxvi. 5) heads the list,—the first-born, and therefore entitled, according to nature, to the leadership; but because of sin, he was not to have the excellency. In these forty years' wanderings, his numbers dwindle,—at the close, we see him weaker than at the beginning. Looking at his history for a reason for this, we come to the rebellion of Dathan and Abiram, who were of this tribe (Num. xvi. 1). Desiring to be leaders, under pretense of claiming their rights for the people, they rebel against God's authority in Moses, turn back in heart to Egypt, and murmur at the trials of the way. Swift judgment overtakes them,—the earth opens and swallows them up, but the leaven of their example spreads among the people, and rebellion is only checked when fourteen thousand are slain by the plague. (Num. xvi. 49.) How many, like these children of Reuben, rebel against God's authority, in pure self-will, and murmur at the trials of the way, only to weaken themselves and their brethren, finding that, instead of being exalted by their independence, they have become abased!

In looking at Simeon, we are struck with the shrinkage from fifty-nine thousand three hundred to twenty-two thousand two hundred,—his strength but little more than one-third of what he had at the start, and we cannot help remembering that it was a prince of this tribe who was the leading offender at Baal Peor, upon whom also judgment was summarily executed (Num. xxv. 8); and doubtless his brethren (*v.* 6) who were sharers in his sin partook also of his judgment, leaving Simeon's ranks woefully depleted. But what was this sin that wrought such havoc? What Balak's efforts at cursing could not effect, mixture with the Midianites did, in measure. Rebellion, the sin of Reuben, does not leave the tribe so weak as mingling with strange people does Simeon. How many, alas! of God's people have proven, as Simeon did here,

that mixture with the world saps their strength and destroys their spiritual prosperity! It is the Pergamos state of the Church—marriage with the world, and is so described in Rev. ii. Then, too, as though in solemn warning, it was at the *close* of the journey that Simeon thus sinned, and there was no time for recovery. Like Solomon afterward, and Lot before, the last thing mentioned is the sin, and their lamp (of testimony) goes out in obscure darkness. David failed grievously, but there was a good measure of recovery (though he bore his scars to the grave). Let us beware of the first symptoms of coldness or worldliness, lest we too, like Simeon, find our last days here blighted by irremediable failure.

Gad also shows a weakening at the close. His outward history shows no reason for this, unless his close connection with Reuben and Simeon (Num. ii. 10-16) made him a sharer in their sin and judgment. Association with evil workers, even where one outwardly is not a partaker, has a weakening effect. How we can see this all around!—a repetition of Jonathan,—upright himself, yet linked with the house of Saul. Many of God's people are growing weaker, through ecclesiastical business, social or family relationships with those who drag them into worldliness.

Secret causes sap the strength of Naphtali, and he comes out of the course weaker by eight thousand men than when he entered it. With nothing unusual laid to his charge, he has gone backward. Let us beware lest some "little foxes" spoil our vines,—lest, while outwardly blameless—with nothing positive in our conduct to be condemned as in Reuben, or in our associations as Gad, we may show even greater deterioration than either. It is loss of *first love*, even where there are abundant works, which brings such weakness.

Fruitful Ephraim seems to contradict his name, losing eight thousand men. It is one thing to have a name by grace, quite another to prove it in our walk.

But this catalogue has also a bright side. Warnings

alone might discourage us. Besides, it is not true that the wilderness is a place that only weakens: on the contrary, rightly gone through, the strength is renewed—"thy pound hath gained ten pounds." There is Judah, who gains nearly two thousand in those forty years of trial. Did Caleb's faith stimulate them all? (Joshua was not perhaps so closely identified with Ephraim, though of that tribe, being the companion of Moses—Ex. xxxiii. 11.) Jonathan, and David, and a host of others, show what the faith of one man can do in encouraging others. Companionship with a man of faith is helpful; unless, like Lot, we lean on him, instead of imitating his faith. Caleb, at the close of his journey, could say (Josh. xiv. 11), "As yet, I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me; as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out and to come in." So the numbers of Judah speak of vigor undiminished. May it be so with us at the close. Issachar and Zebulun, in the same camp with Judah, can bear the same testimony—that the wilderness does not necessarily weaken. Even here there is a difference,—Issachar's increase of nearly ten thousand being much greater than that of Zebulun. Those who succeed, do so in various degrees.

Manasseh reverses Ephraim's experience, and is an illustration of the fact that "many that are first shall be last, and the last first." Many a sincere, quiet, plodding Christian, with nothing brilliant, will show at the close a brighter record than his brother who apparently had so much better prospects.

Dan, already large, increases; while Asher, from being one of the smaller tribes, takes his place with the largest. "Friend, come up higher" might be said of him.

What varied results, both of failure and success! and to be explained by various reasons. Here are indications of little failures and great ones, of small progress and astonishing progress. Can we not take these two catalogues, and seeing in them a picture for ourselves, learn

the lesson? God shows us that at the close, an examination will be made—"we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." In these pictures, we can read the end from the beginning, and so be wise, and seek to gather daily gold, silver, precious stones, shunning all that would weaken us, and counting on that grace which bears us on eagle's wings.

"Though the way be long and dreary,
Eagle strength He'll still renew;
Garments fresh, and foot unweary,
Tell how God hath brought thee through."

S. R.

THE LOST SON.

(Luke xv. 11-24.)

THE third parable of this chapter, while it reveals no less than the former ones the heart of God, reveals on the other hand, more than these, the heart of man, and that whether as receiving or rejecting the grace that seeks him. It is in this respect the fitting close of the appeal to conscience. Publican and Pharisee are both shown fully to themselves in the holy light which yet invites and welcomes all who will receive it.

Whatever applications may be made to Jew and Gentile, it should be plain that these are but applications, however legitimate, and that the Lord is not addressing Himself to a class outside His present audience, but to the practical need of those before Him. The same consideration decisively forbids the thought of any direct reference to the restoration of a child of God gone astray from Him, an interpretation which makes of the elder son who had not wandered the pattern saint! Strange it is indeed that any who know what the grace of God does in the soul of its recipient should ever entertain so strange a notion. It is one of the fruits of reading Scripture apart from its context, as if it were a mosaic of disconnected fragments; a thing, alas! still done by so many, to the injury of their

souls. We hope to look at the elder son at another time, but the foundation of this strange view meets us at the outset.

The two who are in evident contrast throughout here are both called "sons." And so in the first parable are the ninety and nine, as well as the object of the Shepherd's quest called "sheep." But we know the Jewish fold held other flocks than those of Christ in it. When He enters it, He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. (Jno. x. 3.) The fact, then, of all being called sheep need perplex no one.

The title of "son" may indeed seem to involve more than this, because Judaism taught no "Abba, Father," and it is one of the characteristics of Christianity that we receive in it "the adoption of sons." While this is true, it is by no means the whole truth. Israel too had an "adoption" (Rom. ix. 3); and it is with reference to their position in contrast with the Gentiles that the Lord said to the Syro-phenician woman, "It is not meet to take the *children's* bread, and to cast it unto the dogs." In the parable, the Lord spoke to the Jews after His solemn entry into Jerusalem; He again speaks of both Pharisees and publicans, joining "harlots" with the latter as sons, precisely as here,— "A certain man had *two sons*" (Matt. xxi. 28). Thus, while the proper truth of relationship to God could only be known and enjoyed in Christianity, it is certain that Israel had also, as the only one of the families of the earth "known" to Him, a place upon which they valued themselves, and it was just that generation among whom the Lord stood, who did above all claim this. "We be not born of fornication" was their indignant reply to Him upon another occasion, "we have one Father, even God" (Jno. viii. 41). And though He urges upon them the want of real correspondence in their character, yet there was basis sufficient for His utterance here, while the want of correspondence comes out in the end too as fully. "I am a Father to Israel" had long since been declared.

The character of the younger son soon becomes manifest. "Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me" is itself significant. He is not content that his father should keep his portion, but will have it to enjoy, himself, in independence of the hand from which it comes. You do not wonder to learn that in a little while he would be freer still, and that the far country is for him an escape from his father's eye, as the independent portion had been from his hand.

It need hardly be said that this is the way in which men treat God. That which comes from Him, the Author of all the good in it for which they seem to have so keen a relish, such entire appreciation, they yet cannot enjoy in submission to Him or in His presence. God is their mar-all—the destruction of all their comfort. How many "inventions" have they to forget Him! for the "far-off country" is itself but one of these. God is "*not far off*" from any one of us." Oh, what a desolation would these very children of disobedience find it, if indeed they could banish God from His own world!

It is no wonder that in this far-off country the prodigal should waste his substance with riotous living. It is only the sign that where he is is beginning to tell on him; the touch of coming famine is already on him. The little good in any thing apart from God felt by one still not in the secret of it makes him hunt after it the more; and if there be only a pound of sugar in a ton of sap, the sap will go very quickly in finding the sugar. This is what the man is doing,—going in the company of the "many who say, 'Who will show us any good?'" and who have not learned to say, "Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us."

So the wheels run fast down-hill. Soon he is at the bottom. He has spent all, and *then* there arises a mighty famine in the land. It is not only that his own resources are at an end, but the whole land of his choice is stripped and empty. This is fulfilled with us when we have not

merely lost what was our own, but have come to find that in all the world there is nothing from which to supply ourselves. It is not an experience—perhaps an exceptional experience—of our own, but the cry of want is every where. How can we even *beg* from *beggars*? Such is the world when the eye is opened really as to it,—when the ear has come to interpret its multitudinous sounds. Every where are leanness and poverty. Every where is the note of the passing bell. “The world passeth away, and the lust thereof.”

Then he goes and joins himself to a citizen of that far-off land,—one who belongs to it as, according to this story, even the prodigal did not. For men have come into this condition, but are not looked upon as hopelessly involved in it. There is elsewhere a Father’s heart that travels after them: there is the step of One who goeth after that which is lost. But the citizen of that far-off land has no ties,—not even (one may say) *broken* ties elsewhere. Such a citizen the devil assuredly is, and the troop he is feeding and fattening for destruction speak plainly for him: “*he* sent him into his fields to feed *swine*.”

These swine, alas! are *men*,—not all men, not even all natural men. They are those before whom the Lord forbids to cast the pearls of holy things, for they will trample them under their feet, and turn upon and rend you. They are the scoffers and scorers, the impious opposers of all that is of God. These are the company the devil entertains and feeds,—though with “husks,”—and indeed it must be owned he has no better provision. These “husks,” whatever they may be naturally, are surely *spiritually* just what would be food to profanity and impiety. The world’s famine does not diminish Satan’s resources in this respect,—nay, they are in some sense increased by it. All the misery of man, the fruit of his sin, the mark of divine judgment upon it, but also the warning voice of God by which He would emphasize His first question to the fallen, “Adam, where art thou?”—

all this is what profanity would cast up against God. God, not man, it says, is the sinner; and man, not God, will be justified in judgment!

But the swine are swine evidently, rooting in the mire, men in their swinish grovelings and lusts that drive them; and those that feed them cannot after all fill their belly with that which the swine eat. For those who cannot always look down and willingly ignore what is above them, even though storms sweep through it as well as sunshine floats through it, cannot be satisfied with what, in leveling them with the beasts, degrades them below them. The beasts may be—*are* satisfied. They look not at death, and have no instincts which lead them beyond it: *they* may be satisfied "to lie in cold obstruction and to rot;" man never really. And it is more than questionable if, with all his powers of self-deception, he can ever quite believe it is his portion.

"And no man gave him." What is there like a land of famine for drying up all the sweet charities and affections that are yet left in men? Take the awful picture that Jeremiah gives, where "the hands of pitiful women have sodden their own offspring," as a sample of what this can do. And the estimate of men as beasts, the giving up of God and of the future life, does it tend to produce the pity of men for men? Have hospitals and asylums and refuges, and all the kindly ministrations of life, grown out of infidelity, or faith? Every one knows. The charity of the infidel seldom consists in more than freeing men from the restraints of conscience and the fear of God.

But here the prodigal "comes to himself." His abject misery stares him in the face. "Adam, where art thou?" is heard in his inmost soul; and if there be uncertainty as to all other things, here at least there is none. He is perishing with hunger. Not that he knows himself rightly yet, still less that he knows his father; but he is destitute, and there is bread in his father's house: he will arise and

go to his father; he will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants."

This is another point of which even the infidel may assure himself, that while he is starving, the people of God have real satisfaction and enjoyment. There need be no doubt about that. If it be a delusion that they enjoy, *yet they enjoy it*: if it be a falsehood that satisfies them, *yet they are satisfied*. And then it is surely strange that truth must needs make miserable, when a lie can satisfy! Nay, that Christ spake truth in this at least, that He said He would to those who came to Him give rest: and *He gives it*. Bolder in such a promise than any other ever dared to be, He yet *fulfills* His promise. While philosophy destroys philosophy, and schools of thought chase one another like shadows over the dial-plate of history, Christ's sweet assuring word never fails in fulfillment. Explain it as you may, you cannot deny it. Between His people and the world there is in this as clear a distinction as existed in Egypt when the three days' darkness rested on the land, "but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings."

So the prodigal turns at last toward the light. There is bread in his father's house. He will return. Yet he makes a great mistake. He says, "How many *hired servants* of my father's have bread enough and to spare!" And there is not even *one* hired servant in his father's house! God may "hire" a man of the world to do His will, just as He gave Egypt into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar as the "hire" for His judgment which he had executed upon Tyre. But in His *house* He has but children at His table: as it was said of the passover-feast, the type of it, "A foreigner and a *hired servant* shall not eat thereof." (Ex. xii. 45.)

He too—far off as he surely is yet—would come for his hire. He knows nothing as yet of the father's heart going

out after him. He wrongs him with the very plea with which he intends to come, though it is indeed true that he is unworthy to be called his son. But this confession, in what different circumstances in fact does he make it!

“And he arose, and came to his father.” Here is the great decisive point. Whatever may be the motives that influence him,—however little any thing yet may be right with him,—still he comes! And so the Lord presses upon every troubled weary soul to “come.” However many the exercises of soul through which we pass, nothing profits till we come to Him. However little right any thing may be with us beside, nothing can hinder our reception if we come. Him that cometh unto Him He will in no wise cast out.

So helpless we may be that we can come but in a look—“*Look* unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.” Not “*Look at Me*” merely; men may look *at* Christ, and look long, and look with a certain kind of belief also, and look admiringly, and find no salvation in all this; but when Christ is the need—the absolute need, and the death-stricken soul pours itself out at the eyes to find the Saviour, though clouds and darkness may seem round about Him, yet shall it pierce through all. This is “coming.” It is the might of weakness laying hold upon almighty strength. It is the constraint of need upon All-sufficiency. It is the power of misery over divine compassion. It is more than this: it is the Father’s heart revealed.

For, “when he was yet a long way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.” How it speaks of the way in which the father’s heart had retained his image that he could recognize him in the distance, returning in such a different manner from that in which he had set out. Watching for him too, as it would seem; and when he saw him, forgetting all but that this was his son returned, in the impetuosity of irresistible affection, as if he might escape him

yet, and he must secure him and hold him fast, running, and, in a love too great for words, falling upon his neck and making himself over to him in that passionate kiss! It is GOD of whom this is the picture! What a surprise for this poor prodigal! What an overwhelming joy for those who are met thus, caught in the arms of unchanging, everlasting love,—held fast to the bosom of God, to be His forever!

Not a question! not a condition! a word of it would have spoiled all. Holiness must be produced in us, not enforced, not bargained for. Tell this father upon his son's neck, if you can, that he is indifferent whether his son is to be his son or not. He who has come out in Christ to meet us, Friend of publicans and sinners, calls us to repentance by calling us to *Himself*: is there another way? "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation." Is not this "joy in God" the sign of a heart brought back? of the far country, with all its ways, left forever behind?

Christ is the kiss of God: who that has received it has not been transformed by it? Who that, with the apostle John, has laid his head and his heart to rest upon His bosom, but with him will say, "He that sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him" (1 Jno. iii. 6)? That glorious vision—"the glory of that light"—blinded another apostle, not for three days only, but forever, to all other glory. "The life which I live in the flesh," he says, "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Gal. ii. 20.)

Not until upon his father's bosom is the newly recovered one able to get out his meditated confession. Then in what a different spirit would it be made! The shameful "make me as one of thy hired servants" drops entirely out, while the sense of unworthiness deepens into true penitence. "The *goodness* of God" it is that "leadeth to repentance." The prompt reception, the sweet decisive assurance of the gospel, the "perfect love" that "casteth

out fear,"—these are the sanctifying power of Christianity, its irresistible appeal to heart and conscience. Let no one dread the grace which alone liberates from the dominion of sin! If we have not known its power, it must be that we have not known itself. If we have found it feeble, it is only because we have feebly realized it. There is nothing beside it worthy to be trusted,—nothing that can be substituted for it, nothing that can supplement it or make it efficacious. The soul that cannot be purged by grace can only be subdued by the flames of hell!

The son may rightly confess his unworthiness, but the father cannot repent of his love: "But the father said to his servants, 'Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet.'" He must be put into condition for the house he is coming into; but more, he must have the *best* robe in the house. And this, we know, is Christ. Christ must cover us from head to foot. Christ must cover us back and front. There must be no possible way of viewing us apart from Him. He it is who appears in the presence of God for us. Our Substitute upon the cross is our Representative in heaven. We are *in* Him,—“accepted in the Beloved.” There can be no question at all that this is the best robe in heaven. No angel can say, Christ is my righteousness: the feeblest of the saved can say nothing else! It is Christ or self, and therefore Christ or damnation.

Oh, to realize the joy of this utter displacement of self by Christ! To accept it unreservedly is what will put us practically where the apostle was, and the things that were gain to *us* we count loss for Christ. Our possession in Him will become His possession of us, and there will be no separate interests whatever. How God has insured that our acceptance of our position shall set us right as to condition—make us His as He is ours! Here again too, how holy is God's grace! We are sanctified by that which justifies us; and the faith which puts us among the

justified ones is the principle of all fruitfulness as well. The faith that has not works is thus dead: that is, it is no real faith at all.

Work is thus ennobled, and this I think you see in the "ring." The hand is thus provided for, and brought into corresponding honor with all the rest. What an honor to have a hand to serve Christ with! So the ring weds it to Him forever. We are no longer to serve ourselves. We are no longer to feed swine with husks. We are "made free from sin, and become servants to God; we have our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

The person clothed, the hand consecrated, the feet are next provided for. The shoes are to enable us for the roughness of the way: and the apostle bids us have our feet shod with the "preparation of the gospel of peace" (Eph. vi. 15). For the peace of the gospel is to apply itself to all the circumstances of the way. Our Father is the Lord of heaven and earth. Our Saviour sits upon the Father's throne. What enduring peace is thus provided for us! And as the shoe would arm against the defilement of the way, so it would be a guard against the dust and defilement of it. Can any thing better prevent us getting under the power of circumstances (and so necessarily being defiled by them) than the quiet assurance that our God and Father holds them in His hand? To be ruffled and disturbed by them is to be thrown off our balance. We try our own methods of righting things, and our methods become less scrupulous as unbelief prevails with us: "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." It is clear independency,—our will, not God's.

Thus is the prodigal furnished! Again I say, how *holy* in its tender thoughtfulness is all this care! Blessed, blessed be God, *grace* is our sufficiency,—that is, Himself is. He is fully ours: we too—at least in the desire of our hearts—are fully His. And now the joy of eternity begins for us—communion in the Father's love. He is in heaven, we are on earth: in heaven the joy is; but we too

are made sharers of it. Do we *not* share in what is here before us, "and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry: for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost, and is found"?

It is the Father's joy, and over *us*; but Christ is the expression of it, and the One who furnishes the materials of it. The well-known figure of God's patient and fruitful Worker is before us, and the necessity, even for Him, of death, that we might live. God has wrought these things into our daily lives that we may continually have before us what is ever before Himself. And we are called to make Christ our own—to appropriate Him in faith in this intimate way, that as we abide in Him, He may abide in us. How He would assure us of our welcome to Him! How He would tell us that we are never to be parted! The life so ministered to, so sustained, is already within us the *eternal* life.

And the Father's joy fills the house, making all there to share it and to echo it. No impassive God is ours. The Author of this gushing spring of human feeling *no less* feels. We are in this also His offspring. "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." So the music and the dance begin, and shall never end.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER,

CHAP. I. 14-19.

WE were living in ignorance—"According to the former lusts in your ignorance;" but how in that state of ignorance we were nevertheless responsible and guilty, we learn from Eph. iv. 18—"Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;" or, as in the *R. V.*, "because of the hardening of their heart." Just as in Jno. xii., "they could not believe," because God had hardened

them; and then again the same passage is quoted (from Isa. vi.) in the last chapter of the Acts, to show that they had hardened themselves. "For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed."

But now it is no longer blindness and ignorance, but holiness—a holy walk before God, who is light, in all manner of living.

Three considerations are mentioned to produce in the Christian a right state—of holiness and fear. We are to be holy because God is holy to whom we now belong. And since God as our Father judges—that is, governs and chastens us without respect of persons, we are to pass the time of our sojourn in fear. And thirdly, we are to consider the cost of our redemption—"the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

The blood of Christ has redeemed me. The Father chastens me according to my ways; and God is holy.

The fear is not fear of being lost, nor does "the Father judging according to every man's work" imply that. Jno. v. 27-29 and 2 Tim. iv. 1 show that the execution of judgment upon sinners is committed to the Son; but the Father's judgment is, dealing with His own in chastening and discipline in the sojourn here.

But this is a solemn reality, and is too little considered. It is "without respect of persons"—a warning, to disturb our pride and hardness of heart, and to keep alive within me the fact that I have to do each moment with One who hates sin and loves me as His child. The Corinthians had become so dull as to need to be reminded that some of them were weak and sickly, and some had died (1 Cor. xi. 30), "that they might not be condemned with the world." This holy fear was lacking, so that, though having many gifts, they had exposed themselves to Satan. In Ps. cvii., this government of God over His people, and over all men, is unfolded, and is called "mercy and loving-kind-

ness," however great the distress it may bring us into at times, to bring us to repentance, or to give a deeper tone to our character. The refrain of this psalm, four times repeated, should be a song in the heart of every one, however sharp the chastening.—“Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men!”—even though they may go down to the depths, and their soul be melted because of trouble. “Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.” (Ps. cvii. 43.)

When redemption is known, then the heart can be governed by the fear of God. Ps. cxi. is full of this spirit of worship and holy fear. “He sent redemption unto His people: He hath commanded His covenant forever: holy and reverend is His name. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do His commandments: His praise endureth forever.”

We need to cultivate this spirit of fear, that we may not be rash, heedless, trifling, and self-confident.

And “it is written, ‘Be ye holy, for I am holy.’” This is an exhortation which is deep and heart-searching beyond expression, and demands diligent attention lest we should trespass against God. The sixth chapter of Isaiah will illustrate this subject. The seraphim veil their faces before Him who sits upon the throne, high and lifted up, and cry, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory!” and Isaiah cries, “Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.”

The holiness of God is the opposite of that which so easily invades the heart, and unfits us for the presence and service of God.

By unholiness, priestly discernment is destroyed, and we have no clear judgment between good and evil, and

become like the horse and the mule, to be held in by bit and bridle. It is not until after the eighth chapter of Leviticus, where Aaron and his sons are consecrated to the priesthood, that things clean and unclean are mentioned, and their obligation to discern between them; and it is in this epistle of Peter where holiness is so enjoined that Christians are called "a holy priesthood,"—as also in the epistle to the Hebrews, where our priesthood is implied, the obligation of holiness is declared with solemn emphasis.

In John's epistles holiness is not mentioned. There, the new life, as born of God, goes out in fellowship with God and love to the brethren, and overcomes the world; but here we are exhorted as having been redeemed—redeemed from a wicked world and from a life of vanity, as in Titus—"He gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

"Holy and reverend is His name." May we rejoice in Him, as He has made Himself known to us; and beware of walking heedlessly in such a presence, while resting fully in that love that first sought us and took hold of us, and that upholds us, and that is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit that is given to us. (Rom. v. 5.)

E. S. L.

IF our hearts are cherishing the abiding hope of the Lord's return, we shall set light by all earthly things. It is morally impossible that we can be in the attitude of waiting for the Son from heaven, and not be detached from this present world.

THERE are not two faces alike; not two leaves in the forest alike; not two blades of grass alike: why, then, should any one aim at another's line of work, or affect to possess another's gift? Let each one be satisfied to be just what his Master has made him.

THE POWER OF AN ASSEMBLY TO BIND AND TO LOOSE.

(Matt. xviii. 15-20.)—*Continued.*

3. THE LOCAL ASSEMBLY.

WE need now to consider more closely the assembly itself. It is the only place in Matthew,—and in the gospels—in which the assembly is spoken of, this passage that we are now considering, except where, two chapters before, the Lord announces to Peter that upon that Rock which he had confessed He would build His Church. The reference is evident to that very passage; for it is there that the power to bind and to loose is committed to Peter which here is committed to the assembly: not, however, to the whole Church, of which He there speaks, but to the *local* church (or assembly). The reason should be plain: the local assembly is the only practical means by which the Church as a whole can express itself. The Church at large is the whole membership of Christ all over the world. Such a body would be of course impracticable to bring together upon any occasion and unite in a common judgment. The assembly at any one spot is thus empowered by the Lord to act for Him, even though they be but two or three, the lowest possible number of which an assembly could be formed.

It is, moreover, as actually come together that they have authority: this is expressly stated both here and in the epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. v. 4). Only thus could it be said, "There am I in the midst of them." Those actually gathered together, and no others, have power to bind and to loose.

This is of importance in connection with what some have maintained—that all gatherings in a city or town are but one assembly, and that for any one of these gatherings to act for itself apart from the rest is simple independence. It may not seem needful to mention it here, but as a principle that has proved itself fruitful of evil, it

deserves to be considered still. Many yet hold it, who know not what it is they hold,—have not examined its consequences in the light of Scripture, nor even been aroused by what one might suppose abundant experience.

The plea for it is that Scripture speaks only of "the assembly" in a city, of "assemblies" in a district like Galatia. It has been answered that the now-accepted reading of Acts ix. 31 speaks of "the assembly throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria," while in many cities no doubt there was but one assembly. Even in Corinth, a large city for the times (when cities were by no means what they are to-day), the whole church is spoken of as coming together into one place (1 Cor. xiv. 23); so that the language cannot be pleaded in the very place where it would be of most importance to the argument, in the epistle namely in which the order of the church on earth is the special subject. If at Corinth they could all come together into one place, there must have been few cities, one would say, in which they could not.

But the true answer is that there is no *doctrine* in all this, and that the doctrine which we have in Scripture as to assembly-action is different and contradictory to the thought. The question is simply to what kind of an assembly is the power to bind and to loose intrusted by the Lord; and then the answer must be that it is such an assembly as actually *assembles*, and no other. This is evident: it is "where two or three are gathered together in My name," says the Lord, "there am I in the midst of them." If such an assembly pronounces as to any matter within its province, where is the warrant for saying it does not bind? or that that which in a country place would be right and incumbent upon them to do, would be in a city mere independency?

Scripture has no idea of an assembly composed of assemblies, but ever and only of an assembly composed of *individuals*. Membership is only in the body of Christ, and the local assembly, according to the idea of it, before

schism had rent the Church, as it soon did, was just the "one body" in whatever place,—the practical working representation of the whole body of Christ. But if so,—and the first epistle to the Corinthians makes it undeniable,—there is then no possible place for another kind of assembly, whose units shall be assemblies and not members: the *body of Christ* gives us quite another thought. This kind of city-church contended for is really the beginning of an ecclesiastical system like to those around us, and far from the simplicity of Scripture. Its influence is morally evil, for we cannot violate Scripture without suffering the consequences of it.

The first effect is, that there must be some unifying *third* kind of a meeting to enable the whole to work unitedly; and since this cannot be a meeting of the whole, it must be a meeting of representatives, whether self-chosen or chosen by the gatherings. If the latter, a new kind of official is created; if the former, it is worse by so much as they act upon their own account, and without being responsible in any proper way to those they represent.

Other consequences are sure to follow. The representatives come to be the men of leisure, and, as naturally connected with this, the men of means, and not the better is it if they are, along with this, the men of gift; for so all the more readily is a clerical caste established,—the ruin of all divine order in the Church of God.

You have now a parliament, or congress, not an assembly such as the Word contemplates or the Lord authorizes here at all; and yet in their hands is the final decision practically left. And after in perhaps a dozen really competent assemblies—competent, it is owned, in any other place,—the matter has been apparently settled, it is put into their hands for final adjustment.

Thus the Lord is dishonored, for "there am I in the midst of you" is no longer what gives competency to act, and He being slighted, and the Spirit of God grieved, it is no wonder if there should be plenty of conflicting

judgments to exercise the presiding board,—for such it is.

Worse evils follow. These great city-assemblies come to have, necessarily, preponderating weight in the minds of the Lord's people round about. They become centres of influence, and soon courts of appeal. They attract the ambitious; they become temptations to the spiritual; they learn to feel their power and to exert it: metropolitanism grows apace. Alas! we are but tracing the first steps of that decline which subjected the Church to the sway of the world, and eventuated in a Roman dictator issuing his decrees from the Vatican.

This will be thought by some mere raving and abuse. Let it be so. A John could wonder with great astonishment, when he saw in prophetic vision the harlot church. Rome was the slow growth of centuries, and the steps that led to it were almost insensible at the beginning. Yet there has been enough before our eyes to warn those who are capable of receiving it. It should be enough indeed for us that Scripture condemns it all, as it surely does, when it puts the authority to bind and to loose into the hands of two or three gathered to Christ's name, and makes the basis of that authority His own presence in the midst of those so gathered.

We may leave this, then, in order to insist more fully upon another thing which has been already in part before us, but which needs the strongest possible enforcement, and at the same time the fullest consideration that can be given it. All these points as to the order of the Church of God will be found to be most deeply affecting her spiritual condition. They are no mere formalities without moral importance. It would be really dishonoring to God to suppose so. This is the difference so pronounced between human regulations merely and the commandments of the Lord. Indeed, the human regulation is worse than this: in the things of God it is positively *immoral*, because it gives the conscience another master than the Lord; but I speak now of their character apart from this. What

God enjoins is always holy and promoting holiness. Nor can we go aside from it without the most serious loss in this respect. Yet among those most intelligent in divine order, nothing is more common than violations of this where plainest, as if it were really without any spiritual significance.

It is no new thing, however, that those who insist most upon church authority seem to know least of what the church is,—nay, to have the least respect really for it. It needs not to go as far as Rome, or even to high episcopalianism, in proof of this. Those who are clear enough in theory are often found in practice most opposite to it; and “theory” alone it surely can be which so little influences practice. What *is* the “Church”? It is the membership of the body of Christ: who doubts it? among those at least who are likely to read this. But when I ask, Are *women*, then, of that church to which authority has been given, to bind and to loose? is it necessary to consult them as to church-decisions? how many there are whose practice at least excludes them altogether! Some even would plead that the apostle’s prohibition of their speaking in the assembly would equally exclude them from being consulted as to its *acts*. But the two things stand upon entirely different footing.

In the first case, God, who has given the woman her long hair for a covering (1 Cor. xi. 15), has thus indicated that her place was not to be in public. The attractiveness of her modesty is as soon lost by such prominency as the bloom of a delicate fruit by handling. What can be more unfeminine than boldness in a woman? What more dignifies her than a retiring spirit? The head is set boldly upon the shoulders: the heart is safe guarded by its circle of ribs. If the man is, as the apostle says, the head of the woman, the woman is no less clearly the heart of the man.

But God has given woman a conscience no less than man, and to ignore her conscience is more to deny **the**

God that gave it than to put her forward in the assembly is to deny what nature teaches by her long hair. For the conscience is just that in us which owns the divine authority. Deny the conscience, you have unseated God from His throne in the soul. If you can suppress it, the glory is gone from manhood, the beauty and grace from womanhood. Nay, humanity is lost, and a Nebuchadnezzar must be driven to the beasts (to which he belongs) until he knows that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men. Only when he owns that does his kingdom return to him.

The question of discipline is the question of good and evil,—of our association with what is for God or with what dishonors Him; it is but our taking part in that strife from which no one, even from childhood, can withdraw himself. Force any one to walk hand-in-hand with what he believes in his soul dishonors God, and you have corrupted him, cast him out from fellowship with God, shadowed and perverted his life, and set him upon a road which, wind as it will, goes ever downward. Does it matter whether the pronoun be masculine or feminine—whether you say “him” or “her”? No one the least worthy of respect can think so.

Even a conscience not forced at all, but left unexercised, is a serious evil. “Herein do I exercise myself,” says the apostle, “that I may have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men.” A want of exercise means a soul indifferent—careless if it be with God or not. People may be drilled, no doubt, into a belief that they are irresponsible—that the responsibility lies elsewhere; but this will not alter the nature of things, nor prevent the results which necessarily follow. Your belief about it will not make tares wheat, or thorns grow figs. The leak in your boat will scuttle it, though you may sleep easy because the responsibility is in other hands. God’s truth turned to a lie is not a lie; and man’s lie, though heartily believed in, will not act the part of

truth. When God speaks, whosoever has ears is to hear; and if he has none, it is no less God that has spoken.

Now the "church" is not the *men* of the assembly merely; nor is it the leaders, or the gifted ones, or the intelligent: it is the *church*. And a judgment given must be, not the judgment of the few or of the majority, but of all. So, if it is truly their judgment, it must be their intelligent judgment, or it is not a judgment at all. They must know the case, know the scripture that applies to it, have full opportunity, without hurry, and waiting upon God. *Here is the real duty of leaders*, to see that there is no driving, no undue pressure brought to bear, no concealment, and no warping of facts or of the mind: and how helpful will leaders be who can do such work as this! But in the moment of decision there must be *no* leaders, but all clear, each one for himself and before God, as if all depended upon himself and there were not another.

True, a judgment arrived at in this way will be a much slower matter than we often desire. Little do we realize what a safeguard God has provided for us by means of the very slowness and dullness of which we complain. God would have us walk in none other than a very plain path—a path which can be made plain to the dullest. To have to make it so plain means to have to rehearse it to ourselves, to look at it from many a side, to have opportunity to detect perhaps what in our haste we had overlooked before. The difficulties in the way are to force us to wait on God for a solution. Ah, God is wise, be sure, in thus linking us together as He has done, and not alone is help given by the wiser to the duller, but by the duller to the wiser also, that we may prove, not how necessary are the wise merely, but how necessary we *all* are to one another!

And if there are slow ones to be quickened, dull ones to be cleared, souls to be helped in various ways, think you God does not care for all this,—does not look to see it done, does not bless us in the doing it as well as those

to whom it is done? See how He thinks of and provides for general blessing by that which seems to our haste only evil to be got rid of. Patience is one of God's own attributes, as it is the sign of an apostle also. And if patience has her perfect work, we shall be perfect and entire, wanting nothing (Jas. i. 4). No wonder that the world should be a place of tribulation, when "tribulation worketh patience" (Rom. v. 3).

It may be said that this is an ideal assembly-action, and that we cannot expect it to be often attained. Alas! I believe it true that it has been very seldom so. The decision of an assembly counts as that, although half the assembly have never been consulted even,—though the whole matter was settled by a few in a brothers' meeting, and only the result has been communicated to the assembly for their adoption blindly; though the process of conscience has been unheeded, and indifference and confidence in leaders have made it in fact the judgment of a very few. But in all this, what we sow we reap, and have reaped. God is not mocked; and under His government, the results of such courses have been manifest. Let us not talk of precedents, but honestly and faithfully, by the light of God's holy Word, consider our ways. Not the united voice of all the assemblies in the world can make evil good, or hinder the work of evil being ever evil.

We disclaim rightly association with evil. Have we been as careful about it in this form as we have been in some other forms? I am sure we have not. And thus on the one hand laxity has prevailed where there was indifference, and narrowness and party-action have had their opportunity upon the other. God has ordained help for us in a quarter from whence we never should have thought of it—help from the very ones who *need* help. The simple and ignorant, the weak and prejudiced, the "babes" of the assembly,—let us realize that these all are to have their *intelligent part* in assembly-action; and what a guarantee have we got against hasty and party treatment

of what is submitted for it; while the result comes out that we must seek help from God to *raise the general tone and condition of the assembly*, if we would avoid disaster in the time of testing. How wholesome is this necessity! What a binding together of hearts would be the result of the acceptance of it! How would the meaning of church order—and of the church itself—become apparent to us!

Haste is self-will: even though it take the form of zeal for holiness, and care for the honor of the Lord. These, if real, will manifest themselves in care for the least of Christ's purchased flock, and in the endeavor that the separation from evil involve not a worse evil. What need have we of understanding better Christ's headship of His Church, and the omnipotence which we grasp when in helplessness we wait upon Him! And what need to remember that the Church, if one, is yet composed of many members, every one of whom is as distinctly the object of His care and love as if there were no other. His own tender and solemn words, do they not rebuke us all?—"See that ye offend not (cause not to stumble) *one* of these little ones."

A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO TRACT DISTRIBUTORS.

"HOWARD LAKE, MINN., Sept., 1889.

"*Dear Brother,*—

"Brother L.'s business takes him through the villages and towns of this state, and he has many an opportunity for sowing the seed of the gospel. One Saturday evening, having entered the town of G—, and made preparations for staying over the Lord's day, he was asked by a friend to come to the barn, to look at a horse. On entering the barn, an open oat-sack met his eye, and into it he quietly dropped a tract. This tract

was put into the sack in the hope that this friend, whom he knew to be a stranger to God's love, would find and read it. But 'God moves in a mysterious way,' and as this oat-sack belonged to a minister who kept his horse in the same barn, the minister found the tract and took it home to read. Knowing the town to be an ungodly one, his curiosity was excited, and he wondered much by whom the tract had been dropped. The next day, as he was having a vacation, he attended services held by a minister of another denomination. Looking over the congregation, he saw a man turning to his Bible, and perceiving him to be a stranger, he thought, 'There is the man who put the tract in the oat-sack.' After meeting, he spoke to him, and finding him a follower of the Master, invited him to his house. The acquaintance then commenced resulted in the blessing spoken of in the following letter addressed to him lately.

"M. F. S."

"My Dear Brother,—

"It has been some time since I wrote you, and some strange things have transpired since then; one of them is that a preacher should be brought out into the light as shed forth by Jesus in His Word. A small beginning oftentimes, under God's care and guidance, has a very great and worthy ending. For instance, a tract dropped in the mouth of an oat-sack is a small thing—a small beginning, but the conversion of forty or fifty sinners, and perhaps more, and the blessing and upbuilding of a number of God's weak children—among them a preacher,—and the gathering together of a company of God's children as the result thus far, is a great ending; and the end is not yet. Who can tell whereunto this work, begun so simply, will grow. Go on, my brother, with your distribution of gospel-tracts: try another oat-sack,—it seems to be very fruitful ground. The great result of your work in that respect only eternity will reveal

"W. H. S."

NOTES OF ADDRESSES

By W. Easton & S. Ridout, at Plainfield Meeting, July, '89.

BY WM. EASTON.

(Jno. xvii.)

I HAVE read this chapter, beloved friends, not with the idea of expounding it, but just to set forth a few thoughts about it, in order to make the Lord Jesus Christ Himself a little more precious to us. We can never make too much of Him. I shall never forget the remark of a dear old servant of God many years ago, when he asked me on one occasion to supply a pulpit for him. As I was leaving the house, he said,—

“Remember, now, God delights to hear any one speak well of His Son.”

I have never forgotten that, beloved friends, and through God's mercy I try to the best of my abilities to speak well of His Son. And I want so to set Him before our hearts to-night that the very youngest Christians in this tent shall find that the Lord, in however feeble a measure, has been endeared to their hearts; and if we succeed in that, it will be an immense thing.

And here let me say another word before going further. It is not God's gift to us that we are to speak about. Were we speaking of that, and unfolding that, we should turn, in all probability, to the third chapter of John's gospel, where we read that “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” That is God's love-gift to the world. Blessed one it is, surely. Would to God that every one in this tent knew it! Would to God that every one in this tent could say, “I have got that; I have stretched out the hand of faith, and have taken hold of that gift, and now I can say, ‘Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift;’ I have eternal life. I know the Father, and I know the Son of

the Father; and my heart is acquainted with both." What a thing to say! Many times I am positively astounded, in preaching the gospel, at some of the simple truths—truths that we call elementary—that we almost feel ashamed to talk about before a company of saints, because of their simplicity, and yet how profound their depths! The sacrifice of the Son of God! or the love of God! what do we know about them, beloved brethren? Next door to nothing. There is a depth in such themes that our souls have never yet fathomed. There are heights we have never yet reached. May the living God give us to enjoy more even the so-called elementary truths, such as "God so loved the world." Beloved brethren, we have never exhausted that theme, therefore we need not be ashamed to preach from it. We have never got to the bottom of it yet, and all true-hearted saints will be delighted to hear it, and to pray for it.

We commence, then, with this: God has not only been pleased to give a *love-gift to us*, but He has been pleased to give a *love-gift to His Son*. He has given something to Christ, as well as given Christ to us, and therefore our theme is not, "God so loved the world, that He gave His Son;" but it is, God so loved His Son, that He gave the saints to Him. What a wondrous thought! And beloved brethren, that is just what I want to set forth to-night, so that even the youngest Christian here may have larger and grander thoughts of the Saviour, and be able to enjoy Him more than ever.

I want, then, to get fastened in our minds this blessed thought, that God has given us to Christ. "Oh," you say, "we knew that years ago." I know that, my friends, but remember you haven't sucked all the honey out of it yet. God has been pleased to take hold of you and me; and, to show the fullness of His heart's love for His beloved Son, He has given us to Christ. Tell me, how does such a thought affect your soul and mine? Can you estimate the value that the Lord Jesus Christ puts upon

you as the Father's love-gift to Him? Can you tell what the thoughts of His heart are toward us? What must He think of us? This is the way to look at His love. And, dear young Christians, never let us forget this: every thing depends upon the person who gives the gift. It is not a question of the value of the thing itself. It may be very trifling and insignificant—any thing but a costly thing; but the question is, who gave it? I can tell you, I carry a little thing in that pocket—just a tiny little thing, yet money won't buy it. Another person perhaps wouldn't give ten cents for the thing itself. All the cents in America could not buy it from me. Why? Simply because of the giver. How blessed, then, to think that the eye of the Lord rests upon every saint in this wide world with affection and delight, because they have been given to Him! Yes, that blessed One looks down from the heavens into this tent to-night, and sees and values and loves even the feeblest of His own. Beloved brethren, it is the most wonderful thought imaginable! God has given you and me to His beloved Son! What a revelation this is to us! It was the gift of the Father to the Son. It was just as though He said to the Son, "You see how I love You, and I am going to give You something that I know You will value." Thus the thoughts and feelings of the Saviour toward us are molded, if we might so speak, by this blessed fact, that we are the Father's love-gift to Him.

Now if you take and read this chapter at your leisure, you will find that the words, "give," "given," and "gavest" occur seventeen times,—the same number as the chapter. They give a character to it. And it lets us see that the Lord Jesus Christ looks upon the saints with this thought in His mind. Just as though He said, "This is the gift that My Father in His love has given to Me, and now I will tell out My heart, so that they may hear what the thoughts and the feelings and the desires of My heart are about them." He might have whispered that prayer into the ear of His

Father about us without letting us know, but the blessed Lord would not do that. That would not satisfy His loving heart; hence we hear Him saying, "These things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves (*v.* 13). He would have it communicated, He would have it written down too, so that you and I might listen to the breathings of His heart into the ear of the Father, and learn the wondrous fact that they were about us—He was praying for us. What a wonderful thing! Beloved brethren, do we enter into it? Oh, does it not endear Him to our hearts? It is occupation with Him that endears Him to our hearts, as we sometimes sing,—

"I look to Him till sight endear
The Saviour to my heart."

Oh, what a blessed thing it is, just to get the eye of faith upon that blessed Object, and drink in the revelation there unfolded to us in this seventeenth of John, and listen to the breathings of His blessed heart, and to put ourselves in the midst of that hallowed circle that He calls "His own." Just think of it, and take it home to *your own* heart. Me, a poor, weak, worthless thing in myself, perhaps just converted, and to think I am dear to the heart of the Lord! Who could express it but Himself? No one. But He has made it all known to us in this chapter, that we might have the enjoyment of it all now, and be with Him forever and forever by and by. How true is that word, "Having loved *His own* which were in the world, He loved them unto the end"! (Jno. xiii. 1.)

Now what is the first thing He gives us when He thinks of us as the Father's love-gift to Him? Well, He says, the first thing I will give them is eternal life, "As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him" (*v.* 2). He knew that our poor wretched hearts could never understand these things unless He gave us a new nature capable of understanding and enjoying them, therefore He says, "I will give them eternal life;" "and

this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (v. 3). Now do not let us forget that the Lord is not here defining what eternal life is,—He is not giving us definitions of eternal life; He is telling us the characteristics of it. The man that has it knows the Father and the Son: "That they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." I understand human life because I am a human being myself, and have the same life that every man has. In like manner I understand and am able to enjoy, according to my measure, the Father and the Son, because I have the same life in me—eternal life. Isn't that a wonderful thought, beloved friends? Isn't it a marvelous thing to begin with? He says, "I will give them eternal life." Every child of God has it; they could not be children of God if they hadn't it. They never did any thing for it. It was the pure sovereign act of God in giving it to them. The Lord says, "I will give them eternal life." We have got it, thank God. We are not putting it far away over yonder, and hoping that some of these days we shall get it. No; we have it, and enjoy it now.

Then there is another thing: "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world." Here there is relationship, and knowledge of it. I am not speaking of how far they entered into it, but merely of the fact itself; for all through, the Lord was revealing the Father. Isn't it a wonderful thing to know the Father,—to know the heart of that One that gave His well-beloved Son to us, and gave us to His Son? And that is what all young Christians know. Even the babes know the Father (1 Jno. ii. 13). The Lord Jesus is here speaking of His disciples, but the application is equally true to us, as He says further on in the chapter "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word" (v. 20); so that believers come in, and may have the enjoyment of

And it seems as though the Lord knew that Satan would try to steal that away from us, and that some long-headed individual would come in with his reasoning, and say, "Oh, that was only for the disciples," and He put that little word in for our comfort, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for those that believe on Me through their word." Oh, what a blessed thing it is to know the Father! There are many of the dear children of God who seem afraid to say, "Father." You hear them speak about God, and sometimes in their prayers they address Him as the Great and Holy, and Almighty Lord God, and use all those great and glorious titles of God;—titles which are all true in their place, but which are not the familiar but reverent utterances of a child to its Father. Ah, it is another thing to know God as Father! To be able to say that the Father's name has been revealed to my heart, and I know that He is *my* Father. That gives the boldness—the affectionate and holy boldness of the child. And such a thought, beloved brethren, does not give license, but it keeps us steady and sober; for we know that while that One who is up there is our Father, we know that our Father is God. What an important thing that is! Never let us forget it. That blessed God is our Father, but He who is our Father is God. This gives Him His place, and keeps us in ours. It is well for us to keep these things clear and distinct, beloved brethren, especially in these days, when people are attacking the Word of God on every hand, and taking or leaving just what they please; and when some are making every thing of the universal Fatherhood of God, without the new birth, and various other notions which men spin out of their own brains.

Again, you find Christians speaking about the blessed Lord, and calling Him their Elder Brother. This is a shocking thing! I hope none here will ever do it. If the Lord Jesus, after having borne all our sins, and the penalties due to us because of those sins, upon the cross, and

having been raised by the glory of the Father, and ascended to His right hand,—if He in grace associates us with Himself in resurrection, and deigns to call us brethren, let us adore Him for the grace that could do it; but never let us seek to bring Him down to our level, and call Him “Brother.” Thomas did not say, “My dear Elder Brother;” but “My Lord and my God.” Oh, see to it that we give the Lord His true place. Let us not use language that even unintentionally lowers Him.

Then there is another thing: the Lord’s care for His own comes out here so beautifully. “While I was with them in the world, *I kept* them in Thy name; those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled” (v. 12). And then in the ninth verse, “I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine.” And in the eleventh verse, “Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as we are.” Is it not blessed, beloved friends, to see the value that the Lord Jesus attaches to us, and the interest He has in us? He gives us eternal life, makes known the Father’s name to us, and then, in view of His going away, makes the fullest provision for our being kept, by putting us into the care of the Holy Father. It is just as if He said, “These poor things are so precious to Me that I couldn’t intrust them to any one else, so I will hand them over to the care of the One who gave them to Me, for I know His heart, and He will look after them; ‘Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me.’” (v. 11) “While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy name” (v. 12). And in the ninth verse, “I pray for them . . . which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine. And all Mine are Thine and Thine are Mine.” Isn’t that a wonderful thought? Think of our being put into the care of a holy Father. Sometimes we forget this, beloved friends. Sometime

we forget the character of the One that is looking after us. It is well to bear it in mind, and to walk in the sense of this solemn but blessed fact: my Father is the *holy* Father, and as such, He would have His children in keeping with His own character; so I must think of that, and seek to act accordingly. It is not, beloved friends, that it makes us melancholy. I don't believe that having the sense of the Father's love makes us pull long faces. I don't believe that God ever meant His people to pull long faces and appear miserable. I believe that holiness does not tend that way at all. That is legality, and, alas! many of the saints of God are legal to a degree; but legality is not *liberty*, and liberty is not *license*. There is holy reverence when we approach the presence of God, but there is a freedom without levity. God means us to be natural and real. We are not all cast in the same mold, so we need not try to imitate each other in any way; only let us be real, and keep before us the fact that our Father is God,—that He is the *holy* Father. And if we know this, do not let us seek to get out of it in any way, but let us seek to be consistent with it, and at the same time to be joyful and real in our hearts before Him. God looks for *reality*, and He will have it. Let us therefore beware of assuming any thing.

Well, He is keeping us, caring for us. What should we do if He wasn't? I am not speaking now of the Lord looking after us as the High-Priest, etc., but of the care of the holy Father. May our hearts enter more into it.

But there is another thing, beloved friends. The Lord is going to have us with Himself. He has given us eternal life; He has revealed the Father's name to us; He has put us into the Father's hands while He is away; and now He says, "I am going to have these poor things, that I love so much, with Myself up there;" and He says, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may *behold My glory*" (v. 24). Isn't that a beautiful thought, brethren? that there is a glory which

the Lord Jesus Christ cannot give to us, but He knows we shall be delighted to behold it. He counts, as it were, upon the affections of our hearts. He knows we shall be delighted with the thought that there is that which is His which He never could communicate, but which we shall be delighted to behold, while we worship and adore. And that corrects some strange thoughts that are going about to-day. People are getting into serious errors in this connection. Some are saying that the saints are on an unqualified equality with the Lord; others, that every thing that the Lord Jesus is and has as man, the Christian is and has; and others, that all His acquired glories the Christian will share with Him. Beloved brethren, I deny it. To me, it is an awfully solemn thing to make such statements. Yet I have even seen such a statement in print, and handed round to meet supposed current errors, that "all that Christ is and has as man, the Christian is and has." I say again, I deny it. It is false. Will he who made that statement have the bride? Christ as man will have her. Will he sit upon the throne of David? Christ will sit upon that throne. Will he have the glories of the first and second of Hebrews? Never. Yet Christ has them. Yes, He has glories *peculiar to Himself*, even as man, which we can never share. Blessed be His name forever and ever! But there is one thing absolutely certain, that there is not one single thing that the heart of the Lord *can* give to us or share with us that He will withhold from us—not one. He will give us every thing His loving heart can give. But let us beware, and not rob Him to exalt ourselves.

And when it is a question of seeing Him, and being with Him, He says, "I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am." How is that going to take place? Is He going to send for us? No. Is it the angels that are coming? No, not even the highest of them. He will not even send Michael or Gabriel. The saints are so precious, so valuable, that H

says, as it were, "I must go after them Myself." When, therefore, the time comes that He must have us with Himself, (and this verse is to have its fulfillment,) it is Himself who comes. As the apostle beautifully puts it, "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven," etc. (1 Thess. iv. 16.) It is not another Jesus: it is the "same Jesus." The One who "bore all our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Pet. ii. 24); who bears all our sorrows on His heart on the throne. Yes, it is the same Jesus. The One whom God "raised from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, *far above* all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body." (Eph. i. 19-23.) Far above what? Name any thing you like, or any name you like: He is far above every one and every thing. And it is that Jesus whom we know and love. We have not lost Him because He has gone in there. No, no; blessed be His name! By faith we have seen Him go up to the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, and take His seat there. There is where Jesus is to-night. Don't we know Him? Surely, we do! And He occasionally pays us visits, in ways so marvelous that all we can say is, you must experience it for yourselves: it cannot be explained. He says, "I will manifest Myself to him" (Jno. xiv. 21). You must know it for yourselves. It is so wonderful, you cannot explain it. People may say, "I don't believe it." Well, be it so. But when once you have tasted it, my friends, you will believe it then, and you will want others to taste of it likewise. Peter speaks of it when he says, "We rejoice with joy *unspeakable* and glorified." It is not fanaticism either, but the sober teaching of God's Word. Would that we all had more enjoyment of it! And that is the One we are going to see. We are going to be with Him and like Him forever.

He has expressed His will about us, and that will shall have its accomplishment soon.

Beloved brethren, He is coming Himself. Who is it we are waiting for? Jesus. He might be here to-night. "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself," He said. How shall we go? Shall we fly? No! though we sometimes sing, "Then as we upward fly." We shall be "caught up." The same mighty power that raised the blessed Lord, and took Him up there, will be that by which we shall be raised, and we shall pass into the presence of the Lord that has loved us so long and so well;—loved us with a love that is inexpressible, because He has taken us from the Father's hand as the love-gift of His Father's heart to Him. Dear young Christian, isn't He a blessed Saviour? Don't you feel that your heart is drawn out to Him more, through this brief glance at His love? And if you should feel inclined to say, "O Lord, how very little do I love Thee, in view of such a display of Thy love to me!" take courage and comfort from this fact, that there is One who loves Him perfectly. "The Father loveth the Son;" and remember, the more we see of *His love*, and the more we are occupied with *His love*, the more will our love flow forth to Him. "We love Him because He first loved us." May the Lord give us a greater enjoyment of these things, and make them good in our souls.

BY S. RIDOUT.

(Luke xv. 8-7; Song of Solomon ii. 10-15.)

I just want to speak a moment about the love of Christ to His people in a little different view. We have seen how precious we are to the Lord Jesus, in spite of our utter insignificance and worthlessness, in spite of ever-thing we are, because we are the gift of the Father,—th-setting the worth of the most worthless saint beyo-price to the Lord Jesus. In Luke, we see how precie-we are to Him, not only because we have been given

the Father, but because, like the good shepherd, He has gone out and sought us. We were "dead in trespasses and sins," and the Lord Jesus, in order that He might reach those who were dead, died Himself; in order that He might reconcile us, He took such a distance that He said, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He could go no further than that, and that is the love He has to every one of us. He loved us so that He could go that distance to save you and me. How precious we must be in His sight when He speaks of us as a "pearl," as a "precious jewel"! Those whom He has rescued from the power of death He has made a jewel that He will wear forever. That is how dear the weakest believer is to the Lord Jesus. In the Song of Solomon, we find that He not only loved us, and gave Himself for us, but that He wants to have communion with us. "Oh, my dove," etc. The Lord Jesus wants to hear your voice and mine speaking to Him,—wants us to have communion with Himself. Dear brethren, if you have nothing to tell the Lord but that you are away from Him, that will be sweet to Him; no matter what it may be, He says, "Sweet is thy voice." The father surely would have been glad to have seen his son in a different plight, but was it not a joy to the father's heart to see him when he was a great way off? Is it not a joy to the Lord even if we say, "I have wandered from Thee: I have been out of communion"? We are dear to the Lord, so dear that He is going to have us very near Himself. We are so dear to Him that He wants us to be talking to Him while we are here. The love that Christ has to His people leads Him to long and ask each one of us to have communion with Himself. How can we show our praises to the Lord Jesus more than by saying we want to have communion with Him,—letting Him hear that voice, whether in praise or in confession? It is sweet to Him, if it is real. This is the way He shows His wonderful love to us, which we will never realize until we see Him

face to face. To the honest Christian, beloved, there is no other walk than to walk with God.

JACOB'S MISTAKE.

THE story of the book of Genesis is that of the divine life in the soul of man, and which is distinguished from all that might be confounded with it. Thus we have every where in it those notable contrasts which must strike even the most superficial reader. Thus we have Cain and Abel, Ishmael and Isaac, Jacob and Esau, and, in only less close connection with one another, Lot and Abraham. Jacob is not only, however, contrasted with Esau, he is in still more important contrast with himself. Indeed his history may be said to be but an inspired comment upon the two names which are identified with the two characters in which he is exhibited to us as Jacob and as Israel,—names which are used in the same way all through Scripture—the one as the natural name, the other as the spiritual; the one declaring where grace found him, the other what grace made him. We are going to look at him now at that decisive point of his life at which he passed from one condition to the other,—from being Jacob the “supplanter” (rightly called so,) to his being Israel, a “prince with God.”

For it was not by quiet growth that he passed from one into the other condition, but by the strokes of God's hand in discipline,—stroke upon stroke, until at last His purpose is attained. After what long labor indeed! and how many experiences! and only when the freshness and energy of youth are gone, and Jacob is past the age when Abram got his new name and his Isaac. Solemn it is to see this. Especially when God has spread this life of Jacob, with its lessons, over so many pages of this book, for it begins in the twenty-fifth chapter—half way through the book—and only closes with the close of it. Well worthy of our attention it must surely be, when God has

thus spread it out before our eyes, while a few verses give all that He cares to say of nations and mighty movements such as fill men's histories. "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

But who is he that doeth the will of God? Alas! whole-heartedly and unreservedly, if we mean, how few are to be found of such! The mass even of Christians have a limit beyond which obedience does not go. With some, it is set farther off; and with many, nearer at hand; and with many, the entire want of exercise as to matters of the greatest importance prevents the apprehension of their condition altogether. There are so many things about which they do not mean to be troubled, that they certainly manage to secure to themselves a very easy-going life, which they call "peace," forgetting that our peace now is only with God, while "*on earth*" the Prince of Peace declares He has not come to send it, but rather a sword (Matt. x. 34).

This determination not to be "troubled" means only a determination not to be exercised,—not to have inconvenient questions raised,—not to have things settled according to God; whereas the apostle speaks plainly of the *need* of exercise, "to have a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men" (Acts xxiv. 16). An unexercised conscience means only indifference and want of heart; and in this case nothing can be right. How great a mistake it is to suppose that in some self-chosen limited range one may serve God acceptably, without going beyond it!—that we may pay Him His tenth and please ourselves in the nine-tenths which remain!—that God will accept the limits we give Him, and be content with a tenth of our hearts as readily as with a tenth of our income! Alas! I ask again, if we speak of whole-hearted and unreserved obedience to the will of God, who, who are yielding it to Him? and the answer will surely have to be, Few, very few indeed.

And thus do we force God to be against us,—against us, just because, indeed, He is for us. The breaking of our wills must come in tribulation and sorrow, not such as that which He has ordained for His people, but bitterness which bows the spirit and shadows the inmost recesses of the soul. And there is no sanctuary in it, the abode of light and peace, which can be a citadel secure from invasion. The peace which is made with ourselves by keeping God out breaks down in alarm and consternation when it is no longer possible to keep Him out. And yet without this, the blessing—the unspeakable blessing which He brings ever with Him cannot get in.

In this way the history of Jacob is most deeply, most solemnly instructive. The “prince with God,” how alone does he become so?—how *late* does he become so too! Driven from his kindred and his father's house by his own duplicity and evil, he finds twenty years' discipline in servitude in Padan Aram, a victim to the same duplicity in another, and returns back to the land he had left, enriched indeed, but to meet even worse distress. God, that He may not have to deliver him up into his brother's hand, must take him into His own. In what a striking way He does this! and how graciously! coming down as man to meet him, in that familiar guise with which we have become since then, thank God, so intimately acquainted. Yet it is in the darkness of the night, and as an antagonist He does so:—

“And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him.”

Let us remember the circumstances of the time in which this took place. Jacob was already in the greatest distress at the news of his brother Esau being on the road with four hundred armed men to meet him. He saw himself already in the hands of his incensed brother, the acqui-

tions of many years, his wives, his children, and his own life in imminent peril,—God, in His righteous government, Himself against him. He had just sent over the brook all that he had: was it indeed all gone from him? he might ask, as the night fell upon him, more solitary than when twenty years before he had left his father's house. Then suddenly he was in the strong grasp of a stranger. Sought out for attack, he grappled with him as for life, and then began that strange conflict, the mystery of which evidently fell also upon Jacob's soul. Did he penetrate it? At last, he certainly did: had the truth been dawning upon him gradually? did it come in a moment, as, at the stranger's touch, his thigh-joint slipped from its socket? Then, at least, he knew in whose strong yet gentle hand he had been struggling; and so with every one who is to be an Israel, the mystery must be revealed of a struggle they have been long perhaps maintaining in the dark with One they know not, but whom they now know, and whom when they really know the struggle ceases, and with the ceasing of which the unrest passes out of their lives. For who of His own, brought to the positive conviction of with whom he is struggling, would longer struggle? Our impotence, at least, would come to our relief, as with Jacob his crippled thigh did. And on His side, when He has demonstrated to us our weakness in that in which He discovers Himself, He contends with us no more.

So the struggle ceases. There is left with us the abiding mark of it in the consciousness of nothingness; and we may indeed carry it with us even outwardly, as Jacob did. Will it not in some sense be ever manifest as to us that we have measured ourselves in the presence of God, the only place in which we get our true measure? Surely it will. A humble spirit, a chastened temper, a quiet step, such as are thus and only thus acquired will not be hidden. The more surely inasmuch as it is to such that the assurance is fulfilled, "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell

in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isa. lvii. 15).

Nevertheless, the fullness of this blessing is not realized at once, as we shall see in Jacob. It is here indeed he gets his name of Israel, though needing to have it confirmed to him before it is fully his:—

"And he said, 'Let me go; for the day breaketh.' And he said, 'I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.'"

Oh, mighty power of weakness over strength! Oh, blessed God, that canst thus be constrained by the need of Thy creatures! Jacob can no longer struggle, but he can cling. The strength which is gone from his loins is thrown into his arms, and there he hangs, strong and desperate in his need, with the tenacity of one who will drown if he lose hold of his refuge. Did *you* ever know what it is so to lay hold of God and not find blessing? None ever did. But first we must confess ourselves what we are:—

"And he said unto him, 'What is thy name?' And he said, 'Jacob.' And he said, 'Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.'"

This is a simple lesson, yet a great one. It is the principle that the apostle proclaims when he says (2 Cor. xii. 9), "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my *infirmities*, that the *power* of Christ may rest upon me."

We talk of the need of power. We lament the lack of it. We covet for ourselves the revival of what seems is to have passed away. Well, here is the sure way of possessing what we long for, as sure to us now as to those in the days gone by. There is no change in God. The necessities of His holiness are the same ever. The sufficiency of His grace is ever the same. He who glories but in his *infirmities*, that the power of Christ may rest upon him, shall *have* the power of Christ to rest upon him. Who that has known the one, but has known the other? Still,

the strength of God is perfected in weakness. Still, "to him that hath no might, He increaseth strength." Yea "the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and shall not faint" (Isa. xl. 30, 31).

These are principles that abide through all dispensations. They are holy, for they exalt God. They are fruitful in blessing to His creatures. The present is a day of Jacob-like activity: of Israels there are how few. Jacob valued the blessing of God: this is evident in his worst actions; but his means were all his own. "The end justifies the means" seems to have been practically, if not avowedly, his motto. And with how many who similarly value God's blessing is it so to-day! They would be careful not to avow the motto; nay, they would not like to carry it out to any thing like its full extent, yet after all, look at their methods, listen to their frequent plea, "But it is for a good purpose!" and can you doubt that the Jesuit maxim really controls them? that their morality is but diluted Jesuitism?

Do you not even hear in the mouths of Christian people even, what they believe they have apostolic authority for, that "being crafty, I caught you with guile"? Nay, is it not indeed there in 2 Cor. xii. 16? Have we not chapter and verse for such a principle? Well, then, shall we say that the Scriptures positively commend cunning and deceit? Where are the consciences of those who can so argue? If you will look only a little more closely, you will see that it is manifestly the quotation of an adversary's argument—a thing not at all uncommon with the apostle—and that he takes particular pains to appeal to them for its refutation in the next two sentences. But it shows what lurks under the surface, that such a principle should be even for a moment thought to have divine sanction.

(To be continued.)

JESUS IN THE MIDST.

IN the gospel of Matthew, chap. xviii. 20, we read, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst." These are the words of our blessed Lord, and they speak to our hearts of love—yea, love unspeakable,—of forgiveness and peace unlimited,—of joy too, because it is Himself is there. We find the apostle Paul, by the Spirit, reiterating this blessed truth in Heb. ii. 12, "Saying, 'I will declare Thy name unto My brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee.'" Yes, beloved saints, Jesus in the midst!—the earnest to our hearts of a time not far distant, when we shall behold Him with our eyes, the centre of all glory, and we forever with Him, clothed in bodies of glory like unto His own. (1 Jno. iii. 2; 1 Cor. xv. 49; Phil. iii. 21.) Glorious anticipation this, when we shall gather around Himself once more! This time, all radiant and bright, shining in the full blaze of His glorious presence; crowned, as He only knows how to crown those who have not (in ever so small a measure) been ashamed to confess His name down here. And if the blessed realization of His love and grace has led them, while in this scene of sin and sorrow, to cast away as worthless, for His dear name, many hurtful weights once prized, what will be their joy to declare in that blest scene above what they have tasted down here, and have sought to declare, even His own great worthiness! So we see them cast their crowns of glory at His feet—a testimony to the value of His own peerless self. (Rev. iv. 4, 10, 11.) This is the ending in glory of what has begun in grace on earth. But oh! beloved saints of God, what of that which comes between?—the sowing now.

But is it not a blessed privilege now to have Him "in the midst" of the two or three gathered to His name—Himself making our hearts glad as we realize by faith

His personal presence? Like the gladness that filled the hearts of the disciples of old when He appeared to them, the doors being shut. Jesus, their Saviour and ours,—the mighty Conqueror! having burst the bands of death, and risen triumphant over all the powers of darkness, holding them under His feet, He stands in their midst—the Blessor. (Jno. xx. 19, 20.) And this blessing extends to you, dear believer in Jesus; for He says, in ver. 29 of this same chapter, “Blessed are they which have not seen and yet have believed.” It is God’s eternal Son who is before us, and has promised thus to meet us who value His presence more than the praises of men. What wondrous grace is this! Jesus our Lord “in the midst”! What a joy and strength for our hearts!

“If here on earth the thought of Jesu’s love
Lifts our poor hearts this weary world above,—
If even here the taste of heavenly springs
So cheers the spirit that the pilgrim sings,—
What will the sunshine of His glory prove?
What the unmingled fullness of His love?
What halleluiahs will His presence raise?
What but one loud eternal burst of praise?”

Let us look now at another scene in which we find “Jesus in the midst.” The most momentous the world has ever seen or will ever again witness, and the foundation of all of which we have spoken. We read, “He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.” And why? Because “the time was come that He should be received up.” Outside Jerusalem’s walls they raised three crosses; “there they crucified Him, and two other with Him,—on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.” (Jno. xix. 18.)

Solemn hour that was on Calvary’s hill when He, the Son of God, the Lamb of God’s providing, was made an offering for sin! “Jesus in the midst” of sinners—the Sin-Bearer—the sinner’s substitute. All the waves and billows of God’s wrath going over Him. “Brought into the dust of death,” and there was none to pity. (Ps. xxii.,

xlii., Ixix.) For you, dear reader, He suffered,—for you He died. Oh! turn your eyes to this amazing sight. A sinner on His right, a sinner on His left, and Jesus the spotless holy Lamb “in the midst”—made sin. Hear that agonizing cry, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

Has it no answer in your heart? Did not Jesus bear that awful load for you? “Stricken, smitten of God,” and “forsaken.” In the midst of sinners, their Saviour: Oh! that cry, “*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*” Words of awful warning to those who go on heedless of this great sacrifice,—who see no beauty in that “visage marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.” But how blessed for those who have believed the testimony from God concerning His beloved Son, setting to their seal that God is true! “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.” (Jno. iii. 36.) “Unto you therefore who believe, He is precious.” (1 Pet. ii. 7.)

Let us, then, have *Him* before our hearts, taking pleasure in remembering Him—Himself, the blessed One, the eternal Son of God; His incarnation; His path through this world manifesting the heart of God to men; His mighty work on the cross meeting the sinner’s need and glorifying God in respect to sin; His perfect obedience to the end. Well may our hearts believe, and bow and worship. Gladly may we yield ourselves up to Him as His own purchased possession. (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.)

In conclusion, let us remember, God always speaks to us through His Son. By Him He made the worlds, and through Him ever revealing Himself since. It was the glorious Son of God Isaiah saw (Isa. vi.) when he had his needs met as an undone sinner; and forthwith we see the prophet as the ready messenger, and hear from his lips that great prophecy of grace and glory. (Isa. liii.) It was the glorious Son of God the apostle Paul saw when on

his way to Damascus, full of hatred against the lowly followers of Jesus, and had his eyes opened, and heart set right to worship and serve Him in a devotedness that has not since been equaled. It was the same glorious One who appeared to John, quelling his fears when he had fallen as one dead in the presence of such glory; assuring the beloved disciple that He was the One who had died for him, and was alive for evermore—"the first and the last." (Rev. i. 17, 18.)

And we too, in these last hours, are privileged to look upon the same glorious Person. Called "out of darkness into His marvelous light," it remains our inestimable portion, with unvailed faces "beholding the glory of the Lord," to be "changed into the same image from glory to glory." (1 Cor. iii. 18.) Wondrous blessedness! Reader, is it yours?

J. F. G.

"We think of all the darkness
Which round Thy spirit pressed,
Of all those waves and billows
Which rolled across Thy breast.
Oh, there Thy grace unbounded
And perfect love we see;
With joy and sorrow mingling,
We would remember Thee."

NOT LOST AND NOT SAVED.

THE ELDER SON.

(Luke xv. 25-32.)

EVERY one of the class that were now following the Lord would realize in the prodigal his picture, and thus would find the invitation of grace superscribed with his name. Publicans and sinners would have the mirror plainly before them, and the truth in the description was absolute truth,—the condition of all men, if they could but realize it. With the other class who murmured against this grace, their lack of realization

made it necessary to deal differently. *They* needed, above all, the mirror; and to be that, it must reflect the truth: but there would be a great difference in this respect, that the truth it conveyed would be no longer absolute, but only *relative* truth. Christ's words must exhibit them to themselves in such a way as they could *recognize* themselves; not, therefore, simply as God saw them, but according to their own thoughts about themselves; and yet with that in it which—appealing to their conscious experience—would bring them into the reality of what they were before God.

This is the whole difficulty as to the elder son in the last of our Lord's three parables here; and it is a difficulty which has already faced us in the first of them. The ninety and nine sheep which went not astray,—the ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance,—have no *real* representatives among men: yet they vividly portrayed those scribes and Pharisees who were *not* lost, and needed no Saviour. The light is let in there where it is said that there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over them.

In this last parable, the inner workings of the heart are much more exposed, and consequently these features of the first one are found in more development. But the whole is so plain that certainly the Pharisees here would make no mistake about the application. *They*, at least, would not think of Jews and Gentiles being in question, or of the recovery of a backslider: they would not think of the Lord meaning the whole lesson for others than themselves!

But there is nothing that is not clear if only we are at the right point of view. Thus that it is the *elder* son that represents the Pharisees has point in this way. Certainly they would not have accepted the position of the younger. To the elder belonged the birthright, with its double portion, in every way of value in the eyes of a Jew. On the other hand, in the book of Genesis, nothing is more dis-

tinct than the way the first-born all through *loses* the birthright. "That which is first is natural" merely, rings through the book. And even so it is here.

When the younger son is restored to his father's house, the elder son is in the field. It is characteristic of him that he is a worker, and a hard worker. All that is due is credited to the busy religion of the Pharisee. But his secret soon comes out: when he hears music and dancing in his father's house, he does not know what to make of it. It is not that he has heard yet of the return of his brother. It is not that he is simply a stranger to grace. But the sounds *in themselves* are unaccustomed ones: "he called a servant, and asked what these things meant." He is the picture of that joyless, cheerless service which finds nothing in God. No pleasures are known as at His right hand for evermore. The soul cannot say, "In Thy presence is fullness of joy." There is work of a certain kind perhaps in plenty, but it is work in the field simply—afar off. Such work is no test of piety; it is only the "work of *faith* and the labor of *love*" which are so. And where faith and love are, the soul works amid music, and is never outside the Father's presence. As His grace can be no surprise, so the merry heart sings with melody to the Lord,—“music and dancing” cannot surprise it. Joy is the atmosphere in which we are called to live,—the strength for labor, the secret of holiness. It can lodge in our hearts with sorrow, and abide all the changes of the way. The apostle says, "He that sinneth hath not seen [Christ], neither known Him." May we not say, "He that rejoiceth not, cannot have seen Christ"?

These Pharisees had Him before their eyes, yet saw Him not,—looked into His face, and knew Him not. Theirs was work in the field, while the Father's house was dull and pleasureless. Thus to have it opened after this sort to publicans and sinners could not but anger them—could not but rouse an unwelcome voice in them—a voice they could not but hear, while they would not

listen to it. The truth commends itself to men's consciences, when their hearts reject it, hardened through a pride which will not brook humiliation. Did the grace which showed itself so readily to other men refuse them? Nay, the gospel expressly comes out to all,—to every creature—in the same tender tones, addressing itself to all. This elder brother had no door closed in his face. “He was angry, and would not go in.” Nor was there any thing of indifference toward him, but the contrary: “then came his father out and entreated him.”

It will not be found at last that the Father's heart has failed toward any of His creatures. How solemn is His protestation,—“*As I live*, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.” No: men must tear themselves out of the arms which are ready to inclose them. God is not estranged from us,—needs no reconciliation, although men's creeds may impute it to Him. “We pray in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God” (2 Cor. v. 20). Man indeed needs his heart changed. Listen to the elder son, and you will find the grudge which is in the heart of many religionists: “But he said unto his father, ‘Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandments; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this thy son is come, who hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou has killed for him the fatted calf.’”

Thus it is plain, men may be busy for God, with all along a grudge in the heart against God. Their blank and cheerless lives, spite of all that they can do, witness against them; but they would fling the accusation against God. Their hearts are not with Him. They have “friends” to whom they turn to find what with Him they cannot. They take outwardly His yoke, but they do not find it easy: there is no fulfillment of that—“Ye shall find rest to your souls.”

Who is in fault? How vain to think that God is! How

impossible to find aught but perfection in the Holy One! Do that, and indeed you will stop all the harps of heaven, darken its blessed light, and bring in disaster and ruin every where. There is no fear: He will be justified in His sayings, and overcome when He is judged. But it is an old contention, and a frequent one: "Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me that thou mayst be righteous?" Ah, we must do that, or submit to that judgment of God ourselves; for it is recorded as to us, "There is none righteous,—no, not one," and "what things soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God."

To take this place is repentance, and then we are Pharisees no longer. We *need* grace, and thus we come to understand it. We understand it, and so appreciate it. We find it in God, and thus turn to Him. How sweet is then His voice! and how the spring of joy begins to bubble up within the soul! Repentance and faith are never separate, and the tear of penitence is the dew of the Spirit, that already sparkles in the morning brightness—fuller of joy itself than all the pleasures of sin can make one for a moment!

Of this the elder son knows nothing. His heart is shut up in self-righteousness, and there in nothing that can harden a heart more. Self-righteousness claims its due, and sees nothing but its due in all the blessing God can shower upon it. The more it gets, the more it values itself upon it. The getting so much is proof positive of so much merit. Poverty and misfortune (as the world calls it) are equal proofs of demerit, except indeed when they come upon itself, and then they are unrighteousness^d in God. So the heart is, as the Scripture expresses it, "Shut up in its own fat," insensible even to the grossest stupidity, or living but to murmur out its folly and its shame.

But the father's words seem to many to refute this

account of the elder son. How could he say to such an one as this, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine"? Does God speak to the self-righteous and unsaved after this manner? Could it be said of them that they are ever with God, or that all that He has is theirs? If so, would it not seem as if after all they had the better portion?

We have only to look, however, at the facts of the parable to find a convincing answer to all this. Let us take these two things separately, and inquire what is the real truth as to each.

First, "Thou art ever with me." This must of course express a fact, but what is the fact? That the elder son was with the father, had lived a decorous life, and not wandered as the younger had, is plain upon the surface; and it is not strange that the father should express his approbation of that. The open sins of publican and harlot certainly are not, in God's eyes, better, or as good, as the moral and well-ordered life of the respectable religionist. So the woman in Simon's house the Lord evidently puts down as owing the five hundred pence, rather than the fifty; and of her He says, "Her sins, *which are many*, are forgiven." It would not magnify God's grace to say that because they were minor sinners it flowed forth so freely to "publicans and harlots," nor is there ever any such reason given. He does not set a premium upon vice—God forbid!—but all natural laws, and all His government among men operate against it. Even the infidel, as to Scripture, allows in nature a "power that makes for righteousness"—meaning by that too just what the Pharisee would mean. Thus the father's, "Son, thou art ever with me," has its basis of truth.

To make out the complete meaning, however, we must certainly supplement it with something else than this. That there was inward nearness to the father upon the son's part is impossible to believe: he had never rewarded

his toil with even a kid for festivity with his friends ! And in truth the Father makes no provision for merriment elsewhere, and would have no "friends" recognized outside His household.

There was no real nearness to the father, then, in this elder son, and we cannot supplement thus the thought of his outward nearness. What remains for us? Surely as to the younger, so to the elder, it was the father's *heart* that spoke ; and from *his* side, "Thou art ever near me," tells of One who is not distant from His creatures, in whose heart they dwell near indeed. Yes, He is not far from every one of us ; and of this He would persuade the Pharisee no less than the prodigal. "God so loved the *world*, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

But "all that I have is thine" ? That is plainly an earthly portion, not a heavenly. If we look at the beginning of the parable, we find that the father had divided between his two sons his living. The younger had spent his portion, wasted it with harlots,—plainly the earthly things, which God does entirely divide to His offspring by creation. To the elder, there still belonged his: he had not squandered it, and it was all that was left. Heavenly grace, when it bestows the best robe, does not thereby give back the lost health, the wasted substance, the natural things which may be gone forever. These things belong still to the prudent and careful liver, such as the elder son was. The meaning here should be very plain, and God would thus appeal to those who, receiving daily from His hand, are yet content to live in practical distance from Him. "The goodness of God leadeth to repentance."

But he keeps to His grace: "It was meet that we should make merry and be glad; for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

"HE THAT BELIEVETH

Is not condemned,

but he that believeth not is condemned already."

MOST awful sight!—on Calv'ry's mount
 Three crosses stand in bold relief;
 There in the midst the Saviour dies,
 On either side a thief.

Oh! blessed Saviour, by Thy pain
 Thy loved ones reap eternal gain.

What led Thee to that awful cross?

What brought the Sinless One so low?
 'Twas not for aught that He had done,—
 No sin of His. Ah! no.

God's spotless Lamb,—the Victim slain,
 For us He died, and lives again.

'Twas *sin* that nailed His blessed hands
 And feet to that accursèd cross;
Your sins and *mine*, O fellow-man,
 He bore, to suffer thus.

But we, like that poor thief, believed;
 Like him, eternal life received.

In these three crosses we behold
 The saved, the Saviour, and the lost.
 The story of our ruined world,
 The Saviour's death the cost.
 Heaven's door is closed against our sin,
 But faith in Jesus let us in.

H. McD.

Plainfield, N. J.

JACOB'S MISTAKE.

(Continued from page 293.)

ALL this is the spirit of Jacob, as long as he is Jacob. Human power must be supplemented by human artifice, where it is found, as it is soon found, so greatly wanting. When in the presence of God we have measured ourselves, and have learned the secret of strength in Him, of necessity all these things drop off. Does God need man to sin for Him? Can He not afford to be open and honest? So as we wait upon God, our hearts are purified by the faith that is in Him, for faith is at once the worker and the purifier. How good, then, is it to wait upon Him! It is just one thing that the *flesh can never do*. Work, it can; plan, it can; but wait upon God, it cannot. What wonder, then, that God should send trouble to loosen our hold of other things, that we may lay hold of Him with both our hands, and lean upon Him with all our weight, and in result, find His strength made perfect in our human weakness?

This is what makes us Israels; and yet there is something more to be considered. For it is to be well understood that Peniel is not the place where Jacob becomes fully what his name is. As I have said before, he receives it, but is not confirmed in it. Nor only so: Peniel is not in the full sense what Jacob calls it. God is not yet seen face to face, although he says so. Could he, had he really met God so, add to them what he does, as if it were the great thing to rejoice in, "I have seen God face to face, and my *life is preserved*"? Could he say to his brother Esau directly after, "I have seen thy face, as if I had seen the *face of God*, and thou wast pleased with me"? Who that had seen the glorious face of God could compare it with Esau's?

Nay, it is in the darkness he meets God here, and not in the light. When the dawn breaks, He departs. Nor does He answer the request to know His name. "And

Jacob asked him, and said, 'Tell me, I pray thee, thy name.' And he said, 'Wherefore dost thou ask after my name?' And he blessed him there."

So that though he does indeed get blessing, it is not yet *full* blessing. And indeed how little like Israel is he in the scene that immediately follows with his brother! God has indeed Esau in hand; but Jacob, fawning in the dust, seems still the same Jacob. He does not go "after my lord, to Seir." He goes to Succoth, and builds him a house there. Then he buys a portion of a field before the Hivite city of Shechem; Dinah going out to see the Canaanitish women of the land, falls and is defiled; Simeon and Levi, with a craft and rage that the Spirit of God pronounces accursed, destroy the whole city. Jacob, through all, shows only utter weakness. His crippled thigh may be plain, but not his power with God, nor yet with men.

Striking contrast with his claim of the name and of the power! For on that "parcel of a field" which he buys, he erects an altar which he consecrates to the name of El-elohe-Israel—"God"—or the Mighty One,—"Israel's God." Plainly, he is not disposed to think lightly of his divinely given name; nor lightly to estimate the "power" ascribed to him in it. "God is Israel's God," he says; "God belongs to Israel." And then, as in defiance of the assertion, the blast of ruin comes. The miserable man shrinking with horror from the bloody swords of his sons, shrinks yet more as he realizes the condition into which he is brought with the Canaanites around: "Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites; and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house."

Why, then, is this? What is the secret of this collapse on the part of Jacob, so immediately following what is manifestly signal and divine blessing? The following

chapter shows Israel is not yet properly Israel. He has to be confirmed in the possession of his name, as he there is. And yet of course the fault is entirely his, and must be his. Let us proceed, and this will explain itself. *Jacob has forgotten Bethel*, that place so eventful in his history already, to be so still more in the time to come. God must recall him to it.

“And God said unto Jacob, ‘Arise, and go up to Bethel, and dwell *there*; and make *there* an altar unto God, who appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.’”

At once a change takes place, and it is apparent that there is indeed a cause of weakness such as that we no longer wonder at what has occurred, but only at the grace which can deal so mercifully with those who have dishonored Him. “Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, ‘*Put away the strange gods that are among you*, and be clean, and change your garments; and let us arise, and go up to Bethel.’ . . . And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods that were in their hands, and the earrings that were in their ears, and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem.”

And immediately the power of God manifests itself. “And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob. So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan,—that is, Bethel, he and all the people that were with him. And he built there an altar, and called the place El-Beth-el.”

How marked is the difference now! El-Bethel stands in manifest opposition to the forsaken altar of El-elohe-Israel. God is no longer for him the God of Israel simply: He is now “God of His own house,” a house which speaks necessarily of something which belongs to God, and must be kept in the holiness which becomes His dwelling-place. The sanctuary is the only place of strength and refuge for man, for it is the only place in

which He dwells, in whom is our hiding-place. And from this, in absolute holiness, He governs every thing. It is clear that His power cannot be used against Himself; that man cannot be the Master, but only God; that we belong to Him, not He to us; and thus is Jacob's great mistake revealed. Was the power of God to be associated with the false gods in Jacob's tents? Was it to be used in behalf of a house built where Jacob was to be a pilgrim and a stranger? or a piece of ground bought in close association with a heathen city? This could not be. Jacob must learn that it is not God who belongs to him, but he to God. In this way, and in this way only, can the power he has learnt be used.

And so "God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan Aram, and blessed him."—How his wanderings since at Succoth and at Shechem are passed over here as so much lost time!—"And God said unto him, 'Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name.' And He called his name 'Israel.'"

Now he has got it, then, in full possession: divine strength to do the divine will, and to walk in divine ways. No other way, surely, could the gift be given or enjoyed. Would we have power to work disaster with our own wills? Would we have power without the guard of holiness? Would this be a greater gift, or no gift? a blessing, or in fact a dreadful curse?

No one, of course, could hesitate a moment how to answer a question put in that way. And yet in secret, and under the most plausible pretexts, do we not desire and expect what is indeed forever impossible? Was not Jacob doing just this at Succoth? was he not at Shechem? Has he no imitators in these Christian days?

Alas! it is what is being attempted every where—to be Israels, while forgetting Bethel,—to find the power of God in the path of self-will. Ah, on the other hand, would we only have the gift with the necessary conditions

of it, how would the power of God indeed be realized!

For here at Bethel God proclaims Himself, what He did before to Abraham and to Isaac, the *Almighty* God, and bids him be fruitful and multiply, and assures to him afresh all the promises to his fathers. Surely for us, no less than for him, is all this: it is written, not for his sake, but for ours. We need but to give up to Him what is His,—to be, without reserve, surrendered to Him, to know how His strength is made perfect in weakness—how all-sufficient His grace is.

Oh, to be perfectly surrendered! Why should our own wills be so dear to us? Why should we prefer our ways to His only wise and holy ones? why choose certain disaster, instead of pleasantness and peace? Surely, there is no infatuation like that of unbelief; for unbelief it is, and only that which can refuse entire submission to Him who is at once our God and our Father.

Only let us remember that it is in our weakness that His strength is perfected. Our weakness remains still weakness. The strength is His, though continually put forth for us. It is our infirmities in which we glory, that the power of Christ may rest upon us. Doubly blessed is it to be thus continually made aware of the love that is set upon us, of the arm that shields us, of the might that works through us. Through all, God accomplishes in us a weaning from ourselves which is our only security. "We are the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. iii. 3). At the end, as at the beginning, in saint or in sinner, confidence in one's self is confidence in the flesh.

It will often be found that those who get on most rapidly in theory are the slowest in the practical and experimental elements, because it is more a work of the intellect than of heart and conscience.

DAVID NUMBERING THE PEOPLE.

A Lecture by W. C. Johnston, Thursday, July 11, 1889.

(1 Chron. xxi.; 2 Sam. xxi. 1, &c.; xxiv. 1.)

WE learn from these last passages what helps us to understand the state of things brought before us in 1 Chron. xxi. From one point of view, you might say, David, and what *he* does, are chiefly in question. As we look again, in the light of the other scriptures, Israel is brought before us, and God is taking notice of the moral state of the nation. Next, we find this thought coming out, that the circumstances give Satan a place and an opportunity. Look, then, first at the thought that it is the whole moral condition of the nation as discerned by God. It may find its expression in the conduct of the king, but putting that and the state of the people together, you then find that God permits Satan, as in the case of Job, to help to bring about the recovery and blessing on which the heart of God was set. But only to a certain extent can Satan accomplish the work, and when his part is accomplished, God can come in and do His own blessed work. In Job's case, you find Satan permitted to go a certain length, but ere the soul of Job can be reached, and God's thoughts for him brought home to him in power, so that he *bows*, taking his true place, God has to come in and reveal Himself. Now, as with the individual, we may find the same with the nation. We may also think of what the Spirit of God has given us here as some of the things which happened unto Israel, and are types for us, and that they are written for our learning.

Here, then, look at the previous chapter for a moment. (1 Chron. xx.) "It came to pass, that after the year was expired, at the time that kings go out to battle, Joab led forth the power of the army, and wasted the country of the children of Ammon," etc.; and, after the victories

rehearsed, in the last verse we may read, just to sum up, "These were born unto the giant in Gath; and they fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants." Why these triumphs come specially before us is, to see how we may discern the moral state of the people, and learn by what was then made manifest what may be instructive to ourselves, as these things were written for our learning. Just as we see in the Lord Himself, Satan soon has his place; and in the three things with which he tempts the Lord, we may say you get under so many heads all possible temptations of Satan. As it might be rendered, "When the devil had ended *every* temptation, he departed," etc. You may find, then, in the temptation of the Lord, briefly summed up, every possible way in which Satan may reach the people of God. By looking at such principles, we may be instructed as to how he may be permitted to reach God's people now, and how God's Word may meet us, and teach us through such trials, and bring us nigh in heart to Himself. We find, first, for instance, that with Satan there is that which is personal; he appeals to self in his first attack upon the Lord. He puts what comes home to the individual in a selfish way. Next, you find, if you take Luke's order, that it is what is held up in the way of worldly glory. Next, you find what is brought up in connection with the Scriptures, or the things of God, the spiritual temptation. Now take these principles and see how frequently they come up in the history of God's ways, and how they may throw light upon what is before us at this time. For instance, Israel in Egypt has to find out that Satan is acting by violence and power. There, you may find him so engaged at the beginning; but after they had been all these years in the wilderness, when on the plains of Moab, and about to enter the land, you find the same enemy with the same malice. But he has an entirely different method of attack, and through what takes place by Balaam, you find his subtlety is brought to bear so that

God's purposes in connection with the people of Israel may be frustrated. He is the same enemy, only he is attacking the people in another way. And we are told by the Spirit that we should not be ignorant of his devices, so that if now amongst the saints of God there may not be what there was in the days of persecution by the rack, the fire, or the sword; you may not have the wrath of the enemy, as in the martyr's pile, or the other forms of violence which came upon saints in earlier days; but what have we? The *same* enemy, ceaselessly acting in his malicious way to frustrate God's purposes in connection with the blessing of His people.

You may find this principle illustrated in David's history. Take his earlier career, when he and his followers are hunted like outlaws, you may find Satan's efforts to set aside God's appointed king. That could not be and has not been done. The king has been set upon the throne, and has prospered. Here, as we see, in one short chapter, you have a wonderful epitome of his triumphs. Has Satan missed what is going on? By no means. Now, then, he will attack David and Israel in another way. This surely gives the key to what we find here. There is a proud thought in the heart of the king, and he must number the people over whom he reigns. Ah! what do we find there? "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." When David is hunted by Saul, and can scarcely find sustenance, he is depending on God. Satan fails to overcome this one taken up by and cast upon God. But now that he has prospered, and you find this epitome of history,—this indication of triumph and glory, Satan seizes the opportunity and insinuates pride into the heart of the king. There, surely, you find a clue to much that follows. But, as we saw from Samuel, the Spirit of God does not make it all turn upon David's state. God has been looking on the whole nation; He connects the king with the moral state of the people of Israel. Satan may be allowed to

come in, but it is with God's permission, that God's purpose as to really lifting up the people morally should be brought about. That is surely what God desires even in chastisement.

Now, lest we should just miss the point, see at once the application of the principle. It is not at a time, possibly, when things are low, or when persecution is rife, that Satan succeeds. There may be prosperity in the highest and truest sense, and that may just be his opportunity. Indeed, as the extreme of man's need leaves room for God, the extreme of man's blessing may leave room for Satan. You may see it, if you definitely single out what most of us will admit as having taken place during the last fifty years. I refer to the blessed and marvelous work of God's Spirit in recovering truths which had been lost. Just as the book was covered up by debris in Josiah's days, and, on being found, was the means of blessing, so precious truths connected with the Spirit, the Church of God, and the coming of the Lord had been covered for centuries, and have been recovered during the last half century so that souls have been blessed as has scarcely been known since Pentecost. Now see the parallel. When David has prospered, and you have victory, and he is at the very pinnacle of his fame, then Satan gets in his proud thought, and this terrible havoc comes upon the nation. Has it not been so with us? Has there not been *pride in connection with recovered truth*? Has there not been pride as to the position into which God has brought some of His saints? That will be admitted. And thus you find that there has been a lowering of the tone,—making much of the blessing, and hence ceasing in proportion to make every thing of the Blessor. There we find, as in David's case, surely, Satan has been watching the success, and all in which the saints of God have been truly rejoicing. And hence you find, surely, that there has been a puffing up; the pride of heart about place, about truth, the looking

down on many of the dear children of God, and making much of the few to whom these things have been brought in power. Who would undervalue what the Spirit of God has wrought? Who would make light of what many of the saints of God have been led into in connection with what we are accustomed rightly to call recovered truth? Well, the enemy has not missed what has been going on. Just as when David was, you might say, in the zenith of his fame, there was an opportunity for Satan that he never found when David was like a fugitive before Saul. So, when the saints of God have been lifted up and occupied with these things until the truth has been more largely before their hearts than the One of whom it speaks, Satan has found the opportunity for accomplishing his purpose of frustrating the blessing, marring and spoiling, as he ever delights to do, that which God is seeking to bring about in connection with His people.

Sufficient may thus have been said to show what seems to me a parallel, and gives us instructive lessons. I might have taken up lower ground, and begun with such as have not been delivered from Satan's bondage, and brought into the liberty of the children of God. Others, perhaps, may feel it laid on their hearts to touch that, so I keep to this which is now before me; that here is prosperity,—great blessing,—and the blessing is what they are occupied with, until they really lose sight of the Blessor, and the moral state, not only of the king, but of the whole nation, has become what they themselves little understand. Yet God is looking on, and is not going to leave His people under Satan's power, nor to the consequences of their own failure. He will permit even Satan to have for a little, so to speak, his own way. Then out of that, God will bring what will glorify Himself and magnify His name in unfolding blessing they never knew before. It is, if one might roughly illustrate it, that God permits the devil to have a long start in the race. You always find with

God that He can take plenty of time. He is characterized by having patience. Only wait and watch, and notwithstanding Satan's long start, he will be defeated; God will bring about His own purpose, and, according to His heart, bless His people. Thus, then, it would seem that Satan is permitted to bring this about, by insinuating the proud thought which leads the king to give the order to number the people. Surely we need not dwell on this to show the analogy in the way in which pride grew up among saints recently in connection with truth and position. And does it need argument or proof to press it home that Satan has seized the opportunity, and sadly succeeded, as in David's day, in working such havoc among the people of God? Certainly not.

But now we find Joab introduced. There is nothing to show us any thing of spirituality about that man; yet see this, "The king's word was abominable to Joab." How I have been struck with that! David had spiritual intelligence, and knew so much in communion with God, but when he is out of communion, and lowering down until he is in Satan's power, so to speak, he will do without compunction what a merely shrewd natural man could see at a glance to be a huge mistake. And do we not see the principle illustrated? Saints of God who have known His *ways*—not merely His *acts*—and who in communion with Him have certainly gained much of the knowledge of His mind, but let them lose that communion, and get occupied with the blessing, and the heart away from Himself as the Blessor, and you find things done, and that in spite of remonstrances, that worldly men can at once say, "That is a huge mistake—it is folly." How humbling that the man of God, taught in His Word and in His ways, in getting out of communion, may make blunders that the man that never knew God's mind and ways can at once discern to be folly, and use remonstrance concerning such conduct! Joab wishes the people to be a thousand times more than they are, but he sees that there

is something wrong, and does not fail to express it. I need not dwell on that, as having been so illustrated among saints recently; but how humbling to us, and how instructive, if the thought reaches us in God's presence, that we need to be kept there! because if we have judged ourselves, and in any measure learned how unfit we are to govern ourselves, having taken God's Spirit to be our guide, when we lose that guidance, we are more helpless and ready to do things that are contrary to God's mind than mere men of the world who never knew His mind at all. Then, without dwelling on it in detail, but trying to strike principles that may be thought out and brought home to our consciences, that the youngest and the oldest alike may feel the *need of dependence*, and see how readily the most instructed may do, when out of communion, what worldly men would deem at once to be altogether wrong. Surely we learn this from Joab's thoughts about numbering the people.

We next get what God thought about it. It displeases Him, and there is the point. He sees it, and sees it in the right light; and it is indeed a great offense. Yet having fallen into this, does He leave David and his people there? No. The prophet is brought on to the scene. Oh, how wonderful and how gracious! Instead of leaving David to His own ways, or leaving the people and the king under Satan's spell, God brings in His prophet, though the message he may bring may be one of judgment. There is no going back from judgment in such a case as this. Declension has gone too far for recovery to be wrought otherwise. The choice of these three things is put before David: famine, war, or the sword of the Lord. Then he wakes up to see where he is and what he has done. "I have sinned."

"Well," you say, "won't that turn back God's hand in judgment?"

No. Where there is a judging of a man's self, and a getting to God before God judges him, you may avert

the calamity; but where self-judgment is only produced by the direct hand of God, you find the consequences in God's government roll on. Achan may say—can say with sincere sorrow, "I have sinned;" but this is after he has been singled out, and he is already under the hand of God for judgment. On the other hand, mark you, if we would judge ourselves, that would be entirely averted. Where there is real self-judgment, all such consequences may in a great measure be averted. "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." When self-judgment begins with the one who has failed, turning to God, oh, how much may be averted! rather than, on the other hand, it should reach that point where God takes up the controversy, and begins to act in discipline amongst His people. Thus we find, then, there was no setting aside of the judgment. The choice of three things is given. There grace begins to act, and David at least comes to this conclusion that he will fall into the hands of God. He sees how infinitely better it is to be cast on the mercy of God than to be left under the power of his enemies. So the instructed soul would say, "Let me fall into the hand of the Lord."

Without dwelling further, then, on that, I notice next that this goes on, and such a vast multitude are swept away by the judgment of God. How it breaks down the king! how it humbles the elders! You find both in sack-cloth. Had it been a controversy with David alone, you need not bring in the elders; but when it is a question of the nation, the moral state of all is detected, and is now to be judged. All, in some measure, are to feel it. This also comes out in the end, "The Lord was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel." (2 Sam. xxiv. 25.) Hence we see that in God's dealings with His saints there has to be the going through such a matter individually. In difficulties it might seem wise and well to reach the mass, and lead them aright without letting them go into questions raised. Have you ever thought

it to be a solemn thing to lead saints right when they have no exercise of conscience? It may be apparently a very great triumph, and the servant of God may try to do it; but if you look beneath, in God's dealings with His people, He leads them by their consciences; and where there is this question of their moral state individually involved, the conscience must be aroused, and personally there has to be brokenness and true self-judgment before God. Otherwise, they may have the knot cut for them, and you defeat, or rather postpone, God's purpose in discipline. The end will not be reached: there will be more trouble.

But here, the king takes it to himself, as if he had done it all. "And what," he says, "have these sheep done?" And doubtless the elders took it to themselves, and the people, more or less, must have been made to feel that God had a controversy with all. The principle is true and important at any rate, and we do well to notice it and lay it to heart, if out of failure God is to bring blessing. Where there is to be this recovery, and a lifting up to a higher moral platform, there will be individual exercise of conscience, so that one and all have to be exercised, that each may go through the trouble with God. Whether it is the case of a sinner being saved, or whether it is the restoring of a saint that has wandered, is it not true that we have to be alone? Read the gospel of John, and you will find how frequently we get a soul alone with God. He singles them out one by one. You may take up a Nathanael, Nicodemus, the woman at the well, the man that was born blind, or the cases of Thomas or Peter,—take up the wonderful variety thus presented, and isn't that thought brought out that each must be alone? If it is a question of salvation, that is found to have its place, and if with saints it is a question of restoration, again you have to be alone. And some of us have seen that; for even the husband did not tell all to the wife, nor the wife to the husband, the daughter to the father, nor

the father to the son. And how beautiful it is when God's Spirit thus comes in and works brokenness, and isolates every soul alone with God, and each is there judging himself and his ways! You are not far from a real lifting up when thus you get really broken down; for after all, as it has been said, the way up is down; and it can never be more true than when spiritual pride has been the cause of God's hand being laid on His people in chastisement. Surely it is for the saints individually; not to blame this one and that one, or this company or that, but to discern what the state of all has been, and take one's place as having to do with it individually; and by so getting before God, you will find the word for the occasion. You will realize a lifting up that is real; indeed, that is what you find in the chapter; and now the angel is made to stay his hand as he comes to Jerusalem. Always in the midst of judgment God remembers mercy. His people can never get so far down but they may be lifted up; if they will only take their true place and cry to God where they are, God can meet them there. If it is the prophet in the belly of the fish, as in the belly of hell, when his heart turns to the Lord, when he thinks of Him, and when he says, "Salvation is of the Lord," how soon there is deliverance and a fresh start in work! he is to go again and preach the word that he was bidden. How mercy to saints individually and as companies is brought out by discerning such dealings! and how we, where we are, may, by looking at these things, learn something more of His blessed ways, and after we have suffered awhile, He may stablish, strengthen, and settle us.

Then you find the prophet sent, and there is now instruction to build the altar and offer sacrifice. Here is to me the point that was specially pressing upon me. David is brought to find the threshing-floor of Ornan. Even Satan's work only helps on this consummation. And here you see the large-heartedness of Ornan; how readily, how generously, he would have given all! but David is in some

measure recovered, and in having to do with God he will not take the place, nor the oxen, nor the instruments, for nothing. He is back now to the sense of having to do with God, and he knows what is due to Him, and every thing will be received at its full value. There you will find tokens, surely, of restoration. And now the altar is reared, the sacrifice offered, and what next? Fire from heaven: God answers by fire. Again, on the ground of sacrifice, the king and people are brought morally near to God, and Satan is completely defeated. He had thought to take them further and further away, but God uses Satan's action to bring them back, so that morally they are nearer than when Satan began his work of malice. And now see, what place is this? Ornan's threshing-floor, you say. What does David now find when he is in God's presence? He finds, surely, for *the first time, the right place for the altar* in Israel. Oh, what an immense thought if we could reach it, if God would give it to our souls in power! Think of David's victories; think of all that has been manifested by these conquests. Has David not also been a worshiper? Has he not even had it in his heart to build a house for Jehovah? Has he not cared for the ark? All that is true. Surely the king has been interested in the things of God, in considering His will, and what is due to His holy name. But see, for the first time, even partly through Satan's work, here is the discovery of the place for the altar and the site of the house of God. Oh, now mark, how God has given Satan a long start, and in the end He comes in such a long way ahead of Satan. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." This is the spot on which God has had His eye from the calling of the people,—the spot where He would place His name, and where His eyes and His heart would be continually. I say, think of it to the glorifying and magnifying of our God. He brings out that spot at the very time when there is such deep failure,—when, apparently, Satan has had his greatest triumph;

here and now you have the place for the altar, the site for the house, the home for the ark.

The next chapter goes on, as if nothing had happened in the way of failure, with that account of the magnificence with which the king provides for the building of the house, and bringing the ark into its place. Oh, how that pressed home on my soul when alone in the bush in New Zealand, broken-hearted about what was going on among saints in Britain and America! and when, through God's mercy, one was led to look at things in the light of this chapter, one could see and say of the trouble, "Satan is in it; pride has been at the bottom of it; and here is what has happened." The Lord has had to act in judgment. But what a gleam of light, what a lifting up of soul, when one saw that by this very failure, and even by the devil's apparent triumph, God was bringing out as never before the place for the altar, the spot where He has set His eyes and His heart, where His name should be continually! Oh, if one could get what is surely in this,—if saints so learned the meaning of gathering to the name of the Lord, as if, under the Spirit's power, they were realizing what it is to be brought there for the first time, would it not be like the surprise and joy when the Lord answered by fire, and revealed the right place for the altar, the site for the house, and the home for the ark? What a triumph on God's part! There might be gathering to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in reality as never before. Shall we not be exercised as to its realization?

But if the lesson is unlearned,—if these things are not taken up and individually gone through in God's presence, oh, what loss! what an opportunity is missed! Satan indeed gets a triumph; saints indeed suffer loss; the Church as a whole must in some sort feel this tremendous mistake. There will surely be further discipline and judgment. But let there be ever so few who really get to God about what has happened, they will get blessing in-

deed! Then let us try to look beneath the surface and see God's ways with us, and how He has had to deal with our pride and lack of charity. We have neither been humble before Him, nor generous-hearted in our thoughts toward other members of the body of Christ. Then, since God has had to humble us, surely we ought to learn not to boast of position, not to speak lightly of servants and saints who are apart from what we may think we are on,—divine ground. We need rather to be humbled, and all pretentious ideas removed. Is not this the lesson we get with the serpent of brass? instead of its being God's instrument, working deliverance and salvation, when the people have got away from God, and are in a morally low condition, acting by memory and rote, they make an idol of the symbol of blessing, and offer incense to the serpent of brass? When there is recovery it is broken to pieces, and counted merely what it was,—a serpent of brass. We may bless God for what is true about gathering to the Lord's name, and what souls have learned of recovered truths through certain teachers, in connection with what grew up around them; but if faith in God gives place to the mere memory of and reverence for those through whom the blessing came, there may be a slipping into idolatry, as in offering incense to the serpent of brass. On the other hand, when there has been holiness and dependence, what real blessing has been the result. Then it has not been the smashing of things around, and showing up evil, and merely waking up saints to be against the evil that they are separated from, but then they find that the Word is brought against themselves, and they are broken and humbled so as to sigh and cry, taking their true place as having had a part in all that has come into the house of God. And when, beyond this, there is the beauty and matchlessness of that blessed One attracting the heart, you will find saints really gathered, formed, and controlled by the sense of what the Lord is in Himself. Peter, on find-

ing with whom he has to do, says, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord," yet he is clinging to Him all the more closely. So when souls discern that all has been shown up and met by the Lord, and there has been the unfolding to their hearts what the Lord is Himself, there is this clinging to Him in spite of personal vileness and the general break-up of the professing church. It is when there is the realization of the terrible failure that there will be the learning of what gathering to Him really means, as brought about by the power and grace of the Holy Spirit.

On the other hand, when evil is more before the mind, the saint may think of truth and stern righteousness until again, if you can discern it, he may be found to be a fresh Pharisee. Where did the Pharisees come from at first? A thought by a brother put into shape what was in my own mind, as he showed that we never hear of the Pharisees until the remnant had returned from Babylon. That is a remarkable fact. Then as it was among the returned remnant that Pharisaism was developed, is there not a danger of those who have sought to be separate from the confusion of Christendom manifesting once more something of the spirit of the Pharisee? Indeed it may be amongst those who have recovered truths, and have got the real thought of gathering to the name of the Lord that you find this spirit as among no other Christians? Do we not need, then, to be on our guard against such a spirit? Is not this one mark of our pride, on account of which the Lord has had a controversy with us? Instead of talking of the denominations as Judaism, and attacking those in them so as to cause bitterness, we should try to get the Word of God to break us down, until, in true brokenness, there would be that among us which would attract rather than repel many sincere Christians. Then, where holiness and grace prevail, the Spirit would constrain and gather saints, so that it would be like finding the site for the altar and the ark. Thus

God can bring about by the failure far more than what would defeat Satan. He can bring out of it for many what may never have been known before, as to being really gathered by the Spirit's power unto the name of the Lord.

Then, beloved brethren, look at these thoughts, however crudely they may have been presented. Use the opportunity to get out of the lesson what God has intended to teach; and may we know what it is to be in His presence, and gathered unto His name, and all that was signified by the place of the altar and the ark, as we never knew it before. Miss the opportunity, and you may launch out in gospel-work (and no one who knows my past work will ever suspect that I make light of that or the work of the young evangelist)—but, oh, think! what are you gathering to? When God speaks in connection with the tabernacle, have you ever noticed this one lesson? You begin with the mercy-seat,—you are right in where God's very presence is. (Ex. xxv. 10.) It is not even the blood that suits the sinner which is first presented, nor the altar that manifests the accepted sacrifice; but the mercy-seat. So you find it also in Jno. iv., where the Lord Jesus does not merely think of the sins, and the forgiveness and the peace which that poor soul may enjoy; He thinks of what, through God's infinite grace, that one is to give back in worship, in spirit and in truth, to the Father. How much such a line of things as we have suggested from this effort of Satan against Israel, may teach us when looked at in the light of what Satan has been doing among saints during recent years!

One would desire these crude thoughts to be taken up that we may learn anew what the true thought of gathering really is.

It is on my heart to say that one may rejoice in gospel energy and success, but let not that, however blessed, set aside what the Lord's thought is in connection with gathering, or what the Father's thought is in con-

nection with His seeking worshipers who should worship Him in spirit and in truth. This will lead to another line of thinking and acting toward what is called "the systems," than many pursue. "Systems"! Oh, I am sick of the expression, and even think it comes to be a little like cant! God has a system, of which Christ is the centre, and I glory in the thought. Then, instead of being opposed to and trying to break up every thing in the nature of a system, we ought to learn more of the meaning of God's system, and seek to go on and get saints occupied with that. God may just have been breaking up what is ours, and even permitting Satan to have a hand in it, that we might not be building any thing of our own; but learn to discern the things that be of God from those that are of men. Yes, God is above all, and can bring out of the failure what will glorify His name.

W. C. J.

FROM THE WORLD TO GOD.

"I AM not." Oh words unwelcome
 To the lips of men:
 "I am not." Oh words that lead us
 Back to God again!

Speech of him who knows the pathway
 To that refuge sweet,
 Where is covert from the tempest,
 Shadow from the heat.

Speech of heaven, from wise men hidden,
 Unto children taught;
 Few the words of that great lesson,
 Only "I am not."

Heart of man, another language
 Is thy native speech,
 Spoken by a thousand races,
 All alike in each.

“I am,”—rich or wise or holy—
 “Thus and thus am I;”
 For “I am” men live and labor,
 For “I am” they die.

For “I am” men dare and suffer,
 Count all loss as gain,
 Toil and weariness and bondage,
 Sin and grief and pain.

In the blessed gospel read we
 How a rich man bade
 Christ the Lord and His disciples
 To a feast he made.

Well, it was to feed the prophet!
 Thus the rich man thought;
 But amidst his wealth and bounty
 Lacked he, “I am not.”

Then there came a sinful woman,
 Eyes with weeping dim—
 “I am not,” her heart was saying—
 She had looked on Him.

He beheld her, broken-hearted,
 Ruined, and undone,
 Yet enthroned above the angels
 Brighter than the sun

All the while in dust before Him
 Did her heart adore,
 “I am not, but Thou art only,
 Thou art evermore.”

For His heart to hers had spoken,
 To His wandering lamb,
 In the speech of Love Eternal
He had said, “I AM.”

Now she thirsts no more forever,
 All she would is given,
 None on earth hath she beside Him,
 None beside in heaven.

Oh, how fair that heavenly portion,
 That eternal lot ;
 Christ, and Christ alone, forever—
 Ever, "I am not"

Henry Suso.

FRAGMENTS.

Is it the real purpose of your soul to get on, to advance in the divine life, to grow in personal holiness? Then beware how you continue, for a single hour, in what soils your hands and wounds your conscience, grieves the Holy Ghost and mars your communion.

No worldly gain, no earthly advantage, could compensate for the loss of a pure conscience, an uncondemning heart, and the light of your Father's countenance.

As in nature, the more we exercise the better the appetite; so in grace, the more our renewed faculties are called into play, the more we feel the need of feeding each day upon Christ.

SUFFERING first, and then glory, mark the due path or history of the saint. This has been illustrated from old time. Joseph, Moses, and David may be remembered in connection with this truth. But it is the *common* history, in a great moral sense the *necessary* history, of those who adhere to God, in a system or world that has departed from him, and set up its own thoughts. For such must ever be stemming a contrary current.

The moment of deepest depression has commonly been the eve of deliverance.

